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Elderly care may go private

Council to consider home care, day care and care home services going to tender

OFFICIALS at Argyll and Bute Council have been asked to look at privatising all three parts of the authority's services to older people.

A special committee at the council is to be asked tomorrow (Friday) to agree to a new project team that will develop the option of putting out to tender home care, day care and care home services.

The committee decided in November that, following the Older People Services Review, which has not been made public, that this was the option they wished to develop as a 'final business case'.

The approved project team is to be asked to look initially at services the council provides that are duplicated in the independent sector with a view to the council withdrawing from them completely.

Social services spokesman Councillor Donald McIntosh, a member of the special committee for older people's services, was keen to emphasise that no decisions had been made and that any recommendations would have to go before all councillors.

'This was the preferred option that officers came back with and we have asked them to come back with a full

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by MARIAN MILLER
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business case and that will be presented to the council,' he said.

'We are under severe constraints because the older population is increasing. We can't continue the way we are and we have to consider different options.

'We haven't got the funding there from the Scottish government [for free personal care] so we have to look at all options.'

He said the council had struggled to provide free personal care for the elderly from the moment former First Minister Henry McLeish stood up in the Scottish Parliament and announced it in 2001.

But this did not mean that in places where there was no private sector provision that services would be withdrawn.

'Some homes might go to the private sector, some might stay with the council and some might have a different way of operating,'

he said. 'That has all to be teased out.

'We have to find out through the business case what is viable.'

If agreed to, the project team will be given a six-month timetable to come back to the special committee with a view on where the council can withdraw from services; a specification for the remainder of the services and where these can be done by the independent sector; and a complete consultation with the independent sector and invitations to tender drawn up.

A council spokeswoman said: 'Following the decision of the council's special committee reviewing the direct delivery of services to older people by the council in November last year, the council is progressing a final business case in regard to options to possibly externalise the direct service provision by the council.

'This will also look at areas in which withdrawal from direct provision of services might be possible due to excess demand.

'No decision has been taken by the special committee in regard to externalisation or withdrawal and the finalisation of the business case will furnish the special committee with the relevant information to enable it to assess matters.'



Marcus Swietlicki from Kilchrenan has been selected to sing with the National Boys' Choir. 07_09mar02

Kilchrenan young singer uses a little 'Twist' to book his place in national youth choir

A KILCHRENAN boy has gained a place with a prestigious national choir at the first attempt after impressing at an audition in Glasgow.

Performing

Marcus Swietlicki, aged 10, will be one of the youngest singers in the National Youth Choir of Scotland's National Boys Choir and will perform at Glasgow City Hall over Easter, following a week-long course at Loretto School in Edinburgh.

The Kilchrenan Primary School pupil, who was a cast member in last year's Taynuilt pantomime, sang the Oliver Twist favourite Where Is Love at the audition.

'I was a bit nervous when I was singing but I thought I had good chance to get into the choir.'

'My dad got the letter to say I had got in and I was really surprised.'

Marcus said his delight at getting into the choir

turned to mild embarrassment when his head teacher Graham Dickie announced his achievement to everyone in the school on Monday.

Proud

But proud mum Morag, a violinist, said: 'Marcus played Mick Jugular in the Taynuilt pantomime and competed at the Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival last year but he doesn't have a singing teacher.'

'I'm over the moon for him, he has done so well. You go in for these things and you don't expect anything but you have to give it a go.'

Morag had heard about the boys' choir after her fiddle pupil, Kilmore's Angus Sinclair, sang with them three years ago and she took Marcus to Glasgow's Mitchell Library for the audition at the end of January. Marcus is one of a handful of boys from the Oban area to sing

with the choir over the past five years.

Marcus' father, Arek, who runs a construction company, also has a musical side and plays rhythm guitar in the Lorn-based band Blues-caster.

Choir manager Ruth Townsend said: 'For someone that has had no previous experience in a choir, this is a great achievement. He obviously has a good natural singing voice.'

ACHA gets planners' nod for 36 new homes in Oban

Scottish government urged to fund much-needed local housing

ARGYLL Community Housing Association (ACHA) has been given planning permission to build 36 homes in Oban's Glenshellach area.

However, the housing association does not yet have funding to build the 16 flats and 20 terraced houses on land owned by M & K MacLeod.

Argyll and Bute councillors agreed last week to allow the development, which will be two blocks of one-bedroom flats, each with eight flats and five terraces of two-bedroom homes, with four houses in each terrace, although it is a higher density than would be preferred.

Planners told the planning, protective services and licensing committee that all the homes would be affordable, which justified the site being developed at the higher density.

ACHA had pointed out that there was extremely high demand for affordable homes

in Oban with more than 600 families and single people on the waiting list for homes in the area.

Chief executive of ACHA Alastair MacGregor said: 'The association, at the moment, has no funding for the site from the Scottish government. What we wanted to do was get planning permission for all the developments so that the principal of development on the site could be taken forward.'

It was difficult to say when the association would get funding for the development, he said, but it could now be included in the strategic housing investment plan which goes before the Scottish government with support from the local authority.

'We are very keen to take this site forward if funding becomes available,' he added.

There are plans for a play area within the development but not for any other amenities.

Armed police called to Dunollie siege

ARMED police, dogs units and a helicopter were all called to a Saturday night siege in Dunollie, Oban, following reports that a man with a knife was involved in a disturbance.

After a seven-hour stand-off the incident ended peacefully when a 27-year-old man gave himself up to police.

Read more - Page 3

£1 million to be spent on Argyll's roads

MORE than £1 million is to be spent on Argyll's roads to repair damage caused by the severe winter weather.

Argyll and Bute Council says its 2,300 km of roads had 'significant damage' done to them over the Christmas period when snowfall froze for two weeks in the coldest spell in Scotland since 1914.

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Royal National Mòd goes to Paisley in 2013

PAISLEY will host the Royal National Mòd in 2013, the first time the town has held Gaelic's premier festival.

Mòd organiser An Comunn Gàidhealach made the announcement at its AGM last Friday. The Paisley branch of An Comunn Gàidhealach submitted an application to host the Mòd in 2011 and re-submitted the application for 2012.

Read more - Page 2

Elderly islanders in need of care on Tiree and Islay may find themselves on the mainland

ELDERLY islanders on Tiree and Islay may have to be brought to the mainland unless more care workers can be attracted to island posts.

That is the dilemma facing Argyll and Bute Council as it tries to cope with an ageing island population and empty social care posts.

Councillor Donald 'Skye' McIntosh, council spokesman for social services, said: 'On Islay and Tiree in particular, there is an increasing elderly population but fewer people to look after them.'

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How can my business meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century?

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Beachd Ailein

A-rèir rannsachaidh a dh' fhoillsich Comunn Mheidigeach Bhreataim bho chionn ghoidid tha barrachd is barrachd dhaoine a' sireadh aire dotair aig amannan taobh a-mach an latha obrach, agus air an deireadh sheachdain. Tha cuideachd gairm charbad-eiridinn air fàs trichead 's a còig a' cheud san fharsaingeachd, agus ceathrad 's a h-aon as a' cheud air na feasgair. Mar a thuigear tha na gluasadan seo nan dragh mòr dha dotairean agus dhan t-seirbheis shlàinte, is cha b' iongnadh ged a bhiodh iomagain a' nochdadh a thaobh cosgais.

Tha seirbheis slàinte na rioghadh seo na adhbhar farmaid air feadh an t-saoghail agus ged a bhios sinne a' gearan gun sgrùth na rud againn an seo a tha da-riribh a' toirt co-ionannachd cothrom dhan mhòr-shluagh. Tha sinn air fàs cho cleachdte ris a' ghòireas seo is nach eil sinn 's dòcha a' cur na luach air a bu chòir, neo co-dhiù chun am bi feum againn air leigheas.

'S i a' cheist, ma tha, am bheil sinn a' fàs neo-ar-thaingeil air na th' againn? Bheil sinn a' sìor iarraidh, gun thuigse neo dìù air cosgais neo duilgheadas eile? An gabh sinn sàsachadh, neo am feum sinn a bhith riarachtaiche le nas lugha?

Tha sinn air fàs cleachdte ri còir air seirbheis slàinte agus tha riaghaltas a' cur ris a sin le bhith a' cur amasan cruaidh ro na seirbheisean a thaobh na h-ùine sam feumar daoine faicinn. Aig an aon àm tha riaghaltas air gabhail ris gun robh uairean obrach mi-chneasta aig dotairean òga, agus le ceartas chaidh smachd a ghabhail air sin. Tha turarastail bhanastram air an leasachadh, ach tha cuid fhathast ann an seirbheis na slàinte aig nach eil ach pàigheadh bochd taca ris an uallach a th' orra. Agus os cionn sin uile tha staing eaconomaigeach eadar-nàiseanta a tha a' ciallachadh gum bheil ionmhas poblach gu bhith gann fad nan deich bliadhna romhainn co-dhiù, agus 's dòcha nas fhaide.

Feumaidh sinn a thuigsinn gum bheil seirbheis na slàinte fìor chosgail a cumail a' dol agus gum bheil a cuid maoin an eisimeil neart eaconomaidh na rioghadh. Chan iarradh duine lughdachadh air ire seirbheis, ach tha aon dòigh cuideachaidh againn uile agus 's e sin a bhith nochdadh aig an àm is còir.

A recent report by the BMI details dramatically increased demand on doctors outside normal working hours, and similar pressure on ambulance services in evenings and at weekends. While there are several possible explanations for these trends, including work pressures on patients, it is also being suggested that the trend is partly driven by selfish and inconsiderate attitudes.

Despite frequent criticism our health service is envied by many countries, but after sixty years are we taking it too much for granted? Are we asking more than it can reasonably provide? Should we be more aware that health service resources are finite and depend on the health of the economy? One significant contribution would be to ensure that all appointments are kept!

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)
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Kintyre landslip-threat road to have £320,000 spend

A STRETCH of road south of Campbeltown susceptible to landslides is to be upgraded. Argyll and Bute Council has agreed to carry out work on the B842 Conie Glen road to improve the roadside and field drainage and construct a

northbound lane uphill of the existing road. Following landslip activity in 2009, traffic to Southend has been confined to single file working under the control of traffic lights. Although the risk of the

ground slipping below the road will not be entirely removed, it is hoped the level of risk can be managed better in the future. The Conie Glen road is built on top of an area of ground which experienced landslides

around 40 years ago as well as more recently. The council's executive agreed last week to this option - at an estimated cost of £320,000 - from several put forward by geotechnical experts Scott Wilson.

Council leader Councillor Dick Walsh said: 'It is extremely important that we do something at this location, as this issue is not going to go away. The current situation is obviously of concern not just to the local residents, but

to the hundreds of people who visit the Southend area both for business and pleasure.' The project now moves to the design phase. It is hoped that the work will be completed towards the end of the summer.



Father Roddy McAuley, Father John Paul MacKinnon and Father Calum MacLellan, retired, at Castlebay, Barra in front of Kisimul Castle.

Film crew to follow island priests

THREE priests from the southern isles are to feature in the new series of the BBC's An Island Parish. The new Roman Catholic priest for Barra, Father

John Paul MacKinnon of the Church of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Castlebay, along with neighbouring priest Father Roddy McAuley of St Peter's, Daliburgh, South Uist and

retired priest Father Calum MacLellan from Eriskay are the subject of the next series of the popular BBC2 programme produced by Tiger Aspect Productions.

The day-to-day lives of the three priests are being filmed between now and the end of the summer and the series, the fifth so far, is due to be broadcast later this year.

Paisley first for Royal National Mòd

Gaelic festival planning process extended to four years

PAISLEY has been named as the host venue for the Royal National Mòd in 2013, the first time the town has held Gaelic's premier festival.

Mod organiser An Comunn Gaidhealach made the announcement at its AGM last Friday.

John Macleod, President of An Comunn Gaidhealach said: 'An Comunn have received, and considered, submissions from local authorities regarding the economic squeeze that they are feeling at the moment.'

'Our board of directors have debated this issue thoroughly and concluded that the present three-year planning process for Am Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail (Royal National Mod) now needs to be extended to four years to give local authorities and supporters of the Mòd more opportunity to plan for the event.'

'The early announcement of the 2013 venue is the first step in establishing this longer planning cycle.'

The Paisley branch of An Comunn Gaidhealach submitted an application to host the Mòd in 2011 and then re-submitted the application for 2012.

Growing interest
An Comunn Gaidhealach stressed that bringing the 2013 event to Paisley would allow the growing Gaelic speaking community in Renfrewshire and Glasgow closer access to the Mòd for the first time since the Mòd was held in Airdrie in 1993.

Mr Macleod concluded by saying: 'We have a duty to bring the Mòd to the growing Gaelic communities across Scotland, as well as to the Highlands and Islands. A 20-year delay in holding a Mod in West Central Scotland is far too long and I am sure the event will be welcomed by everyone.'

Am Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail will be held in Caithness between October 8-16 this year, followed by Stormoray in 2011 and Dunoon in 2012.

Forestry Commission calls for Gaelic comment
FORESTRY Commission Scotland is asking members of the public, partner agencies, groups and organisations to offer comment on its new Gaelic Language Plan. The five-year plan (2010 - 2015) sets out how the commission will promote and use Gaelic in communicating with the public and with key partners. The Consultation period ends April 2 at noon.

Tayvallich link boosting Jura's economy

A REVIEW of the Jura passenger ferry service to Tayvallich has revealed that it has boosted the island economy by an estimated £130,410.

The ferry service is in the final year of a three-year pilot and the current report makes positive reading to the ferry operators, who are based on the island.

The inflatable RIB gives Jurachs and visitors summer season day-return access from Craighouse to the mainland, and negates the need to travel to the neighbouring Isle of Islay to catch the boat to Kenacraig.

In its first season (June 11 to September 24) the service carried 1,761 passengers, of which 14 per cent were island residents. In season 2009 (April 9 to September 31) passenger numbers increased

to 2,688, with residents' use increasing to 23 per cent. But one of the more pleasing aspects to the increased visitor number is the economic impact on the island.

'There is a very positive feeling about the passenger ferry'

A number of distinct customer groups have emerged; business visitors, holiday home owners visiting more frequently, walkers and cyclists, 'Whisky Trail' tourists from North America and Scandinavia and shooting parties.

Jura Distillery Shop estimates that most day visitors on the ferry visit the shop and spend an average of £30 per person.

Jura Hotel similarly estimates that most day visitors come into the hotel and purchase at least a coffee, with some having lunch or staying overnight.

Antlers restaurant reports high footfall by day visitors and has employed two part-time staff in high season as a result. The island cycle hire business has quantified a 50 per cent increase in business due to ferry visitors.

John Potts of Jura Development Trust said: 'There is a very positive feeling about the passenger ferry and many islanders use it regularly, as well as visitors. I know one man who works

on the mainland, who says the ferry has made his life a lot easier, and another who can travel to see his parents in Edinburgh and bring them back to Jura within the same day.'

In Tayvallich the community shop reports additional sales due to passengers awaiting or alighting from the ferry. This has benefited their community buy-out initiative.

Islanders also report that the increased journeys to the island have reduced the sense of isolation and has increased the incidence of holiday homeowners visiting their properties.

The ferry service requires an ongoing subsidy of between £40,000 - £55,000 in order to operate, although the figures suggest that for every £1 spent on the service a return of nearly £3 is possible.

Castlebay High School pupils take part in fire safety course



Pictured receiving their certificates from Angus MacNeil MP, Group Manager Ian Smith and Watch Manager William Douglas are: Eleanor MacKinnon, Simon O'Connor, Duncan Douglas, Christine MacLean and (front row) Craig Ferguson, Isabel MacIntyre and Aileen Elder.

SCHOOL pupils on Barra have been finding out what it's like to be a member of the fire service after passing a fire safety course.

Certificates marking the achievement were presented to the pupils of Castlebay High School at Castlebay Fire Station last Wednesday.

Skills training

Parents, carers, fire service members and teaching staff heard how they have learned skills, such as: hose drills; ladder drills; breathing apparatus and carrying out home fire safety checks. They have also benefited from non-fire related training including, incident management at a road traffic collision.

They also learned basic first aid skills, delivered by The Scottish Ambulance Service. Members of the fire crew in Castlebay are all delighted to have been involved in the course, which is funded by The Big Lottery Fund.

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Oban FM post loss

COMMUNITY radio station Oban FM has posted a financial loss of £19,102 for 2009 as revenue fell and costs increased.

The figures were reported at the station's annual meeting on Monday.

In 2009 the radio station's administrative expenses totalled £102,197, a figure that surpassed the company's turnover for the year. Turnover decreased by around £10,000 over the same period to £92,355.

Wages and salaries rose in 2009 from £40,259 to £49,745 and, perhaps as an indication of the credit crunch, the company's bad debts jumped from £1,771 in 2008 to £11,721 in 2009.

Oban FM refused to comment on the figures.

Dunbeg shop to become flat

PERMISSION has been granted to turn a vacant shop in Dunbeg into flat.

The premises at 14 Jane Road have been empty for some time. Planners agreed to the change of use because an existing village shop lies next door at number 15.

Development of historic farm buildings

HISTORIC farm buildings on a Cowal estate are to be converted into a garden centre, craft shop and cafe, after planners granted permission last week.

Ardlamont Leisure, based at the Ardlamont Estate near Kames, hope the development will cater for tourists all year round and create four new jobs.

There were no objections to the plans to transform the interior of the Category B Listed buildings, known as The Square, with few external alterations.

Change to deposits for homeless

ARGYLL and Bute Council is to stop paying deposits for homeless people moving into privately rented homes.

Instead, from April 1, it will underwrite the sum without any money changing hands.

The rent deposit guarantee scheme means the council will pay out to a landlord only if the deposit is needed to cover damage or bills.

A report to councillors noted since 2004, 411 deposits had been covered to help secure tenancies, but the old system was burdensome to run and fewer deposits were recovered than expected.

A number of landlords surveyed told the council they would not work with the new system.

Ten-day Festival of the Sea planned for Oban

TEN days of special events in and around Oban will mark Argyll's first Festival of the Sea.

Community input

The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), based at Dunstaffnage, is co-ordinating the festival, to be held from May 21 to 31. Organisers hope it will bring together world-class scientists with school children, local businesses and com-

munity groups to celebrate the area's connections with the sea.

Dr Anuschka Miller of SAMS explained: 'Argyll's coastline is as long as that of France. We are defined by our seas, our climate and gardens, our culture and the on-going prosperity of Oban also has lots to do with our marine environment. Tourists come because of our environment or the oppor-

tunities it provides.

'This festival of the sea is first and foremost a community-based event. It's something we hope will become a regular feature of the town's calendar.'

Waverley visit

SAMS has received grants from the Scottish government and Argyll and Bute LEADER programme to fund the special programme. Nearby schools will be learn-

ing about the sea for a week running up to the festival and a host of activities are being planned for all ages, including guided walks, cooking demonstrations, drama, music and a visit by the Waverley steamer.

The festival will kick off with a parade of children in sea-inspired costumes and there may even be the crowning of Mr Neptune, an official ambassador for the

event. Local restaurants are being encouraged to put on special festival menus celebrating the fruits of the sea and catering for the visitors the event hopes to attract.

Welcomed

Councillor Roddie McCuish said the programme of special events would encourage an influx of visitors to the town and help its economy thrive. 'It's vitally important we

encourage things like this in the town,' he said. 'It's great to see SAMS taking the initiative not just in Dunstaffnage but in Oban itself.'

'It's not just that the community will benefit greatly, this will put Oban on the map.'

'SAMS has worldwide renown, and as it continues to grow so will the economy of Oban and the surrounding area.'



Ian MacLean with daughter Julie and loyal dog Nell at home in Ardfern. 16-09-09/01

Community rallies round farmer saved by his dog

A LOYAL dog and a loving community were behind the rescue of a man lost in the hills.

Ian MacLean of Collaig, Ardfern, went missing while working with his family on the hillside in Kilmelford. The 61-year-old farmer who suffers from dementia was disorientated for more than 15 hours in freezing conditions before Nell, his nine-year-old collie dog, raised the alarm for rescuers.

Brother Hugh MacLean said: 'At one point there were more than 100 people on the hillside. It was quite incredible that so many people were willing to come and look for Ian. The dog doesn't usually make any noise so when she barked

to attract the attention of rescuers we knew just how loyal she is.'

Daughter Julie MacLean said: 'We live in a very loving and caring community here in Ardfern.'

'The day he went missing every emergency service in the area came to our help: Oban Police especially Sergeant Colin Johnson, Strathclyde Police Mountain Rescue, Clyde Coastguard, RAF Kinross, SARDA Rescue Dogs, Oban and Arrochar mountain rescue teams, the ambulance service and the retained fire fighters from Kilmelford - and our community here in Ardfern were amazing.'

North Argyll Carers Centre and Alzheimer's Scotland, help Ian and his family cope

with day-to-day life. To say thank you to the charities the family organised a fundraiser on Saturday night. Ian's wife Eilidh was overwhelmed by the support for her husband.

'People were so generous on the night of the incident that I was a bit worried they felt that they had already given support,' she said. 'So, we were overwhelmed with the huge sum of £3,237.26 raised. We really have to say a big thank you twice.'

Ruth Moody of North Argyll Carers Centre said: 'To say we are delighted at the results of the evening would be an understatement. We can only thank the organisers for all their hard work and ensure the money is put to good use.'

North Uist parents voice concerns over school cuts

Councillor denies any proposal to close Lochmaddy Primary School

MEMBERS of the public attempted to hold North Uist councillors to account over the future of Lochmaddy Primary School at a heated community council meeting on Monday.

Refuse to discuss
The councillors responded by refusing to discuss the situation ahead of a 'conversation' with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's leader and director of education at the school this week, part of the council's consultations on their cost-cutting proposals across education in the islands.

The Lochmaddy community is angered by CnES proposals to close Lochmaddy, moving pupils to Carinish 12 miles away.

The community has shown the school roll is growing and is expected to reach 20 by 2014.

They have also shown that Lochmaddy is a thriving economic centre, with 182 jobs at present and more expected in the short and medium term.

Parents say they do not want their children to spend long periods each day on public transport ill-equipped to deal with them; and that Lochmaddy school has been deemed satisfactory at all levels in recent HMIE reports, with a higher rating for its building than Paible school.

Denied proposal
At the meeting two parents, Ewen Morrison and Norman Macleod repeatedly asked the local councillors present, Archie Campbell and Uisdean Robertson, where they stood on the matter and whether their support could be counted upon.

Councillor Campbell, who is chairman of CnES sustainable development committee, sits on the education and children's services committee and the policy and resources committee, denied there was any proposal to close Lochmaddy Primary School.

He said: 'Council leader



Lochmaddy parents and community members face North Uist Community Council in Lochmaddy Hall

Angus Campbell promised a conversation with Lochmaddy parents as part of the consultation process taking place across the Western Isles. That will happen on Wednesday night (last night) at Lochmaddy school.'

Listening
Councillor Campbell said he viewed the community council meeting as an opportunity for the community to air its views.

When pressed by Mr Morrison and Mr Macleod as to whether they could count on his support to keep Lochmaddy open, Councillor Campbell said: 'I will make my position clear after the consultation process. I will not be answering questions tonight as I refuse to be the only representative of the comhairle.'

When asked for his position on the matter Councillor Uisdean Robertson said: 'I'll take the opinions and will listen but I am not making any commitments until I have seen all the arguments.'

Councillor Campbell added: 'My responsibility is to all the residents of the ward including those without school children and older people. As elected members we need to look at our responsibilities across the whole island chain.'

Mr Morrison asked: 'Should you not be fighting for all

our schools?' Councillor Campbell said he would not be drawn into arguments with people.

Alasdair Allan, MSP, attended the meeting and stated his support for Lochmaddy school. He said: 'Parents have shown there is a good case for keeping the school open. It makes no sense to shut it in an economically thriving area.'

After the meeting Mr Macleod, who is manager of Taigh Chearsabhagh arts centre and parent of a pre-school child, said: 'People have now lost confidence in their councillors. This should never have got to this stage. The information the comhairle is using is wrong. They took figures of pre-school children only from one nursery on the island, showing that there were three pre-school children in the Lochmaddy area, which was totally misleading.'

'We can show that there will be 20 school-age children within three years, and that at the current rate of growth, the school might need an extension.'

Mr Macleod added: 'I would like to know why Lochmaddy was earmarked for closure in the first place. I saw an email a year ago which suggested this, which has been withdrawn from the council website and is now denied.'

Armed police called to Dunollie siege

A DRAMATIC Saturday night siege in Dunollie, Oban, involving police in riot gear, a helicopter, fire engines, ambulances and five police cars plus dog units, ended peacefully when a 27-year-old man gave himself up to police.

Witnesses said that officers used riot shields and cordoned off an area, near to the shop, after a man went on a rampage. Witnesses claimed that the man had a knife and at one point tried to attack the police with the weapon.

The stand-off, which lasted seven hours, saw expert negotiators and a police armed response unit rushed to the town to deal with the situation - described as a 'significant threat' by Strathclyde Police.

A crowd quickly gathered, as a helicopter circled above the incident. Friends of the man said that he was known for his erratic behaviour.

The man was later taken to hospital in Lochgilphead where he remains.

A police spokesman confirmed: 'Police were called to a disturbance at 5.17 pm on Bay View Road, on Saturday evening.'

'As a result of the call-out, police continued to Graham Court to arrest a male who they believed was causing the disturbance.'

'The situation accelerated into a significant threat to members of the public, therefore officers called the force's armed response and dog units who are based in Glasgow. A trained negotiator was also called to the scene.'

'Officers contained the situation until these units could be flown in.'

'The situation continued until 12.08 am when the male surrendered to police. 'An officer sustained a slight injury and received medical treatment.'

Witnesses said that one of the paramedics treated a male at the scene - before being transferred to the hospital.

'Freak' snow storm blocks Seil road

A 'FREAK' snow storm rendered part of the B844 by Loch Seil impassable on February 17.

Police were alerted when the 5.10pm bus from Oban to Easdale slipped on ice and straddled the road.

One eyewitness said: 'There were 60 cars stuck on both sides of the hill because of thick snow and ice.'



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There will be an **Open Day** to allow our customers, old and new, to see the new facilities. Details will be in the Oban Times in due course. We're sorry to leave Dunstaffnage but the **bigger and much improved facilities** in the new Oban centre will be a boon to the whole Oban and Lorn area. Moving from Dunstaffnage also allows our UHI partner, SAMS, to expand as they will take over our old premises and extend them.

Watch the press for more information in the coming weeks.

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MULL based Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) is to benefit from a share of a £2.2 million resilience package from the Scottish government. The Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, based on the Isle of Mull, will receive £57,040 towards its work with schools and communities to sustain the marine environment. Cally Fleming project director of the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust said: 'We are absolutely thrilled. 'This grant is fantastic news for us, and means we can survive for the moment. It gives us time to put our own recovery plans into operation and focus on building a sustainable future for our organisation.' Supporting the project MSP Jim Mather said: 'The resilience fund was launched in response to the difficulties felt by some organisations as a result of the global downturn. 'These grants will provide an immediate boost that will help to position organisations for a strong recovery and in turn, will support the provision of front-line services for the most vulnerable people in Scotland.'

A MULL woman is to be honoured with a Gold Badge for her fundraising endeavours for the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI).

Mrs Shelia Campbell a member of the Ross of Mull and Iona Branch of the RNLI is to receive the accolade after 'invaluable commitment' to the lifesaving charity. Mrs Campbell will be invited to the RNLI's award ceremony in London on May 27 this year to accept her award.

She will then join 101 volunteers from around Scotland will be invited to the Scottish annual meeting at Perth Concert Hall on June 11.

IONA Primary School raised £315.57 for people in Haiti. At a recent fundraiser the small school held a Chinese New Year lunch.

Malcolm Alloway, primary seven pupil, said: 'For just £20 a family in Haiti can be housed so we tried to do our bit here on Iona to help the 2,000,000 who are homeless.'

'We served more than 50 people and after the costs had been deducted we made a profit of £315.57. 'Many thanks to everyone who came and to those who donated money to this most important cause.'

CONCERNS about wildlife watchers stopping in dangerous locations on the Mull roads was raised at a meeting of the island's community council.

The meeting heard of the dangers of people stopping on blind bends but noted that there were very few places that visitors could park.

Police Sergeant Angela MacDonald, who is based at Tobermory, confirmed that there would be a dedicated police officer dealing with these issues this year rather than different officers each week.

She also confirmed that yellow no-parking notices would be placed at danger spots.

To sponsor Mull Lines please contact Isla at 01631-568000

Volunteer teams remain confident following search and rescue shake-up

SEA and land-based volunteer rescue teams have reacted positively following a decision that west coast search and rescue helicopters are to be replaced and operated by civilian crews. The Ministry of Defence has named a consortium of private companies, including Thales UK and the Royal Bank of Scotland, as the preferred bidder to run the national service. The Soteria Consortium's arrangements are expected to be phased in by 2012. Ageing Royal Navy Sea King helicopters will be replaced by larger and faster Sikorsky S92 helicopters, though the total number of craft will drop from 38 to around 24 nationwide. The west of Scotland base, served by the RAF at HMS Gannet at Prestwick, will be transferred to civilian staff at Glasgow Airport. Volunteer rescue crews

responded positively, saying that they expected the same high level of response. John Grieve, team leader with Glencoe Mountain Rescue, said he had no worries about the service being privatised: 'I have never seen why it should be a military task. We work with the coastguard helicopters at the moment and that's exactly the same - helicopters provided by a contractor. Who actually fills them doesn't make an iota of difference to us.'

Ross Lilley, deputy team leader for Oban Mountain Rescue said: 'We are fully expecting to get the same service we have had over the years from HMS Gannet and Lossiemouth. 'We had a fantastic service from them.' A spokeswoman from the RNLI said: 'The charity has always had an excellent working relationship with the Coastguard and all involved in search and rescue in the UK and we expect that this will continue under this new arrangement.'



Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid, Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Tavish Scott and Oban Airport manager Barry McCaig.

Liberal leader calls for less red tape surrounding local flights

OBAN Airport must be allowed to cut through government bureaucracy if it is to flourish, according to the Liberal Democrat's Scottish leader Tavish Scott.

The Shetland Isles MSP was speaking last Wednesday when he took a trip to see the airport with Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid and pledged his party's support to the island flights from Oban and to transport networks in rural and isolated communities as a whole.

He said: 'We need to start thinking about these island flights in the same way we think about the Benderloch bus, which is subsidised by the council.'

REPORT and PICTURE by EUAN PATERSON epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

business. But he agreed to visit the airport with Mr Reid following the near collapse of Highland Airways, which serves the Argyll islands.

On the morning of their visit the full-booked flight to Tiree was grounded because of snow on the runway.

Both politicians agreed the current rules around public service orders (PSOs), which dictate what flights come out of Oban, had to change and were keen to see an air link between Oban and Islay.

Mr Reid said: 'I would like to see Islay included in the schedule, as the extra costs would be minimal. It would be an important addition to

Tough times for tourism, but Oban fighting back

£100,000 advertising campaign to raise town profile

TOURISM businesses in Oban and Lorn are facing another tough year, but they have big plans to attract more visitors.

Oban and Lorn Tourism Association plans to double in size, use new technology to give visitors information and look at taking on a greater role in marketing and promoting Oban as a tourism destination.

At the association's annual general meeting last week, chairwoman Linda Battison said: 'I think we all know that this year will be a challenging one for the tourism industry.'

'We are, however, one of the most recession-proof industries around - thank goodness people will always have a holiday, even if they change what they do.'

The association has co-ordinated a £100,000 advertising blitz by members to raise the profile of the town as well as running competitions for holidays in Oban.

'Royal National Mòd had been a huge boost'

It has also developed the website so it can be viewed on mobile phones and use text messages to welcome tourists on their arrival.

Reviewing the previous year, Linda said the Royal National Mòd had been a huge boost to tourism in the town.

She said: 'We are absolutely firmly behind the campaign to keep this annual event in Oban every year rather than every few years.'

'It was one of the best I have seen for years and didn't it just offer us a tantalising glimpse of how our town could be with a major event.'

New Norwegian-built fish farm supply ship proves star attraction in Oban Bay



Visitors check out the huge wells for transporting fish. 15_0916b01



Viktoria Viking moored in Oban for an open day last week. 15_0916b02

A STATE-of-the-art ship for the fish farm industry was on show last week in Oban.

Despite falling snow, plenty of visitors took the opportunity to step aboard the Norwegian-built Viktoria Viking when she moored at the town's North Pier.

