

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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SEE PAGE 14 FOR DETAILS

auchrannie resort

Also inside this week: Oban, a fairtrade town • Homes and interiors feature • Bonnie Babies

Mòd medalist dies on Isle of Islay

THE ISLE of Islay lost one of its most celebrated Gaelic singers at the weekend, following the death of Robert Forrest.

The body of the 75-year old was found at 9am on Saturday in his home village of Bowmore. Police said there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding his death.

Robert won a coveted gold medal at the Royal National Mòd in Inverness in 1984.

See Islay Letter, page 8

Highlands and Islands Enterprise appoint new chair

HIGHLANDS and Islands Enterprise (HIE) welcomed Professor Lorne Crerar as its new chairman on Monday.

Appointed by Scottish Ministers, Professor Crerar is a founding partner and chairman of law firm Harper Macleod LLP, which has offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness. Lorne has held the part-time chair of banking law at Glasgow University since 1997.

He has been a member of the HIE Board since April 2008 and is also Chair of the HIE Risk and Assurance Committee.

He will earn £38,721 per annum for one and a half days a week work during his three year contract.

Time stands still as Oban clock stalls

TIME has been standing still for people in Oban's Station Square – with both hands on the iconic clock tower having not moved an inch for a month.

Commuters could have been forgiven for missing their bus, train or ferry if they were relying on the clock, which is within strolling distance of all the town's major transport terminals.

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council: 'We have checked the clock and a fuse had blown and has now been replaced.'

A similar problem at Campbeltown's clock tower is being investigated by the authority.



Sara-Maria Smith as the Black Swan, opposite male lead, Michael Bearden, as Prince Siegfried, at Oban's Corran Halls last Wednesday. Picture - Kevin McGlynn

Swan Lake spectacular wows audience

A PACKED Corran Halls witnessed a spectacular performance of arguably Pyotr Tchaikovsky's most famous ballet, Swan Lake, last week.

Ballet West's production captivated the audience, with the undoubted talents of the school's dancers combining to create a show to remember.

Sara-Maria Smith played the principal roles as Princess Odette in both White and Black Swan form.

Opposite her as Prince Siegfried was Michael Bearden, the company's principal dancer from Ballet West in Utah, who replaced Jonathan Barton in the role after he suffered an injury.

If there was any last minute upheaval, it certainly wasn't perceptible as the dancers put on a show to remember, drawing warm applause at many stages for their feats.

Gillian Barton, principal of the Taynuilt-based ballet school,

said: 'We were very pleased with the performance and the response was fabulous. People have been saying they really enjoyed it.'

The 11 date tour continues this weekend with two performances at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre on Saturday.

The company then travels to Dundee's Carnegie Hall for a performance on March 2, concluding the tour at Greenock Arts Guild on March 3.

Loch Fyne Oysters to remain in Argyll after buyout

RENOWNED seafood business Loch Fyne Oysters is to remain at its base in Cairndow after being sold, the managing director has confirmed.

The business will be remaining in the village at the head of Loch Fyne and retaining its

105 staff after Scottish Seafood Investments (SSI) acquired the business on Monday.

The company, which transferred into employee ownership in 2003 to ensure the future of Loch Fyne Oysters remained in Argyll, accepted the SSI buyout

in a bid to expand the business' export markets.

On Tuesday, Bruce Davidson, managing director of Loch Fyne Oysters, said employees had voted the SSI deal through 'unanimously'.

SSI, formed in 2011, is a joint

Consultants net £4.7 million from Argyll and Bute

'Cost effective' say council - 'an absolute scandal' claims council election candidate

CONSULTANTS and specialist advisors have been paid £4.7 million by Argyll and Bute Council over the past five years, it has been revealed.

Fred Hall, a former Oban police chief who has declared his intent to stand for this May's council elections, obtained the figure in a freedom of information request to the authority.

Equivalent to approximately £950,000 per annum, Mr Hall has described the sum as 'an absolute scandal' given the spend was in the same term the authority proposed to close 24 rural primary schools.

The figure follows revelations in *The Oban Times* last year that Argyll and Bute Council had spent approximately £600,000 on consultants for Oban CHORD projects alone.

However, the authority says the use of external consultants and experts in effect saves it from having to employ project advisors on a full time basis.

Without consultants, it claimed, it would not have been able to allocate an extra £40million spent between 2012 and 2015, as revealed in last week's shock budget.

Mr Hall said: 'This is an absolute scandal and should be put in the public domain.'

'I have in the past in a letter to *The Oban Times* expressed a personal view that this

.. we'd prefer the money was spent on lighting and roads.

Oban businessman Alan MacLeod

administration is economically illiterate.

Argyll and Bute Council said: 'To put this spending into context, the council's total revenue spend over the same period was £1.16bn, therefore the £4.7m spent on specialist consultants represents 0.4 per cent.'

'Our total capital spend over the same period was £107m. The council has also identified savings through service reviews of £72m.'

'It is not cost effective for the council to retain the services of specialist project advisors on a full time basis. Therefore it

is sometimes essential that the council employs a consultant to work on pieces of specific project work when we do not have, or cannot spare dedicated personnel.

'Without these savings the council could not have developed the budget agreed last Thursday that will see massive investment in schools, roads and infrastructure across Argyll and Bute.'

Alan MacLeod, the owner of the Ee-usk and Piazza restaurants on Oban's north pier as well as the Argyll Hotel site, said consultants were only worth money if they listened to what people told them.

He said: 'Instead of consulting on a pie in the sky extension of the north pier they should actually be listening to the businesses on the ground.'

'Businesses want the town busier and we'd prefer the money was spent on things like proper lighting for the town and good roads.'

'Rottweiler' in 'spy' case

AN INDEPENDENT investigator nicknamed 'the Rottweiler' has been appointed by Argyll and Bute Council to investigate allegations of 'spying' on social networking sites.

Retired Audit Scotland head John Clayton will investigate claims that council communications chief Jo Smith told delegates at last September's Social Media for the Public Sector conference in Glasgow that she used 'spy' accounts to monitor public perception of the authority.

Mr Clayton's appointment was confirmed in a thorough statement to local politicians

on Tuesday. The news breaks as the organiser of the conference in question, Nick Hill, cast fresh doubt over the allegations, saying they were both inaccurate and politically motivated.

Mr Hill said: 'Speakers use the slides in their presentation as an aide-memoire and, as it clearly shows, the use of the word 'spy' is in inverted commas.'

'This was taken out of context. What she was referring to was individuals in Argyll who get in touch with regards comments left on social networking sites. Most bizarre for me is that it took five months for this anonymous person to complain. Why?'

Islay driver without a licence runs out of luck

AN ISLANDER who has been driving for 14 years without a licence was caught out after police stopped her for speeding.

Islay woman Diane MacNiven also admitted drink driving to police officers when they stopped her in Port Charlotte on January 28 and was found to be three times the legal limit.

At Campbeltown Sheriff Court last week MacNiven, of 8 Daal Terrace, Port Charlotte, admitted driving without a licence and with 107 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath; the legal limit is 35 microgrammes.

Prosecutor fiscal John Service told the court the speed MacNiven was driving at caught the attention of police.

'When they did stop her to warn her about her speed, they noticed she was smelling of alcohol,' said Mr Service.

He said MacNiven told the officers: 'Yeah, you've got me. I have been drink driving.'

Defence agent Mike Creegan said his client thought she had applied for a new licence in 1998 after losing it in the early nineties.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC fined the 44-year-old £300 and disqualified her from driving for three years.

Policing model in Lorn to change

THE WAY communities throughout Oban and Lorn are policed is set to change, including Oban town centre, Soroba Dunollie and Dunbeg being allocated one police officer.

Chief Inspector Brian Auld, who is the officer in charge of area's policing, is proposing to alter his Integrated Service Delivery Model, which is used to deploy staff to where they are needed most. The move follows criticism from Soroba Residents Association, which claims anti-social behaviour has been on the increase in the town's most populated area since a designated community police officer was removed a year ago.

Chief Inspector Auld said: 'There will be a re-alignment of community policing, although there will not be a policeman specifically for Soroba. It will be broader than that.'



Pop-up Theatre Tour

mull theatre

by Andy Duff

by Martin McCarrise

2 comedy dramas about lads, friendship & camping

Axed Connel primary school may reopen as demand rises

ACHALEVEN Primary School could be reopened in August after four parents registered an interest in sending their children there next year.

While only four potential pupils are currently registered, all have younger siblings so the school roll could double by the following year. The parents hope though that others will follow their lead in the interim, boosting numbers and the chances of the school reopening in the process. One of the parents, Stephanie Irvine, said: 'We're really keen to get it started again.'

'We felt that four was a good number to start with but the more the merrier.'

Argyll and Bute Council say they will discuss options with the parents before any decision is taken on reopening the school.

Landfill site staff claim 'intimidation'

STAFF manning Argyll and Bute's landfill sites have agreed a two-day strike to start on Friday, after claiming they have been 'intimidated' by company bosses.

Employees of the county's landfill sites will walk out this Friday and the following Monday as the dispute over pay and conditions continue.

While Shanks say their four per cent pay increase offer over three years – backdated to the 2010/11 financial year – is fair, staff say they are in effect paying for it themselves thanks to a proposed one third cut in sick pay entitlement.

Staff have in recent days received a letter from Shanks' Scottish area director telling them he is 'disappointed' in their continued dispute, saying they are jeopardis-

ing both its contract with the local authority, but their own jobs.

One member of Shanks staff said: 'We feel like we're being intimidated into accepting an offer that's just not good enough. Yes they're offering a rise, but we're effectively paying for it ourselves.'

Alex McClucky, GMB union rep for Shanks, said: 'Shanks have made their revised offer and that has been rejected by our members.'

'Our members have received a letter and it does threaten their job security.'

'In that letter, they're threatening to take their current offer off the table. Our members are fine with that because they don't think it's good enough.'

It is understood that drivers of waste collection lorries for Argyll

and Bute Council won't cross the picket line, resulting in some disruption to collection services.

The site will, however, remain open for householders, although there will be no health and safety cover provided without Shanks' staff on site.

A spokesperson for Shanks said: 'We believe that our latest and final offer is more than fair, especially given current economic conditions.'

'The changes to sick pay are proposed to bring the regions employees sick pay entitlement in line with that which is currently in place throughout the rest of the company.'

Argyll and Bute Council said those who find their bins are not emptied as normal should leave them out, as it intends to catch up on routes affected.

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Wed 7	Sunart Centre, Strontian	8pm
Thu 8	Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern	7.30pm
Fri 9	Three Villages Hall, Arrochar	8pm
Tue 13	Corran Halls, Oban	7.30pm
Wed 14	The Leven Centre, Kinlochleven	7pm
Tue 20	Mallaig & Morar Community Centre	7.30pm

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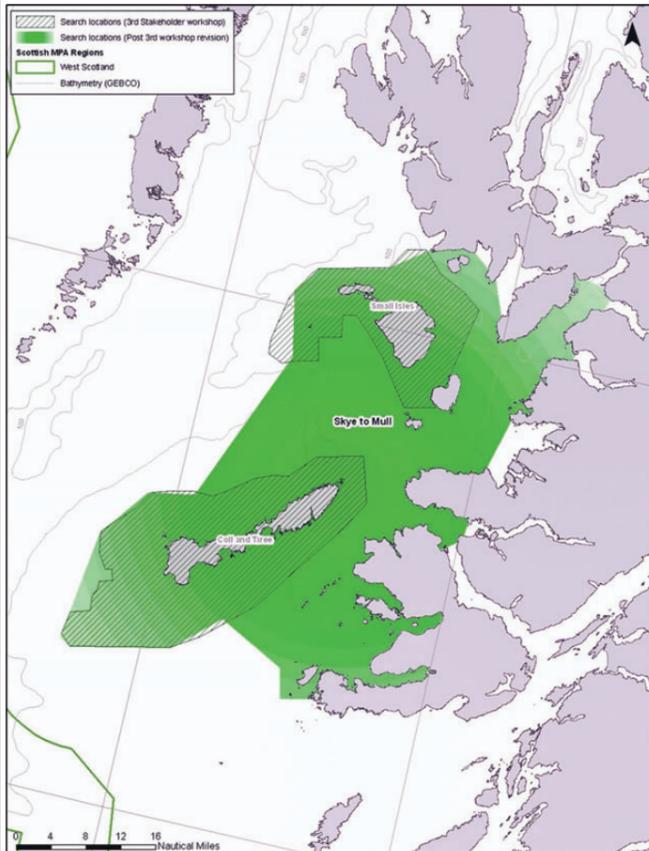
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Marine conservation net widens ahead of decision



The green area indicates the search locations being considered for Marine Protected Areas.

'The concern is that wherever they pick it is likely to have an impact on fishing.' Nick Turnbull, Mull Aquaculture and Fisheries Association

MOST of the main fishing ports in the West Highlands and Islands are being looked at in a broad search for Scotland's new marine protected areas (MPAs). The area under consideration by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) stretches from the Isle of Mull up to the Isle of Skye...

Islay shakes as tremor strikes

RESIDENTS on Islay woke to an earth tremor in the early hours of Monday morning. No one is reported to have been injured nor buildings damaged in the minor quake, which had a magnitude of 2.6 on the Richter scale.

The tremor follows a number of small earthquakes which have occurred in Argyll and Bute and the Highlands and Islands in recent years, including one reported on Islay on February 5.

Mull bus thief to pay compensation

STEALING a bus during a drunken night out on Mull has cost a Dundee man £960.

Paul Robertson, aged 23, of 59 Collingwood Street, Burnhill, Dundee, had previously admitted that on October 4 2010 he stole a bus in Craignure, causing £2,271.68 of damage.

Defence agent Eddie Thornton said Robertson had gained employment since his last appearance at the court in May last year, and had saved £960 to pay for any compensation ordered.

He pointed out to the court that co-accused, Carl Mark Jordan, 22, Folkestone, Kent, had paid £1,200 in compensation for the £5,000 of damage he had caused.

Sheriff Mhairi MacTaggart ordered that the whole £960 be paid in compensation. Previously, Sheriff Douglas Small imposed £200 fines on both Robertson and Jordan for driving without insurance, and banned them from driving for 12 months and 18 months respectively.

Lismore to make film on cinema

LISMORE islanders will this summer have the chance to make their own short film about the benefits of cinema in rural communities.

The project will be run over a weekend from June 1-3 by East Lothian-based rural cinema group Pics in the Stix. Suzie Queripel, secretary of the group, was inspired to take the project to Lismore as she has long-standing family connections to the island. Representatives from the group visited Lismore last Saturday.

Lochaber crofter bids to reverse years of constant decline



Michael Foxley is standing for the new Crofting Commission.

Islanders welcome news as Jura passenger ferry finds funding

Offer is to run a six-day-a-week service

ARGYLL and Bute Council's decision to continue funding the Jura passenger ferry for the next two financial years has been welcomed by Jura Development Trust.

The funding of £11,000 per year announced at last week's budget meeting will represent 20 per cent of the ferry's operating cost, with the remainder of the bill to be picked up by Transport Scotland.

Jura Development Trust chairman John Potts said the announcement had come as a pleasant surprise off the back of the recent draft Scottish Ferries Review.

'Until the Ferries Review came out, we were thinking it wouldn't run. Now we're discussing it with the usual operators and trying to get a timetable in place for Easter.'

'The offer is to run a six-day a week service, which will be 11 sailings.'

While Mr Potts welcomed the funding he said he did not expect it to be extended beyond the two years allocated.

After that he thinks Jura residents will have to go via Islay to reach the mainland, as they do currently when taking a vehicle.

'All indications are that this [the passenger service] is limited to two years.'

'We won't give up though and will continue to fight to prove that it is a viable service.'

LOCHABER crofter Michael Foxley has pledged to apply tough new rules designed to crack down on absentee crofters with 'sympathy' if elected to the new Crofting Commission on March 16.

Dr Foxley, who runs sheep and cattle on his croft at Achaphubail in Airdour, also places bringing useful agricultural land back into production to reverse years of decline and neglect as a top priority.

He further opposes de-crofting of whole crofts, wants more young entrants to crofting, abattoirs retained and more opportunities for renewable energy.

He told The Oban Times: 'I believe the new regulations [regarding absenteeism] need to be dealt with sympathetically and practically. You can follow the hard letter of the regulations, but there needs to be a fair bit of understanding.'

'If people are working away a lot of the time to supplement their income there has to be real sympathy towards their employment situation.'

'Crofting is still extremely important to the Highlands and Islands, particularly the West Highlands and Islands, and we have to make sure that voice is heard regarding all policy issues'

Isle of Islay petition to save Port Ellen link builds momentum

A PETITION started by South Islay Development Trust opposing the Scottish Ferries Review proposal to reduce the number of sailings between the mainland and Port Ellen has gathered more than 800 signatures in three weeks.

At the time of going to press, an online petition had collected 392 signatures while a print version had been signed by 419 people.

Kirsten Laurie, local development officer with the trust, said she would present the petitions as part of the community's response to the review, which is due by the end of March.

People also have the chance to respond in more detail to the review's proposal, either online

or by contacting South Islay Development Trust. 'We are trying to get as many local people as possible to put their own response as well as signing the petition,' Kirsten Lawrie said.

The review's stated proposal, 'to run more services from Port Askaig and fewer from Port Ellen' has encountered strong opposition at the south end of the island.

'The fact that it's very vague means we don't know what we're up against,' Ms Lawrie commented.

'I spoke to Mike Russell, MSP, last week, and he just emphasised it was a general consultation and it was up to residents of the island how many services they want to see from both ports.'

Mull Lines

CONCERNS that schoolchildren on Mull are paying unfairly for journeys home from Oban during the week have been cleared up by Argyll and Bute Council.

Stewart MacDougall raised the issue at a meeting of Mull Community Council on February 14. He said: 'If the kids are coming home during the school week for the dentist or doctor they have to pay the fare.'

'This shouldn't be the case. The journey should be free for them all the time.'

But a spokesperson for the council contradicted this claim: 'It is our position that when a pupil has to return home for an unavoidable medical appointment the council will pay the fare for the return journey from Oban High School.'

PROPOSALS to introduce a more frequent ferry service on the Oban to Craignure route have been welcomed by a local island councillor.

Other suggestions in the draft plan from the ferries review are that the existing vessel is replaced with two smaller vessels.

Councillor Mary-Jean Devon said: 'I think that would be great. Sometimes there is just a handful of passengers and a large crew.'

More than 500,000 foot passengers and 100,000 cars use the service each year. Proposed extended operating hours would see the ferry sail from 7am to around 11pm. It would also operate more frequently throughout the day.



THE ISLE of Mull Hotel at Craignure hosted an unusual Valentine's event - a fire training exercise. Strathclyde Fire and Rescue personnel from Tobermory, Salen and Craignure were all involved in a search and rescue from smoke-logged rooms at the hotel on February 14.

The hotel has been closed during the winter providing an excellent opportunity for an exercise to be held.

A CROFTING course being run on Mull has attracted a high level of interest from all over the island.

The Scottish Crofting Federation course takes place over 10 weeks in the An Roth Centre, Craignure. It started on February 9 with 20 aspiring crofters taking part.

The beginners course, an evening class once a week, has welcomed delegates from those in their late 20s to people aged over 40.

Organisers are pleased with the turnout, which included two Iona residents.

They urge anyone else interested in the traditional way of life to contact Mull and Iona Community Trust so a future course can be arranged.

SUSTAINABLE Mull and Iona ran a successful renewables fair in Craignure Village Hall on Saturday February 4.

The event was attended by more than 100 visitors. The 15 exhibitors provided advice on a range of renewable energy technologies including wind, hydro, air to air heat pumps, woodchip and biomass boilers.

A PLANNED radio station for Mull and Iona is a step closer after the operating group applied for a broadcasting licence for the area.

The Sound of Mull Radio Station Group, run by Adrian Fitness, hopes to install transmitters to provide a local radio service to islanders.

LIVES could be put at risk if a proposed fish farm at Gometra goes ahead, according to local residents.

Roc Sandford, who lives on Gometra, said: 'The farm will block our route to Mull which we need access to for essential services like going to hospital or getting food.'

'If it is dark or bad weather we go along the shore, if we have to go out in to the loch it can be very dangerous.'

The Scottish Salmon Company has asked to meet with residents to discuss their concerns.



A MULL cameraman won a prestigious television award in Bristol last week - after spending a year living with wild bears in America.

Gordon Buchanan, originally from Tobermory, won the Best Male On-Screen Talent award at the Royal Television Society awards ceremony in Bristol's Showcase Cinema de Lux.

But Gordon was humble in his acceptance speech: 'It was the bears themselves - particularly the little cubs - that were the true stars of the series.'

His programme, The Bear Family and Me, saw him take to the American wilderness for a year to live with a family of wild black bears.

Send all your news from the Isle of Mull to Faith Orr at The Oban Times email: forr@obantimes.co.uk or telephone Faith on 01631 568000



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Roads and education gain as Argyll and Bute announce budget

ROADS and education are the main winners in Argyll and Bute Council's budget, which will see £120 million capital investment in the area in the next three years.

Despite a heated debate during a full council meeting last Thursday, all but three councillors agreed a budget that will invest £30 million in education and a further £21 million upgrading roads.

In a shock revelation during the budget debate, council

leader Dick Walsh revealed plans to spend a further £40 million between 2012 and 2015, a 50 per cent increase on the original £83 million capital spend suggested in the draft budget.

Councillor Walsh's proposals see £12.5 million invested in a new Campbeltown Grammar School and Dunoon Primary Campus. A further £7.5 million will fund a new swimming pool and leisure facility in Helensburgh.

The budget also sees the introduction of a Young Employment Opportunities Fund to tackle the 27 per cent rise in youth unemployment in Argyll and Bute in the last year. The one-off fund of £200,000 for 2012/13 will be based around learning choices for the 16 and over age group.

The lifeline ferry service that connects the Isle of Jura to the mainland has also been secured through the revised budget. The council agreed to pledge

£11,000 to the Jura Passenger Ferry Service in 2012-13 and 2013-14. The money represents 20 per cent of the operating costs of the ferry; the Scottish Government will fund the remaining 80 per cent.

Following excessive storm damage endured over the last few months, the council has also created a Resilience Fund, through which £700,000 will be available to develop contingency plans to implement in the event of severe weather.

Councillors also approved an additional £750,000 for 'preventative spend' - to implement changes in early years and health and social care, helping the county's most vulnerable people.

Presenting the budget to the council, Dick Walsh said that despite facing 'the worst set of economic conditions for a generation', the budget created the opportunity for recovery and growth.

Stating the budget was

'shaped by and for the people of Argyll and Bute', Councillor Walsh said: 'This budget puts significant additional capital into Argyll and Bute - creating jobs, improving our infrastructure and improving lives across the region.'

This additional investment would, Mr Walsh said, be funded by efficiency savings, renewed borrowing and releasing funds from the NPDO and Waste PPP Smoothing funds. Commenting on the invest-

ment, Mr Walsh said: 'It is not only affordable across the three years, but is also sustainable going further forward into the future. It represents sensible use of borrowing to promote essential capital investment which can be funded within planned budgets.'

Agreeing additional investment across a range of sectors, the council plans to save £8.2 million in the next two years, achieved through management and operational efficiencies.

'Worst' roads getting better say council

ARGYLL and Bute Council say 'significant' progress has been made to improve the county's roads since being described as 'Scotland's worst' last year.

Last autumn, the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation published a report that said 18.4 per cent of Argyll and Bute's roads were in the worst category - a higher percentage than anywhere else in the country.

Argyll and Bute Council say they have been working to improve the network since, spending £3million throughout the 2011/12 financial year.

A further £21million is to be invested in roads over the next three years.

A spokesperson for the authority said: 'The money will improve the road network, economic benefits and improve people's lives.'

Tarbert driver banned for two years and fined

A TARBERT man was fined £700 and disqualified from driving for two years at Campbeltown Sheriff Court last week.

Fraser Talbot of 1 Bankend Flat, Harbour Street, admitted driving while twice the drink/drive limit, failing to stop for pursuing police, driving at excessive speed and without due care and attention, all on September 18.

Talbot's defence agent Christian Kane said that the 20-year-old - 'was in a bar in Tarbert and his home address was no more than 100 feet away.'

'There was no reason to drive; he wasn't going anywhere,' he said.

Talbot pled guilty to driving with 191 microgrammes (mg) of alcohol in 100ml blood; the legal limit is 80mg.

Science park power

A PLANNING application to build a new electricity sub-station at Dunstaffnage Science Park was submitted to Argyll and Bute Council last week.

A spokesman for Scottish and Southern Energy, who made the application, said: 'The European Marine Science Park is building an extension so increased load is required on the network.'

Bowmore doctor saga continues

PATIENTS in Bowmore on the Isle of Islay are seeing as many as five different doctors for the same ailment within a six-week period as their long-running GP saga continues.

Despite public objection, Bowmore Surgery was moved to Islay Hospital at the beginning of February, following a disagreement over the lease of the former GP surgery premises.

Adverts via distillery

Meanwhile, the Community Health Partnership (CHP) has failed to secure at least one permanent doctor for the village in almost two years.

Job adverts for a doctor in Bowmore and on the Isle of Jura have been lodged by the CHP.

However, in a bid to widen the search for a permanent doctor for the islands, Islay Community Council has formed a sub-committee to help find a new doctor and has lobbied Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell on the issue.

Bruichladdich Distillery has also lent its support by advertising the essential post to its near

4,000 followers on Facebook.

Community councillor Roberta MacNeill told *The Oban Times*: 'The community council has been forced to form this sub-committee to find a GP for Bowmore and to ensure the NHS service for Islay is not going to be compromised.'

'People are feeling dreadful about this because there is no continuity about which doctor they see. I know of one woman who saw five different doctors for the same problem over six weeks.'

'People here usually hold back from complaining but this time they are not holding anything back.'

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'One of our main aims for the locality is recruiting additional GPs for Islay and Jura.'

'We are looking forward to welcoming applications from suitably qualified individuals.'

Michael Russell MSP has contacted health secretary Nicola Sturgeon on the issue and is seeking to clarify the position with NHS Highland bosses.

Rest and Be Thankful solution underway 'by winter' claims minister

WORK needs to start 'by winter' on a long-term solution to landslip closures at the Rest and Be Thankful, according to Transport Minister Keith Brown.

Mr Brown confirmed in an exclusive interview with *The Oban Times* last Friday that he expected action to start after the results of a recently commissioned study on the road are returned.

'There's a study coming back in the summer and that's the deadline we're looking at now.'

Contingency plan
'We have to get the survey information back first of all and then I'd like to think by winter we can get cracking on the road,' the minister said.

Viaduct alignment

As to the form the long-term solution would take, Mr Brown forecasted the type of ideas the survey was considering.

'One option is a viaduct alignment using the contours of the hill, essentially putting a tunnel in the hillside,' he said.

Advocates of putting more livestock on the hill to stabilise the slope were not likely to be listened to, the minister added.



Transport Minister Keith Brown at a windswept Rest and Be Thankful 16_108keithbrown04

He also confirmed the idea of term plan, pointing out that 'trees can uproot in very high winds'.

Mr Brown had travelled from Glasgow to the top of the pass through the 'Arrochar Alps'

where he met representatives from Transport Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council.

Convoy system

Graham Edmond, head of network maintenance at Transport Scotland, confirmed details of a contingency plan in the event of landslips closing the A83 later this year.

Around £1.25 million will be allocated to upgrade a Forestry Commission track that runs near the bottom of the valley and joins the B828 at the top of the pass where it meets the A83. 'The Forestry Commission are working on the track now and we're certainly aiming to get the work finished before the next landslip season which will be July and August,' Mr Edmond said.

Callum Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council Asset Manager, said the upgraded track would be one way, meaning a convoy system would be in place if the A83 was to be closed.

'We think it will be about a 20 to 30 minute turnaround time, so if you arrived just after a convoy left the maximum time you could be waiting would be about an hour.'



Pupils from Barcaldine Primary School bid farewell to Holly 16_108seal02

Holly the rescued seal says goodbye to Barcaldine pupils

A RESCUED grey seal pup was released back into the wild on Monday after saying goodbye to local schoolchildren.

Holly, who was found weak and starving on an Easdale beach in November, has made a full recovery after being cared for at the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary in Barcaldine.

She was found weighing just 10 kilos but soon revived with staff looking after her. Care team supervisor, Dennis Chamberlain, said: 'As soon as she perked up she revealed a really aggressive side and she chose to vent it on our footwear, destroying eight pairs of wellies inside a fortnight.'

Holly is now fighting fit, weighing a healthy 36 kilos, but

staff are sad to see her go: 'Even though we are extra careful to make sure our rescued seals are not mollycoddled and retain all their wild instincts, it's impossible not to get attached to them,' said Dennis.

Children from Barcaldine Primary School were at the Sanctuary to say goodbye to Holly, they are involved in a website project with the Scottish Zoological Society and filmed the release to go online.

They said they 'would really miss Holly' but agreed it was best she was going back to the wild.

The video by the schoolchildren will be on the Deep Blue website, expected to launch at the end of the month.

Man may face jail after Benderloch road rage attack leaves victim slashed

A MAN is facing jail after slashing a tourist across the face with a Stanley knife in a road rage attack in Benderloch.

Anthony Joseph Murray, 32, of Flat 3, 18 Shandon Crescent, Balloch, was found guilty at trial at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday for his brutal assault on the man at a lay by in the village on April 5 last year.

He repeatedly punched and kicked the 55-year old man, before knocking him to the ground and slashing him.

Murray had been a passenger in a car overtaken by the victim prior to the assault.

Giving evidence, Murray told

the court that he was acting in 'self defence', adding he had seven of 33 vertebrae removed from his spine due to treatment for a tumour he had since he was a child. Any injury could kill him, he claimed.

Prosecutor fiscal David Glancy challenged his account though, telling Murray: 'You wouldn't know the truth of the matter if it skelped you in the face.'

Sheriff Mhairi MacTaggart said: 'You emerged from the cross examination lacking completely in credibility and reliability.'

'It leaves me in absolutely no doubt that you are guilty.'

Connel village projects gain help from Community Payback scheme

A LORN community is seeing remarkable benefits - thanks to convicted criminals.

The community of Connel was one of the quicker communities to react to the launch of the Community Payback scheme, which sheriffs were able to impose on those convicted of committing an offence after February 1 last year.

Good quality of work

Like other communities across Scotland, they decided to bid for certain work to be done in the village, including making the main streets cleaner and more presentable.

They have been pleasantly surprised by the quality of work done though and have thoroughly endorsed the benefits of the scheme, which replaces the old community service legislation.

Les Stewart, vice-chairman of Connel Community Council, said: 'We're

getting plenty of help from the Community Payback scheme. We had asked for some help to do up the village and they've made a good start on it.'

'What we've found is that some of the guys are qualified builders and they're up for doing quite a lot of things.'

'So far, they've been doing things like cutting back branches and picking up litter. Some woodwork has been painted too.'

While the orders are imposed by the court, the scheme is administered by local authority, in this case Argyll and Bute Council.

Les said: 'We asked for some work to be done through the scheme and we find they've been really keen to help.'

'There's not much been done over the winter as the weather wasn't perfect for it, but we're hopeful some work will start again soon.'

Gamekeeper damaged vehicles on Islay estate

A FORMER head gamekeeper of an Islay Estate has been ordered to pay £350 compensation by Campbeltown Sheriff Court after denying he put sand in the fuel of two estate vehicles. John Joseph Adamson, aged 62, of Coullabus Keeper's Cottage, Bridgend, was found guilty last month of putting sand into the fuel systems of an Argocat and a grass-cutting machine on June 11.

Outdoor nursery first

OBAN will see the opening of Argyll and Bute's first all-outdoor-based nursery when term-time begins this August.

The Stramash Outdoor Nursery is the brainchild of outdoor education and environmental charity Stramash and will be able to house up to 18 children during weekdays.

Stramash chief executive Niall Urquhart said: 'Stramash has been using the outdoors for the past eight years to facilitate the learning and development of children and young people across Argyll and Bute.'

'We believe in using the outdoors to enable the holistic development of children, encouraging them to learn about themselves, others and the environment around them.'

Parents will be able to register a place for their children at Stramash from Monday, March 5 to Friday March 9.

Councillor Ellen Morton, Argyll and Bute's spokesperson for education and lifelong learning, said: 'Stramash Outdoor Nursery is an exciting new adventure, being the first outdoor nursery in Argyll and Bute.'

'We in Argyll and Bute are blessed with an outstanding environment with some of the best areas of biodiversity which allow our children to explore nature in depth as they learn and have fun.'



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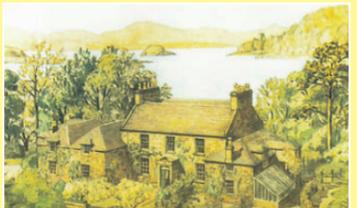
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OT

Local housing initiative works for Strathfillan

A LOCAL housing initiative in Strathfillan is helping more villagers live where their heart is.

Rural Stirling Housing Association (RSHA) said last week that of the 78 households let in Tyndrum last year, two were currently living in the village, four were from Crianlarich, two were from Killin, six were from Argyll and 10 from rural Stirling.

A further 12 were from urban Stirling, 35 from other areas of Scotland and seven from England.

Of those transfers to Tyndrum, eight were from the village, three were from Crianlarich, one from Argyll, two from rural Stirling and four from elsewhere in Scotland.

Ms Whyte said: 'Tyndrum has much more local people being housed there than most of our stock, probably because there isn't huge demand.'

Meanwhile, of those housed throughout RSHA's area in the previous year, 39 per cent were because of overcrowding, 73 had no secure accommodation and 23 per cent had a medical need to move.

Thirty six per cent came from the same village they were housed in, 40 per cent from elsewhere in rural Stirling, eight per cent from urban Stirling and 16 per cent from other parts of Scotland.

Freedom of Argyll for Provost Petrie

PROVOST William Petrie is in line to receive the Freedom of Argyll and Bute.

The decision to arrange a special meeting in April regarding the proposal was taken during Argyll and Bute Council's recent budget meeting at Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Provost Petrie was nominated for the award for his service to local government, tourism and the community, over the last 47 years.

Shoreline clean up at Otter Ferry

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help residents of Otter Ferry, near Tighnabruich, clean up debris along the Loch Fyne coastline.

The increase in the amount of rubbish follows recent storms and a mass clean-up has been organised in response.

Those interested should make their way to the Oystercatcher Restaurant on Sunday March 4.

Protective gloves and collection bags will be provided and the Oystercatcher is offering free soup and rolls to all volunteers.

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The MV Isle of Mull sustained damage to the bow visor and gangway after striking the pier at Oban last Saturday.

Quartet of bumps for CalMac fleet

AN UNFORTUNATE week for ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) saw four of their fleet suffering bumps and scrapes and passengers facing travel disruption.

As ports throughout the west coast experienced strong, blustery winds the 6,750 tonne MV Isle of Lewis, which operates on the Ullapool to Stornoway route, struck the dockside at Birkenhead, near Liverspool, where the ferry was undergoing major engine repairs.

The incident, on Friday February 9, happened as the vessel was about to return to service. It has now been returned to dry dock.

There are also reports that the 22.5 metre MV Raasay, touched rocks off Kilchoan while on route to Tobermory.

A spokesman for CalMac confirmed there was an incident. He said: 'The Tobermory ferry picked up some rocks when

she was leaving the slipway at Kilchoan. There was no damage and no impact on services.'

In a third stroke of bad luck, the MV Caledonian Isles, which links the Ayrshire port of Ardrossan with Brodick on the Isle of Arran, was caught off guard by a force nine gust of wind on Tuesday evening and collided with the sea wall at Ardrossan.

The 94 metre, 5,211 tonne vessel, which can carry 1,000 passengers and 110 cars, sustained minor damage.

A CalMac spokesman said: 'The boat was tied up while the Master waited for the wind to drop to allow her to berth, which she did about an hour later, and passengers and vehicles were able to disembark.'

'In the interest of safety the vessel has gone into dry dock for inspection and repairs.'

REPORT

by FAITH ORR

forr@obantimes.co.uk

The coastguard was informed but did not have to attend and it is not believed there were any injuries as a result of the collision.

However, the vessel was temporarily withdrawn from service and passengers were left stranded on the mainland for two nights. A relief vessel, the smaller MV Isle of Arran, which can carry 448 passengers and 76 cars, took up the run at 7am on Thursday and started to clear the backlog of passengers and vehicles.

Last Saturday afternoon the MV Isle of Mull was returning to Oban from Craignure with 177 people on board when she struck the pier in Oban while being buffeted by strong and

blustery winds. The vessel sustained damage to her bow visor and gangway but no one was injured.

However, the vessel was withdrawn from service and scheduled sailings cancelled for the rest of the day to allow damage to be assessed.

A CalMac spokesman said: 'The MV Isle of Mull came into contact with the pier in Oban as a result of being struck by a 60 knots (70 mph) gust of wind on her approach.'

'Her bow visor and the gangway were both damaged as a result. No-one was injured.'

'A detailed assessment of the damage will be carried out and once complete we will be able to establish how long repairs are likely to take.'

The MV *Herbidean Isles* has been drafted in to the Oban to Craignure crossing in the meantime.

Council awaits report on Ganavan

ARGYLL and Bute Council is preparing a report into the condition of Ganavan Sands; with the beach still looking uncharacteristically rocky.

Hundreds of tonnes of sand were washed off the beach during last December's storms, to the extent that the foundations of the old beach huts are now clearly visible.

While some sand has returned, the beach is still some way short of its golden best. It's thought the depth of the sand was around two feet before it was washed away.

Resurfacing the beach with brought in sand, which requires a licence, would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds.

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'A full report is being prepared on Ganavan Sands and will be ready next month.'

Speaking in January, Oban councillor and the council's tourism spokesperson Neil MacKay said: 'We have to look at every option we have to rectify it. Really, the decision is whether we take action or wait for nature to take its course.'

'We will do what we can with what resources are available to us.'

New Look robber remanded in custody

A MAN who broke into the New Look store on Oban's George Street has been remanded in custody until March 19 to await criminal justice reports.

Michael Gowans, 49, appeared at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday and pled guilty to breaking into the clothes store just after 7am on January 30.

Gowans, whose address was given in court as c/o Balmoral Hotel, Oban, was caught on CCTV in the shop and had made no effort to hide his face. He tried to flee when police officers showed up with the store key holder.

Defence agent Gordon Seaton described his clients actions as a moment of madness but admitted his record had been notable until 2002. Thereafter he has 'generally been of reasonably good conduct', said Mr Seaton.

Repair work starts on Oban flat roof

WORK has begun to repair damage to an Oban man's flat which he claimed was caused by 'cowboy' builders.

Upon moving into the property at Colonsay Terrace, Soroba, roofing contractor Peter Laird found part of his roof was missing.

A period of sustained rainfall had caused severe water damage to the living room ceiling and the only heat to the flat was provided by a solitary storage heater.

Peter, whose story was featured in *The Oban Times* on February 9, said he hoped Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) would 'stick to their word'.

Alastair MacGregor, chief executive of ACHA, confirmed no evidence of further water in the living room had been discovered.

Tiree hotelier plans to build swimming pool

Planning permission in place for eight traditional 'black' houses

TIREE could have a swimming pool in future years after the owner of the Lodge Hotel adjacent to the Lodge Hotel, Colin Beattie, most well known as owner of Oran Mor in Glasgow, spoke to *The Oban Times* last week to confirm the Gott Bay-based hotel will reopen for 2012's tourist season, regardless of whether or not new lease holders can be found.

Just as important, he said, was his future vision for the island, which includes building a swimming pool at the hotel and developing eight new 'black' houses.

Planning permission for the houses is already in place, but discussion about developing a swimming pool continues.

He said: 'I've been in correspondence with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to maybe build a swimming pool adjacent to the Lodge Hotel.'

'Designers tell me that the technical requirements of the pool can only be met at Gott Bay. I'm very much interested in doing it.'

'A curious thing about the island is a lot of the people there don't know how to swim. A pool could help address that.'

Mr Beattie's links with Tiree extends back to his grandfather, a MacLean, who was born and raised on the island.

As such, he says he is determined to continue to support the local economy - but he has urged islanders to do the same with all Tiree's businesses to ensure their continued success.

He said: 'It is a special island

for me and I have great affection for it as I grew up there when I was growing up and so did my children.'

