

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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INSIDE part one of our wedding guide pull-out

THE BRIDE GUIDE

includes full details on the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show



SCOTTISH
SEALIFE
SANCTUARY

INSIDE

Annual pass reader offer
see page 15 for full details

People's Games postponed for year

THE LORNE Highland Games, which is held on the last Sunday in June, has been cancelled due to a volunteer shortage.

The event had become a highlight of Oban's annual calendar and was known locally as the people's games.

Kieron Green, a member of the organising committee, said: 'Due to several retirements from the Lorne Highland Games committee, it will not be possible to run the event this June.'

'The games will, however, be back in 2017 and we are looking for volunteers for the committee, and we are also looking for organisations, community groups and individuals willing to assist on the day.'

'A specialist knowledge of Highland games isn't required, but car park attendants, ticket/programme sellers, go-fors and people capable of erecting tents are always valuable.'

Chairwoman, Dee Bradbury said: 'It is with a heavy heart that I must step down as chairwoman.'

'My new job as Scottish Rugby representative to Rugby Europe will mean a lot of travelling, particularly at the time of the games, leaving me unable to devote the time the games need.'

Anyone wishing to volunteer should email secretary@lorne-highland-games.org.uk

Highland Show to clash with EU referendum

THE in/out vote on EU membership is set for Thursday June 23 is a date that clashes with the opening day of the Royal Highland Show.

Organisers of the Royal Highland Show are urging attendees to consider setting up a postal vote.

Connectivity key to Argyll success, says forum chief

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

PEOPLE in Argyll and Bute should accept nothing less than 4G provision from mobile phone providers, according to the chairman of Sky plc.

Nicholas Ferguson, CBE, has been heading up the Argyll and Bute Economic Forum for the last 12 months and says the potential in the area is 'immense', but people have to start working together to achieve it.

The forum was set up in October 2014 to drive forward economic progress throughout the region. This report is the first from its members who work in key business sectors, lead agencies and government.

Mr Ferguson, who is a life-long resident of Tignabruich, was speaking ahead of the report's publication on Tuesday (February 23). He said that top of the group's agenda for change are mobile technology and connectivity.

'The situation with mobile phones is concerning,' Mr Ferguson said, 'but where there are obstacles coordinated efforts



Nicholas Ferguson CBE

must be made to campaign for, and achieve, change.

'Mobile connections were stated by everybody we talked to as a problem.'

'I think the Conservative government has made the biggest mistake in not recognising the worth of mobile phones and instead considered them as a luxury item.'

'If the government had realised mobile phones were an essential item then it could have charged higher spectrum fees and we would not have had the

problem with them we do at the moment. Can you imagine if the government had allowed patchy development with electricity?'

He continued: 'It was a mistake to give out telecommunication licences that did not cover the entire UK and demand that these were delivered.'

'The lack of provision is beginning to limit the area. I can give you two examples.'

'Firstly, people need information as they go. Ferry timetables, bus timetables, Air BnB, holiday information are all taken from mobile phones and when your phone doesn't get a signal it makes being in Argyll and Bute more difficult. We want to make it simple for people to be here.'

'And secondly, we have all these wonderful festivals taking place in Argyll and Bute where people sell food, drink and clothing amongst other things. People don't tend to carry cash the way they used to, so they use a mobile card reader but, of course, it doesn't get signal.'

'I have heard of people missing out on £5,000 worth of sales because there is very little signal in Argyll.'

Mr Ferguson said he had spoken to many people about the problem, including Oliver Letwin MP, advisor to Prime Minister David Cameron on government policy; the Scottish Government, the mobile phone providers and Alex Paterson, 'the man who gets things done from Highlands and Islands Enterprise'.

Mr Ferguson vowed: 'I will not let it go, we need ubiquitous 4G in Argyll and Bute - nothing less will do.'