Members of the public, tourists and those employed in aquaculture grasped the chance to explore the ship and climb down into the huge wells used for transporting live fish. Operated by Migdale Transport Ltd, the vessel uses a closed well system to handle and transport live fish. The system is 'Freedom Foods' accredited and allows fish to be counted, graded and treated onboard.

The Viktoria Viking was launched in Norway last autumn and arrived in Scotland in January.

Islay's language-based education centre appoints new Gaelic development officer

PLANS to make Ionad Chalum Chille Ìle (ICCI) the centre of Gaelic development in Argyll are underway following the appointment of a development officer.

Rita Hunter will begin a six-month contract on March 1 to develop new market areas for Gaelic-based activities at the centre near Bowmore.

Ms Hunter is best known as director of Fèis Rois, the jewel in the crown of the Fèis movement, which she successfully led for more than 20 years.

This latest initiative at ICCI will build on seven years of successful Gaelic language-based education and community outreach activity on Islay and in the wider Argyll area.

Following the appointment, the ICCI directors have identified two key aims

for the centre; to develop its position as a major Gaelic centre for the region, and to increase the number of people speaking Gaelic.

Chairman Robin Currie said: 'We are delighted to have Rita's experience to help flesh out our business plan for the next phase of ICCI's development.'

'We are very grateful for the support of Bòrd na Gàidhlig; Argyll and Bute Council; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; and Argyll and the Islands LEADER to this project, and we are encouraged by their confidence in our plans.'

Since its inception in 2000 and opening in 2002 ICCI has piloted a range of education initiatives and provided a home for many local community organisations. It currently supports more than 100 students of Gaelic at all levels.

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Lorn Lines



OBAN and Lorn Horticultural Society held a successful 'Gardeners' Forum' in the Church Centre, Glencruitten Road on Wednesday, February 17.

The panel for the evening was made up of well-known gardeners John Grieve, Charlie Milne, Ronnie MacKillop, Dougie McDougal and Hector McKenzie.

After two digital presentations, shown by Dougie Dougie McDougal on how to grow onions and dahlias, Ronnie MacKillop gave a demonstration on how to present and stage flowers for showing.

The ladies of the committee then served a welcome cup of tea before the panel ably answered the many questions from the floor.

The evening ended with club president Jim Kirkpatrick thanking everyone for taking part.



LORN Garden Club met recently in the unlikely setting of Oban's Co-op store cafeteria after being unable to access their usual venue.

Peter McDonald, lecturer in horticulture at the Scottish Agricultural College at Auchincruive, gave an excellent demonstration entitled 'Propagation of plants made easy', showing the best methods of sowing seeds and taking cuttings.

The club offered its grateful thanks to the management of the Co-op store for allowing use of its facilities in the club's hour of need.

The next evening lecture is entitled 'Herbaceous Borders', by Simon McPhun, former head gardener of both Inverewe and Leith Hall gardens. The lecture will be held on Tuesday, March 16 at a venue to be confirmed.



IT was once again competition night at Oban Photographic Club on Monday February 15 2010.

The subject was 'movement', which attracted some 30 digital images and five prints.

A warm welcome was extended to the judge - John McTavish from Benderloch, a former member of the club.

John is aptly qualified to judge this competition, for, as well as his day job of gamekeeper, he is a semi-professional freelance photographer for The Oban Times and several Sunday tabloids, specialising in sports other than football eg shinty, rugby, motor racing etc.

Winners emerged as digital: 1 Tim Haynes, 2 Tim Haynes, 3 Eric Shaw and prints: 1 Margaret Whitton, 2 John Douglas, 3 John Douglas.

The judge thereafter selected the overall winner as Tim Haynes and he received the Laird Parker Shield and a gift voucher courtesy of The Oban Photographic Centre.

Tim's winning picture was of a speeding moto-cross motor cycle while Margaret's picture of a funfair in motion was given the top mark.

The next meeting was due on Monday, 2010 when Inverness photographer John MacPherson was to give an update on his recent world travels.



AROUND 40 members and friends attended an excellent meeting of Oban Speakers Club on February 4 for its annual Ladies Night.

The first half of the meeting saw chairman Roy Wood introduce speakers Donald MacAskill on Speaking from Experience, Peter Abbott on The Suffragettes and Stuart Philp on Stuart's Valediction. Their immediate critics were Archie MacPhail, Frank Walton and Cameron Fletcher.

Chairman for the topics session was Alex Clark and his speakers were Elizabeth Little, Bill Leech, Archie MacPhail, John MacLean, Guido Facenda and Frank Walton. Timekeeper for the evening was Jim Fraser and the general evaluator was Eamonn Arthur.

This was possibly club member Stuart Philp's last meeting at the club since he is now leaving Oban, members of the club wish him and his wife a long, happy and healthy time in their new home.



GEORGE Berry is continuing to make good progress in his endeavours to climb Ben Nevis for charity in September.

As he reaches the quarter way mark, by losing two stones, George is looking and feeling great.

He said: 'This exercise programme has made a world of a difference to my way of thinking.'

'I am spending time in the gym almost every day. I am starting to seriously train to climb the mountain.'



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Sheriff jails man for violence in accident and emergency unit

A MAN who threw a watch which struck a 63-year-old patient in the face while she was sitting in a wheelchair in a hospital has been jailed for six months.

Ian Towers, aged 63, admitted the assault and obstructing and hindering nurses at Lorn and Islands Hospital's accident and emergency department in Oban, on December 4 2009.

Warning

Court authorities in Oban have since warned that anyone who acts in a violent or disruptive manner in a hospital or medical centre can expect to be brought swiftly to justice.

Towers had been brought into the Oban hospital by

ambulance as a precaution after complaining of chest pains but on examination was told he was not suffering from any medical condition and was told he could leave.

Instead he fell asleep on a hospital bed and when awoken by nursing staff, who needed the bed for another patient, became abusive, shouting and swearing at nurses.

Towers then threw his watch into the lap of the patient being brought in by wheelchair with a foot injury, telling her, 'Give this to medical science'.

The watch was handed back to Towers, who was asked to leave but threw the

watch again, with force, at the patient, striking her on the bridge of her nose.

He was again handed the watch back and asked to leave; he threw the watch on the ground and left the premises.

Police were contacted and Towers found near the hospital with the watch in his pocket.

Drinking

Defending Duncan Durbin said Towers had started drinking at the age of 52 years on the breakdown of his marriage and had been in and out of court since then.

Towers, of 15-6, 60 Kingsway Court, Glasgow, had been visiting a friend in Oban and in the days lead-

ing up to the offence had been drinking every day and had no recollection of the events.

Sheriff Douglas Small told Towers, who has previous convictions for punching an ambulance technician and making 999 nuisance calls: 'This was disgraceful conduct rightly described by your solicitor, on your behalf, as being outrageous.'

'I want to send out a very clear message to such as yourself that embarking on this type of behaviour will just not be tolerated.'

Sentence was backdated to December 7 when Towers was put on remand.

District Procurator Fiscal Craig Harris said, following

sentencing: 'Being under the influence of alcohol is no excuse for endangering the safety of patients and staff and offenders should know that this will not keep them from prosecution.'

'Disturbing the peace at a hospital or a medical centre in our communities will not be tolerated.'

'I wish to make it very clear that any violent or disorderly conduct at these locations will be treated as a serious offence.'

'My office and the police have worked closely together to develop procedures which will see people committing such offences brought swiftly before the court,' he said.

Canoeist saved in Clyde rescue

A CANOEIST who had been in the water for an hour was rescued thanks to an eagle-eyed member of the public.

Clyde Coastguard received a 999 call last Tuesday afternoon from someone saying they could see something floating in the water off Dunoon.

Dunoon Coastguard Rescue team and the police launch Rhona were dispatched while Royal Navy Rescue helicopter R177, which was on an air exercise, was sent to assist.

The police launch reached the scene first and found a man who had been canoeing but whose canoe was nowhere to be found.

He was winched into the helicopter and taken to the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow for treatment.

Andy McMillan, Clyde Coastguard watch manager, said: 'We would like to thank the caller who made the emergency call.'

'The canoeist was wearing an aid to keep him afloat which undoubtedly contributed to keeping him alive whilst he was in the water.'

Mod dates concern for Glasgow

PARENTS of Royal National Mod competitors in the Glasgow area fear their children will not have the chance to compete in 2011.

The city has contributed greatly to a rise in numbers of junior entrants at Gaelic's premier festival but if the Glasgow school holidays follow a similar pattern to previous years, it is anticipated that Glasgow schools will be off the week before the Mod in Stornoway in 2011. Glasgow school holidays will not be confirmed until May or June this year.

The issue was raised at a meeting of An Comunn Gàidhealach.

Successful Icelandic businessman finds new life and love on Argyll's west coast

A WORLD travel entrepreneur from Iceland has left behind a business empire to start a new company in Argyll, after rekindling a teenage romance from 30 years ago.

Arngrimur Baldursson, who is known in Scotland as Archie MacKenzie-Baldursson, has teamed up with Oban travel agent Eric Smith to set up Destination Management Company Argyll and Highland Incoming.

Archie was running a similar company in Iceland and Denmark with an annual turnover of £2 million - but a chance visit to find an old flame, Sharon MacKenzie, in Appin led to marriage and a new business challenge in the Scottish Highlands.

Archie and Sharon first met around 30 years ago as teenagers when his Icelandic swimming team came to Glasgow to compete against Sharon's West of Scotland squad.

Archie said: 'We got to know each other and began a teenage romance. We kept



Archie MacKenzie pictured beside his Superjeep which he intends to ship to Argyll from Denmark

in touch over the next three years by letter - there was no SMS or e-mail in those days!

'We saw each other when our swimming teams exchanged a visit and on one New Year, which I spent in Appin.'

The couple lost touch when Sharon moved to Canada and, unbeknown to one another, they married other people in the same year and then divorced their partners, also in the same year.

It wasn't until Archie attended the Glasgow travel trade seminar, Scotland Expo, in 2007 that he decided to try and track Sharon down.

'Although I met her in Glasgow all those years ago, she always considered herself to be an Appin girl so I decided to look there,' said Archie.

'I was asking for Sharon MacKenzie but her married name had been Black. Fortunately I met an old woman who worked it out and told me where she lived.'

'When Sharon answered the door to me she recognised me

instantly and gave me a big hug. We went out for dinner that night and realised there was still a spark there.'

Both had been divorced for seven years and had pledged never to marry again - but they did, in August last year, and Archie moved to Appin, which he describes as 'a romantic version of Iceland'.

Archie now runs his Danish-based company from Oban, as well as making contacts for Argyll and Highland Incoming, which will encourage companies and private groups to take up adventure holidays in the area.

Archie is bringing over his own Superjeep, which will be used to explore Argyll off the beaten track.

'I have been travelling around Argyll to get in touch with people in the travel and tourism industry,' he said.

'I have so many ideas but I want people to get in touch with me so we can work together on bringing more people to Oban and Argyll.'

Archie can be contacted at: archie@ice-travel.com

'I have so many ideas . . . on bringing more people to Oban and Argyll.'

Oban lifeboat called out

OBAN lifeboat was called out twice last week to help a seriously ill islander and two stranded kayakers.

The Mora Edith Macdonald was launched last Tuesday at 8.26pm to assist in the transfer of a seriously ill woman from Mull to Oban after weather conditions were unsuitable for the NHS helicopter and the Royal Navy rescue 177 helicopter had been tasked to Islay.

Last Thursday two kayakers, who were holidaying at South Shian, had reached the south end of Lismore when the visibility closed in with heavy snow showers. Fearing that they could not get back to the mainland before the light failed they went ashore and called for assistance using a mobile phone.

The two kayakers, who were most apologetic, were assured by coxswain Ronnie MacKillop that they had done the correct thing in calling for help immediately rather than have the situation complicated by darkness.

Pharmacist re-elected to chair of Scottish board

GOVERNMENT policy affecting pharmacies and medicine are not just being made in Holyrood and Westminster - they are being dreamt up in Oban too.

Sandra Melville, a pharmacist in Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban, has been re-elected as chairwoman of the Scottish Pharmaceutical Board and therefore responsible for lobbying ministers and protecting pharmacists' rights - most recently campaigning for the decriminalisation of dispensing errors.

Anniversary

Recently, Ms Melville spoke alongside health secretary Nicola Sturgeon at a Holyrood reception for the industry.

The reception marked the contribution pharmacists had made to the NHS in the past 10 years, in line with the 10th anniversary of the Scottish Parliament.

Ms Melville told The Oban Times: 'Just as the Scottish parliament has grown, so has our contribution to healthcare.'

'Pharmacists are making



Sandra Melville pictured with health secretary Nicola Sturgeon.

a real difference with the introduction of the Minor Ailment Service, which allows pharmacists to prescribe medicine, keeping doctors' surgeries freed up.

'And our role in rational prescribing has contributed to infection control.'

'There are more and more expensive drugs on the market to treat conditions like

cancer but there is a lot of pressure on the budget, so we have to prescribe rationally.'

'Ahead of the game'

'Scotland is quite far ahead of the game when it comes to assessing which drugs are cost effective.'

This will be Ms Melville's fourth year on the board and her second term as chairwoman, while carrying out her own full-time job.

'The role takes up a lot of my spare time,' she admits. 'I quite often go to London for meetings but I'm happy to fly the Scottish flag down there.'

'Those based in London sometimes forget we do it differently here, especially in NHS Highland,' she explained.

'I have to remind them that they can't think about the size of health boards in terms of population and NHS Highland is a prime example of that.'

'When I tell them about the size of our health board area, compared to the population here, they soon change their definition of a 'rural' area.'

Girl attacked 15-year-old

A TEENAGER girl who carried out an unprovoked attack on another girl has been ordered to pay her victim £150 compensation.

Stephanie Duffy, whose address at the time of the incident on May 30 last year was 17A High Street, Oban, admitted assaulting the 15-year-old, knocking her to the ground, repeatedly punching her in the head, pinning her to the ground, hitting her hair and hitting her head off the ground to her injury.

Oban Sheriff Court heard last week that the girl had been walking down High Street with a friend in the early hours of the morning when she was called over by someone in a flat and Duffy attacked the girl.

There had been some animosity between the two, the court heard and Duffy, aged 18, had been drinking at the time.

She was fined £375 and told by Sheriff Douglas Small that he hoped it was the last time he would see her in court.

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Weather at Plockton

DURING January there was only 3¼ inches of rain at Plockton.

The warmest day was 11°C and the coldest was -5°C. There were 12 nights and two days when the temperature dipped below 0°C.

Piping recital

THE SOUTH West Ross Piping Society recital in the Lochalsh Hotel, Kyle, on Saturday February 6 was by Decker Forrest.

Duneraig Castle

THE NEW owners of Duneraig Castle are continuing to renovate it to its former glory.

They are also planning to rebuild the boathouse.

Car boot sale

A CAR boot sale in Plockton Hall on Saturday February 6, followed by a French film and food night organised by school teacher Louisa Jane MacInnes, raised £420.

Proceeds went to the Spanish pupils' exchange trip in March and the Haiti earthquake appeal.

Burns Supper

A VERY enjoyable Burns Supper was held in Plockton Hall on Saturday January 23.

The event raised £660 for Crossroads funds.

Organiser Robert Kennedy acted as chairman and said the Selkirk Grace. The haggis was carried in by Don Calvert with young Cameron Sharp playing the pipes.

Peter MacKenna addressed the haggis and the Immortal Memory was by Maggie Byrne. The Toast to the Lassies was by Charlie M MacRae and the reply by Jane MacKenzie.

Recitations were by Willie Gillespie and Norman Craig,



The young performers at the Rowan Club in Port Appin.

Rowan Club entertains with music and dance

SEVENTEEN members of The Etive Club travelled to Port Appin on Thursday for an afternoon of tea and entertainment laid on by Appin's Rowan Club.

The afternoon opened with Murray Willis on accordion and Colin Black on guitar, followed by songs from Molly

Gregory Beard. Novices Isla Dunlop, Charlie Johnston and Hannah Regan performed a Highland dance, followed by a solo dance from Eilidh MacKay, accompanied by Murray Willis on accordion. A quartet comprising Aimee MacDonald, Eilish Thomson, Anna Whitelaw and Rhona McGlone sang,

with solos by Moira Thomson and Aimee MacDonald.

Giving the vote of thanks, Margaret Massey said how nice it was to see young talent in the village.

The Rev Dr Roderick Campbell said grace and tea was served by Rowan Club volunteers.

who also sang. Other singers were Kathleen MacRae and Bob Rowe.

Music was provided by Neil MacKinnon and Neil MacRae.

Votes of thanks were by Hugh MacQuarrie and the evening closed with Auld Lang Syne.

Whist drive

A WHIST drive in Plockton Hall on January 29 raised £84 for Kinlochshiel Shinty Club.

Coffee morning

A COFFEE morning in the Plockton Inn on January 30 raised £290 for Plockton Football Club.

Frozen lochs

DURING the recent very cold spell, many people walked across the frozen Loch Lundu and Loch Achnahinch.

It is believed this was the first time this had been done since 1985.

Special collection

A SPECIAL collection in Plockton and Kyle Free Church raised £535 for the Haiti earthquake appeal.

The Free Church nationally had already donated £10,000.

Islay
Your correspondent is Susan Campbell: 01496 850215

Islay energy day

ABOUT 140 people visited Islay Energy Trust's informative renewables day in Bowmore Hall on January 30.

Islanders had the chance to investigate and discuss

possibilities of renewable energy equipment for their homes and businesses.

Andy MacDonald, for Islay Energy Trust's undersea Sound of Islay Tidal Energy Project, updated visitors on the latest progress on the project.

Experienced installers and advisors at the renewables day were all working tradespeople and enthusiasts, able to discuss the nuts-and-bolts practicalities of having energy/carbon-saving equipment built into a new structure or fitted in an existing building.

Ecoliving, a ground source heat pump supplier, brought a model of the equipment to help explain it to viewers. Amongst 16 participants was Islay man Magnus Bell, son of Donald and Catriona Bell, who ably explained the use of next-generation high performance household-

ing on planning requirements. Islay High School's new Hospitality Group, in its first public engagement, supplied teas and snacks for visitors.

Pipe band promotion confirmed

ISLAY Pipe Band members continue to hold practise sessions for new chanter players and drummers at Ionad Chalum Chille Ile (The Columba Centre), Bowmore, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 8pm.

The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association has confirmed the band's promotion to Grade 3A. This is the third promotion within three years and all band members, especially Pipe Major Nigel Morris, must be congratulated.

Their hard work as musicians is constantly improving the band and recognition has come through their outstanding successes in 2009 competitions. Islay Pipe Band also gives much enjoyment to Islay people when performing locally.

Unfortunately, the band had had to call off its planned trip to Moville, Ireland, for St Patrick's Day on March 17 owing to unforeseen circumstances. It's hoped the band will be able to join the Moville festivities another year.

Lagavulin Fund-raisers Splash for Cash 2009

LAGAVULIN Fund-raisers thank all the helpers, 'splashers' and sponsors for making Splash for Cash 2009 such a success.

Cheques have been sent to the following Islay charities: Kildalton and Oa Children's Christmas Party Funds, £1,500; Mactaggart Leisure Centre, £2,000 and Port Ellen Playing Fields, £1,500.

Thanks to Ellen Brown for soup and sandwiches, helpers for the supply of towels, bar staff at the hot toddies bar, Gus Newman for safety boat, divers, Dr Knowles, Islay Coastguard, piper Lindsay MacArthur,

Ringo, Dugald and Calum Murray for PA system, Don and Phil, the pier marshals, and Lagavulin distillery for the hot toddies and the gifts for the safety crews and helpers. Special thanks to the boys from Buildbase for their fantastic fund-raising effort, to Calum Campbell, Lagavulin, the youngest boy splasher, aged eight, and Mirren Brown, the youngest girl and youngest ever splasher, age five.

Lagavulin Fund-raisers is having a break from Splash for Cash this year and would be happy to see other fund-raisers doing a splash for their own charities.

Phoney Book

ISLAY Phoney Book is not a production of the *Ileach*, nor will it be sold in the *Ileach* office when it appears, which is planned for the end of February.

The production of the 2009/10 edition has been entirely in the hands of Islay and Jura CVS and Islay High School.

As a result of proofing errors in the first version of this update, which was released at the Islay Show last August, the Phoney Book has been completely revised and is currently in the process of being re-printed.

When available, the corrected new version will be sold through the island's Post Offices in standard, Gaelic, large print and braille editions.

Anyone who has already bought an earlier 2009 edition will be able to exchange it for the new version at the various points of sale.

SAC cattle health meeting

A CATTLE health meeting was due to be held at the Bridgend Hotel on Thursday February 11.

Speakers were Ian Pritchard, SAC Health Schemes Manager, Beth Newman, Islay's local vet and Charles Sidgwick, SAC Oban. Topics covered included BVD, Johne's disease and the Scottish Government's new Animal Health and Welfare Management Plan and its implications for Islay's beef and dairy farmers.

Festival plans in full swing

ISLAY Festival/Feis Ile, the Islay Festival of Malt and Music held each May, was founded in 1984 to showcase all aspects of island hospitality, the talents of local musicians and artists and the island's Gaelic culture.

And plans for this year's event are already in full swing. The event is run by volunteers: chairwoman, Florence Grey; vice chairwoman Lynn Ross; secretary Meri Ferguson; treasurers Susan Gains and Donna Bradley and Gaelic event co-ordinator Morag MacDougall. Associate members are Duncan Stewart, fishing; Iain McPherson, walking; Dianne Brown, golf; Douglas MacTaggart, PA/sound; Fiona Burnett; Gerry McKay; Maria Vicars Rosier and Gary Chapman.

The committee is seeking island support for the event by placing an advert in the event programme, sponsorship or a donation of raffle prizes. The deadline for advertising in the Feis Ile booklet is March 12. Contact 07979 574555 or email islayfestival@btconnect.co.uk.

Geopoetics in Islay

THE SCOTTISH Centre for Geopoetics' Winter Colloquium will be based at Port Charlotte Youth Hostel, Islay, from tomorrow (Friday) until March 1.

This voluntary group's members are interested in the creative expression inspired by the natural world. The centre organised the first Atlantic Islands Festival on the Isle of Luing last year.

The programme includes a visit to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reserve at Loch Gruinart, led by ornithologists Bill Eddie and Richard Wesley and a recorded talk by Peter Matthiessen, author of 'The Snow Leopard'. There will also be 'Travelling Light - 50 years of Stravaiging', a talk by Jim McCarthy following the example of founder Kenneth White's Way-books.

Around the Rurals

Killin

THE LATEST meeting took place in Lesser McLaren Hall on Thursday February 4.

President Fiona Inglis welcomed members and guests.

Local man David Osler gave an interesting talk on the history of the surrounding area. He showed very old and interesting maps and answered many diverse questions.

Margaret Galloway gave the vote of thanks and a cup of tea with sandwiches and biscuits was served.

Competition results: Local Photograph - 1 Kay Riddell; 2 Margaret Galloway. Three Empire Biscuits - 1 Cathie Reid; 2 Yvonne Macpherson; 3 Margaret Galloway.

The next meeting is on Thursday March 4 at 7.30pm in Lesser McLaren Hall when another local, Wendy Simpson, will give a talk on gems.

Anyone wishing information on jewellery is invited to take it along to the meeting.

Members and friends are invited to attend this meeting.

This year's outing will take place on Thursday April 11 when members will have high tea in the George Hotel, Perth, and enjoy a visit to the theatre to see *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

Kilbrandon

PRESIDENT Linda Brown welcomed members to the January meeting of Kilbrandon SWRI, held in Seil Island Hall.

Twenty eight members had sat down to a delicious

Christmas dinner in the Oyster Bar at Ellenbeich. Having truly enjoyed the festive season, members looked ahead to the varied programme planned for 2010.

The first speaker of the year was Max Bonniwell, who has many years' experience as a vet in the Oban practice, specialising in large farm animals. Max gave a fascinating talk on his life and experiences, illustrated by a slide show including some from his time as a vet in West Africa.

Janice Baxter gave the vote of thanks.

Unfortunately, the speaker for February was unable to attend the meeting so president Linda Brown devised a quiz to keep everyone entertained.

Three teams fought a close battle for the honour of being named champions and Lyn Pearson gave the vote of thanks to the organisers

Lochalsh

AT A MEETING of the Lochalsh branch of the Scottish Women's Rural Institute (SWRI) on Thursday February 4 in Plockton Hall, Jill Charnley gave a talk entitled 'Lunar Influences'.

Lochawe

THE LOCHAWE branch of the SWRI held a Burns social evening on January 20.

Ladies from Dalmailly Institute joined members for a traditional meal and a quiz, with some hilarious answers, and a very enjoyable time was had by everyone.

The meal was excellent and a credit to all members who contributed to it.



The Alan Gardiner Trio in full flow at the Royal Hotel.

Isle of Skye Accordion and Fiddle Club

ISLE of Skye Accordion and Fiddle Club welcomed a large audience on the first Thursday of February to the Royal Hotel, Portree.

The club chairman and MC opened the evening by introducing the first of the local and visiting players.

It was Portree's Aly 'K' MacPherson on piano accordion accompanied on keyboards by John Cameron who led off with two sets of fine marches followed by set of jigs. Two of the club's youngest players, both on accordion, took to the stage. Iona MacAskill, aged eight, and Maria MacAskill, nine, each played a solo selection and later in the programme Rhona MacInnes, 11, of Dunvegan, played beautiful Gaelic airs on accordion.

Talented young piper Bruce MacDonald of Woodend then played two selections, the first being a Strathspey and two reels followed by a hornpipe and jigs. Young Emma Dixon brought her accordion on stage with a fine selection. Regular player Wendy Riva of Kilmuir on fiddle gave her usual well prepared contribution to the evening to be followed by a group of club stalwarts for a great set of Gaelic waltzes followed by foot-tapping reels.

Leading on accordion was John Cameron of Portree, on second box John MacGilvray of Borve and on drums, Aly 'K' MacPherson of Portree. Making up the quartet on keyboards, the club was pleased to

see the familiar face of the multi-talented Derek Hamilton from Galston in Ayrshire who had made the long journey north to visit the club. The final local player was Catherine Macleod, another of the club's younger players, who gave selections on her piano accordion accompanied by Aly 'K' MacPherson on second box.

To close the first half of the evening it was again Derek Hamilton, this time on piano accordion, with visiting bandleader Alan Gardiner of Biggar on keyboards and another popular visitor Richard Hughes of Tobermory on drums. They played two great sets, starting with some Lowland waltzes followed by a lively set of Border marches including Derek's arrangement of *The Soft Lowland Tongue Of The Borders* played in 4/4 time!

The second half of the evening was devoted to the eagerly awaited performance of the guest band the Alan Gardiner Trio comprising of Alan leading on piano accordion, his nephew Kevin Gardiner of Larbert on second box and Richard Hughes on drums. Their fine performance in a relaxed style with a fine tight sound enthralled the audience and the evening was rounded off with other players joining the trio for a great stramash.

The club meets again on the first Thursday of March when the guest artistes will be The Michael Garvin Trio.

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Were you born in Mallaig, Charlie, and if not, how long have you lived there? I have lived here since the 1960s. I was working with a big electrical firm in the area, Scott's of Perth, which is my home town. I came here as an apprentice when I was 17 and was working in Knoydart to begin with. I stayed on in Mallaig and started my own business, Charles King. My son Colin took over and now owns the business, King Electrical. I met my wife Christine Henderson, whose family had a guesthouse here, and she helped her mother run it. We were married in 1966.

What does Mallaig offer that other places can't? Mallaig, I would say, offers people a better way of life and definitely a more relaxed way of life. I do think that anybody who comes here tends to find the village friendly and people settle in very quickly. Also, unlike some other Highland villages, Mallaig is a working village and is a busy wee place - there's always something happening here.

Tell us something of Mallaig's history, Charlie. Mallaig was started in the early 1900s with the herring fishing. Before that the fishing used to be out of Tarbert on Loch Nevis, but with the advent of the railway at the beginning of the 20th century Mallaig became the place and from then on it grew quickly. You used to get kipper sheds down at The Point area and there would be trains loaded with fish every day going to Glasgow and Billingsgate - the main London fish market - which you don't see nowadays. People went all over to and from Mallaig for the fishing - it was a very busy place. In the 1970s when the herring fishing was at its height, you would get 40 or 50 lorries a day leaving here. Mallaig was the busiest herring port in Europe then. With the decline of the herring, Mallaig came into its own as a prawn and white fish port. The boats would be lining up to come in to land a load - and that was in the winter. Nobody realised in those days what the Common Market would eventually do to the fishing industry. It was never spelled out clearly that the government would give up our rights. Fishing nowadays is the most regulated industry in Britain.

Have you a favourite place in Mallaig? My favourite place is the house now - I mean, just look at the view. There's a great view over the harbour and there's always something different going on every day and the weather is constantly changing. I got up the other morning and looked over to Skye. The Cuillins were covered in mist low down with another layer higher up, yet a bit of them were snow-covered and lit up pink with the sun shining on them. It was absolutely beautiful.

What's your favourite time of year in this part of Lochaber? Spring and autumn have got to be my favourites. The colours are beautiful and we always seem to have good weather in April and May, and then again in September. Autumn really brings out the colours of the place. We are really lucky here to live in such a beautiful part of the country.



Charlie has a grand view of his beloved Mallaig from his cliff-side home. 10_f09charlie01

Any famous people that you know of from Mallaig? Probably that has to be Sir Cameron Mackintosh, who has been very good to the village in making sure he gifted money to various projects such as the swimming pool and the Mackintosh Centre. If these projects were at a stage where between council funding and other bids there was a shortfall, Sir Cameron would ensure that shortfall was made good.

He was going to buy Knoydart before the community buyout, but at the end he gave money towards that buyout. He still does a lot of good work quietly in the area. He's been a great benefactor to Mallaig.

What are the main challenges facing Mallaig? That has to be the downturn in the fishing industry - that's had a drastic effect on the village. Business from the fishing and the harbour remains a big, big part of Mallaig. They are the heart of the village and they depend on each other. I see the future of the harbour point of view as lying with the new yachting marina that is planned as a way of helping the income of the village and the harbour. We are also very glad that Marine Harvest and Scottish Sea Farms employ 35 to 40 men between them.

That's been taking up a lot of the slack from the fishing, which has been a real godsend. Fish farming plays quite a big part in the Mallaig economy now. Without these industries it would be dire. What fish is left we have to protect. With fishing being so regulated it's really hard for the boys trying to make a living when they are limited to so few days at sea.

There's several young local fishermen who have invested heavily in the industry and are trying to make a living under very difficult conditions. You really feel for these guys. But every village faces challenges and Mallaig is no different, but the good thing is that we are well placed as a fishing port and a ferry terminal. Passenger and vehicle traffic has increased over the years and fears that the Skye Bridge would take away from the Mallaig-Armadale crossing have not been realised. And if we get the ferry to Lochboisdale, that will also increase through

traffic. Personally I can't understand the reluctance to having a ferry link between the two ports when the crossing is just over half the journey time between Lochboisdale and Oban. In this day and age where fuel costs are such an important part of the equation there's a strong case to be made for the link. Also with the uplift in tourism traffic to the Small Isles also increasing, future trends look good.

There's the steam train too in the summer which helps business. A lot of people decide to stay because they find a working port attractive and bustling - Mallaig is the very opposite to your sleepy Highland village.

Who are the main employers here that keep the local economy going? Main employers here is the

fishing, Marine Harvest, Scottish Seafarms and the tourist trade, which brings in extra people and workers as well as more jobs for the local economy.

Are you confident Mallaig has a bright future? Mallaig has come through good times and bad times and we are at a low ebb at the moment. We are like everywhere else in that the recession is hitting hard, but if you look back at Mallaig's history it has always recovered. My own personal view is that the marina will increase tourist trade to the village. We have active marketing groups in Mallaig in the Road to the Isles and over in Ardsvar. Both these groups promote their areas very hard and very successfully so I am confident Mallaig will always prosper.



Mallaig's future: Queen Rachel Dempster and her Princess Maxine MacDonald at the 2009 Fishermen's Mission Gala Day. 10_f09girls01

'I do think that anybody who comes here tends to find the village friendly and people settle in very quickly.'



Vital link: The Caledonian MacBrayne ferry leaves for Mallaig from Armadale. 10_f09mallaig01

My Village Mallaig

CHARLIE King was a slip of a lad when he arrived in Mallaig in the mid-1960s as an apprentice electrician with a Perth-based firm.

A native of the Fair City, the young Charlie was soon beguiled by the Lochaber fishing port's delights, one of which was a certain Christine Henderson, the girl who would soon become his wife.

The couple settled in the village, raised a family and Charlie and Mallaig's future quickly became intertwined. To begin with he dedicated himself to building up his own electrician's business in the village.