'Unfortunately, the previous tenant had to give up the Lodge Hotel and she gave the keys back at Christmas. We are now actively looking for a tenant for the hotel and I've got some people in Glasgow willing to go up and do a short shift in the meantime.'

'My ideal tenant would be a young couple with a background in the hotel industry.'

'But if nobody has come forward we will open it for the season. I'm hoping to visit it on March 1 and we'll see what happens. Islanders need to realise though that they have to support their local businesses. It's vital that they do that throughout the year on a small island.'

They can quickly scan a dark hillside and identify the position of any person there.

Following successful field trials earlier this year the cameras recently arrived with the team, whose members have already been using them in practice situations.

Killin team secretary Bill Rose said: 'So often we get into situations where people are looking for help but we don't know exactly where they are.'

'Sometimes they are on the other side of the hill from where they think.'

'It's quite an investment for us but the most difficult thing we have to do is find someone who doesn't know their position.'

The handheld cameras work in a similar way to ones currently

Killin Mountain Rescue Team first to use infrared camera technology

KILLIN Mountain Rescue Team has become the first in Scotland to invest in infrared cameras that can locate people lost in the dark up to two kilometres away.

The two £9,000 cameras, bought from a firm in Nottingham, work by showing up heat sources in white against a black background.

They can quickly scan a dark hillside and identify the position of any person there.

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The new infrared cameras show up heat sources in white.

used by police and military helicopters.

Until a few years ago the technology was too expensive for mountain rescue teams, but now models such as those offered by the Nottingham firm, Infrared Security Solutions, have be-

come affordable. The infrared cameras offer a considerable advance on previous search and rescue methods, Bill Rose said: 'Current line search techniques by torchlight take considerable manpower resources and a long time to cover ground. Search dogs are invaluable in such circumstances, but cannot cover all potential search areas at one time.'

'Infrared cameras will allow them to be used more effectively. They can even detect people hidden behind trees and bushes.'

The £18,000 cost of the two cameras came from donations to Killin Mountain Rescue fundraising events, matched by Callander Community Council.

A taste of Kenya comes to Oban's Corran Halls

OBAN will experience a Taste of Kenya when Fairtrade comes to the Corran Halls, Oban, on Wednesday evening, February 29.

The event is being hosted by the Oban and Lorn Fairtrade Steering Group along with The Co-operative Membership.

Liz Armstrong of The Co-operative Membership, said: 'Trade is a big global issue and we want to make it as fair as possible.'

The evening, which heralds the beginning of Fairtrade Fortnight 2012, will feature a talk by Joseph Cheruiyot, chairman of Finlay Out Growers Group and a five-minute DVD presentation.

Visitors will also be able to enjoy music by Peter Sinclair and Friends while partaking of a variety of produce from Kenya and other parts of the world, including Fairtrade teas from Kenya and other countries.

Liz pointed out the great variety of teas that would be available during the evening, adding: 'There should be one for everybody's taste.'

In addition to tea, wine from South Africa will be available, as well as an assortment of other refreshments. Entrance is free, but those interested in attending are asked to book in advance by calling 0141 304 5582.

LORN and Mid-Argyll members of the Scottish Wildlife Trust were treated to a series of videos filmed by Sealife Adventures proprietor David Ainsley.

They ranged from locations as diverse as the coast of Orkney to the reefs of Indonesia, but the underwater views came much closer to home with stunning film of diving on the Corrieveckan whirlpool.

The next presentation will be on March 15 at 7.30pm at the Marine Institute at Dunstaffnage when John Gordon will talk about 'Fishing About in the Dark!' Everyone welcome.

Wildlife Trust members' diving tour

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Oban girl on course for a life at sea with Royal Navy

ONE OF the Royal Navy's newest recruits is a former Oban High School pupil, now on course for a life at sea.

Susannah McMillan, 23, has successfully completed the first stage of her military training and attended her passing out parade last Friday.

Grandparents Anne and Ian Donn said: 'We think it is wonderful. She is a wee bit homesick but trying really hard and leading her group.'

'She is all excited about her new career but keeping her flat in Oban for when she comes home on holiday.'

Susannah's new role in the military runs in the family. Her late grandfather, David McMillan, was in the Royal Marines for seven years and Granny Margaret couldn't be prouder that she is following in his footsteps.

Susannah previously worked at Atlantis Leisure, The Print Shop and the Woodside in Oban but she hopes to make her family proud in her new role as a Trainee Medical Assistant.

She said: 'I joined the Royal Navy to have a career where I can help people, to make my family proud and to travel. I've enjoyed my training very much.'

On completion of the course Susannah will be awarded the distinctive red Geneva cross.

It's been full of ups and downs, but it's been well worth it.'

She added: 'I've made a lot of close friends during training and I can't wait to start my career in the Royal Navy.'

With the first phase of her training complete, Susannah's next port of call is the Defence Medical Services Training Group at Keogh Barracks in Aldershot. There she will undergo a 20-week course to learn first aid, environmental and preventative medicine and pharmacy.

On completion of the course Susannah will be awarded the distinctive red Geneva cross.



Susannah MacMillan from Oban has joined the Royal Navy and is currently training as a Trainee Medical Assistant at Aldershot.

Portavadie to host Argyll tourism summit

Hopes to pool resources to develop a vibrant brand identity for area

TOURISM businesses across Argyll and the Isles will gather at Portavadie Marina next week for the second annual tourism summit.

Aimed at improving the promotion of the area to new and emerging markets, it will be hosted by Argyll and Isles Tourism Ltd (AIT), a new co-operative company run by local businesses whose objective is to ensure the long-term success of the industry.

Bringing together 28 individual marketing groups under the motto 'Stronger Together', the new company hopes to pool resources to develop a vibrant brand identity for the area as a destination.

A number of expert guest speakers have been lined up to appear at the

event, including VisitScotland's chief executive Malcolm Roughhead OBE.

Workshops have also been organised for local business keen to develop their tourism strategy.

Vice chairman of Argyll and the Isles Tourism Mike Story said: 'Basically, we're going to be following up what we achieved at last year's summit and do those things people asked us to do.'

'That was to show the complete new brand for Argyll and the Isles as a tourism destination and marketing identity.'

AIT is key to that objective as an organisation able to bring together and promote coherently all the county's assets.

'There was no way maybe 50 per cent of these 28 individual groups would have been able to get to this off their own backs,' said Mike. 'This way, they're able to go and be able to meet with European and Asian travel agents and tell them why this is such a great place to visit.'

'It's actually a huge thing to market ourselves to the wider world in this way.'

'The margins you're operating in can sometimes be in inches so you have to push really hard to succeed.'

It is thought around 180 businesses are represented by the group. Up until now, AIT has been funded by private enterprise, but that will soon be complemented with equal share funding from Argyll and Bute

Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and VisitScotland. Mr Story said: 'This is just the first step.'

'The plan for the future is to create a new website which will be a PR magnet for lots of agencies and organisations. We also hope to attend at least two tourism expos this year. One is the Bird Show at Birmingham, which is huge for Argyll and Bute - particularly when you look at the figures for tourism to the area purely for the sea eagles.'

'We're looking at the Scotland Outdoors Show and the Boat Show, which is especially important when you see the growth in marine tourism. This is a huge showcase for Argyll and the Islands to make this brand really viable.'

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Lorn Lines

NEIL MacGregor, from Glasgow, was the guest judge at Oban Photographic Club's weekly meeting on Monday February 13. Neil had the difficult task of judging the many entries for the landscape/seascape competition; his comments and criticisms were constructive, helpful and enjoyed by everyone.

The results were almost a clean sweep for longstanding club member John Douglas, who had first, second and third in the prints section and first and second in the digital images class. Maurice Wilkins, from Arduaine, came third in the digital images.

John received the Gordon Sellars Trophy as well as a voucher from Oban Photographic Centre.

The next meeting of the club is on Monday, February 27 when local photo-journalist Kevin McGlynn will talk and show some of his images. February 27 is also hand-in night for the last competition of the year 'Open 2'.



Ken Oxland, president of the Rotary Club of Oban, left, welcomed Alastair MacGregor, chief executive of Argyll Community Housing Association to the club's recent meeting. Mr MacGregor gave an interesting and amusing insight into the operation of Argyll's largest housing association, with many topics and issues addressed. Rotarian Roger Parry thanked Alastair for his presentation and commented on the way that he had not avoided any contentious issues.



MORE than 200 people went along to the Corran Halls in Oban to donate blood when the NHS Donor Care Team rolled into town.

No-one - surely - enjoys having a needle stuck into their arm, but Elizabeth Kirkwood from the donor care team reported that everything had gone smoothly.

The team had travelled up by bus from Glasgow to run the event over Thursday and Friday February 9 and 10.

For previous donors the process was speeded-up, but first timers were submitted to a fairly rigorous questionnaire to check they were suitable to donate.

There were around a dozen beds in the hall and donors were asked to lie down and roll up their sleeves.

Banter with the nurses eased any nerves people might have been feeling before the needles were stuck in.

Donors were asked to wiggle their fingers to coax the blood out for the 10 minutes it took to lose the regulation pint.

After the needle was whipped out and a plaster applied it was over to the other side of the hall for juice, tea and biscuits.

The blood of all the Oban donors went down to Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow to join the national transfusion bank.

It can be used for two weeks then goes out of date. For that reason the blood donor service is a continual operation and the NHS is always renewing the call for people to donate.

Digging in for a night on Ben Nevis with *The Oban Times*

'An Eskimo can make an igloo in 20 minutes but it took us six hours!'

MANY a climber has had to dig a snowhole to survive a harsh winter's night at the summit of Ben Nevis.

But for *Oban Times* readers Piotr Wojtyla and Marek Kochmanski it was all part of the plan.

The Oban friends, natives of Poland, braved temperatures as low as -15°C as they spent the night on top of Britain's highest mountain.

Piotr explained: 'It was very cold but I am from a mountainous region of Poland, where it is currently -30°C. I have also spent the night at 21,050 feet on Peak Lennin in the Himalayas, where they can get three metres of snow a night.'

An experienced climber, Piotr insisted the pair had sufficient equipment for such a dangerous excursion, including a space 'Mylar' blanket, first aid blanket, emergency blanket, thermal blanket, weather blanket and expedition sleeping bags.

However, their overnight wasn't all straightforward. 'I had climbed Ben Nevis before,' said Piotr. 'But that was in April and I didn't realise how much snow would be at the summit.'

'Our best piece of equipment was our GPS, because the visibility couldn't have been more than eight metres.'

'We also ended up digging the snowhole with our hands after our shovel broke. An Eskimo can make an igloo in 20 - 30 minutes but it took us six hours!' Seven years ago adventurer Piotr and another companion biked across Lake Baikal, Siberia, in 17 days, becoming the first people to achieve the feat.



Piotr and Marek read their *Oban Times* before trying to sleep in their snowhole on the summit of Ben Nevis.

UHI hosts musical tasters with Gunn

WEST Highland College University of the Highlands and Islands will hold two musical taster weekends with one of Scotland's most exciting fiddle players.

Gordon Gunn is to teach at the faculty as part of a new partnership between the UHI and the National School of Excellence in Traditional Music.

The tasters will be held this weekend, February 25 and 26 and on March 10 and 11 at Plockton.

For more information, phone 01599 544706 or email jackie.macleman@whc.uhi.ac.uk

Rare Bowmore goes to auction

A RARE bottle of 40-year-old Bowmore whisky is to go on sale in Edinburgh at the beginning of March.

The malt, distilled in 1955, is bottled in a Caithness Crystal decanter and estimated to be worth £5,000 - £7,000.

Other whiskies up for auction at Bonhams' auction house on March 7 include two bottles of 50-year-old Glenfiddich and a 52-year-old Macallan.

Oban shop 'adopts' charity for 2012

THE ORIGINAL Factory Shop in Oban's Combie Street has chosen the town's Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre as its charity partner for 2012.

A programme of fundraising activity is planned, with a minimum target of £500 to be raised.

Store manager Gwen Cameron said: 'Once again, we had a lot of local causes come forward asking for our support.'

'On behalf of all of us at The Original Factory Shop, I would like to sincerely thank all the charities who applied to be our partner.'

Mull Rally brings in expert organiser

ONE OF the most respected names in Scottish Motorsport has been announced as the organiser for the Mull Rally 2012.

Iain Campbell is Rally of Scotland's Clerk of the Course and has a wealth of experience in running rallies.

Lawyer claims '90 per cent' of households use abusive language

A CAMPBELTOWN solicitor has claimed '90 per cent' of households in Scotland use abusive language towards their partners.

Christian Kane, of C and D MacTaggart, made the comments while addressing Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC at Campbeltown Sheriff Court last Wednesday.

He was defending Campbell Maguire, aged 25, of 7 New Parliament Place, who was found guilty of acting in a threatening or abusive manner at another address on September 26 last year.

The court heard Maguire had called a woman - with whom he was in a relationship at the time - a 'slut' and a 'tart', among other terms, during a

drunken argument at her home. Under examination Maguire did not deny using the words, but accepted he should not have used them. Sheriff Anderson said the terms were 'exactly what is covered by the term abusive'.

However, Mr Kane replied: 'In that case this criminalises more than 90 per cent of households in Scotland.'

Sheriff Anderson said: 'I don't know what your life experience is, but I've never been in a house where this language is used.'

Sentence on Maguire, who had earlier pleaded guilty to being in possession of 0.8g of cannabis resin, was deferred for six months to be of good behaviour and to gain employment.

Breaking into new territory

A CHANGE in ownership and large-scale investment has seen an established Argyll quarry undergo an exciting new lease of life. Barrachander Quarry's former owner, Andy Sutherland, felt it was time for the quarry to move forward and is keen to see the new business crack on under the stewardship of another successful Argyll family business. The site is now run by

Barrachander Quarry Ltd, a sister company of A & L McCrae Ltd (Contractors). Taking the helm at the new company will be Calum McCrae, son of Alistair McCrae who started his contracting business 35 years ago with just a tractor and a determination to succeed. Now his ever-expanding Mid Argyll business has broken into the quarry sector to help support his



The new crushing equipment at Barrachander Quarry.

Barrachander Quarry changes Ownership

ANDREW SUTHERLAND

CONTRACTOR AND PLANT HIRER

The Cottars, Dalmally.

I would like to thank my many clients for their loyal and valued custom over the past 42 years and especially for their support of Barrachander Quarry, which I have owned and operated for the past 32 years.

The quarry has now been sold to A & L McCrae Ltd and managed by Calum McCrae whom I hope will enjoy your continued support and business in the future.

Best wishes to Alistair, Linda and Calum for a long and prosperous future in their new venture.

roadwork contracts and help meet demand for construction projects elsewhere. The family have wasted no time in setting out their vision for the future of the quarry by investing heavily in new crushing machinery, taking the business into the 21st century. He said: 'My father's business mantra was always; 'Quality doesn't cost; it pays,' and I would like to think I would run this business the same way. 'We are a family business: my mum handles the paperwork, dad does the contracting and now I'm managing the quarry side. 'Quality of care to the customer is really important to us because our reputation is on the line if we don't deliver that to a high standard. We rely on repeat contracts. 'I want people to know that we will always be open for business from 7am - 7pm Monday to Friday and until 2pm on Saturdays and during



Former quarry owner Andy Sutherland, left, hands over the reins to Calum McCrae.

those hours someone will be here to help. 'As well as investing in new crushing machinery, we have been building up our stockpiles, so there is plenty of stone available for people to come in and see. 'I look forward to building on the great reputation Andy has established at Barrachander over the years. We, as a family, would like to thank Andy for the handover period and for introducing us to the customers.' Aggregate from Barrachander Quarry is renowned for its quality, and is traditionally suited to dyking

stone and facing stones, as well as having excellent concrete and road building properties. But it is one of the only mainland quarries in Argyll that can produce stone with a genuine high polished stone value (PSV) and is one of the only west coast quarries with seams of red rock, which means Barrachander can produce red dress chips on site. On handing over the reins to his successors, Andy Sutherland said: 'There has always been a high demand for Barrachander stone but the quarry has a lot more potential.'

BARRACHANDER QUARRY

Open from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 2pm on a Saturday.

Supplying everything from red dress chips for paths and gardens, Type 1 for roads and Armour stone for marine work.

The quarry is ideally located to serve the west coast and Argyll with a full range of quality aggregates. The trade and public are both welcome at Barrachander

For a full list of our products and quarry information please visit our new website www.barrachanderquarry.com Phone the quarry on 01866 833 355, mobile 07717 006 923

OT

Councillors urged to consider pitch switch

LOCHABER councillors have been urged to consider siting a proposed new all-weather sports pitch for Fort William in Claggan rather than at the new multi-million pound development at Blar Mhor.

Members of the public queried councillors Eddie Hunter, Bill Clark and Allan Henderson about the plans at a packed north ward forum meeting in Kilmallie Hall, Corpach, on Tuesday night.

Highland Council asked for plans for a proposed all-weather pitch situated near a new Tesco store to be included in the plans submitted by Miller Developments in 2009.

The Blar Mhor site has a covering of peat around 2.5metres deep which needs removed before any development can take place.

Miller development manager Colin Graham said that could cost as much as £200,000 per acre for the Tesco site, which would put the cost of peat clearing for the three-acre all-weather pitch site at around £600,000.

But Mr Graham also pointed out the cost to the council would be lower because the equipment and men would already be at the

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

site. Fort William FC chairman John Wattman presented the councillors with a report from sports developers AP Thomson which quoted a figure of £676,935, excluding VAT, to create a shinty-sized all-weather pitch at Claggan.

Early estimates for the pitch at Blar Mhor have put the cost at around £1.2million.

Surplus
He said: 'If the pitch goes there [Claggan] there will be a surplus of around £400,000 which could go back into the community.'

'Instead of that, we could possibly be using that money to dig out peat. Who benefits from digging out peat?'

'You've got to look at best value for the whole community, not just sport. If there's a surplus to be had, surely that goes further than just the clubs.'

'It could be used for the wider community. The clubs need somewhere to

play, but if it's going to cost an extra £1million at the Blar, why are we even putting that on the table?'

Councillor Clark said the option of placing the pitch at Claggan involved no peat removal and would therefore be cheaper.

'We are considering spending huge sums of money,' he said, 'when we maybe could have two pitches.'

'We could have an all-weather shinty-sized pitch on Claggan and an indoor training facility for the money it would take to have one project at Blar Mhor. It's a no-brainer.'

He continued: 'There's no use being blinkered about it and saying Blar Mhor or nothing, there's more to it than that. Everyone is cutting back and we are duty bound as councillors to go along the road of best value and that means watching the pennies.'

Councillor Eddie Hunter said: 'Best value is not all about money, it's also about accessibility.'

'There's no point in having a wonderful facility somewhere that's not accessible to people, even if it's going to be £200,000 or £300,000 cheaper.'



Grieg Kelly, Gregor Linfield, Samantha Runcieman and Dylan Smyth spent Tuesday in the kitchen making pancakes. 20_108pancake01

Pupils get down to business on Pancake Day

PUPILS in P5/6 at Banavie Primary School celebrated Pancake Day by making and selling pancakes to the rest of the school.

During an extended break period on Tuesday morning, pupils and teachers from the rest of the school came to the P5/6 classroom to get freshly-made pancakes, with an array

of toppings on offer including jam, strawberries, syrup, lemon sugar and cinnamon.

The scheme, part of the class maths project, saw the children split into five teams – the kitchen team, the creative ideas team, marketing and advertising, accounts and sales. Class teacher Laura Smith told *The Oban*

Times: 'They children have been running a small business. We split them into five groups and conducted a survey of what sorts of toppings people in the school would want. They've really enjoyed it and I couldn't have done it with help from the two mums, Amy Kelly and Ishbel Murray.'

Scottish Water claims December storms were 'some of the worst ever seen'

A REPRESENTATIVE from Scottish Water has said storms last December which left more than 100,000 people without water and electricity were 'some of the worst we've ever seen'.

Asset planning manager Neil Brennan gave a presentation at Highland Council's south ward forum meeting in Fort William

on Monday night to explain to local residents the scale of the problems.

Mr Brennan said a number of back up generators had to be brought into Lochaber from Inverness and Glasgow and that blocked roads had caused further delays in getting water treatment plants back working.

He said: 'Twelve treatment works in Lochaber were affected by power loss during the storms. The normal emergency response was not good enough.'

Mr Brennan also said Scottish Water planned to have more generators based in Lochaber to prepare for any future power cuts.

Duror and Kentallen Community Council chairman Jonathan Baxter praised the workmen who worked around the clock during the storms to restore power.

The meeting also heard 400 trees fell on the main electrical power line to Mallaig, all of which needed to be cleared before power could be restored.

Shinty's ruling body hits back at youth cash claims

SHINTY'S ruling body has hit back at claims more money needs to be invested in the youth side of the sport, saying it invests more than £100,000 every year.

In last week's *Oban Times*,

Kilmallie coach John Morrison said more investment was needed to stop youngsters between the ages of 12 and 16 leaving the sport.

Camanachd Association director Donald Stewart told *The Oban Times* improving youth shinty was one of its key aims over the next three years.

He said: 'The Camanachd Association invests more than £100,000 per annum. The money

goes through our development officers and comes from funding from SportScotland and a number of sponsors including Marine Harvest, Scottish Hydro electric and Royal Bank of Scotland.'

'No money comes out of the Camanachd Association coffers for the internationals - they are run on a break-even basis. They are seen as the pinnacle of our sport.'

Stornoway club reports abusive 'Tweet' to police

STORNOWAY Golf Club says it has contacted local police after someone hacked into its Twitter account and posted an offensive sectarian message.

The club claims a message left in response to a tweet from Guardian golf reporter and Celtic fan Lawrence Donegan about the plight of Rangers

Football Club was not written by anyone with a connection to the club. Rangers went into administration last week.

The post received a number of angry responses from Twitter users from across the country.

The day after it was posted, the club's Twitter page said: 'Have been to the local police to report

the abusive tweet purporting to come from our club. Appalled to be 'associated' with it. Going to look into this. Looks like someone has 'hacked' the account. Huge apologies. No to bigotry here in Stornoway too. Half the club are Celtic supporters.'

The club said its password, which has since been changed, was easy to guess for anyone who knew the local course. Mr Donegan was invited to have a free round at the club's course.

A club spokesperson said: 'This matter is under investigation. We have consulted Northern Constabulary in the context of internet sectarian crime.'

As *The Oban Times* went to press Northern Constabulary said no further details were being released about the pair until next of kin had been notified.

Driver seriously injured in four-car A82 collision

THE A82 between Fort William and Corran Ferry was closed for two-and-a-half-hours on Tuesday morning after a four-vehicle pile up which left one driver with serious injuries.

The accident happened around two miles north of Corran Ferry at 8.10am during heavy rain and involved three cars and a van.

The driver of one of the cars had to be cut free by fire rescue workers and was taken to Belford Hospital, where his injuries were deemed to be serious but not life threatening.

Another driver was taken to the hospital for treatment to minor injuries.

A Northern Constabulary spokesman said a report would be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Climber dies after falling 1,000 feet on Ben Nevis

A CLIMBER died and another suffered serious injuries on Sunday morning after falling 1,000 feet on Ben Nevis.

Other climbers alerted rescue services after screams were heard just before 11am and Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team (LMRT) and search and rescue helicopter 137 raced to Zero Gully, the site of a popular ice climb.

The pair were believed to be roped together near the summit of the mountain when they fell.

LMRT leader John Stevenson told *The Oban Times*: 'It was good climbing conditions and their gear was all good.'

'It just looks like one of them slipped and took the other with him.'

'It was just one of those unfortunate things.'

The surviving climber, who has been named as David Warden, aged 46, from Perth, was taken to Belford Hospital in Fort William but has since been transferred to Ninewells Hospital in Dundee and is described as being in a serious but stable condition.

As *The Oban Times* went to press Northern Constabulary said no further details were being released about the pair until next of kin had been notified.

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SCOTTISH COMPANY DEFEATS BANKS

THOUSANDS of people across the UK who have been mis-sold payment protection insurance (PPI) by banks could be due compensation – and YOU could be one of them!

That's where Payment Protection Advice Centre (PPAC) come in, because as previously reported, the Hamilton firm are continuing

the fight against the banks. Anyone who has taken out a loan or credit card within the last 10 years may have been sold a payment protection insurance policy – and sometimes without realising it.

Payment protection insurance – which was used to cover loan and credit card payments if the customer was out of work – is now banned

in the UK after the British Bankers' Association (BBA) lost a crucial judicial review by the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

There are an estimated 20 million mis-sold policies throughout Scotland, and to cover the outlay, Lloyds Banking Group (which includes Halifax, Bank of Scotland, Black Horse and Lloyds TSB)

have set aside £3.2billion. Working in conjunction with the Hamilton Advertiser, Payment Protection Advice Centre have had an overwhelming success rate in helping people to get their money back, and are delighted to have come to the rescue on behalf of so many of our readers.

Reader Mrs McCall recently picked up the phone to call

PPAC and has since received over £21,000. She said: 'I saw the advert in the paper and wasn't sure if it applied to me. "Since I called PPAC one of their guys came to see me at my house and I have now had a cheque. "It couldn't have come at a better time, with Christmas just around the corner!" If YOU think you have a

case then look no further than Payment Protection Advice Centre, who are situated at the newly-refurbished former gatehouse in Bothwell Road, Hamilton.

PPAC work in conjunction with Moore MacDonald Solicitors in Motherwell, giving you peace of mind with the knowledge that you're dealing with a lawyer who

specialises in this type of case. PPAC owner Andy Frame said: "We can't believe the amount of readers who have responded to the last report. "It goes to prove that all you have to do is pick up the phone. "But so many people still need to be made aware that they could be eligible to reclaim this. "Although the response

has been great there are still millions of policies to be reclaimed. "I cannot stress enough how important it is to call us to see if you are eligible." As was the case with Mrs McCall, a PPAC employee can visit your house to discuss your claim, or you could visit their office at a time that suits you.

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then chances are you have been mis-sold Payment Protection and could be due £0000's in compensation. Call us now on 01698 897655 to reclaim what is yours.

Drunk threatened nurses with chair

A DRUNK Fort William man drunkenly waved a chair at nurses in the accident and emergency department of the town's Belford Hospital.

Chef James Hosey, of 15 Argyll Terrace, was taken to the Belford at around 2.30am on January 28 after falling and bumping his head while drinking in Fort William.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court the 32-year-old was 'agitated' and began swearing at nurses before kicking a chair in an examination room. He tried to leave the hospital but was chased by nurses who were concerned he may have had concussion.

After being brought back in he picked up a chair and 'raised it above his shoulders as if he was about to throw it,' Ms Wylie said.

Police were called and arrested Hosey, who spent the night in custody. Defence solicitor Stephen Kennedy said: 'My client has absolutely no recollection of anything to do with this incident.'

Hosey pled guilty to behaving in a threatening or abusive manner by acting aggressively.

Sheriff Mungo Bovey ordered him to pay £200 compensation to each of the nurses involved and fined him £200.

Police files

THE SCREEN of the ATM at the Post Office in Kinlochleven was damaged sometime between 5.45pm on Friday February 17 and 9am on Saturday February 18.

THE WINDOW of a car parked in Grange Road, Fort William, was smashed sometime between 4pm on Tuesday February 14 and 9am on Wednesday February 15.

A TRAFFIC monitoring box attached to a post in a lay-by on the A830 Road to the Isles at Camus Dri Seach near Lochailort was removed sometime between 3pm on Saturday February 11 and 2.45pm on Tuesday February 14.

Anyone with any knowledge of these incidents is asked to contact Fort William Police Station on 01397 702361, the confidential line on 01397 702000 or independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Lotto jackpot rises to £300

THERE were no winners in the Fort William FC lotto draw on Saturday. Numbers were 2-17-18. The jackpot goes up to £300 this week.



Donations: Calum and his crew hand over the cheques to the charities.

Generous boatman donates £2,500 to charity

A GENEROUS Plockton boatman has donated nearly £2,500 to three charities from money raised taking tourists to see seals last summer.

Calum Mackenzie provides the seal trips in his boat *Sula Mhor*, and has recently been

helping traffic get between South Strone and North Strone while the A890 is closed at Stroneferry.

Tips

He raised the money through tips from the tourists, and split the money evenly between

the three charities - donating £805.54 to Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care and the Highland Hospice.

Local councillor Audrey Sinclair thanked Calum and his crew on behalf of the three organisations.

Unacceptable hospital behaviour costs man £400

A CAOL man who charged through accident and emergency at the Belford Hospital in a wheelchair on New Year's Day demanding an x-ray has been fined £200 and ordered to pay £200 compensation to each of the two nurses involved.

Robert Lawrie, of 22 Glenpane Street, was taken to the hospital in the afternoon complaining of soreness in his ribs and back.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court Lawrie was 'intoxicated' and was placed in a wheelchair in the waiting area.

She said: 'He started shouting and swearing and demanding an x-ray, but he couldn't say where he was hurt. He self-propelled himself around the department on the wheelchair.'

'The nurses were dealing with other patients and more than one had to stop

and see to him.' Lawrie continued causing a disturbance for 30 minutes before police arrived and arrested him.

The 48-year-old pled guilty to causing a disturbance and assaulting, obstructing or hindering the two nurses by shouting and swearing.

Sentencing, Sheriff Mungo Bovey QC said: 'This was quite unacceptable behaviour towards medical staff.'

Caol man admits hitting neighbour's door with axe

A CLAGGAN man has admitted attacking his neighbour's front door with an axe on Hogmanay.

Police were called out after a neighbour of Steven Stewart reported hearing 'chopping noises' at around 3am.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie said officers found Stewart, aged 35, outside 8 The Corries holding an axe and saw several marks on the door and wall.

Ms Wylie said: 'The officers asked him why he had an axe and he replied 'I was just trying to get him.'

Defence solicitor Hamish Melrose told Fort William Sheriff Court the two men had 'exchanged words' a few weeks before the incident.

He said: 'This particular evening Mr Stewart was out on

his own drinking and brooding about the words previously exchanged. For some reason he took it into his head to go and do this.'

The neighbour was not in the flat during the incident.

Damage

Stewart, of 4 The Corries, pled guilty to wilfully or recklessly damaging or destroying the property of another by using an axe to strike and damage the door and surrounding wall.

He also admitted having an offensive weapon in a public place.

Sheriff Mungo Bovey ordered Stewart to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work and told him to save for a future compensation order when the case is recalled in three months.

Isle of Lewis remembers the role of Sandwickhill School in community

A TEA and coffee evening to mark the closing of Sandwickhill School, Isle of Lewis, will be held next Wednesday.

The event will be the first in a series of events to celebrate the school, with all members of the local community invited. The evening starts at 7.30pm and will finish at 9pm.

A small exhibition of school photographs will be on display and the school is keen to find more examples of photographs, report cards, records or other old

school memorabilia which can be copied and returned to their owners.

These will form the basis of an exhibition and publication to be produced as a memorial to the school's history.

Head teacher Calum Maclean said: 'This is the start of a series of events to celebrate the school and the role it has played in the local community.'

'We're keen to uncover more about the school's history from former pupils and staff.'

Oban bands take the stage at Lochaber event

LOCHABER Pipe Band has announced the line up for its popular annual fundraising ceilidh and dance, with two Oban bands topping the bill.

Oban and Oban High School pipe bands will both be performing at the event in the West End Hotel, Fort William, on Saturday March 17.

Oban High School, led by renowned piper Angus MacColl, has enjoyed considerable success since its formation in 2005 and in 2010 was named Juvenile World Pipe Band Champions.

Oban Pipe Band, led by Pipe Major Euan Dewar, were crowned Scottish and World Pipe Band Champions in Grade 3A last year and have gained promotion to Grade 2 for 2012.

Also performing on the night will be Eriskay Lilt, and Lochaber Pipe Band and its junior section will also provide entertainment throughout the night.

Nevis Highland Dancing Association will provide a display of Highland dancing.

Any piper or drummer interested in joining the band, as well as parents of children who would like to learn an instrument, are welcome to come along to one of its practice nights held in Caol Primary School at 6.30pm every Thursday.

Society hosts four speakers

LOCHABER Historical Society (LHS) will hear from four different speakers at a bumper monthly meeting next Thursday.

Roddy Mainland will give the first of the '10 minute talks' about strange coastal discoveries he has made on Skye called 'Mark of the Viking'.

Local man Colin Neilson will then speak about his early days in Fort William, before Ken Johnston will talk LHS along the road from Corran to Fort William. The final speaker of the evening will be Ian Abernethy who will give an update on the latest from the Friends of the Old Fort group. Anyone interested is welcome to attend the meeting, which will be held in the Alexandra Hotel from 8pm.

Unanimous call to keep Mallaig ferry

RESIDENTS and business leaders from across west Lochaber packed out the Fisherman's Mission in Mallaig on Monday night to make clear their opposition to any suggestions of a downgrade to the Mallaig to Armadale ferry service.

The Scottish Government is gathering views of people in the west Highlands about how best to deliver ferry services in the area, with the consultation running until the end of March. The government has already announced plans to extend Road Equivalent Tariffs across the Western Isles, but suggestions of removing subsidies from the Mallaig to Skye ferry have not proved popular with the local community.

The meeting to discuss the Scottish ferries draft plan consultation was chaired by Mallaig Community Council chairman Martin Sullivan.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It was a really positive meeting. There were more than 100 people

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

there and there was some really powerful arguments made. The Mallaig to Armadale link feeds right down the west coast. People touring the west coast want to go back down the way they came.'

'Everybody at the meeting undertook to write to the ferries review expressing their concerns.'

Mr Sullivan said there were also plans to set up an online petition.

Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson was present in the hall and will present the views of the public to Scottish Government Minister Alex Neil in a meeting today (Thursday).

Local councillors Allan Henderson, Eddie Hunter and Bill Clark attended the meeting, and Provost Henderson said: 'Mr Thompson was given a clear message that a reduction in the current service is not an option. In

fact the opposite is true as many members present expressed how vital the ferry service is to their business and were clear how the ferry attracted business to the fragile areas.

'I am incredulous that the Scottish Government was not intending to capitalise on its £23 million investment improving the A830.'

'Joined up thinking would surely not allow a diminution of services.'

Councillor Clark added: 'The views were unanimous, 100 per cent. I'm optimistic the Scottish Government will take on board the residents' views. They've got to listen to the people of Mallaig and elsewhere that will be affected.'

The meeting also gave its support for a potential Mallaig to Lochboisdale ferry link. A show of hands at the end of the meeting showed unanimous support. A similar meeting on the consultations will be held in South Uist on Friday night.

Health minister meets residents for nurse talks

WEST Ardnamurchan residents flocked to Edinburgh yesterday (Wednesday) for final talks on out-of-hours nursing care for the area.

Two district nurses have served the peninsula with round the clock care for a number of years. One of the nurses, Jessie Colquhoun, retired on Monday, and health bosses have hired a replacement nurse who will join a West Lochaber team, serving an area from Mallaig to Strontian. Locals have been in talks with NHS Highland and Scottish Ambulance Service for the past 14 months about how the service will be provided in

future, but have yet to come to an agreement to satisfy all parties.

Of the bus load of people who travelled to Edinburgh to make their feelings known, four West Ardnamurchan Community Council representatives met with Cabinet Secretary Nicola Sturgeon at Holyrood yesterday. Ms Colquhoun also took part in the talks.

WACC chairman Rosie Curtis said: 'We feel that we are representing not only West Ardnamurchan but also the many other small communities along the west coast of Scotland who are facing changes in medical

provision. Since Monday, there has been no 999 cover for medical emergencies within an hour of us. Throughout this we've had tremendous support from our local MSPs, and particularly from Mary Scanlon, who arranged the meeting with the Minister.'

'They have understood that the loss of nursing services will impact on the future of our community: if we can't sort this, people will leave, businesses will leave, tourists will stay away, and the place will die.'

For a full report on the Holyrood meeting, see next week's *Oban Times*.

Newsdesk 01631 568000



Guest artistes at Meur Lochaber's Isle of Skye Ceilidh.

Packed house for Isle of Skye ceilidh

THE WEST End Hotel in Fort William was packed out on Saturday night for Meur Lochaber's Isle of Skye Ceilidh.

Visitors from as far as Aberdeenshire, the Borders and the Black Isle came to perform and enjoy the music and songs on the night.

Donald Fletcher from Skye was fear a tigher for the evening and introduced songs from artists including Calum Ross, Catriona Fair of south Argyll and former Sabhal Mòr Ostaig pupils Tear-

lach Quinnell and Emma Leitch. Young Brighde Campbell from Skye gave a rousing selection of tunes on the pipes, which proved very popular with the audience. Brothers Robert and Allan Nairn were the band for the ceilidh.

Unfortunately bad weather conditions prevented some of the planned guest singers from Skye making the journey on the night. Convenor Charlie MacColl was grateful to those who made it and helped make a success of the evening.

Caol man guilty of assault

A CAOL man has been ordered to pay his victim £200 compensation after admitting punching a man on the face during a house party.

David McKellor, of 19 St John's Road, got into an argument with the man after finding him asleep in a room at 6 Crown Cottages, Banavie that McKellor was planning to share with his girlfriend.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the 31-year-old woke the man and the pair got into a pushing match before McKellor punched him, knocking him to the ground. Other partygoers split up the fight and the victim was later taken to Belford Hospital with substantial bruising and swelling to the right side of his face.

McKellor, who was also fined £300, pled guilty to assaulting the man by repeatedly punching him on the face and head to his injury on August 14.

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COLONSAY

KILCHATTAN Primary School was closed last Wednesday afternoon following a power cut.

The Colonsay school reopened the following day with no further problems following a repair on Wednesday evening.

LISMORE

A WELL-ATTENDED community council meeting on Saturday February 11 chaired by Dr Amanda Curry looked at the Scottish Government's ferry proposals which are to be responded to by March 30.

The document states 'the most appropriate option would be to replace the two existing services with a single passenger and vehicle service. Replacing two services, neither of which quite provides the required service profile, with a single service that does, is therefore our preferred way forward. The comparatively short crossing time between Port Appin and Point would make this route the most appropriate location for the new service.'

This conclusion follows the findings from the STAG appraisal conducted by Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited. Lorna Spencer from CMAL gave an overview of the events leading up to the current proposals and took questions as did Councillors Duncan MacIntyre and Neil MacKay as well as Robert Pollock, Head of Economic Development at Argyll and Bute Council.

All the speakers said they wished to hear islanders' reactions as they too had to respond to the proposals and their response would be influenced by what they heard. Several islanders had concerns about affordability, frequency and how linked bus services would work, which the proposals do not cover, and the advice was that the community council should take the initiative and press for the details it wants, not just for the next few years but for the following generations.

MARIE Campbell and the musicians from her latest Lismore Fiddle Retreat, along with many locals, recently gathered for a candlelit ceilidh in the hall.

The music was wide ranging and entertaining and the joy of listening to a great many talented people jamming, singing and playing solo their own or others compositions was a treat.

LOCHCARRON

ENGINEERS updated Lochcarron residents on work to partially re-open the A890 at Stromeferry at a public meeting in the village hall last Tuesday night.

Specialist contractors TRAC Engineering Ltd said it was hoped to get traffic flowing again from next Monday, 10 days later than originally planned.

Extra work to stabilise the rock face, clear loose rocks and install safety netting was needed, TRAC said.

When the road re-opens, a 10mph traffic convoy system will be in place between 7am and 7pm, with delays of around 30 minutes expected. The road will be closed overnight. A landslide closed the road on December 22.

TAYNUILT

TAYNUILT Golf Club is to officially open its new clubhouse on Saturday March 24.

The building is the result of a year-and-a-half's hard work carried out by club members who volunteered their services to build it.

Club secretary Jeremy Church said: 'It's a great achievement by everyone involved.'

SKYE

THE SKYE and Lochalsh branch of the Scottish National Party has reported a 20 per cent jump in membership in the first six weeks of 2012.

Political education officer Ian Blackford, from Glendale, put the increase down to the emerging independence campaign ahead of the referendum planned for 2014.

ISLAY

BOWMORE schools currently have a biomass project underway, which is designed to contribute towards Argyll and Bute Council's target of reducing carbon emissions by 20 per cent by March 2014.

The project includes the installation of a woodchip biomass boiler, using renewable resources to heat both Islay High School and Bowmore Primary School.