Saying that a shared vision on many matters was the key to an area's success, Mr Ferguson said: 'From business leaders to newspaper editors and teachers, the private, public and academic sectors must come together to drive prosperity in one of Scotland's most promising regions.'

'I was asked to look at Argyll from a business perspective. Like any business, if we are to achieve our potential we need a shared vision, with all our members working to make that vision a reality.'

'Argyll and Bute can clearly succeed and grow. We have strong advantages in two of the

world's fastest growing industry sectors, namely tourism and food and drink production, particularly aquaculture.'

'We have a strong entrepreneurial tradition and many great small businesses. We have good education and one of the finest environments in which to live. We have an economy of opportunity here to be developed.'

'Marketing the area should be coordinated across all agencies involved. Schools and businesses must forge stronger links so that young people are aware of careers opportunities on their own doorstep.'

'Agencies should focus their spending where possible on local producers and suppliers.'

'It's about everyone coming together to back Argyll and Bute. It's a great place with great potential.'

'A shared vision will bring the prosperity that's there for us to create.'

The Economic Forum will meet again in late March. Mr Ferguson said it would be a monitoring group to ensure plans laid out in the report were delivered.

Oban Express staff left stunned as Menzies Distribution axes 30 jobs at town depot

MORE than 30 staff members at an established Oban parcel business have been told their jobs are on the line, in spite of its parent company denying in last week's *Oban Times* that there were any concrete plans for change in the business.

Oban Express was bought by Menzies Distribution in late November 2015. At that time the business ran 45 vehicles, with depots in both Oban and Glasgow.

A company employee who did

not want to be named said this week: 'We were all lined up and each of us had an interview with the bosses.'

'No-one is happy about it. I cannot for a minute imagine this is what the former owners thought would happen when the business was sold.'

'We have been told that a skeleton staff will be kept on in Oban - maybe 11 people - and there are a couple of jobs in both Fort William and in Lochgilphead we can all apply

for. It is the end of an era.'

Another man said: 'This is disgusting behaviour from a national company.'

'I think we all knew the writing was on the wall.'

'People want to get parcels all over the area for the cheapest price and it is not cheap to get parcels to the Highlands and Islands.'

'I am now looking for a new job along with 20-odd other people. It is going to be tough.'

When the business was

taken over in late November, managing director Forsyth Black said: 'We have now strengthened the geographical reach of our specialist parcel consolidation service, which dramatically cuts the cost of delivery to isolated areas for national carriers.'

In June 2015 Menzies Distribution acquired AJG Parcels of Inverness. It described that move as 'another strategic purchase for specialising in hard-to-reach areas'.

Last week *The Oban Times* was told by a spokesman for Menzies Distribution: 'Our HR team has confirmed that while we are reviewing our operations in Oban, no conclusion has yet been reached and shared with our employees.'

'In the event that any changes do emerge, our employees will be the first to know.'

An updated statement from the company was requested this week, but no reply was received at the time of going to press.

TIMESLINE

Driver arrested on leaving ferry

A MAN who may have been driving 'for years' without an official driving licence was stopped on Shore Street, Oban as he drove off the CalMac ferry from Tiree this week.

Police officers were alerted to the fact that the 65-year-old Tiree man had arrived on the mainland, driving his car on his own, and was believed to be driving on a provisional licence.

Sergeant Alan Moore said: 'A man was arrested on Monday afternoon on alleged driving offences. He was charged with driving without insurance while alone in a motor vehicle without a suitable person next to him.'

A report has been made to the Procurator Fiscal.

Resurfacing work planned on A83

MOTORISTS using the A83 are soon to benefit from an improved road surface on a 1km section between Dalchenna and Auchindrain following an investment of £245,000 from Transport Scotland.

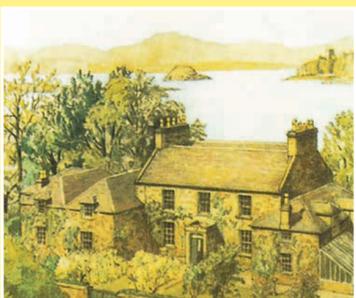
The resurfacing improvements will take place between south of Argyll Caravan Park to Auchnagoul and are planned to begin on Monday February 29 for approximately two weeks.