Keen to see Mallaig prosper, he then turned his talents to local politics,

representing the local ward at district then regional level. Charlie soon built up a reputation as a doughty and passionate campaigner for local causes including local housing, the swimming pool and upgrading the A830, which he oversaw while a regional councillor and chairman of transport body HiTrans.

Still a fervent St Johnstone supporter, Charlie took special pride in the opening of the final improved section of the A830 from Loch nan Uamh to Arisaig last April.

Vice chairman of Mallaig Harbour Authority for more than 20 years, Charlie tells *Oban Times* reporter Stephen Norris what Mallaig means to him.



Mallaig is a busy port - especially on the Fishermen's Mission Gala Day! 10_f09mallaig02

'A lot of people decide to stay because they find a working port attractive and bustling - Mallaig is the very opposite to your sleepy Highland village.'

MALLAIG HARBOUR AUTHORITY

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The new purpose-built DFS Store, designed to make shopping easy.

New DFS sofa store opening proves huge success

By **GAVIN CAMPBELL**

Great news for sofa shoppers of the Highlands and Islands, the brand new DFS store on Millburn Road, Inverness is now open.

Last weekend thousands of people visited the new DFS store in Inverness to take advantage of the company's Grand Opening Sale. This easy-to-find store served customers from far and wide who took advantage of some extra special opening offers that end this Sunday. DFS have arranged to specially extend its opening hours on Saturday and Sunday until 8pm allowing furniture shoppers extra time to really save on their choice of a huge range of sofas, corner units, chairs and action furniture.

DFS founder Graham Kirkham commented that the Grand Opening of the Inverness Store, "has been our most successful opening during our 40 years history". He continued by saying, "I would like to say thank you on behalf of all the team at DFS Inverness to our many new friends in the region".

With customers travelling from as far as Wick and Mallaig the attraction of buying from Europe's number 1 sofa specialist is clear for all to see. Famous for over 40 years for its sofas, savings and outstanding customer service after



The Houston
3 seater sofa.
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100% LEATHER **The Cranford**
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Save time – order direct at **www.dfs.co.uk** or call **FREE*** on **0800 110 5000**

Final days to save. Special Grand Opening offers end Sunday 8pm.

10 years in Scotland the furniture giant is now well and truly open in the Capital of the Highlands.

This family-owned business has three factories in the U.K. So DFS don't just sell sofas they make them too. That way you can have a huge range of exclusive furniture in a wider choice of styles and colours handmade to your order. It is comforting to know that the sofas DFS manufacture are built to such high standards they can give you a 10 year Guarantee on everything they make.

Now everyone in our region looking to transform their home with the comfort of a brand new DFS sofa can relax, and take hours off their travelling time. Which is great news if you prefer spending time on your sofa rather than travelling.

The DFS opening offers end this weekend but until then there is still the chance to save a small fortune and celebrate the new store opening with the DFS red carpet treatment and a champagne welcome.



Our first week has been amazing. We've helped so many people find their perfect sofa and the feedback from customers has been brilliant. The great thing is, this is just the start. Come along and see for yourself why so many people choose DFS.

Richie Cunningham Store Manager.



The Nolan 2 seater sofa bed.
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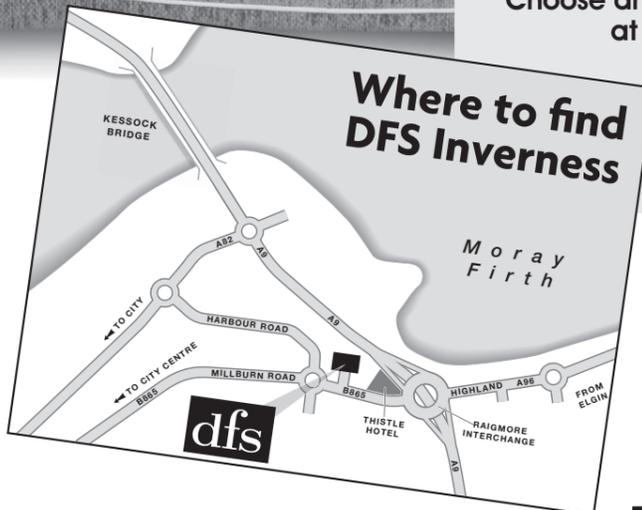
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think sofas, think **dfs**

The New DFS sofa store is next to the Thistle Hotel on Millburn Road, Inverness, just off the A9.

Woman who threatened staff in Oban town centre shop is fined

A WOMAN who threatened staff in a town centre shop on two different days has been fined a total of £450 at Oban Sheriff Court.

Karen Fletcher, aged 36, believed that someone working in the shop had caused her to lose her job as

a care assistant and admitted going into a private staff area of the Oban shop, shouting, swearing and making threats on November 2 last year.

Fletcher had also tried to stop a member of staff from calling the police. When police arrived and she

was being escorted away Fletcher kicked out at one of the employees.

Returned

The court heard that she returned to the shop on November 19, having been banned from entering, and threatened to slit the throat

of one of the staff there, who did not even know Fletcher. Defence agent Duncan Durbin said Fletcher, 8D Sinclair Drive, Oban, had recently moved back to Oban from Elgin and had been battling a drink problem for 15 years.

She had found a job as a care assistant but it had come to an abrupt halt after five or six weeks.

She had been quite drunk, said Mr Durbin, and was full of remorse when she realised what she had done.

Since the beginning of the

year she had taken steps to get help with her drink problem.

Fletcher also appeared before the court for drinking and driving on Soroba Road on December 23 last year and driving carelessly on the same road, mounting

a central reservation and colliding with an illuminated traffic bollard.

She admitted both offences and had her sentence deferred for reports until March 16 but was disqualified from driving in the meantime.

Airline re-opens bookings

HIGHLAND Airways has said it is 'cautiously optimistic' that ongoing talks with a potential buyer will secure the future of the firm.

The company has re-opened ticket bookings for flights during March, including on routes between Oban, Coll, Tiree and Colonsay.

The airline said it hopes to extend bookings beyond this shortly.

The airline said: 'We have signed an exclusivity agreement with this party and they are currently negotiating with the key stakeholders and creditors in the business in order to ensure its future viability.'

Council to review Sunday pub hours

SUNDAY opening hours for pubs are to be reviewed by Argyll and Bute Licensing Board.

Under the old legislation, pubs had to wait until 12.30pm to open on a Sunday while hotels and off-licences could open at 11am but there is no such distinction under the new legislation.

Board chairman Councillor Daniel Kelly said: 'We have received representations from public house licensees, who feel that they are being unfairly disadvantaged by the fact that both off-licences and hotels can now open their premises earlier than they can on a Sunday.'

'We have therefore decided to look again at this and will consider applications for earlier opening hours from any licence-holder who wishes to make one.'



Ewan reads his copy of The Oban Times in Khandahar, Afghanistan, early on Thursday morning

Keeping up with news from home in Khandahar province

A REGULAR reader in Khandahar, Afghanistan, will be opening his copy of The Oban Times with his breakfast early on Thursday morning - thanks to the power of the World Wide Web.

Ewan McGillivray, from Oban and the Isle of Lismore, is working in the dangerous

and dusty Afghanistan region as a logistics manager for army personnel, so his downloadable copy of The Oban Times is just the ticket to lift his spirits.

He said: 'It is great to see all the names I know in the paper. I read every word, cover to cover.'

'It is good to see what

is happening in the town and to keep up with all the things that are changing. I also like to read the stories from the court.'

'It is fantastic to get the paper at the same time as folk back home.'

My family are from Lismore and Oban so I can probably read it before some

of them on the island.

'I live in a 20-foot metal container in Afghanistan so there is not much of a view. On any given day I may be at threat of insurgency - so seeing pictures of home are a real tonic.'

'I miss Oban - and I miss the damp and cold Scottish climate.'

£1 million of repairs for Argyll's road network

Coldest spell in Scotland since 1914 causes 'significant damage'

MORE than £1 million is to be spent on Argyll's roads to repair damage caused by the severe winter weather.

Argyll and Bute Council says its 2,300 km of roads had 'significant damage' done to them over the Christmas period when snowfall froze for two weeks in the coldest spell in Scotland since 1914.

Priorities

A list of priorities has been drawn up and work will be undertaken by the end of March.

Among the places where major works will take place are:

- A849 Tobermory to Salen and Salen to Craignure, Mull
- C14 Ardtalla road to UC49 Cladich road, Islay
- C29 Kilchrennan, Dalavich, Kilmelford and B844

Kilninver to Ellenabeich, Lorn

□ Oban Road, Lochgilphead and B841 Bellanoch east and west, Mid Argyll

□ Dalsmirren Road and A83 Clachan, Kintyre.

Councillor Dick Walsh, council leader, said: 'There is significant evidence across Argyll and Bute of roads and pavements which have been lifted by frost heave and this leaves behind a failing structure which is susceptible to damage.'

'When the weather improved, survey work was undertaken throughout the area and a list of priority remedial works required was drawn up.'

He added that as it was an extreme weather issue rather than a roads backlog, it was important that the additional capital spend agreed was

allocated on a 'needs' basis.

'Overall, the current estimate for repairing the frost damage caused during the extreme weather is estimated to be some £5 million,' said Councillor Walsh.

'By agreeing to accelerate £1.1 million of capital spend into this financial year, our overall spend on roads reconstruction this year will be more than £7 million. This will allow us to address the most serious issues and undertake the remedial works to avoid a major deterioration of the network.'

'In addition, the roads reconstruction programme will be further reconsidered and reviewed as part of the capital plan, which will be submitted to the council next month.'

Support grows for Mull rally

Facebook support site gains 900 members in five days

ISLANDERS on Mull have been showing their support for the annual October car rally staged on the island.

Last week's shock revelations on the future of the 2010 Tour of Mull Rally brought an outpouring of support for event organisers including an on-line Facebook site which attracted 900 members in five days.

Despite The 2300 Club still not having made a definitive decision about whether to run the 2010 rally or not, club director Neil Molyneux was more hopeful than previously that the event would go ahead.

He said: 'We have received many phone calls, emails and letters of support from islanders and beyond.'

Decision

'I am hoping that at the next meeting of The 2300 Club we will be able to make a positive decision about the Mull rally in 2010.'

One of many letters that The Oban Times received on the subject was from rally supporter Sis MacDougall, Mull, the fact that her son, who was a co-driver in 1st year's rally, was involved in a crash.

She said: 'This is the highlight of the Mull calendar.'

'Organisers and helpers at the rally have my support and admiration for their organising skills and great atmosphere they bring to Mull.'

'Here's to another 40 years. It's your island too.'

Crash

'My 16-year-old lad was involved in a crash on the Friday night last year and he was lucky that he had very few injuries, as was everyone else involved,' she said.

As The Oban Times went to press details were emerging that some islanders were considering setting up a support group for the rally.

Dunstaffnage marine scientist to lead new graduate school

A CONNELL marine scientist has been appointed head of the newly-created graduate school at UHI, the prospective University of the Highlands and Islands.

Dr Lois Calder, who is based at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) at Dunstaffnage, near Oban, will oversee and develop the postgraduate research network at UHI.

She will continue with her duties as deputy head of education, course leader and lecturer at SAMS, where she has worked since 1992.

Dr Calder told The Oban Times: 'I am really excited about the opportunity to lead a wonderful team of colleagues in creating a graduate school for UHI that we can be proud of.'



Dr Lois Calder is looking forward to her new role

Travel Tips

With Eric Smith World Travel

Eric Smith World Travel, 10 Argyll Square, Oban
Telephone: 01631 566818/9



Iceland - probably the coolest holidays on the planet.

Iceland is only 800 kilometres from Scotland, with direct flights from Glasgow on the national carrier Icelandair taking around 2 hours on a direct service, currently though with a touchdown in Manchester on the return.

This will change shortly when Glasgow will have its own direct service, from May this year making it one of the most accessible destinations out of Scotland.

Scots will feel at home here as DNA tests show that over 50% of the female population have Celtic origins, from The Hebrides and Ireland, probably taken here as 'guests' of the Vikings who settled here in the ninth century.

Surprisingly, only 20% of the males have the Celtic DNA, possibly meaning that for some reason the Vikings preferred the Hebridean ladies to the men.

The food is delicious making full use of local ingredients such as lamb and seafood, beautifully prepared to a high standard.

Previously perceived as an expensive destination for visitors, things have changed dramatically with Iceland's recent financial problems.

So much so that the Lonely planet guide has nominated it as best value destination for 2010, bringing it well within the budget of all holidaymakers wanting to experience something a little bit 'out of the ordinary' and yet within easy reach.

We stayed at the Loftleidir hotel at Reykjavik airport, which is out of the centre but very comfortable with a courtesy coach into town, but on landing at Keflavik, the international airport we stopped for a visit to the amazing

"blue lagoon" recently voted among the top ten spas worldwide by Conde Nast magazine, where geothermal springs allow over 300,000 visitors a year to luxuriate in the health giving warm blue waters, which are said to be beneficial to the skin due to silica and other minerals occurring naturally in the lagoon.

Next day was a trip by Super jeep to the interior of Iceland, an amazing experience where the huge balloon tyres make light work of the snow and ice, and if you get bored with the beaten track your driver guide will simply ignore the bridges and drive straight through the nearest river for a little light relief. That day we also experienced the golden circle tour comprising 3 of Iceland's most visited attractions, the spectacular Geysers, the Thingvellir, where Iceland's parliament began over a thousand years ago and the spectacular Gullfoss waterfall.

Being up close to a glacier is an unforgettable experience and Iceland has the largest in Europe, the mighty Vatnajökull which is larger than all the other glaciers in Europe put together, we flew over it in small aircraft with Eagle Airways who provide charter and scheduled services in the region, and literally offer a birds eye view of Iceland's natural wonders from the air.

On landing at Hofn we were taken right to the foot of the glacier which is surprisingly a translucent blue in colour and not glistening white as expected.

Iceland is well worth a visit for a weekend break, but to properly appreciate all that this spectacular island has to offer a week would be necessary.

Eric Smith F.Inst.TT

Isle of Mull butchers co-op closes

MULL Butchers has been forced into voluntary liquidation leaving three staff members redundant and customers disappointed after another poor trading year.

Directors of the island community enterprise, which is based at Tobermory, took the decision in early February and at a hearing in Oban Sheriff Court last week the company agreed to appoint an interim liquidator.

Jim Wilkie, company secretary, said: 'The butchers was simply not profitable so the directors had no option but to apply for voluntary liquidation.'

'The directors would like to thank all our customers over the last eight years and we are sorry that we have had to close and let you down.'

It is understood that a group may evaluate the project with a view to re-opening the business.

Recreation and tourism focus for second Loch Etive meeting

THE SECOND in a series of public meetings on creating a coastal zone management scheme for Loch Etive, north of Oban, is to focus on recreation and tourism.

Invited

A general meeting to go over information gathered and progress made in 2004-05 before it was put on hold until this year was held last month in Connel.

Anyone with an interest in the loch or who is resident close to it has been invited to the public meetings.

Two workshops are planned for the meeting next Wednesday (March 3) in Tainuill Village Hall, the first looking at recreational

activities on the loch, coastal infrastructure and access to the loch.

The second will look at existing management and good practise and how recreation and tourism interacts with other interests on the loch.

The aim of the meetings is to collate enough information and input from local stakeholders to formulate an integrated coastal zone management plan which would provide guidance for future developments and use of the loch and its surrounding area.

A similar plan has already been put together for Loch Fyne in Mid Argyll.

Argyll recycling rises to 40 per cent

RATES of recycling in Argyll and Bute are ahead of the Scottish average and continuing to rise, according to figures published last week.

Over 24,000 tonnes of waste was diverted from the council's landfill sites last

year by recycling or composting; 40.1 per cent of the total rubbish.

It means Argyll and Bute Council is one of 12 Scottish authorities that has already hit the Scottish government's target of recycling 40 per cent of waste by the of 2010.

Lochgilphead policeman recovering

A LOCHGILPHEAD police officer knocked off his bike whilst cycling home from his shift remains in a stable condition in hospital.

Police Constable David Henderson has undergone a lengthy operation to correct several facial fractures but is now recovering in the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow.

The 41-year-old was knocked off his bicycle on Sunday February 14 as he made his way home along the A816 Lochgilphead to Oban road.

Inspector Neil Wallace from Lochgilphead Police said: 'One man has been charged in connection with the incident and a report has been sent to the procurator fiscal in Dunoon.'

Sledge hammer man admonished

FIFTY-one-year-old Thomas George of 8 Scott Terrace, Dalnally, was admonished at Oban Sheriff Court last week having previously admitted breaching the peace and brandishing a sledge hammer at Scott Terrace on April 25 last year.

His sentence had been deferred from May 2009 for him to be of good behaviour.

Kilmartin cemetery to be restored

RESTORATION work is to be carried out on a section of wall at Kilmartin Cemetery, Kilmartin, during March and April. The work on the south-easterly section will include dismantling and rebuilding parts of the wall.

It will also include temporary lowering and re-erecting of some headstones and removing vegetation growth adjacent to the wall.



Community split over hospital future

OPINION in South Lochaber appears sharply divided on ambitious plans to turn the mothballed Glencoe Hospital into a centre for tourism and community activities.

South Lochaber Community Company (SLCC) is balloting local people on buying the building and associated former ambulance station from NHS Highland and renaming it The Strathcona Centre after the man who built it, Lord Strathcona.

SLCC sees the centre as housing exhibitions of artefacts, offices, small businesses, medical services, workshops for local tradesmen, a conference centre, a youth club and social functions. But Scottish Government-appointed valuers CKD Galbraith have valued the property at £450,000 and that combined with repairs and running costs, say some local residents, is a price not worth paying.

SLCC staged an open day at the hospital on Saturday attended, trustee Mr Stewart said, by around 100 mostly supportive people.

But Ballachulish Community Council Chairman Mel MacAskill said the prohibitive costs meant local communities 'cannot be expected' to support the project.

Mr MacAskill said: 'Our village halls at the moment struggle to stay afloat and further spreading of a small enough population would make their situation worse.'

Quoting Muhammad Ali, Mr Stewart said: 'The man who has no imagination has no wings.'

See letters, Page 14.

Newsdesk
01631 568000

Police called to hammer incident

POLICE officers were called to a disturbance in Knipoch Place, Oban on the afternoon of Wednesday February 17 after it was alleged that a man had been involved in an incident while carrying a hammer.

A police spokesman confirmed that a man had been arrested and is the subject of a report to the procurator fiscal.

Oban police officers also attended the scene of an alleged assault in the early hours of Tuesday, February 16 at Corran Brae, Oban.

A man was arrested and a report has been made to the procurator fiscal.



Ina received flowers from Provost of Lochaber Allan Henderson, right, on behalf of Highland Council and a birthday card from the Queen, presented by Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Inverness-shire Iain Thornber.

Birthday girl Ina celebrates 100 years

LOCHABER woman Ina Hope has lived more than three quarters of a century in Fort William – but already had 23 years of life behind her when she moved to the Lochaber capital in 1933.

The remarkable pensioner turned 100 on Sunday and celebrated her birthday at a party among family and friends in Caol Community Centre the night before. Born Ina Stevenson at Renfrew on February 21 1910, Ina was one of a family of eight and married

Samuel Rodgers in 1929. The couple had five children, one of whom died in childhood. The family moved to Fort William, where Samuel delivered for Cameron's the coal merchants until his death in 1941.

Ina married John Hope and the couple had a daughter, Sarah. Mr Hope was sadly killed during World War II.

Ina, of Linnhe Road, worked in Clydebank in a laundry before the family's fit to Fort William, where Ina worked in Lochaber Dairy and hotels

around the town, including the Station Hotel, the Lawriestone Hotel and the Highland Hotel.

Her daughter Betty, now MacDonald, who was born a year after her mother's move to Fort William, said: 'She retired at 60. She thought she had worked long enough. She is in very good health.'

Ina added: 'I've no problems!' The 100-year-old is the proud grannie of ten, the great grannie of 22 and the great-great grannie of six. Around 80 people attended the party, Betty said.

Nether Lochaber slipway 'misinformation' quashed

HIGHLAND Council leader Michael Foxley has moved to quash what he describes as 'misinformation' surrounding plans to temporarily close the Nether Lochaber slipway later this year for repairs.

At a stormy public meeting in Strontian two weeks ago, many of 160 people present were angry a closure would cripple the local economy and endanger lives. But this week Councillor Foxley stressed two other separate proposals that the slipway be

concreted in phases to allow partial, tide and weather dependent operation of the ferry were still under consideration.

Using the smaller *Maid of Glencoul* to allow greater access to the partially repaired slipway was also being investigated, he said, and tenders for the repairs contract would not be going out until those investigations were complete. He added: 'The emergency services are being fully consulted about the potentially disrupted service. The ambulance service intends to place a

second ambulance in the peninsula and will arrange for additional crews to be provided as required.

'Mitigation measures are to be carried to the A861 including extending passing places, scrub cutting, removing rock at poor corners, additional signs and the police are assisting with recommendations for being able to turn traffic.'

Councillor Foxley said September/October was the likely window for the work.

Argyll and Bute Council faces island care dilemma

Islay and Tiree elderly may have to come off the islands and into care



Councillor Donald 'Skye' McIntosh, council spokesman for social services, said: 'This is a worry for us.'

ELDERLY islanders who cannot look after themselves may have to be brought to the mainland unless more care workers can be attracted to island posts.

That is the dilemma facing Argyll and Bute Council as it tries to cope with an ageing island population and empty social care posts.

Staff shortage

At a meeting of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay area committee on February 3 a community service report stated that attracting sufficient homecare staff to Islay and Jura was proving to be 'challenging'.

Councillor Donald 'Skye' McIntosh, council spokes-

man for social services, said: 'On Islay and Tiree in particular, there is an increasing elderly population but fewer people to look after them. This is a worry for us.'

Mainland
'It might mean people have to come off the island and into care. We can't have people at risk.'

'If we can't look after them in their own home, then we need to move them somewhere we can.'

Councillor McIntosh and Councillor Anne Horn plan to go to Islay at the end of March to meet those affected.

Last December, 87-year-old carer Anne Redford,

from Islay, told The Oban Times how some home help services had been cut on the island.

The alternative offered to the clients was private care company Medico, which would charge £13 per hour.

Councillor Horn has already been to Islay to discuss the issue with Mrs Redford.

Councillor Horn said this week: 'With all rural and remote areas it is difficult to get home care staff but there is a funding issue as well; there is a limited amount of money and the council has to make efficiency savings.'

'I have contacted social work officers to see if any of those who had their domestic

care [home help] removed qualify for personal care, in order to give them a bit of help.'

'I have also talked to the Welfare Rights Officer to see how these people can maximise their income through benefits.'

'There are a lot of people feeling vulnerable after losing their home-helps and if they can get some extra income, they can pay for domestic care.'

Councillor Horn added that after visiting a number of elderly people on Islay who had lost their domestic service, she was satisfied that none would come to harm as a result.

Police appeal over Mull fuel thefts

FOLLOWING a recent spate of fuel-related thefts, police on Mull are asking islanders to be vigilant and report any suspicious vehicle movements after dark. Four fuel storage tanks have been targeted since December.

The latest case, on February 16, saw the alleged theft of 400 litres of heating oil from a domestic storage tank in Bunnass, while other incidents have taken place on the Ross of Mull and in Tobermory.

A police spokesman said: 'Fuel crime is on the rise but if people are vigilant then we can catch the thieves.'

Police can be contacted on 01688 302016.

North Road supermarket plans on show to public

THE FIRM wanting to build a supermarket on North Road, Fort William, is inviting members of the public to an open day at the Ben Nevis Hotel today (Thursday) to view and comment on its proposals for the site.

The event, from 10am to 3pm, will provide local people with an opportunity, the developer says, to talk over plans with a Morbaine Limited director.

The consultation will focus on two issues - Morbaine's wish to extend planning permission with Highland Council for a non-food retail park on land it owns off the A82 by two years and its plans to bring in a major supermarket retailer to the same site.

The Cheshire-based developer has already informed Highland Council it intends to submit an application for a 55,000 sq ft supermarket on land between the Alcan junction and the Ford car showroom.

The store would be raised above the ground on pillars to make best use of the site.

Morbaine director Alex Brodie told *The Oban Times* an application for the supermarket could be submitted by late April.

He said: 'We are talking to all the major multiples who are not currently represented in Fort William at the moment. We know that there are two or three big retailers who are keen to come to Fort William.'

The company currently has permission for a non-food retail park, but wants planning conditions barring them from bringing in a supermarket chain to Fort William lifted.

Morbaine says DIY stores are unwilling to come to a relatively small centre such as Fort William in the present difficult economic climate.

Morbaine will hold a second public consultation event around March 23 and 24, when more detailed plans on the supermarket blueprint will be on view, Mr Brodie said.

Seed to Supper project

MORE than 60 primary school children from St Mary's, Inverloch and Lochside schools will take part in the Seed to Supper project at the Rural Education Centre this year.

With assistance from Morrison's 'Let's Grow' they will learn how to grow their own produce, market it and present it for shows including a new Junior Gardening Show in An Clachan on August 21.

Underwater Centre presentation

THE UNDERWATER Centre in Fort William has underlined its reputation as a world-renowned provider of subsea training after a specialist firm presented the company with market leading sonar equipment.

Aberdeen-based Tritech Managers recently visited the Lochaber deep-water training site to hand over the equipment.



John and Stacy with the cheques for charity.

Wedding dance raises £1,130 for charity

AROUND 100 friends, colleagues and ex-colleagues gathered at Banavie Masonic Hall on Saturday night to join newly-weds Kinlochleven High School head teacher John McGilp and wife Stacy to celebrate their wedding.

The wedding dance proved a great success - both as a social function and as a fund-raiser for good causes.

Mr and Mrs McGilp asked guests not to give presents, but to make donations towards Macmillan Nurses and Sport Lochaber Youth Support Trust Fund.

The generous partygoers chipped in a total of £1,130 and the money was split evenly, so each organisation will gain to the tune of £565.

John told *The Oban Times*:

'We decided to have the wedding dance so that our friends in Fort William who didn't make the wedding in Glasgow could help us celebrate. We also thought it was a good way of making money for two great charities.'

John and Stacy were married in House for an Art Lover in Glasgow on Sunday February 14.

Wind farm co-op cash bonanza

EXCLUSIVE REPORT: By STEPHEN NORRIS

COMMUNITY shareholders in the West Highlands' biggest renewable energy co-op are set to reap an inflation-busting dividend from a wind farm's first full year of power generation, it has emerged.

Almost 700 members of the Great Glen Energy Co-op (GGE) invested between £250 and £20,000 each to buy a £1.28million stake in the Millennium wind farm north of Invergarry in September 2008.

The 16-turbine development started operations in December that year and last April the co-op held its first AGM, when shareholders received almost three per cent of their investment after only four months production.

With the second AGM only weeks away, *The Oban Times* can reveal that GGE members are to vote on 7.4 per cent dividend being paid out to shareholders on the full 12 months production since April 2009, subject to an audit currently being carried out.

The bonus dwarfs any deal available to savers trying to earn enough interest from ISA or deposit accounts to counter rising inflation.

GGE member Christine Rigg, from Lundavra Road, Fort William, was able to buy 500 shares in the wind farm thanks to a cash gift from her mother. She told *The Oban Times* she earned more from that small stake in six months than from her much larger ISA savings - but stressed profit was not her main motive.

Ms Rigg, aged 42, a former director of Lochaber Environmental Group and a auxiliary at Lochaber High School, said: 'I never invested in it from that point of view. The environment has always been close to my heart. Community wind farms are the way to go and the best way to get local people on board. I think they are a big asset to the community.'

Energy4All Scotland Limited brokered the deal that saw local people buy a 1.3 per cent stake in the Falck Renewables-owned wind farm and guided GGE through its early stages.

GGE chairman Graham Strachan said

members 'appear very happy' with results to date. Demand was such that the co-op was maintaining a waiting list for members wishing to buy additional shares, Mr Strachan said - and urged other communities to follow the Great Glen's lead.

He said: 'To date there has been nothing to indicate that this has been anything other than a 100 per cent worthwhile project.'

'Where developers allow individuals to form a co-op to invest in a wind farm I would fully recommend local people and other co-op members to fully get behind such a proposal. Energy4All is there to assist and our board members would be happy to advise.'

'Clearly individuals need to weigh up the risks of any such personal investment for themselves - but there are benefits apart from the financial ones. Local community benefit funds have been set up separate from the co-op and have substantial monies to help with local project support and development.'

Mr Strachan added lengthy spells of freezing cold, windless weather this winter had had an impact on electricity generation - but the dip was balanced out over the year as other months performed better than predicted. 'In terms of wind, for December it was 26 per cent less windy than expected,' he said. 'December was a very still month with 62 per cent of predicted power compared to the budget - but May last year was 137 per cent of prediction. Members are very aware that they are investing in the Co-op over a 25-year period and figures in the prospectus relate to longer-term averages and predictions and individual months in one year will not impact greatly on yearly and longer term averages. The weather is also only one of the factors affecting returns along with turbine availability and wholesale electricity prices, which have been lower.'

GGE members were also making a social investment in renewable energy and supporting Scottish, UK and European targets for renewable energy production while helping community development at the same time, Mr Strachan said.

2010 Calendars

<p>Scottish Field - £6.65 £3.32</p>	<p>The Oban Times - £2.25 £2.62</p>
<p>Days - £2.25 £2.62</p>	<p>Isle of Arran - £2.25 £2.62</p>
<p>West Coast Scenes - £2.25 £2.62</p>	<p>Scottish Field Mini - £2.25 £2.62</p>

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what's on

CINEMA LISTINGS > Highland Theatre
INVICTUS Cert 12A
 Daily 6.30 (except Mon 1st), 9.00. Sat/Sun Matinee 4.00
EDGE OF DARKNESS Cert 15
 Daily 6.30, 9.00
THE HURT LOCKER Cert 15
 Mon 1st 6.30
SPIRITED AWAY Cert PG
 Sat/Sun Matinee 1.30
PERCY JACKSON & THE LIGHTNING THIEF Cert PG
 Sat/Sun Matinee 1.30, 4.00

Saturdays > Junior Ski Training
 Glencoe Mountain Ltd 10.30am - 2.30pm
 Tel 07854 688408

Saturdays & Sundays > Glencoe Discovery
 Glencoe Mountain Ltd Guiding service for
 Tel 01855 851226 intermediate skiers

Saturday 27 February > Soup Lunch
 Connel Village Hall 12-2pm

Thursday 4 March > Producers Market
 Kintaline Farm, Benderloch

WHAT'S ON

in association with the Highland Cinema,
 George Street, Oban Tel: 01631 562444

gig argyll guide your essential guide to live music in argyll

Friday 26th February > Filthy Kinky
 The Woody

Saturday 27th February > Shaniganans
 The Woody

Saturday 27th February > Crooked Reel
 Markie Dans 9.30pm start

Sunday 28th February > Crooked Reel
 The Woody 4pm - 7pm

Friday 5th March > Ballochmyle
 The Woody

YOUR STARS WITH PATRICK ARUNDEL

ARIES Mar 21st - Apr 20th 090 6612 4520
 Tact and quiet diplomacy can sort out all sorts of areas of life, but you must fend off any sense of a crisis of confidence. One of your great gifts is your ability to rely on your instincts. Yet you could find yourself confused by the options, or by what the facts of situations are. Don't force things, by next week, your sense of certainty will start to return? Call your special prediction line for more...

TAURUS Apr 21st - May 21st 090 6612 4521
 We can all get caught up in the daily grind, but this week offers you a wonderful opportunity to look beyond this, and to focus on what you really want from your future. Be prepared to dream a bit with this. Don't feel that something you aspire to, is beyond you. This may require a leap of faith, but even trying for your prize can feel good, so do go for it! Call me now for more advice...

GEMINI May 22nd - Jun 21st 090 6612 4522
 Your ruler Mercury is on the move this week, but this can be great for business plans and for interviews and presentations. You will have a real knack of shrewdly being able to drill down into the detail of what is required. This change can also be good if you're contemplating moving properties. Important people will also notice you more. Call now for your in-depth forecast...

CANCER Jun 22nd - Jul 23rd 090 6612 4523
 Do you sometimes put others first, just a little too much of the time? Your horizons need to widen now. You might find yourself almost aching for a change, but this doesn't mean that you have to let anyone down, as much as negotiate with them. And anyway, it may be good for them to learn to be more independent and to stand on their own two feet. Call now for more news and advice...

LEO Jul 24th - Aug 23rd 090 6612 4524
 Get mind sharp. This is especially true about something that has been staring you in the eyes and yet you have been choosing to ignore, for far too long. Perhaps you know this, but now you can assert more control, and that can help you to feel better. And anyway being wishy-washy really isn't your style. People will also know you mean what you say. Call now for more astral advice...