The project, costing around £450,000 will replace the schools' existing oil fired boilers at Islay High School and an old electric boiler at Bowmore primary, and deliver



Feis Ile children with the five accordions from the appeal, including the one from Black Diamond in the centre.

Twitter brings new boxes to Islay kids

ISLAY children have Twitter to thank for five new accordions winging their way to the island on the back of an internet appeal.

The boxes came in time for Feis Ile's 65 kids to get their hands on them at a practice session last Wednesday.

With no money to buy instruments, Feisan nan Gaidheal Development Officer Christine MacIntyre posted this Tweet on January 19: 'Urgent: does anyone have any old accordions, smallish, they don't want. Kids in Islay desperately need six. DM me with info.

Thanks,' Christine said the tweet was more in hope than expectation, but within hours the baton had been picked up by her Twitter followers.

'Armin, who does the Islay blog, re-tweeted it and later on so did Mike Russell, MSP. People just tweeted it round their contacts and it grew and grew.'

It wasn't long before the accordion offers started to come in and within a week five instruments had been donated. Three were from within Argyll and one was from Glasgow, but it was the origin of the fifth that

really raised eyebrows. Black Diamond Accordions are based on Mersea - the easternmost island in the United Kingdom lying just off the coast of Essex.

Co-owner of the husband and wife firm, Juliet Doyle, explained how Christine's appeal had captured her attention: 'I was just looking on Twitter at anything to do with accordions.'

'When I came across Christine's message I retweeted it. Then I suddenly thought we had this warehouse of unloved accordions.'

Soon a new Black Diamond

box was sent on a long journey by road and sea to join the others converging on Islay.

Juliet Doyle confirmed she and her husband hope to visit Feis Ile later in the spring.

A delighted Christine said the sixth accordion could be on its way as she has been in touch with another music company.

And the number could be doubled if Feisan nan Gaidheal can find the money to take advantage of an excellent discount offered on six second hand accordions by another company, this time from Thurso.

in touch with coastguards as they approached the location and the couple were escorted back to their car without incident.

Kilchoan coastguard Rosie Curtis told the Oban Times: 'They didn't realise what the time was and they had no torch. The Salen team got them and walked them out. It was a good ending.'

ARDNAMURCHAN

GROWERS in West Ardnarmurchan are to set up a community interest company (CIC) to market and sell their own produce.

West Ardnarmurchan Community Garden has until now been a voluntary association, but was unable to undertake commercial activities because of conditions attached to a Climate Challenge Fund grant.

At a meeting earlier this month, members agreed to establish West Ardnarmurchan Produce as their CIC. The community garden will operate as usual.

The new organisation will be able to make cash from fruit and vegetable sales while still being able to apply for most grants available to charities.

Meanwhile, work is underway to replace the polytunnel destroyed in December's storms with a more robust model.

JURA

THE JURA ferry, the Eileen Dhura, has gone into dry dock for its annual re-fit.

The vessel left the Sound of Islay on Saturday and the Margaret Sinclair provided to ASP Ships Management, which runs the service, said it hoped the Eileen Dhura would be back on the run 'as soon as possible'.

KILMORE

KILMORE'S 100 Club winner of £100 was L Griffin.

GREAT GLEN

CABINET Secretary for Justice Kenny MacAskill was in the Great Glen last Wednesday to see offenders taking part in a major clean up operation around the Caledonian Canal.

The workers cleaned up litter and cut back vegetation between Tomnahurich and Dochgarroch for the benefit of the local community.

Mr MacAskill said: 'We should be using these low-level offenders as a resource to make improvements to local communities instead of giving them free bed and board in prison.'

BARRA

PLANS have been submitted for a new, three bedroom house with study on former crofting land near Castlebay.

The application from Mrs M Galbraith, of 3 Leanish, Castlebay, would see the bungalow built near Upper Borve. A new access would be created for the 1,200m² site, which will be fenced in.

Two new parking spaces will be created as a result, walls will be finished in a white wet dash and windows will be white uPVC.

ACHARACLE

TWO ADULTS were led out safely from a remote Lochaber beach last Wednesday night after becoming disoriented as darkness fell.

Clyde Coastguard tasked Salen, Kilchoan and Mallaig coastguard teams to find the family on the Singing Sands near Acharacle after Fort William Police received a call for help late in the afternoon.

The woman was able to keep

CRANLARICH

STIRLING Council is to meet again at the earliest opportunity after last week's budget meeting failed to reach conclusion.

There was broad disagreement about the way forward for the administration and chairman of the meeting, Provost Fergus Wood, announced no progress could be made on the day.

The authority is obliged to reach agreement for the 2012/13 financial year by Sunday March 11.

ISLAY LETTER



Left to right: David MacArthur, mechanic; Dave Protherough of Re-JIG and David MacLellan, coxswain. Photo by Mark Unsworth Islay Studios.

Lifeboat presentation

RE-JIG, the island's recycling organisation, has presented a £670 cheque to the local lifeboat station at Port Askaig.

The money was raised at a raffle organised by Re-JIG personnel as part of the RNLI's SOS national fundraising day in January. It will be used to help buy new life jackets for the lifeboat crew.

Receiving their cheque and sporting their latest acquisitions were lifeboat coxswain David MacLellan and mechanic David MacArthur. The presentation was made by Re-JIG director Dave Protherough.

The cheque was handed over at the official opening of the company's new retail outlet at Shore Street, Bowmore.

Burns Supper

FÈIS Ile's annual tribute to our National Bard lived up to expectation with everyone praising the quality of the homely fare, speeches and entertainment on offer.

Former Fèis chairperson Diane Brown compered the evening in the Lagavulin Distillery Malt Mill and the main toast of the evening was ably handled by Florence Grey, current head of the festival committee.

The haggis was piped in by James Carmichael and robustly addressed by local contractor Iain MacPherson. The Rev Jim MacNulty, pastor of the island's Baptist

churches, offered the Selkirk Grace and all did justice to the traditional supper prepared and served by Anne Newman and her staff from Port Ellen's Cyber Bistro.

Local farmer John Findlay Junior attended to the Toast to the Lassie with exceedingly good humour and this brought a swift response on the fairer sex's behalf from Maureen MacDonald, the recently appointed head teacher at Port Ellen Primary School.

Burns' songs were included in the selection sung by Patricia Brown and her father-in-law Alec and this vein was continued in the lively fiddle selections provided by Neil Oliver.

This supper would not be complete without a rendition of 'Tam o' Shanter' from Dorothy Carmichael and on this occasion she greatly enhanced her already established reputation for dancing witches and warlocks.

Hotel award

FOR THE third year in succession Bowmore's Harbour Inn and Restaurant has received the Gold Star award from VisitScotland.

This award recognises businesses offering exceptional levels of hospitality and customer service and recommends the hotel as one of the 'best places to stay' in Scotland.

The hotel has recently undergone a comprehensive refurbishment of its Schooner Bar and guest bedrooms and this will enhance its reputation.

Mine hosts Neil and Carol Scott will now concentrate on other aspects of the establishment while they son James and his fiancé Sian will be responsible for the day to day management of the hotel.

Robert Forrest

THE WHOLE of Gaeldom has been greatly shocked and saddened by the tragic death of Bowmore resident and Mòd gold medallist Robert Forrest.

He was 75 years of age and won his gold medal at the National Mòd in Inverness in 1984.

I will be paying a full tribute to Robert, as lifelong friend, in a future letter.

Meanwhile, everyone sends sincere condolences to his widow Belle during these trying days.

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810658.

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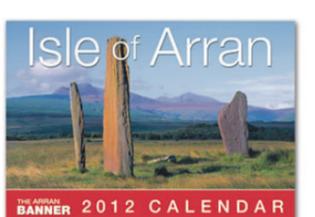
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Oban bridge may be replaced

SOROBA Lane, Oban, could have a new bridge for 2013. Argyll and Bute Council is currently surveying the existing bridge near the centre of the town which has had a makeshift parapet in place since May last year.

As part of investigations, drilling work has been carried out to establish the conditions on either side of the existing bridge, which is currently only to be used by pedestrians and public transport.

A spokesperson for the authority said: 'The bridge is programmed to be replaced within the next financial year as part of the council's bridge strengthening programme.'

'The design will be undertaken as soon as the results of the site investigation are known, with the view to issuing a tender for construction in Autumn 2012.'

Teacher accepts religious role with Argyll and Bute

KINTYRE teacher William Crossan has been confirmed as the Church of Scotland's representative on the executive committee of Argyll and Bute Council.

The former Campbelltown Grammar School head teacher's new position was confirmed at last Thursday's budget meeting following William Dalby, of Dunoon's resignation. Mr Crossan said: 'I'm very pleased and honoured to be asked by the Presbytery of Argyll to be its representative.'

'I look forward to being able to combine my knowledge in education with my church experience in filling this role.'

Weather strands visitors on Mull

VISITORS stranded on Mull after the last sailing of the day to Oban was cancelled have called for ferry company Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) to provide transport to Tobermory for those without accommodation - but the company says it is not liable for disruption as a result of bad weather.

A spokesman said: 'It is not policy to provide accommodation for disruptions due to bad weather, but we will consider reimbursing reasonable costs for disruptions due to technical breakdowns.'

Isle of Kerrera - the island government forgot

WALKING along Oban's esplanade, it's hard not to find your eye drawn across to the island which protects the bay.

Tantalisingly near, yet at the same time removed and mysterious, the Isle of Kerrera has a curious effect on the psychology of the town: an ever-present reminder there is always another level of detachment to be found.

The only way onto Kerrera is by boat. Unless you own one, that means a ride with ferryman Duncan MacEachen, who has been running his vessel as a ferryboat to the island for the past 17 years. He must have shipped thousands of passengers on *Gylen Lady*, across the 550-metre stretch of water from Gallanach, two miles south of Oban, onto Kerrera.

It's a business that can reap rewards in the summer, when plenty of tourists are keen to make the short trip. But during winter times are harder, as apart from islanders the number of people wanting to cross is limited.

One of the problems faced by Duncan - and the island as a whole - is Kerrera's anomalous position among Scottish islands. He believes it is viewed by the Scottish government as not requiring help with running a ferry service, a position he sees as confirmed by the recent Ferries Review.

'The review is proposing that the ferry is sufficient for the community's needs. They don't have a plan for Kerrera,' mused Duncan.

Like many on the south side of the island, Duncan MacEachen is a tenant of Dunollie Estate. The estate factor Mike Robertson has been among those trying to rally support for a concerted opposition to the Ferries Review.

'Duncan and myself went to several meetings in Edinburgh to put Kerrera's case, but with no success,' he said.

'Now the entire island is united in saying that if we don't become part of the national ferries system now - then we never will.'

Mr Robertson compares



The island's ferry boat *Gylen Lady* provides a vital link across the Sound of Kerrera to the mainland. 15_108kerrera1



Ferryman Duncan MacEachen.

Kerrera's treatment with that of another island with a similar population. Muck, he says, received funding for a new pier and jetty, while also benefiting from the subsidised Caledonian MacBrayne ferry service.

He says his employer, Dunollie Estate, does invest money to maintain the island's limited

services, including the ferry, but the enterprise is not profitable. Dunollie, the estate of the Clan MacDougall, own most of the south end of the island including the most famous monument on Kerrera, Gylen Castle, now an atmospheric ruin, was built in 1582 as a seat of the clan. It's a major draw for summer tourists who often walk there from the ferry's drop-off point. The castle has been a ruin since a Covenanting army laid siege and burnt it to the ground in 1647, making the MacDougall chiefs' habitation on Kerrera unexpectedly short-lived.

Today's islanders may not face the risk of siege and arson from religious warriors, but they are engaged in a constant battle to cope with huge infrastructure and communication challenges. It's testament to the fortitude of Kerrera's 40 or so residents that they manage to keep a thriving community going in spite of

the obstacles. Susan Marshall, originally from Oban, moved across the water three years ago to work at the tea garden on the south side of the island. After the previous managers moved on, she took over the tenancy. When asked about the challenges of running a business on Kerrera, she admits it isn't for the faint-hearted.

'Everything has to come from Oban and you've got to get all the supplies across in the ferry then load it into the car and drive along the track, stopping every hundred yards or so to open another gate.'

Time warp

'It's a lovely island but it feels like it's stuck in a time warp - 50 or 100 years behind the rest of the world.'

Like many islanders, Susan feels the Scottish Government's Ferries Review is another example of Kerrera being short-changed in the allocation of

funding and investment. Farmer Billy McPherson is another islander who believes Argyll and Bute Council, as well as the national government, should be doing much more to sustain life on the island. His farm is at Ardentrive on the north side of Kerrera, and to take cattle across the water, or bring back vital supplies, he first has to reach Duncan MacEachen's ferry on the south side - not an easy task when sections of the only track linking north and south have deteriorated into swamplike conditions. Then, he says, there's the cost factor associated with carrying heavy loads such as livestock across on the ferry.

'We have to hire the ferry at £120 plus VAT,' he said.

'Maybe it's time the council bigwigs visited the island and saw for themselves the state of this vital link.'

If anyone was in doubt about the urgency of Kerrera's need for

better infrastructure, a dramatic incident reported in last week's *Oban Times* served as a timely reminder.

Retired island farmer Donald MacGregor was driving down one of the rough tracks at about 9pm when his car overturned and plunged down a steep slope, leaving him lying in the darkness, seriously injured. His dog, 'Zulu', ran to nearby Slatierich Farm where Donald's daughter, Sheila MacGregor, lives with her husband. Sheila went out on a quad bike and managed to find her father after hearing his shouts, but without mobile phone reception she had to leave him again to alert neighbours and emergency services. Having been told a rescue helicopter would be delayed in taking off from Prestwick, Sheila decided time was of the essence. Helped by her husband Corrie Louw and other neighbours, she managed to get her father onto the quad and took him to the ferry slip on the south side of the island.

By then ferryman Duncan MacEachen was standing by, but time was running out before the tide dropped too far for a vehicle to get on board. In the end it was

only by a matter of minutes that Donald was able to make the crossing, potentially saving him from paralysing injury or worse.

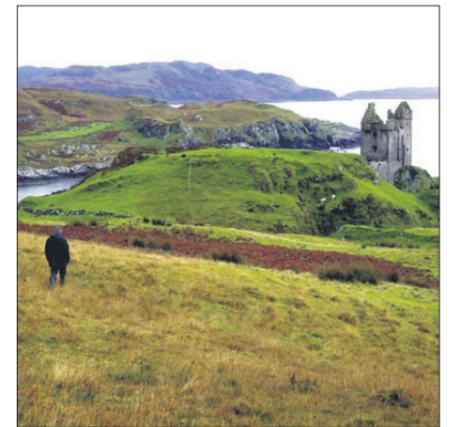
On his arrival at the hospital in Oban, doctors found he had sustained a punctured lung, fractured vertebrae and broken ribs. While her father remains in hospital, Sheila says she's confident he will be on the mend soon. But relief that things turned out better than they might have done is tempered by a frustration she shares with many on the island.

'The roads are awful and the council doesn't help very much. If I'd been 20 minutes later my dad wouldn't have been able to get off the island,' she said.

The incident seems to sum up been told a rescue helicopter would be delayed in taking off from Prestwick, Sheila decided time was of the essence. Helped by her husband Corrie Louw and other neighbours, she managed to get her father onto the quad and took him to the ferry slip on the south side of the island.

While their lives are made harder by a lack of access to the most basic services, their continued ability to overcome the odds allows the council and the government to claim they don't need further funding.

As long as the islanders appear able to cope, even if only just, Kerrera's anomalous position may be allowed to continue.



Gylen Castle guards the south shore of Kerrera. It was built by the MacDougalls in 1582 but burnt down only 65 years later.

ADVERTISEMENT

OPEN LETTER FROM RORY YOUNG

Dear Residents of Seil, Luing and Kilniver & Kilmelford.
West Coast Renewables has submitted an application to Argyll and Bute Council for permission to build a nine turbine wind farm on the land above Loch Seil, to be known as Clachan Wind Farm.

I am writing to you to outline the local and wider benefits the wind farm would bring and to address some inaccurate statements that have been circulated.

At a local level, these are some of the benefits:

- A community fund for local residents either as a direct share of the wind farm revenue or community ownership of one of the turbines. Either way the value to the local community would be around £2 million (or more) over the 25 year life of the project. Both these options will be guaranteed by legal documentation and it will be local residents who will decide how the funds are used.

- Examples of how community funding from other projects has been used include:
- Travel/educational grants for students
 - Energy efficiency improvements in homes and community buildings
 - Repairs/improvements to community buildings
 - Maintaining local services
 - Funding for local societies or social groups
 - Funding for local sports groups and their facilities

- On the basis of reliable research, the wind farm will provide a boost to the local economy (in wages, supplies and contracts) of about £8 million pounds over its lifetime.
- There is also the possibility for the Clachan wind farm to supply electricity direct to local residents at subsidised rates.

On a wider level the wind farm will generate sufficient renewable energy annually to power over 4,500 homes and save nearly 13,000 tonnes of CO2*, a valuable contribution in our collective attempts to tackle climate change.

Finally you may have received a leaflet that has recently been distributed which contains a number of inaccurate/misleading statements. I have requested that it should be withdrawn - or at least changed - and I am waiting for a response from those responsible for it.

In the meantime, if anything in the leaflet causes you concern I would be pleased to provide clarification. In particular I would like to draw your attention to the official 'photomontage' below which is an authentic planning representation of what the wind farm will look like from the given viewpoint: the Tigh-an-Truish pub next to Clachan Bridge.

I hope I have managed to convey some of the exciting and positive opportunities that the Clachan Wind Farm offers everyone and which have prompted me to commend it to you as a project that merits support on a local, regional, and national basis.

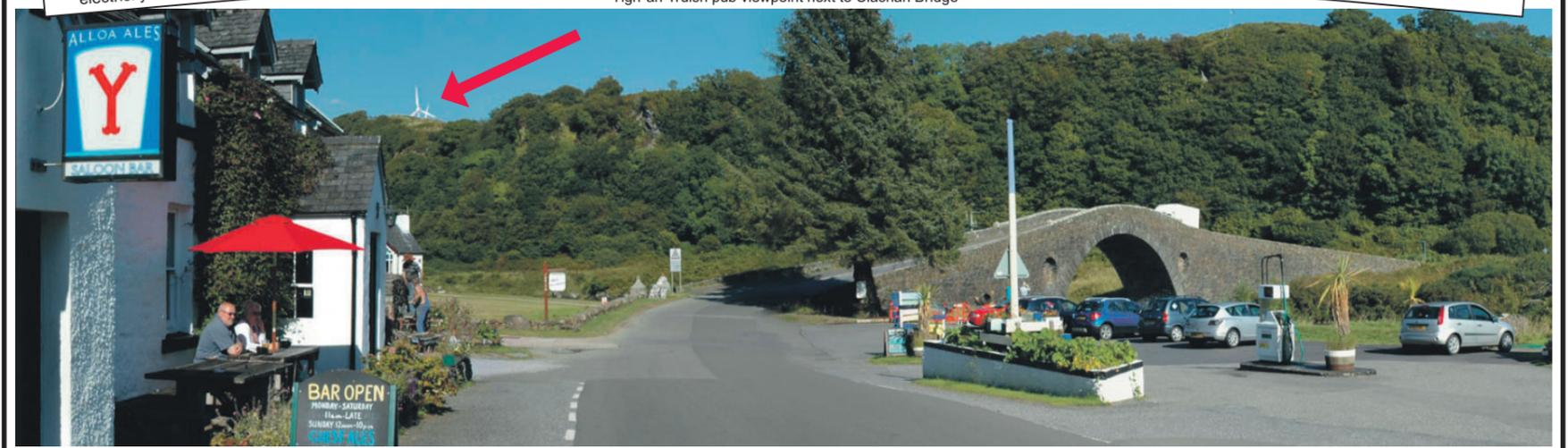
Further information can be found on our website at www.westcoastrenewables.com together with a contact form.

The planning application number is 11/02447/PP and representations can be made to the Argyll and Bute Council planning department, or you can use a simple and quick 'Support Clachan Wind Farm' facility at www.yes2wind.com (use Clachan link).

Yours sincerely,
Rory Young (West Coast Renewables)

* based on information provided in the planning documentation and assuming an average household annual usage of 4,700 kWh

Authentic planning representation of the wind farm from Tigh-an-Truish pub viewpoint next to Clachan Bridge



Keep signing up to improve A83

Sir, Argyll First is delighted the Scottish Government has recognised all the issues raised in our ongoing petition 'Sign for the A83'.

It is even more important than ever that we keep the pressure on the Scottish Government to deliver a firm plan of action.

This news should encourage any member of the public who has not signed the petition to do so. We expect to present the petition to the Scottish Government in March. In the meantime we thank everyone who has taken the time to sign the petition so far.

Councillors Donald Kelly, Douglas Philand and John McAlpine.

Road study welcomed

Sir, Argyll First welcomes the announcement of the A83 study by the Transport Minister Keith Brown.

We are pleased Mr Brown recognises three areas of concern highlighted by our campaign, namely the Rest and Be Thankful, the various pinch points on the road between Lochgilphead and Tarbert and the safety concerns in Ardrishaig and Tarbert.

The significance and strategic importance of the A83 cannot be underestimated, none more so than the trunking of the road between Campbeltown and Kennacraig, which should also be included in the study.

It is vital we continue to campaign and stress to everyone this might be a one-off opportunity to make a difference. The communities of Argyll and Bute are united behind 'The Sign for the A83' campaign.

If you have not signed the petition, we urge you to stand with us and sign either the hardcopy or the e-petition. **Councillor Donald Kelly, Argyll First, Time for Change.**

Why are we building wind turbines?

Sir, Would you be too pleased to know you are paying off a loan that is being used to build a new car factory costing billions and

billions of pounds, where more than 60 per cent of your money is going out of this country into the hands of foreign industry and thus providing incomes for their suppliers, their workers and investors?

Would you be too pleased to know that the car they produce only works for an average of 20 per cent of any given day and not even the same 20 per cent on consecutive days, thus making it totally unreliable and therefore virtually useless?

Would you buy the car they produce when it costs four to six times the price of an average car today and because of its unreliability will only allow you about three per cent of your daily mileage needs, thus forcing you to maintain another fully serviced car for the other 97 per cent?

No? Well that is what this government is asking you to do by investing in wind farms, rather than concentrating on 100 per cent reliable modern cleaner power stations which could supply our homes and industry every second of every day for decades to come. And at far less money than so called renewables. Yes, even nuclear is cheaper than offshore wind farms and would, of course, maintain a 24-hour supply. France is 84 per cent nuclear and even supplies Scotland when required.

So why are we building wind turbines? Other than political dogma, the only other reason is 'profit' for the owners and their suppliers and certainly very little to do with global warming.

Each 2.3MW turbine can earn in excess of £50,000 clear profit for the owner, and if you have enough acres for ten then it's virtually a lottery win. But that's not all, and here's the rub, you, me and everyone else who pays an electricity bill is guaranteeing this annual return to each wind farm owner for the next 20 years. Okay for some.

Malcolm Kirk, Craobh Haven.

Don't stand by and let Glen Lonan be destroyed

Sir, My father was a very wise man. When I was a 14-year-old lad in Taynuilt in the 1950s I said to my father: 'Will you be voting Scottish Nationalist?', expecting him to say he would.

He said he wouldn't dream of it, so I asked why, since he loved his Highlands. He told me to

Letters to the editor

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Time for change

Sir, On February 2, Argyll and Bute Council Leader Dick Walsh (Independent) announced an £8.5 million cut in council spending over the next three years.

In typically honeyed words he 'assured' the people of Argyll and Bute that he would 'explore every avenue...so as to shield those services which people care about the most from the effects of the financial squeeze'.

However, in his list of services, social care and education were ominously absent, though he did include 'leisure, culture and sport facilities'.

Meanwhile, his colleague Duncan MacIntyre, also Independent, and his co-voters on the CHORD committee, Independents too, behind closed doors with no public or press admitted, voted for a drawdown of £1.8 million pounds from council reserves to pay for a reconfiguration of Oban Bay 'to better meet the needs of users' including pontoons for cruise liner passengers and yachting.

What do we care about the most? Social care or cruise liners? Schools or traffic interchange? Remember this is the administration which last year sought to close 26 of our primary schools on the grounds of economy.

These councillors and their senior administrators and expensive 'consultants' have passed their sell-by date and it's time for them to go - and the sooner the better. Roll on the May elections.

John Gosling, Barcaldine, Oban.

Response to ill informed tirade

Sir, I must respond to Councillor Freeman's ill informed tirade in *The Oban Times*.

I have been privileged over the past number of years to represent not only Oban North and Lorn at council level, but also all of Argyll and Bute at regional level through HIRTRANS and SPT and at national level through COSLA.

Uncaring because they do not have to view these monstrosities from their cosy homes far away. I now live in Devon where these blights are beginning to proliferate to the fury and despair of all but the landowners for whom it is a cash cow as the non-millionaire taxpayers are bled to subsidise the rich to no public advantage.

I return home to Argyll every year once or twice to refresh my soul. Not any more within view of these abominations, if they are allowed. **Archie McIntyre.**

Step-ashore proposals welcomed

Although I am passionate about Oban, Lorn and the Isles, I recognise that, like Scotland, we are part of a unit that is better and stronger together and at all times I promote the development of the entire area.

Oban, Lorn and the Isles have an incredible opportunity to not only safeguard our future but to give security and confidence to our residents and particularly to our young people.

Developments and initiatives such as the LornAre (TIF); CHORD; SAMS; BIDS; European Science Park; University of the Highlands and Islands; public transport improvements to our ferries, train and bus services and new housing strategy are the result of a diligent and proactive approach and working together and I commend everyone involved for their hard work.

This co-operative approach contrasts with what happened at last Thursday's Argyll and Bute Council budget meeting. The council leader proposed a positive budget but Councillor Freeman, together with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the SNP group, could only offer grievance and negativity.

Councillor Freeman, Helensburgh and Lomond member, incredibly voted against £21m capital spend on roads; more than £2m on schools in his own area, including £315,000 for Roseneath Primary School, and £75,000 for Luss Primary School's new roof and £55,000 for Rhu village hall, also in his ward.

Apart from Councillor Strong, all the SNP members voted against their own leader.

It is gratifying the majority of Argyll and Bute Council's elected members believe in local people, local interests and local decision making and Thursday's momentous decision overcame party politics to demonstrate that listening to our local communities and working with colleagues will guarantee best results for all our residents.

It is a pity Councillor Freeman could not take the same positive approach.

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, Deputy Leader, Alliance of Independent Councillors.

Tremendous dedication at Oban hospital

Sir, Further to the letter of February 9 in *The Oban Times* praising the NHS at Belford Hospital, Fort William, I would like to give Oban's Lorn and Islands Hospital a special mention.

I have recently undergone a large number of tests there and was very impressed and full of praise for the efficiency, care and attention of the doctors, nurses and staff. Through your newspaper I would like to thank them all. They do a tough and sometimes difficult job with tremendous dedication.

In these days when there are so many complaints and criticisms loudly voiced it is good to offer praise and admiration when it is deserved.

Many thanks to all the people who make our hospital great. **June Buchan, Benderloch.**

Great service from Oban company

Sir, The papers are always full of stories about rogue tradesmen and their shoddy work but I have experienced the opposite.

I required electricity work in my home and was very fortunate to ring Walton Electrical.

A young man called Greg came to the door and I could not get over how efficient, helpful and how well he cleaned up after himself. Later, I had a faulty line box and Mr Walton came out himself but advised me it was a job for British Telecom. I was not charged for this visit.

The British Telecom engineer wandered back and forth to his van five or six times to get tools. A snail could have got to his van quicker. With private firms like Waltons, Oban can only thrive. **Elizabeth Smith, Barcaldine.**

Search for Field Gunners' records

Sir, In 1956, I was in the Royal Navy's Devonport Field Gun Crew, whose base was HMS Drake in Devonport.

Subsequently Devonport Dockyard remained the home for the Devonport Field Gun Association.

I'm sure some readers will remember the Royal Navy Field

Gun competitions which were part of the Royal Tournament each year until 1999.

Last year the Ministry of Defence gave the Field Gun Association notice to leave Devonport Dockyard.

The association was fortunate to find a new home at Crownhill Fort in Plymouth, which is now a small Devonport Field Gun Museum. When all the Field Gun records and equipment were transferred to Crownhill last September it became apparent that all records and photographs for the 1956 crew were missing.

I wonder if, through your letters page, it would be possible to trace any field gunners from 1956, or any other year, who may have photographs or any other personal records or memories.

If we were able to make copies, they could then be included in the museum records.

Field Gunners feel a tremendous pride in their achievements and I know how much it would mean to me and to any other 1956 Field Gunners to have our achievements included in the museum rather than feel, as I do, that we are the forgotten year.

I would also be delighted to hear from old field gunners of any year and, if they are interested, I could give them details of the Devonport Field Gun Association. Many thanks for your help.

Stewart McKenzie, 11 Alma Place, Clitheroe BB7 2LF. Email: stewartmckenzie@talktalk.net.

Mary Sandeman

Sir, Please can you help me with details of Mary Isabella Stewart Sandeman, wife of Frank Stewart Sandeman.

They moved with a family of five to Connel Ferry about 1913 from Mains Loan, Wellington Street, Dundee. Frank drove an ambulance during the 1914 to 1918 war in Northern France. The family moved in 1917 to Ballachulish, between the pier and ferry. Mary, our grandmother, who had been a nurse before her marriage, and a minister's daughter, apparently suffered an illness in the 1920s and had to be looked after, possibly in a nursing home. She died in 1932 and she is remembered on the stone where her husband was buried in 1936.

Is there any possibility of learning where she, Mary, was cared for and about her last years?

Alexander Hett, 33 High Street, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TB.



THE NEXT STEP FOR FAIRTRADE - A TASTE OF KENYA



Photos courtesy of Fairtrade

In 1994 a single ethically-produced chocolate bar was sold bearing the Fairtrade Mark. Today in the UK 7,000 products carry the Fairtrade Mark. They include KitKat and Cadbury's Dairy Milk. Likewise 30 per cent of the bananas and half the sugar we buy are Fairtrade. Major supermarkets - the Co-operative, M&S, Morrisons, Waitrose and Sainsbury's - have committed entire product lines to Fairtrade. All Olympic venues during the London Games will be selling Fairtrade refreshments.

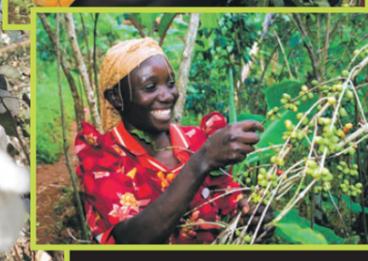
It was in November 2006 that Oban became a Fairtrade Town. In 2012 Oban and Lorn has become a Fairtrade area with Fairtrade outlets and tea/coffee being

provided in Lismore and Appin, Benderloch and Ardchattan, Dunbeg and Connel, Taynuilt, Dalavaich and Kilchrenan as well as in Oban itself. The new Fairtrade Directory lists 84 Fairtrade outlets including guesthouses, cafes, workplaces, schools and churches and will be released on February 29 at the Corran Halls. Further information is on the website at www.obanfairtrade.org.uk

This year's Fairtrade theme is TAKE A STEP IN 2012. The next step in Oban and Lorn will be the release of the Directory as we move step by step towards Argyll and Bute becoming a Fairtrade Zone and Scotland becoming a Fairtrade Nation. In collaboration

with the Co-operative the people of Oban are invited to a free leap year event in the Corran Halls from 6.30 pm onwards on Wednesday, February 29 where there will be tea-tasting, traditional music, fairtrade stalls, fairtrade wine and A TASTE OF KENYA with Joseph Cheruiyot who is a tea producer from Kenya.

Things have moved a long way from that single chocolate bar so that today poor farmers and other workers around the world are receiving a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. New schools and clinics are being built. Child labour is being eliminated and the loan sharks are on the retreat. So step along and join the celebration.



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Fair trade information & inspiration
Entrance Free!

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

West Ardnamurchan 'boil' is a warning

AS *The Oban Times* went to press, a group representing West Ardnamurchan was taking its concerns over the lack of emergency medical service provision in their remote rural area to an Edinburgh meeting with Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon.

Frustration has been building on the Ardnamurchan peninsula for more than a year since it became clear that the retirement of one of only two nurses in the area, who responded to local 999 calls, was resulting in a gap in emergency provision. A new nurse has been recruited, but she will not start until March, and will live 50 miles away in Ballachulish. The nearest emergency medical cover is more than an hour away, claim protesters.

It is their belief that neither the Scottish Ambulance Service nor NHS Highland have taken the area's concerns seriously enough with each passing the problem back and forward in the hope the other would resolve it.

The West Ardnamurchan situation highlights a clear warning for all remote rural areas that, as health budgets are increasingly centralised, the provision of health care, emergency or otherwise, is an issue that is as much a threat to the long-term future of rural communities as any virulent strain of disease.

GLASGOW LETTER

150 years in Glasgow

ON FRIDAY March 2, Glasgow Islay Association will celebrate its 150th birthday with a star-studded Gathering Concert in the Mitchell Theatre starting at 7pm.

Please note the earlier starting time for this concert. The singers will be Bette C Belle, Iain Carmichael, Dougie Gillespie, Nina McKellar and Iseabail MacTaggart, all former winners of the Mod Gold Medal, and both the Glasgow Islay Senior and Junior Gaelic Choirs. The increasingly successful Islay Pipe Band will be playing and Lord Robertson of Port Ellen will chair the proceedings.

The concert will be broadcast live on www.clanradio.net and should be available on the web. The dance normally associated with annual gatherings will not take place on the same evening.

Ceol's Craic

AFTER the busy Ceol's Craic at Celtic Connections, the February event will return to its usual format in the CCA on Saturday March 25 when the day's programme will start with the screening of Rathad a'Ghlinne by Ishbel Murray at 2.15pm.

This will be followed by Menask, the story of an Innu man who returns to his reserve, unearthing a painful past. At 4.30pm the shortlisted entries for the Gaelic short film competition will be shown and at 6pm the Gaelic Conversation will take place.

The main musical event of the evening will start at 8pm with the launch of a new CD from Urstan featuring Alasdair Roberts and Mairi Morrison and there will be support from the McCluskey Brothers and Lorraine Wilson.

Clydebank ceilidh

SINGERS at the recent ceilidh at Clydebank were Kirsteen Grant, Iain MacLean, Alison Wood and Isla MacVean. John McMillan played fiddle selections and young Robert Wood again illustrated that he is one of our best young pipers. Alasdair MacCuis will be in the chair for the evening.

Ceilidh for Erskine

A CHARITY ceilidh in aid of Erskine Hospital is well established on the syllabus of the Clydebank Highlanders.

This year's event will be on Friday April 20, but the Clydebank connection is being extended to Inverness where Ailean Domhnullach, brother of Katie who was for many years the president at Clydebank, has organised a ceilidh to take place in the Craigmore Hotel at 7.30pm this coming Saturday, February 25.

Stirling ceilidh

THERE were plenty family connections at the well-at-

tended penultimate ceilidh of the season.

Janet Campbell and her daughter Jennifer sang. Margaret Callan also sang and siblings Michel and Mairi played selections on the fiddle. Gillebride MacMillan was the other singer, the piper was Craig Sutherland and the Cluaran Dancers were in their usual excellent form at the event which was jointly chaired by Seumas Campbell and Donnie MacKenzie. The final ceilidh will be on March 13.

Stirling Mod

THE SYLLABUS for the 50th Local Mod in Stirling is available from Rona Morrison, telephone 0141 334 0649.

Entries must be submitted by March 31.

Robert Forrest

IT IS with extreme sadness that I learned of the death of Robert Forrest on Islay.

Robert, a Mod Gold Medalist, spent much of his life in Glasgow where he was popular not only within the Gaelic community but as a knowledgeable guide in the City Chambers where he was employed. Our sympathies are extended to his wife Belle at this sad time.

Diary dates

Thursday February 23: Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm - Steve Turner.

Friday February 24: Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choirs Annual Concert, Bearsden Burgh Hall, 7.30pm. Uist and Barra Association Ceilidh Dance, Crawford Hall, Partick, 9pm. Scottish Music Competition for Juniors, Royal Conservatoire for Scotland, 6pm.

Saturday February 25: Ceol's Craic, CCA, Sauchiehall Street, from 2.15pm - see above. Glasgow Skye Association Buntata's Sgadan, Crawford Hall, Partick, 7.30pm. Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Buffet Ceilidh Dance, Partick Bowling Club, 7.45pm. Annual Junior Piping Competition, National Piping Centre, 9am. Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Annual Dinner Dance, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, 5pm to 11pm.

Thursday March 1: Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm - Duck Baker.

Friday March 2: Glasgow Islay Association Annual Gathering Concert - see above.

Saturday March 3: Mur Phaislig Informal Gaelic Choirs' Competition, The Wynd Centre, Paisley, 7.30pm.

Pub scene

TOMORROW evening (Friday) Trail West, will be playing in the Park Bar with Deoch 'n Dorus playing there on Saturday and Nicky McMichan on Sunday. In the Islay Inn this weekend it will be Penny Dogs on Friday and Gunna Sound on Saturday.

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

YOUR LETTERS

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

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including an email, 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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WE AT The Oban Times do our utmost to make sure that all our reports are fair, accurate and balanced, but we accept that, on occasion, mistakes can occur in the hectic process of producing the biggest local newspaper in the West Highlands.

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

The Oban Times adheres to the Press Complaints' Commission's Code of Conduct. The views expressed in The Oban Times are not necessarily those of this newspaper.



Commonwealth baton passes through Oban

With the Commonwealth Games returning to Scotland in 2014, Mary Tindall, from Oban, submitted this week's flashback photo of the Commonwealth baton passing through Oban on its way to Edinburgh. David Webster is pictured in the back row next to three men unknown to Mary. Also pictured are the Captain of Dunstaffnage, Willie Currie, Provost Donald Thompson, who is handing the baton to a Helensburgh cadet, and Ian Jackson. Among the young Oban athletes pictured are, from left: Pamela May, Lorna Carden, Moreen Gracie, Ann MacPhee, Maureen Tindall, Mary McMorris, Pamela Scott, Ray MacCallum and Elizabeth Dawson. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Soroba needs community police officer

Sir, As a member of Soroba Community Association I am concerned at the lack of visible police presence within Soroba, Oban, especially at the weekends and call for a Community Police Officer to be appointed for the area.

The estate has encountered problems ever since the drinking alcohol in public places ban was introduced in Oban and Soroba was not included in the catchments area and I feel this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Soroba encounters groups of teenagers at the weekends from Oban and its surrounding area. These teenagers come into Soroba, drink alcohol to excess, scream and shout abuse, fight with each other, smash bottles and urinate in closes as well as in the street leaving some members of the community afraid to leave their homes in the evening.

I am calling, on behalf of members of the community, for the appointment of a Community Police Officer to be appointed for Soroba. **Sean MacIntyre, Independent Candidate, Ward 4, Oban South and the Isles.**

Roughcasting proposals

Sir, Your article in last week's *Oban Times* under the banner 'Soroba residents unite in rejecting ACHA roughcasting proposals' is both inaccurate and misleading.

The association's enquiries to *The Oban Times* reveal no survey was carried out of the over 380 residents in the estate, on ACHA's proposals, which could have led to such a conclusion.

Instead it has been suggested that around 30 opinions had been trailed through *The Oban Times* Facebook page, and some individual enquiries.

I can confirm that we have not had one intervention from any of ACHA's 172 tenants in the Soroba Estate requesting this work should not go ahead.

I would surmise this is because they see this work as being intrinsic to preserving the long-term external fabric of the buildings.

The article also focuses on costs. The costs obtained by ACHA were based on competitive tenders and not figures plucked out of the air. The association's position has always been that if individual owners wish to co-ordinate the necessary works and obtain prices, which properly deal with the re-rendering issues, then the association will support that strategy as well. To date, no alternative has been forthcoming.

The article further focuses on the point that the share of costs is equal to more than a quarter of the value of many of the homes there. I would make the simple point, if the re-rendering is not carried out where it is needed then the value of the properties will diminish and that benefits no one.