The improvements will be carried out between 7am and 7pm each day from Monday to Friday with no weekend working planned.

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Billy's freedom on hold - again

THE FAMILY of a man caught up in an international dispute in India have had their hopes of him being freed put on hold again this week as legal wrangling continues to keep him in prison.

Last month Billy Irving from North Connel and five of his UK colleagues were jailed in an Indian prison for five years on piracy charges.

The men have been detained in India since October 2013, when they were arrested after their vessel, owned by an American company offering armed protection services to vessels sailing between the

Indian Ocean and Red Sea, was blown off course.

A bail hearing last week was stopped mid-argument after officials ran out of time.

This week it was believed the court would allow the men their freedom while waiting for an appeal against their sentences. But the judge asked for more time to make his judgement.

However, Billy's fiancée Yvonne MacHugh told *The Oban Times*: 'The bail hearing has been completed. No verdict was given today. They have reserved orders, so I will my update my Facebook page

when we get a date for the verdict, or further information.'

'Lawyers have been into prison to see Billy and the other men. They are okay, health-wise at the moment, but they are desperate to get out of prison and for the appeal to be heard.'

Jim Irving, Billy's dad added: 'I do not think we would have coped with the worry and upset without you all, whether the support be financial or just to tick Like on the Facebook posts. It all means the world to us. To know that there are people in this crazy world, some of whom we do not know, have

never met and probably never will, and yet you continue even after more than two years, to send messages of support and encouragement is a Godsend to us. Please, please, please, keep it all coming - we, the families, and especially the men, need it.'

At the time of going to press, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were unable to make a statement about the situation.

A page to raise money for the men and their families has been set up. To donate text FSG066 £1 TO 70070 or visit www.justgiving.com/freesgo6

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Scottish creelers join low-impact fishers

SCOTTISH inshore fishing businesses with a low environmental footprint have joined a European-wide coalition to push for fairer representation for their skippers.

A meeting of the Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation agreed unanimously to join Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE).

The move sees nine fishermen's associations from across Scotland strengthen efforts to back small-scale, low impact fishermen at European level and boosts LIFE's ever growing membership to more than 4,000 active fishermen.

The coalition works to promote the interests of its members by pushing for the proper implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy to grant priority access to fishers who have the least impact on the environment and add the most value to local fishing activities. The LIFE coalition also works on behalf of its members to grant the right to fish to those who fish sustainably, end harmful subsidies and reduce overcapacity without endangering small scale fishermen.

Mussels fight back against sea changes

MUSSELS are fighting back against ocean acidification, a new scientific report has found.

A gradual rise in oceanic acidity, due to higher CO2 concentrations absorbed into seawater, weakens the calcium carbonate exoskeletons of shellfish, corals and sea urchins, making them vulnerable to predation and damage from oceanic movements.

But a new paper published in Scientific Reports shows the humble mussel is fighting back, by adapting and evolving to the sea changes.

Dr Susan Fitzer, from Geography and Earth Sciences at the University of Glasgow, said: 'Research suggests mussels induce a repair mechanism to combat shell damage under ocean acidification. Mussel shells grown under ocean acidification produce more amorphous calcium carbonate and had less crystallographic control over shell growth.'

But the mussels' adaptation may be insufficient to protect them.

Mull pensioner, 85: 'I want a proper health service I fought for'

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

CUTBACKS have made Mull 'a third world country in terms of healthcare', an island pensioner has claimed.

For the last eight years, 85-year-old Hugh Dickinson has cared for his wife Peggy, 85, who suffers from dementia, at their home in Dervaig.