VIRGO Aug 24th - Sep 23rd 090 6612 4525
 On the face of it, things have been flowing fine between you and others but how about more harmony? Why do little glitches and differences of opinion keep coming up? The answer, is because you may still be too much of a perfectionist. Set yourself reasonable expectations, but accept, with the more listening you do the better the atmosphere will be. Call now for more news...

LIBRA Sep 24th - Oct 23rd 090 6612 4526
 Involved or share your home? How much consideration do you show your partner or house mates, or perhaps more pertinently, how much do they show you? Grappling with the domestic side of life can become so much easier if there is a fair carving up of mundane duties. So, if there is an imbalance, talk it through and try to put this right now. Call your prediction line for more news...

SCORPIO Oct 24th - Nov 22nd 090 6612 4527
 There are weeks to sulk and there are weeks to spin. This one is ideal to spin the wheel of astral fortune, to have confidence in your abilities and to demonstrate your personality to the full. Good things can fall into place for you, and your communications skills can absolutely sparkle. Professional wrangles can also be sorted out more easily now. Call me now for more advice...

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23rd - Dec 21st 090 6612 4528
 Sagittarians are generally more interested in the future than the past, but this week affords you some valuable thinking time - if you seize it. If you find yourself defensive or reluctant to talk over sensitive subjects, try to analyze why this might be. Is there some fear driving this? If you're interested, a retreat or spiritual workshop can work wonders. Call for your in-depth forecast...

CAPRICORN Dec 22nd - Jan 20th 090 6612 4529
 Your ruling planet Saturn is the most no-nonsense influence in the zodiac, yet over the last three months it has been agitating with the power broker Pluto. This tension is going to ease from now, and Mars replaces Pluto in a more positive way. Yet some of the tricky issues which need addressing cannot still be ignored. Don't rush with judgments. Call me for more astral advice...

AQUARIUS Jan 21st - Feb 19th 090 6612 4530
 Most of us would like a bit more of it. Money that is - even a more idealistic person around cash, like you often are. And if you really have been working hard to create extra wealth or piling in the overtime at work, things can look up now. But you mustn't take this for granted. This overconfidence can come from the Full Moon's flirtation with bubbly Jupiter. Call for more...

PISCES Feb 20th - Mar 20th 090 6612 4531
 This is a great time to take the initiative. However, balance moves you make this week with plans for the future. You can afford to be a little more risk taking than usual. Not everything you try will work out perfectly but if you don't try, you won't win. Health or energy issues can also improve. You can feel more robust in the face of life's workaday pressures. Call now for more advice...

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 For entertainment purposes only

Coming to Oban Cinema

Invictus (12A)
 Stirring account of how Nelson Mandela turned the Springbok national rugby team into a unifying force for South Africa.

Directed by Clint Eastwood with both Morgan Freeman and Matt Damon putting in Oscar nominated performances.

The Hurt Locker (15)
 Your chance to see this multi Bafta award winning film on the big screen set in Iraq this is a riveting, suspenseful portrait of the technicians of the bomb squad.

Forget the off-putting banner of another Iraq film, it's most literally exciting film you will see this year.

Spirited Away (PG)
 With her parents transformed into

pigs after straying into what seems to be an abandoned theme park, a spoilt ten year-old girl must navigate a strange and magical realm in order to save them.

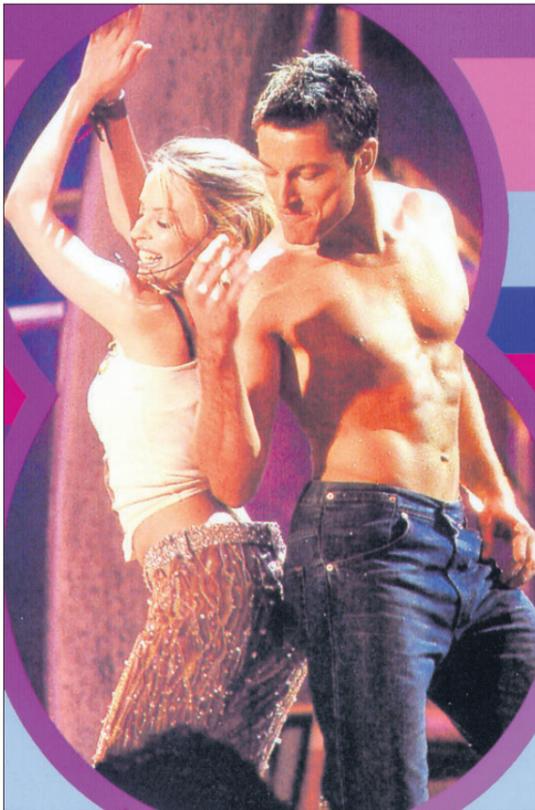
Winner of the Best Animated Feature Oscar in 2003 this enchanting film will leave adults and children grinning with a giddy sense of wonderment.

Edge Of Darkness (15)
 Remake of the BBC mini-series: Mel Gibson plays a detective whose adult daughter is shockingly, and inexplicably, gunned down on his doorstep.

His subsequent investigation sees him drawn into a terrifying political and corporate conspiracy.

Gibson's excellent comeback performance and some effective set pieces makes for an exhilarating ride.

Dance school to the stars books Oban date



Kylie's dance captain to put you through your paces

A DANCE company that has worked with the most famous popstars on the planet is stepping out to put Oban residents through their paces.

Purestar Productions, led by Tim Noble, has worked with Madonna, Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake, among others, and Tim was Kylie's dance captain for five years, helping to organise and choreograph her famous Showgirl tour.

'It was the best time of my life,' said Tim. 'I worked with Kylie on four albums and was responsible for looking after all the dancers and took care of rehearsals.'

'I have also worked with Pharrell Williams, Sophie Ellis Bextor and Jamelia.'

But Tim and his team will swap the glitz and glamour of the big stage for the gym halls of Oban High School when they hold open dance classes in Oban on March 20 over an eight-hour day.

'This will be the first event of its type in Oban,' said Tim. 'We want as many people as possible to come along, regardless of their ability.'

'The idea is to inspire dance enthusiasts and give them a fun and energetic day.'

Tim said that dancing has become more popular in recent years because of the various television talent shows on offer and has held workshops throughout the UK for the past four years.

But he was convinced to come to Oban by Atlantis Leisure dance teacher Lami Wright, who recently took a handful of dancers down to one of Tim's dance sessions in Stirling.

Tim added: 'It doesn't matter if you have never danced before, or you attend another dance school; we are offering a masterclass with some of the best dancers in Europe, who specialise in everything from jazz and musicals to hip-hop and breakdancing.'

The eight-hour workshop is open to anyone aged eight or over and costs £30.

TIMES FORUM
 WWW.OBANTIMES.CO.UK

Local Producers Markets
Thursday 4th March
 Kintaline Farm, Benderloch
 1 mile along the Tralee road
 10am to 3pm
 Lots to eat and do
 Every first / third Thursday
 Interested Producers contact
 01631 720223
 Local Origins Rural Network
 www.lorn.org.uk

Oban and Lorn Tourism Association
 www.oban.org.uk the definitive web guide to Oban that enjoys 20 million hits
 We can help you to help your business.
 Visit: www.oban.org.uk TODAY!

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

OBAN U3A
Monthly Coffee Meeting
 Caledonian Hotel, Oban
 Tuesday 2nd March 2010 at 10.30am
 A warm welcome to all members and an opportunity for anyone interested to find out about U3A activities.

FORT WILLIAM ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Musical Evening
 on Tuesday 2nd March, 2010 at 8pm
 GUEST ARTISTS:
 Stuart Cameron Ceilidh Band
 Railway Club Inverlochly
 All Welcome
 Admission £4.00... Tea & Raffle Extra
 IN THE EVENT OF A LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION BY ANY GUEST ARTIST THE COMMITTEE WILL FIND AN ALTERNATIVE ARTIST

10 Years On.....
 Presented By
 No Cailleagan Phinc
 Clarsach Ensemble
 With
 Toni Russell Highland Dance School
 And guests
 Oban High School Choir
 Saturday 6th March
 Corran Halls 7.30pm
 Tickets from The Corran Halls Box Office £6 cont.£4
 All proceeds will be donated to Yorkhill Childrens Hospital.

SPRING FAYRE
Sunday Feb 28th
 Cairndow Hall
 11am - 3pm
 stalls include books, crafts, local foods, soaps, jewellery, home-baking and candy floss.
£1 incl. tea/coffee

Help for Haiti Art sale
Sat. 27th February
 2.00-7.00 pm
 in Regent Hotel Oban
 Auction starts 3.00pm
 All profits to Mary's Meals

Strathclyde University Big Band
 Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern
Sunday 28th February, 3pm
 Tickets £7/£5
 Reserve on 01852 500746
 or email cvh.arts@btconnect.com

Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club
Monthly Club Night
 Argyleshire Gathering Hall
 Thursday 4th March 2010 8pm
 Supporting Players and Audience Welcome
 Special Guest Artist
 Ian Cameron S.D.B.
 Admission £3
 Come along and enjoy the music

Happy House
 Christian Pre School
COFFEE MORNING
 Saturday 27th February 10-12
 Glencruitten Church Centre
 Tea, Coffee, Home Baking
 Face Painting and other stalls
 Admission - Adults £2
 Children £1.00

CEILIDH
 In Masonic Hall, Albany St, Oban,
Sat 6th March at 7.30pm
 Kirsteen Menzies Mod Gold Medalist
 Alison Rapson Mod Gold Medalist
 Myra MacNab, Charlie MacColl
 Music By Michael & Joanie Garvin
 Piper Ryan MacInnes
 Fear An Taighe Capt Eric Smith
 Adm. £5

NORTH LORN DRAMA FESTIVAL
 24-26 March 2010
 7.30 pm
 Appin Village Hall
 £3 each evening or £10 for season ticket
 Child's ticket £1 each evening
 Mary J D Gregory, Secretary
 North Lorn Drama Festival
 Rhugarrath Croft, Appin, Argyll PA38 4BA
 Telephone 01631 730309
 email nlorndrama@btinternet.com

St Columba's Cathedral Restoration Fund
Old Oban Film Show
 By Bob MacCulloch
 Cathedral Hall
Friday 26th February
 7.30pm
 Admission £4.00
 Teas/Homebaking/Raffle

Advertise in the Community Notice Board for just £14.50 (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



Vivien Smith and JJ Galbraith scored top marks for their tango at the Co-operative. 15_t09coop03

Co-op staff dance their way into Fairtrade Fortnight

THERE was dancing in the aisles at an Oban supermarket on Monday, to launch Fairtrade Fortnight.

Vivien Smith and JJ Galbraith donned their dancing shoes and demonstrated their twinkle toes to highlight the Co-operative's commitment to fair trade.

Oban manager Christopher Taylor said: 'We don't mind doing the Cha Cha if it helps encourage our shoppers to support Fairtrade and choose Fairtrade tea and other products over other brands.'

There will be an information stall in store all week, with free samples and information. The stall moves to Tesco for the second week of Fairtrade Fortnight.

Stay away from wildlife plea

AS the icy weather continues to threaten wild birds, Scottish Natural Heritage has issued a plea to outdoor enthusiasts to stay away from wildlife. Dr Andy Douse, SNH senior ornithological adviser said many birds which rely on wetlands were struggling to get food. He added: 'These scenic locations also attract many people out into the countryside for recreation. We would therefore ask people to be conscious of the birds' ongoing survival struggle and avoid stressing them further.'



Raising money for the people of Haiti, through Marys Meals and Shelter Box, are members of The Rotary Club and young people from Oban High School. 16_109hait01

Rotary and Oban high join forces for Haiti

A SHOWCASE of talent from Oban High School sent a strong message of support to the people of Haiti.

Two charity concerts held in the Corran Halls on Friday afternoon and evening raised more than £3,000 and awareness of the plight of people in the earthquake torn country.

Oban Rotary Club and Oban High School worked together to put on the concert at short notice and, as older pupils are studying

for exams, many of the pupils involved were from junior classes.

Hosts for the evening were Lisa MacKenzie and Angus Scott, head girl and boy, who would have given TV presenter Jonathan Ross a run for his money in presenting skills - 14 startling performances by musicians, singers and dancers entertained a good crowd.

The concert was sponsored by businesses in the town and others gave assistance in kind, including staff from the Corran Halls. But the real stars of the show were the children who gave up their time, and a live performance of Eastenders, to show that the young folk of Oban and Lorn really do care about the devastation caused by the earthquake. Donations for Mary's Meals and Shelter Box can be made via any Rotary Club member.



The ladies of Oban's Inner Wheel raised £500 for Oban Mountain Rescue at a coffee morning held in the Regent Hotel, Oban. Thanking staff at the hotel, a spokesperson for the organisers said: 'We had a very good turnout and we managed to raise a good sum for Oban Mountain Rescue. We would like to thank the staff at the Regent Hotel for their generosity and support in allowing us to use the premises.' 16_109inner01

Uist pipers to learn from the best at workshop weekend

UIST Pipe Band has been learning from the best with a special weekend workshop this month.

Expert tuition was provided by two members of the world's top Grade 1 bands, Duncan Nicholson, pipe sergeant of the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band, and David Ross from House of Edgar Shotts and Dykehead Pipe Band. The pair put

Uist's pipers and drummers through their paces, focusing on technique, musical expression, tuning and preparation.

Funding for the weekend workshop was provided by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and members will be putting their new skills into practice at the band's regular weekly practices, each Thursday evening at the Dark Island Hotel.

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Lifeboat launched

PORTREE Lifeboat launched at 9.35am on Saturday morning to go to the assistance of fishing vessel *The Three Sisters*, which had broken down in the Sound of Raasay. The single-handed trawler had developed engine failure five miles north of Portree in the middle of the Sound. The lifeboat arrived on scene at 10am and quickly took the fishing boat under tow back to Portree, arriving at 11.05 am without incident. The weather was calm with good visibility and no-one was injured.

This was Portree RNLI Lifeboat's second consecutive Saturday morning 'shout' to assist a fishing boat which had broken down, having towed in the fishing vessel *Paulona* on Saturday February 13.

Harris gets its say

COMMUNITIES throughout Harris will get the chance to have their views heard next Wednesday March 3 as the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership heads to Tarbert.

The gathering in The Harris Hotel from 7.30pm to 9pm will aim to garner the views of local people on how partnership agencies and organisations can best fulfil a joint vision for the Outer Hebrides.

Issues to be discussed will include improving population balances, improving the economy, improving the skills of the workforce, improving health and wellbeing, strengthening local communities, making use of natural and cultural resources and improving services.

There will also be an update on the health board's clinical strategy.

Insight into Fromelles

A PROMINENT academic will give a personal perspective on the archaeology of the Western Front when he addresses Lochaber History Society next Thursday.

Dr Tony Pollard, the director of the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology at the University of Glasgow, will focus on his work at Fromelles, where German soldiers dug mass graves to bury the bodies of hundreds of Australian and British troops killed during the Battle of Fromelles in 1916.

Dr Pollard's research led to a return to the site in 2008 when trial excavations were carried out.

Some of the soldiers' bodies were found, and a full programme of DNA analysis is underway in the hope that at least some of the fallen men can be identified.

The event, in the Alexandra Hotel, starts at 8pm. Everyone welcome.

Lochaber police chief condemns copper thieves who put lives at risk

A LOCHABER police chief has condemned copper thieves who stole 150 metres of telephone line in Ardnamurchan for putting local people's lives at risk. Last week *The Oban Times* told how a criminal gang removed three spans of plastic-sheathed cable between telegraph poles along the A861 at Ardery between Strontian and Salen last Sunday night, knocking out most phone services to west Ardnamurchan.

The February 14-15 theft left many in the western peninsula with no way of contacting emergency services. Mobile phone reception in the remote area is either patchy or absent altogether. The gang also cut through a fibre optic cable strung beside the phone line. Police say the thieves made off with a large quantity of copper, which they had extracted from the cable. The re-sale value of the scrap metal

is relatively low, but the cost to BT is considerable in terms of repairs - particularly the fibre optic material, which was discarded in favour of the copper. **Justice** Following an earlier appeal from local police, Area Inspector Dougie Allan has reiterated the need to bring the callous gang to justice. Describing the theft as 'a threat to public safety', Inspector Allan said: 'This type

of crime can have a serious impact on rural communities as telephone services provide a lifeline in many areas. 'The reality is that someone could die if they cannot get telephone access to contact emergency services. 'We imagine the person or persons responsible for this recent theft may be travelling in a transit type van and may have ladders to reach the poles. Anyone who witnesses any

suspicious activity should contact police immediately.' He added: 'This type of theft has reportedly been taking place throughout the UK over the past few weeks and months. Police ask the public to remain vigilant.' Police are appealing to anyone with information about those responsible to contact them at Fort William Police station on 01397 702361 or call Crimestoppers anonymously any time on 0800 555 111.

Donald set for Himalayan adventure

A RETIRED army captain from Moidart is heading for the Himalayas next spring to attempt a gruelling five-day trek for charity. Donald Monro, of Ardmolich, near Glenuig, was in the vet's in Fort William when he noticed a flyer from Dogs for the Disabled inviting members of the public to take part in its Trek Nepal fund-raiser.

When he read the 70-mile hike would take him past Annapurna, one of the world's highest and most fearsome peaks, he immediately signed up - despite being three years over the age limit.

Donald, who had a career with Ben Line Steamers after his retiral from the army, knows the mountain and has read widely on attempts, often fatal, to conquer it.

He has other strong reasons for wishing to return to Nepal - he served with the Queen's Own Highlanders in Malaya and Borneo alongside the Gurkhas, and built up a close relationship with the legendary mountain fighters from that country. Donald, 67, is already looking to start training for the early April 2011 trek, which will take him to an altitude of 11,000 feet.

He has been given a clean bill of health to take on the challenge by his doctor, and plans to use his 50-year old army boots, which he still keeps in tip-top condition. 'I passed my medical MoT,' Donald told *The Oban Times* at his croft home near the River Moidart bridge.

'For training, I'll just go over the hill to Acharacle and back.'

Donald has to raise a minimum of £3,000 for the trek and asks anyone wishing to sponsor him to contact him on 01967 431799.

Dogs for the Disabled trains puppies to become assistance dogs for disabled people to help them live more independently.



Preparing for action in the Himalayas: Donald Monro outside his home at Ardmolich. 10_f09donald01

Skye-based firm one of Britain's 100 smartest

A SKYE-BASED communications company has been named as one of the top 100 smartest small businesses in Britain.

Portree-based Highland Wi-Fi Limited was one of only four Scottish firms, and the only Highland company, to be named in the prestigious Smarta 100 list for 2010.

The Smarta 100 winners are a selection of small, dynamic enterprises picked by a panel of judges including Dragon's Den entrepreneur Deborah Meaden and Bebo founder Michael

Birch. The company, which has only been in operation since August 2009, has rapidly made a name for itself by installing broadband wireless internet access services where the service is patchy or non-existent. **Online**

The firm currently manages 'hotspot' areas in Dunvegan, Portree, Gairloch and Dornoch, with sites at Uig and Arisaig coming online for the forthcoming season. Services are aimed at independent campsites, hostels and hotels where

pay-as-you-go internet access is on offer.

Local companies can advertise on the network to promote their business to visitors.

Technical manager at Highland Wi-Fi Limited Calum MacDonald told *The Oban Times*: 'We are delighted to receive this accolade considering the number of businesses in the UK and the highly successful judging panel.'

'Our aim is to create a large wireless network operating throughout the Highlands.'

Kilmallie Hall fund-raiser fun

FIFE-BASED Scottish music band Buttons & Bows are to top the bill at the next Kilmallie Hall fund-raiser on March 27.

Also appearing at the popular venue will be local artistes including young local fiddler Kayleigh MacDonald - the grand-daughter of Kilmallie Hall committee member Bobby Henderson.

'All funds will go to the upgrading of the hall,' Bobby told *The Oban Times*.

The concert starts at 7.30pm. For more information, contact Bobby on 01397 700268.

Got a story for The Oban Times? Call our reporters on 01631 568000

Lyndsay helps Scotland cook to victory

KINLOCHLEVEN cuisine queen Lyndsay Michie is back at Kinlochleven High School fresh from helping Scotland to a tri-nations cooking victory in Wales.

Lyndsay travelled to South Lanarkshire College in East Kilbride to meet the Scottish Culinary Team to decide menus and tactics last Monday, before making the long trip south the next day to Coleg Llandrillo, Rhos on Sea Llandudno, Conwy, for the Welsh International Culinary Championships 'Battle for the Dragon 2010'.

The teams each had to prepare a three-course lunch for 80 covers using Welsh

produce. 'Ireland, Scotland and Wales competed across three days and Scotland came out the winners,' Lyndsay, aged 17, explained. 'Unfortunately, I was not part of the victorious team - I helped mainly with the prep and other jobs. However I will train from now to December with the team at South Lanarkshire College and Glencoe and then hope to compete at a worldwide prestigious culinary competition in Luxembourg in November.' Lyndsay has already worked with TV Masterchef judge Michel Roux Junior in his Le Gavroche restaurant in London.



Lyndsay Michie: travelled to Wales with victorious Scottish team.

Great support for charity event

ROY BRIDGE and Spean Bridge communities are set for one of their biggest charity fund-raising events for years.

Organisers say that support for the Haiti Aid morning at Roy Bridge Hall this Saturday has been remarkable and a large number of prizes, including meals at local hotels, have been provided for the raffles. The event starts at 11am.

Oban High School news



Haiti help concert

ON FRIDAY February 19 a Haiti benefit concert was held in the Corran Halls.

The concert was a joint venture between Oban Rotary and Oban High School where Oban High provided the music and dance items and the Rotary Club organised the event.

Two performances were held, with a matinee performance during the afternoon, and the main performance held at night. Around 100 students and staff, participated in the event and through their extremely hard work and outstanding talents

the day raised more than £3,000 for the Haiti Earthquake Relief Appeal.

A huge thank you to all those that participated, staff and students, and all the members of the public that gave up their time and money to support this extremely worthy cause.

Literary talent at Oban High

A GROUP of pupils up to 14-years of age have been working very hard, in their own time, compiling short stories for a national short story writing competition.

The stories, which have to be 500 words or less and have the theme of 'lost and found', have been flying into the library. By all accounts the standard of stories received so far has been outstanding.

We would like to wish all those students taking part the very best of luck although luck doesn't play a part as their writing talents speak for themselves!

Well done to everyone who is taking part.

Ski club

A NEWLY formed junior ski club at Oban High School has

been enjoying the best snow conditions for many years.

At the beginning of this term senior depute John MacPherson asked for pupils from S1 to S3 who could ski and had their own equipment if they would like to take the opportunity to ski midweek.

He then approached Niall Urquart at Stramash - a local outdoor sport organisation dedicated to encouraging more young people to participate in sport more often - and asked if they would be willing to offer tuition and supervision.

Not only were they delighted to assist, they also had some skis and boots available for hire.

Several groups of Oban High School pupils have also been introduced to ski-ing on the dry slope at Kilbowie outdoor centre including one of the school's S3 XL classes (taken by Debbie Lamb) and some S5 Pathways programme students who are now ready to go on the snow at Glencoe and Aonach Mor ski resorts.

Local instructor Fiona Kincaid described the dry slope introduction as 'the perfect start for beginners and with some of the best skiing in Scotland just over an hour's drive away this

is a fantastic opportunity for our young people'. The school ski club aims to help introduce young people to the sport and give other more experienced skiers the opportunity to ski on relatively empty slopes.

Oban High School is also hoping to organise a trip to the Alps next February - and train some of its staff as Alpine Ski Leaders - the basic Snowsport Scotland qualification for teachers.

All pupils who take part in the ski club trips must follow the school's behaviour codes, do well in their subjects and catch up with missed lesson time at home.

Although Mr MacPherson acknowledges that ski-ing is an expensive sport, the school has been able to negotiate a great deal with Glencoe mountain resort who have agreed to a third off the afternoon junior lift ticket with a free lift pass for instructors.

Glencruitten hostel's minibus will be used to provide the transport, making the day's sliding fun and superb value for money.

Last weekend Nevis Range also agreed reduced prices for Oban High School-based midweek skiers.

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The Oban Times

& West Highland Times

Direct funding could save elderly care ideal
 FREE personal care for all elderly people throughout Scotland was heralded as a popular milestone in the history of positive social politics when announced in 2001 by the then First Minister Henry McLeish.
 In 2010, the concept of a comfortable, caring community fully funded from the coffers of Holyrood is as highly valued as ever, however, reality finds the ideal floundering against a tide of underfunding with many local authorities unable to meet their obligations. And the depth of the problem will only get worse as life expectancy increases.
 Prioritising direct funding from national government could place this right, right back on its pedestal.

Glasgow Letter

Buntata's Sgadan

THERE was a reasonable turnout at last weekend's Glasgow Skye Association Buntata's Sgadan when, after the traditional fayre, there was entertainment from singer Calum Angus MacDonald and accordionist Charlie Kirkpatrick.

This was a most enjoyable event which also included a quiz.

It would be remiss not to mention the absence of Ewan Nicholson, usually ever present at the Skye functions and at most other associations in the city, and we wish him well as he recuperates from his recent accident.

Clydebank ceilidh

DESPITE competing against the annual Mull and Iona Association festivities, there was an excellent turnout at the February ceilidh when Christine Buchanan was in the chair.

The singers were Fiona Dunn, Rhona Morrison and Angus Smith and accompanist Kirsteen Grant played for community singing which was thoroughly enjoyed.

Andrew Caulfield was the piper and Jean Anne Calendar and Lex Keith were the musicians.

At this ceilidh the deaths of two long standing members of the association, Muriel Duncan and Michael Allan, were intimated and best wishes were sent to Anna Cameron, Dugie Thomson and Calum Lamont.

Ceol's Craic

THIS month's event will take place in the Centre for the Contemporary Arts on Saturday February 27 and will consist of a viewing of Passing Places with Mairead Green at 8pm.

This will be followed by Joy Dunlop and friends as Joy releases her debut album *Dusgath*.

Mairead's creative musical was commissioned for Celtic Connections New Voices 2009 and shows much of her native Wester Ross.

The *Potential Strangers*, a five-piece musical group which plays the tunes of Harris born singer Dol Eoin and has found common ground between American rebel folk and Gaelic traditional music, will also be on the programme.

Glasgow Islay Association

THE ANNUAL Gathering Concert will take place in Glasgow University Union on Friday March 5 at 7.30pm

Correction

THANK you to the many eagle-eyed *Oban Times* readers who pointed out that the Scott Monument is only 61 metres high rather than the 200 metres the graphic illustration stated. Other heights for Big Ben and the Glasgow Tower were correct, as is the height of the planned turbines at Raera Forest at 125 metres.

PRESS POLICY

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.

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

with the dance to follow at 10.30pm to the music of Charlie Kirkpatrick's Band.

Catriona Bell will be chairing the concert and the artistes will be Islay pipers Alasdair Whyte, Marion Ramsay, Mairi MacInnes and Iain MacLean, with accordion music from Charlie Kirkpatrick.

Both the concert and the dance were very successful in the same venue last year and the association is looking forward to welcoming a large turnout of friends to both parts of the evening.

Oban High School Former Pupils' Dinner

A REMINDER this dinner will take place in the Swallow Hotel on Saturday March 13.

For tickets telephone Isabel Ross, 0141 563 9729.

Diary dates

Thursday February 25: Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm, Wendy Arrowsmith.

Friday February 26: Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choirs Annual Concert, Kessington Hall, Bearsden, 7.30pm. Glasgow Uist and Barra Association ceilidh dance, Crawford Hall, 110 Beith Street, Partick, 9pm to 1am. Helensburgh and District Highlander's Association ceilidh dance, Commodore Hotel, 7.30pm.

Saturday February 27: Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association buffet ceildh dance, Partick Bowling Club, 7.45pm. Motherwell and Wishaw Highlander's Association ceilidh dance, Dalziel St Andrew's Church Hall, 7.30pm. Ceol's Craic-see above.

Thursday March 4: Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm, John Hinselwood and Sandra Gellatly Band. Kieron Goss, Old Fruitmarket, 8pm.

Friday March 5: Glasgow Islay Association Concert and Dance - see above. RSAMD Year 2 Student's concert, 7.30pm.

Saturday March 6: Clann Gaidhlig Concert, Wynd Centre, Paisley, 7.30pm.

Pub scene

MUSIC in the Park Bar this weekend will be provided by Iain Angus MacLeod, from Harris, on Friday, Martin Pottinger/Willie Cameron on Saturday with Sunday still to be confirmed.

In the Islay Inn it will be The Keelies on Saturday and Deoch'n Dorus on Saturday. Neil Murray, Tel: 0141 954 8105. Email: neilmurray@yahoo.co.uk.



Oban Railway Station - May, 1962

Ian Haikings of South Australia sent in this week's flashback photograph which shows the North British Railway No. 256 Glen Douglas pictured in Oban Railway Station on May 12 1962. It visited the town along with C R No. 123. Ian wonders if anyone recognises the young boy in the foreground? We would like readers to send in flashback photographs. 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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Vote 'no' to hospital purchase

Sir,
 So the ballot papers are on the way.

We all need to make sure that a 'non vote' doesn't turn into a yes by default - everyone needs to take the two minutes required and actually vote 'no' to the white elephant that is a community purchase of Glencoe Hospital.

Mr Stewart is surprised by the price - although property prices are rising - isn't worried about asbestos or the fact it isn't even wind and water tight, yet would have us believe he has experience of buildings and restoration work.

I gather Ballachulish Community Council is dead against it and is recommending a 'no' vote, I just hope enough of South Lochaber follow suit.

Stewart Borland, Ballachulish.

Waste of money

Sir,
 Regarding your front page story of February 18 I, for one, hope this 'community' bid for the old hospital fails because if it doesn't at this stage, it certainly will later.

What a waste of community or grant money that would be, especially at a time of such major cut backs to essential services across the country.

I'm also curious as to how the percentage Mr Stewart quoted in *The Oban Times* the last time he used his 'survey' has dropped from 'roughly 15 per cent' to five per cent?

Doesn't sound like there are many people being taken in by his plans.

I just hope everyone takes the time to vote 'no'.
 Fiona Bowers, Ballachulish.

No support from community council

Sir,
 As you will likely be aware residents of South Lochaber will by now have received a ballot paper regarding the proposed community buyout of the building formerly used as Glencoe Hospital and ambulance depot.

Our community council, the correctly elected body for the villages of Ballachulish and Glenachulish, is opposed to this buyout, as we believe

that misleading information is being published over the finances of this operation.

The stated purchase price of £450,000 is perhaps correct, but we would consider the annual running costs to be more critical.

Running costs could not be reduced to allow the purchase and running costs for three years to be met in the £1 million budget we are being quoted - it simply can't stack up.

Having discussed this long and hard we cannot support this community buyout and would urge residents of South Lochaber to firstly consider all the information available to them and secondly return their ballot paper to the Highland Council.

Regarding the possible use of the building - a youth club was mentioned - having spoken to a few juveniles in the last few days they all say it's too far out of the village and that they wouldn't walk to it.

Our village halls at the moment struggle to stay afloat and further spreading of a small enough population would make their situation worse.

Our choice is that you vote against this purchase as our communities cannot be expected to financially support such a project.

If, however, the residents do vote in favour of this project we would confirm that our community council will not contribute to the purchase or the running costs as our money is used for projects that benefit our community and this purchase will encumber our communities with financial and indeed operational burdens they do not need.

Mel MacAskill, chairman, Ballachulish Community Council.

Get Mull Rally back on track

Sir,
 I was shocked when I read your report about the future of the Mull Rally as a result of a split in public support.

As far as I am aware this is down to a lack of communication and of things said in the heat of the moment. I also understand that a meeting of those concerned was going to take place and I know that the farmer involved is an honest and hard working gent who I believe did what he thought to be good enough and was very upset by all that took place on the night in question.

But I also believe there are other people who live life with nothing being good enough and feel they are due something from everyone

except themselves. My view is that the rally was here long before them and they know where the ferry is. There are always going to be people like that. There are also farmers who go to extra lengths to make sure their stock is off the road and gain no monetary gain from doing so as they donate any money received to charity. They should be applauded.

I know myself how hard it is to get the weather for gathering in stock at rally time but come on guys you know the rally is that weekend and what better time to get stock closer to hand for a fluke dose?

Who is this I hear you shouting.
 Well I am the mother of the 16-year-old lad involved in the crash on the Friday night.

He was lucky, as was everyone else involved. It could have been a lot worse so let's sort the problems so they don't happen again.