I don't believe anyone who is close to this matter is of the

view that the re-rendering work doesn't need to be done. ACHA will do its best to take this forward in the best interests of Soroba and we look forward to starting the work at 19 Shuna Terrace and 9 Colonsay Terrace to show the benefits for the way forward.

Alistair MacGregor, ACHA Chief Executive.

Editor: *The Oban Times* interviewed at least 10 individuals in collecting evidence, on which to base the article referred to.

Policing and targets

Sir, I would like to congratulate Fred Hall on his letter last week about policing and targets.

It has been said before and must always be remembered that if you have targets for the number of people who must be convicted of a crime or for the number of people who must be sent away to other countries to face torture and death, you cannot possibly have justice.

Graeme Pagan, Neaveton Oban.

Mismanagement of RET

Sir, Donald Manford of the Western Isles and Catriona MacLennan of Tiree have hit the nail on the head with their comments on RET in last week's *Oban Times*.

Transport minister Keith Brown and all other ministers in Edinburgh and London would do well to open their eyes and ears and learn from those who know about island life before it is too late.

From the start of RET, ministers and their civil servants have been un-enquiring and arrogant about shaping this initiative, instead of listening to island people.

These ministers think islands lack and would like more visiting tourists, but they are wrong. Tourists to the islands have benefited from cheaper fares and have arrived in their motorhomes but have brought nothing more than an expensive nuisance to the islanders, not money into their coffers.

Meanwhile travel costs for islanders hardly went down because though single ticket prices went down the 'three for the price of two' deal was withdrawn. This mismanagement of what should have been a worthy scheme is now to be exacerbated by withdrawal of commercial RET - the only RET element that actually benefited islanders which will lead to rocketing prices.

Matters are already worse here than anywhere in the UK with average incomes at £5,000 per annum less than mainland Scotland, diesel at £1.83/litre and the Tiree Co-operative prices having been massively hiked up because the premises have been re-graded from supermarket to local store.

If the government want to see how long it takes for a guinea pig community to bleed to death in this recession then they need look no further than the careless damage and bungling they are currently meting out on these islands. I would like to know which brilliant politician we should we vote for to start

improving our affairs and if a simpleton like me can see how worthy of their fat wages are the current bunglers?

Peter Isaacson, Isle of Coll.

Preserve old Rockfield school building

Sir, If still structurally sound, the fabric of the former Rockfield Primary School, Oban, needs preserving as part of any re-development.

The character of a town like Oban depends in large part on its architecture and the way this meshes with the topography.

There are a number of rock types used to face the town's older buildings and these lend that character.

In the case of Rockfield School, the facing stone is granodiorite, the same as that used in McCaig's Tower and other iconic buildings.

In considering its future, Argyll and Bute Council should factor in the aesthetic benefits of preserving the building, adjusting the selling price as a community contribution to the retention of architecture that ensures the town's character, especially if this makes the building affordable to a buyer willing to keep the town's heritage intact.

Professor Iain Reid, Oban.

Glencoe memorial bench

Sir, I have had a memorial bench at the Lochan in Glencoe for 12 years.

Now all of a sudden they are re-doing the paths and removing the benches and plaques.

I wouldn't have known, only my cousin who lives in the area phoned me to say there was an article in *The Oban Times* asking anyone who had a bench to contact the Forestry Commission. They couldn't contact me - or anyone - as they do not have any records, which I thought was shocking. They do not intend to put the plaques back.

When I spoke on the phone and a woman told me what was to happen, I was so upset I could hardly speak.

That memorial bench meant a lot to me and my family. Obviously the Forestry Commission has no feelings. Surely they just cannot take them away. It was my late husband's special place and I am so upset.

Kathleen Nicol, Glasgow.

Support for Armadale to Mallaig ferry

Sir, At the Skye and Lochalsh branch meeting of the Scottish National Party held on February 13, there was unanimous support for unfettered maintenance of the Armadale to Mallaig ferry link.

The needs of businesses and communities are fully recognised by local SNP members given the value we put on transport links to and from the Isle of Skye.

I would recommend to interested readers the Scottish ferries draft plan which deals admirably with the issue of improving ferry services.

Tabled by Keith Brown,

Minister for Housing and Transport, it can be accessed at www.scotland.gov/news/releases/2011/12/21150445. Contributions are welcomed up until March 31 2012.

David Ashford, Treasurer, SNP Skye and Lochalsh branch.

A better rail service

Sir, The Scottish 'Rail 2014' Consultation was available until February 20 for responses regarding the future of Scotland's railway network.

Oban has the fewest daily trains on the ScotRail network, yet is the busiest rural terminus and the main rail/ferry interchange for the Western Isles. Three trains per day each way is just not acceptable in the 21st century.

Transport Scotland considers rural routes as secondary and because they are 'tourist lines' consider the journey times and number of trains are not that important. This is a misconception, given that tourism is Scotland's most valuable industry. The people of the West Highlands deserve better than the present skeletal train service. Scottish Ministers need to address the issue that Transport Scotland has with providing a modern West Highlands' rail and road network.

The cost of running a daily additional Oban train is minimal compared with the massive investment in Central Belt road and rail projects.

The current trains, which are almost 25 years old, have inadequate heating, lack air conditioning and only have one toilet per two-coach unit which is non-retention and totally outdated. These trains should operate on suburban services, but certainly not on three hour-plus journeys on our foremost tourist routes.

Doug Carmichael, Chairman, Friends of the West Highland Lines.

No need for SNP candidates

Sir, It is with a small degree of amusement and a large degree of pleasure that I read in your paper about the policy proposals from the Highland group of the SNP.

I know imitation is the greatest form of flattery, but to see the words of my 2007 election leaflet almost replicated verbatim is, for me, a great delight.

Every word that myself and the other three independent Lochaber councillors have been saying has been taken on board by the SNP.

Local discussion, debate, decision making and democracy, yes my very words in 2007 and today in 2012. Myself, Donald Cameron, Alan Henderson and Bill Clark now realise that all the years of drumming on about local democracy has not been, as we had thought, falling on deaf ears.

So good on you Highland group of SNP - there will be no need for you to put up any candidates in our Wards 12 and 22 because now you have come round to our way of thinking.

Independent Councillor Eddie Hunter, Ward 12, Caol and Mallaig.



Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

CHAN eil teagham nach b' i a' chombaist tè de na h-inleachdan a bu chudromaiche dha mac an duine.

Le ceangal cunbhalach ri aird a tuath magnaiteach agus le taic an eòlais a chuireadh air imeachd an t-saoghail tro na speuran, bha inleachd iùil dearbhte againn nach dèanadh mearachd fhad 's a cleachdamaid gu ceart i. Le cho ealanta 's a tha comasan na combaist, theagamh gum biodh cuid a' meas nach eil cho uabhasach fada bho chaidh a cruthachadh agus bidh e na annas dhaibh fhiosrachadh gun deach a' chaid chombaist a togail leis na Sionaich mu chaid bliadhna ro am Chrìosd. Beagan is mìle bliadhna an dèidh sin, bha combaist ga cleachdadh gu cunbhalach mar iùil siubhail feadh an t-saoghail a b' aithne dha daoine aig an àm.

Tha leasachadh mòr air tighinn air ire an teicneòlais sin bhon uairsin agus an-diugh tha inleachd beag a dh'fhaodas sinn uile a ghìlan ann am pòca a chumas fiosrachadh rinn air càite am bheil sinn air aghaidh na talmhainn. Inleachd suidheachadh cruinneil (GPS) mar a thèar ris agus a-rithist, bhiodh daoine dualach smaoinachadh gur e goireas a tha seo a nochd bho chionn ghoirid. Ach tha mu cheud bliadhna bhon a chaidh dreachd den t-seorsa inleachd seo a dhealbhadh an t-seorsa seo a thàinig leasachadh mòr air ri linn obair airm, ann an Ameireaga gu sònraichte. Carson a bhithinn a' comharthaich is cù agam?

A rèir coltais, tha gliocas an t-seanfhacail air smachd tur a ghabhail air uimhir den t-slugh an-diugh is iad air fàs cho carbsach ann an comhairle lùl Saideil an cuid chàraichean is eile is gum bheil fortan ga chall ri linn tubaistean.

Mar a dh'èirich dhan chaid chombaist aig na Sionaich, cha tèid aig inleachd lùl Saideil air àite mhic an duine a ghabhail gu tur agus bidh e mar a h-uile goireas eile, na thaic seach co-dhùndhadh dearbhte.

Tha aithisg ùr air nochdadh gum bheil tubaistean a th'air an adhbharachadh le daoine a' leantainn comhairle lùl Saideil a' cosg £203 millèan sa bhliadhna agus gur iad Albannaich as dualaiche a dh'air seacharan! A rèir coltais, tha cuid de na fir ag ràdh gur e na guthan boireann air na h-innealan is coireach gum bheil iadsan a' gèilleadh agus theagamh gum bheil sin ceart, oir tha an aithisg cuideachd ag innse gum bheil còrr air leth nam boireannach a thèid air slighe cheàrr dìreach ag èigheach is a' càineadh an inneil!

A RECENT report says that UK-wide Scots are the most inclined to follow car sat nav guidance which is patently incorrect. This submission to electronic wisdom apparently leads to accidents costing over £203m per annum in Great Britain.

Evidently some men blame the dominating female voices in the equipment for their blind obedience, and there may be some truth in this as it also appears that more than 50 per cent of female drivers misled by the technology just sit and scream abuse at it!

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

Times Diary



The Kazakh Ceilidh Commandos, aka Gary Innes, Alec Dalgligh and Ewen Henderson, above, have just finished a 12-day tour of Kazakhstan. The freezing steppe, we are told, was kept at bay by numerous warming drams of varying descriptions. The boys are pictured above on the Ural River separating Europe from Asia. Evening entertainments, at least those suitable for publication, included late night poker with the Commandos' fourth member, producer and bodhran player Martin O'Neill - no, not the erstwhile Celtic manager.

ACCORDING to the CNN American television news channel, London has moved to Norfolk.

The international news channel has apologised after it broadcast a map of the UK highlighting the city of London approximately 120 miles north east of its true location.

One company researcher is quoted as saying: 'You would expect the main city to be more in the centre of the country.' Ah, you mean like Washington DC!

WHILE the recent Vodafone outages have caused a degree of angst for its Oban customers, one had more reason than most to be disappointed.

Having gone for three days without a signal and having complained to the network extensively that people couldn't contact him, he managed to get a brief glimpse of signal when away from the area.

Excited, he grabbed his phone, eager to find out who had been in touch.

Just two text messages and no missed calls.

IT IS a brave person who challenges the belief that rugby is a game for hardy souls, those who put their bodies in harm's way to ensure victory.

Indeed, Oban Lorne's hard-fought victory over Uddingston on Saturday had a handful of casualties, with knocks to the head and twisted knees almost expected as fresh-legged substitutes replaced the walking wounded.

But there was one incident on Saturday that seemed to defy rugby's hard man image.

On seeing one of her team's players hit the turf, following a collision on the field, a concerned Uddingston physio trotted onto the field of play with her well-packed medical bag, prepared for any outcome.

As play raged on, as is customary with this sport, the more eagle-eyed spectators at Glencruitten will have seen the burly Uddingston player slowly return to his feet.

At first glance all looked to be well but the diagnosis was completed when the physio pulled a plaster from her bag and applied it to the casualty's knee.

The brave Uddingston player returned to the action and managed to play through the pain until the match concluded.

CHILDREN at Taynuilt Nursery know the value of money more than most.

The thrifty tots have raised £18.31 by collecting 816 used writing instruments and have raised the grand total of £1.48 by joining the Aquafresh Oral Care Brigade.

Whoever said 'Every little helps', perhaps had these nursery children in mind.

Share your humorous gems, comments on life or amusing tales with the *Diary*. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to *Diary*, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.



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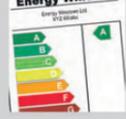
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Homes & Interiors

With rock bottom interest rates continuing for longer than many expected, those with savings may wonder how else they can make their reserves go that bit further.

With this in mind, it has never been a more important time to spend money on your home.

Cash spent wisely on your property is always a sound investment, even when times are hard.

And a competitive housing market means sellers will have to go that extra mile to make their property stand out.

Keeping your home décor fresh and appealing both externally and internally is always a good move.

Outside, giving your property extra protection as we go into the winter is a sound idea and inside a warm, welcoming, fresh and appealing place to come home to is just the kind of boost we all need.

Do you see any loose or decaying boards, loose bricks or hairline cracks that need to be patched? Make a list and tackle repairs before winter sets in.

It's your home, so you get to pick your priorities. Very few jobs will take as long as an hour and some are covered with a simple phone call to the right professional.

Following a visual inspection of the house exterior, make arrangements with roofers, masons, painters or other professionals to handle repairs you won't be doing yourself. Does the roof need attention? Are the TV aerial mountings and fittings secure? Are the gutters clean and reinforced? Do you see any loose or decaying boards, loose bricks or hairline cracks that need to be patched?

Meanwhile, fuel, gas and electricity prices are soaring, thrusting the issue of eco-friendly insulation, heating, lighting and even generation

such as solar panels into the public consciousness.

These 'green' alternatives to heating and powering your home and not just an environmental consideration - they can save you money in the long term.

With winter approaching, it's also time to get little projects finished off. The jobs that you were meant to finish over the summer but just haven't had time to do.

With all probability, then, it's time to get the professionals in because a small problem in dry and warm weather can become a big one in a matter of months.

Take a look at the businesses on these pages to see which one suits the jobs you need done.




kitchens



Up until about fifty years ago, the kitchen was the least considered room in any house. The very name implied something low and almost not respectable. Kitchen maids were a long way down the domestic hierarchy. Kitchen porters were even lower in the commercial sphere. When it came to equipping a kitchen little attention was paid to convenience, even less to hygiene. A cooker, sink, table, cupboard, meat safe and a couple of chairs were about the best most kitchens could boast. Décor was as basic as it could be - emulsion on the walls if you were lucky, whitewash if you weren't. 'Luxury kitchens might have white tiled walls but even these did nothing to detract from the bare, comfortless utilitarianism of the room. It was a room to escape from as fast as possible or to keep away from if you were lucky enough to be able to afford a cook.

Thankfully all that changed. Domestic staff have all but vanished, so the lady, and even the man, of the house now have to carry out the cooking duties, and of course they demand a little more in the way of comfort and convenience. So from around the 1960s the kitchen became a top priority for modernisation. Since then, many kitchens have had more than one re-fit, and still the average householder will even after ten years, consider a brand new kitchen, spending more money on that room than any other room in the house.

A great deal of design thought and effort goes into the creation of today's kitchen furniture and equipment. It is now a room to be bang up to date, to be shown off to friends, to linger in, to enjoy.

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bathrooms

For some time now, the bathroom has been considered an area where comfort can be expected. This is not unreasonable considering most people pop in and out of it almost as much as they pop in and out of any other room in the house. And let's face it, in a room where you wear the least, it is only sensible the heating and furnishing should be sufficient to keep you warm and comfortable. For this reason, bathrooms should have rather more heating than is provided by a single bar towel rail. At least one full sized radiator is required, if not more. And if because of its size, switch-on/off heating has to be employed, it should be of sufficient capacity to heat all corners of the room, fast.

textured surfacing to banish condensation. Cork tiling too is available and very lovely that can look when it has been carefully sealed. However with changing attitudes to heating and ventilation, it is even possible to decorate bathrooms with normal wallpapers or textured sisals.

Decor in the bathroom has changed a lot over recent years. The once almost universal, chilly white tiles have given way to colour. Tiles now come in a huge range of patterns, colours sizes and textures, but there are other alternatives. Bathrooms may be fully lined with pine boards. Beautiful vinyls are available in rolls with warm

But decor doesn't stop there. Modern bathrooms have pictures, shelves for ornaments, and of course the luxuriant growth of potted plants that find the atmosphere so very amenable. Pretty curtains and blinds are included because gone almost for good, are the plain boring, utilitarian window dressings of days gone by. Lighting is both concealed for relaxation, and direct for specific jobs like shaving and cosmetic application. And below it all, carpeting is thick and luxurious, and wall to wall, carefully surrounding all the essential furniture that is the real business of the bathroom.



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TYPES OF HOME IMPROVEMENTS

In the coming year, in spite of hard financial times, there will be home owners spending their hard earned money on home improvements. It is estimated that 15-million-odd owner-occupiers in Britain will each spend on average, £2,000 annually, improving their homes in some way or another. Whether these improvements are good value for money depends a lot on the reasons for having them done.

For example, take a simple conversion of an out-house into a small extra room. If that extra room is for a member of the family to use as a hobby-room or study, fine. If on the other hand it is supposed this extra room can be described as an extra bedroom in order to enhance the value of the property when it is put up for sale, not so fine. It may not even pay for itself.

Most home improvements can be looked upon as investments in that their yield is two-fold. First there is the convenience they bring to the householders, and second, the value they add to the property up to and beyond their actual cost. There are however important exceptions.

In terms of value for money however, the most popular improvements are necessarily those that will yield the best returns.

Top of the value pops is central heating, which will nearly always recoup the money spent and add a reasonable amount to the value of the property. This also includes up-dating any existing system.

Next comes conversions and extensions which will repay most of their cost. Kitchen and bathroom refits will recoup around two-thirds their cost, and double glazing up to half.

A recent survey taken countrywide revealed the commonest forms of home improvements are:

- Double glazing or new windows.....36%
- New kitchens.....35%
- New bathrooms.....24%
- Central heating.....20%
- Conversions and extensions.....16%

bedrooms

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Cairistiona Stone is one of two award winners named by Gaelic Book Council

Highland writers named in Gaelic awards

THE GAELIC Books Council has named two writers from the Highlands and Islands as winners of the Gaelic New Writers Awards 2012.

Cairistiona Stone, originally from Back in the Isle of Lewis and now living in Caithness, and Seonaidh Charity from Ullapool were announced as recipients of this year's awards, organised in collaboration with Scottish Book Trust.

A skills development scheme designed to encourage new writers and now in its third year, provides a tailored programme of professional guidance and training sessions.

Participants take part in a variety of skill-based workshops and advisory sessions to develop links with the publishing industry, with a view to advancement towards professional development and publication.

Digging up your history on Dunollie days

Volunteers can help with long-term maintenance of Oban's iconic castle

VISITORS to Dunollie had a chance to delve into the area's rich history at the weekend – even getting a hands on look at building and crafting techniques of the day.

Bow drilling and wool spinning using a drop spindle were two of the more unusual activities on offer at the 1745 House, while Catherine Gillies took visitors back through time with an enlightening guided tour of Dunollie Castle.

'Dig your own' Budding archaeologists were catered for at the Sunday event too, with an artefact identification table coupled with a hands-on 'dig your own' section.

The event, entitled Archaeology and Graves, was held in conjunction with Archaeology Scotland and Adopt a Monument to help drum up more interest for both visitors and those willing to help maintain the area.

Catherine Gillies, The MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust project director, is hoping more people volunteer to help maintain the castle, once home to the Kings of Dalriada.

She said: 'One of the reasons we're part of the Adopt a Monument Scheme is to get local

people to come and look after the area.

'We want to get people involved and maybe have a group together to help with long-term maintenance.'

Littering is one problem the Trust is having to deal with, with evidence of a fire inside the castle found during Sunday's first tour.

It is hoped some system can be worked out to firstly deter littering, but also to help keep the area clean and presentable throughout the year.

Anyone interested should contact Catherine on info@dunollie.org or 01631 570550.

Meanwhile, one of the major attractions of Sunday's tours of the castle was its secret colony of cave spiders. With leg span of up to 15cm the spiders are not insignificant – but they are elusive and they decided to remain firmly out of view throughout the event.

Catherine said she didn't anticipate a major problem with the harmless spiders as part of plans to renovate the castle – but said experts were being consulted in advance.

For more information on Dunollie, visit dunollie.org.



Catherine Gillies, left, helps visitors delve into Dunollie Castle's illustrious past during Sunday's archaeology day 15_108dunollie1

Music comes to Eadar Glinn for Valentines' Day

Kyle of Lochalsh harpist entertains

RESIDENTS at Eadar Glinn Retirement Home in Oban enjoyed a Valentine's Day concert provided by musician Margaret Knight.

The professional harpist, from Kyle of Lochalsh, gave the performance as part of her work with charity Music in Hospitals, which is committed to improving quality of life for those in care facilities through the 'joy and therapeutic benefits of professionally performed live music.'

Music in Hospitals undertakes over 1,700 live concerts a year across the country and Margaret is one of over 150 musicians who work with the charity.

To find out more about their work, visit their website at www.music-in-hospitals.org.uk.



Taynuilt ceilidh success

DESPITE some setbacks, the latest winter ceilidh in Taynuilt proved to be very successful and an appreciative audience witnessed a wide range of talent.

The ceilidh, held last Saturday in Taynuilt Village Hall, was affected by the weather and unfortunately a singer and a keyboard player, both due to appear, were forced to call off at the last minute.

Benderloch's Emma Law, a stalwart of Taynuilt ceilidhs, started off the evening with several stirring pipe tunes.

Three young Eilidh MacInnes Dancers, namely Katie MacPherson, Ragen Kelly and Charlie Nathan, gave excellent displays of highland dancing.

Mod gold medallist Wilma Kennedy and Mod Silver Pendant winner Nicola Pearson provided top class singing and a wide range of beautiful Gaelic solos and duets.

Well-known accordionist Hector McFadyen entertained the audience with his usual sparkling performance while Inveraray's Jake MacKay produced further enjoyable toe-tapping music on his mouthorgan, with Hector accompanying him.

Fear an Taigh for the evening was Eric Smith who kept proceedings flowing smoothly.

Nursery children gather pens for charities

OLD pens are being collected by children at Taynuilt Nursery in a scheme which allows them to protect the environment and at the same time raise money for Oban Hospice.

Pre-fives nursery teacher Caroline MacInnes said the nursery receives two pence for each pen they send to London-based Terracycle, who run the project in partnership with pen manufacturer BIC.

'We've raised about £20 so far but we're hoping to keep going until June then send a big parcel of used pens down to London,' Caroline said.

'We had sent some money to the hospice last Christmas so we decided we wanted to raise more money for them.'

NEWSDESK
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Lochaber's natural history enthusiasts enjoy wanderings in the watershed

LOCHABER Natural History Society has enjoyed a fascinating talk on 'The Watershed of Scotland' from naturalist Peter Wright.

The watershed, mostly upland in character, has been christened the 'Ribbon of Wildness' by Mr Wright, who walked its entire 745-mile length from Peel Fell

on the English Border to Dunscanby Head in Caithness.

His solo journey along the watershed, described in entertaining and informative terms, took him along a route which did not cross running water as rivers run either side to the Atlantic or the North Sea.

On the way it passes through

Lochaber, reaching its western-most point in Glen Dessary.

The walk was spread over a period of nine months, starting in January 2005. Apart from the new town of Cumbernauld, which straddles the watershed, only around 20 houses can be seen from the route, which passes through some of the

most remote and wild areas of Scotland.

The watershed transverses many protected areas, such as five National Nature Reserves, 71 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 37 Special Areas of Conservation, 28 Special Protected Areas and 11 National Scenic Areas, as well as a plethora of

other nature reserves, and scenic land managed by charities such as the National Trust for Scotland and John Muir Trust.

Despite this, much of the watershed is unprotected. Peter's thesis is that it links the wilderness areas of Scotland in one continuous route, and that this should be recognised as

such. He promotes the Ribbon of Wildness in his book of the same name and advocates that it should be given formal recognition. This would prevent developments or barriers that would detract from wildness or people's ability to access it. Although to walk the watershed is a mammoth undertaking

as an entirety, people can experience sections of the route for themselves, and this will soon be aided by Peter's forthcoming publication of short walks.

Lochaber Natural History Society meets at 7.30pm in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William once a month throughout the winter, and all are welcome.

Enjoy a short break on the idyllic Isle of Arran

The mild climate, wide range of accommodation and frequent ferry service make Arran an ideal place for a short break.



Broddick Castle

Five return ferry crossings a day from the Ayrshire coast and seven return crossings from Kintyre give plenty of options for those looking to get away from it all for a while.

One of the island's highlights is Broddick Castle and Country Park, set beneath Goat Fell and overlooking Broddick bay from the hillside.

It is unique in being the only island country park in Britain. The park extends from the seashore to the mountain tops with over 10 miles of marked trails and abundant wildlife. With its backdrop of mountain peaks, its terraced lawns and magnificent gardens, the castle is the epitome of a Victorian 'Highland' estate.

The Isle of Arran is one of the best places in Scotland to experience outdoor activities.

With rugged mountains, sheltered coastline, lush forests and

green fields, the island is a wonderful natural adventure playground.

There is an opportunity to try something new and exciting – sea kayaking, sailing, abseiling and gorge walking to name just a few.

Through the Broddick-based company, Arran Adventure, you can experience most of these adventure activities.

They specialise in providing the right level of challenge to make sure everyone can take part at their own pace.

There are three swimming pools on Arran – two at the Auchrannie Hotel and Spa Resort in Broddick and one at the Kinloch Hotel in Blackwaterfoot.

Both the spa pool at the Auchrannie and the Kinloch facilities are

open to the public all year round.

The Auchrannie Spa Resort also has a brand new Play Barn, which is guaranteed to fill a rainy day with hours of fun for younger children.

Seven golf courses scattered around the island offer a range of challenges for the keen and the casual golfer

Whether you're looking for groceries or gifts to take home, Broddick is a popular place to do a spot of shopping.

There are a number of small village shops dotted along the seafront including James of Arran who produce high quality handmade chocolates and confectionery for those with a sweet tooth. The bakery, Wooleys of Arran, is

famous not just for its bread and cakes but also for their traditional Arran oatcakes, a simple product with amazing versatility.

One of Arran's oldest businesses, The Old Byre Showroom in Machrie, sells a range of sheepskin products including tartan rugs and cosy knits, and is popular with tourists.

In recent years Arran has garnered a reputation for its good fresh local food not only produced here but also used by local restaurants in their cooking.

With its sheltered position on the west coast of Scotland, Arran is ideally suited to produce some of the country's finest food.

Pheasant, venison, and grouse as

well as Arran lamb and beef are produced to sit nicely on the plate next to the famous Arran potato.

The warmth from the Gulf Stream means juicy strawberries and raspberries grow abundantly during the summer months and fish stocks of salmon, cod, herring and shell fish truly make Arran a gourmet's delight.



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The multi-award winning Auchrannie Resort, located on the beautiful Isle of Arran, is one of Scotland's leading family destinations. Auchrannie consists of two four star hotels, the traditional 'House Hotel' and the more contemporary 'Spa Resort'. In addition, the resort features 30 five star self-catering lodges, three outstanding restaurants and bars, a play barn for children and two leisure centres offering pools, saunas and a wide range of ESPA beauty treatments. Visit www.auchrannie.co.uk.

We have teamed up with Auchrannie Resort to give readers the chance to win a two night stay, bed and breakfast, for a family of four at the Spa Resort.

To enter, simply collect token one we are printing this week and token two next week. Full entry details in next week's Oban Times, Thursday, March 1.



Terms and conditions: The prize package consists of Bed & Breakfast in the Spa Resort for a family of four (up to two adults and two children). The prize package can be used anytime during 2012, excluding school and public holidays. The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. The winner may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvex Media publication and website. This competition is not open to Wyvex Media and associated company employees and their families. This competition is open to readers of other Wyvex Media publications. Full terms and conditions online at www.obantimes.co.uk.



Golf at Whiting Bay.

Historic Scotland commit to Argyll township museum

HISTORIC Scotland has pledged to look at ways of ensuring the survival of the Auchindrain township.

The 21-acre site recently received a £20,000 grant from Argyll and Bute Council, and efforts are now underway to ensure its long-term survival.

A spokesperson for Historic Scotland said: 'Auchindrain is significant as a very rare survival of a once common settlement type which survived widespread 18th and 19th century improvements. Its significance is reflected in it being A-listed for its national importance.'

'Historic Scotland has recently invested £5,000 into drainage works and repairs and a further £5,000 towards the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan.'

'We are keen to work with the (Auchindrain) Trust to look at ways of finding a sustainable future for this important heritage site and will shortly be commissioning an options appraisal in conjunction with them.'

Auchindrain, which is around 6 miles from Inveraray, remained as other townships failed in the face of social and economic changes across the country.

Its last tenant retired in 1962 and it now serves as a museum which educates visitors on how township folk used to live their lives.

Lynda Syed, communications manager for Auchindrain, said: 'It has been greatly acknowledged for some time that The Auchindrain Trust faces a challenging situation in seeking to care for and operate Auchindrain on the basis of current sources of income.'

'The reference to funding for Auchindrain within the Council's 2012-2013 budget merely represents its agreed proportion of the funding. There is no new or changed situation beyond what has previously been known and discussed.'



Michelle McManus in concert helps boost cathedral funds by more than £4,000

POP IDOL star Michelle McManus helped raise more than £4,000 towards the restoration of St Columba's Cathedral with a rousing performance at Oban's Corran Halls on Friday.

The Glasgow singer, who has close connections to the area and is currently learning Gaelic, topped the bill at the gala concert on Friday, with 11 more acts taking to the stage in a night of good humour.

John Carmichael compared the evening, which organiser, John Mc-

Kenzie described as a tremendous success.

He said: 'It went very well. There was a good crowd and we're delighted to say we made more than £4,000 on the night to go towards the church renovation fund.'

'Michelle went down really well with the crowd. She was also terrific backstage with the young people and dancers etcetera.'

'I've always been very impressed with her and she was just superb on the night.'

'All the performers, especially Michelle, took no payment for their part in the event. Accommodation for those that needed it was organised by locals which was very much appreciated.'

John paid special tribute to the performers, who he described as 'brilliant'.

'We're very grateful to everyone who turned up and performed so brilliantly. There was a very positive atmosphere on the night and we're delighted with how it went.'



Last Saturday, musician and choir conductor Sileas Sinclair put 40 members of Taynuilt, Mull and Tarbert Gaelic choirs through their paces at a rural choirs' workshop in Oban's Royal Hotel. Sileas concentrated on two of this year's National Mod pieces 'Breisleach' and 'Maoileas Mor na Gualine', the latter of which she arranged herself



Eye to eye with John Wallace

Accidents Can (and do) Happen

Finally, after months of seemingly continuous rain, I managed to make a start on my garden last weekend. Several of my neighbours were also working in their gardens, mainly doing hard landscaping or vigorously pruning overgrown bushes. The reason I am mentioning this; I have already seen patients this year with various types of garden debris in their eyes. Gardening can be dangerous yet we all seem to rush out and start using saws, strimmers and other assorted power tools without the slightest thought about eye protection. It is not just tools that can be dangerous. Plants can be as well. I just missed having my cornea lacerated by an errant bramble while I was walking my dog.

Plants can also cause allergic reactions. Handling plants and then inadvertently rubbing your eyes can cause an acute allergic response. Hay fever sufferers must be dreading the onset of

spring with the release of pollens into the atmosphere.

But it is not just gardening injuries I have seen since the start of the year. Working on the underside of cars is guaranteed to get debris hitting your face and frequently going into your eyes. Not paying attention when working close to someone welding can also lead to "arc eye" which is incredibly painful. I have even had to remove pieces of concrete from the eyes of two builders last month.

What do all these problems have in common? In every case the patient had not been wearing any form of eye protection. Eye protection is cheap. You can pick up appropriate goggles from most DIY stores for a few pounds. An eye injury could ruin your vision for the rest of your life. You would not drive a car without wearing a seat belt. Don't do any DIY without wearing eye protection!

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP
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what's on oban

Friday 24th February > Oban High School Pipe Corran Halls Band In Concert, 7.30pm
Saturday 25th February > Club Night 11pm - 2am Skipinnish Ceilidh House with DJ's Mark and Stuart
Fri 2nd & Sat 3rd March > Moray MacNiven Markie Dans
Fri 9th & Sat 10th March > Chris Suckle Markie Dans
Friday 16th March > Disco Markie Dans with DJ stevo
Saturday 17th March > St Paddy's Markie Dans Cuan an Aire
Friday 23rd March > Tim O'Connor Markie Dans
Saturday 24th March > Jon MacKenzie Markie Dans

what's on lochaber

Friday 24th February > Nightclub with DJ Irish Al. Fort William Skipinnish Ceilidh House Beat the Clock
Saturday 18th February > Nightclub 10pm till 2am Fort William Skipinnish Ceilidh House Beat the DJ

Sponsored by
SKIPINNISH CEILIDH HOUSE FORT WILLIAM
www.skipinnish.com
Middle Street, Fort William

Taynuilt whist drive raises funds for senior citizens

A WHIST drive held in Taynuilt Village Hall on Friday February 17 raised £158.55 for senior citizens outings. The card master was Dougie McDougall and there were five tables with prizes as follows.
Gents: 1st Dave Watson, 2nd Jim

Grout, 3rd Mary Scott, 4th Dougie McDougall.
The consolation prize went to Stella Huntingford.
Ladies: 1st Cecilia Keenan, 2nd Florence Anderson, 3rd Mary Mitchell, 4th Judith Day. Marina MacInnes

picked up the consolation prize. The travelling prizes went to Hector MacKenzie from Dunbeg and Isobel Grout from Connel.
The next whist will be on Friday March 9 in aid of the North Lorn Senior Section Guides.

ARGYLL ANIMAL AID

POOKIE
Very nice and friendly neutered boy. Has been here around a year and needs somebody to love him. His character is enhanced by his damaged ear!
Contact Pat on 01852 300362
aaa.rescueteam@btconnect.com
http://www.smallpaws.co.uk
Reg. charity SCO13211

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click
VISIT US AT
www.obantimes.co.uk

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GARDEN RE-OPENS FOR 2012 ON 1st MARCH

See the world-famous collection of plants & unique Victorian Fernery Courtyard Gallery, Benmore Café, Shop, Plant Sales

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Sign up now for the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's Certificate in Practical Horticulture which will be taught at Benmore from 16th - 28th April 2012.
Visit www.rbge.ac.uk/certph or call 0131 248 2937

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club
Monthly Club Night
Thursday 1st March, 2012
Argyllshire Gathering Hall
7.30pm
Audience and players welcome
Special Guest Artists
Marian Anderson Trio
Admis £3
Come along & enjoy the music

Happy House
Christian Preschool
COFFEE MORNING
Saturday 25th February
10.30 - 12.30
Glencruitten Church Centre
Tea, Coffee, Home-baking,
Face Painting and other stalls
Admission - Adults £2.50,
Children £1.50

Oban High School Pipe Band In Concert
Friday February 24, 2012
@ 7.30pm in the Corran Halls, Oban
Also featuring special guests
Tickets: £5 adult, £3 under 16 concessions,
Family Ticket (2 adults/2children) £15
Tickets available from Oban Music Shop, Oban High School, Corran Halls & Band Members.

Comunn Gaidhealach an Obain
Ceilidh
Saturday 3rd March 2012
7.30pm
Masonic Hall, Oban
Norman MacArthur, Myra MacNab, Claire Jordan, Andreas Wolfe, Accordion Hector MacFadyen, Chairman Donald Morrison
Admission £5

Oban Friends of Anthony Nolan COFFEE MORNING
Connell Village Hall
Sat. 25 February, 2012
10.30am until 12 noon
Suggested donation - £2.50
Cake & Candy, jewellery, books, tombola and lots more

Crinan Hotel

Argyll, Scotland

Early Spring Offer.
2 night stay, dinner, bed and breakfast during March and April from only £90.00 per person per night*.

Take in the fabulous views whilst dining on your 4 course dinner in the elegant Westward Restaurant or sit by the fire and enjoy a wee dram. Here is the ideal, undemanding base from which to enjoy the peaceful tranquility of this memorable part of the Scottish landscape.

*terms and conditions apply.

Book online at www.crinanhotel.com or telephone reservations on 01546 830 261

The Oban Times
bonnie babies
competition 2012

WIN £500 worth of vouchers

In association with
The co-operative good for everyone

Enter your baby today!

Enter online or by post
We are now open for entries! Bonnie Babies 2012 is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. To enter by post please send us a photograph along with a signed entry coupon (see left) to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Please make sure you write the name of the child, date of birth and a contact telephone number on the back of the photo. Should you wish for your photo to be returned, please also enclose a stamped addressed envelope. We will do our best to return your photo but please make a copy just in case. To enter online visit www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

After you have entered your child into the competition, look out every week in The Oban Times to see when your baby appears. You can find all the competition rules and terms and conditions online at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies or call 01631 568000. More details on page 16.

The closing date for entries will be announced in a future issue.

ENTRY FORM
Child's name.....
Child's date of birth.....
Tel:.....
Address:.....
Name of parent/guardian.....
Signature of parent/guardian.....
I agree to all terms and conditions applied to this competition.....
Please post to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Terms & conditions: The Oban Times Bonnie Babies 2012 competition is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. Only one entry per child by entering the competition and by filling in the parental consent form that is provided with your entry. You - the parent or guardian - consent to the reproduction of your child's photograph in The Oban Times Bonnie Babies feature in the paper and online and in any other related Oban Times Bonnie Babies promotion. If you do not wish for your child's photo to appear in the magazine or online then you should not enter the competition. The Oban Times cannot take responsibility for the safe delivery and safe return of the entrant's photograph. Photos posted without an enclosed stamped addressed envelope will not be returned. Poor quality photographs, which are out of focus, difficult to see the child's face, ripped, torn or folded, will not be accepted as an entry and will be returned to the sender providing a stamped addressed envelope is supplied by the entrant. By sending us your photograph, you agree that Wyman Media Ltd and The Oban Times have the right to publish the image and details of the entrant without payment for the purpose of promoting The Oban Times Bonnie Babies campaign. All the winner must be willing to take part in publicity. Employees of Wyman Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter. Photocopied entry forms will not be accepted. Full terms and conditions at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

Oban Friends of Anthony Nolan COFFEE MORNING
Connell Village Hall
Sat. 25 February, 2012
10.30am until 12 noon
Suggested donation - £2.50
Cake & Candy, jewellery, books, tombola and lots more

To advertise in the WHAT'S ON COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD
Telephone: 01631 568000

Lochaber Strathspey & Reel Society Annual Fiddlers Rally
Saturday 3rd March @ 7.30pm
Lochaber High School
Admission £8.00 & £6.00

Advertise in the Community Notice Board for just £14.95 (plus VAT)
This section is available to charitable organisations with a charity number.
All AGM's will be placed on the Public Notice Page. Please ask for details

DREICH HOUSE
a film and theatre project

Wildbird are looking for local children aged 6-15 to audition for a film and theatre project.

Download the application from the Dreich House web page. E-mail the completed form to info@wildbird.org.uk.

Youth Cast Auditions
The audition will consist of a drama workshop followed by a screen test
Saturday 25th February, Corran Halls, Oban 10am-4pm
Sunday 26th February, Nevis Centre, Fort William 10am-4pm

for full details and to register go to www.wildbird.org.uk

The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

bonnie babies

competition 2012

in association with The **co-operative**
good for everyone

WIN
£500
of shopping vouchers

How the competition works

This year it is up to you, our readers, to vote for who you think should win the title of The Oban Times' 'Bonniest Baby' and £500 worth of shopping vouchers to

spend at The Co-operative! We will publish a selection of Bonnie Babies each week of the competition, between now and early spring. At the end, the babies with the

most votes from each week will qualify for our grand finale. All finalists will then feature in The Oban Times for one last time, again for public vote. The baby with

the most votes will then be crowned The Oban Times' 2012's bonniest! For rules and terms and conditions, visit www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

The Co-operative Group is owned by almost six million consumer members. They are the UK's fifth biggest food retailer and a major financial

services provider, operating both The Co-operative Bank and The Co-operative Insurance. Visit www.co-operative.coop.