'It's been a real struggle looking after her,' he told *The Oban Times*: 'It's more than taken its toll. Over the past year I've gone down hill rapidly. But she's my wife. We've been together since 1953. I can't put her in a hospital because I know I'd never see her again. She's terrified of hospitals after the last time.'

Mr Dickinson claims that while in hospital some years ago, his wife's health deteriorated and she lost a substantial amount of weight. He said: 'My wife

was skin and bone,' he said: 'I could pick her up by one hand. I brought her home and brought her back to life.'

He said that following this period, the local GPs would visit once a fortnight without fail, but now it's harder to see a doctor because they don't do home visits unless it's an emergency. With the couple living in Dervaig and due to Mrs Dickinson's condition, Mr Dickinson says it is harder for them to attend either the surgery in Tobermory or care centre in Craignure.

'It's wrong that old people should travel 23 miles to Craignure and back for a medical appointment,' he said. 'There's no bus service from Dervaig to Craignure except on the school bus. So if they've got an appointment in Craignure, it's a whole day's journey.'

'I can't even go to the dentist in Tobermory, because I can't

leave my wife. I'm working 16 to 18 hours a day for a pension of £119 a week. You're supposed to live on that?'

'I fought for my country. My country isn't fighting for me. The welfare state has almost gone. All that fighting's been for nothing. I want a proper health service that I fought for.'

'We are short of doctors. It's ridiculous how much they've been cut back, and I want to see it how it was. We used to have two at Tobermory. Locums keep changing, and you can't pin anything down. You can't blame the doctors; the rot starts at the top with politicians. They're going to cripple the health service come what may.'

'We had a good medical service a year ago and they've taken it away. I'm just a voice in the wilderness crying out. There are a lot of old people who are afraid to speak.'

A spokesperson for NHS Highland responded: 'There has been significant investment in health and social care provision on Mull in recent years, the biggest of which was the opening of the Mull and Iona Community Hospital and Progressive Care Centre at Craignure.'

'GPs are now working as one group practice but continue to provide surgeries in the existing locations, so there is no difference to travel distances for patients attending appointments.'

'We are currently going through a recruitment process to recruit the two remaining GP vacancies. In the meantime we have locum GPs providing cover.'

'Our GPs will also undertake home visits when there is a clinical need and if anyone does need transport and they meet the criteria then transport will be made available.'

Secret life of West Coast basking sharks revealed

A PIONEERING three-year project revealing the secret life of the West Coast's basking sharks was published this month.

The Basking Shark Tagging Project tagged 61 sharks feeding near the sea surface off the islands of Hyskier, Coll and Tiree, and used satellites to track their real-time horizontal and vertical movements between 2012 and 2014.

The report, published by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), found the migratory giant fish, the world's second largest after the whale shark, tended to summer in the Sea of the Hebrides before wintering as far south as Spain and North Africa.

Scientists at SNH and the University of Exeter believe the sharks return each year to feed in the area's plankton-rich seas, and that they could benefit from a proposed marine protected area off the West Coast.

Protecting highly mobile species, such as basking shark and whales, is difficult due to the large areas they cover. Identifying and managing areas



The project has tagged 61 basking sharks

where they gather to feed, or for important life-cycle events, can aid their conservation.

SNH project manager Dr Suzanne Henderson said: 'The sharks show courtship-like behaviours, such as jumping clear of the water, known as breaching, and swimming around nose-to-tail.'

'These suggest the sharks return for other reasons too, perhaps even to find a mate. It really does emphasise that the Sea of the Hebrides is highly important for this migrating species.'

Consultation on long-term future of wild fisheries

THE SCOTTISH Government has begun a three-month consultation on its new draft Wild Fisheries Bill, and anglers and fishing proprietors are urged to take part.

Donald Cameron, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Candidate for Argyll and Bute, claims SNP plans present a radical change in how wild fisheries are managed and encouraged those with an interest to make their views known.

Mr Cameron said: 'It is important the Scottish Government gets any new legislation on wild fisheries right and ensures local expertise and good practice are built upon.'