I'm sure a few apologies and humble pie wouldn't go amiss. I am also a shepherd and if any farmer would like a hand gather - free of charge - to help get their stock off the road, please get in touch as I have three dogs keen for work.

To all the rally boys and girls, you have my support and admiration for your organising skills and great atmosphere you bring.

Here's to another 40 years. It's your island too.
 Sis MacDougall, Wood Cottage Croft, Tobermory.

No 'hit list' of Argyll school closures

Sir,
 Alan Reid claims he is 'astounded' Argyll and Bute Council is 'even considering' closing Tarbert Academy's secondary department and once again refers to a 'hit list' of schools in the area.

We are not considering closing any element of Tarbert Academy or any other school in the current financial year. Nor is there any such 'hit list'.

What we have said is that budgetary pressures over the following two years will require us to review every aspect of our service provision, including the schools estate.

I would be extremely surprised if there was any local authority in Scotland - of any political composition - which is not in a similar position.

Mr Reid reveals a basic lack of understanding in his comments relating

to my own position as spokesperson for Education and Lifelong Learning. I was not 'put in charge of education' by the SNP but by the coalition administration of Argyll and Bute Council. This appointment was made largely on the basis of my 35 years' experience as a teacher, not simply because I am an SNP councillor.

I am extremely proud of the educational standards we have in Argyll and Bute, and of the partnership work between staff, pupils, parents and local communities to ensure our young people have the best possible chance to reach their full potential.

I am wholly committed to maintaining and improving these standards, despite the tough economic circumstances in which all councils now find themselves.

The process of reviewing our school estate will begin within the next few months.

In the meantime, it is disappointing that Mr Reid seems prepared to use our children and their parents as political footballs in his ongoing bid to raise his own profile.

He asks that Argyll and Bute Council puts parents' and pupils' minds at rest.

I would suggest a good start in this regard is for him to stop these scaremongering tactics.

Councillor Isobel Strong, Spokesperson for Education and Lifelong Learning, Argyll and Bute Council.

Oban War Memorial research appeal

Sir,
 I am working with a lady called Carol Sklinar to complete the profile of the men from Oban whose names are engraved on Oban's War Memorial and who died during World War I.

Through her family history society, she is attempting to record as much information as possible about the 174 men who did not return and has already an interesting profile on some of them.

If any readers are interested in this worthwhile project, can provide details of men whose names appear or would like to access this information, her website is www.wakefieldfhs.org.uk. Carol can be contacted at carol@wakefieldfhs.org.uk.

Alternatively, I would be happy to pass on any information to her.
Mhairi Ross, Dail Ghrianach, Ledaig, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1RT.

A VIEW FROM THE TOWER

By McCAIG



Is there a tyrant in No 10?

JUST when does a forceful management-style become bullying?

This must be the crux of the latest bizarre episode to hit the run-up to the General Election for the Westminster Parliament.

Thank heavens the Scottish Parliament is for a fixed term and the date on which its next election will be held next year is already known while we have to wait until March or April until it is formally announced that we will go to the polls on May 6.

If it is proclaimed in March we will have a six week campaign - can we stand that?

Perhaps we should try to define the type of bullying in which Mr Brown is said to have indulged as it seems not to be the basic implementation of a reign of physical terror but a host of small incidents that in the eyes of those staff who are alleging that they have been bullied have made working at No 10 Downing Street very unpleasant, if not impossible.

I think it is fair to say that such incidents have taken place despite the initial denials when the book in which they are contained came out, and are now serialised in 'The Observer' newspaper.

The author is a well-known and serious political journalist and 'The Observer' is a highly regarded and independently minded broadsheet - not a scurrilous 'red-top' tabloid.

Also, a quick check round sources in London confirms that the Prime Minister's abrasive management of his senior staff has been more than hinted about for some time.

Not really a No 1 guy

WHEN he became 'the man in No 10' I wrote that with his senior government minister experience and his decade as Chancellor of the Exchequer he should be able to have a successful time in office - if he didn't get blown off course.

Maybe it was fanciful to expect him to be so fortunate!

But not even the most gloomy of political commentators could have forecast that the storm would be so fierce nor the waves so steep.

Maybe his greatest fault, and the one for which he is paying so harshly now, is his slavish acceptance of the course mapped out by his predecessor Tony Blair who clung to office for far too long.

His secondary fault was that he did not have an Alastair Campbell at his side - as Tony Blair had - to steer his away from the shallows into which he fell far too easily.

Given that he had got where he wanted to be without too great difficulty, the culture shock of realising that 'the buck' stopped with him

inevitably seems to have been too much.

To whom should he turn for advice, support and expertise in political management? Blair had the 'Tiree Tarantula' - a title I gave Alastair Campbell - and one which I understand amuses him considerably.

Eventually, he was invited back, as was Lord Mandelson whom he was said to hate.

But, it was far too late to prevent staff, harried and verbally assaulted day after day, from complaining and, in some cases, quitting.

I cannot imagine he ever tried to vent his frustration on either of his late recruits as he knew that he would be told in no uncertain terms where he could go.

However, it is also noticeable that neither has rushed to defend the Prime Minister or deny what is being alleged.

Where does this leave Gordon Brown as far as winning a General Election is concerned?

Is it another nail in his coffin or will the public's uncertainty of who and what is David Cameron give him another chance?

More generosity welcomed

A FEW weeks ago, I wrote here about the Argyll Piping Trust - representatives of the Argyllshire Gathering and Argyll and Bute Council - receiving £10,000 from the National Lottery's Awards For All Scheme.

This was so they could buy sets of bagpipes to be made available on loan to young pipers who might find the initial cost of buying them perhaps beyond their or their parents' means.

I heartily endorsed the trust's initiative and expressed a hope that the great upsurge of interest in junior piping would continue to be nurtured so that one of the great distinctions of Scottish traditional music would flourish in rude good health.

Such thoughts have fallen on very fertile ground as Peter Forester, this year's Senior Steward of the Argyllshire Gathering, has told me that a very generous but anonymous benefactor who read what I wrote has made a very substantial donation of thousands of pounds to the Argyll Piping Trust to enable them to buy more sets of pipes for young players.

Although I don't know who he is, I add my thanks to him for his generosity. At the same time, I would encourage anyone who can afford to do so to add to the fund by sending their donation to the Argyll Piping Trust, c/o of the Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Breadalbane Street, Oban, Argyll.

All donations will be acknowledged with grateful thanks.

McCaig

Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.



Argyll piping gets its second wind

The award-winning Inveraray and District Pipe Band are the current world champions at grade two.

IT WAS only 10 years ago that many among Argyll's ageing piping fraternity feared for its future; teenage players ready to join up with senior bands were few and far between and many relied on tuition outside of school.

Fast forward to 2010 and an explosion of young pipers and drummers have appeared on the scene with many so called 'senior' competition bands made up of players not even old get a round in at the pub after competitions.

The incredible turnaround in a relatively short time is down to committed parents, pipers and council officials who refused to see a great Argyll tradition fall out of step.

Campbeltown

Campbeltown's Willie MacCallum (senior), at 81 years of age is still fiercely protective of Argyll's fine piping tradition and has been involved with Kintyre Piping Society since 1951.

He said: 'For a while there was no piping tuition in Campbeltown and the council told us that there were no plans to teach it in the school.'

'During this period we had Robert Wallace from the Royal College of Piping down for a piping society competition and he later commented on the state of piping in Campbeltown in his editorial in the Piping Times.'

'I pointed this out to a councillor at the time, George MacMillan, and told him that we were now the laughing stock of piping in Scotland.'

'It just so happened he was going to an education committee meeting that day and he took a copy of the editorial with him.'

Willie received a letter from the council shortly after stating that high school pupils would have two hours a week of piping tuition - not good enough.

'I wrote back saying that they had to start in the primary schools and they agreed. Piping has just gone from strength to strength since then.'

Kintyre Schools Pipe Band was formed under the stewardship

'The whole traditional music scene has taken off and piping is up there with everything else.'



Young pipers from Oban High School Pipe Band play at many social functions in the town. 07_088pipe01

of Iain McKerrall, who has overseen the success of Juvenile and Novice Juvenile competition bands, culminating in the band being named Scottish Pipe Band of the Year at the Scottish Traditional Music Awards 2007.

But the trend of teaching in schools would be further reaching in the coming years, with world champion pipers Stuart Liddell and Angus MacColl taking up similar positions in Mid Argyll and Oban, respectively.

Again Willie MacCallum's influence was demonstrated as he then encouraged the re-establishment of the Netherlorn Piping Society in Oban and the junior piping competition in Inveraray.

Inveraray

As a result junior pipers in Oban and Mid Argyll expressed a desire to play in a competitive band and, before long, Inveraray and District Pipe Band and Oban High School Pipe Band were formed, with Stuart and Angus as respective pipe majors. Inveraray, in particular has rapidly progressed up the competitive ladder. The band, the first the Royal Burgh has had in 70 years, is world champion at grade two, the second tier of competitive piping, and in 2009 won four consecutive major championships. What's more impressive is that most of the fresh-faced 'senior' band members were born as recently as the 1990s.

It would seem obvious, then, that it also has a Novice Juvenile band and 10 young chanter players, proving the conveyor belt of talent remains well oiled.

Band secretary Jim MacMillan said: 'Without a doubt, Stuart [Liddell] is the main driving force behind the band and is the main reason for its success.'

'But the involvement of parents and friends is paramount. We could never have got where we are today as an organisation without the assistance of the parents. With most of the band being teenagers and quite a few living out of town they would never get to practices without their parents taking time out.

They are also very supportive in many other ways and many are on the committee.

But the introduction of enthusiastic tutors to the schools, alone, is not enough to explain the sudden migration of young musicians to the chanter and pipes.

Oban

Euan Dewar, one of the few competing pipers from Oban as a teenager and now pipe major of Oban Pipe Band, explained: 'It's more 'cool' to be a piper now.'

'The whole traditional music scene has taken off and piping is up there with everything else.'

'This is fantastic for the senior band and I hope the high school pipers will see us as a natural progression.'

Like Inveraray, Oban High School Pipe Band is driven by its prizewinning pipe major and a fundraising committee that runs on 'parent power'.

These parents make up the band's fundraising arm, the Oban and Lorn Youth Pipe Band Association, and part of the wider-reaching Netherlorn Piping Society.

Angus MacColl, whose teaching role is funded by Argyll and Bute Council and the Argyllshire Gathering Piping Trust, says the band's ability to transcend all age groups has been a factor in its recent popularity.

He said: 'The thing I like to see in the band is the fifth and sixth year pupils at high school

hanging around with the primary kids; there's no age division because the older ones tend to help out the young ones and look out for them. It is quite heart-warming.'

'They all want the band to succeed because it has given them a focus.'

Other Argyll bands have benefited from an improved element of youth over the last decade.

Cowal Pipe Band has a distinctively young membership, boosted by Dunoon Grammar Pipe Band, while on Islay, Mull, Rothesay and Tiree young pipers have also come to the fore, sometimes requiring the formation of youth bands to complement the senior members.

Cowal

Most of these bands are geared towards competition - Cowal states that its common aim is 'to be the best' - but Mid Argyll Pipe Band is proud of its reputation as one of the country's best 'non-competing' bands, while still attracting an unprecedented number of young members.

Established in 1927, the band has had its fair share of success but has made a name for itself in recent years by working on collaborative projects, such as the Blackwood and Hickory project in 2007, and attending festivals in Britain and overseas, including Golowan Festival in Penzance.

Former pipe major Rod Buchanan, who still plays and tutors with the band, said: 'The band has taken off in the last few years and that is thanks to the young pipers coming through.'

'We established a link with a band in Poland and recently flew out there to play. We have quite a few teenage boys in the band and they had lots of teenage girls, so let's just say there was a good rapport established!'

'We have more young players now than I can ever remember seeing in the band but the standard, enthusiasm and thirst to do well is as high as ever.'

'There is more teaching now; Stuart Liddell is in Lochgilphead High School and primary schools

in the area, which has really helped. I think there is almost a peer pressure among young people to be in a pipe band these days, whereas 10 years ago I would advertise chanter/piping classes that two people would come to. Now I don't advertise because so many youngsters want lessons.'

While there is a dedicated and concerted effort to keep this great Argyll tradition alive, tuition will not be immune from budget cuts or from volunteer 'fatigue' forever. The bands are constantly in need of sponsorship for kitting out new members, tuition fees and travel expenses to national and international competitions.

If Argyll is to be a force in the piping world it is crucial that bands are given the funds they require and that the roles of the piping tutors, who have inspired a generation, are kept intact.



Technical Sergeant Iain Morrison plays his pipes at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

Young players make piping 'cool' again

25 Years Ago

Those Were The Days
The Oban Times

Thursday February 28 1985

New ferry boat for Barra to Uist route

A VITAL link in the communications network of the Western Isles has been strengthened with the introduction of a new ferry on the service between Barra and Uist.

Ferryman Donald Campbell has purchased a new 33ft boat with assistance from the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The vessel will cut 10 minutes off the crossing time and provide a safer and more comfortable passage.

Appeal to save Crarae Gardens on Loch Fyne

AN APPEAL was launched this week by the Trustees of the Crarae Gardens Charitable Trust to save the world famous Crarae Glen Gardens on the shores of Loch Fyne, near Inveraray.

The gardens, with their breathtaking 'Himalayan' setting are best known for their magnificent rhododendrons and azaleas but in addition they contain many other rare and interesting species.

Army to fix Appin footbridge

THE ARMY are to repair the Jubilee Bridge at Appin at only minimal cost to the local people, it was stated this week.

There has been growing concern about the poor condition of the footbridge since reorganisation of local government, when neither district nor region would take responsibility for it.

Mr John Sharples, district councillor, said this week that he was delighted to say that the Army Engineers had offered to repair the bridge as a training exercise.

Oban sea wall under repair

TUMMEL Bridge Engineering of Glasgow have started work on a major repair scheme to the sea wall in Oban's George Street.

The construction work, which will take several weeks to complete, has been made necessary because of serious undermining over the years.

Problem pitch at Fort William

LOCHABER District Council are going back to the drawing board to solve a problem that is repeatedly putting the An Aird playing field out of action.

The council agreed at their leisure and recreation committee meeting to ask the original architects to investigate the problem.

Fort William Shinty Club have written a letter of complaint to the council about the state of the pitch. They were forced to cancel 40 per cent of their games due to be played on the pitch last season because it was waterlogged.

'Bear' opens Dervaig Hall

AFTER a reconstruction programme lasting almost a year Dervaig Hall in Mull has re-opened.

Dervaig people are traditionally known as 'The Bears', therefore, despite the presence of officials from bodies which helped to fund the £50,000 project, the opening ceremony was performed by 'a bear'.

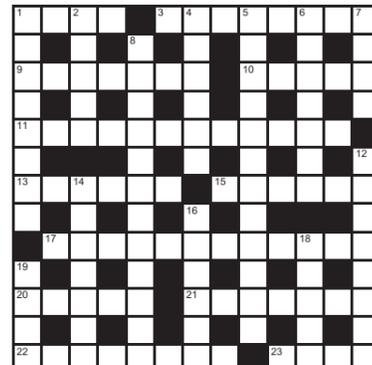
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

Across

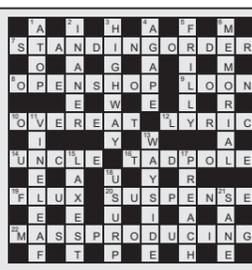
- 1 Arrived (4)
- 3 Willingness (8)
- 9 Equivalent (7)
- 10 On TV again (5)
- 11 Similar looking but their left is your right (6,6)
- 13 9 day devotion (6)
- 15 Painful spasm (6)
- 17 Wide apart (6-6)
- 20 Get out of (5)
- 21 Mainstay (7)
- 22 For the very young (8)
- 23 As a result (4)

Down

- 1 Used with a sash (8)
- 2 One who goes for the gold? (5)
- 4 Clear (6)
- 5 Asked to appear again (7,5)
- 6 Nazareth native (7)
- 7 Pull (4)
- 8 A short message (12)
- 12 Scalloped collars (8)
- 14 Tastelessly (7)
- 16 Not poisonous (6)
- 18 A brace and a half (5)
- 19 One on a pedestal (4)



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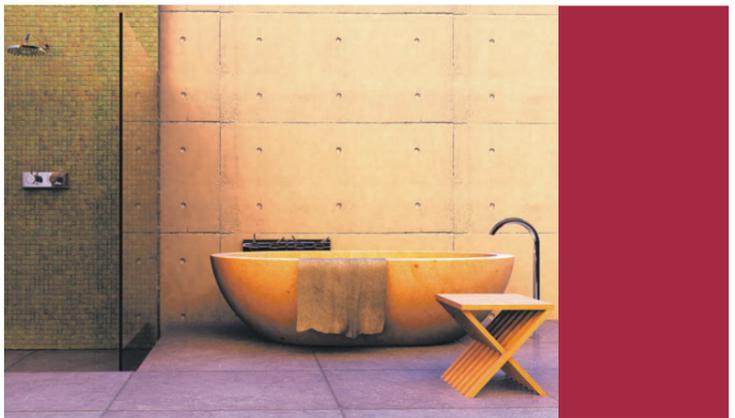
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Homes



Interiors



WHEN STRONTIAN couple Iain Cameron and Louise McAdam attended a talk in the village from Inverness architect Neil Sutherland in November 2005, they knew they had found the winning formula to create the home of their dreams.

Iain, a mechanic with Ardtornish estate and Louise, a doctor at a Fort William medical practice, were looking to build a new house on Blar Dubh croft, Scotstoun, a scenic site on the Polloch road overlooking a tributary burn of the Strontian River.

Keen to use locally sourced, environmentally friendly materials wherever possible, the couple also envisaged their new home incorporating a renewable energy system, the property designed in such a way as to make the most of the sun's natural energy.

They were immediately attracted to Mr Sutherland's ethos of using sustainable local design principles in housing projects, and hired the firm to plan their home.

One big plus for Iain was that he has his own sawmill on the estate, which allowed him to mill much of the wood needed for the timber-construction house himself from locally sourced large section larch.



Iain Cameron in his new home

The open-plan two-storey house, focused around a central Douglas fir post and beam frame to create a double height space over the living areas and kitchen, has the main living and dining areas facing south with large glazed windows leading onto raised external decks overlooking the adjacent burn.

manufactured from untreated Scottish softwood filled with warmcell insulation - comprising sheep's wool and recycled newspaper - and sheathed in panelvent to provide a breathing wall construction. Externally the walls are clad in homegrown European larch with a slate roof. Windows and doors were supplied by Nordan.

Underfloor space heating and hot water are provided using a wood fuelled Rayburn with roof mounted flat plate solar collectors to supplement the hot water supply.

'The house has been built to make use of all the passive solar gain,' Iain said. 'On the north-facing gables there's the windows are much smaller, while a much bigger glass area faces south. They are designed in such away to let the heat from the sun in, but are very reluctant to let it back out again.'

Iain, 50, says the house, which he started building in 2007, is '90 per cent' complete and reckons it will be finished by the summer.

He has used local tradespeople throughout and has been on site much of the time to help with the work. His son James has also been a great help.

'It's been well worthwhile,' says Iain, who takes a great deal of satisfaction in having milled wood for his home-to-be himself.

'I think a lot of people living in the Highlands are fairly handy at doing things themselves - but then they had to be.'



The almost complete eco-house at Blar Dubh croft, Strontian

A small study is located on the stair half landing. A covered porch signals the main entrance.

The house, appropriately named Larchwood, has much less glass space on its north-facing aspect, meaning the sun's natural heat and solar panels on the roof make a significant contribution to heating the home and the hot water supply.

The timber for the large section Douglas fir post and beam frame was sourced in Scotland, while the roof and external wall panels are



Larchwood has a spacious open-plan design

'The house has been built to make use of all the passive solar gain...'

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• STEELWORK IN HOUSES - Lorn Weld

There is a trend towards having the living space of modern houses on the first floor instead of the traditional ground floor as this gives an improved view with less noise and the elevation provides more light.

The creation of large open living areas can be achieved easily with the use of steel beams. There are many different shapes and sizes to suit all designs.

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• Scots' Business Has the Technology to Consign Conventional Central Heating to the History Books - Scotframe

How much higher will domestic energy bills go? The sky might be the limit, but a Scottish business which already manufactures many hundreds of energy-efficient timber-framed home kits for self builders each year has found a way to drastically reduce home energy bills and, possibly, according to industry observers, bring an end to conventional and often very expensive central heating systems.

Leading timber frame manufacturer, Scotframe Timber Engineering of Inverurie which also has a factory in Cumbernauld, is the only Scottish licensee to manufacture "SupaWall", a highly innovative technology which promises a green revolution in domestic heating.

Peter Hall, Scotframe's Marketing Manager said: "This exciting new technology has been developed right here in the UK and Scotframe, as its only Scottish licensee, has been manufacturing it in Inverurie since early 2009. SupaWall is a homegrown success story which I believe is every bit as good as, and in many respects better than, any of the low-carbon, high sustainability products developed elsewhere in the UK, in continental Europe or North America."

Scotframe's construction approach incorporates the "SupaWall" closed panel system, in which every void in each wall panel of the structure is injected with high-performance insulation; this then locks together with a patented airtight seal making it exceptionally thermally efficient and virtually airtight. This structure can also include the floor and the roof panels. So effective is it that the need for a conventional central heating system can be removed.

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Baby blues for Fort attack duo

A NIGHT out to celebrate the birth of a new baby ended in an ugly brawl outside a Fort William hotel, a court heard.

Local men Steven Milne and Erol Ozen had been in a party of 12 out wetting the baby's head in Fort William town centre when they ran into Alastair MacPherson outside the Alexandra Hotel in the early hours of July 5 last year.

Milne, aged 32, of 6 Kincardine Place, Fort William, and Ozen, also 32, of 12 Treig Road, Inverloch, admitted assaulting Mr MacPherson by repeatedly punching him on the head and body and kicking him to the ground to his injury.

Prosecutor Ian Smith said Ozen walked up to Mr MacPherson and

struck him on the head with his fist. The victim tried to fight back and then Milne became involved, punching Mr MacPherson to the ground.

'Thereafter both set about kicking him while he was down,' he said. 'Both said the complainer was the one who attacked them.'

For Milne, agent Stephen Kennedy said Ozen and Milne were close friends and there was 'a background between the accused and the complainer'.

Milne had tried to break up the fight but recalled being punched in the face by Mr MacPherson. 'It was at that point he reacted,' Mr Kennedy said. 'It was not premeditated. The complainer was giving as good as he got.'

For Ozen, solicitor Hamish Melrose said his client, a part time electrician

who worked in his father's local pizza business, had suffered racial abuse from Mr MacPherson, who, he alleged, had been one of four men who attacked him while out delivering pizzas in Claggan 10 years ago. He added: 'The following weekend the complainer assaulted my client in the local leisure centre in the presence of his wife and young children, and was convicted of that assault.' Ozen, he said, 'has now grown up' and realised he should not have reacted the way he did.

Fining the pair £500 each, Sheriff Ian Abercrombie refrained from imposing a compensation order. He told them: 'You should be ashamed of yourselves in that you were out celebrating the birth of a new child and that this kind of thing could happen.'



Building for success: Elspeith Taylor is heading for an architectural career.

Elspeith building a bright future

KINLOCHLEVEN High School has scored another academic success with news that one of its students has won unconditional offers from two Scottish universities to study for a degree in architecture.

Elspeith Taylor, aged 17, from Kinlochleven, has been accepted for Dundee and Edinburgh universities and on Friday took down a portfolio of work to Glasgow School of Art for an interview there.

Emma told *The Oban Times*: 'I had known for a while that I wanted to study architecture so when it came to applying for university I found it easy to select my course choices.'

'Soon after submitting my application I had a reply from Edinburgh. It was an unconditional offer. I was so pleased about the offer, but Edinburgh was the easiest of the three units to get an offer from.'

'For Dundee I had to prepare a large portfolio of artwork. I also had to attend an interview.'

'The prospect of an interview was daunting but it went really well and I enjoyed it. I also recently received my interview date for The Glasgow School of Art.'

Hopefully the interview will go as well as it did at Dundee, but I need to wait and see.'

Drink driver banned for two years

AN ENGLISHMAN who crashed through a roundabout on the A82 at Ballachulish was later found to be almost three times the drink-drive limit.

Lochaber traffic police stopped David Hawthorne, of 3 Pembury Mews, Brompton on Swale, Richmond, after they spotted him driving his badly damaged car very slowly with the hazard lights flashing along the A82 at Glencoe on January 23.

Hawthorne, aged 46, was unsteady on his feet and was slurring his speech before officers breathalysed him, Fort William Sheriff Court heard.

He was found to have 101mcg of alcohol per 100ml of breath, the legal limit being 35. Debris from Hawthorne's car was later found at the roundabout.

Sheriff Ian Abercrombie fined Hawthorne £460 and banned him from driving for two years.

Accused ordered back to court

A FORT William man accused of driving while under the influence of alcohol on the B863 at Kinlochleven has been ordered to appear again at Fort William Sheriff Court.

Raymond Aitchison, aged 27, of 4 Campbell Court, is accused of being over the drink-drive limit on February 13. Mr Aitchison faces a second charge of failing to identify himself as the driver of the car to police. He made no plea or declaration and the case was continued until March 4.

Men admit vehicle theft

TWO LOCHABER men will be sentenced next month for stealing a vehicle from a local industrial estate.

Michael Gillespie, aged 19, of 9 Dumbarton Road, Fort William, and Scott Currie, 20, of 2 Montrose Mansions, Corpach, admitted two charges of stealing a key to a motor vehicle and stealing the motor vehicle at the Scotland TransServ depot at Annat Industrial Estate, Corpach on March 8 or 9 last year.

The men will be sentenced at Fort William Sheriff Court on March 18.



Desperate bid to find Ardnamurchan cat

AN ARDNAMURCHAN woman is asking *Oban Times* readers for help after her beloved cat went missing.

Sue Cheadle, of Croft 4, Lower Sanna, Ardnamurchan, has not seen her cat Shelly since February 9, when the moggie decided to take a nap in a skip in Sanna.

The skip was then uplifted and its contents,

including Shelly, pictured left, were taken 65 miles to the landfill site at Duisky.

'She has not been seen since leaving the skip at speed when it was opened. She was last seen heading in the Treslaig direction,' said Sue. 'We are desperate to find her - we miss her very much.'

Sue can be contacted on 01972 501000.

Students leave conference motivated to help everyone enjoy adventure tourism

THREE students from the BA Adventure Tourism Management degree at Lochaber College UHI recently attended the Equal Adventure Conference 2010 at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

Chris Glebocki, Kevin Smith and Gerry Crabbe returned to Lochaber enthused by the inspirational and motivational event, which centred on making outdoor activities accessible to people of all abilities, whether able-bodied or disabled.

Third-year student Gerry Crabbe said: 'The conference opened up my eyes in terms of possibilities for inclusion for the adventure industry, not only in Lochaber, but also in the wider geographical sense. It has motivated me to aim high and always strive for the best.'

Conference speakers included world record breaker and 11 times paralympic gold medal winner Tanni Grey-Thomson.



Left to right, Kevin Smith, Gerry Crabbe and Chris Glebocki, together with Sol Findlay, front, who is also studying the subject but had to pull out.

Bicycle to be main exhibit at fatal accident inquiry

THE BICYCLE champion cyclist Jason MacIntyre was riding when he was involved in the road accident which led to his death is to be produced in court as evidence at a fatal accident inquiry next month.

A preliminary hearing at Fort William Sheriff Court heard the machine would be the main exhibit for the case, which begins on March 1 and is likely to last for three days.

Mr MacIntyre, aged 33, died following a collision with a Highland Council van at Carr's Corner on the A82 north of Fort William on January 15 2008.

The Olympic and Commonwealth Games candidate was on a training ride heading back into Fort William when the accident occurred.

Council worker Robert McTaggart, aged 36, of 36 Alma Road, Fort William, later pled guilty to careless driving and pulling across Mr MacIntyre's path. He received a six-month driving ban and a £500 fine.

Mr MacIntyre's family felt many aspects surrounding the tragedy were not dealt with adequately either at the time or during the subsequent court case.

Earlier this month Mr MacIntyre's widow Caroline won her campaign to have the matter fully investigated through a fatal accident inquiry.

Mrs MacIntyre, the mother of the couple's twin 11-year-old girls, will be represented by local solicitor Stephen Kennedy. David Dewar will act for Highland Council.

At last week's preliminary hearing Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie said Mr MacIntyre's parents David and Angela had appointed their own solicitor. Sheriff Douglas Small will preside over next week's proceedings.

Man crashed brother's car while drunk

AN INVERLOCHY man took his brother's expensive car while drunk and crashed it into a marsh yards from his home, a court has heard.

Peter MacLean, aged 29, of 5 Montrose Avenue, admitted four charges of driving away a car from Montrose Avenue without the owner's consent, driving on Montrose Avenue and Lochy Road while almost three times over the legal limit, driving without insurance and driving while holding only a provisional licence while unsupervised on January 3.

Fort William Sheriff Court was told the BMW X6 had been left in the care of MacLean's partner by his brother

while he was on holiday. Prosecutor Ian Smith said MacLean was seen to be 'very drunk' around 9pm. Police spotted the car coming towards them on Laggan Road and moments later the car ended up in marshland close to the house.

He said: 'The accused told police he was the man they were looking for and that he had taken the car without consent.'

Defence agent Hamish Melrose said MacLean had fallen out with his partner and had stormed out of the house with the car keys.

'He literally drove to the end of the road, turned the corner and got stuck

in the mud. He spent the weekend in custody for his pains,' he said.

Mr Melrose produced a letter in support of MacLean from his brother's wife.

'They have reached an agreement in paying the insurance excess of £500,' he said.

MacLean, a digger driver in his brother's firm, was fined a total of £1,274 and banned from driving for one year.

Ordering MacLean to attend a drink driver's rehabilitation course, Sheriff Ian Abercrombie told him: 'I hope you are thoroughly ashamed of your actions on the day in question.'

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Households get lowdown on energy efficiency

AROUND 100 people attended an open day at Highland Wood Energy's (HWE) new showroom at the Rural Complex, Torlundy, on Saturday to learn more about energy efficiency and cutting carbon emissions.

The event, set up by Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) in partnership with HWE and the Energy Saving Trust, is the latest in a series of local initiatives to raise awareness of schemes available to households to cut heating bills and help the environment at the same time. Laurence Dallinger-

Mills runs the Renew project for LEG, which advises on small-scale domestic renewable energy systems such as solar panels, ground and air source heat pumps, automated wood pellet boilers, micro hydro schemes and small wind turbines.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'Today is all about helping the drive towards green energy and to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. If you look at CO2 emissions, in terms of woodchip versus coal, there are significant reductions to be made.'

Plantation properties damaged with spray paint

SEVERAL properties in the Plantation were damaged with spray paint sometime between 4pm on Wednesday February 17 and 9am on Thursday February 18.

Anyone with any knowledge of these incidents is asked to contact Fort William Police Station on 01397 702361 or the confidential telephone line on 01397 702000.

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Turning up the heat: Finlay Taylor, West Highland research officer for the Energy Saving Trust, George Fulford of Highland Wood Energy and Laurence Dallinger-Mills of Lochaber Environmental Group join forces to promote renewable energy. 10_f09wood01

Sword man shown leniency by sheriff

A FORT William man who brandished a ceremonial sword outside his home has been shown leniency by a sheriff.

Sentence had been deferred on Adam Ramsey after he was found guilty of possessing the weapon outside his home at 2 Highland View, Cameron Road, on January 3 last year without reasonable excuse.

During a three-day trial, Ramsey had been accused of assaulting a man with the sword during the incident, but a jury found the case not proven.

Favourable background reports and two letters in support of Ramsey from individuals within the Shopmobility project in Fort William were evidence that Ramsey was 'a respectable member of society', defence agent John Slavin told Fort William Sheriff Court.

'Mr Ramsey acknowledges that having been found guilty of the offence that he has to accept the consequences of that. This was a one off incident,' said Mr Slavin.

Sheriff Ian Abercrombie told Ramsey: 'It was clear from the verdict of the jury that you did not come from your house armed with a ceremonial sword. But the jury was satisfied that you were in possession of the sword outside your house.'

'This is a very serious offence, but after reading the reports I believe the interests of justice would not be served by the imposition of a custodial sentence.'

Sheriff Abercrombie sentenced Ramsey to 180 hours' community service and ordered the sword to be confiscated.

SNH winter bird appeal

CONTINUED sub-zero temperatures in the West Highlands' freezing winter has prompted Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to ask visitors to the outdoors to be sensitive to the plight of wildlife and birds.