ENTER YOUR BABY TODAY! See page 15 or enter online at www.obantimes.co.uk



043
Iona Kirkpatrick
7 months Isle of Islay



044
Tyler Brown
6 months Lochgilphead



045
Rhys Chaimberlain
13 months Oban



046
Abbey Prosser
9 months Oban



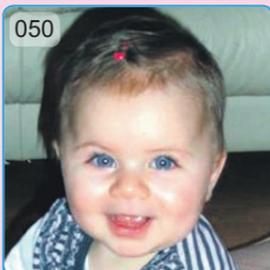
047
Taylor Stewart
3 months Lochgilphead



048
Layla MacLellan
13 months Lochgilphead



049
Lacey McCartney
1 month Ardrishaig



050
Ferne MacLachlan
13 months Lochgilphead



051
Alistair W Gibson
7 months Killin



052
Treat Cameron Williams
12 months Kilmelford



053
Lewis Steele
17 months Isle of Mull



054
Kali Elizabeth McCuaig
11 months Kilmichael Glassary



055
Declan Stewart
34 months Isle of Islay



056
Katherine Stewart
5 months Isle of Islay



057
Duncan Davie
20 months Caol



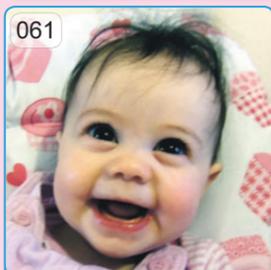
058
Aleisha Aitkenhead
27 months Oban



059
Maximilian Salvador Lewandowski
14 months Oban



060
Dewar Nicolson
9 months Kinlochleven



061
Emily Lawn
6 months Oban



062
Jack Lawn
26 months Oban



063
Emma Bannatyne
19 months Taynuilt



064
Gillian Cameron
24 months Oban



065
Emma McCallum
32 months Oban



066
James McCallum
7 months Oban



067
Dylan Ross
15 months Oban



068
Lily Hobson
12 months Oban



069
Ruairidh Ross
9 months Isle of Skye

Vote for this week's finalist!

How to vote

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

By text:

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

Text messages cost **£1** plus one message at standard network rate. The voting deadline will be announced in a future issue.

By coupon:

Complete the voting form provided on this page and send it to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies VOTE, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB. Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted. The voting deadline will be announced in a future issue.



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

VOTING COUPON

I would like to vote for:

Baby number*:..... Baby's name:

Please post to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies VOTE, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Or text the word **BABY** followed by a space then the baby's three digit number to 88010. Text messages cost £1 plus one message at standard network rate.

*Baby number must be supplied. This can be found at the top left of each baby photograph.

Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted and will not count as one vote.

Terms & conditions: The winner must be willing to take part in publicity. Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted. Text messages cost £1 plus one message at standard network rate. The deadline to receive votes will be announced in a future issue and on The Oban Times website. One text counts as one vote. One coupon counts as one vote. The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. Full terms and conditions at www.obantimes.co.uk.



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 Yamaha Grizzly 450 2008.....£3,500 + VAT
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 New Quadzilla Ram 100cc.....£1,300 inc VAT
 Kiddies Used Machines
 Apache Army 100cc elec start/rev.....£680 inc VAT
 Apache in red 100cc elec start.....£600 inc VAT
 Yamaha Breeze 125cc elec start/rev.....£1,100 inc VAT
 Yamaha PW 80 2 wheels, immaculate.....£980 inc VAT
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Hustlings meeting ahead of Crofters Commission's March ballot

A HUSTLINGS meeting will be held in Fort William next Friday (March 2) ahead of the Crofting Commission ballot later in the month. Five candidates have put their names forward for the South West Highlands ward (including Argyll and Lochaber): Colin Kennedy, Coll; Donnie Campbell, Trec; Robin Currie, Islay; Billy Neilson, Taynuilt; and Michael Foxley, Lochaber.

The meeting will take questions from the floor about the future of crofting, with each candidate setting out what they will do for the area.

Prime hogs up 2p per kilo at Stirling

UNITED Auctions sold 5428 prime sheep including 3859 hogs averaging 202.6p/kg (+0.2p on week) and 1569 ewes and rams at Stirling last Thursday.

Beltex hogs from Upper Auchencray sold to 247p per kilo and £116 while Suffolks from West Loch sold to £109.

Texels from Townhead of Arngibon fetched £102.50, with Cheviots from Ballinloan and Byres reaching £95.50 and 222p per kilo. Blackface hogs from Glendamp sold to £93.50, with Abercainie and North Amulree selling Blackfaces to 208p per kilo.

Texel ewes from Scart and Cheviot ewes from Barbreck both sold to £126.50 with Overton selling Blue-faced Leicester ewes to £105.50.

Suffolks from Hordweel fetched £97.50, while Dalrass sold Blackface ewes to £74.50.

Heifers sell to 240.5p per kilo at Caledonian

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd sold 258 cattle at their weekly primestock sale at Stirling last Thursday when 127 bullocks and heifers, 13 young bulls, 14 OTM cattle, 103 cast cows and bulls and 67 calves and stirks were sold.

Bullocks averaged 206p per kg and sold to 228p per kg (twice) for heavy Limousins from Knockhousee, Dunfermline and Learielaw Farm, Broxburn and to £1609 for a 750kg Limousin, Mains of Culmalundie Farm, Perth.

Heifers averaged 207p per kg and sold to 240.5p per kg for a 585kg British Blue from Easter Ochtermuthill Farm, Muthill and to £1478 for 670kg Limousin, Kinneil Mill Farm, Linlithgow.

A pen of five heifers from Easter Ochtermuthill averaged 232p per kg for 571kgs.

Butchers cattle averaged at 224p per kg, selling to 234.5p per kg for a 530kg Limousin heifer from Knockhousee Farm.

Young bulls sold to 223.5p per kg for a 665kg Limousin from Mains of Throsk Farm, Stirling and to £1795 for a 825kg Limousin from Little Kype Farm, Strathaven.

OTM cattle averaged 174 p per kg and sold to 213.5p per kg and £1602 for a 750kg Limousin from Wester Thomaston Farm, Banknock and to £1592 for a 810kg Limousin Mains of Burnbank farm, Blairdrummond.

Cast cows sold to £1,700 for a Charolais from Castleton Farm, Stirling while cast bulls sold to £1,605 for a Limousin from Blairsgreen, Dunfermline.

Calves sold to a top of £350, £305, and £300 for Limousins from Clatto, while dairy type calves sold to a top of £170 from Ormsay and stirks sold to a top of £650 for a Limousin cross from Graystale.

Farming
 Sponsored by NFU Mutual
 Oban, call Euan Warnock and Donna MacDougall on 01631 567 036 for your insurance needs.
 Agent of The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited.




Farmers were having difficulty interpreting the complex sheep tagging guidance rules and ensuring that their stock movements were being properly recorded

Course success leads to more

AN AGRICULTURE course established to assist crofters and farmers to understand new tagging and recording regulations has been a success when tested around Argyll lately.

Colin MacPhail, a senior agricultural consultant with the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC), compiled the Sheep Records Course at the beginning of January this year after realising farmers were struggling with the necessary paperwork.

He said: 'Many farming clients were having difficulty interpreting the complex sheep tagging guidance rules and were getting penalised at inspections for incorrectly tagged sheep and maintaining poor records.'

'We decided the look for a solution and came up with our Shepherd Right tagging guide and on farm

working documents.' Over 700 farmers have already taken part in the half-day course held at locations throughout Argyll since early January.

Simple format
 These have included Seil, near Oban, the islands of Islay and Mull, and more recently Taynuilt and Inveraray.

Brian Walker of Carloan Farm, near Inveraray attended the course in Inveraray last week. He said: 'There has been a lot of twists and changes with tagging, I just wanted to brush up and make sure all the information I had was right.'

'This course is in a simple format and made everything very clear, I think it clarified a lot of points for a number of people.'

Colin MacPhail, 36, says the feedback he has received has been excellent.

'Farmers have really enjoyed the smaller group environment, a maximum of 10 participants, as they can ask questions and share their experiences.'

Colin is ideally suited to structure the information in a practical and usable format as he comes from an Argyll farming background. Brought up on Callachally Farm at Glenforsa on the Isle of Mull, Colin left the island at 18 and, after spending time at various SAC offices, including Uist, now lives in Stirling.

The SAC course is run at a local level by Niall Campbell and Donald MacKinnon, based at the SAC's Oban office.

The success of the course has encouraged more to be available in March, May and June.

Details can be obtained from your local SAC office.

United Auctions Stirling hosts Aberfeldy show and sale

UNITED Auctions sold 2,157 store cattle, incorporating the Aberfeldy Show and Sale sponsored by Starlyne Feeds, at Stirling last Wednesday when 152 cast cows and 1,257 store and breeding sheep were also sold.

Aberfeldy Show and Sale
 Champion - Ballechin Farms, 568kgs £1280
 Reserve Champion - Mr Robertson, Newton of Logierait 574kgs £1330
 Champion pen of 4 - Mr Robertson, Newton of Logierait 506kgs £1280
 Pen of 4 bullocks - 1st Mr Robertson, Newton of Logierait 506kgs £1280

2nd - Mr Robertson, Newton of Logierait 432kgs £1180
 Pen of 4 heifers - 1st Monzie Farms 477kgs £1210
 2nd Mr Robertson, Newton of Logierait 443kgs £1080
 Single Bullock - 1st Ballechin Farms 568kgs £1280
 2nd Mr Robertson, Newton of Logierait 574kgs £1330
 Single Heifer - 1st Monzie Farms 496kgs £1280
 2nd Mr Robertson, Newton of Logierait 504kgs £1420

Sale
 Bullocks averaged 216.72p (+3.25p) and sold to 313.4p per kg for a 402kg British Blue cross from Newton of Logierait and £1,690 for a 786kg Simmental cross from Leoch.

Heifers averaged 215.93p (+7.68p) and sold to 331.7p per kg and £1,420 for a 410kg Limousin cross from Newton of Logierait.

Cast cows averaged 136.72p and sold to 189.3p for a Limousin from Bridgehouse and £1,565 for a Shorthorn cross from Clatto. Forward cattle averaged 183.96p and sold to 198.1p per kg and £1455 for a Limousin cross from Ardmarnock.

Texel ewes from Drumphin sold to £198, with Kinneil Mill selling Suffolks to £176.

Corsehope had Mules to £174 and Blackfaces at £122.

Texel hogs from Binzian sold to £84 with the same home selling Cheviots to £70. Suffolks from Udstonhead to £71, while Glenehervie sold Mules and Beannie Blackfaces at £69.

Prime sheep back on week at Dingwall

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 82 prime cattle and 1,278 prime sheep at Dingwall on Tuesday this week when heifers rose on last week's prices while both bullocks and sheep were slightly down.

Prime bullocks averaged 199.8p (-1.6p) and sold to 214p per kg for a 650kg Limousin cross from Little Kildrummie, Nairn, and £1,447.95 gross for a 735kg Charolais cross from Shawpark, North Kessock. Prime heifers averaged 203.9p (+6.4p) and sold to 216p per kg for a 535kg Limousin cross from Easter Strath of Auchterflow, Killen, a 585kg Limousin cross from Udale Pointyfield, and a 640kg Limousin cross from Little Kildrummie, and £1,460.20 gross for a 745kg Limousin cross from Little Kildrummie.

Lambs averaged 206.8p (-4.4p) and sold to 231.3p per kg for 39kg Beltex crosses from Findon Mains, Culbokie, and £96 twice for 46kg and 43kg Beltex crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge.

Dingwall maintains high rates for all store sheep

DINGWALL and Highland Marts sold 1,877 sheep of all classes at Dingwall last Wednesday when all classes continued to sell at the recent high rates.

Lambs averaged £66.76 and sold to £93 for Texel crosses from Ballachraggan Farm, Kildary.

Ewes averaged £72.25 and sold to £138 for a Suffolk from Ardvannie Croft, Edderton. Rams and feeding sheep averaged £76.51 and sold to £115 for Charollais rams from Kinnahaird Farm, Contin.

Market reports

DINGWALL

Dingwall and Highland Marts

Lambs:
 TexelX: Pollowick, Cromdale, £92;
 Cheviot: 55/57 Rhue, Ullapool, and Rhannich Farm, Edderton, £90;
 Suffolk: Ardvannie Croft, £90;
 Texel: Kinnahaird Farm, £86;
 SuffolkX: 7 Achrimisdale, Brora, £83;
 Cross: Alvie Farm, Kineraig, £81.

Ewes:
 Texel: The Cloy, Fortrose, £127;
 TexelX: Druid Temple Farm, Inverness, £126;
 Cheviot: Drumore, Evanton, £118;
 SuffolkX: South Balkeith, Tain, £114;
 Half-Bred: Cantraybridge College, Croy, £111;
 Mule: Cambusmore Estate, Dornoch, £108;
 Suffolk: Strathskiach, Evanton, £106;
 Blackface: Cantraybridge College, £96;
 Cross: Balintraid, Delyn, £85;
 Charollais: Greenlands, Arabella, £84;
 CharollaisX: Invercharron, Ardgay, £82;
 Jacob: Greenlands, £80;
 Charmoise: Druid Temple Farm, £76.

Wedders:
 Cheviot: 19 Cabrich, Kirkhill, £72;
 Cross: Invercharron, £66.
Rams:
 Beltex: Wester Cairnglass, Gollanfield, £106;
 Bluefaced Leicester: Kinnahaird, Contin, £105;
 Texel: Kinnahaird, £105;
 Charollais: Greenlands, £102;
 Cheviot: South Balkeith, £98

STIRLING

United Auctions

Bullocks:
 Up to 250kgs Sorn Mains £690, 282.8;
 251-300kgs Dyke £780, Gallahill 267p;
 301-350kgs Ochiltree Place 695p,
 Lephinchapel 281.4p; 351-400kgs
 Newton of Logierait £1080, 291.1p;
 401-450kgs Newton of Logierait
 £1260, 313.4p; 451-500kgs Nochnary
 £1240, 258.3p; 501-550kgs Newton
 of Logierait £1280, 253p; 551-600kgs
 Scotstarvit £1340, Newton of Logierait
 231.7; 601-650kgs Drumalbin £1380,
 223.3p; 651-700kgs Drumalbin £1480,
 213.9p; 701kgs + Leoch £1690, 215p.
Heifers
 Up to 250kgs Borlick £595, Torwood
 259.7p; 251-300kgs Kinburn £700,
 Criagend 244p; 301-350kgs Torhouse-

kie £850, 244.3p; 351-400kgs Loanheadof Duchally £1060, 270.4p; 401-450kgs Newton of Logierait £1360, 331.7p; 451-500kgs Monzie £1280, Stanley 264p; 501-550kgs Newton of Logierait £1420, 281.7p; 551-600kgs Mid Derry £1210, 205.8p; 601-650kgs Ardmarnock £1200, 186.3p.
OTM Cow
 Clatto (Sho) £1565, 170.5p; Little Inch (Cha) £1555, 179.1p; Whitesome Laws (Sim) £1475, 186.5p; Bridgehouse (Lim) £1435, 189.3p; Quixwood (AA) £1315, 171.6p; Whitesome Laws (BS) £1305, 166.9p; East Bangour (Fr) £1165, 148.6p; Stanley (BB) £1145, 155.1p; Meikle Harelaw (He) £1085, 140.7p; Whitesome Laws (SD) £1075, 164.9p; Denfino (Sal) £1055, 177p; Kepculloch (Ho) £965, 129.7p; Nyadd (HF) £955, 124.3p.
OTM Bulls; Upper Obney (Lim) £1555, 154.9p; Loanleaven (Sim) £1495, Townhead 139.2p; Balkaithly (AA) £1350, Quixwood 114p
Sheep
 Hoggets; Binzian (Tex) £84; Udstonhead (Suf) £71; Binzian (CHE) £70; Glenehervie (Mul) and Beannie (BF) £69.
Breeding Sheep; Drumphin (Tex) £198; Kinneil Mill (Suf) £176; Corsehope (Mul) £174 and (BF) £122.

West Coast property service
www.westcoastpropertyguide.co.uk

Meadows Avenue, Campbeltown
Semi-detached three bedroom house with open outlook over Meadows field.
 • Hallway • Full double glazing
 • Lounge • Gas central heating
 • New kitchen/diner • Off-street parking
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 • Bathroom with shower
Offers around £110,000
 For further details or to arrange a viewing please telephone 01586 553960.
West Coast property service

Dunbeg, By Oban (close to Marine Lab)
Two bedroom semi detached house with sea views.
 Excellent starter home.
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Semi-detached, granite and sandstone Victorian villa.
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HOUSE TO LET
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 3 Bedrooms, Kitchen, sitting room and sun room, unfurnished.
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 Further details telephone 01397 722402

TO LET Top Floor Bed-sit FURNISHED
 £80 per week + C/Tax and Bills
 1 months deposit
 References required
 Tel: 07748801631

LONG LET Isle of Mull
 Central Location
 Single Bedroom
 Self-contained
 Accommodation
 For more information contact Box No 77, Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB

FLAT FOR RENT
 Spacious 1 bedroom, first floor flat available for rent in a quiet side street in the centre of Campbeltown. Flat in excellent condition, very clean.
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Scottish Sea Farms
Marine Site Manager
Orkney Mainland

We are currently looking to identify a suitably qualified and highly motivated individual to undertake the role of Marine Site Manager for our Toyness and Bring Head sites within Scapa Flow.

Candidates must demonstrate excellence in all aspects of fish husbandry including fish health and welfare, feeding optimisation, containment, infrastructure maintenance and skilled seamanship. If successful you will be hard-working, focused on achieving your own key performance indicators and developing the potential within your staff.

To be considered, you should ideally already be a Site Manager within the aquaculture industry, or an experienced Assistant Manager that is keen to progress into management. You will have excellently developed risk assessment skills and be able to demonstrate your commitment in developing a strong safety culture.

Scottish Sea Farms Site Managers are already expected to be industry leading - with competence in finance, budget control and planning, stock management, stakeholder interactions, personnel management and promotion of health and safety. In return Scottish Sea Farms Ltd will offer an attractive salary package, company vehicle, pension support and production bonus, along with a commitment to support your development with training and close mentoring. A full relocation package would be available for successful candidates that are from outside the Orkney Islands.

All applicants are required to have a full, clean driver's license.

If you would like to know more please contact Claire Scott on 01786 445521 or email claire.scott@scottishseafarms.com to obtain an application pack.

Closing date for applications is 9th March, 2012

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland
LOCAL CO-ORDINATOR
Lochaber/Oban

Part-time 15 Hours
Salary Scale: £19,286 - £22,934 (pro rata)
Salary Points 20-26, NJC Salary Scale

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland improves the quality of life for people in Scotland affected by chest, heart and stroke illness, through medical research, influencing public policy, advice and information and support in the community.

The Community Services Department provides services designed to support people who have had a stroke with an emphasis on those with communication problems.

The successful applicant will support existing services and develop new services in line with community need. Current service provision is mainly in the form of support groups which are designed to support and promote communication and encourage social interaction. The groups are managed by the Local Co-ordinator with the support of a team of trained and dedicated volunteers.

Demonstration of a positive attitude towards people with disabilities, the ability to recruit, manage and motivate a team of volunteers, excellent communication and interpersonal skills will be required to fulfil this role.

This post is home-based. The use of own car and a current valid driving licence is essential (expenses paid at mileage rate).

The post is subject to membership of the Protection for Vulnerable Groups Scheme.

For an informal discussion please contact Libby Waugh, Regional Manager, on 01463 794771 or by e-mail on libby.waugh@chss.org.uk

For further details and application pack, please contact the HR Department on 0131 225 6963 or e-mail kelly.harkins@chss.org.uk You can also download an application pack from our website: www.chss.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 12 noon Friday 9th March 2012.

Interviews will be held in Fort William on Thursday 22nd March 2012.

CHSS aims to be an equal opportunities employer. Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland and CHSS are operating names of the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association Scotland
 A registered Scottish charity No. SC018761.

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ACHA
 argyll community housing association

Customer Services Assistant (2 posts) **Oban**

1 x 26 hours per week Maternity Leave cover - In house repairs team
 1 x 35 hours per week Temporary to 31st March 2013 - Area Team

Customer Services Assistant Lochgilphead

1 x 35 hours per week Temporary Post to 31st December 2012 - Area Team
 Salary Grade 10 (£15,646 - £17,385 pro rata)

To apply visit our website at www.acha.co.uk;
 Tel 01546 605 859 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk

Closing Date for all applications: 12 noon on Friday 9th March 2012

STRATHCLYDE POLICE | Keeping people safe

It might be our police officers you see on your street and in your community. But maybe you never thought about the thousands of people who support our police officers. But they are here every day, dealing with all kinds of situations - thinking and acting effectively whatever comes up.

Albany Street, Oban
TEMPORARY POLICE CUSTODY & SECURITY OFFICER (MALE)
 £18,402 - £20,481 + Allowances REF: R53/11/OT

Closing date 8 March 2012.
 Testing date w/c 19 March 2012.
 Interview date to be arranged.

Visit www.strathclyde.police.uk/recruitment
 email recruiting_forcesupport@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk
 or call 01355 566350

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 Lochgilphead PA31 8RR
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Head Gardener

A full-time Head Gardener is required for Glenborrodale Castle. The successful candidate will be responsible for the regeneration, improvement and maintenance of a Grade A listed coastal garden with a further walled garden. In addition, the role will require liaison with the castle's resident chef to produce flowers, fruit and vegetables for the castle. The ideal candidate will be highly motivated and able to work under their own initiative, with significant experience in horticulture and arboriculture. In addition, a practical ability to maintain buildings and machinery would be an advantage.

An excellent salary is payable, along with live-in accommodation. Work may be available for a partner.

Please contact Lise Williamson MacDougall for a detailed job description and application form: Bell Ingram Ltd, 2 Gibraltar Street, Oban PA34 4AY. Tel: 01631-566122 or email lise.macdougall@bellingham.co.uk

JEWSON

We have an exciting opportunity for Sales Executive in Oban and the surrounding area. If you have enthusiasm and the drive to succeed, we'll offer you excellent benefits and career opportunities.

To apply visit www.sgbdcareers.co.uk

ACROSS
 travel for those needing special care

Small charity, specialising in group pilgrimages for the seriously ill or unable to Lourdes, France, is looking for an administrator to provide office support in its office in Inveraray. The role involves handling phone enquiries, updating customer records and spreadsheets, as well as document collation and dispatch.

Good organisation and planning skills required. Good knowledge of MS Office). Book-keeping experience an advantage. **Fixed term contract to end September 2012. Hours 37.5 per week. Salary: £9 per hour.**

To apply please send your CV and a covering letter outlining relevant experience and current salary to marianne@across.org.uk. Closing date for applications: **March 2nd 2012.**
www.across.org.uk

Require
AJC CIVILS LIMITED
GROUNDWORKS FOREMAN

for ongoing contracts in Mid Argyll and Kintyre
 Salary dependant on experience.

Written applications to
AJC Civils, Seagrove, Kilkerran Park, Campbeltown, PA28 6UG

Oban Times RECRUITMENT

51% of people turn to their local newspaper first when looking for a new job.

Source: Recruitment Choice, The Newspaper Society 2005

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ASSISTANT KEEPER

Circa £19k per annum & Cottage

Cobbinshaw Angling Association is seeking to fill the position of Assistant Keeper. The successful applicant will report directly to the Head Keeper and assist in the day to day running of the fishery.

Key responsibilities will be fish husbandry, repair and maintenance of equipment etc. Good communication and numeracy skills are essential along with a conscientious and committed approach to flexible working arrangements.

A three bedroom cottage is available with the position. A clean driving licence is also required.

Salary circa £19k per annum paid monthly.

All applications with accompanying CV should be sent to Ian Bailey, Hon Secretary, 4 McLardy Court, Uphall, West Lothian EH52 5SL or emailed to cobbinshawaa@googlemail.com by 9th March 2012.

Companion wanted in Oban

To have coffee and chat with an 85yr old lady in her own home. No personal care required, just your company. Part time hours
Please contact 07786368781

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES
Media Sales Executive

campbeltown courier
 Incorporating Argyllshire Advertiser
Media Sales Executive

The Oban Times and the Campbeltown Courier are seeking to recruit Media Sales Executives to join our experienced sales teams in Oban and Campbeltown. Applicants should be lively, enthusiastic, good communicators and committed to customer satisfaction. The successful candidates will work across a variety of publications and products. Ongoing in-house training will be given as required.

A full driving licence is essential as you may not necessarily be office based but could have the opportunity to travel throughout Argyll and surrounding areas in one of our company vehicles.

We offer an excellent basic salary along with bonus, generous annual holiday entitlement, company pension scheme, life assurance and private medical insurance.

If you are looking for a career with a well established company and have the above attributes - we want to hear from you.

Please apply by e-mail with a full C.V including contact details to:
ali@obantimes.co.uk

Closing date: Monday, 27th February, 2012

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES **campbeltown courier** **argyllshire advertiser** **THE ARRAN BANNER**

Oban Times RECRUITMENT

Driver/Escort
 £15,125 - £16,031 pro rata **Lochgilphead Ref CTF00889**
 20 hours
 ☎ 01369 708558

School Crossing Patrol
 £12,270 - £13,022 pro rata **Taynuilt Primary School Ref DVR00706**
 16.28 hours
 ☎ 01546 604894

Closing date: 9 March 2012.
 To apply visit our website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/jobs

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Source: Recruitment Choice, The Newspaper Society 2005

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**MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
PLOUGH DREDGING: CORPACH**

Notice is hereby given that British Waterways Scotland has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of plough dredging at:

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Location	Co-ordinates	Co-ordinates
Corpach	56 50.521 N	005 07.368 W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Corpach Sea Lock Office

Objections relating to safety of navigation or environmental issues in respect of the application should be made in writing to:

Licensing Operations Team, Marine Scotland, Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DB within 28 days of the date of this notice or by email: MS.Marinelicensing@scotland.gsi.gov.uk, quoting reference: FKB/D442

British Waterways Scotland, Canal House, Applecross Street, Glasgow, G4 9SP

The Scottish Government

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

**ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984
THE A82 PULPIT ROCK IMPROVEMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - DECISION TO PROCEED WITH PROJECT**

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS give notice that, in terms of paragraphs 7(1B) of Schedule 1 to the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, they have decided to proceed with the A82 Pulpit Rock Improvement in relation to which an environmental impact assessment has been made, and they have complied with their obligations under paragraphs 7(1A) of that Act.

A COPY of the decision of the Scottish Ministers is available for inspection on Transport Scotland's website at www.transportscotland.gov.uk

**ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984
THE A82 TRUNK ROAD (PULPIT ROCK IMPROVEMENT) ORDER 2012**

The Scottish Ministers hereby give notice that on the Sixteenth day of February Two Thousand and Twelve they made the following Orders in connection with improving the A82 Dalnottar - Inverness Trunk Road at Pulpit Rock:

- The A82 Trunk Road (Pulpit Rock Improvement) Order 2012 under sections 5(2) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to provide for the construction of a new length of trunk road to form part of the existing A82 Trunk Road, and
- The A82 Trunk Road (Pulpit Rock Improvement) (Stopping Up) Order 2012 under section 68(1) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 stopping up the trunk road from a point on the trunk road, 181 metres or thereby east of the Pulpit Rock Monument, in a generally south-easterly direction for a distance of 143 metres or thereby, to a point on the trunk road 271 metres or thereby south-east of the Pulpit Rock Monument.

COPIES of the Orders, relative plans and a statement of the reasons for making the order under section 68(1), may be inspected, free of charge, during business hours from 23rd February 2012 until 6th April 2012 at: - Transport Scotland, Reception, 9th Floor, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow; Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Carrochan, Carrochan Road, Balloch G83 8EG; Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT and Arduil Hotel, Arduil, Loch Lomond G83 7EB.

Any person aggrieved by either or both of these Orders who wishes to question their validity or any of the provisions therein on the grounds that they are not within the powers of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 or that any requirement of the Act has not been complied with in relation to the Order(s) may, within 6 weeks of 23rd February 2012, make application to the Court of Session for the suspension of the operation of, or the quashing of, the Order(s) or any provision contained therein.

**THE ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984
THE ACQUISITION OF LAND (AUTHORISATION PROCEDURE) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1947
THE A82 TRUNK ROAD (PULPIT ROCK IMPROVEMENT)
COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2012**

- Notice is hereby given that the Scottish Ministers (herein referred to as "the acquiring authority"), in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 103 to 108 inclusive of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as read with section 110(2) of that Act, have made a Compulsory Purchase Order entitled "The A82 Trunk Road (Pulpit Rock Improvement) Compulsory Purchase Order 2012".
- The Order as made provides for the purchase of the land described in the Schedule hereto, for the purpose of improving the A82 Dalnottar - Inverness Trunk Road at Pulpit Rock.
- A copy of the Order as confirmed and the map referred to therein have been deposited at the offices of Transport Scotland, 9th Floor, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF; Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Carrochan, Carrochan Road, Balloch G83 8EG; Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT and may be seen without payment of fee from Monday to Friday between the hours of 08:45 and 16:45 on business days and also at the Arduil Hotel, Arduil, Loch Lomond G83 7EB, Monday to Friday between the hours of 10:00 and 18:00.
- The Order as made becomes operative on the Twenty Third day of February Two Thousand and Twelve being the date on which this notice is first published; but a person aggrieved by the Order may, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 15 of the First Schedule to the Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedure) (Scotland) Act 1947 as extended by section 60 of the Land Compensation (Scotland) Act 1973, by application to the Court of Session within 6 weeks from that date, question its validity on the grounds (i) that the authorisation granted by the Order is not empowered to be granted or (ii) that the applicant's interests have been substantially prejudiced by failure to comply with any statutory requirement relating to the Order.
- The acquiring authority may acquire the land to which this notice relates by making a general vesting declaration under section 195 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Such a declaration shall not be executed before the end of the period of two months beginning with the date of the first publication of this notice except with the consent of every occupier of the land affected. The effect of the making of such a declaration is to vest the land in the acquiring authority at the end of the appropriate period and is more fully explained in Form 8 (Statement to be included in Form 4 where a general vesting declaration is to be made) contained in the Compulsory Purchase of Land (Scotland) Regulations 2003. A copy of the said Regulations has also been deposited and may be seen as aforesaid.
- Persons entitled to claim compensation in respect of any interest in the land are invited to give information with respect to their name and address and the land and their interests therein on the prescribed form, a copy of which will be sent by the acquiring authority on application to the Director of Major Transport Infrastructure Projects, 7th Floor North, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF.

**S. A. M. Fairweather
A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers
Transport Scotland, Major Transport Infrastructure Projects, Buchanan House, Glasgow G4 0HF.**

16th February 2012.
This is the Schedule referred to in the foregoing Notice relating to the A82 Trunk Road (Pulpit Rock Improvement) Compulsory Purchase Order 2012

SCHEDULE
The plot references and areas referred to below correspond to those given in the Schedule and the map annexed to "The A82 Trunk Road (Pulpit Rock Improvement) Compulsory Purchase Order 2012".

Plot No	Land in the County of Dumbarton
1	Land lying to the south east of the Pulpit Rock Monument and west of the existing A82 Trunk Road
2	Land forming the solum of the existing A82 Trunk Road lying to the east and north east of the Pulpit Rock Monument
3 & 4	Land and loch bed lying to the east and north east of the Pulpit Rock Monument and east of the existing A82 Trunk Road
5, 6 & 7	Land lying to the north east of the Pulpit Rock Monument and west of the existing A82 Trunk Road



To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
12/00050/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse and garage	Land South of Cill Bheige Davaig Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Davaig
12/00254/PP	Alterations to existing sun lounge to form conservatory	3 Reef Terrace Crossapoll Isle of Tiree Argyll and Bute PA77 6UT	Tiree Area Office
12/00257/PP	Formation of jetty on the foreshore for private recreational use.	Land South West of Gosteen Farmhouse Lochdon Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA64 6AP	Sub Post Office Craignure
12/00287/PP	Erection of single storey rear extension.	54 Rockfield Road Tobermory Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6FN	Tobermory Area Office
12/00329/PPP	Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse.	Plot 1 Land South West of Camus Nan Eun Clachan Seal Isle of Seil Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4TL	Sub Post Office Balvicar
12/00331/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and installation of septic tank.	Land North West of Cnoc Mor Ardun Bunesan Isle of Mull	Sub Post Office Bunesan Isle of Mull
12/00335/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse.	Plot 2 Land South East of Camus Nan Eun Clachan Seal Isle of Seil Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4TL	Sub Post Office Balvicar

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Argyll and Bute Council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8SE. A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

COUNCIL SURGERY

Councillors Roddy McCuish (Ward 4 Oban South and the Isles) and Louise Glen-Lee (Ward 5 Oban North and Lorn) Will be holding a joint surgery in Meeting Room 1, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 2.30pm to 5.00pm on Friday 24th February 2012.

No appointment is necessary. To make an appointment with the Councillors outwith these times, they can be contacted as follows: roderick.mccuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk or Tel: 01631 567142 and louise-glen-lee@argyll-bute.gov.uk or phone/text 07717 526 999 or 01546 604029

COUNCIL TAX 2012/2013

As required by Section 96 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, notice is hereby given that the Council Tax has been set by Argyll and Bute Council in terms of Section 93 of that Act and the amounts payable in respect of chargeable dwellings in each valuation band are as follows:-

Valuation Band	Property Values	Council Tax
A	Up to £27,000	785.33
B	£27,001 to £35,000	916.22
C	£35,001 to £45,000	1047.11
D	£45,001 to £58,000	1178.00
E	£58,001 to £80,000	1439.78
F	£80,001 to £106,000	1701.56
G	£106,001 to £212,000	1963.33
H	Over £212,000	2356.00

SALLY LOUDON, Chief Executive, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT February 2012

CROFTERS COMMISSION COIMISEAN NAN CROITEARAN DECROFTING APPLICATIONS

Applicant, Croft, Extent/Purpose, Case number
Mr A M MacPhail
67 Ormsalbeg,
Ardnamurchan & Sunart
0.361 ha - Existing house site
4.86.37090

Comments can be made to the Crofters Commission by any member of the crofting community within the locality of the land, within 14 days of the date of this newspaper. Crofters Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW info@crofterscommission.org.uk

The Oban Times is purchased by 84% of all households in rural Oban making it the 7th largest selling weekly, paid for, newspaper in Scotland.

Our Lochaber Edition outsells any other newspaper in rural Lochaber with a circulation of 4,745 giving a readership each week of *112,896.

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CLOSER TO HOME

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, FULTON HOUSE, GORDON SQUARE, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6XY; online at www.highland.gov.uk and, where given, the alternative location(s).

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

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description	Alternative locations where application may be inspected
12/00398/FUL	Former Ajo Wiggins Paper Mill Site Annat Point Corpach Fort William	BSW Timber Sawmill Phase 3 - Erection of log sorting line, sawline and timber sorting line to produce finished timber and ancillary and support facilities	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00410/FUL	Garden Grounds of Foinaven Corpach Fort William	Erection of house	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00490/PIP	Land 35m to East of Bank Cottage Banowie Fort William	Erection of 1 pair semi-detached houses (renewal of 07/00564/OUTLD)	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00519/FUL	75m South West of Fosgadh Morar	Erection of garage (amended design to planning permission ref:10/03770/FUL)	Mallaig Post Office (14 days)

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008

Planning Application

Pre-Application Consultation

Highland Council, Education, Culture & Sport Service are conducting pre-application consultation on the following development proposal:
Construction of New Community Primary School at land adjacent to An t-Eas, Lundavra Road, Fort William.

Further information can be obtained from Highland Council, Housing & Property Service, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William, PH33 6EL, opening hours 9:00am to 5:00pm; Monday to Friday.

A public exhibition will be held at the West End Hotel, High Street, Fort William on Friday, 2nd March 2012, the exhibition shall be open between 11:00am and 7:00pm.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposals should do so by writing to Mr Ron MacKenzie, Highland Council, Education, Culture & Sport Service, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX by the 23rd March 2012.

PLEASE NOTE: No application has been submitted to the Highland Council in relation to this proposal. Any comments made to the prospective applicant at this time are not representations to the council and would not be considered as part of any future application. If the prospective applicant subsequently submits a formal application for planning permission there will be an opportunity to make representations on that application to the Council.

Oban Times Oban Times Oban Times
PUBLIC NOTICES PUBLIC NOTICES PUBLIC NOTICES

WATER ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003

WATER ENVIRONMENT (CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2001

APPLICATION FOR AUTHORISATION

ARDMADDY SOUTH (PORT NA MORACHD)

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with regulation 13 of the above Regulations, that an application has been made to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) by Lakeland Marine Farm Ltd (part of the Meridian Salmon Group) for authorisation to carry on a controlled activity at Ardmaddy South, namely:

Port Na Morlachd marine cage fish farm, as follows:

Description of Controlled Activity	Waters affected	National Grid reference
Discharge of waste effluent from marine cage farming of Atlantic Salmon with a maximum tonnage of 2500tonnes (including the discharge of sealice chemical therapeutants).	Seil Sound	NM 7739 1349

SEPA considers that the above controlled activity is likely to have an impact of the water environment and on the interests of other users of the water environment.

Any person affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the application may make representations to SEPA in writing within 28 days beginning with the date of this advertisement, at the following address, quoting reference number CAR/L/10999009.

Registry Department, SEPA Dingwall Office, Craesser House, Fodderty Way, Dingwall, IV15 9XB.

A copy of the application and any accompanying information may be inspected free of charge, at the above address, between 9.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday (except local and national holidays) and by prior arrangement at SEPA's Lochgilphead Office, 2 Smithy Lane, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8TA, or telephone 01546 602876. Alternatively, the application may be viewed on SEPA's website at: www.sepa.org.uk/about_us/consultations.aspx.

A statement of the reasons for SEPA's assessment that the above controlled activity or activities is likely to have an impact on the water environment will be made available by SEPA on request by contacting the above office.

Written representations received by SEPA within 28 days of this advertisement will be taken into consideration in determining whether or not to grant the application. Any such representations will be placed in a public register unless the person making them requests that they should not be. Where such a request is made SEPA will include a statement in the register indicating that representations have been made which have been the subject of such a request.

When ready to determine the application, SEPA will serve notice on any person who has made a representation within 28 days of this advertisement, information them of SEPA's proposed determination and giving them the opportunity to notify the Scottish Ministers in writing that they object to SEPA's proposed determination within 21 days of the notice being served.

Before determining the application, SEPA will:

- assess the risk to the water environment posed by the carrying on of the activity or activities;
- assess the indirect effects of that impact on any other aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected;
- consider any likely adverse social and economic effects of that impact and of any indirect environmental effects that have been identified;
- consider the likely environmental, social and economic benefits of the activity;
- assess the impact of the controlled activity or activities on the interest of other users of the water environment;
- assess what steps may be taken to ensure efficient and sustainable water use; and
- Apply and have regard to relevant legislation.

SEPA will then either grant or refuse to grant an authorisation to carry on the activity or each of the activities referred to above and will make its decision available to the public together with the main reasons for it, the matters considered in making it and, if granted, details of any measures that will be taken to mitigate the impact.

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- Front fogs • MF controls

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- 11 61 118 Diesel Performance Edition 3dr, Alpine white, black cloth/sensatec, 3,481 miles, 18" alloys, sport seats and steering wheel, auto air con, MF controls, sun protection glass.....**£17,995**
- 10 10 120i M Sport Coupé Auto, Black sapphire, black cloth/sensatec, 7,415 miles, 18" alloys, PDC rear, auto air con, MF controls, front fogs.....**£17,495**

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- 07 57 320i SE, Montego blue, black cloth, 46,387 miles, 17" alloys, PDC, cruise, MF controls, auto air con.....**£9,995**
- 07 57 318i M Sport Touring, Le Mans blue, black cloth/alcantara, 18" alloys, rain sensor, auto headlight activation, PDC, cruise, auto air con, front fogs, sun protection glass.....**£11,995**
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- 11 11 318 Diesel M Sport Touring, Titanium silver, black cloth/alcantara, 3,921 miles, 17" alloys, Bluetooth, electric folding exterior mirrors, PDC, cruise, auto air con, front fogs.....**£20,995**
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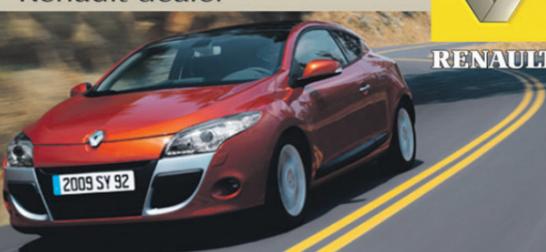


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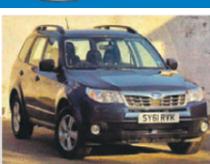
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56 MITSUBISHI SHOGUN Warrior, Commercial SWB auto, heated leather, multi cd, cruise, black £9,950

58 MITSUBISHI L200, 4LPE, single cab pickup, e-pack, air cond, black 40k £9,750

56 MITSUBISHI L200 4LPE, club cab, canopy, E-pack, air con, met green, 25k £8,950

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09 MITSUBISHI L200 4LPE, double cab pickup, alloys, E-pack, met black, 80k £13,950

09 NISSAN NAVARA OUTLAW plus, double cab pickup, manual, leather, sunroof, black 30k £13,950

09 NISSAN NAVARA Platinum Double Cab Pick-up, manual, leather, sun roof, black pepper, 58k miles £10,950

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08 VW TRANSPORTER T32 1.9TDI LWB High top van, air con, remote locking, white £7,450

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OARS Pair of 6ft wooden oars. Good condition. Target £49.99 Telephone 07879 241047.