'It seems certain that Fishery Management Organisations (FMOs) will replace current District Salmon Fishery Boards and that these FMOs will have an all-species remit and not just salmon and sea trout. There are concerns the funding issues around this change have not been addressed in the draft bill and other subjects like the relationship between local FMOs and government need to be considered closely.'

Responding to Mr Cameron's concerns, Argyll and Bute SNP MSP Michael Russell said: 'The purpose of a consultation is to consult. There will be a range of views. I'd encourage Donald Cameron to engage with the process of consultation.'



Michael Russell MSP

'It's a long-running and contentious issue and we need to get a long-term resolution. The bill is about the effective management of the environment and the prosperity of the people who work in it.'

The consultation ends on Monday May 2.

Land Reform Bill 'going in the right direction'

THE SCOTTISH Government's changes to the Land Reform Bill are 'broadly going in the right direction', Argyll and Bute's SNP MSP Michael Russell has said.

SNP members voted, as expected, to reject their party leadership's description of the bill as 'radical' at their party conference last October, and later, Mr Russell, who sits on Holyrood's Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, also urged the bill be strengthened.

In January Aileen McLeod, minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, announced 49 changes to the Scottish Government's flagship land reform legislation, which is meant to improve

the way land in Scotland is used, owned and managed, after committee MSPs insisted the bill must be emboldened to achieve its aims.

Introducing amendments to the Rural Affairs Committee to debate last week, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment Richard Lochhead MSP said the new-look bill would introduce a new process for tenant farmers to sell or assign their tenancy, to 'deliver a fairer balance of rights between those that own the land and those that work and depend on the land.'

The new measures also widen the category of relatives who can succeed to a tenancy. If landlords wished to intervene in the assignment they would

have to pay a higher price than the incoming tenant.

Mr Russell, who voted for the amendments, said: 'I don't think they're particularly radical. It gives the opportunity for those coming towards retirement, with no successor in place, to look to the future with some confidence. We are living with the consequences of a 19th-century pattern of land ownership and we need a broader view. It's a matter for the whole of Scotland. We need to make a more sustainable agricultural system and I think the bill addresses that. Broadly we're going in the right direction.'

If passed, the Land Reform Bill will also give communities a right to buy land to help sustainable development,

and make information more publicly available on who owns land and its value.

David Johnstone, chairman of landowners' group Scottish Land and Estates, said they supported community ownership where there is a willing buyer and seller and the land is neglected and abandoned, but appealed for the amendments to prevent the enforced sale of well-managed estates.

In a further development last week, Community Land Scotland launched a new programme to increase the number of communities taking on land ownership in Scotland, and help existing community landowners tap into peer-to-peer support and the sharing of best practice. The Scottish

Government-funded programme aims to help reach its target of one million acres of land in community ownership by 2020.

Chairman Lorne MacLeod said: 'the community landownership movement has made great strides and there are now more than 500,000 acres of land in Scotland owned by communities. In some areas, such as the Western Isles, community ownership has become the norm, with 70 per cent of people living on community-owned land. We'll be able to help more communities in under-represented areas such as the South of Scotland, East Coast, and the Central Belt reap the benefits of owning and managing their own land.'

MULL lines



Mull Hockey Club made its first public appearance last week by playing in Oban's indoor tournament.

Mull hockey club gets off to a flyer, winning Oban indoor tournament cup

MULL Hockey Club made a winning start when it took part in its first tournament last week, lifting the trophy at Oban's indoor event.

Jonathon Kellar, the new maths teacher at Tobermory High School, started up Isle of Mull Hockey Club and the group has only been training for three sessions.

Mr Kellar said: 'We all had a brilliant time. The standard of hockey was excellent and they are such a nice group of people.'

'We also really did ourselves proud. We finished second out of five in the group stages, qualifying for the semi-finals.'

'In a very tight and compet-

itive semi final - we were losing 1-0 with about 30 seconds to go - we edged it with an extra time 'golden goal'.