Frozen conditions means wild birds, particularly those species relying on wet habitats such as ducks, geese and shore waders, will likely be struggling to find sufficient food to survive.

SNH senior ornithological adviser Dr Andy Douse asks people to avoid scaring the birds because the energy used to fly away 'can mean the difference between life and death'.

Hospice cash boost

HIGHLAND Hospice has received a funding boost from Jans Mica, Skye's largest DIY and hardware retailer, with a cheque for £1,000.

The funds were raised at a charity open day held in the firm's Portree outlet and was supplemented by cash placed in the shop's wishing well.

Pupils from Portree Primary School and Portree High School provided entertainment at the open day.



Sub-postmistress Mary with loyal customers Brian Foskett and John Burton.

Loyal Sconser Post Office servant retires 50 years on

SCONSER will lose a loyal servant in April when the sub-postmistress for the Isle of Skye community retires.

Mary MacLean has run post office services from a little tin hut in the village since 1982, when she took over from her husband Calum following his death the same year.

Mary had already worked alongside Calum for more than two decades before that, working at the counter and delivering mail.

Last year Post Office Limited held a presentation for Mary to thank her for 50 years of loyal service.

Mary officially retires on April 7 - ten days after she celebrates her 80th birthday.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'I would like to thank my customers very, very much for their support over the years. Without them it would have closed years ago.'

'The loyal ones are very sad that I'm giving up, but it's about time I retired and put my feet up. I'm too old to be doing this

- I'm well past my sell-by date!' She added: 'Sconser is such a small village, yet when I did this years ago it was a very busy post office - now that's all changed. But there's one or two people interested in taking in the job and the Post Office is committed to keeping the post office open if possible.'

Post Office Limited today confirmed it would be temporarily closing the Sconser branch from April 7, apologising to customers for any inconvenience and ensuring that 'every effort' is being made to resume services in Sconser.

Field change advisor Kenny Lamont said: 'The provision of a Post Office service to our customers in the local community is of paramount importance and we continue to work hard to restore a Post Office service in the area as soon as possible.'

The nearest alternative branches are at Broadford, Portree and Carlost, all approximately 13 miles from Sconser.

'I would like to thank my customers very, very much for their support over the years. Without them it would have closed years ago.'

New CHP chairman welcomed

THE NEW chairman of the Mid Highland Community Health Partnership (CHP) committee has emphasised the importance of working with local communities.

Oskain McLennan takes up his post as a member of the Standards Commission of Scotland and board member of HITRANS, a non-executive member of the NHS Highland Board and chair of the control of infection committee, the audit committee and the formulary committee.

He said: 'We face a number of challenges, in common with the rest of NHS Highland, and I look forward to helping our organisation meet these challenges whilst continuing to deliver quality care to every person. It is critical we communicate and work effectively with our communities on the changes ahead in shifting the balance of care nearer to home. I



New chairman: Oskain MacDonald.

look forward to meeting all involved over the next few months.'

Mid Highland CHP general manager Gill McVicar welcomed Mr MacDonald to the role 'at a particularly challenging time'.

She said: 'I am sure that he will use his considerable skills and talents to ensure that the CHP delivers on its responsibilities.'

Mrs McVicar thanked outgoing chair Ann Bethune for her support and encouragement during her time as chair.

Work together on small wind farms

FARMERS and landowners are being urged to work together to develop a network of small-scale wind power developments across the Highlands.

Energy4All, a social enterprise set up to develop co-operative ownership of renewable power generation, has sent out hundreds of questionnaires to members of co-operative farming group HBS Ring detailing the plan.

The organisation envisages a network of small developments typically comprising one to three turbines each, with infrastructure and planning costs shared to save money and development costs part-funded through a share issue to members of communities surrounding the proposed schemes.

Energy4All Ltd helped set up a similar

scheme for the Millennium Wind Farm at Glen Moriston in September 2008.

A co-operative involving the communities of Invergarry, Invermoriston and Fort Augustus was set up to buy a share in the wind farm and local people invested £1.3million, buying shares of between £250 and £20,000 each to earn an annual dividend from sales of green power. Such community ownership, Energy4All says, is a common feature of energy generation in Scandinavia - but remains relatively undeveloped in Scotland.

The group is also keen to break the current cycle of commercial developers building huge wind farms which offer very little income to the local economy.

Energy4All says results of the study will be available in April and could represent a first step in harvesting a natural resource for the benefit of local landowners and communities.

Managing director of HBS Ring Alan McLean said: 'Since 1989 we've been providing our members with co-operative solutions to purchasing and sharing machinery, feedstuffs, seed and a host of other common needs where operating jointly makes sense. It strikes us that energy generation through wind turbines could prove a popular new service for our members - this survey will test just that.'

Co-operative Development Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise are joint funding the study.

It's all black and white as council budget cuts bite

HIGHLAND councillors' communications to constituents will be less colourful in future after the latest round of budget cuts.

Colour printer cartridges from members' IT supplies are to be phased out and replaced with black ink cartridges only as the council seeks to plug a £60 million hole in its finances.

Councillors also agreed to cut their travel, catering, councillor surgeries' and accommodation costs.

The belt-tightening will see £233,000 trimmed from the members budget over three years to 2012.

Measures include: car sharing, greater use of public transport and cycling to and from meetings.

greater use of video, tele-conferencing and web-casting to reduce the need to travel to distant meetings.

£9,000 savings per year on catering at main

committee meetings at headquarters.

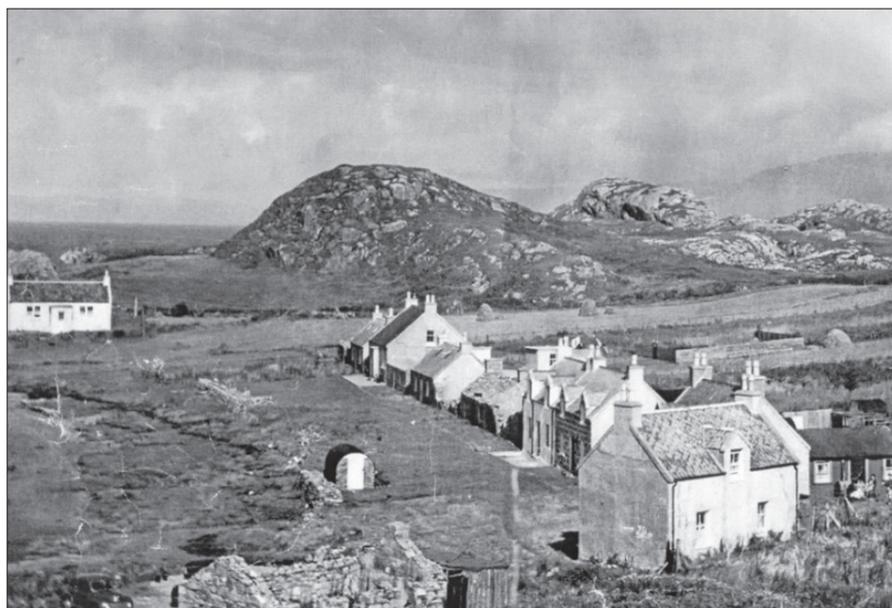
provision of members' catering at council headquarters to be put out to tender.

ceasing to provide tea and coffee for meetings that last less than two hours.

Members further agreed not to include the use of photographs in newspaper adverts promoting members' surgeries - which will reduce the cost of advertising by 14 per cent - and to make greater use of the council's website to promote meetings.

Resources committee chair Carolyn Wilson said: 'The council has got to make £60 million savings over the next three years and members are acutely aware of the part that they have to play in achieving efficiencies.'

'I look forward to future proposals coming to the council's resources committee on how we can make more significant savings on travel.'



A LOCHALSH woman is issuing an appeal to *Oban Times* readers to help her identify one of her mother's treasured possessions.

Carol Mackay from Fasgro, Drumbuie, near Kyle, lost her mum Janet MacLean in December and was clearing out the house in the neighbouring village of Duirinish when she came across a large black and white photograph in a drawer. It depicts a coastal township

Highland township photo mystery

somewhere in Highlands and Islands comprising some 12 houses, some in a state of ruin.

Clues in the picture suggest the season was summer and that the picture was possibly taken some time in the 1950s.

Hay stooks on the in-by-

land suggest mid-summer, while an old car in the left foreground are redolent of the 1950s.

Location

Carol has so far failed to identify the location of the idyllic scene from a bygone age, and would like to know why the picture of the

township was so important to her mother. 'It must have meant something to her, the way she kept it,' Carol told *The Oban Times*.

'We were just curious to know where it is or if anybody knows anything about it.'

'There is nothing written on the back, so we have nothing to go on at all. It would be good to know what the village in the photograph looks like today.'

Enhanced online planning system goes live

AN ENHANCED online system enabling people to submit planning applications, appeals against decisions and track progress of proposals in the Highlands went live on Tuesday after months of preparation.

Under the ePlanning initiative, applications are processed electronically by a team of seven staff based at the council's electronic processing centre in Inverness.

Applicants and agents can still submit planning applications by post, but an increasing number of applicants are using the online facility, which is already proving fast and efficient.

Highland Council is one of a number of local authorities taking part in a Scottish Government initiative aimed at making the planning system simpler and faster to provide a consistent level of service throughout the country.

ePlanning provides applications or appeals to be made online; more planning information on applications as they progress and the ability to consult electronically with statutory consultees.

Planning, environment and development committee chairman Ian Ross welcomed the new service. He said: 'In a rural area, such as the Highlands, the benefits will be all the more apparent. Customers can submit online planning applications using the new web access. Maps, plans and other associated documents can be attached. Planning fees can also be made online using a credit or debit card.'

Scanned and validated applications will be available to view on the council's web site <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/>.

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Find all these jobs online at our new website www.westcoastjobs.co.uk



Freshwater Farm Manager

Basic Remuneration Package £30k - £35k

Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd is the largest Aquaculture Company operating in Scotland. Our Marine and Freshwater farms are located throughout the West Coast and Outer Isles.

We are currently looking to identify a suitably qualified and highly motivated individual to undertake the role of Farm Manager at our newest and largest freshwater farm, Loch Lochy, nr Fort William.

The role will report to the Freshwater Lochs Manager and will be fully involved in the development of the new farm site & facilities. In time, Loch Lochy is expected to produce in excess of 5 million smolts.

The successful candidate, who must be a strong team player, will possess several years fish farming experience and have a sound understanding of fish husbandry, biology and welfare. Leadership combined with strong interpersonal, communication, organisational and planning skills as well as the ability to problem solve, motivate and achieve results through the success of others are some of the attributes required for this post.

Candidates must possess excellent computer skills, particularly in Microsoft Excel and Word. In addition, applicants should have a full driving licence and should be prepared to undertake travel as required.

In return the successful candidate will benefit from a highly competitive salary package, plus bonus scheme, and the opportunity to develop their management career within a global company at the forefront of the Scottish Salmon Farming Industry. Assistance with relocation will also be available, if required.

If you feel you have the necessary skills to respond to this role, please submit an application in writing with details of relevant experience, no later than Thursday 18th March 2010 to: Vicky Ferguson, Human Resources Manager, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William, PH33 7PT.

Informal enquires can be addressed to Gideon Pringle, Freshwater Manager, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd, Farms Office, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William, PH33 7PT. Mobile 07747 487232 e-mail gideon.pringle@marineharvest.com



Assistant Site Manager - Loch Eriboll

Scottish Sea Farms have a vacancy for an assistant site manager. The successful candidate will have over 3 years practical experience and will be able to demonstrate competence across a range of farming disciplines including: health and safety awareness, fish health assessment, cage and moorings maintenance, feeding optimisation and skilled seamanship. You will have the drive to succeed, a well-developed sense of pride and the ability to inspire others. Gifted communication skills are essential, as is a proactive ability to guide correct decision-making. You will be enthusiastic, honest and transparent in approach.

This position is salaried with a 1:3 weekend working demand. The successful candidate will see this as a key step to career development within SSF and should be open to training investment.

A clean driving license is compulsory. Salary and conditions will be in the region of 18K-20K + overtime.

Some assistance may be available in relocating to the area if applicable.

In addition, Scottish Sea Farms operates a generous bonus incentive scheme and a leading occupational health programme.

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: Friday 12th March 2010



GRADUATE PLACEMENT PROGRAMME

We are looking for 3 Graduates to join successful businesses in the Highlands. 12 month contracts which could lead to full time positions. Salary range: £15 - £17,000

LOCHABER

Sales and Marketing Graduate to work for a lively Outdoor Activity Provider
Engineering Graduate to work for a medium sized engineering company

WESTER ROSS

(could be based in Benderloch, by Oban)
eMarketing Graduate to join an independent luxury hotel business in Wester Ross

To find out more details or to submit your CV please

e-mail HR@peopleinfocus.co.uk call on 01397 708888 by post
People in Focus, Lochaber College, An Aird, Fort William PH33 6AN

Cleaner Wanted

Holiday cottage in Crinan area changeover on Saturdays.

Phone 01546 830134 or e-mail: cbindon@doctors.org.uk

TRACTOR DRIVER

Competent and Experienced Tractor Driver Required To Carry Out Both Construction and Agricultural Duties

Part-time Position Considered

CONTACT: Donald McLean
Tel: 01586820217
Mobile: 07776192321



the National Trust for Scotland
a place for everyone

Receptionist required at Arduaine Garden near Kilmelford.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April to September inclusive.

Please phone Maurice on 01852 200366



Lighthouse Caledonia Ltd is one of the leading aquaculture companies in Scotland. We now currently have a vacancy for a Yardman at our Stronachullin site in the Lower Loch Fyne area of our South Production Region in Argyll.

Yardman - (Ref: SRYMAN10)

The candidate will be enthusiastic, self-motivated and will be able to work under their own initiative as well as working within a small team. The candidate should have a flexible attitude to their role; main duties are to assist with the day-to-day operations of the servicing of the yard area but may be required to work at other shore bases. The successful candidate will also be required to assist with the husbandry duties as and when necessary at marine sites within the South Region and will be required to participate in the existing weekend rota for these sea-sites.

It is essential that the candidate is an experienced telescopic handler forklift driver with relevant certificates and be able to undertake any required training. A full, clean driver's licence is also a prerequisite for this position.

Other relevant training will be given to the successful candidate to allow them to develop within this role.

In return, the company will offer a comprehensive pay and benefits package.

Senior Marine Operative - (Ref: QP/SMO(2))

(Salary grading range - depending on experience - £21,000 - £24,000)

The ideal candidate will already be experienced in fish husbandry and have the capability to lead a small team in the day-to-day operations at our marine site at Ardcastle in the Upper Loch Fyne area. This position would suit someone who is self-motivated, has good communication skills and be able to demonstrate prior experience in working within a small, focused team in a constantly changing and challenging environment. Where previous aquaculture and boat handling experience is a must for this post, the company can also offer further development opportunities.

Working hours are normally 40hrs per week Monday to Friday, with weekend working required on rota basis. Overtime is paid at an enhanced rate.

In return, the company offers a comprehensive pay and benefits package including entry into the Company pension scheme after the qualifying period.

To apply and receive a Job description and application form, please contact
HR Department, Lighthouse Caledonia Ltd, Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, Argyll, PA26 8BH. Tel: 01499 600 415 or e-mail cairndowhr@lighthousecaledonia.com

Closing date for applicants: 5pm on Friday 5 March 2010

Visit our website at www.lighthousecaledonia.com



Marine Farming Career Opportunities

Scottish Sea Farms is the UK's leading producer of premium quality Scottish salmon. We are trusted to supply Britain's most demanding retailers and need exceptional staff to build our business within Argyll.

Marine Husbandryman (Feed Specialist) Argyll / Mull

It is anticipated that you will have a wealth of "hands on" aquaculture experience and be passionate about feed management. You will have a clear vision on what is required to deliver efficient conversion rates and an excellent track record to prove it. Above all, you will set high standards, want to progress to a senior position and be willing to improve your career through taking initiative, influencing others and seizing training opportunities. This is a salaried position, with additional weekend payments, bonus scheme and occupational health support. Relocation assistance will be offered.

Trainee Fish Farmer Argyll / Mull

No previous experience required but you must have high standard of workmanship, be enthusiastic, practical and willing to take on new challenges; acquiring new skills to meet these. Salary and conditions will be commensurate with the existing pay structure after a satisfactory probation and 6 month review.

All applicants are required to have a full, clean drivers licence.

If you would like to know more and to request an application pack, please contact Claire Scott, Human Resources on 01786 445521 or email, claire.scott@scottishseafarms.com

Closing Date: Friday 12th March 2010



RGN/RMN required - full or part time

At the Lynn of Lorne we believe that people should be looked after with the utmost dignity and respect and are proud of the high standards we achieve through a continuing philosophy of developing standards and delivering service.

Please contact Brenda on 01631 720278 or email lynnoflorne@arguscare.co.uk

FLIT SELF DRIVE Experienced Motor Mechanic Required Full time

Apply in writing to William Bonniwell, Flit Self Drive, Glencruittan Road, Oban, PA34 4DN
Email: flit@btconnect.com

Hazelbank Motors

Parts / Store Person Required in Oban

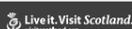
Part time position, would suit retired person with mechanical knowledge
Please contact Iain on 01631 566476

Seasonal Visitor Services Advisor, Campbeltown and Lochgilphead

Salary from £6.33 per hour

You're passionate about Scotland. So why not join our team and become the first point of contact for thousands of visitors? As a Seasonal Visitor Services Advisor, you will have the customer service experience to sell our products and services, the confidence to maximise customer spend, coupled with strong organisational, admin and IT skills. Most of all you'll have good local and national knowledge, and excellent communication skills. Weekend working will be required.

For further information and to apply please visit www.visitscotland.org. Closing date: 19th March 2010.



Comhairle nan Leabhraichean

Tha a' Chomhairle a' sireadh tuilleadh luchd-obrach is tuilleadh bhall, mar a leanas. Bidh feum air cead-dràibhidh anns na dreuchdan.

Neach-taice Reice is Margaidheachd (£24,741-£31,761)

Bidh an t-obraiche seo an sàs ann an raon malairt leabhraichean.

Ceannard Litreachais is Foillseachaidh (£32,763-£38,781)

Bidh riaghladh obair maoinneachaidh, deasachaidh is taice eile do sgrìobhadairan is do dh'fhoillsichearan an urra ris an obraiche seo.

Thathar a' sùileachadh gum bi an dà obair seo a' tòiseachadh sa Ghiblean 2010.

Stiùiriche Ainmichte (£39,651-£55,965)

Bidh an t-obraiche seo an urra ri ro-inleachd na Comhairle a chur an gnìomh, an obair a stiùireadh san fharsaingeachd is a' Chomhairle a riochdachadh an lùib bhuidhnean maoinneachaidh is eile. Bithear a' sùileachadh gum bi e/ì ag obair còmhla ris an Stiùiriche a th' ann airson ùine is a' gabhail thairis na dreuchd air an ath bhliadhna ionmhasail.

Buill Ùra dhan Chomhairle

Bidh deastanas air na buill stiùireadh is taic a thoirt dhan luchd-obrach, coinneamh na Comhairle a fhrithealadh is dearbhadh gu bheil a' Chomhairle a' leantainn a h-amasan. Bidh iad san dreuchd trì bliadhna sa chiad dol-a-mach, is bithear a' sùileachadh gum bi iad ag coinneamh na Comhairle sa Chèitean 2010.

Cathraiche

Tha Cathraiche ga shireadh a stiùireas coinneamh is a bheir taic shònraichte dhan luchd-obrach, a' tòiseachadh aig coinneamh a' Chèitein.

Gheibhear tuilleadh fiosrachaidh o oifis Chomhairle nan Leabhraichean le sgrìobhadh no fònadh (0141 337 6211) no le fios gu post-dealain: brath@gaelicbooks.net
Feumar tagraidhean airson nan dreuchdan a chur gu lain MacDhòmhnaill ro 20.3.2010 agus ainm dithis luchd-taice nan cois. Feumar fios o mhuintir a dh'arradh a bhith nam buill fhaighinn ron latha sin cuideachd, le fiosrachadh mun deidhinn fhèin.

Tha Comhairle nan Leabhraichean a' toirt Co-ionannachd Chothroman Cosnaidh. Tha i air a maoineachadh le Comhairle nan Ealain an Alba agus le Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

22 Sràid Achadh a' Mhansa/Mansfield Street
Glaschu/Glasgow
G11 5QP



a million voices for nature

Islay Reserves and Community Officer

£14,500 - £16,000 pa Island of Islay

Closing date: Noon, 5 March 2010. Interview date: 11 March 2010.

Colonsay Wildlife Information Officer

£14,500 - £16,000 pa Island of Colonsay

Closing date: 19 March 2010. Interview date: W/C 29 March 2010.

We are looking for enthusiastic and dynamic people to work for the RSPB on two five month projects on Islay and on Colonsay. This is an exciting opportunity to promote Islay's and Colonsay's amazing wildlife and rich heritage.

Main duties will include enthusing people about the islands through guided walks and talks providing information and interpretation about the islands, their wildlife and wildlife watching opportunities. If you are a good communicator, are passionate about wildlife and have the ability to deliver this enthusiasm to visitors, this is the post for you. A flexible approach to work is required, as are excellent organisational and presentation skills and a sound knowledge of birds and other wildlife.

For further information and an application form, please visit our website.



www.rspb.org.uk/vacancies



The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity. England and Wales no. 207076. Scotland no. SC037654.

Catering Assistant (2 Posts)

£6.92 per hour

Oban Primary Campus, Term time, 20hrs per week Oban Ref: OSF20582

Dalmally Primary School, Term time, 10hrs per week

Oban, Lorn & the Isles Ref: OSF20573/R

Cleaner

£6.32 per hour

Oban High School, Term time,

15hrs or 10hrs per week

☎ 01546 604625

Oban Ref: OSF20288



Closing date 12th March 2010.
To apply visit our website

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/jobs



Regional Press

The Scottish Government
 TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION
A85 AIRDS BAY
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
DETERMINATION BY THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS UNDER SECTIONS 20A AND 55A OF THE ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS hereby give notice that they have determined that their proposal to improve a 1.248 kilometres or thereby section of the A85 Tyndrum - Oban Trunk Road at Airds Bay just west of Taynult is -

(a) not a project which falls within Annex I of Council Directive No. 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment as amended by Council Directive No. 97/11/EC and Council Directive No. 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and Council;

(b) is a relevant project within the meaning of Sections 20A(9) and 55A(7) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, and falls within Annex II of the said Directive but that having regard to the selection criteria contained in Annex III of the Directive it should not be made subject to an environmental impact assessment in accordance with the Directive, and accordingly the project does not require the publication of an Environmental Statement.

D M C MACNEILL
 A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers
 Transport Scotland
 Trunk Roads Network Management
 Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF
 18th February 2010

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 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 and, where given, the alternative location(s).

Written comments should be made to the Area Planning and Building Standards Manager at this office 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 and time period for comments
10/00036/FULLO	Birchbroe Onich Fort William	Demolition of existing garage and erection of holiday cottage (amended design)	Ballauchulish Post Office (14 days)
10/00041/LBCLO	St Andrew's The Parade Fort William	Repairs to church roof	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office Regulation 5 - affecting the character of a listed building (21 days)
10/00043/FULLO	10 Glenspan Park Roy Bridge	Extension to garage	Roy Bridge Post Office (14 days)
10/00049/FULLO	46 Mossfield Drive Lochy-side Fort William	Proposal to form single storey house extension	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)

Planning and Development Service
 eplanning@Highland1, PO Box 5740, The Highland Council, Inverness IV1 9DH

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at 67/69 Chalmers Street, Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, the location details below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications.

Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning Services 67/69 Chalmers Street, Ardrishaig PA30 8DX by the 18/03/2010

- **Ref No: 10/00263/PP**
 Applicant: Mr Antony Walls
 Proposal: Erection of a Bonded Warehouse including associated security fence, hardstanding and access improvements
 Site Address: Land North East Of Conisby, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay, Argyll and Bute, PA49 7UN
 Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Port Charlotte
- **Ref No: 09/01549/PP**
 Applicant: Mr Kevin Sutherland
 Proposal: Alterations to existing access and formation of new entrance at eastern end of property.
 Site Address: Tigh-an-Athain, C17 Through Port Ellen From A846 Junction To U26 Kilsnoughton Road Junction, Port Ellen, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA42 7AH
 Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Port Ellen

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR, the location details below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications.

Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning Services Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR by the 18/03/2010

- **Ref No: 09/01512/PP**
 Applicant: C Woodcock
 Proposal: Erection of 1 no dwelling house, installation of a septic tank and soakaway
 Site Address: Glenforsa, Aros, Isle of Mull, Argyll and Bute, PA72 6JN
 Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
- **Ref No: 09/01817/PP**
 Applicant: Mr Cameron MacLean
 Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse
 Site Address: Land West of The Lianag, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, Argyll and Bute PA75 6QA
 Location of Plans: Tobermory Area Office
- **Ref No: 10/00216/PPP**
 Applicant: Colin E Hodge
 Proposal: Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse as previously approved under outline planning permission reference 05/00515/OUT.
 Site Address: Site South East Of Glencruitten House, Glencruitten Wood, Oban, Argyll and Bute
 Location of Plans: Oban Area Office
- **Ref No: 10/00218/PPP**
 Applicant: Mrs Diane Gibson
 Proposal: Site for the erection of a dwellinghouse
 Site Address: Garden Ground of Ryoan, Benderloch, Oban, Argyll and Bute PA37 1QS
 Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Ledaig
- **Ref No: 10/00225/PP**
 Applicant: Mr Pete Dugdale
 Proposal: Erection of conservatory to the southeast of dwellinghouse (retrospective)
 Site Address: Ardlade, 6 Western Road, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, Argyll and Bute PA75 6RA
 Location of Plans: Tobermory Area Office
- **Ref No: 10/00230/PP**
 Applicant: Mr and Mrs Peter Stanhope
 Proposal: Erection of timber chalet for holiday letting purposes
 Site Address: Pier House, Ardmor Road, Salen, Isle of Mull, Argyll and Bute PA72 6JL
 Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Salen
- **Ref No: 10/00251/PP**
 Applicant: J R Morgan
 Proposal: Proposed erection of dwellinghouse and installation of bio-disc treatment plant unit
 Site Address: Land North East Of Craig Rowan, Pennyghael, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA70 6HB
 Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Bunness Isle of Mull

Argyll and Bute Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Planning Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8ST.

A weekly list of planning applications which can be viewed on the Council's website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and Argyll and Bute Council Libraries.

Any letter of representation the council receives about a planning application is considered a public document. Please therefore note that representations will be made available for public inspection and, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, will be copied on request. They will also be published on the council's web site.

The author of such a representation is solely responsible for its content and accuracy. Anonymous representations will be "shredded" and those marked confidential will be returned to the sender. Neither will be taken into account when the application is being considered.

Details of representations we receive on planning applications can be viewed on the council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publicaccess

COUNCILLORS SURGERY
 Councillors Mary-Jean Devon and Roddy McCuish (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles) will be holding a surgery in the Island Cafe, Isle of Coll on Wednesday 3rd March from 4.00pm - 5.00pm. No appointments necessary.

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETINGS
LOCH ETIVE INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Argyll and Bute Council have restarted a project to develop an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Plan for Loch Etive which will provide guidance on the future use and development of this important coastal area. The proposed project area includes all of Loch Etive extending west of the Connel narrows to include Ardmuckish Bay and Dunstaffnage Bay.

The following meetings are open to all, but in particular those who live adjacent to, or work on Loch Etive.

Date for meetings
 Wednesday, 3 March 2010 from 19.00-21.30 - Taynult Village Hall
 Recreation/Tourism & Litter
 Tuesday, 30 March 2010 from 19.00-21.30 - Connel Village Hall
 Natural Heritage, Historic Interests & Water Quality
 Tuesday, 20 April 2010 from 19.00-21.30 - Connel Village Hall
 Aquaculture, Fishing, Commercial Marine Traffic & Marine Infrastructure

Further information on the ICZM project and minutes from previous Loch Etive meetings can be accessed from the Marine and Coastal Development Unit web pages on the Argyll and Bute Council website (www.argyll-bute.gov.uk).
 Enquiries to Mark Steward, Marine and Coastal Development Unit, Argyll and Bute Council, Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban PA34 4AR - T: 01631 567972 email: mark.steward@argyll-bute.gov.uk

crofters commission
 ughdarras nan croitearan

APPLICATION TO CREATE A NEW CROFT

David Melville, owner of Beinn Deas, Glencruitten Road, Oban is applying to create a new croft.

If you have any objection to the proposal, you may submit representations in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofters Commission, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ by 15 March 2010 quoting 5.01.22326. Please specify your interest in the application and your reasons for objecting. A copy of any representations made will be forwarded to the applicant.

COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
SINGLE MOORING - SAMALAMAN BAY

Notice is hereby given that **John Sutherland Payne** has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 to install a single mooring at the following location in Samalaman Bay:

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Mooring	56 49.980N	05 49.800W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Glen Uig Post Office.

Objections relating to safety of navigation in respect of the application should be made in writing to:
 Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference: 2SPC12/5402
 Mr D S Payne
 361 Cromwell Tower
 London
 EC2Y 8NB

Oban & Lorn Youth Pipe Band Association
A.G.M.
Oban High School Pipe Band
 Monday 8th March 7pm
 Oban High School, Assembly Hall
 All players, parents and interested parties welcome.
www.ohspipeband.org.uk

crofters commission
 ughdarras nan croitearan

The following Decreeing Direction has been granted:
Part Croft
Penmore Mill, Kilninian & Kilmore

Direction dated 22 February 2010 granted to John Duncan Morrison. Area ext to 0.175 ha.

Conditions: The land is used for a house site. Complete enclosure of the site with a stockproof fence or barrier within 4 months of completion of the proposed development.
 Case Number: 4.86.20847

The granting of this Direction may be appealed to the Scottish Land Court, within 42 days from the date of this advert. Information on how to appeal is available from the Crofters Commission.

flowing well

we are adjusting the way we treat the tap water in your area, keeping it safe to drink

Scottish Water will be switching to a new method of treating drinking water in South Lochaber and the surrounding areas as from **12th March 2010**.

Chloramination will improve the taste of drinking water for around **3,000** customers in Ardgour, Ballachulish, Duror, Glencoe, North Ballachulish and Onich.

This change will be especially beneficial for those who may be sensitive to the taste or smell of chlorine and will ensure even better quality drinking water to your taps.

Renal dialysis patients should contact their renal unit direct for advice.

Owners of pet fish and other aquatic species should speak to their local aquarist to ensure that any equipment used is suited to chloraminated water.

Information leaflets are available on request. If you have any queries, contact our **Customer Helpline on 0845 601 8855**, or write to **Scottish Water, PO Box 8855, Edinburgh, EH10 6YQ**.

Scottish Water
 Always serving Scotland

Photographic Orders

You can order photographs published in this newspaper

A5 photograph: £4.41
A4 photograph: £6.76

Order from the relevant offices by filling in the coupon below, quoting the code, shown alongside the picture

Picture code	Date of Paper	A5 No. of copies £4.41 per photograph (inc.vat)	A4 No. of copies £6.76 per photograph (inc.vat)
Total			

Payment can be made in cash or by cheque, (cheques to be made out to Wyvex Media) To cover postage and packing 1 to 3 photos £1.30 extra charge, 4 to 5 photos £1.60 charge. Any more is an extra £2 charge

Please send/bring your order to:

The Oban Times PO Box 1, Oban Argyll, PA34 4HB Tel: 01631 568000	The Oban Times Mamore House Fort William, PH33 6BA Tel: 01397 703003	Campbeltown Courier Courier Centre Campbeltown, PA28 6AE Tel: 01586 554646	Argyllshire Advertiser Argyll Street Lochgilphead PA31 8NB Tel: 01546 602345
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Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

WIN £1150

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

All you have to do
 We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.
 If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. Prizes will be shared between those submitting correct entries.
 If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter
 Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to reach "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday.
 You may hand it into **The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban** by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules
 No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.
 The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.
 In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.
 The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.
 Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

I enclose £1 (note) for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules.
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Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

Store cattle trade shows another rise at Stirling

UNITED Auctions sold 803 store cattle, 86 cast cows and forward cattle and 885 store sheep at Stirling last Wednesday.

Bullocks averaged 188.76p (+13.69p) and sold to 221.6p per kg for a 282kg Aberdeen Angus cross from Courance and £1080 for a 674kg Charolais cross from Holehouse.

Heifers averaged 178.51p (+7.75p) and sold to 227.7p per kg for a 303kg Santa cross from Courance and £895 for a 470kg Charolais cross from Beechwood.