SAFETY HARNESSSES Two sets with tether, two hooks, new, Campbelltown £15 each Telephone 01586 554969 eves.

SAILING JACKET Douglas Gill offshore, XL, blue/white, good condition, Campbelltown, £49.99 Telephone 01586 554969 eves.

SAILING TROUSERS Douglas Gill offshore, size XL, blue, good condition, Campbelltown, £49.99 Telephone 01586 554969 eves.

SAILING TROUSERS Douglas Gill offshore, size XL, red, good condition, Campbelltown £49.99 Telephone 07947 855941.

WET SUIT TWF, medium-large £5 Telephone 07796 774132.

WET SUIT medium, Gull, £10 Telephone 07796 774132.

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BUOYANCY AID Kayak style, black & red. Palm, 40-80kg £10 Telephone 07796 774132.

LIFEJACKETS Gas baltic inflatable lifejackets, two, adult size, Campbelltown, £25 each Telephone 01586 554969 eves.

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SAILING TROUSERS Douglas Gill offshore, size XL, blue, good condition, Campbelltown, £49.99 Telephone 01586 554969 eves.

SAILING TROUSERS Douglas Gill offshore, size XL, red, good condition, Campbelltown £49.99 Telephone 07947 855941.

WET SUIT TWF, medium-large £5 Telephone 07796 774132.

WET SUIT medium, Gull, £10 Telephone 07796 774132.

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WANTED

SCRAP METAL all types of scrap metal, we uplift scrap cars, call Mr Cook, West Coast Scrap Metals. Telephone 01499 500638 or 07787 991636?

TOURING CARAVAN wanted touring caravan, reasonable condition, suitable for temporary accommodation for Forestry work. Buyer can collect Telephone 07771 947061.

WANTED Copper, Brass, Lead, Zinc, Stainless Steel, All Alloys. All types of Cable, Household and Armoured. Best prices paid Telephone 07770 724851 or 0800 959 6483.

PERSONALS

A Big Thank You To all my family and friends, who made my 50th Birthday Party a fantastic night. I raised £520 towards 'Make a Wish Foundation' children's charity. Cheers Ruth MacDonald.

THANKS I would like to thank my family and friends for the lovely cards, gifts, flowers and money received for my 18th birthday. I would also like to thank my Nana and Grandad, Christina for the beautiful cake and Ellie for the entertainment. A great night was had by all. Sophie MacLennan

OBAN TIMES PERSONALS

FISH TANK with water filter pump. 61cm by 31cm, 50 Litre capacity £25 Telephone 01631 565764.

FISH TANK w18 d12 h15 with table 12d 18w 13 1/2 £10 Telephone 01631 563033.

GUINEA PIG CAGE indoor, grey plastic base, wire top, from Pets at Home, 2yrs old. Inc hay rack & little house, easy clean, gd cond £20 Telephone 01852 200722.

ROTASTAK SPACE COMMAND suit hamster, gerbils or mice. Only bought in October & cost £50 £25 Telephone 07824 611226.

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BUSINESS STATIONERY Design and printing of letter-heads, comp slips and cards, for a hassle free service contact Krisp Print, Telephone 01586 554975.

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LITTLEST PET SHOP House, adventure play centre and more than 70 accessories. Excellent condition, £15 Telephone 07733 062466.

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TRAILER 6+4 Bateson trailer two year old in perfect condition includes jockey wheel and spare, cost £800, £400 Telephone 01852 200206.

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OBAN TIMES PERSONALS

LOCAL services

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Are you stressing about childcare? We can offer a solution!! KILMALLIE PLAYGROUP AND DAYCARE. Open during holidays. Arts & Crafts, Stories, Outdoor Play, Toys & Games. Term Time and School Holidays Competitive Prices. Children aged between 2 1/2 and six years old. For further details call Carole on 07876 260967

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carpentry & joinery

BIRTHS

FREYTAG - TEMPLETON - Jennifer and Robert are delighted to announce the arrival of their son Henry Thomas Freytag-Templeton, at Wishaw General Hospital on February 17, 2012. First grandson for Patrick and Margaret Freytag, Oban.

MACNEILL - Russell and Donalda nee McArthur, are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter Mia Grace, at the Southern General Hospital on February 14, 2012.

DEATHS

CAMERON - Catherine McKichan. Peacefully at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley on February 19, 2012, after a long illness bravely borne, Cathie (formerly of A F Craig & Co. Ltd and the Glasgow Morvern Association). A much loved aunt, great aunt, sister-in-law and friend to many. Funeral service will take place in Renfrew.

CARMICHAEL - Unexpectedly, but peacefully on Tuesday, February 14, 2012, James Alexander Carmichael of Keills, Islay. Formerly Minister of Scotland

Minister of Ardgour, Kinairloch and Strontian, loved and loving husband of Elizabeth Watt and a dear brother, son-in-law, brother-in-law and uncle. Funeral service from Ardgour Church on Thursday, February 23 at 2pm. All friends respectfully invited.

DOW - Peacefully at Abbeyfield Nursing Home, Ballachulish, on Friday, February 17, 2012, Mary Jane (Molly), loving wife of Jim, much loved mother of James, dear mother-in-law of Laura and cherished granny of Jamie and Christopher.

FERGUSON - Passed away peacefully, family by her side, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on Saturday February 18, 2012, Georgina, (Ina), 5 Crauchan Cottages, Taynuilt, beloved wife of Donald John and much loved mother to David, Lindsey and Derek and dear mother-in-law to Tracy. Treasured sister to Bobby, Marie, Jacky and David and dear sister-in-law to all. Cherished granny to Heather, Bethany, Holly, Sara and Joseph and a much loved Auntie Ina. Funeral service will be held at Muckairn Church, Taynuilt, on Thursday, (today), February 23, 2012 at 1p.m., thereafter to Muckairn Cemetery. Retiring collection to North Argyll Carers Centre, Oban.

MACRAE - Peacefully at Morar Lodge Care Home, Helensburgh on Sunday February 19, 2012, Annie, nee MacInnes, of Fionnphort, Mull, age 81, beloved wife of the late Bertie MacRae, dear sister, aunt and great aunt. Funeral at St Eran's, Creich on Thursday February 23, at 12 noon. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to RNLI and Alzheimer Scotland.

MENZIES - Peacefully at home, "Fasgadh", 21 Ford Spence Court, Benderloch, on Wednesday, February 15, 2012, in his 89th year, John William, (Johnny), formerly of "Gyllar", Croft Road, Oban, beloved husband of the late Grace and much loved father of Gwen, dear father-in-law, grandpa and great grandpa to Archie, John, Elaine, Donald, George, Matthew, Zara and Aimee. Fortified by Rites of the Holy Church R.I.P. Donations in memorial to North Argyll Carers Centre, Oban.

STEWART - Lily Jane MacKenzie. Peacefully, on February 17, 2012, in her Ninety-fourth year, in the care of the staff of the Lynn of Lorne, Benderloch, Lily (formerly primary school teacher at Rannoch, Perthshire) daughter of the late Robert John Stewart and Flora Jane MacKenzie. Funeral service at Lismore Parish Church on Friday February 24, at 1pm, to which all family and friends are welcome.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
CAMPBELL - The family of the late Rebecca Reid Campbell (Cissie), would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the kind expressions of sympathy extended to them following their recent sad loss. Special thanks to the Rev Alex Whiteford for his comforting service and the nurses and staff of Kingsmill's Care Home for their kindness to Cissie over the last three years, also to Bill and Martin Fraser and their staff for excellent

funeral arrangements. Finally thanks to all who donated so generously, raising over £500 for Down's Syndrome Society Scotland and Petty Church, 36 Culloden Road, Balloch, Inverness.

MACDONALD - Catherine (Trena), Maria, Noel and family of the late Donald William would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their overwhelming support and kindness by expressions of sympathy cards, Mass offerings received and to all who attended the Funeral Mass and graveside. A special thank you to Father Roddy McAuley and Father James MacNeil for a comforting Funeral Mass and prayers. Mike McFall and staff for their caring and dignified handling of the funeral staff of the Railway Club, and for catering. Our thanks also go to all who visited Donald while in hospital in the Belford, Raigmore, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary for helping to keep Donald's spirits up. Our special thanks go to all the doctors and staff of the Tweeddale Surgery and Belford Hospital. The sum of £500 was raised for the Belford Hospital and Macmillan Nurses. God bless you all.

MACQUARIE - The family of the late Elizabeth Macquarie thank relatives, friends and neighbours for the messages of sympathy received in their loss. Grateful thanks to all who so kindly cared for her at Lynn Court and the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban. Thank you to Donald MacKinnon for his fitting tribute and D & A Munn for their guidance and efficient arrangements. Finally, thank you to all who joined us to pay their respects at the service and graveside.

MCCULLOCH - The family of the late Patrick (Pat) would like to thank family and friends for the help, support, phone calls and cards they gave us following the sad death of our father and granda. Special thanks to Father James MacNeil, at St Columba's Cathedral for the comforting service, the nursing staff at Ward I Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, and all the staff at Eader Glinn Care Home. For all those who attended his interment at Pennyfuir Cemetery and later attended the buffet at the Royal Hotel. Many thanks to Catriona of Hamish Hoey for handling all the funeral arrangements in such a caring and professional manner. The retiral collection raised £110 which has been donated to Eader Glinn Residents Fund.

MCKAY - The family of the late Alan McKay wish to thank everyone for the many cards and letters of condolences. We also wish to thank those who attended the funeral service, Rev. McCormick for a comforting service, Hamish Hoey for help, advice and quiet professionalism; to Rev Miller for his understanding at the committal, and to all the wonderful staff of Ward B at Oban Hospital for their consideration and respect for Alan in his final hours. Our thanks go to all of you.

O'HARA - Janet and all the family of the late Tommy O'Hara would like to thank staff in Wards A and B, Lorn and Islands Hospital, District Nurses, Macmillan Nurses and doctors at Lorn Medical Centre. A special thank you to all the girls at CARE+ who saw to Tommy's comfort all day in his last few weeks. Thanks to Ian MacInnes for funeral arrangements and Donald MacKinnon for his very comforting service. Thanks to all who came to the church and graveside and Soroba House for catering.

BROWN - In loving memory of my dear husband Alasdair, who died February 25, 2005, also remembering my brother-in-law Hector, who died on March 24, 2004, also remembering all loved ones gone before and since. Deep in my heart your memories are kept. Of the ones I loved and will never forget. Gar caoidh s gar ionndrainn. - Seonaid, 11 Balephuil, Tiree.

FARQUHAR - In loving memory of Molly and Donald. - Rhoda.

GIBSON - In loving memory of our dear mum Marybell who died February 23, 1987. Always in our thoughts. Forever in our hearts. - Iain and family, Dalmally. Margaret and family, Canada.

GIBSON - In loving memory of my dear wife Marybell who died February 23, 1987. Loved and remembered ever day. - Jimmy.

LAMONT - In loving memory of a missed mum and granny Joanne, died February 17, 2009. Always in our thoughts.

MACCORMICK - Treasured memories of a dear mum and gran Catherine who passed away February 27, 2002. You fell asleep without saying goodbye. But memories of you will never die. - Colin, Flora and Graeme.

MACCORMICK - In loving memory of my dear mother Catherine, died February 27, 2002 and my dear father Peter, died August 1, 1980 and all those near and dear gone before and since. I think of you in silence. I make no outward show. For what it meant to lose you. Only those who love you know. My thoughts go back to happy days. When we were all together. The family chain is broken now. But memories live forever.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of Alexander and his son Ian, Uisken, Bunesan. Forever in our hearts. From loving family in Mull and Oban.

MACDONALD - Precious memories of our dear mother Mary, who died on February 24, 1998. Deep are the memories. Precious they stay. - Mary, Jessie and Ian x x

MACDONALD - Treasured memories of our beloved mother, gran and great-gran, Margaret MacDonald who passed away on February 21, 2005. Seven years have passed since that sad day. The mum we loved was called away. A wonderful mum, so very rare. Content in her home and always there. She guided our paths and helped us along. If we walk in her footsteps we'll never go wrong. A smile for all, a heart of gold. The best the world could ever hold. Never selfish, always kind. These are the memories she left behind. Remembering loved ones gone before. - May Margaret and Tearlach, Main Road Farm, Balephuil, Tiree. Seven years ago brought heartache. And sorrow in it's wake. But we were left with memories. From us no one can take. When our footsteps falter. And the path we take may err. We look to you on high dear Mam. And watch that shining star. Forever in our thoughts. Remembering loved ones gone before. - Mary Flora, Sandra and families.

MACDOUGALL - Will always be remembered my friend and neighbour Ewen, who was taken from me on February 25, 2010. All the good times are gone. But I will never forget them. - Your friend, Ewen MacLennan, Tigh-Na-Coille, Spean Bridge.

MCGILL - In loving memory of Donald MacGill, a loving husband and father, who passed away on February 23, 1991. Always in our thoughts. Nancy, Anne and Neil.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of our dear mum Veronica, who died February 25, 2000. You left a place no one can fill. We miss you Mum and always will. - Yvonne, Richard, Michael and Innes.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of my precious daughter Veronica who passed away February 25, 2000. The years go by so quickly but the pain of losing you seems like yesterday. - Your loving Mum.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of Veronica, a much loved sister and auntie. Always in our thoughts. Forever in our hearts. - Violet, Iain, Janette, Jennifer and families.

MACSEVENNEY - In loving memory of Doris. Your life was a blessing. Your memory a treasure. You are loved beyond words. And missed beyond measure. From Graham, Jackie, Willie and Grace.

MCKELLAR - Cherished memories of my husband Lachlan who was sadly taken from us on February 24, 2010. Your presence we miss your memory we treasure. loving you always forgetting you never. Your loving wife and sons Donna, Ewan, Kyle, Kern and Ruan. XXXXXX

MCKICHAN - In memory of Don McKichan, February 15, 1998 and Annie McKichan, February 16, 2002. Never forgotten. - Love Kath, Annie, Robert and kids.

MCLENNAN - In loving memory of our brother and uncle Willie, who passed away on February 24, 2008. Sadly missed along life's way. Quietly remembered every day. Elsie, Margaret and families.

MORTON - In loving memory of a dear wife and mother Catherine passed away February 24, 1995. Forever in our thoughts. - John, John and David.

MORTON - In loving memory of a dear mum and nana Catherine passed away February 24, 1995. Always in our thoughts. - Norman, Karen, Christopher, Lewis and Aran xxx

MORTON - In loving memory of my daughter-in-law Catherine Morton, died February 24, 1995. Sadly missed. - Mum

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN
Campbell Street Church
Sunday 26 February 2012
11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.
Phone-In 'Worship Link' available
Rev. Archie McPhail MA, MTh
(01631) 567076
All welcome

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Sunday 26 February 2012
Lent 1
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion..... 08.00
Choral Mattins..... 10.15
Sunday School and Crèche
Parish Eucharist..... 11.30
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Norman MacCallum, Provost.
(01631) 562323
St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Communion..... 11.00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist..... 10.00

OBAN MEMORIALS
Alistair MacLean
Master Sculptor
Glenalma, Soroba Road, Oban
Design and prices on request
LETTERING AND RENOVATING
DONE IN ANY CEMETERY
TEL: 01631 563123 / 565269

Words by the Wayside
"And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd." (Jonah 4:6)
When Jonah sat under the gourd, undisturbed and sheltered, all was bright, and he was pleased and thankful; but destroy the gourd and he is filled with wrath and vexation, a disclosure that his resources are really in what pleased himself, and not in God. For the believer to find them in God, and God alone, the gourd must wither. He must have the pre-eminence in all things.

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In memory of Dawn Joyce

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CARING FOR THE FUTURE
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Please contact
David Mudie (Treasurer)
Oban Hospice Ltd
The Croft
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Oban & Lorn Fundraising Branch
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Tynwald, Glenburn,
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01631 571009

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Please give your financial support by donation, deed of covenant or legacy
Please send to Appeals Department, Highland Arts Effort, Royal Blind Asylum School, P.O. Box 500, Gillespie Crescent, Edinburgh, EH10 4HZ

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Islay remembers Commando hero

A LARGE gathering of mourners met at Port Ellen's St John's Church on Tuesday for the funeral of Corporal Menzies MacAffer - the first military funeral on Islay for more than 40 years.

Ardbeg's Cpl MacAffer, who served with Royal Marines 45 Commando, was only 35 years old when he lost his battle with cancer on February 8.

He had been held up as an example of what was expected from a commando and had shown exemplary conduct during the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003 and in the Gulf on board HMS Argyll and other ships.

Among the mourners were

60 Royal Marines, who lined the road from the church to Torrie's corner. Marines then carried the coffin from the church to the Co-op, where the hearse was waiting to take it to Kilnaughton Cemetery.

Menzies' uncle, Craig MacAffer said: 'The military was represented by 60 Royal Marines, which showed what they thought of the boy. That meant a lot to the family.'

'It was a big funeral and the mourners all walked behind the coffin through the village.'

At Kilnaughton a bugle played the Last Post.

Reading his eulogy in the church, commanding

officer Colonel Alan Lister explained how the young Ieach was identified early on in his training as a potential leader.

Medal
He was awarded the Commando Medal, an accolade bestowed on Marines who demonstrate courage, determination, unselfishness and cheerfulness in the face of adversity.

Described by his commanding officer as 'a first class advert for our Corps', Menzies featured on the Ross Kemp documentary on counter-piracy.

Col Lister added: 'Corporal Menzies MacAffer is one of the most impressive,

humble and brave men I have ever met. He was the embodiment of the Commando attributes and lived his life by them.'

Praised for his sporting prowess, Menzies was also an elite skier, representing the Royal Marines, and was an elite biathlon competitor.

In 2001 he was the fourth to finish for the Royal Navy in the London Marathon and as a youth was on the books at Glasgow Rangers Football Club.

The last military funeral to take place on the island was in 1971 for George Hamilton, who was killed in action while serving in Northern Ireland.



Duror Primary School children get on their bikes to celebrate the opening of the new section of the proposed Oban to Fort William cycle path on Tuesday. Highland councillors Brian Murphy and Bren Gormley were in attendance at the event. The path is being built by transport charity Sustrans. 16_108cycle02

Taynuilt SWRI meets whale trust speaker

PRESIDENT Jessie Servant welcomed 17 members and six visitors to the meeting held in Taynuilt village hall on February 8.

Mrs Julia Hamilton was the speaker for the evening and gave a very informative and well-illustrated talk about the work of the Whale and Dolphin Trust.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening, which highlighted many of the hazards for our marine life.

A lovely tea was provided by Jessie Servant and Marlene Stanners and afterwards a vote of thanks was given by Jessie Servant.

Competitions: Three-flower arrangement: 1 Alice Campbell; 2 Cathy Potter; 3 Doreen Penswick. Stormy seas photo: 1 Cathy Potter; 2 Tracey Sage.

25 Years Ago Those Were The Days
The Oban Times
Thursday, February 26, 1987

Valuers dig up council's hidden treasure

VALUATION of paintings and regalia held by Argyll and Bute District Council has revealed an unexpected treasure.

The regalia - mainly provosts' chains of office - have been valued for insurance purposes at over £37,000.

The Victorian gold chain of office worn by successive provosts of Rothesay is alone estimated to be worth £14,000 while the provost's chain at Dunoon has been valued at £10,000.

The regalia includes a gardening trophy at one time awarded to council tenants in Oban and estimated to be worth £700.

Paintings and other works of art owned by the council have been valued by Christies at over £63,000.

Of these, by far the biggest number, 28 in all, is held at the public library and museums in Campbeltown and includes a painting by Sir William McTaggart, RSA, bequeathed by the artist's eldest daughter, Lady Caw, and valued at £10,000. Other items are held at the council chambers at Rothesay, the council's headquarters

Valuers dig up council's hidden treasure

at Kilmory, the town hall at Campbeltown, the district library headquarters at Dunoon and the Corran Halls in Oban.

Most of the items came into the ownership of the district council when the old local authorities were re-structured in 1975.

Garage fire traps two
TWO men narrowly escaped with their lives when fire broke out last Wednesday afternoon near Lochgilphead.

Campbell MacLellan and his brother Iver, joint owners of Bellanoch Garage on the Crinan Canal, were preparing a Vauxhall Nova for sale when what appeared to be the engine ignited without warning.

Iver MacLellan received severe burns as he made attempts to save his brother, who was by this time trapped in the building.

Campbell finally escaped by breaking through a small window in the rear of the shop.

'You don't have time to think, everything caught fire just like that. It was the most frightening experience of my life,' said Campbell later.

All local emergency services were alerted and arrived in less than 20 minutes.

Iver was taken to the Mid Argyll Hospital, Lochgilphead, for treatment, while firemen from Lochgilphead and Tarbert successfully brought the fire under control and prevented it from reaching a nearby showroom and fuel pumps.

Environment lobby excluded from fish farming debate
TUESDAY afternoon's session on the environment at the National Fish Farming Conference in Inverness was criticised for excluding conservation bodies from among the speakers.

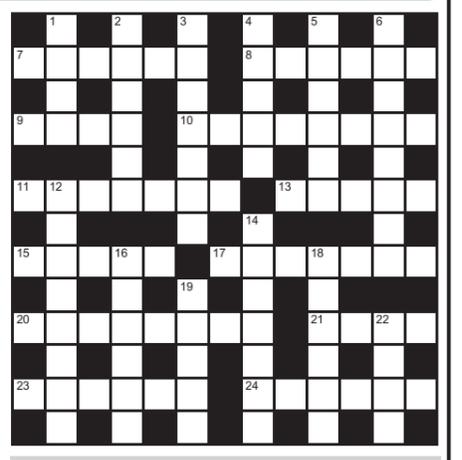
'Not a single conservation organisation has been invited to put the views of the public affected by fish farming,' says the Scottish Science Trust in a teleaxed protest to the organisers.

'The voice of conventional fishermen, tourists, anglers, yachtsmen and local residents is not being heard.'

The session was entitled 'Fish Farming and the Environment', with the main speakers Fisheries Minister John MacKay and Lord Mansfield, of the Crown Commissioners.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- Across**
- Social gathering (6)
 - Undisturbed (2,4)
 - Axlike tool (4)
 - Foot soldiers (8)
 - What went before (7)
 - Above the bedroom ceiling (5)
 - Drooping (5)
 - Emergencies calls at sea (7)
 - Defensive position (8)
 - Arid (4)
 - Ornamental wall design (6)
 - Gaudy trinket (6)
- Down**
- First-place (4)
 - Pressing (6)
 - Impishness (7)
 - Instant (5)
 - Online newsgroup system (6)
 - Forever (8)
 - Rushed (2,1,5)
 - Parcel (7)
 - Long narrow kitchen (6)
 - Renounce (6)
 - Receives remuneration for goods (5)
 - Back (4)



Last week's solution

D	N	A	S	T	S	T	I	B	I	A	
E	I	T	I	W	R	L					
I	N	F	L	I	C	T	I	D	I	C	M
S	T	R	C	L	S	S	C				
M	A	Y	O	R	G	I	L	S	K	I	N
D	R	O	O	P	Y	T	A	T	T	E	R
R	U										
A	T	T	E	M	P	T	G	I	B	E	D
C	L	O	C	I	H	R	E				
U	B	G	A	T							
L	U	E	S	N	A	T					
A	U	D	I	T	E	P	I	G	R	A	M

Seniors on derby duty at the primary league

All Stars versus Lochnell was match of the day

THE Community Pitch welcomed back the teams from the Oban Express Primary Football on Sunday with the seniors taking to the 3G surface for seven-a-side and the youngsters continuing with their fun four-a-side fixtures on the grass rugby pitch in what turned out to be a cold but sunny and fine day, despite the early frosty conditions.

It was derby day in the seniors as it opened with the Lochgilphead derby on pitch 1 which saw the older boys of Red Star put on a very convincing performance against the Scorpions with Joseph Harper claiming a hat-trick.

The Scorpions rallied for their next match against Saints 03 and were two nil up by half time with Jamie Munro on target for both. Craig Millar added a third in the second half to seal the win.

The Scorpions goalkeeper Alistair Cupples was called into action in their next match against the All Stars but despite his heroics he was powerless to prevent a Cammy Scott diving header as the Stars ran out winners.

On pitch 2 the New Saints derby was the opening match with the 02s facing the younger 03s who held out until half time but early in the second half 03s Gavin Forgive latched on to a rebounded shot to smash the ball beyond unsuspecting keeper Innes Horne. Euan Logan added a second on the counter attack but the 03s can be proud of their performance with Adan Munro causing problems with his runs down the flank.

Not disheartened the 03s went on to record a win over the Wasps with Garry McIvor and Connor Moore getting their

names on the score sheet for the second week running.

The third derby of the day was the north Lorn match between Lochnell and Tralee but hat-tricks apiece from Stuart McAllister and James Divers settled the match in Lochnell's favour.

Tralee had earlier been involved in an excellent match against the Galaxy who went in front when Syzmon scored direct from a free kick but some spirited play from Tralee earned them an equaliser when Stuart Black fired a left foot shot across the keeper and into the corner of the net. Galaxy went on to win their match over Wasps with Syzmon again on target.

Over on pitch 3 the Jags opened their day with a win over the Wasps with Ben Smith, Finbar Dunne and Mark McKnight scoring without reply but it was

to be their only win of the day going down to Lochnell, who had Sandy Bevington score twice, and a loss against the impressive Red Star.

This was the exact opposite opening their day with a loss to Saints Boys but then went on to win their next two matches with Cameron Hill scoring two headers in his hat-trick against Galaxy and in their last match Keir MacLean and Jamie Anderson put them on the way to a win over Saints 02 who had Euan Logan score a consolation.

The Saints 02 were asked to punch above their weight against Red Star and opened the scoring with a swerving strike from the left by Lewis Campbell which beat the keeper at his near post but despite some outstanding goalkeeping from Jamie Turner Red Star managed to find an

PRIMARY FOOTBALL

equaliser through Brodie Kallanche as the 02 ran out of steam towards the end.

Match of the day was the game between All Stars and Lochnell with the All Stars racing to a 2-0 half time lead. Lochnell came out a different side in the second half and got themselves back in it with an early goal and then went on to equalise with James Divers scoring his second of the match but it was to be in vain as with time ticking down the All Stars launched a hopeful ball forward which the keeper looked favourable to grasp but Beppe Lopez had other ideas and ghosted in to glance a header into the corner for the winner.

All the teams meet up once more at the Community Pitch next Sunday.



Aaron Paterson of Mull evades several tackles during a match. 07_108dalrugby1



Oban Lorne under-16s, pictured with club coaches, try their new strips for size.

Under-16 players are put through their paces

A 30-STRONG squad of Oban under-16 rugby players met up at Glencruitten on Sunday for an intensive training session and to receive new strips.

The players were put through their paces by a number of Oban Lorne first team players at the first U16 Development Day, sponsored by MacQueen Bros, which has also sponsored the new kit.

Opportunity

Head coach Murray Hamilton said: 'This was an opportunity for the players to train together as a team and work on specific positional skills.'

'A big thank you goes out to all the boys who turned up and the coaches who gave up their Sunday to pass on their valuable knowledge; Robin MacQueen, Craig Ni-

cholson, Billy Thomson, Willie Malone, Ryan Jackson and Cammy Smith.

'A special thanks to Dee Bradbury, president of Oban Lorne RFC, who was in charge of fuelling the performance of the young players, providing excellent lunchtime snacks and a well deserved meal at the end of the game.'

The day was finished with a competitive match between the two inter-school teams, The Crusaders-Intensive training session for the Under 16s and The Highlanders.

The under-16 players were presented with their new strips for next season, which they paid for mainly through a sponsored truck pull. The team pulled the

YOUTH RUGBY

MacQueen Bros removal truck along the esplanade just before Christmas.

Donated

Robin MacQueen of MacQueen Bros was involved with the coaching and on hand to present the strips to the players. MacQueen Bros also kindly donated £100 towards the cost of the strips.

This coming weekend sees many of the Oban Lorne players representing Argyll and Bute when they face Kilmarnock in the West Regional Cup competition. The game is being played at Glencruitten and will be a 1pm kick off. All supporters welcome.

Mini rugby players turn on the style at Dalriada

MORE than 80 mini rugby players from around Argyll gathered at Glencruitten last Sunday for the first Argyll Mini Rugby Dalriada of 2012.

Players from Oban Lorne, Etive Vikings (Taynuilt), Isle of Mull and Mid Argyll all took part in the P4/5 and P6/7 tournaments in a round robin format.

All of the teams produced some superb rugby on the day despite

the cold conditions, which was of huge credit to the volunteer coaches who had prepared them for the day.

Clean Sweep

Taynuilt won the P4/5 age group with a clean sweep of six wins from six games, while Isle of Mull won the P6/7 age group winning all four matches.

The tournament was organised and co-ordinated by Argyll

MINI RUGBY

an Bute Rugby Development Officer Allan Wright and SRU Modern Apprentice Fergus Matheson.

It is the first of a series of tournaments planned for the rest of the season, with the next tournament taking place at Garmoy, Isle of Mull, on March 11.



Pictured is Taynuilt's junior shinty team, who received a new set of strips from sponsor Lorne Sim, right, who runs a garage in the village, L. Sim Auto Services. Also pictured is coach Colin Sloss.

Ben wins gold at Scottish Age Group Championships

A TEENAGE athlete from Kilmore has won a Scottish Indoor Athletics Age Group Championship at his first attempt.

Thirteen-year-old Ben Coates, a pupil at Oban High School, made his debut at the International Athletics Arena in Glasgow's Kelvin Hall on Sunday, competing in the Scottish Indoor Under 14s combined events championship and exceeded all expectations in winning the title and a gold medal.

The competition was in the form of a pentathlon with points awarded for performance in the five events and Ben's day started at 10am with the 60metres hurdles.

Ben had very little preparation for the hurdles but his strength and speed ensured he won his

heat easily in a time of 10.08seconds giving him an impressive 526 points, which was the highest total within the competition.

Next was the long jump and despite having trouble hitting the take-off board Ben leapt out to 4.27metres, which brought his total up to 776 points and at this stage he was in second place overall, 22 points behind the leader.

Personal Best

The shot putt was next and Ben's throw of 7.81metres converted to 355 points and in the high jump he finished second, despite setting a new personal best of 1.52metres. With only the 800metres to go Ben's total of 1,535 points was just 12 ahead of rival Scott Connal of Whittemoss AC. His time of two minutes,

INDOOR ATHLETICS

28.7 seconds, just over a tenth of a second behind the lad from Whittemoss, was enough to take overall victory.

Ben's coach, Bill MacCallum, said: 'What an introduction to big time athletics for Ben and this was quite an achievement considering the lack of facilities locally, especially the lack of a long jump sandpit and shot putt circle.'

Next up for Ben is the Argyll Sports Hall Athletics final at Atlantis Leisure this Saturday, followed by the Scottish Age Group indoor championships in the Kelvin Hall on the March 4 when he will contest the 60metres, 200metres and high jump.



Ben Coates. 15_108coates01

Friendly games

SHINTY

LOCHABER Camanachd's preparations for the upcoming season got underway with a preseason friendly with premier division newcomers Bute at Spean Bridge on Saturday.

Michael Delaney's men lost 3-1 with Ben Delaney scoring the home side's only goal. Bute were short of substitutes for the game so Lochaber youngster Barry MacDonald swapped sides and scored for the away side after coming on as a sub.

Meanwhile, Skye Camanachd's second team put in an impressive performance to beat south division two side Lochside Rovers 4-0 at Portree.

Danny Morrison scored twice, with the other goals coming from Iain MacLellan and Paul MacKinnon. The referee ended the game after 60 minutes due to heavy snowfall.



Fort William second team's Cameron Grant shields the ball from Oban Celtic's Kenny Wotherspoon during last Saturday's friendly match at Mossfield Stadium. Fort William ran out 2-0 winners in an entertaining game. 07_108shinty1



Oban Saints Under-15s took on Kilpatrick at the Oban Community Pitch last Saturday. The teams were well matched and a close game ended in a 0-0 draw. Our picture shows Alan Buchanan avoiding a sliding tackle. 07_108saints1



The Oban Lorne Ladies Rugby Team proudly display their new kits alongside Donald Hunter. 15_108rugby10

Oban Lorne Ladies look the part

THE OBAN Lorne ladies rugby team were delighted to receive their new strips last week from sponsors Bredon Aggregates.

Team captain Katie Ritchie said: 'We are delighted to receive the new strips, they were badly needed and I would like to thank Bredon Aggregates for their very kind support.'

Successful Season

'We have been having a good turnout at training and are looking forward to a successful season.'

The strips had their first outing last weekend away to Morgan and will be making their home debut this Sunday against Broughton. Donald Hunter, Commercial Manager for Bredon Aggregates

LADIES RUGBY

said: 'We are really pleased to be sponsoring the ladies' strip this season.'

'The team have been doing really well with their rugby and we wish them all the best for the forthcoming season.'

Anyone who wants to try their hand at rugby is encouraged to attend training with the team. Vice-captain Jennifer McPhee said: 'If people want to join they are more than welcome to come along to the rugby club on Wednesday evenings at 6pm.'

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Lorne turn on the style to defeat Uddingston

Impressive win takes Oban out of the relegation zone

RBS West Division 2
Oban Lorne 28 Uddingston 18

BOTTOM-placed club Uddingston travelled to Glencruitten last Saturday just one point behind their Oban rivals.

But after Oban Lorne stunned their opponents with some free-flowing and fast tempo rugby, there is now daylight – and another team – between both teams in the league standings.

Bucking the unwanted trend that has plagued Oban Lorne's season so far, the men in green had a full complement of 22 players to choose from.

Notable additions to the squad included stand-off Dougie Pender, who brought much-needed experience to the back line, and Scottish youth international Magnus Bradbury, 16, who made his first team debut from the bench.



Young Magnus Bradbury had an impressive debut for the first fifteen.

The hosts made a good start to the game and the Oban forwards were putting in a very good show, allowing the backs to get quick ball to play with. Oban were rewarded around 10 minutes in with a good try from winger Callum MacLachlan. MacLachlan took the ball out wide before beating several Uddingston defenders to touch down over the line. Craig Wright converted to give a 7-0 lead.

defence in the process. This narrowed the score to 14-5 and was a welcome wake-up call for Oban. The home side returned to the good passages of play seen in the opening exchanges and scored their third try of the afternoon, again from Angus MacCallum, who took a short ball from Dougie Pender to touch down between the posts. Oban led 21-5 at half-time.

Both teams exchanged tries in the second half with Oban securing the important bonus point with a score from Cammy Smith. Oban were on top for much of the half but failed to take several scoring chances.

Magnus Bradbury on a few occasions was taken down short of the line while substitute Ryan Jackson had an impressive run from the 22 only to be denied a few metres out.

This was a much improved performance from the men in green with Jamie MacMillan and Corrie Louw both impressing the large home crowd throughout. Oban won the game 28-18 securing five vital points in the process. The result means that Oban have risen to 8th place above Wigtonshire and now seven points above Uddingston.

Oban Lorne travel to promotion-chasing Cambuslang next Saturday.



Corrie Louw looks in determined mood as he takes on the Uddingston forwards watched by his scrum half Fergus Matheson

Sports Hall Athletics final on Saturday

ATLANTIS Leisure in Oban is the venue this Saturday for the Argyll Sports Hall Athletics Final.

The competition starts at 1pm in the games hall with young athletes from most parts of Argyll taking part in various running, jumping and throwing events.

The final is the last of a series

of competitions held in the district this winter, starting with the local event on Mull in December and followed by the Lochgilhead, Oban and Kintyre qualifying competitions in January.

Successful qualifiers from the local contests will now come together in Oban with as many as 140 young athletes, from seven

INDOOR ATHLETICS

years to 16 years participating in what should be an enthralling competition.

Athletes are reminded to register after noon on Saturday, with the first events starting an hour later.

As well as trophies for first, second and third overall in each age group, medals will be awarded to fourth, fifth and sixth

Saints on West Cup duty this Saturday

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints senior team's game against Myre Athletic in the 3rd round of the West of Scotland Cup was called off last Saturday morning half an hour before the team were due to travel after a pitch inspection found Merkins Park in Dumbarton unplayable after the heavy overnight rain on Friday.

The game has been relisted for this Saturday at Vale of Leven Academy 3G with a 1.30pm kick-off.

The game has to be finished on the day, so extra time and penalties, if required, will determine who goes through.

The winners have been given a home tie against top Ayrshire outfit Knockentiber in round four.

Tight at the top

POOL

IT IS extremely close at the top of the Oban and District Pool League and with only one more week until the league split, it is all to play for.

POOL

Team	Pts
Lancaster A	20
Markie Dans A	18
The Cellar	16
The Claredon	16
Lancaster B	12
The Lochavullin	8
Markie Dans B	6
Oban Backpackers	0

Saints youths - results and fixtures

YOUTH FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results: Lenzie Youth Club 2, Under 13s 6.

On target for Saints were Jay Cooper (4), Zander Kilmurray and Lomond MacPherson.

Kilpatrick 4, Under 14s 1. Saints goalscorer was Jamie MacPherson.

Under 15s 0, Kilpatrick 0. The Under 16s had no game.

This weekend's fixtures: Blair Thistle v Under 13s; Under 14s v Kilpatrick; EDFC United v Under 15s; Helensburgh v Under 16s.

ISLAY GOLF CLUB

GOLF

WINTER League 1 David Livingstone 44 pts; 2 Graeme Hamilton 39 pts; 3 Jay Doherty 39 pts. Cps 71.

Scottish Amateur League fixtures

FOOTBALL

THIS Saturday's fixtures: Jimmy Marshall Trophy, 1st round - Campbeltown Pupils v Haldane United; West of Scotland Cup, 3rd round - Myre Athletic v Oban Saints; Premier Division 2 - Dunoon v Celtic CA; Division One - Duncannrig 'B' v Lochgilhead Red Star; Tarbert v Port Glasgow Hibs.

ISLAY GOLF CLUB

WINTER League 1 David Livingstone 44 pts; 2 Graeme Hamilton 39 pts; 3 Jay Doherty 39 pts. Cps 71.

SCOTTISH AMATEUR LEAGUE FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

THIS Saturday's fixtures: Jimmy Marshall Trophy, 1st round - Campbeltown Pupils v Haldane United; West of Scotland Cup, 3rd round - Myre Athletic v Oban Saints; Premier Division 2 - Dunoon v Celtic CA; Division One - Duncannrig 'B' v Lochgilhead Red Star; Tarbert v Port Glasgow Hibs.

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Laura Ann helps Scotland to victory

POOL

OBAN'S Laura Ann Sneddon is currently in action for Scotland ladies team at the European Eight-ball Championships in Dublin.

The team's first match ended in a 9-6 victory over France and the Scots were due to play England on Tuesday afternoon, followed by Northern Ireland, Belgium and Ireland.

The semi-finals will be played on Thursday, with the final to be played on Saturday.

Although she lost two of her three matches against the French, debutant Laura Ann beat France's number two seed.

Laura Ann said: 'The win against France was a good start. I just hope we can keep it up.'



L-R Kinlochshiel's Finlay Macrae, Orion Group's Scott Burns-Smith and Glenurquhart's Stuart Mackintosh.

Orion Group to sponsor shinty's premier division

THIS season's top tier shinty league will have two 'derby days' as part of a new sponsorship deal with manpower supplier Orion Group.

The Camanachd Association announced the league's title sponsors for seasons 2012 and 2013 on Monday.

The Orion Group Premiership gets underway on Saturday March 3 with the top 10 shinty teams in the country competing to be the first to lift the new Orion Group Premiership Trophy.