'The final beckoned. We'd already lost to this team earlier in the day, so focus was on enjoying ourselves and being proud of what we'd achieved already. Four-two down at half-time, we gave everything in the second half. It was four all at full-time. Then another golden goal extra time winner.'

Everyone agreed it was an incredible achievement after just three training sessions.

Kara McKee won ladies' player of the tournament, while Jonathon Kellar won the male prize.

Commerical dive company achieves Investors in Young People accolade

MDIVE, a commercial dive company based on Mull has achieved the Investors in Young People Accreditation, the only people-management standard that focuses on an employer's recruitment and retention of young people.

The award represents a true commitment to the training and development of young people and demonstrates MDive as an employer of choice for young people.

Launched in July 2014, Investors in Young People originated through a key recommendation from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, led by Sir Ian Wood.

The accreditation is offered to all businesses across Scotland and exists to recognise and support organisations in the employment of young people.

Having achieved the accreditation, MDive is now eligible to use and display the Investors in Young People logo and plaque, and enjoy its benefits.

Commenting on the award, Helen Dewar, managing director said: 'We are all delighted to have attained this accreditation in recognition of the work we do in recruiting and developing young people from our local community, and hopefully in the future from further afield.'

Peter Russian, chief executive of Investors in People Scotland, said: 'This is a fantastic achievement for MDive and I and the whole IYIP team would like to wholeheartedly congratulate them. The Investors in Young People framework not only recognises and supports organisations in the employment of young people, but marks them out as an employer of choice.'

'I envisage that many more organisations will wish to follow in the footsteps of MDive and demonstrate their commitment to young people by working with the Investors in Young People framework. The benefits of recruiting and developing young people are countless. These include the creation of a talent pool for the future, new and increased skills in areas such as IT and social media, fresh eyes and mind-sets into business operations along with enthusiasm and unique talents.'

MDive is based at An Roth Community Enterprise Centre, Craignure, Isle of Mull and currently employs 12 full-time staff with a pool of self employed cover divers.

Established in December 2013, MDive is entering its third year of trading and has recently won two awards for excellence.

High speed broadband delivered to homes in Tobermory and Craignure

FOLLOWING the completion of significant engineering work, including subsea links, the first homes and businesses in Tobermory and Craignure can now benefit from fibre-based broadband.

Further coverage is planned for Tobermory with two more cabinets expected to be upgraded by Spring 2016.

Work has already started in the village of Aros, with further work to upgrade more than 150 homes in Salen expected to progress

around spring 2016. Plans are also under way to bring fibre broadband to Dervaig.

The upgrades are thanks to the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband partnership, led by HIE and delivered by Openreach, part of the BT Group.

To benefit from the faster speeds, people should contact their service provider to place an order.

Coverage info and updates are at www.hie.co.uk/whereandwhen

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Bogged down in red tape

LOUISE GLEN and SANDY NEIL
editor@obantimes.co.uk

TWO 'notes of interest' have been placed with Argyll and Bute Council to take over the running of public toilets at Ganavan beach, a-mile-and-half north of Oban.

But instead of accepting one of those offers, Oban, Lorn and The Isles area committee has decided to market the lease at Ganavan, plus adjacent land.

At a meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee last week, councillors were told it had received two unsolicited expressions of interest for the toilets.

The building and land will be offered for long-term lease or, depending on the offers received, an alternative option for the council developing a facility on the site which it would then lease. The second option would depend on a business case showing this would be financially viable.

Area committee chairman Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'This area lends itself to development and it's vital to have it advertised as soon as possible to make sure the council receives good value if the go-ahead is given for a leasing arrangement.'

'There is no doubt that potential development will enhance an already popular location, and will be of huge benefit to local users and visitors alike.'

'I feel confident there will be formal expressions of interest and look forward to receiving development proposals and ideas to make this site the very best it can be.'