Forward cattle averaged 134.57p and sold to 154.2p per kg for a Blonde D'Aquataine cross from South Brownhill and £975 for a Limousin cross from Glenroy.

Cast cows averaged 100.22p and sold to 125.9p for a Limousin cross from Graystale and £825 for a Aberdeen Angus cross from Grange of Elcho.

Suffolk cross hogs from Ashfield sold to £80 with Texels crosses from the same home and from Braes of Grandtully selling to £78.

Mule hogs from Achavoulaig sold to £63.50 with Blackface hogs from Dinsinnan to £61.



Bert Leitch, right, of Lagganulva Farm, Mull receives his award from Jim McLaren, NFUS

Mull farmer recognised for service to industry Award came as complete surprise

AN ISLE of Mull hill farmer's dedication and commitment to the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) over the past 30 years was officially recognised last week when he was presented with an award.

Bert Leitch of Lagganulva Farm, Isle of Mull was awarded the John Miskelly award, which recognises outstanding contribution to the organisation and both local and national level.

Bolt from the blue

The award was established in memory of John Miskelly, who served as regional manager with the Union and was an inspirational figure through his dedication and support to the farming industry. The award was donated by John's family following his death in 2006.

Bert said that the award was like a bolt from the blue. He said: 'I was listening to the speakers and I heard them talking about a farmer on Mull, then about sheep farming and I thought 'I think they are talking about me.'

'It was very nice to receive the award.'

Bert has farmed throughout Scotland - starting in Culross in Fife before moving to the west coast and a short period in England. But it is on Mull that Bert has really made his mark, as tenant of a hill farm at Ulva Ferry, which he describes as 'the best place in the world' - but he doesn't really like the rain 'that comes down in sheets'.

NFUS President Jim McLaren, who presented the award to Bert Leitch at the Union's AGM in St Andrews said: 'Bert Leitch is a fantastic example of an ordinary hard-working hill farmer

who, for much of his life, has been prepared to put considerable time aside to represent the interests of his fellow producers and to promote the industry that he is proud to be part of.

'He has made a telling contribution to the work of NFUS Scotland and I am delighted to be able to reward such dedication with this award.'

'He began working with the Union as the chairman of the Mull branch before moving into the role of chairman of the Argyll and the Islands Regional Board. He is now a member of the Crofting Highland and Islands Committee and has been at the forefront of crucial issues such as LFAS and LMOs.

Prominent community role

'Only last year he was involved in activity which saw the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Richard Lochhead, and his officials visit Mull to discuss the importance of the continuation of active farming in the area. This kind of activity exemplifies the importance of his work for the Union and its members.'

'Bert plays a prominent role in his community and is involved in the Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum as well as being a community council representative.'

'Quite simply Bert has contributed decades of work to NFUS Scotland, striving to secure a better future for his fellow farmers.'

'It speaks volumes that he was nominated not only by those in his local area, but by other members across the country.'

'I am delighted to be able to award someone who typifies the John Miskelly award so well.'

Demand for cattle at Dingwall maintained

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd., sold 304 store cattle and 36 Over 30 Month cattle at Dingwall last Wednesday when a show of mixed quality cattle on offer met a strong demand.

Bullocks averaged 173.9p and sold to 235.7p per kg for a 280kg Limousin cross from Dummaglass Mains, Inverness, and £1,060 for a 675kg Charolais from Galcantray Farm, Cawdor.

Heifers averaged 173.6p and sold to 229.2p per kg and £1,100 for a pair of 480kg Belgian Blue crosses from Wester Moy, Urray.

Young bulls averaged 148.6p and sold to 176.6p per kg and £415 for a 235kg Belgian Blue cross from 2 Achnagarron, Rogart while prime and feeding cows averaged 95.8p and sold to 121.3p per kg for a 705kg Limousin cross from Rhannich Farm, Edderton, and £885 for a 795kg Belgian Blue cross from Inverbreakie Drive, Invergordon.

OTM bulls sold to 97.9p per kg and £945 for a 965kg Limousin from I Eyre, Portree.

Prime sheep trade rises at Stirling

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd had forward 2,809 sheep comprising 2,208 prime hoggets plus 601 cast ewes and tups at Stirling last Tuesday.

Prime hoggets averaged 190.7p per kilo (+5.1p on the week) selling to 238.1p per kilo for a pen of 40kg Beltex hoggets from P McIntosh, Strageath, Muthill.

Ewes sold to £108.50 for Texels from Mrs E Robertson, Skeoch Farm to average at £63.88 while rams sold to £99.50 for Texels from W J Mitchell & Sons, Blairlinnans to average at £79.50.

Bridgend bullocks and heifers top Dingwall prime sale

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd., sold 88 prime cattle 1,329 prime sheep at Dingwall last Tuesday.

Prime bullocks averaged 165.7p (-1.0p) and sold to 181p per kg for a 590kg Limousin cross from Bridgend Farm, Dingwall, and £1,224.60 for a 780kg Simmental cross from Drummond Farm, Evanton.

Prime heifers averaged 168.9p (+4.3p) and sold to 180p per kg for a 470kg Limousin cross from Bridgend Farm, to Fraser Brothers Butchers, Dingwall, and £1,136.85 for a 715kg Charolais cross from Conrock Farm, Rothes.

Old season lambs averaged 183.8p (-5.5p) and sold to 197.9p per kg for 39kg Texel crosses from Charleston, North Kessock, and £90 for 47kg Beltex crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge.

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Newton of Logierait champion at 'Aberfeldy' show and sale

UNITED Auctions sold 822 store cattle at their annual Aberfeldy Show and Sale, sponsored by Starlyne Animal Feeds, at Stirling last Friday.

Bullocks averaged 181.6p and sold to 274.1p per kg and £1,250 for a 456kg Limousin cross from Newton of Logierait while heifers averaged 177.2p and sold to 220.4p per kg for a 490kg Limousin cross from Monzie and £1,130 for a 562kg Limousin cross from Stanley.

Champion John Robertson, Newton of Logierait, 456kg, £1250 Reserve Champion Ballechin Farms, 522kg, £1050 Champion Pen of 4 J Robertson, Newton of Logierait, 440kg £960 Single Stot

1st John Robertson, Newton of Logierait, 456kg, £1250

2nd John Robertson, Newton of Logierait, 426kg, £930 Single Heifer

1st Ballechin Farms £1050 2nd Monzie Farms £1080 Pen of 4 stots

1st John Robertson, Newton of Logierait, 440kg, £960

2nd Ballechin Farms 495kg, £950

Pen of 4 Heifers 1st Monzie Farms, 539kg, £1020

2nd John Robertson, Newton of Logierait £920

SNH expands Islay geese team on island

THE SCOTTISH Natural Heritage (SNH) team on Islay has expanded with a number of staff starting new roles on the island.

Islay woman Morven Laurie has been appointed to manage the Islay Goose Management Scheme, replacing Margaret Morris, who has been promoted to a new job as the rural surveyor for Argyll and Stirling, providing advice on the legal and financial aspects of land management.

Although covering a much wider area than Islay, Margaret will still be based in the SNH office in Bowmore. Stuart Shaw joined the team as an area officer in May after working in Kintyre and on Rum. His wife, Claire McSorley, and their two children, aged one and three, moved to Islay with him. Claire already worked for

Margaret has worked

with SNH for 18 years and managed the Islay Goose Management Scheme for 13 years before taking on her new job. She is currently studying hard for her rural surveyor qualifications, and is delighted with her promotion. She said: 'I'm really grateful to SNH for the opportunity for promotion and training through higher

education, so I can carry out my new job while still being based on Islay.'

Rae McKenzie continues to lead the Islay team, ably supported by Tracey Johnston and Wilma Kelly, the local administrators. SNH area manager Andrew Campbell added: 'I'm very pleased to welcome Morven, Stuart, Claire and

Margaret to their new jobs. Their combined knowledge and experience will further strengthen our team on Islay.'

'It will put us in a better position to offer advice and support to people and projects related to the natural environment and its enjoyment across Islay, Jura and Colonsay.'



£3 million winter aid package is welcomed

NEWS that Scotland's farmers affected by the recent severe winter weather will receive a £3million package of aid has been warmly welcomed.

The announcement from Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead includes £3 million to off-set additional costs to farmers forced to move livestock

to boost the £12 million raspberry industry.

SRDP brought forward

In addition, £15 million will be brought forward from the Scotland Rural Development Programme business development budget to allow more farmers to invest in their farms now.

Highlands and Islands

Conservative MSP Jamie McGrigor, himself an Argyll hill farmer, said: 'This has been the hardest winter for around three decades and has been particularly difficult for livestock farmers who have had to use extra feeding and extra fuel in order to keep their animals alive and in reasonable condition.'

STIRLING United Auctions (Wednesday)

Bullocks: Up to 250kg Courance £550, 220p; 251-300kg Courance £830, 221.6p; 301-350kg Gateslack £730, 220.5p; 351-400kg Carsloe £795, Dyke 212.7p; 401-450kg High Unthank £860, 201.4p; 451-500kg Farden £925, 191.1p; 501-550kg Holehouse £930, Dyke 178.6p;

551-600kg Holehouse £1000, 174.8p; 601-650kg Holehouse £1080, 160.2p.

Heifers:

Up to 250kg Courance £465, Balcarrach 199p; 251-300kg Hartwood £590, 203.9p; 301-350kg Courance £690, 227.7p; 351-400kg Bogside £730, 191.1p; 401-450kg East Shawtonhill £850, 210.4p; 451-500kg Beechwood £895, Carsloe 190.8p; 501-550kg Farden £870, Castlehill 169.3p; 551-600kg Hareshawhill £885, 151.4p.

Forward cattle: Glenroy (Lim) £975, 152.8p; South Brownhill (BDA) £925, 154.2p; Eggermess (Sim) £875, 139.3p; Killerguier (HF) £755, 118.7p; Glenluce (AA) £745, 138.5p.

OTM bulls: Ashprington (Sim) £1295, 134.6p; Trench Hall (Cha) £1105, 144.1p.

OTM cows:

Grange of Elcho (AA) £825, Kipperoch 120p; Haggmuir (Lim) £815, Graystale 125.9p; Kipperoch (Sim) £795, 114.9p; Millhouse (Cha) £775, 108p; Gilston (BB) £755, 112.3p.

Sheep

Hoggs: Ashfield (SuffX) £80; Braes of Grandtully (TexX) and Ashfield (TexX) £78; Dallowie (TexX) £69; Achavoulaig (Scotch Mule) £63.50; Dinsinnan (BF) £61; Dallegles Hill (BF) £57; Riverside (BF) £54.

STIRLING United Auctions (Friday)

Bullocks: Up to 250kg Boreland £340, 182.8p; 251-300kg Dunalastair £660, Borlick 225p; 301-350kg Loanhead of Duchally £735, 216.2p; 351-400kg Mains of Creuchies £890, 233p; 401-450kg Newton of Logierait £960, 218.8p;

451-500kg Newton of Logierait £1250, 274.1p; 501-550kg Balnaguard £990, 188.9p; 551-600kg Mid Derry £1080, 181.2p; 601-650kg Mid Derry £1120, 177.9p; 651-700kg Aberbothrie £1140, 167.4p; 701kg + Aberbothrie £1200, Barbrafield 156.6p.

Heifers: Up to 250kg Borlick Cott £470, 193p; 251-300kg Borlick Cott £595, 210p; 301-350kg Mains of Creuchies £685, Dunalastair 204.2p; 351-400kg The Glebe £760, 205.4p; 401-450kg Stanley £890, Newton of Logierait 213.9p; 451-500kg Monzie £1080, 220.4p; 501-550kg Ballechin £1050, 204.7p; 551-600kg Stanley £1130, 201.1p; 601-650kg Victoria £1050, 172.7p.

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Market reports

DINGWALL Dingwall and Highland Marts

Bullocks 201-250kg - Coilach, Muir of Ord, £445, 183.1p; 251-300kg - Dummaglass Mains, £660, 223.7p; 301-350kg - 283 Torboll, Dornoch, £700, 212.1p; 351-400kg - Lochdhu, Nairn, £830, Balliefurth, Grantown on Spey, 209.5p; 401-450kg - Balliefurth, £830, Little Croy Farm, Croy, 195.1p; 451-500kg - 6 Balnabeen, Conon Bridge, £960, 193.9p; 501-550kg - Wester Moy, £1,040, 159.1p; 551-600kg - Wester Moy, £950, 171.2p; 601-650kg - Galcantray Farm, £1,010, 159.1p; over 650kg - Kindeace, Alness, £1,050, Galcantray Farm, 157p.

Heifers 201-250kg - Tongue Mains Farm,

Tongue, £490, 196p; 251-300kg - West Syall, Ardgay, £580, Dummaglass Mains, 198.5p; 301-350kg - Lochdhu, £715, 207.3p; 351-400kg - Balmacaan, Drumadrochit, £700, 182.8p; 401-450kg - 6 Balnabeen, £840, 197.7p; 451-500kg - Wester Moy, £890, 183.5p; 501-550kg - Galcantray Farm, £910, Ordmuir, Muir of Ord, 174.8p.

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BABY BATH mobile baby bath and changing station, vgc, £20 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

BABY CARRIER Mothercare 2 way baby carrier, navy, suitable for birth, £10 Telephone 01631 720305.

CHICCO SIMPLICITY STROLLER Argos cat no 098/4315, very good condition, hardly used, £30 Telephone 01546 606219.

COSATTO CHANGING UNIT Easi Peasi baby changing unit with bath and storage, in good condition, less than 1 year old, Benderloch, £40 Telephone 01631 720305.

COT BUMPER X2 Mamas and Papas cream and brown cot bumper, unisex, baby beanstalk yellow and green cot bumper with zoo animals, unisex, £5 each, Telephone 01631 720305.

DOOR BOUNCER Lindam, red and blue, selling in Argos for £24.99, £10 Telephone 01631 720305.

MAMAS AND PAPAS Pliko P3 stroller, mint and black stroller complete with raincover, excellent condition, £35 Telephone 01586 551919.

MAXI COSI CAR SEAT vgc, birth - 4 years. Easy to install, £45 Telephone 07834 640989.

MAXI-COSI CAR SEAT suitable for children from 9-15kg (9 months-4 years), 5 sleeping/sitting positions, as new, boxed with installation CD, £49 Telephone 01631 563452.

MOSES BASKET and rocking stand with mattress, quilt, removable lining and adjustable hood, white in colour, excellent condition, must see, £30 Telephone 01838 200529.

NAPPY BUNDLE by Mother Ease, 8 one size nappies, 8 pop-in liners (5x "stay-dry"), 1 roll of 100 liners, 5 boots waterproof pants-med, all barely used, £45 Telephone 01631 720305.

PINE WOODEN TODDLER bed with waterproof mattress, vgc, £45 Telephone 07834 640989.

PRAM - 3 IN 1 pram, pushchair and carrycot. Mamas and Papas navy blue design with classic chassis, cosytoes and raincover included, £49.99 Telephone 01631 567487.

TIGGER DOOR BOUNCER suitable from 4 months of age, very good condition, £10 Telephone 01546 606219.

UPRIGHT PRAM vgc, blue, £20 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

BICYCLES

WEE GIRLS BIKE Apollo Daisychain, pink with stabilisers, very good condition, £15 Telephone 01546 605251.

BOOKS

CROFT AND CREEL by Anna Blair, 1st edition 1987, paperback in laminated cover, very good condition, £3 Telephone 01631 563307.

TALES OF THE NORTH COAST by Alan Temperley and pupils of Farr Secondary School, hardback in very good condition, 1978, dust wrapper slightly torn, £3 Telephone 01631 563307.

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ARMOURD CABLE 2 x drums, £90 each Telephone 01855 831213.

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COMPUTERS AND GAMES

COMPUTER 1 apple mac computer, worth more in scrap metal platinum value, buyer collects, £49.99 Telephone 07747 492780.

COMPUTER DESK 1 computer desk silver in colour metal, buyer collects, will just be dumped otherwise, £30 Telephone 07747 492780.

DESKTOP PC Packard Bell I-media 1306, windows XP SP3, Intel celeron 2.9 Ghz, 40gb HD, 1 gb RAM, DVD RW, 5 X USB 2.0, full working order, £45 Telephone 01546 605251.

KEYBOARD black in colour, buyer collects, £5 Telephone 07747 492780.

DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

BELLING COOKER electric, white, 500mm x 600mm, four hob, oven, grill, in good condition, £45 Telephone 01631 564167.

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ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL PUPS Liver and White, both parents KC reg, excellent pedigrees and workers, can be seen, call Brendan, £350 Telephone 01700 811364 07901 683775.

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FURNITURE

3 PIECE SUITE terracotta colour, good condition, £49.99 Telephone 01631 564255.

3 SEATER SOFA beige leather, £35 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

3 SEATER SOFA beige leather 3 seater sofa with 2 reclining positions, £45 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

BED FRAME from Ikea, king size, vgc, £30 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

CAMP BED as new, never used, £49.99 Telephone 07834 640989.

CANE CONSERVATORY SUITE 2 seater sofa, 2 armchairs, 2009 model, high backed luxury deep filled chenille cushions, sheer comfort, all totally unused, intended for show home, cost £1,500, £495 Telephone 07766 773131.

CHEST OF DRAWERS small, £4 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

COMPUTER DESK good condition, £10 Telephone 01631 562318.

CONSERVATORY FURNITURE Breakfast Table and 2 chairs-cane furniture with cushions, £25 Telephone 01631 562879.

COTTAGE SOFA 2 seater cottage sofa and armchair, £39.99 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

DINING TABLE square draw-leaf wooden dinner table, £12 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

DINING TABLE circular light wood dining table with central pedestal, £19 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

REEBOK WEIGHT BENCH £15 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

DISPLAY CABINET 1950's conventional curved front display cabinet, £9 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

DOUBLE SOFA BED excellent condition, hardly used, £100 Telephone 07876 762361.

EVENTS TABLE substantial fold-up events table, approx 6'x3' when open, folds up flat, £39 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

GATELEG TABLE vgc, with four folding chairs tucked inside, mahogany colour, £39.99 Telephone 01852 200259.

GOLD SOFA gold dralon 3 seater sofa and armchair, £49.99 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

IKEA RECLINER blue leather, £40 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

IKEA RECLINER cream material, £30 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

KITCHEN TABLE small dropleaf formica-topped kitchen table and four chairs, £29 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

LEATHER COUCHES 1 three seater and 1 two seater black leather couches, £49.99 Telephone 01546 602601.

OFFICE STORAGE CHEST large light oak office storage chest with 6 drawers, £19 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

PINE KITCHEN TABLE small, rectangular, with 4 chairs, Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

PINE SINGLE BED 3', pine head and foot, slatted base, complete with mattress, rarely used, excellent condition buyer uplifts, £25 Telephone 01586 551919.

ROUND DINING TABLE and four chairs, pedestal light oak with carved leaf crest on chairs, vgc, table protector included, lovely condition, £49.99 Telephone 01866 822734.

SINGLE BED good clean single divan bed, £9 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

SOFA moss green 2 seater sofa, £20 Telephone 01631 569819 between 9am and 4.30pm.

TABLE Small Table & 4 chairs -modern Rennie Mackintosh style, £45 Telephone 01631 562879.

THREE PIECE SUITE in very good condition, colour terracotta. Rug 6' x 4' app, both ono, £150 Telephone 01631 564216.

TV CABINET pine tv unit with glass doors, £30 Telephone 01546 602942.

WARDROBE large old mahogany wardrobe with mirror door and two drawers below, £22 Telephone Oban 01631 564848.

WARDROBE large stag triple door mahogany wardrobe, £29 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

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WORK/DINING TABLES four tilt-top circular strong work/dining tables on casters, £49.99 Telephone Oban 01631 564848 during office hours.

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HOME FURNISHINGS CONTENTS OF FLAT FOR SALE All household items, Telephone 07786 474085.

CURTAINS have 2 pairs of 90x90 cream lined curtains for sale, used but washed, washable, £20 each or both for £30 Telephone 01631 720305.

CURTAINS 1 pair of mauve curtains 48x48, buyer collects, £10 Telephone 07747 492780.

MID SLEEPER WITH TENT good order, bought from Argos, comes with mattress, comes disassembled, easy to put back, buyer must collect Lochgilhead, £49.99 Telephone 01546 603650.

TV STAND bolt-on up to 42in, designer stand, argos item 534/6721, perfect condition, £49.99 Telephone 01631 570557 office hours.

HOME OFFICE MONITOR Dell 17 inch flat screen LCD monitor, model no. 1707FP1, bundle includes stand, power cable and monitor connection cable, £43 Telephone 01631 710649.

PRINTER cannon i350 printer, buyer collects, will just be dumped otherwise, £5 Telephone 07747 492780.

KITCHEN AND BATHROOM BATHROOM SINK with pedestal and taps, good condition, £15 Telephone 01631 710487 after 6pm.

CAST STONE SHOWER TRAY brand new and unused, still in wrapping, 1200mmx760mmx100mm, cost £159, sell £49.99 Telephone 07788 833110.

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TOYS AND GAMES PINK RIDE ON JEEP hardly used, battery powered (rechargeable) with in car radio. For age 1 year and over, £45 Telephone 01546 606652.

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SCRAP METAL all types of scrap metal, we uplift cars, call Mr Cook, West Coast Scrap Metals, Telephone 01499 500638 / 07774 621917.

WANTED SCRAP metals, copper, brass, lead, stainless steel. All types of cable, household and armoured. Top prices paid, Telephone 0800 959483 / 07770 724851.

PERSONALS

George McQueen Would like to thank all who contributed in any way to making his surprise retirement party such a success. Also for the many gifts, cards, phone calls and to those who travelled and gave up their weekend. Thank you all.

Eilidh Wilshire would like to say a great big thank you to all at Tobermory Surgery, Oban Hospital and the wonderful team at Gartnavel Hospital Ward 5c also the lovely people who sent flowers, cards and made phone calls.

Happy 40th DAD On March 1, 2010 Lots of love Craig, Katie, Abi and Ben xxxx

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West Highland Times

THE REGIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR THE WEST HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS AND ARGYLL

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Church on Friday, February 26, at 1pm, thereafter to Achmabreac Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Knapdale Ward, Mid Argyll Hospital.

NIPPERDEY - Catherine (née Binnie). Peacefully at Cologne University Hospital on February 9, 2010 after an illness bravely fought, aged 84 years, dearly loved mother of Alexander and Gabrielle, dear mother-in-law of George and much loved grandmother of Nora and Henrik. Sadly missed.

RICHMOND - Peacefully on Friday February 19, in Glenaray Ward of the Mid Argyll Hospital, Mary aged 72 years of 19 Croft Park, Tarbert, Argyll. Wife of the late James "Jimmy" Richmond. Beloved and devoted mother of Johan, dear sister of the late Ian, Finlay and Fraser, sister in law of Cathie and Sylvia. Treasured aunt, cousin, neighbour and true friend. Following Mary's wishes a service will be held in Cardross Crematorium on Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 12.45pm which friends are invited to attend. Family flowers only please. A retail collection will be taken for the Glenaray Ward of the Mid Argyll Hospital. In our thoughts, prayers and hearts always.

WAIT - Peacefully at Eadar Glinn Home, Oban on Tuesday, February 16, 2010, Isabella Connell (Isobel) formerly of 19 Mossfield Drive, Oban, sister of the late Ruby and Robert, dear friend and "Auntie Isobel".

FARQUHAR - In loving memory of Molly and Donald. - Rhoda.

GIBSON - In loving memory of my dear wife, Marybell who died February 23, 1987. Loved and remembered every day. - Jimmy and family.

GIBSON - In loving memory of our dear mum Marybell who died February 23, 1987. You will always be missed And never forgotten. - Iain and family, Dalmally, Margaret and family, Canada.

GRAY - (née Steele). Treasured memories of a dear sister May, died February 21, 2009. Sorely missed. Also parents, sisters and brothers gone before. Memories are precious Always treasured. - Inserted by families in Oban, South Uist and Aberdeen.

HARROLD - Cherished memories of my beloved husband and our much loved dad, David, who died February 17, 2009. Loved and remembered with each passing day. - Christina, David and Donald.

MACALLISTER - In loving memory of John, who died March 2, 2002. Always still fondly remembered. - Love Morag and family.

MACCORMICK - Treasured memories of a dear mum and gran, Catherine, passed away February 27, 2002. In our hearts you will always stay Loved and remembered every day. - 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 cannot bring the old days back When we were all together But memories keep you close to me And memories last forever. - Mary.

MACDONALD - Precious memories of my dear mother, Mary, who died on February 24, 1998. Gone are the days we used to share but In my heart you are always there. - Jessie and Iain.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of Mary, who died February 18, 2009 and June, died February 26, 2006. Sadly missed. - Iain and family, 4 Ardmore, South Uist.

MACKINNON - In loving memory of my dear wife Phemie, who passed away on February 23, 2003. Always in my thoughts. - Alasdair.

MACLEAN - Treasured memories of my darling husband, Calum, who died so suddenly on March 1, 1992. RIP. Calum, death can never part us Your love is still my guide As I travel on life's journey You are always by my side With all my love - Chrissie xx.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of our dear mum and nana, Veronica, who died February 25, 2000. The best mum in the whole world Love and miss you every day. - Yvonne, Richard, Michael and Innes.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of my darling daughter, Veronica, who passed away on February 25, 2000. It doesn't need a special day To bring you to my mind For days without a thought of you Are very hard to find. - Your loving mother.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of Veronica, a dear sister and auntie. No matter how our lives have changed No matter what we do A special place within our hearts Is always kept for you. Loved and remembered always. - Violet, Janette, Jennifer and families.

MACTAGART - In loving memory of Katie, who died February 25, 2005, a dear sister and auntie never to be forgotten. Always in our minds Forever in our hearts - Joan and all the family.

MACVICAR - In loving memory of my wife Christina (Teena), who died March 1, 2007. There's not an hour of any day I don't recall the past It didn't seem important then I thought they'd always last But how I wish we could return And be together now And continue always the things we said and done - Johnnie

MACVICAR - Christina, died March 1, 2007. Much loved mum and nana. You left us beautiful memories Your love is still our guide And though we cannot see you You're always at our side. - Catherine, John, John, Niall and Michael.

McFADYEN - In loving memory of our dear dad, Robert, died February 25, 2006. Always in our hearts. - Love John, Lorraine, Michaela, Alec and Catherine.

McINTYRE - William, in memory of a much loved dad and grandpa, who passed away February 27, 2005. Loved and remembered every day. - Love from Jimmy, Caroline, Fiona and Jamie xx.

MORTON - In loving memory of a beloved wife and mother Cath died February 24, 1994. Always in our thoughts. - John, John and David.

MORTON - In loving memory of my daughter-in-law, Catherine, died February 24, 1995. Sadly missed. - Mum.

MORTON - In loving memory of a dear mum and nana, Catherine, died February 24, 1995. Always in our thoughts. - Karen, Norman, Christopher and Lewis. XX.

ROWAN - Alan, a dear dad and grandpa, who died February 23, 1993. Always in our thoughts. - Sandra, Gillesbuig and Lauren.

SUTHERLAND - In loving memory of our gran and great-gran, Elizabeth (Betty), who passed away on February 24, 2005. Always in our thoughts Forever in our hearts. - Inserted by her grandchildren, Caroline, Tracy and Robert Murray and families.

WELSH - Treasured memories of our dad, Da Ronnie, who died February 4, 2007. May the winds of love blow softly And whisper so you'll hear We will always love and miss you And wish that you were here. - The Welsh family.

Thought for the week
Is everything about giving things up?

THE SEASON of Lent is often viewed in a negative light - having to give up things for our own good. But is this popular interpretation correct? Here are some words of Jesus: 'What profit is there by gaining the whole world and losing one's soul? What can someone give in exchange for their soul?' Here was a Man who lived His whole life without material goods and yet was the most free and satisfied of all who ever lived. If we're honest, we realise that material possessions don't liberate us, they tie us down. Ask anyone who has been forced to move into a smaller house after living for years in a much larger one! So Lent isn't so much about having to give things up, but realising that being truly free is not about adding more and more things to life, but rather letting go of them. C S Lewis wrote about everyone having a gaping hole at the centre of their lives, and that no matter how much stuff they try to fill that hole with they never find anything that does the job. Because we were designed that way, there is only One Who can truly fill that void, the One Who said: 'Whoever drinks of the water I shall give them will never thirst; the water I give will become in them a spring of water bubbling up with eternal life.' Lent is about clearing out the clutter to leave room for Him.

Dr Eric Morgan

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Salvation Army envoy Criag McKinstry accepts toys from Darrell Williams. 16_09toys01

Salvation Army envoy Criag McKinstry accepts toys from Darrell Williams. 16_09toys01

Hotel's toy amnesty reaps rewards

THANKS to generous guests and friends of Oban Bay Hotel, the Salvation Army will have a supply of toys to give away to children in need. The hotel collected duplicate or extra toys for the Oban church as part of a Christmas fundraising campaign. Craig McKinstry, territorial envoy of Oban Salvation Army, said: 'We'd like to express our sincere thanks to the Oban Bay Hotel and its staff - we organise a Christmas gift appeal every year so their toy amnesty fits in perfectly with this.' 'Receiving these gifts will allow us to distribute extra gifts to needy children throughout the year.' Darrell Williams, hotel manager, said: 'We are still receiving donations for the Toy Amnesty and it is good to know that they will be going to a good home.'

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Choral Mattins.....10:15
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Obituary
Kenneth Dodgson, 1916-2010



Kenneth Dodgson

OUR Dad, Kenneth Dodgson, died peacefully last month aged 93. He had been married to Mum (Susan, who died in 2007) for 65 years. He had a happy childhood in Whitley Bay with his mother and father along with his sisters, Eileen and Nona. He attended the local primary school, then went on to Whitley and Monkseaton High school continuing to Edinburgh University where he, at the age of 19, gained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry. Throughout his youth he enjoyed being part of the Boy Scout movement. In the years that followed, after becoming a King Scout, he helped to run the Scouts including a cub Scout pack in Ballachulish, where he was working as a surveyor for a new road. He enjoyed tennis, walking, swimming, cycling, and in later years, photography. He once cycled with a friend from London to Lands End and back after sailing from Newcastle to Tilbury on a coastal steamer. George Formby was not the only person to play the ukulele, Dad did so too, as well as the mandolin, piano and organ.

We then moved to Tobago where Dad organised road construction and the airport runway extension both of which helped the economy and tourism. Although busy at work there, he always found time to enjoy his surroundings and go to the beach. He loved the warm clear sea where he could swim underwater among the sea ferns, coral and beautiful coloured fish. There were many happy get-togethers of our family and new friends where he enjoyed the obligatory rum punch but particularly loved being surrounded by people with their chat. These were happy days for him. On our return to UK he went to Fort William and joined Highland Region roads and bridges department. Meanwhile we stayed on in the bungalow in Oban that Dad had had built some years previously. Little could they have imagined that he was finally putting down roots and that he was going to stay in Fort William for the next 50 years.

Many of the roads that we drive on in Lochaber were designed and constructed under Dad's supervision. The recently completed Arisaig section of road was surveyed by Dad 40 years ago. For many years Dad was a member of the Rotary Club of Lochaber and enjoyed the social side of the club. He also took part in the club's charity work and he felt that this work was genuinely worthwhile. Sailing took a big part in his life and for many years he sailed his boat on Loch Linnhe. When his grandchildren came on holiday there was always time for sailing, fishing, making fires on the beach and picnics. For Dad and the neighbours, the two major social events on the calendar were the annual launch and pulling up of his boat. The boat work was done in record time so that the important business of cracking open a bottle or two of whisky could be started as soon as possible. The discussions on these occasions would put any debate in the House of Commons into the shade. Once again Dad had an excuse for a party of which the family and friends have many happy memories. After Mum died he missed her so much and was very lonely, however, he managed to stay on in his house in Fort William with the view of the loch which he loved. This was achieved by the assistance of family and friends. The Social Work Services staff and Crossroads were also a great support to him and indeed became good friends.

At the end of the war he joined the Army Officer Reserve of the Royal Engineers and continued his duty in this form for a further 15 years with the rank of Captain. Dad's part in the defence of the United Kingdom was recognised with the award of three medals. After the war, I was born around the time that Dad went back to civil engineering. He had to move round the country on various contracts so we only saw him on intermittent weekends. In later years whenever a town or village anywhere in Britain was mentioned to him, it turned out that he had either worked there or had had digs there. In 1956, he took a three-year road and bridge construction contract in Trinidad and Tobago. On this occasion Mum, Alistair and I went with him. Oddly, we had to cross the Atlantic to get all our family under one roof. Dad's main civil engineering project in Trinidad was the supervision of the construction of a dual carriageway highway over a swamp. Happily the road design was successful and the highway did not sink into the swamp.