The Orion Group Premiership Derby Days take place on Saturday, May 26 and Saturday, August 25 between local rivals such as Kingussie v Newtonmore, Fort William v Kilmallie, Glenurquhart v Lovat and Kyles

SHINTY

athletic v Bute. Announcing the sponsorship at Orion Group's Head Office in Inverness today were Camanachd Association Vice-President, Jim Barr, and Orion Group's Head of Marketing Development, Scott Burns-Smith.

Mr Barr said: 'Today marks a great day for shinty and we are delighted to welcome Orion Group as title sponsor of the Premiership for the next two years.'

'Their investment represents a significant boost for the sport and will be used to help promote and develop shinty across the country, particularly at youth level.'

'The Orion Group Premiership showcases shinty's best teams so

it is fitting that it is paired with such a prestigious and successful Scottish company.'

Mr Burns-Smith said: 'Whilst Orion Group is a worldwide business our history is firmly in the Highlands. As a company we have a strong focus in working with the communities on various projects and commercial opportunities and we are pleased to offer our support to the Camanachd Association.'

'2012 is an exciting year for us with the Group celebrating its 25 year anniversary and we all look forward to the launch of the Orion Group Premiership in March.'

Weather

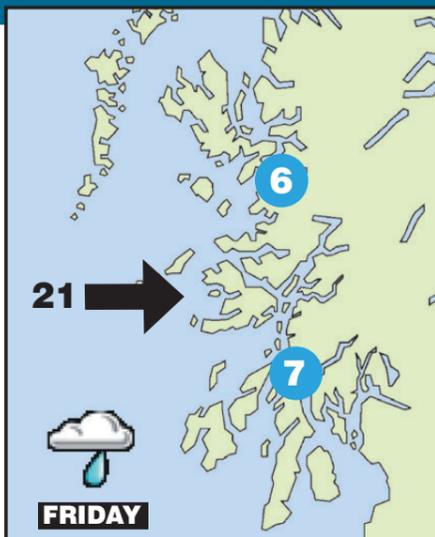
Thursday Light rain.
Winds moderate, south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 10°C

Friday Cloudy
Winds moderate, westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

Weekend Outlook Light rain
Winds moderate, west south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 8°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, February 23, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	00.38 0.6 06.31 4.1 12.57 0.8 18.42 3.9	
Fri	01.12 0.7 07.02 4.1 13.30 0.9 19.09 3.9	
Sat	01.14 0.8 07.32 4.0 14.01 1.0 19.37 3.8	
Sun	02.14 1.0 08.02 3.8 14.32 1.2 20.05 3.5	
Mon	02.43 1.3 08.31 3.6 15.05 1.4 20.35 3.5	
Tues	03.15 1.5 09.02 3.4 15.43 1.6 21.09 3.3	
Wed	03.50 1.8 09.36 3.1 16.32 1.8 21.49 3.1	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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Whatever the weather

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SEE PAGE 14 FOR DETAILS

auchrannie resort

Also inside this week: Oban, a fairtrade town • Homes and interiors feature • Bonnie Babies

Councillors urged to consider pitch switch

LOCHABER councillors have been urged to consider siting a proposed new all-weather sports pitch for Fort William in Claggan rather than at the new multi-million pound development at Blar Mhor.

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

Members of the public queried councillor Eddie Hunter, Bill Clark and Allan Henderson about the plans at a packed north ward forum meeting in Kilmallie Hall, Corpach, on Tuesday night. Highland Council asked for plans for a proposed all-weather pitch situated near a new Tesco store to be included in the plans submitted by Miller Developments in 2009.

The Blar Mhor site has a covering of peat around 2.5metres deep which needs removed before any development can take place.

Miller development manager Colin Graham said that could cost as much as £200,000 per acre for the Tesco site, which would put the cost of peat clearing for the three-acre all-weather pitch site at around £600,000.

But Mr Graham also pointed out the cost to the council would be lower because the equipment and men would already be at the

site. Fort William FC chairman John Wattman presented the councillors with a report from sports developers AP Thomson which quoted a figure of £676,935, excluding VAT, to create a shinty-sized all-weather pitch at Claggan.

Early estimates for the pitch at Blar Mhor have put the cost at around £1.2million.

Surplus
He said: 'If the pitch goes there [Claggan] there will be a surplus of around £400,000 which could go back into the community.'

'Instead of that, we could possibly be using that money to dig out peat. Who benefits from digging out peat?'

'You've got to look at best value for the whole community, not just sport. If there's a surplus to be had, surely that goes further than just the clubs.'

'It could be used for the wider community.'

'The clubs need somewhere to

play, but if it's going to cost an extra £1million at the Blar, why are we even putting that on the table?'

Councillor Clark said the option of placing the pitch at Claggan involved no peat removal and would therefore be cheaper.

'We are considering spending huge sums of money,' he said, 'when we maybe could have two pitches.'

'We could have an all-weather shinty-sized pitch on Claggan and an indoor training facility for the money it would take to have one project at Blar Mhor. It's a no-brainer.'

He continued: 'There's no use being blinkered about it and saying Blar Mhor or nothing, there's more to it than that. Everyone is cutting back and we are duty bound as councillors to go along the road of best value and that means watching the pennies.'

Councillor Eddie Hunter said: 'Best value is not all about money, it's also about accessibility.'

'There's no point in having a wonderful facility somewhere that's not accessible to people, even if it's going to be £200,000 or £300,000 cheaper.'



Grieg Kelly, Gregor Linfield, Samantha Runcieman and Dylan Smyth spent Tuesday in the kitchen making pancakes. 20_108pancake01

Pupils get down to business on Pancake Day

PUPILS in P5/6 at Banavie Primary School celebrated Pancake Day by making and selling pancakes to the rest of the school.

During an extended break period on Tuesday morning, pupils and teachers from the rest of the school came to the P5/6 classroom to get freshly-made pancakes, with an array

of toppings on offer including jam, strawberries, syrup, lemon sugar and cinnamon.

The scheme, part of the class maths project, saw the children split into five teams – the kitchen team, the creative ideas team, marketing and advertising, accounts and sales.

Class teacher Laura Smith told *The Oban Times*: 'They children have been running a small business. We split them into five groups and conducted a survey of what sorts of toppings people in the school would want. They've really enjoyed it and I couldn't have done it with help from the two mums, Amy Kelly and Ishbel Murray.'

Scottish Water claims December storms were 'some of the worst ever seen'

A REPRESENTATIVE from Scottish Water has said storms last December which left more than 100,000 people without water and electricity were 'some of the worst we've ever seen'.

Asset planning manager Neil Brennan gave a presentation at Highland Council's south ward forum meeting in Fort William

on Monday night to explain to local residents the scale of the problems.

Mr Brennan said a number of back up generators had to be brought into Lochaber from Inverness and Glasgow and that blocked roads had caused further delays in getting water treatment plants back working.

He said: 'Twelve treatment works in Lochaber were affected by power loss during the storms. The normal emergency response was not good enough.'

Mr Brennan also said Scottish Water planned to have more generators based in Lochaber to prepare for any future power cuts.

Duror and Kentallen Community Council chairman Jonathan Baxter praised the workmen who worked around the clock during the storms to restore power.

The meeting also heard 400 trees fell on the main electrical power line to Mallaig, all of which needed to be cleared before power could be restored.

Shinty's ruling body hits back at youth cash claims

SHINTY'S ruling body has hit back at claims more money needs to be invested in the youth side of the sport, saying it invests more than £100,000 every year.

In last week's *Oban Times*,

Kilmallie coach John Morrison said more investment was needed to stop youngsters between the ages of 12 and 16 leaving the sport.

Camanachd Association director Donald Stewart told *The Oban Times* improving youth shinty was one of its key aims over the next three years.

He said: 'The Camanachd Association invests more than £100,000 per annum. The money

goes through our development officers and comes from funding from SportScotland and a number of sponsors including Marine Harvest, Scottish Hydro electric and Royal Bank of Scotland.'

'No money comes out of the Camanachd Association coffers for the internationals - they are run on a break-even basis. They are seen as the pinnacle of our sport.'

Stornoway club reports abusive 'Tweet' to police

STORNOWAY Golf Club says it has contacted local police after someone hacked into its Twitter account and posted an offensive sectarian message.

The club claims a message left in response to a tweet from Guardian golf reporter and Celtic fan Lawrence Donegan about the plight of Rangers

Football Club was not written by anyone with a connection to the club. Rangers went into administration last week.

The post received a number of angry responses from Twitter users from across the country.

The day after it was posted, the club's Twitter page said: 'Have been to the local police to report

the abusive tweet purporting to come from our club. Appalled to be 'associated' with it. Going to look into this. Looks like someone has 'hacked' the account. Huge apologies. No to bigotry here in Stornoway too. Half the club are Celtic supporters.'

The club said its password, which has since been changed, was easy to guess for anyone who knew the local course. Mr Donegan was invited to have a free round at the club's course.

A club spokesman said: 'This matter is under investigation. We have consulted Northern Constabulary in the context of internet sectarian crime.'

It just looks like one of them slipped and took the other with him. 'It was just one of those unfortunate things.'

The surviving climber, who has been named as David Warden, aged 46, from Perth, was taken to Belford Hospital in Fort William but has since been transferred to Ninewells Hospital in Dundee and is described as being in a serious but stable condition.



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High winds and snow delay re-opening of A890 road

THE RE-OPENING of the A890 at Stromeferry has been further delayed after high winds and snow over the weekend delayed work to secure the unstable rock face.

Contractors Trac Engineering Ltd had given a provisional date of February 27 for the partial re-opening of the road, but this has been moved back and no new date is being set in light of the unpredictable nature of the works being carried out and the weather.

Trac's 40-strong workforce was unable to carry out any work over the weekend due to the adverse weather leaving the site unsafe for workers.

Operations director Angus MacGregor said: 'The weather delays to rock scaling and drilling along with some more geological challenges have made it impossible to achieve the partial opening target date.'

TECS chairman John Laing said: 'The adverse weather and the unstable nature of the rock face are

combining to make this a very difficult challenge. I know people want a target date for re-opening but given our recent experiences it would be unwise to do so and raise expectations.'

'Residents should be assured that we are doing everything we can to get the road back open, even on a partial basis, and we will keep everyone as closely advised of progress as possible.'

Landslide
A landslide caused the closure of the road on December 22, with traffic being transported via ferry between 7am and 6pm Monday to Saturday since then.

The ferry will be available until March 17 and council officials are trying to source another ferry should the road remain closed beyond this date. They are also discussing with Network Rail the necessary measures to divert traffic on to the railway line.

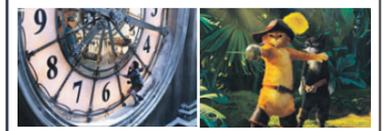
Harris Tweed gets cash to attract new workers

THE HARRIS tweed industry will receive £200,000 over the next two years to attract new workers and meet growing demand for the cloth.

The funding is being provided by the European Social Fund, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, with additional support coming through Skills Development Scotland money. Harris Tweed Industry Liaison Group chairman Angus Campbell said: 'The programme reflects feedback from the industry, with careful consideration given to the age profile of the workforce, skills shortages and demand for the tweed. While there is no doubt this scheme will provide valuable training across the industry, one of the central issues in balancing the workforce remains accessibility of looms and this is something we will continue to look at.'

Screen Machine Cinema

Mon 27 - Wed 29 Feb
Nevis Centre Car Park, Fort William



Hugo (3D) (U)
Tue 28 at 5:30pm
Mon 27 & Wed 29 at 5:30pm
Ever wondered what happened before Shrek and Donkey?

The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo (18)
Mon 27 & Wed 29 at 8:15pm
Nominated for 5 OSCARS! Daniel Craig, Rooney Mara, Christopher Plummer

Hugo (3D) (U)
Tue 28 at 5:30pm
Nominated for 11 OSCARS!
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Drunk threatened nurses with chair

A DRUNK Fort William man drunkenly waved a chair at nurses in the accident and emergency department of the town's Belford Hospital.

Chef James Hosey, of 15 Argyll Terrace, was taken to the Belford at around 2.30am on January 28 after falling and bumping his head while drinking in Fort William.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court the 32-year-old was 'agitated' and began swearing at nurses before kicking a chair in an examination room. He tried to leave the hospital but was chased by nurses who were concerned he may have had concussion.

After being brought back in he picked up a chair and 'raised it above his shoulders as if he was about to throw it,' Ms Wylie said.

Police were called and arrested Hosey, who spent the night in custody. Defence solicitor Stephen Kennedy said: 'My client has absolutely no recollection of anything to do with this incident.'

Hosey pled guilty to behaving in a threatening or abusive manner by acting aggressively.

Sheriff Mungo Bovey ordered him to pay £200 compensation to each of the nurses involved and fined him £200.

Police files

THE SCREEN of the ATM at the Post Office in Kinlochleven was damaged sometime between 5.45pm on Friday February 17 and 9am on Saturday February 18.

THE WINDOW of a car parked in Grange Road, Fort William, was smashed sometime between 4pm on Tuesday February 14 and 9am on Wednesday February 15.

A TRAFFIC monitoring box attached to a post in a lay-by on the A830 Road to the Isles at Camus Dri Seach near Lochailort was removed sometime between 3pm on Saturday February 11 and 2.45pm on Tuesday February 14.

Anyone with any knowledge of these incidents is asked to contact Fort William Police Station on 01397 702361, the confidential line on 01397 702000 or independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Lotto jackpot rises to £300

THERE were no winners in the Fort William FC lotto draw on Saturday. Numbers were 2-17-18. The jackpot goes up to £300 this week.



Donations: Calum and his crew hand over the cheques to the charities.

Generous boatman donates £2,500 to charity

A GENEROUS Plockton boatman has donated nearly £2,500 to three charities from money raised taking tourists to see seals last summer.

Calum Mackenzie provides the seal trips in his boat *Sula Mhor*, and has recently been

helping traffic get between South Strome and North Strome while the A890 is closed at Strome ferry.

Tips

He raised the money through tips from the tourists, and split the money evenly between

the three charities - donating £805.54 to Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care and the Highland Hospice.

Local councillor Audrey Sinclair thanked Calum and his crew on behalf of the three organisations.

Unacceptable hospital behaviour costs man £400

A CAOL man who charged through accident and emergency at the Belford Hospital in a wheelchair on New Year's Day demanding an x-ray has been fined £200 and ordered to pay £200 compensation to each of the two nurses involved.

Robert Lawrie, of 22 Glenpane Street, was taken to the hospital in the afternoon complaining of soreness in his ribs and back.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie told Fort William Sheriff Court Lawrie was 'intoxicated' and was placed in a wheelchair in the waiting area.

She said: 'He started shouting and swearing and demanding an x-ray, but he couldn't say where he was hurt. He self-propelled himself around the department on the wheelchair.'

'The nurses were dealing with other patients and more than one had to stop

and see to him.' Lawrie continued causing a disturbance for 30 minutes before police arrived and arrested him.

The 48-year-old pled guilty to causing a disturbance and assaulting, obstructing or hindering the two nurses by shouting and swearing.

Sentencing, Sheriff Mungo Bovey QC said: 'This was quite unacceptable behaviour towards medical staff.'

Caol man admits hitting neighbour's door with axe

A CLAGGAN man has admitted attacking his neighbour's front door with an axe on Hogmanay.

Police were called out after a neighbour of Steven Stewart reported hearing 'chopping noises' at around 3am.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie said officers found Stewart, aged 35, outside 8 The Corries holding an axe and saw several marks on the door and wall.

Ms Wylie said: 'The officers asked him why he had an axe and he replied "I was just trying to get him".'

Defence solicitor Hamish Melrose told Fort William Sheriff Court the two men had 'exchanged words' a few weeks before the incident.

He said: 'This particular evening Mr Stewart was out on

his own drinking and brooding about the words previously exchanged. For some reason he took it into his head to go and do this.'

The neighbour was not in the flat during the incident.

Damage

Stewart, of 4 The Corries, pled guilty to wilfully or recklessly damaging or destroying the property of another by using an axe to strike and damage the door and surrounding wall.

He also admitted having an offensive weapon in a public place.

Sheriff Mungo Bovey ordered Stewart to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work and told him to save for a future compensation order when the case is recalled in three months.

Isle of Lewis remembers the role of Sandwickhill School in community

A TEA and coffee evening to mark the closing of Sandwickhill School, Isle of Lewis, will be held next Wednesday.

The event will be the first in a series of events to celebrate the school, with all members of the local community invited. The evening starts at 7.30pm and will finish at 9pm.

A small exhibition of school photographs will be on display and the school is keen to find more examples of photographs, report cards, records or other old

school memorabilia which can be copied and returned to their owners.

These will form the basis of an exhibition and publication to be produced as a memorial to the school's history.

Head teacher Calum Maclean said: 'This is the start of a series of events to celebrate the school and the role it has played in the local community.'

'We're keen to uncover more about the school's history from former pupils and staff.'

Oban bands take the stage at Lochaber event

LOCHABER Pipe Band has announced the line up for its popular annual fundraising ceilidh and dance, with two Oban bands topping the bill.

Oban and Oban High School pipe bands will both be performing at the event in the West End Hotel, Fort William, on Saturday March 17.

Oban High School, led by renowned piper Angus MacColl, has enjoyed considerable success since its formation in 2005 and in 2010 was named Juvenile World Pipe Band Champions.

Champions

Oban Pipe Band, led by Pipe Major Euan Dewar, were crowned Scottish and World Pipe Band Champions in Grade 3A last year and have gained promotion to Grade 2 for 2012.

Also performing on the night will be Eriskay Lilt, and Lochaber Pipe Band and its junior section will also provide entertainment throughout the night.

Nevis Highland Dancing Association will provide a display of Highland dancing.

Any piper or drummer interested in joining the band, as well as parents of children who would like to learn an instrument, are welcome to come along to one of its practice nights held in Caol Primary School at 6.30pm every Thursday.

Society hosts four speakers

LOCHABER Historical Society (LHS) will hear from four different speakers at a bumper monthly meeting next Thursday.

Roddy Mainland will give the first of the '10 minute talks' about strange coastal discoveries he has made on Skye called 'Mark of the Viking'.

Local man Colin Neilson will then speak about his early days in Fort William, before Ken Johnston will talk LHS along the road from Corran to Fort William. The final speaker of the evening will be Ian Abernethy who will give an update on the latest from the Friends of the Old Fort group. Anyone interested is welcome to attend the meeting, which will be held in the Alexandra Hotel from 8pm.



Guest artistes at Meur Lochaber's Isle of Skye Ceilidh.

Packed house for Isle of Skye ceilidh

THE WEST End Hotel in Fort William was packed out on Saturday night for Meur Lochaber's Isle of Skye Ceilidh.

Visitors from as far as Aberdeenshire, the Borders and the Black Isle came to perform and enjoy the music and songs on the night.

Donald Fletcher from Skye was fear a tight for the evening and introduced songs from artists including Calum Ross, Catriona Fair of south Argyll and former Sabhal Mòr Ostaig pupils Tear-

lach Quinnell and Emma Leitch. Young Brighde Campbell from Skye gave a rousing selection of tunes on the pipes, which proved very popular with the audience. Brothers Robert and Allan Nairn were the band for the ceilidh.

Unfortunately bad weather conditions prevented some of the planned guest singers from Skye making the journey on the night. Convenor Charlie MacColl was grateful to those who made it and helped make a success of the evening.

Caol man guilty of assault

A CAOL man has been ordered to pay his victim £200 compensation after admitting punching a man on the face during a house party.

David McKellor, of 19 St John's Road, got into an argument with the man after finding him asleep in a room at 6 Crown Cottages, Banavie that McKellor was planning to share with his girlfriend.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the 31-year-old woke the man and the pair got into a pushing match before McKellor punched him, knocking him to the ground. Other partygoers split up the fight and the victim was later taken to Belford Hospital with substantial bruising and swelling to the right side of his face.

McKellor, who was also fined £300, pled guilty to assaulting the man by repeatedly punching him on the face and head to his injury on August 14.

Unanimous call to keep Mallaig ferry

RESIDENTS and business leaders from across west Lochaber packed out the Fisherman's Mission in Mallaig on Monday night to make clear their opposition to any suggestions of a downgrade to the Mallaig to Armadale ferry service.

The Scottish Government is gathering views of people in the west Highlands about how best to deliver ferry services in the area, with the consultation running until the end of March. The government has already announced plans to extend Road Equivalent Tariffs across the Western Isles, but suggestions of removing subsidies from the Mallaig to Skye ferry have not proved popular with the local community.

The meeting to discuss the Scottish ferries draft plan consultation was chaired by Mallaig Community Council chairman Martin Sullivan.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It was a really positive meeting. There were more than 100 people

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

there and there was some really powerful arguments made. The Mallaig to Armadale link feeds right down the west coast. People touring the west coast want to go back down the way they came.

'Everybody at the meeting undertook to write to the ferries review expressing their concerns.'

Mr Sullivan said there were also plans to set up an online petition.

Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson was present in the hall and will present the views of the public to Scottish Government Minister Alex Neil in a meeting today (Thursday).

Local councillors Allan Henderson, Eddie Hunter and Bill Clark attended the meeting, and Provost Henderson said: 'Mr Thompson was given a clear message that a reduction in the current service is not an option. In

fact the opposite is true as many members present expressed how vital the ferry service is to their business and were clear how the ferry attracted business to the fragile areas.

'I am incredulous that the Scottish Government was not intending to capitalise on its £23 million investment improving the A830.

'Joined up thinking would surely not allow a diminution of services.'

Councillor Clark added: 'The views were unanimous, 100 per cent. I'm optimistic the Scottish Government will take on board the residents' views. They've got to listen to the people of Mallaig and elsewhere that will be affected.'

The meeting also gave its support for a potential Mallaig to Lochboisdale ferry link. A show of hands at the end of the meeting showed unanimous support. A similar meeting on the consultations will be held in South Uist on Friday night.

Health minister meets residents for nurse talks

WEST Ardnachurchan residents flocked to Edinburgh yesterday (Wednesday) for final talks on out-of-hours nursing care for the area.

Two district nurses have served the peninsula with round the clock care for a number of years. One of the nurses, Jessie Colquhoun, retired on Monday, and health bosses have hired a replacement nurse who will join a West Lochaber team, serving an area from Mallaig to Strontian. Locals have been in talks with NHS Highland and Scottish Ambulance Service for the past 14 months about how the service will be provided in

future, but have yet to come to an agreement to satisfy all parties.

Of the bus load of people who travelled to Edinburgh to make their feelings known, four West Ardnachurchan Community Council representatives met with Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon at Holyrood yesterday. Ms Colquhoun also took part in the talks.

WACC chairman Rosie Curtis said: 'We feel that we are representing not only West Ardnachurchan but also the many other small communities along the west coast of Scotland who are facing changes in medical

provision. Since Monday, there has been no 999 cover for medical emergencies within an hour of us. Throughout this we've had tremendous support from our local MSPs, and particularly from Mary Scanlon, who arranged the meeting with the Minister.

'They have understood that the loss of nursing services will impact on the future of our community: if we can't sort this, people will leave, businesses will leave, tourists will stay away, and the place will die.'

For a full report on the Holyrood meeting, see next week's *Oban Times*.

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Caol man denies drink driving

A CAOL man has denied driving in Fort William while twice the legal alcohol limit. Graham Allison, of 98 Glenkingie Street, pled not guilty to driving on the A82 North Road and at the Ben Nevis Filling Station on September 24, claiming he was not the driver. The 22-year-old is due to stand trial at Fort William Sheriff Court on Monday.

Council considers Cameron Square study

HIGHLAND Council has received a quote from consultants for a design and feasibility study on improving Cameron Square in Fort William. Lochaber councillors heard at their latest business meeting. It was agreed the matter should be discussed with Highland and Islands Enterprise to determine if they can part-fund the study.

Fun for all at family fairs

FÈIS Lochaber is giving parents and children the chance to learn traditional Gaelic songs at its Fèis Teaghlaich (Family Fairs) at Upper Achintore Primary School this Saturday. The children will play and learn songs while parents brush up on their own Gaelic skills. The event will run from 10am-1pm with all levels of Gaelic speakers welcome.

Man fined for jumping on five police officers

A FORT William teenager who jumped on five police officers as they tried to arrest his brother has been fined £275. David Duncan, of 74 Kennedy Road, was on a Christmas work night out when the incident occurred, Fort William Sheriff Court heard. Defending the 18-year-old, Hamish Melrose said: 'He saw his brother being arrested and put to the ground and he stupidly intervened.' Duncan pled guilty to resisting, obstructing, molesting or hindering the officers by lunging at them on the town's High Street on December 17.

Trial bike and fuel stolen from Glenelg shed

POLICE are investigating a theft of a blue Sherco 2.9 trial motorcycle from a shed in Glenelg. The bike's fuel tank, which was sitting beside the bike, was also stolen. Both were stolen from the shed at the rear of a house in the village or around December 27. Police are carrying out inquiries into the incident. Officers are appealing for anyone who may have been offered this item or have further information to contact Kyle Police Station on 01599 534222 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

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Rahoy in Morvern: rare plants to benefit from five-year grazing programme.

New project to protect rare plants

AN AREA of Morvern renowned internationally for its plant life and geology is to benefit from a new management project. The stock grazing break across the Rahoy Hills wildlife reserve, say conservationists, will allow alpine plants to flower and set seed more effectively. The flexible grazing pattern will also allow land managers to seasonally vary the number of sheep on the hills. The reserve contains rare upland plants including the Norwegian Sandwort and Lapland Marsh Orchid, which live in the flower-rich grassland. The highly specialised habitat needs just the right amount of grazing and trampling by sheep and deer - too much or too little can damage it. The project has been given the go ahead after a successful bid to

the Scottish Rural Development Programme. The five-year, £253,610 initiative uses monitoring, fencing and traditional shepherding practices to ensure the fragile habitat flourishes. **Employment** It will also help retain local employment, say the scheme's backers Ardtornish Estate, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Rahoy Hills management committee. SWT manage the reserve in partnership with the estate. Ardtornish Estate's Hugh Raven said his father, John Raven, discovered the rare species more than 50 years ago. He said: 'We are delighted that this experimental management of grazing pressure will help safeguard that wonderful assemblage of rare plants.'

'It is excellent that they get the recognition which their scarcity merits, and we are grateful to the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage for their sensitive management and critical role in getting this project off the ground.' Mark Foxwell of SWT said: 'Rahoy Hills is one of Scotland's most valuable and diverse nature reserves and this grant will allow us to graze it in ways that are good for wildlife. **Vital** We will be using sheep from Ardtornish to do this and this will help to sustain the sheep flock and shepherds, which is vital for local employment.' And Sarah Bentley, SNH operations manager for Lochaber, said the joint initiative would make 'a major contribution' to global nature conservation.

Glass attack man ordered to pay victim £500 compensation

A CAOL man who left another man with multiple cuts on his head after hitting him with a full pint glass during a row in a Fort William pub has been ordered to pay his victim £500 compensation. Stephen Hardie, of 30 Ardour Road, had been drinking in the Volunteer Arms on December 5 and got into an argument with another man at the bar. Fort

William Sheriff Court heard the man pushed Hardie and turned away, and the 21-year-old retaliated by smashing his glass against the left hand side of the man's head. The victim was taken to Belford Hospital for treatment to cuts on the left side of his head and ear, and a five-millimetre wound was 'glued' together. Defending Hardie, Urfan Dar

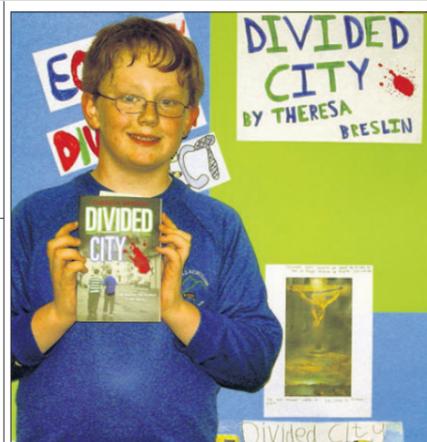
called the attack 'a moment of madness'. He said: 'Mr Hardie found his own behaviour completely unacceptable.' Hardie previously pled guilty to assaulting the man. Sheriff Mungo Bovey QC fined Hardie £75 and gave him a one-year supervision order, saying: 'It's very fortunate you didn't harm this man more seriously than you did.'

Man charged with five counts of theft

A MAN arrested in connection with a recent spate of break-ins in Caol, Corpach, and Fort William was charged with five counts of theft at Fort William Sheriff Court last week. Dean Conn, of Fort William, was taken into police custody last week and appeared in private accused of two counts of theft, two counts of theft by housebreaking and theft by housebreaking with intent to steal. He made no plea and was remanded in custody. The 22-year-old was due to appear at court again this week.

Lochyside teenager admits violent attack

A LOCHYSIDE teenager who plans to join the army next month has admitted violently attacking a man on Fort William High Street on Christmas Eve. Cameron MacInnes, of 51 Castle Drive, pled guilty to pushing the man on his body, knocking him to the ground, placing his knee into the man's throat and repeatedly kicking and stamping on his body, Fort William Sheriff Court heard. MacInnes also admitted struggling with police officers who tried to arrest him after the assault by lashing out with his arms and legs. The 18-year-old pled guilty to a separate charge of shouting and swearing at police and making offensive comments on Fort William High Street on October 7, and violently resisting arrest. Sheriff Mungo Bovey deferred sentencing MacInnes until March 13, 12 days before the apprentice mechanic is due to join the Royal Engineers.



Michael's writing wins prize

Ballachulish Primary School pupil Michael MacInnes has won a runner-up's prize of a signed copy of the book *Divided City* in a recent competition organised by Scotia Books. The competition challenged pupils to continue the story after chapter one of the book, which deals with sectarianism and racism in Glasgow. His class are looking at the novel as their book study this term.



Rewarded: Gaelic nursery children at Roy Bridge.

Heart group praises nursery youngsters

AMIDST celebrations of St Valentine's Day, children of Sgoil Araich Braigh Lochaber, the Gaelic nursery based at Roy Bridge Primary School, received a 'Certificate of Appreciation' from the British Heart Foundation. The children and their eco committee have been encouraging recycling by siting a BHF bin in the

foyer of the nursery. The bin is emptied regularly by the BHF and has been popular with parents and users of the premises, Taigh na Sgoile. 'The children have been learning the importance of eating well and keeping fit and active in order to keep their hearts beating healthily,' said head teacher Catherine MacKinnon.

Sixteen-year-old to stand trial for break-ins

A TEENAGER accused of breaking-in to Fort William Primary School on three separate occasions and vandalising it is due to stand trial at the town's sheriff court on April 10. Jacob Payne, aged 16, pleaded not guilty to breaking into the school on September 16, 20 and 28. **Fire** He is accused of smashing a number of windows, setting fire to a painting inside, stealing a quantity of money, stealing

juice and milk and forcing open a lockfast canteen. Payne, of 27 Banff Crescent, Fort William, also denies destroying two wheelex bins by setting them on fire at 6 Lochy Road and 14 Parkan Dubh, both Inverlochy, on September 28.

Sheriff admonishes man on fight charge

A MAN who caused £9,000 of damage to a static caravan at a Lochaber holiday park during a fight with another man has been admonished. Fort William Sheriff Court heard Scott Miller, of 95 Warwick, East Kilbride, had been of good behaviour since his sentence was deferred in September. His co-accused, Michael Gallacher, aged

21, of 92 Salisbury, East Kilbride, was not present at court. Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie said Gallacher was currently being held in custody for a separate crime. His sentencing was deferred until March 14. Gallacher and Scott Miller previously pled guilty to wilfully or recklessly damaging the caravan by knocking holes in wall panels and damaging the electrical supply, bending doors, smashing a light fitting, the living room fire and a microwave and smearing blood over other furnishings. Miller, aged 27, also admitted a breach of the peace by shouting, swearing and uttering threats to the proprietor at Caolasnacon Caravan Park near Kinlochleven. The incidents occurred on August 15 2010.

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Act now to claim free insulation

A LOCHABER energy-saving initiative is urging local residents to apply for free loft or cavity wall insulation being offered by Scottish Hydro.

LIFE, which has been carrying out thermal imaging tests on local homes to show where heat is being lost, said householders should grab the chance to cut fuel bills. Project officer Robert Dunn, from Strontian, told *The Oban Times*: 'We've just become aware that Scottish Hydro is offering free loft or cavity wall insulation to anyone - regardless of income - as long as they register an interest before the end of March.'

Existing loft insulation would have to be 60mms or less to qualify, Mr Dunn said. He can be contacted on 01967 402453.

Agreement on meetings

LOCHABER councillors have agreed to meet with Fort William Chamber of Commerce on a quarterly basis to discuss matters of mutual interest. Areas for joint working could include possible lobbying roles the chamber could pursue to further its aims and council input to the chamber's strategy for business development. Chamber input to the Lochaber Community Development Plan and procurement opportunities for local businesses could also feature on future agendas.

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Man's threat to burn down mother's house lands him in court

AN ONICH man who threatened to burn down his elderly mother's house during the festive period has been ordered to be of good behaviour for six months.

James Maclean made the threats at Foresters Cottage, Inchree, where he lived with his mother on December 28.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the 44-year-old brandished matches, threw about items of furniture, shouted and swore and acted in an aggressive manner.

Police officers arrived and found him holding matches in the kitchen and had to restrain him.

Maclean had previously pled guilty to making threats, acting aggressively, and resisting two police officers by swinging his arms, struggling with them and kicking out with his legs.

He also admitted breaching bail by staying at a house in Inchree rather than the address in Acharacle he had given to the court.

Defence solicitor Hamish Melrose presented a letter from Maclean's mother which said she wanted him back in her house.

'It's clear Mrs Maclean misses her son,' said Mr Melrose.

Sheriff Mungo Bovey lifted bail conditions which had prevented Maclean from going back to his mother's house or contacting her.

Rescue committee appoints project manager

THE MOUNTAIN Rescue Committee of Scotland has announced Shaun Roberts, head of rescue at Glenmore Lodge in Aviemore, as its Scottish Mountain Rescue project manager.

The new post will see Mr Roberts provide direct support to the 27 voluntary mountain and cave rescue teams across Scotland over the coming year.

The job is part funded by the Scottish Government, the Order of St John and SportScotland/Glenmore Lodge.

Big plans to boost CF charity coffers

AN ISLE of Lewis charity set up in memory of a local girl who lost her life to cystic fibrosis (CF) is planning a major fundraising drive in 2012 as it celebrates its second anniversary this month.

Willie and Christetta Mitchell, from Garrabost near Stornoway, launched the Leanne Fund in February 2010 after CF claimed their daughter Leanne at the age of just 21.

Since then the charity has raised thousands of pounds to help CF sufferers across the Highlands and Islands.

Fundraisers have included the Land's End to John o' Groats cycle run, the Stornoway half marathon and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

And in August five of Leanne's friends undertook the Three Peaks Challenge, climbing Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis in 24 hours, raising £7,000.

Now, aided by 'ambassadors'

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk



...because life is 4 living!

such as shinty-playing musician Gary Innes, Scotland rugby legend John Beattie and Gaelic TV presenter Cathy MacDonald, the charity is looking to step up its efforts this year.

Colin MacLeod from Lewis intends to complete two Harris sea-swims - from Huishinish to Scarp and Horgabost to Taransay - in April, Leanne's dad Willie will tackle the Edinburgh Marathon in May, while June 2 will see the hugely popular annual

'Leanne's Walk' and 5k run at Point.

Working under Leanne's motto 'because life is for living' the grant-giving body funds special treats for those 25 years and younger who live with the daily struggles of CF, which eventually damages sufferers' lungs beyond repair.

Driving lessons, a night out at a music concert or a Scotland football match with friends, music recording sessions and holidays with family have all been provided by the fund.

Efforts

Leanne's mum and dad, Christetta and Willie, thanked all the charity's supporters for their efforts so far, including its 'dedicated and active' committee.

The couple told *The Oban Times*: 'We are completely overwhelmed by the generosity of those who contact us with offers of fundraising and are equally blessed by the huge amount of

individual donations received by post, or by direct payments into our account.

'Our supporters continue to go the extra mile to show their support of young people with cystic fibrosis. Their enthusiasm and determination mean so much to us as we celebrate our second anniversary this year.'

They added: 'We very much hope that we can continue to work together to build on our initial success so that we can continue to provide funding to create many more happy memories.'

'We couldn't do it without all of you and we hope that you will continue to support the unique and valuable work that we do. We are encouraged by our growing calendar of events for 2012 and hope you will be able to join us on Leanne's Walk (Point 5k) on June 2.'

Anyone wishing to help the charity can visit www.theleannefund.co.uk.



Leanne Mitchell: inspiration to others.

Court finds man guilty of assault

A FORT William man has been ordered to carry out 100 hours' unpaid work after punching a man who was sitting in a car.

Peter O'Donnell, aged 28, of 76 Camaghael, Ben Lochy Cottages, pled guilty to assaulting the man by punching him on the head to his injury on Ardour Road, Caol, on December 27.

The victim was left with a heavily bleeding nose.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard there was a 'long-running dispute' between the two men.

Toasting 100 years of whisky association

MSP FOR the Highlands and Islands Mary Scanlon has hosted a reception celebrating the Scotch whisky industry at the Scottish Parliament.

The event was one of several marking this year's 100th anniversary of the Scotch Whisky Association.

Ms Scanlon said: 'At a time when other sectors are struggling, it is encouraging to see the 23 per cent increase in exports of Scotch whisky and the growing reputation of Scotland's national drink around the world.'



Top folk band plays Skye

Internationally acclaimed Scottish folk band *Breabach* will play two gigs on the Isle of Skye next month as part of its UK-wide tour. The band, above, whose line-up includes Lochaber's Megan Henderson and James Duncan MacKenzie from Back on the Isle of Lewis, second right, will perform at Sabhal Mor Ostaig on Sleat on March 15 and the Aros Centre in Portree the following evening. The group, which received nominations for best group at both the 2011 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards and the Scots Trad Music Awards simultaneously, releases its new album 'Bann' on March 5.

College wins funding to support restoration of salmon and sea trout in River Carron

A THREE-year £300,000 funding package has been secured by Inverness College UHI to support a salmon and sea trout restoration project on the River Carron in Wester Ross.

The cash, from Scottish Sea Farms' Heart of the Community Trust, the Scottish Salmon Company, aquaculture feed companies EWOS, Skretting and BIOMAR, the River Carron Improvement Association (RCIA) and the college, represents a major boost to ongoing efforts to increase salmon and sea trout numbers in the long term.

The Carron supported significant salmon and sea trout populations in

past, but during the 1990s the declared rod catch collapsed, falling to a five-year average of only six salmon and 12 sea trout in 2001.

Working with the RCIA, Inverness College began a restocking programme with the aim of restoring the salmon and sea trout populations of the river. Under the management of its freshwater fisheries expert Bob Kindness, brood stock produced from eggs stripped from wild fish caught in the river began to restore fish populations.

By 2004, the declared annual salmon rod catch had recovered to 141 fish and continued to increase, averaging over 250

salmon a season. In 2010 a record rod catch of 419 fish was recorded. Sea trout catches have also recovered significantly, reaching almost 200 in each of the last three seasons. The new money means evidence on how stocking can be used for restoration and the extent to which the Carron example could help other rivers can be fully investigated.

The research will use several methods including genetics, electrofishing and detailed assessment of the biodiversity of the river's catchment. John Rea of SSF said: 'The determination of Inverness College UHI and the RCIA in refusing to let this west coast river die is exemplary.'

Henry Dalgety of the Scottish Salmon Company added: 'It's encouraging to see a significant increase in the river's stocks and we understand important lessons can be learned from the River Carron project which can be taken elsewhere.'

Inverness College UHI chief John Spencer said: 'This is a significant development for the River Carron project, enabling the college to enhance research activity in this area.'

RCIA convener Shaun Macdonald added: 'The regeneration of the River Carron has exceeded all our expectations, for which we are grateful to Inverness College UHI and Bob Kindness.'

Caol man guilty of struggling violently with five police officers

A CAOL man has admitted struggling violently with five police officers during a Christmas work night out in Fort William.

Brian Gillespie, of 114 Glenkingie Street, was out with workmates on December 17 and he got into an argument

with his nephew at a taxi rank. Police were called and restrained Gillespie.