Ganavan is popular with kayakers, cyclists, walkers, dog walkers and the many visitors to this spectacular coastal location. Following the announcement,

The Oban Times went into the town centre to ask people their views on the sale at Ganavan.

Richard Maxwell, of Oban said: 'Seven years ago it was handed to the public and the public should have it.'

'You could have a nice wee place selling ice-cream, or swings for the children, because there's not much in the town.'

'It's ridiculous having parking meters out there. You have to pay to take the kids out there. Tourists and locals have to pay to park, and they'll just go away.'

John McDonald: 'The thought there would be any restrictions [on parking] is frankly astonishing.'

Other members of the public, who didn't want to give their names, said: 'If it goes into private ownership, the parking fees will be exorbitant. If it restricts access to local people then it's not a good thing. It's a lovely beach. It should be public access at all times. I would hate for there to be restrictions, but you've got to raise money for it.'

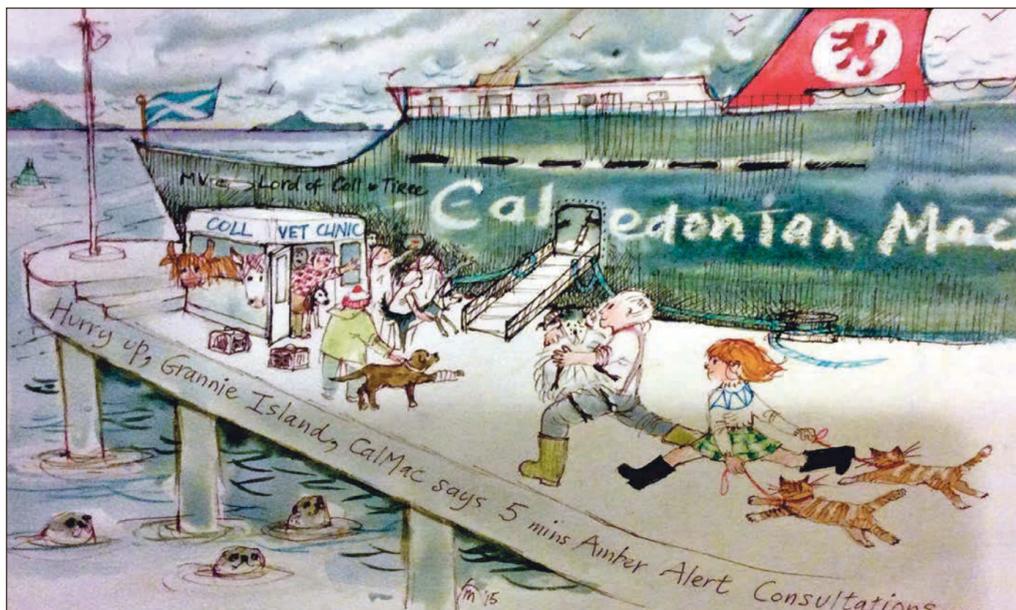
One woman demanded: 'Knock down the houses and put it back to the way it was. It's a beach on a housing estate, really. It could have been a good local amenity back in the day, but it wasn't managed well.'

While a man from Dunbeg said: 'It should be an accessible, free beach. I hope somebody buys it and does something with it.'

'There's a couple of swings and it really needs updated. If it's sold they could do more with it, and maybe then people wouldn't mind paying a small charge for parking.'

And a dog walker from Oban said: 'I don't think people should be paying parking charges because it's a public beach. The council don't even keep it nice.'

Islanders give vet a special send-off



ISLANDS vet Pat Boyd was presented with a unique farewell card, above, when he retired recently after serving the animals of Coll and Tires – and their owners – for 35 years. The one-off card, created by children's author and illustrator

Mairi Hedderwick – whose Katie Morag series of children's picture books are set on the Isle of Struay, a fictional counterpart of the real-life island of Coll where Hedderwick has lived at various times for much of her life – captures the unusual

challenges for an island vet, and Hedderwick's humour, with a pier-side clinic on Coll.