When the second world war broke out he remained in civil engineering doing work which included the construction of massive ammunition tunnels in the south of England. He then went on to help with the building of Trefee aerodrome which was used as a refuelling point for planes coming over from America. It was while he was on Trefee that Mum and Dad were married. Dad did not worry about some of the finer points in life and Mum complained when he arrived for his wedding with his belongings in a hessian bag tied with rope. My brother Alistair was born in Stirling. Mum and he joined Dad in Trefee shortly afterwards, but it was not long before Dad was called up into the army. Although he enjoyed travelling around he did not like being separated from his family. The army gave Dad his basic training and in due course he became the Commander of 168 platoon, number ten Bomb Disposal Company in the Royal Engineers. He and others had the unenviable task of defusing unexploded bombs, land mines and other devices.

After Mum died he missed her so much and was very lonely, however, he managed to stay on in his house in Fort William with the view of the loch which he loved. This was achieved by the assistance of family and friends. The Social Work Services staff and Crossroads were also a great support to him and indeed became good friends. The final months of his life were spent in Abbeyfield House, Ballachulish, where he appreciated all the loving care and attention he received. Right to the end of his life Dad took an interest in all the activities of his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who will all miss his visits and the stories that he had to tell. Dad has been a tower of strength and support to our family. Although we miss him very much the memory of his kindness, high standards and faith will be a great comfort to us in the years to come. Kenneth Dodgson leaves his sons Alistair and Colin along with their wives Sheila and Naida. His grandchildren Kelvin, his wife Becky, Scott, his wife Emma, Lee and Alicia. (Alistair and Sheila's family) Richard and Jeff (Colin and Naida's family). Also his great grandson Jordan and great grand-daughter Caitlin.

CD

BIRTHS

MACLEOD
Neil and Jacqueline (née Crighton) are pleased to announce the safe arrival of Cameron Michael MacLeod on January 31, 2010 at Paisley Royal Alexandra Hospital.

MACLEAN - To Donald and Zoe on February 15, 2010 at The Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley, a son Angus Russell. Both well.

SMITH - Mark and Marion (née Campbell) are delighted to announce the arrival of their daughter Eve Marie on January 16, 2010 at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital. A beautiful sister for Erin and Matthew.

ENGAGEMENTS

MACLACHLAN - TAYLOR - Kenny and Moira MacLachlan, 9 Arkland, Inveraray, Argyll are delighted to announce the engagement of their son Derek to Michelle, daughter of the late Norman Taylor, Lisburn, N. Ireland on February 14, 2010.

DEATHS

MACARTHUR - John. Slept away peacefully on February 21, 2010, at Middleton, Trefee a much loved husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather. Safe now in the arms of Jesus. His loving family, Trefee.

MACCALLUM - As a result of an accident, on February 11, 2010, aged 40 years, Alasdair, loving father of Riona and Neil and a much loved brother and uncle.

MACDIARMID - Peacefully at Abbeyfield, Ballachulish, on February 20, 2010, Ina, Mod Gold Medalist, (formerly of 10 North Corran), daughter of the late Neil and Christina, beloved sister of the late Ishbel, sister-in-law of the late Iain, a much loved cousin and a friend to many. Funeral service at Ardgoor Parish Church on Friday, February 26 at 2pm. Family flowers only, donations if desired to Montrose Centre, Inverlochy.

MACNEIL OF BARRA - Ian Roderick. February 16, 2010. Funeral has taken place.

McALPINE - On February 21, 2010, peacefully at home, Douglas, beloved husband of Marilyn Black and dearly loved father of Jessica and Carolyn, father in law of Stuart and a much loved brother, brother-in-law, uncle and friend. Funeral service was held at Tarbert Parish Church on February 24, interment thereafter at Carrick Cemetery.

McKINLAY - Peacefully after a long illness in Knapdale Ward, Mid Argyll Hospital on February 22, 2010, Thomas McKinlay, aged 90 years of 2 Letterdaill, Cairnbaan. Much loved husband of Morag and loving father of Diana and Isabel, father-in-law of Allan and brother-in-law of Marion. Grandfather of Morven and John, Ian and Carol. Great-grandfather of Arran and Kyra. Uncle of Wendy and Allan. A good neighbour and friend and former work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held in Kilmichael Parish

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMERON - Douglas. Nan would like to thank all family and friends for comfort cards and flowers following her recent bereavement. Thanks to Rev R Henderson for comforting service, to P and R O'Brian Funeral Directors for efficient and sympathetic services. A retiring collection of £251 was donated to Cancer Research Scotland.

DRUMMOND - Rab, Flora, Kenneth and Susan would like to thank relatives, friends, neighbours and colleagues for the kind expressions of sympathy, telephone calls, condolence cards and floral tributes received following the sudden passing of Rab. Thanks to everyone who paid their last respects at the church and graveside. Thanks to David Cameron and Christine MacGregor of the Ambulance Service, Dr Bennett and doctors and nurses of the Lorn Medical Centre. Thanks also to the Rev Dugald Cameron for his comforting service, Andy Henderson the church organist and Rowantree Hotel for refreshments. Grateful thanks to Catriona Hoey for her professional and caring manner with the funeral arrangements.

GRANT - Joanne wishes to thank most sincerely all family, friends and neighbours, for their many kind expressions of sympathy, following the death of her husband Fred, and to thank the people who travelled from far afield. A special warm thank you to Mary, Allan and Aileen for their wonderful help and support throughout Fred's illness. I also wish to convey my appreciation and gratitude to the community nurses, local carers, Dr Douglas, Crossroads, Montrose Centre and Abbeyfield, who have helped me through difficult times and been so caring to Fred. My thanks to Mike McFall for his guidance and sensitive handling of the funeral arrangements and to John Fraser who conducted the service and to all those who attended the church and graveside. - Thank you.

MACKELLAR - The family of the late Jackie wish to thank all friends for phone calls, cards and flowers. Special thanks to Dr Fiona MacLennan and all medical and nursing staff at Lorn and Islands Hospital. Grateful thanks to D and A Munn for kindness and funeral arrangements. £120 was collected for Ward B.

IN MEMORIAM

BROWN - In loving memory of my dear husband, Alasdair who died on February 25, 2005. Also my brother-in-law Hector died March 24, 2004. Also remembering loved ones gone before and after. Every day in some small way Memories of you come my way Though absent you are ever near Still missed, still loved and ever dear. - Seonaid, 11 Balephuil, Trefee.

CHISHOLM - Happy memories of my friend Marnie, who died February 22, 2009. - Isabel.

VOLUNTEERS Gordon MacIntyre and Sheena Rogers were presented with gold medals for 25 years service to volunteering at the Oxfam Shop in Oban.
Kenneth MacKinnon, Lord-Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute made the presentation during the Fairtrade Fortnight ceilidh. 16_09oxfam01

Primary pupils run for Haiti

INVERGARRY Primary School and nursery children recently undertook a sponsored run to raise money for the people of Haiti.

After seeing the Haitians' terrible plight on television the children decided their fund-raising effort should have a sporting theme.

It was decided to run a charity race round the village park, with some pupils managing to run an impressive 32 laps.

The children reported: 'On Thursday February 11, Invergarry Primary School pupils ran a sponsored fun run to raise money for Haiti.'

'The older class ran for 30 minutes and the younger ones ran for 15 minutes. We were all tired out but we were proud of ourselves. We had a baking stall and it raised £75 for Haiti, but our sponsor money is still coming in. We would like to thank everyone who sponsored us.'

Headteacher Jane Strachan said: 'Children themselves initiated the event and planned and executed it.'

Highland League fixture pile-up continues

Football

WHEN Fort William's home game against Highland League leaders Buckie Thistle was controversially called off at the last minute on January 30, committee members - only half in jest - said the team would still be playing come the summer.

Now that prediction is looking increasingly likely following last weekend's fixtures wipeout, again because of frost and snow.

Fort were due to play Forres Mechanics on Tuesday night but ice-box conditions also ruled that game out.

Meanwhile, the fixture backlog continues to grow and has already reached unprecedented levels with winter not yet over.

Catch-up

League bosses are desperately trying to play fixtures catch-up by playing mid-week games, to no avail.

With March almost here Fort are, incredibly, only half way through their league fixture list, having played 17 games out of 34.

Calum MacLean's men are due to play Clach away on Saturday, but the prolonged spell of frost has put that fixture in severe doubt - and Fort could spend another weekend kicking their heels.

Fort committee member John Corbett, currently recuperating from a knee operation, said: 'There's not an end in sight to the cold weather yet.'

'We'll just have to leave it to the powers that be to sort out the fixture backlog.'



P5 winners Banavie, right, and runners-up Ballachulish show off their medals. 10_f09shinty01

Frozen pitches desimate rugby programme

ALL WEEKEND matches involving Oban Lorne's teams were off due to frozen pitches.

Last Friday the under-15 match between Langholm and Oberrory, made up of pupils from Oban and Tobermory high schools, was called off.

The match, a Brewin Dolphin Schools Bowl quarter final, this will now be played tomorrow (Friday) at Hutchesons School in Glasgow.

On Saturday the much-anticipated Strathclyde Police versus Oban Lorne encounter was also called off.

But this weekend sees an equally intriguing tie when Oban face old rivals Clydebank at Glencruitten in what is usually a bruising encounter.

The visitors use a very effective mauling style of play, backed up by a strong forward pack.

Indoor football

GOON Squad maintained top spot in the Ali Young Winter League at the Nevis Centre on Monday night thanks to a comfortable 3-0 victory over Sawmill.

Second-placed Achintore FC kept up their title challenge with a 4-2 win over HWE No Stars, while Funky Five still have an outside shot at the title following their 3-1 win over Wanderers.

Elsewhere, Lochaber Leisure made short work of Alcan in a 5-0 win and Livercaol disposed of Rangers Supporters 3-0.

Table:	
Goon Squad	47
Achintore FC	44
Funky Five	42
Livercaol	32
Lochaber Leisure	32
Sawmill	26
Alcan	24
HWE No Stars	12
Wanderers	11
Rangers Supporters	9

Cross country

AS A RESULT of icy conditions on the Nevis Range course, the Lochaber primary schools cross country running had to be cancelled on Tuesday.

Organisers have rescheduled the race for Tuesday March 23. Registration will be at 12.45pm, with the prizegiving at 2.30pm.



Banavie Primary 6/7 won through to the national finals.



Action from the P5 Ballachulish versus Lochaber game. 10_f09ahinty02

Battle for place in First Shinty finals

Banavie sweep the boards

BANAVIE Primary School swept the boards in the second round of qualification matches for the BP First Shinty Cup at the Nevis Centre on Saturday.

The all day event featured round robin tournaments for P5 and P7 children and provided the enthusiastic crowd of parents lining the arena with some excellent matches.

In the P5 tournament, Banavie came through all their games undefeated, pipping Ballachulish to the coveted qualification spot by three points.

Banavie, coached by Ally Clark and Victor Smith, also came out on top in the P7 tournament, narrowly pipping Lochaber to first place.

Both Banavie teams now go through to the BP Cup finals, where they will play against teams from all over Scotland who have qualified from their respective area competitions.

The finals, to be held on separate days for each age group, will be held in the Nevis Centre in the spring.

It was a long day for organisers on Saturday's Lochaber area heats. Around 50 P1 to P3 children took part in the early morning session, five P5 teams played their

tournament to 1pm, then 11 P7 teams played their competition to 7.30pm.

'We must have had 150 children taking part in all,' area secretary Michelle McNeil told The Oban Times. 'They are a very enthusiastic group of children and parents - the competition has been very well supported.'

'Fort William FC have started children's football sessions, so we are competing for children as well. Some of the kids are playing football on the Friday night then playing shinty on Saturday.'

'The sport is really thriving. We are well supported by the senior clubs, Lochaber, Kilmallie and Fort William, which is very much appreciated.'

Banavie coach Ally Clark paid tribute to Michelle's organisational skills behind the scenes. 'She is the glue that holds the area committee together,' he said. Fellow Banavie coach Victor Smith was delighted to see both teams through - but told The Oban Times the P7 team's hopes of lifting the BP Cup had already suffered a blow.

'Our full back Calum MacDougall broke his leg skiing on Sunday. It's a disaster - he's one of our best players.'



Local firm kits out junior rugby players with new strips

Lochaber Rugby Football Club junior players took delivery of new strips on Saturday - thanks to the generosity of a local firm. The club had been looking for a sponsor to provide the youngsters' kit and Corpach-based BSW Timber were only too happy to oblige.

Pictured above is BSW retail manager David Haines handing over the new strips to Lochaber RFC junior players, left to right, Fraser Hunter, Andrew Haines, Loraine Hunter, coach, Calum Boyd, Calum Sandison and Calum MacDonald.

Double celebration at boxing club

IT WAS a double celebration for Kinlochleven-based Nether Lochaber Amateur Boxing Club last week as they took delivery of new equipment, thanks to a £1,000 grant from The Big Lottery Fund.

Also in the post was the official boxer's registration book from Amateur Boxing Scotland for club member Roslynn Newman, making her the first carded female boxer in Lochaber.

Flyweight Roz, aged 31, from Kinlochleven, is an active schools co-ordinator for Nether Lochaber and a single mother to a three year-old girl - but still manages to find time to train at the Leven Centre gym.

Roz hopes she will inspire more women in Lochaber to follow her lead by taking up the sport. Now keen to get

her first fight, Roz reckons boxing is the ideal way to boost fitness, self-confidence and self-esteem - as well as showing the boys that the girls have got what it takes to succeed in the ring.

Roz told The Oban Times: 'Boxing has had a very positive impact in my life and has definitely helped me when dealing with stressful issues. I would recommend it to all women.'

Local MSP Fergus Ewing praised club coach Martin Glenesk for securing the grant. He said: 'This is a fantastic achievement and I would like to congratulate Martin and the rest of the club on this achievement.'

Any women interested in joining the club can contact Martin on 07979 862 448 or at netherlochaberabc@yahoo.co.uk.



Packing a punch: Nether Lochaber ABC boxer Roz Newman.

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Eddie junior from Salen and Eddie senior from Tobermory were first in class at the Snowman's Rally. Photo courtesy of AML Photography.

Fledgling fighters fly Phoenix flag

NEXT week sees Lochaber Phoenix ABC make their first foray into the full senior Scottish championships with light welterweight Stephen Cameron and middleweight Ryan Watson both competing.

Boxing

'They are straining at the leash to find out how far they have come'

After only two years in existence, the move represents a major step for the club, as boxers of this experience are not normally expected to be capable of boxing at this level.

But such is the talent and desire of the local fighters, club members say they are straining at the leash to find out themselves just how far they have come in such a short space of time.

With this level of boxing to aim at, a greater level of training has been introduced and two local companies have come to the aid of the boys with Kevin McFadyen Mechanical Services sponsoring Stephen, and Spice Tandoori restaurant sponsoring Ryan.

last for the whole year and will enable the boxers to purchase equipment and travel for sparring throughout Scotland in their quest for glory.

Shock

Meanwhile, in what was something of a shock to Lochaber Phoenix, rising star Chris Bradley's recent fine run of form came to an end as he lost a close points decision to David Dalziel of Peterhead ABC at in Aberdeen last Saturday.

Round one began with Dalziel rushing forwards to catch Bradley with a straight

right which forced Chris to the ropes - although this was the only time he was in this position the entire contest, as he quickly established his jab together with fine lateral movement.

The stage was set early in the bout with 13 year-old Dalziel coming forwards with one-tuos and Bradley countering with jabs - but whenever the Fort William boxer made a forward motion Dalziel would initiate a clinch to stop Chris working on the inside.

Round two of this quality match followed the same pattern, but by round three Dalziel was on a final warning for holding, which enabled Bradley to work more freely. He started to land flush on the Peterhead boxer whilst tightening his own defences.

Unfortunately the judges deemed Chris' efforts not quite enough as he lost a tight decision - but he has returned home a wiser and more knowledgeable boxer.

Steady Eddie takes class win in the snow

A FATHER and son team from Mull took first in class in treacherous conditions at the Snowman's Rally in Inverness at the weekend.

Driver Eddie O'Donnell, junior, and co-pilot Eddie O'Donnell, senior, finished first in class and in 29th place overall.

Rally

Eddie junior said: 'The conditions were hard enough to walk on, never mind trying to drive flat out in our Ford Escort RS. 'Ice and snow were the order of the day. 'A steady drive to the end

of the event kept us out of trouble and got us to the finish line.

'Yet again a big thanks again to our sponsors and service crew.'

Hazel leads singles league as Pam strikes Abbamania gold

AFTER the third week of the ten-pin bowling singles league at the Nevis Centre, Hazel White has stretched her lead at the top of the handicap table to six points and now has 99 points. Her lead puts her in the chase for Robert Cairns trophy.

Ten-pin bowling

John Weller is the new second place player with 93 points, moving up from eighth spot place the previous week.

David MacDonald moves up from 11th to third - also on 93 points. The biggest mover this week was Tim Atack who stormed up the table from 27th to 12th.

The scratch league, sponsored by Nevis Radio, sees Tony Whitelocke

continue as leader with 118 points. Pam Weller is now in second place with 110 points, Colin Pinkett is in third with 108.

Biggest mover this week was Shug McMurray who moved from 29th to 22nd. Nearer the top the next biggest mover was Tommy McKnight who moved from 12th to seventh.

All the top scores this week came from Pam Weller who rolled the highest scratch game and series (187, 320) and the top handicap series of 416.

This score of 416 won Pam two tickets for the upcoming Abbamania show donated by the Nevis Centre.

Connel Village Hall 'buzzing' as 33 pairs play for Lora shield

CONNEL Hall was buzzing last Saturday with 33 pairs taking part in the Connel Carpet Bowling Club Open Doubles Competition.

Carpet bowling

The 30-year-old Falls of Lora Shield was being replaced by the new Falls of Lora Shield kindly donated by Mrs Webster, from the hotel.

and Colin Clark, Cairnbaan. Hugh MacLeod and Mike Kelly, North Connel v Neil MacCorkindale and Alastair Dickie, Kilmore.

Adrian and Colin met Neil and Alastair in the final and it was the Kilmore pair who went on to win the competition.

After many hard fought matches the semi-finalists lined up as follows: Sandy Carr and Michael MacPhee, Connel v Adrian MacKay

On hand to present the winners with the new trophy was hotel manager Michael MacPhee.



Goalmouth action from last Sunday's junior primary football league. 16-09/fo001

Thistle sting young Saints to go clear at the top

SUNDAY saw Oban Express Primary Football League juniors meet again at the all weather pitch at Oban High School in week three of the current league campaign.

Another exciting day of football from the youngsters started with Puma's and AC Argyll going head to head and it turned out to be a hard fought encounter with Pumas number seven Conner Moore breaking

Football

the deadlock, beating two defenders and slotting the ball past the excellent Fergus Carmichael in goal. Pumas went on to draw with Benderloch in one of the games of the day, where they held on to a 1-0 lead for most of the game, only to lose two points thanks to a stunning top corner strike from Daniel Sloss.

Benderloch also beat AC Argyll and went on to defeat Galaxy with both Dougie MacLeod and Stuart Campbell scoring three goals each but not to be undone, new Galaxy signing Alik Aleynik also scored a hatrick. The team at the top of the league, Thistle, and the current champions, Saints

clear at the top of the league and looking good for their first ever league winners medal.

U8's, then locked horns and both teams put on a great game, which could have gone either way until a well worked free kick from the Jags ended with Scott Mossman hitting a cracker from distance high into the net. Thistle also went on to beat the mighty Koz with Finlay Lawson scoring two goals. This keeps Thistle

Lochgilthead kept in touch at the top with a good team effort to record a 4-0 win over Pumas which sets the league up for an exciting finish. This Sunday has the senior league sides back in action at the high school.

Youth results

Football

SATURDAY'S results: Regional Cup 4th round - Mill United 6, Under 13s 1. Netting for Saints was Connor Howe, Helensburgh 1, Under 15s 4. Saints scorers were Lee MacLean (3) and Martin MacPherson.

Saints Under 13s could win the Dumbarton Development League this Saturday if the beat Westerton United.

The Under 15s take on Drumchapel United. Both games will take place on the 3g pitch at Oban High School, the 15s kicking off at 11 am and the 13s at 1pm.

Shinty draw

Shinty

THE CAMANACHD Association will be launching the 2010 Scottish Hydro Camanachd Cup and Premier League at 12pm today (Thursday).

The launch will take place at the Scottish Hydro Visitor Centre, Pitlochry.

The draw for the preliminary and first round of the Scottish Hydro Camanachd Cup will also be made along with the announcement of the 2010 final venue.

Camanachd Association President, Duncan Cameron and representatives from Scottish Hydro will be in attendance, along with a number of Premier League players including Kingussie's Ronald Ross and Kyles' Grant Irvine.

Scottish anglers hooked on Loch Etive

AROUND 50 anglers took part in the second annual Royal National Lifeboat Institute Species Hunt Angling Competition on Loch Etive on Saturday.

Angling

Using their own boats, hire boats, a 12-man charter boat and several kayaks, competitors travelled from all over Scotland to compete.

to the bottom of buckets. Organiser Gordon Goldie was pleased with the turnout but admitted the conditions hampered the catches.

He said: 'The actual fishing was quite poor in comparison to recent weeks on the loch. 'However, cash raised on the day amounted to £1,711, which exceeded our target of £1,500.

The temperature on arrival at the loch side was minus nine degrees celsius.

This meant a variety of problems were encountered boat wise; frozen steering, frozen fuel lines, kayak frozen to roof rack, frozen gas in stoves, frozen cooling systems in outboard engines - not to mention bait frozen

The money came from donations, raffle tickets and fines for those not wearing a silly hat, those whose hats were too silly, and those who just deserved a fine anyway. The money collected on the day was added to

previous online auctions on the World Sea Fishing (Scotland) internet forum.

Another £420 being recovered in gift aid.

A spokeswoman from the RNLI said: 'The RNLI is very grateful to have the support of Gordon and his friends as part of the Loch Etive Species Hunt event.

The RNLI wants people to enjoy and remember their time by the coast for the right reasons.

'Money raised through the event will help us promote water safety to groups including anglers and fishermen, as well as train and equip our volunteer

lifeboat crew.

'We're looking forward to hearing about the event and how many species are caught and released on the day, as well as supporting any other anglers and fishermen fundraising in aid of the RNLI.'

Results: 1. Isle of Claire - Andy Douglas and Colin Colclough, 10 species; 2. Hire Boat No.2 - Dermot Kavanagh and crew, nine species; 3. Ticketty Boo! II (last year's winner) - Gordon Goldie, Darren Sloan, Matt Burrett, eight species.

First junior - Cameron Bryan of Barrhead with five species.



The fundraising anglers pictured with their cheque.

The Oban Times
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Football officer Rae-ring to go

Former goalkeeper is a safe pair of hands in Argyll

THE FUTURE of football in Argyll and Bute is in safe hands after the council chose a former goalkeeper as its new development officer.

Former Ross County coach Martin Rae has taken up to the role of Argyll and Bute Football Development Officer and has already kicked-off plans for coaching sessions throughout the year.

Titles
Martin, who won Highland League and cup titles with Clachnacuddin, has been tasked by the council to build on the success of his predecessor, Dylan Kerr, who has taken up a coaching role in South Africa.

The 31-year-old told The Oban Times: 'I am really looking forward to a fresh challenge and I want to take

Football
youth programme outside of the Old Firm. He coached and managed several of the Ross County youth teams and was also the first team goalkeeping coach for three years, as well as training and coaching the club's full time Under-19 squad.

Award
A Children's Licence and Youth Award holder, Martin will be responsible for the delivery of the SFA Coach Education Programme throughout Argyll and Bute, in addition to a wide variety of coaching initiatives for people of all ages, from three-year-olds through to adults.

Martin, who is originally from Maryburgh, Dingwall, has moved his family to Oban, where he will be based.

Martin was a goalkeeper with Ross County before moving to the Highland League with Clachnacuddin and Forres Mechanics and finally returning to County as a coach. He has been involved with football development on a full-time basis for the last nine years at the Scottish Football League First Division club, helping to build arguably the best



Argyll and Bute's football development will be in the safe hands of former goalkeeper Martin Rae. 07_09foot03

Ileach to lead out Scotland against Auld enemy

Rugby

ISLAY Rugby Club Minis team has received the highest honour for its dedication to the sport of rugby union.

All the more remarkable as this is the young team's first year of competing.

The enviable position of Scotland mascot for the match against England has been awarded to Islay in appreciation of the commitment of the club's young players, recognising their turning out for weekly training through the winter when many other clubs have taken breaks, and for their determination to attend the regional Dalriada rugby festivals.

Thomas Piper, a primary six pupil at Port Charlotte Primary School, has been selected for the honour, in recognition of his 100 per cent participation in club training sessions and tournament matches.

The mascot will run out with Scotland in the Six Nations challenge against England on March 13.

Islay's rugby coaching team are all delighted that the Scottish Rugby Union have recognised the remarkable progress that Islay have made since beginning their minis group in August.

The Minis competed at Cowal Dalriada on January 31 and attended Murrayfield on the February 7, cheering Scotland on against France.

The club thanked Bruichladdich Distillery and the Port Charlotte Hotel for their kind donations, which made the trips it possible.

Postal fail to deliver as Craig nets a double

Scottish Amateur League Premier Division Oban Saints 2 Postal United 0

SAINTS got off to the perfect start in this Premier Division league encounter which was played on the 3g pitch at Oban High School after the recent snow and hard frost made the grass pitch at Glencruitten unplayable.

The Oban side took the lead in the first minute with a superb goal involving intricate passing between Allan MacKay, Sean Ford and Asen Gaydardzhiev, before Craig MacEwan tucked the ball past the helpless Postal keeper Michael Gemmell.

Willie Gemmell almost increased the home side's lead in the 11th minute with a well taken free kick, but it flashed inches past the post.

The home side were on top in the first half, but they have keeper Graham Douglas to thank for a good save from a



Craig MacEwan

Football



Allan MacKay takes on a Postal defender.

Picture by Kevin McGlynn

snap-shot by Paul McGuire.

Saints took a 2-0 lead in the 24th minute with another well worked goal. Some fine play between Willie Gemmell, Allan MacKay and Myles McAuley resulted in the ball being fed through to MacEwan who fired home his second goal of the game. Saints seemed to take their foot off the pedal after this goal and their play became very sloppy much to the annoyance of the management team.

Postal came out with all guns blazing at the start of the second half and had Saints pinned back for the

opening period, but the Oban side, well marshalled by skipper Dante Lopez, were defending well, although they almost got caught out when they failed to clear a free kick and David Gibson headed wide of the post.

Saints were getting forced further and further back, but they did look dangerous on the break and Donald Campbell had a great chance to kill the game off in the 64th minute, but miskicked in front of goal.

The Glasgow side had a lot of possession, but they weren't troubling Saints keeper Graham Douglas too

much, although he had to make a couple of good saves to keep his ninth clean sheet of the season.

The homesters were quite content to hit Postal on the break and created three or four excellent scoring chances, but these were missed.

In the final minute Saints had a good claim for a penalty when Donald Campbell seemed to have his feet whipped from under him just as he was about to pull the trigger, but referee Darren Murray, who had a good game, waved away the claims.

Manager Iain Jackson said 'We got off to a great start with the early goal and played some excellent football, then we got very sloppy, but credit to Postal they certainly made a game of it in the second half.'

This Saturday Saints travel to take on Glencastle Sparta at the famous Cathkin Park, former home of the famous Third Lanark FC.

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Oban Saints	11	8	2	1	26
Greenock HSPF	9	7	1	1	22
Aikenthead Thistle	6	3	1	2	10
Inverclyde	6	3	1	2	10
Kilpatrick	4	2	2	0	8
Cambria	9	2	1	6	7
Postal United	8	1	3	4	6
Castlemilk	6	1	2	3	5
Glencastle Sparta	8	0	1	7	1
St Joseph's	1	0	0	1	0

Bronze award

Coaching

AN ARGYLL sports coaching weekend has been given a bronze award for advancing community and well being.

Argyll and Bute Council's event, which last year gave 300 people the chance to hone their coaching skills in a range of different sports and activities, was named by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in their annual Excellence Awards.

This year's coaching weekend was held earlier this month.

Pool league

Pool

Oban Pool League sponsored by Tennants and Oban Filling Station

	P	Pts
Markie's A	14	22
Claredon A	14	20
Lancaster	14	20
Lochnell	14	20
Kelvin Dale	14	16
Cellar	14	14
Markie's B	14	12
Gluepot	14	8
Claredon B	14	6

Ladies' debut

Football

THE newly-formed Oban Saints Ladies team travel to Kirkcaldy on Sunday to take on Raith Rovers in the first round of the league cup.

The club trains on the 3g pitch at Oban High School on a Wednesday evening at 7pm.

The league programme commences on Sunday March 7 with an away game against East Kilbride Thistle.

Lorn bowls

Bowls

THE SEMI-finals of the Lorn Carpet Bowls Knock-out Cup saw Easdale beat Kilmore 7-1 and North Connel defeat Benderloch 5-3 after extra ends.

Winners of Easdale Open Doubles were Sandy Carr and Ronald Gordon.

Colin Clark and Neil McCorkindale won the Kilmore Open Doubles.

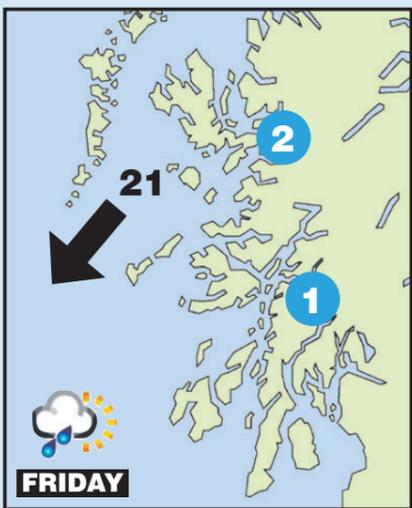
Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, February 25, 2010 are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 03.03	3.2 09.26 1.5 15.55 3.3	21.22 1.3
Fri 03.59	3.5 10.27 1.1 16.39 3.6	22.19 0.9
Sat 04.43	3.9 11.14 0.8 17.16 3.8	23.08 0.5
Sun 05.23	4.2 11.56 0.5 17.51 4.0	23.53 0.2
Mon 06.02	4.3 12.35 0.4 18.25 4.1	*** **
Tues 00.36	0.1 06.39 4.3 13.13 0.4	18.59 4.1
Wed 01.18	0.1 07.15 4.2 13.50 0.5	19.34 4.0

Ardrihaig	-5.35	Lochboisdale	+0.30
Campbeltown	-5.30	Mallaig	+0.25
Crinan	-0.47	Portree	+0.55
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Tobermory	+0.16
		Dover	+5.30

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the weather

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Thursday
Sunny intervals. Winds light to moderate to strong east/north-easterly. Temperatures 0°C to 3°C

Friday
Sunny intervals persist, with winds moderate to strong north-easterly. Temperatures -2°C to 4°C.

Weekend Outlook
Again, expect sunny intervals throughout Saturday but snow is forecast overnight and into Sunday. Winds moderate easterly. Temperatures 2°C to 4°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree - As above
Kennacraig to Islay - As above

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Atlantis to host Argyll athletics final

Athletics
YOUNG athletes from across Argyll will battle it out to find the county's best runners, jumpers and throwers.

Atlantis Leisure in Oban is the venue this Saturday for the Argyll Sports Hall Athletics Final.

The competition starts at 1pm in the large games hall. The final on Saturday is the last of a series of competitions held in the

district this winter, which started with local events in Campbeltown and finished with the Mull qualifying contest.

Local
Successful qualifiers from the local contests will come together in Oban with as many as 140 young athletes, from seven 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. The Argyll Sports Hall competitions are promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club, with support from other athletic clubs, and sponsored by Awards for All.

Double Oban win at congress

Chess
FOUR tournaments, consisting 106 players from all over Scotland, at the 16th Oban Chess Congress.

The event, held in the Royal Hotel last weekend, saw two Oban winners. The strongest tournament, the Open, was won jointly by Stephen Burns-Mannion of Paisley Chess Club and Ed Spencer from the Castlehill Club in Dundee, who shared the £450 prize money.

Chess

First prize in the Challengers Tournament was won outright by Oban player Alastair Campbell with a score of 4.5/5 and the Major Tournament ended with three players tied for first place with 4/5.

The Minor Tournament was won by Oban Chess Club president, Geoffrey White with a score of 4.5/5.