Prosecutor Fiscal Alison Wylie said: 'He was continuing to struggle and trying to kick out with his feet.'

Officers hit him twice with a baton to get him into the van. Defending, Hamish Melrose said

the incident happened on 'Mad Friday' - the last Friday before Christmas when many workplaces have nights out.

Mr Melrose said: 'Mr Gillespie is not normally a big drinker, but clearly too much drink had been taken.'

Sheriff Mungo Bovey deferred

sentencing for good behaviour for one year, 'up to and including Mad Friday 2012'.

Gillespie pled guilty to resisting, obstructing, molesting and hindering the officers by struggling violently and repeatedly lashing out with his legs.

Breaking into new territory

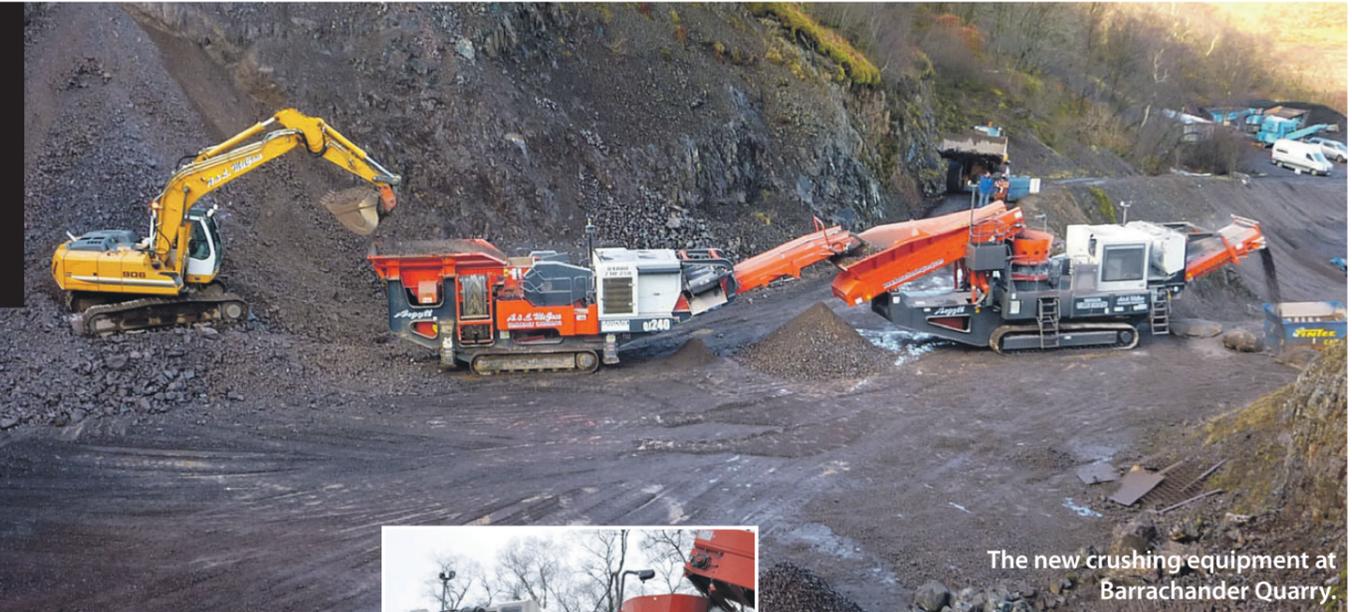
A CHANGE in ownership and large-scale investment has seen an established Argyll quarry undergo an exciting new lease of life.

Barrachander Quarry's former owner, Andy Sutherland, felt it was time for the quarry to move forward and is keen to see the new business crack on under the stewardship of another successful Argyll family business.

The site is now run by Barrachander Quarry Ltd, a sister company of A & L McCrae Ltd (Contractors).

Taking the helm at the new company will be Calum McCrae, son of Alistair McCrae who started his contracting business 35 years ago with just a tractor and a determination to succeed.

Now his ever-expanding Mid Argyll business has broken into the quarry sector to help support his



The new crushing equipment at Barrachander Quarry.

Barrachander Quarry changes Ownership

ANDREW SUTHERLAND
CONTRACTOR AND PLANT HIRER

The Cottars, Dalmally.

I would like to thank my many clients for their loyal and valued custom over the past 42 years and especially for their support of Barrachander Quarry, which I have owned and operated for the past 32 years.

The quarry has now been sold to A & L McCrae Ltd and managed by Calum McCrae whom I hope will enjoy your continued support and business in the future.

Best wishes to Alistair, Linda and Calum for a long and prosperous future in their new venture.

roadwork contracts and help meet demand for construction projects elsewhere.

The family have wasted no time in setting out their vision for the future of the quarry by investing heavily in new crushing machinery, taking the business into the 21st century.

He said: 'My father's business mantra was always; 'Quality doesn't cost; it pays,' and I would like to think I would run this business the same way.'

'We are a family business: my mum handles the paperwork, dad does the contracting and now I'm managing the quarry side.'

'Quality of care to the customer is really important to us because our reputation is on the line if we don't deliver that to a high standard. We rely on repeat contracts.'

'I want people to know that we will always be open for business from 7am - 7pm Monday to Friday and until 2pm on Saturdays and during



Former quarry owner Andy Sutherland, left, hands over the reins to Calum McCrae.

those hours someone will be here to help.

'As well as investing in new crushing machinery, we have been keen build up our stockpiles, so there is plenty of stone available for people to come in and see.'

'I look forward to building on the great reputation Andy has established at Barrachander over the years. We, as a family, would like to thank Andy for the handover period and for introducing us to the customers.'

Aggregate from Barrachander Quarry is renowned for its quality, and is traditionally suited to dyking

stone and facing stones, as well as having excellent concrete and road building properties.

But it is one of the only mainland quarries in Argyll that can produce stone with a genuine high polished stone value (PSV) and is one of the only west coast quarries with seams of red rock, which means Barrachander can produce red dress chips on site.

On handing over the reins to his successors, Andy Sutherland said: 'There has always been a high demand for Barrachander stone but the quarry has a lot more potential.'

BARRACHANDER QUARRY

Open from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 2pm on a Saturday.

Supplying everything from red dress chips for paths and gardens, Type 1 for roads and Armour stone for marine work.

The quarry is ideally located to serve the west coast and Argyll with a full range of quality aggregates. The trade and public are both welcome at Barrachander

For a full list of our products and quarry information please visit our new website www.barrachanderquarry.com Phone the quarry on 01866 833 355, mobile 07717 006 923

FW

Mòd medalist dies on Isle of Islay

THE ISLE of Islay lost one of its most celebrated Gaelic singers at the weekend, following the death of Robert Forrest.

The body of the 75-year old was found at 9am on Saturday in his home village of Bowmore. Police said there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding his death.

Robert won a coveted gold medal at the Royal National Mòd in Inverness in 1984. See Islay Letter, page 8

Highlands and Islands Enterprise appoint new chair

HIGHLANDS and Islands Enterprise (HIE) welcomed Professor Lorne Crerar as its new chairman on Monday.

Appointed by Scottish Ministers, Professor Crerar is a founding partner and chairman of law firm Harper Macleod LLP, which has offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness. Lorne has held the part-time chair of banking law at Glasgow University since 1997.

He has been a member of the HIE Board since April 2008 and is also Chair of the HIE Risk and Assurance Committee.

He will earn £38,721 per annum for one and a half days a week work during his three year contract.

Time stands still as Oban clock stalls

TIME has been standing still for people in Oban's Station Square – with both hands on the iconic clock tower having not moved an inch for a month.

Commuters could have been forgiven for missing their bus, train or ferry if they were relying on the clock, which is within strolling distance of all the town's major transport terminals.

A spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council: "We have checked the clock and a fuse had blown and has now been replaced."

A similar problem at Campbeltown's clock tower is being investigated by the authority.



Sara-Maria Smith as the Black Swan, opposite male lead, Michael Bearden, as Prince Siegfried, at Oban's Corran Halls last Wednesday. Picture - Kevin McGlynn

Swan Lake spectacular wows audience

A PACKED Corran Halls witnessed a spectacular performance of arguably Pyotr Tchaikovsky's most famous ballet, Swan Lake, last week.

Ballet West's production captivated the audience, with the undoubted talents of the school's dancers combining to create a show to remember.

Sara-Maria Smith played the principal roles as Princess Odette in both White and Black Swan form.

Opposite her as Prince Siegfried was Michael Bearden, the company's principal dancer from Ballet West in Utah, who replaced Jonathan Barton in the role after he suffered an injury.

If there was any last minute upheaval, it certainly wasn't perceptible as the dancers put on a show to remember, drawing warm applause at many stages for their feats.

Gillian Barton, principal of the Taymuit-based ballet school,

said: "We were very pleased with the performance and the response was fabulous. People have been saying they really enjoyed it."

The 11 date tour continues this weekend with two performances at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre on Saturday.

The company then travels to Dundee's Carnegie Hall for a performance on March 2, concluding the tour at Greenock Arts Guild on March 3.

Consultants net £4.7 million from Argyll and Bute

'Cost effective' say council - 'an absolute scandal' claims council election candidate

CONSULTANTS and specialist advisors have been paid £4.7 million by Argyll and Bute Council over the past five years, it has been revealed.

Fred Hall, a former Oban police chief who has declared his intent to stand for this May's council elections, obtained the figure in a freedom of information request to the authority.

Equivalent to approximately £950,000 per annum, Mr Hall has described the sum as 'an absolute scandal' given the spend was in the same term the authority proposed to close 24 rural primary schools.

The figure follows revelations in *The Oban Times* last year that Argyll and Bute Council had spent approximately £600,000 on consultants for Oban CHORD projects alone.

However, the authority says the use of external consultants and experts in effect saves it from having to employ project advisors on a full time basis.

Without consultants, it claimed, it would not have been able to allocate an extra £40 million spent between 2012 and 2015, as revealed in last week's shock budget.

Mr Hall said: "This is an absolute scandal and should be put in the public domain."

"I have in the past in a letter to *The Oban Times* expressed a personal view that this

".. we'd prefer the money was spent on lighting and roads."
Oban businessman Alan MacLeod

is sometimes essential that the council employs a consultant to work on pieces of specific project work when we do not have, or cannot spare dedicated personnel.

"Without these savings the council could not have developed the budget agreed last Thursday that will see massive investment in schools, roads and infrastructure across Argyll and Bute."

Alan MacLeod, the owner of the Ee-usk and Piazza restaurants on Oban's north pier as well as the Argyll Hotel site, said consultants were only worth money if they listened to what people told them.

He said: "Instead of consulting on a pie in the sky extension of the north pier they should actually be listening to the businesses on the ground."

"Businesses want the town busier and we'd prefer the money was spent on things like proper lighting for the town and good roads."

'Rottweiler' in 'spy' case

AN INDEPENDENT investigator nicknamed 'the Rottweiler' has been appointed by Argyll and Bute Council to investigate allegations of 'spying' on social networking sites.

Retired Audit Scotland head John Clayton will investigate claims that council communications chief Jo Smith told delegates at last September's Social Media for the Public Sector conference in Glasgow that she used 'spy' accounts to monitor public perception of the authority.

Mr Clayton's appointment was confirmed in a thorough statement to local politicians

on Tuesday. The news breaks as the organiser of the conference in question, Nick Hill, cast fresh doubt over the allegations, saying they were both inaccurate and politically motivated.

Mr Hill said: "Speakers use the slides in their presentation as an aide-memoire and, as it clearly shows, the use of the word 'spy' is in inverted commas."

"This was taken out of context. What she was referring to was individuals in Argyll who get in touch with regards comments left on social networking sites. Most bizarre for me is that it took five months for this anonymous person to complain. Why?"

Islay driver without a licence runs out of luck

AN ISLANDER who has been driving for 14 years without a licence was caught out after police stopped her for speeding.

Islay woman Diane MacNiven also admitted drink driving to police officers when they stopped her in Port Charlotte on January 28 and was found to be three times the legal limit.

At Campbeltown Sheriff Court last week MacNiven, of 8 Daal Terrace, Port Charlotte, admitted driving without a licence and with 107 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath; the legal limit is 35 microgrammes.

Prosecutor fiscal John Service told the court the speed MacNiven was driving at caught the attention of police.

"When they did stop her to warn her about her speed, they noticed she was smelling of alcohol," said Mr Service.

He said MacNiven told the officers: "Yeah, you've got me. I have been drink driving."

Defence agent Mike Creegan said his client thought she had applied for a new licence in 1998 after losing it in the early nineties.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC fined the 44-year-old £300 and disqualified her from driving for three years.

Policing model in Lorn to change

THE WAY communities throughout Oban and Lorn are policed is set to change, including Oban town centre, Soroba Dunollie and Dunbeg being allocated one police officer.

Chief Inspector Brian Auld, who is the officer in charge of area's policing, is proposing to alter his Integrated Service Delivery Model, which is used to deploy staff to where they are needed most.

The move follows criticism from Soroba Residents Association, which claims anti-social behaviour has been on the increase in the town's most populated area since a designated community police officer was removed a year ago.

Chief Inspector Auld said: "There will be a re-alignment of community policing, although there will not be a policeman specifically for Soroba. It will be broader than that."

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Loch Fyne Oysters to remain in Argyll after buyout

RENOWNED seafood business Loch Fyne Oysters is to remain at its base in Cairndow after being sold, the managing director has confirmed.

The business will be remaining in the village at the head of Loch Fyne and retaining its

105 staff after Scottish Seafood Investments (SSI) acquired the business on Monday.

The company, which transferred into employee ownership in 2003 to ensure the future of Loch Fyne Oysters remained in Argyll, accepted the SSI buyout

in a bid to expand the business' export markets.

On Tuesday, Bruce Davidson, managing director of Loch Fyne Oysters, said employees had voted the SSI deal through 'unanimously'.

SSI, formed in 2011, is a joint

venture between private equity investor Northern Link Ltd and The Scottish Salmon Company plc, which also owns a processing plant in Cairndow.

Mr Davidson also said the five-year expansion plan may lead to further jobs in Argyll.

Advertisement

SCOTTISH COMPANY DEFEATS BANKS

THOUSANDS of people across the UK who have been mis-sold payment protection insurance (PPI) by banks could be due compensation – and YOU could be one of them!

That's where Payment Protection Advice Centre (PPAC) come in, because as previously reported, the Hamilton firm are continuing

the fight against the banks.

Anyone who has taken out a loan or credit card within the last 10 years may have been sold a payment protection insurance policy – and sometimes without realising it.

Payment protection insurance – which was used to cover loan and credit card payments if the customer was out of work – is now banned

in the UK after the British Bankers' Association (BBA) lost a crucial judicial review by the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

There are an estimated 20 million mis-sold policies throughout Scotland, and to cover the outlay, Lloyds Banking Group (which includes Halifax, Bank of Scotland, Black Horse and Lloyds TSB)

have set aside £3.2billion.

Working in conjunction with the Hamilton Advertiser, Payment Protection Advice Centre have had an overwhelming success rate in helping people to get their money back, and are delighted to have come to the rescue on behalf of so many of our readers.

Reader Mrs McCall recently picked up the phone to call

PPAC and has since received over £21,000. She said: "I saw the advert in the paper and wasn't sure if it applied to me."

"Since I called PPAC one of their guys came to see me at my house and I have now had a cheque."

"It couldn't have come at a better time, with Christmas just around the corner!"

If YOU think you have a

case then look no further than Payment Protection Advice Centre, who are situated at the newly-refurbished former gatehouse in Bothwell Road, Hamilton.

PPAC work in conjunction with Moore MacDonald Solicitors in Motherwell, giving you peace of mind with the knowledge that you're dealing with a lawyer who

specialises in this type of case.

PPAC owner Andy Frame said: "We can't believe the amount of readers who have responded to the last report."

"It goes to prove that all you have to do is pick up the phone."

"But so many people still need to be made aware that they could be eligible to reclaim this."

"Although the response

has been great there are still millions of policies to be reclaimed.

"I cannot stress enough how important it is to call us to see if you are eligible."

As was the case with Mrs McCall, a PPAC employee can visit your house to discuss your claim, or you could visit their office at a time that suits you.

PPAC
PAYMENT PROTECTION ADVICE CENTRE

'Give us a call and see if you are eligible to claim'

ATTENTION

Have you had a loan or credit card in the last 10 years with any of the following companies

**Black Horse - Barclays - First Plus
Abbey - G E Capital - Bank Of Scotland
RBS - M&S - Welcome Finance - MBNA
Blemain - Lloyds TSB - Citi Finance
Alliance & Leicester - Halifax - Nemo
Clydesdale - Nationwide**

then chances are you have been mis-sold Payment Protection and could be due £0000's in compensation. Call us now on 01698 897655 to reclaim what is yours.

Roads and education gain as Argyll and Bute announce budget

ROADS and education are the main winners in Argyll and Bute Council's budget, which will see £120 million capital investment in the area in the next three years.

Despite a heated debate during a full council meeting last Thursday, all but three councillors agreed a budget that will invest £30 million in education and a further £21 million upgrading roads.

In a shock revelation during the budget debate, council

leader Dick Walsh revealed plans to spend a further £40 million between 2012 and 2015, a 50 per cent increase on the original £83 million capital spend suggested in the draft budget.

Councillor Walsh's proposals see £12.5 million invested in a new Campbeltown Grammar School and Dunoon Primary Campus. A further £7.5 million will fund a new swimming pool and leisure facility in Helensburgh.

The budget also sees the introduction of a Young Employment Opportunities Fund to tackle the 27 per cent rise in youth unemployment in Argyll and Bute in the last year. The one-off fund of £200,000 for 2012/13 will be based around learning choices for the 16 and over age group.

The lifeline ferry service that connects the Isle of Jura to the mainland has also been secured through the revised budget. The council agreed to pledge

£11,000 to the Jura Passenger Ferry Service in 2012-13 and 2013-14. The money represents 20 per cent of the operating costs of the ferry; the Scottish Government will fund the remaining 80 per cent.

Following excessive storm damage endured over the last few months, the council has also created a Resilience Fund, through which £700,000 will be available to develop contingency plans to implement in the event of severe weather.

Councillors also approved an additional £750,000 for 'preventative spend' - to implement changes in early years and health and social care, helping the county's most vulnerable people.

Presenting the budget to the council, Dick Walsh said that despite facing 'the worst set of economic conditions for a generation', the budget created the opportunity for recovery and growth.

Stating the budget was

'shaped by and for the people of Argyll and Bute', Councillor Walsh said: 'This budget puts significant additional capital into Argyll and Bute - creating jobs, improving our infrastructure and improving lives across the region.'

This additional investment would, Mr Walsh said, be funded by efficiency savings, renewed borrowing and releasing funds from the NPDO and Waste PPP Smoothing funds. Commenting on the invest-

ment, Mr Walsh said: 'It is not only affordable across the three years, but is also sustainable going further forward into the future. It represents sensible use of borrowing to promote essential capital investment which can be funded within planned budgets.'

Agreeing additional investment across a range of sectors, the council plans to save £8.2 million in the next two years, achieved through management and operational efficiencies.

'Worst' roads getting better say council

ARGYLL and Bute Council say 'significant' progress has been made to improve the county's roads since being described as 'Scotland's worst' last year. Last autumn, the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation published a report that said 18.4 per cent of Argyll and Bute's roads were in the worst category - a higher percentage than anywhere else in the country.

Argyll and Bute Council say they have been working to improve the network since, spending £3million throughout the 2011/12 financial year.

A further £21million is to be invested in roads over the next three years.

A spokesperson for the authority said: 'The money will improve the road network, economic benefits and improve people's lives.'

Tarbert driver banned for two years and fined

A TARBERT man was fined £700 and disqualified from driving for two years at Campbeltown Sheriff Court last week.

Fraser Talbot of 1 Bankend Flat, Harbour Street, admitted driving while twice the drink/drive limit, failing to stop for pursuing police, driving at excessive speed and without due care and attention, all on September 18.

Talbot's defence agent Christian Kane said that the 20-year old - 'was in a bar in Tarbert and his home address was no more than 100 feet away.'

'There was no reason to drive; he wasn't going anywhere,' he said.

Talbot pled guilty to driving with 191 microgrammes (mg) of alcohol in 100ml blood; the legal limit is 80mg.

Science park power

A PLANNING application to build a new electricity sub-station at Dunstaffnage Science Park was submitted to Argyll and Bute Council last week.

A spokesman for Scottish and Southern Energy, who made the application, said: 'The European Marine Science Park is building an extension so increased load is required on the network.'

Bowmore doctor saga continues

PATIENTS in Bowmore on the Isle of Islay are seeing as many as five different doctors for the same ailment within a six-week period as their long-running GP saga continues.

Despite public objection, Bowmore Surgery was moved to Islay Hospital at the beginning of February, following a disagreement over the lease of the former GP surgery premises.

Adverts via distillery

Meanwhile, the Community Health Partnership (CHP) has failed to secure at least one permanent doctor for the village in almost two years.

Job adverts for a doctor in Bowmore and on the Isle of Jura have been lodged by the CHP.

However, in a bid to widen the search for a permanent doctor for the islands, Islay Community Council has formed a sub-committee to help find a new doctor and has lobbied Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell on the issue.

Bruichladdich Distillery has also lent its support by advertising the essential post to its near

4,000 followers on Facebook.

Community councillor Roberta MacNeill told *The Oban Times*: 'The community council has been forced to form this sub-committee to find a GP for Bowmore and to ensure the NHS service for Islay is not going to be compromised.'

'People are feeling dreadful about this because there is no continuity about which doctor they see. I know of one woman who saw five different doctors for the same problem over six weeks.'

'People here usually hold back from complaining but this time they are not holding anything back.'

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'One of our main aims for the locality is recruiting additional GPs for Islay and Jura.'

'We are looking forward to welcoming applications from suitably qualified individuals.'

Michael Russell MSP has contacted health secretary Nicola Sturgeon on the issue and was seeking to clarify the position with NHS Highland bosses.

Rest and Be Thankful solution underway 'by winter' claims minister

WORK needs to start 'by winter' on a long-term solution to landslip closures at the Rest and Be Thankful, according to Transport Minister Keith Brown.

Mr Brown confirmed in an exclusive interview with *The Oban Times* last Friday that he expected action to start after the results of a recently commissioned study on the road are returned.

'There's a study coming back in the summer and that's the deadline we're looking at now.'

Contingency plan
'We have to get the survey information back first of all and then I'd like to think by winter we can get cracking on the road,' the minister said.

Viaduct alignment
As to the form the long-term solution would take, Mr Brown forecasted the type of ideas the survey was considering.

'One option is a viaduct alignment using the contours of the hill, essentially putting a tunnel in the hillside,' he said.

Advocates of putting more livestock on the hill to stabilise the slope were not likely to be listened to, the minister added.



Transport Minister Keith Brown at a windswept Rest and Be Thankful 16_108keithbrown04

He also confirmed the idea of planting the slopes was unlikely to be a major part of the long-

term plan, pointing out that 'trees can uproot in very high winds'.

Mr Brown had travelled from Glasgow to the top of the pass through the 'Arrochar Alps'



Pupils from Barcaldine Primary School bid farewell to Holly 16_108seal02

Holly the rescued seal says goodbye to Barcaldine pupils

A RESCUED grey seal pup was released back into the wild on Monday after saying goodbye to local schoolchildren.

Holly, who was found weak and starving on an Easdale beach in November, has made a full recovery after being cared for at the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary in Barcaldine.

She was found weighing just 10 kilos but soon revived with staff looking after her. Care team supervisor, Dennis Chamberlain, said: 'As soon as she perked up she revealed a really aggressive side and she chose to vent it on our footwear, destroying eight pairs of wellies inside a fortnight.'

Holly is now fighting fit, weighing a healthy 36 kilos, but

staff are sad to see her go: 'Even though we are extra careful to make sure our rescued seals are not mollycoddled and retain all their wild instincts, it's impossible not to get attached to them,' said Dennis.

Children from Barcaldine Primary School were at the Sanctuary to say goodbye to Holly, they are involved in a website project with the Scottish Zoological Society and filmed the release to go online.

They said they 'would really miss Holly' but agreed it was best she was going back to the wild.

The video by the schoolchildren will be on the Deep Blue website, expected to launch at the end of the month.

Man may face jail after Benderloch road rage attack leaves victim slashed

A MAN is facing jail after slashing a tourist across the face with a Stanley knife in a road rage attack in Benderloch.

Anthony Joseph Murray, 32, of Flat 3, 18 Shandon Crescent, Balloch, was found guilty at trial at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday for his brutal assault on the man at a lay by in the village on April 5 last year.

He repeatedly punched and kicked the 55-year old man, before knocking him to the ground and slashing him.

Murray had been a passenger in a car overtaken by the victim prior to the assault.

Giving evidence, Murray told

the court that he was acting in 'self defence', adding he had seven of 33 vertebrae removed from his spine due to treatment for a tumour he had since he was a child. Any injury could kill him, he claimed.

Prosecutor fiscal David Glancy challenged his account though, telling Murray: 'You wouldn't know the truth of the matter if it skelped you in the face.'

Sheriff Mhairi MacTaggart said: 'You emerged from the cross examination lacking completely in credibility and reliability.'

'It leaves me in absolutely no doubt that you are guilty.'

Connel village projects gain help from Community Payback scheme

A LORN community is seeing remarkable benefits - thanks to convicted criminals.

The community of Connel was one of the quicker communities to react to the launch of the Community Payback scheme, which sheriffs were able to impose on those convicted of committing an offence after February 1 last year.

Good quality of work

Like other communities across Scotland, they decided to bid for certain work to be done in the village, including making the main streets cleaner and more presentable.

They have been pleasantly surprised by the quality of work done though and have thoroughly endorsed the benefits of the scheme, which replaces the old community service legislation.

Les Stewart, vice-chairman of Connel Community Council, said: 'We're

getting plenty of help from the Community Payback scheme. We had asked for some help to do up the village and they've made a good start on it.'

'What we've found is that some of the guys are qualified builders and they're up for doing quite a lot of things.'

'So far, they've been doing things like cutting back branches and picking up litter. Some woodwork has been painted too.'

While the orders are imposed by the court, the scheme is administered by local authority, in this case Argyll and Bute Council.

Les said: 'We asked for some work to be done through the scheme and we find they've been really keen to help.'

'There's not much been done over the winter as the weather wasn't perfect for it, but we're hopeful some work will start again soon.'

Gamekeeper damaged vehicles on Islay estate

A FORMER head gamekeeper of an Islay Estate has been ordered to pay £350 compensation by Campbeltown Sheriff Court after denying he put sand in the fuel of two estate vehicles. John Joseph Adamson, aged 62, of Coullabus Keeper's Cottage, Bridgend, was found guilty last month of putting sand into the fuel systems of an Argocat and a grass-cutting machine on June 11.

Shore St Dental and Implant Centre, Oban

In addition to our full range of Private and NHS treatments we also offer:
Tooth Whitening • Dental Implants
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Outdoor nursery first

OBAN will see the opening of Argyll and Bute's first all-outdoor-based nursery when term-time begins this August.

The Stramash Outdoor Nursery is the brainchild of outdoor education and environmental charity Stramash and will be able to house up to 18 children during weekdays.

Stramash chief executive Niall Urquhart said: 'Stramash has been using the outdoors for the past eight years to facilitate the learning and development of children and young people across Argyll and Bute.'

'We believe in using the outdoors to enable the holistic development of children, encouraging them to learn about themselves, others and the environment around them.'

Parents will be able to register a place for their children at Stramash from Monday, March 5 to Friday March 9.

Councillor Ellen Morton, Argyll and Bute's spokesperson for education and lifelong learning, said: 'Stramash Outdoor Nursery is an exciting new adventure, being the first outdoor nursery in Argyll and Bute.'

'We in Argyll and Bute are blessed with an outstanding environment with some of the best areas of biodiversity which allow our children to explore nature in depth as they learn and have fun.'

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Phoenix boxer lifts North of Scotland title

FORT WILLIAM has a new boxing champion after rising star Igor Sliwinski lifted the North of Scotland Open schoolboy light welterweight title in Aberdeen.

Having been crowned Scottish Novice champion a couple of months previously this is the Lochaber Phoenix Amateur Boxing Club's first Open championship.

Sliwinski took on Josh Dunlop of Elgin ABC, and the fifteen-year-old Pole displayed all the skills that he has been showing in the gym.

From the opening seconds of the bout he danced into the centre of the ring and peppered Dunlop with straight punches. Sliwinski was in the zone and glided in and out of range landing frequently but receiving very little in return.

The undoubtedly talented Igor has been winning his bouts recently simply through aggression and power, but in this fight he used his intelligence to help win this bout and not just his

renowned ferocity. In round two the Lochaber boxer upped the pace slightly and Dunlop, although defiant, spent the majority of his time on the defensive as Igor seemed to always be in front of him but always just out of reach.

Sliwinski is creating a bit of a buzz in Northern boxing as shown when coaches from other clubs make sure to watch his bouts.

Incessant Pressure
This was the case in the final and in round three Sliwinski, realising Dunlop was starting to tire under the incessant pressure, went through the gears, showing a vicious streak that highlights his desire for success.

His fantastic speed coupled with crippling power was brought to the fore and while Dunlop showed great resilience and determination he slowly began to rumble as Igor's combinations began to land more and more cleanly. Towards the end of the

BOXING

round the referee issued a standing eight count on the Elgin boxer and on resumption Sliwinski pinned Dunlop on the ropes and began to unleash bombs. The Elgin coach climbed onto the ring apron to throw in the towel as Dunlop's head was repeatedly rocked back before he was saved by the bell.

Sliwinski's overwhelming points victory was a fitting way to win a title. Meanwhile, reigning Scottish champion Chris Bradley moved out of his weight category to face old adversary and Scottish champion David Dalziel of Peterhead ABC who is the Scottish champion at the weight division above.

Unfortunately Bradley didn't bring his A-game and Dalziel ran out a comfortable winner. Lochaber Phoenix's other national champ James Aitchison's final was cancelled due to the unavailability of his opponent.



Rising star: Youngster Igor Sliwinski is the new North of Scotland champion. 20_f08box01

Home rugby match called off - again!

RUGBY

LOCHABER Rugby Club are hoping to have work carried out to improve the drainage on their home pitch at Banavie at the end of the season after yet another cancellation last weekend.

The club have been forced to postpone nine home games in the Caledonia Regional League Division Two North this season due to the state of the playing surface, including last Saturday's tie with Aberdeenshire second XV.

Club president Alistair MacKinnon told The Oban Times he was waiting for confirmation from Highland Council for when the works will start.

He said: 'We're hoping the drainage work will go ahead at the end of our season, we're just waiting to get it confirmed from the council. It will be similar to the work they've done at An Aird.'

'We've still got four more league games to play, and that takes us up to the end of March. We'll hopefully get a game this weekend but it's all weather dependant.'

Lochaber are due to welcome Garioch to Banavie this Saturday - a match which has already been postponed three times - as they look to avoid finishing bottom of the league.

Alleycats lead handicap division

TEN PIN BOWLING

AFTER 13 weeks of play in the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues there is no change at the top of the scratch division, with the top three teams all running out 5-0 winners.

Alleycats lead with 63 points with Council in second with 55 points, while Ardtoe/Nevis Radio sit third with 47 points.

The handicap division is still very close where Alleycats are the new leaders with 45 points. Last week's leaders Ardtoe/Nevis Radio drop to third place on 44 points, and Council move up to second place, also on 44 points.

The highest team games of the week came from Council with 593 scratch, 802 handicap. Council also had the highest two-game series totals with 1,163 scratch and 1,581 handicap.

Individually, Alleycats' Pam Weller had a good week with a 214 scratch game which is the season's high. She also had the best handicap game of the week with 251. Her 369 two-game scratch series was also the season's highest and her 443 two-game handicap series was the week's high. Other good games this week came from Tony Whitelocke, Alleycats, with 181, and Jacqui Hill, Phoenix, with 170.

Fort 17s v City

FOOTBALL

FORT William under 17s are due to welcome Inverness City to Claggan Park for a 1pm kick off on Sunday, weather permitting.

The youngsters' game against Dingwall last weekend was postponed due to an unplayable pitch at Claggan.

Manager confident about trip to Inverurie

FORT William travel to play Inverurie Loco Works this Saturday, with manager Danny Conlon in bullish mood about his team's chances.

He told The Oban Times: 'We enjoy going up there. Sometimes you have grounds where things seem to go well for you, and with a stronger squad hopefully we can go up there and give them a

good game.' 'We're in the middle of February and we haven't seen them yet because we haven't played them, which is a bit unusual.'

Conlon said he hoped the three trialists who have been with the club in recent weeks will be part of his squad for the game against Inverurie, who sit sixth in the Highland League.

He said: 'Because of cancellations and the problems with getting proper training facilities, it's a bit unfair to judge them at the moment. We'll give them a few more weeks.'

The Fort manager said he was also hopeful first team regulars Mark Gillespie, Iain MacLellan and Danny Mackintosh would be available to play on Saturday.

FOOTBALL

Fort faced yet another postponement last weekend after the Lochaber weather left the Claggan Park pitch unplayable, with Nairn County were the scheduled visitors. The match will be re-arranged for a mid-week later in the season.

Local runners dominate Glen Nevis 10k

LOCAL runners dominated Lochaber Athletic Club's Glen 10k road race in Glen Nevis on Sunday, which saw nearly 40 competitors taking part.

Despite a light dusting on snow underfoot, some fast-paced performances were put in. John Binnie built up a comfortable lead early on and was able to maintain it until the end, finishing in 35minutes and 14seconds, 52 seconds clear of second-placed Allan Ross.

Strong Challenge

Despite having around a 20 second lead on Nicola Meekin at the five-mile point, John Hepburn had to work hard to fend off Nicola's strong challenge for third in the last mile and crossed the line just six seconds ahead of her in 37m31s. Amanda Blackhall was the second female runner home in 41m14s.

Sandra MacDonald and Aidan Jenkins both recorded new personal best times, while Mhairi MacCallum and Noleen Souness put in impressive runs.

Ron Turner again showed good form with fifth place in a time of 40m15s, while veteran runner Alec Kitson finished in 40m30s. LAC would like to thank Susan

Jane for marshalling at halfway, Ellen, Jackie, Bruce and John Dougan for marshalling at the old Nevis Bridge, Raymond for the results, John O'Neil for



The runners set off at the start of the Glen 10k road race on Sunday morning.

marshalling the course and the police for their continued assistance keeping the runners safe. The club's next race is an 11-mile trail race at Duror on Sunday.

ATHLETICS

Results -
1, John Binnie 35minutes 14seconds; 2, Allan Ross 36:06; 3, John Hepburn 37:31; 4, Nicola Meekin 37:07; 5, Ron Turner 40:15; 6, Alec Kitson 40:30; 7, Ali Kennedy 40:36; 8, Ben Dodman 40:46; 9, John Grant 41:11; 10, Amanda Blackhall 41:14; 11, Ritchie Collins 41:28; 12, Andrew Cameron 41:46; 13, Brian Campbell 42:36; 14, Tark John 44:29; 15, Lucy Prins 45:03; 16, Jim Hamilton 45:06; 17, Laura Barbour 45:22; 18, Martin McDermott 45:36; 19, Mark Wollard 47:00; 20, Alice Hall 47:08; 21, Jo McGuire 47:20; 22, Jim Treasurer 47:34; 23, Scott Langan 47:58; 24, Fiona Gardiner 48:09; 25, John Grant 48:54; 26, Aileen Duncan 49:11; 27, Ernie Orr 50:36; 28, Bill Scott 50:51; 29, Mhairi MacCallum 51:15; 30, Sandra Macdonald 51:16; 31, Margaret Rose MacPhee 55:14; 32, Elma Murdoch 55:56; 33, Aidan Jenkins 57:03; 34, June Watt 57:35; 35, Elvire Feeny 57:36; 36, Christine Dougan 61:58; 37, Pamela Hamilton 65:53; 38, Noleen Souness 65:53.

Orion Group to sponsor shinty's premier division

THIS season's top tier shinty league will have two 'deby days' as part of a new sponsorship deal with manpower supplier Orion Group.

The Camanachd Association announced the league's title sponsors for seasons 2012 and 2013 on Monday.

The Orion Group Premiership gets underway on Saturday March 3 with the top 10 shinty teams in the country competing to be the first to lift the new Orion Group Premiership Trophy.

The Orion Group Premiership Derby Days take place on Saturday, May 26 and Saturday, August 25 between local rivals such as Kingussie v Newton

more, Fort William v Kilmallie, Glenurquhart v Lovat and Kyles Athletic v Bute. Announcing the sponsorship at Orion Group's Head Office in Inverness today were Camanachd Association Vice-President, Jim Barr, and Orion Group's Head of Marketing Development, Scott Burns-Smith.

Mr Barr said: 'Today marks a great day for shinty and we are delighted to welcome Orion Group as title sponsor of the Premiership for the next two years.'

'Their investment represents a significant boost for the sport and will be used to help promote and develop shinty across the

SHINTY

country, particularly at youth level.'

Mr Burns-Smith said: 'Whilst Orion Group is a worldwide business our history is firmly in the Highlands. As a company we have a strong focus in working with the communities on various projects and commercial opportunities and we are pleased to offer our support to the Camanachd Association.'

'2012 is an exciting year for us with the Group celebrating its 25 year anniversary and we all look forward to the launch of the Orion Group Premiership in March.'



L-R Kinlochshiel's Finlay Macrae, Orion Group's Scott Burns-Smith and Glenurquhart's Stuart Mackintosh.

Tough conditions for Winter Feast Duathlon

THE SECOND annual Winter Feast Duathlon saw 60 runners descend on Arisaig in less than ideal weather conditions on Saturday.

The participants in the No Fuss Events race set off under blue skies, but the conditions quickly changed to rain, hail and heavy winds. They tackled an eight km road and beach run, including a section along Camusdarach

beach, before a 13km bike ride to Kinsadel, Morar and back and then faced another 5km run to the finish line at Sunnyside Croft.

Local man Ewan Thorburn and David Wilby could not be separated as they finished joint first in a time of one hour 45minutes and 55seconds.

Marie Todd of Inverness was the first of the 22 female racers

home in a time of 2h 5m and 1s, just ahead of Louise Crilley, who recorded the fastest ladies time for the cycling section.

Race organiser Frazier Coupland said: 'The sunny skies didn't last long as the race got underway, runners could see a squall approaching across the Sound of Sleat, the wind and hail could not deter the humour and good spirits, everyone headed

ATHLETICS

of for the road cycle stage with a smile and thinking the worst is past.

'This was not to be the case and the spiralling wind did its level best to either hit cyclist side on, or indeed head on, with biggest gust of the day being reported at 54mph.'

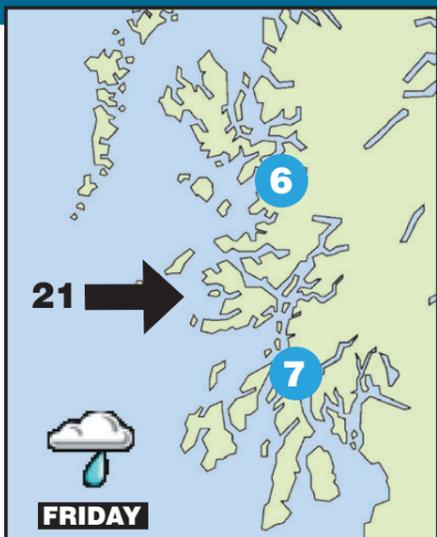
Weather

Thursday Light rain.
Winds moderate, south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 10°C

Friday Cloudy with light drizzle
Winds moderate, westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

Weekend Light rain
Outlook Winds moderate, west south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 8°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, February 23, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 00.38	0.6 06.31	4.1 12.57 0.8 18.42 3.9
Fri 01.12	0.7 07.02	4.1 13.30 0.9 19.09 3.9
Sat 01.14	0.8 07.32	4.0 14.01 1.0 19.37 3.8
Sun 02.14	1.0 08.02	3.8 14.32 1.2 20.05 3.5
Mon 02.43	1.3 08.31	3.6 15.05 1.4 20.35 3.5
Tues 03.15	1.5 09.02	3.4 15.43 1.6 21.09 3.3
Wed 03.50	1.8 09.36	3.1 16.32 1.8 21.49 3.1

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

Wherever you are...
Whatever the weather

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