A group of well-wishers gathered at Coll's community centre, An Cridhe, to bid a fond farewell to Mr Boyd, who ran the Coll and Tires practice with his wife

Judith. Following a presentation of gifts – which included a Hebridean throw, a case of wine, a wooden bowl crafted on the island and the humorous card – the Boyds enjoyed a fine dinner at the Coll Hotel, hosted by the island's farmers.

OAP guilty of indecent practices placed on Sex Offenders' Register

A 74-YEAR-OLD man has been found guilty of two serious offences against two children following a jury trial at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

At the beginning of the trial, pensioner Stanislaw Madej pled not guilty to nine charges; he was acquitted of five of these.

On Friday (February 19), Madej, of 3 Stalcraig Crescent, Oban, was found guilty by majority verdict of lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards one child (Girl 1), and guilty by majority verdict that on various occasions he committed lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards a second child (Girl 2).

The jury returned unanimous verdicts of not guilty on two other charges involving Girl 1.

The offences were said to have taken place in Oban between January 9, 1998 and December 5, 2014.

Both of Madej's victims gave evidence by video link.

The court heard his crimes came to light after Girl 1 had sexual health lessons at her school, following which her mother and teachers noticed a change in her behaviour.

Her mother said: 'I was stunned for a couple of minutes. I believed her immediately but had to find out if she was telling the truth. But I knew she was telling the truth.'

During evidence, Girl 1 told the court: 'I thought it was about time I told her [mother] because I remember it quite a lot. I was doing health stuff in school. It was wrong what he done to me. I think it was wrong.'

She added: 'I was too young to know he was doing something wrong to me. He used to tell me he had done it to [Girl 2] as well and not to tell anyone or he would get taken away.'

Girl 2 told the court: 'Nothing physical happened but inappropriate comments.'

She said that when she was six or seven years old he asked her if she would like to make love to him. He showed her a novelty keyring which depicted a man and woman having sexual intercourse. She also said normal hugs and kisses went on too long and he referred to her as 'gorgeous' and 'sexy'. She said: 'As a teenager I realised things weren't right. I didn't want to be round him. It made me feel uncomfortable. I would avoid him.'

When challenged under cross-examination that she was misconstruing Madej's actions, she said: 'Why make up something so hurtful?'

She said that when she learned of Girl 1, she decided to speak up: 'I felt I have to back her up because of what happened to me as a child. It was wrong.'

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said police seized 15 pieces of IT equipment from Madej's home.

A Police Scotland specialist said only one laptop was of relevance; on it he found one photograph of Girl 1 sitting on towel, naked, in the lotus position.

He said: 'There was no evidence of distribution of the photograph and no internet history of relevance to this case.'

Madej an electrical engineer for 55 years, admitted he had a drink problem and suffered from depression.

He said: 'I was clean for about 15 years then started having relapses. My mother, father and wife died in a short period of time, we had been married for 42 years.'

Madej denied the allegations made by the two girls and said

he believed one of the mothers had put them up to it.

He said he had found the obscene keyring, hung it up in his shed and thought nothing of it. He said Girl 2 had found it by accident.

When asked about the photograph of Girl 1, he said: 'I did not take that photograph; the first time I ever saw that photograph was when I saw it in court, here.'

Defence agent Edward Thornton produced a series of photographs inside the house where the naked photograph was said to have been taken. These showed discrepancies in the background.

Mr Thornton added: 'Innocent, common actions like a cuddle or a kiss can be given different connotations years later.'

'[Girl 1's] allegations are based on flashbacks, false or vague memories influenced by health education lessons and family tensions.'

Sentence has been deferred until April 11 for reports. Sheriff Mungo Bovey QC ordered Madej's passport be surrendered to the court. Madej was placed on the Sex Offenders' Register.

Action group aims to deliver on the Rest

AN ACTION group has been set up to take forward the wishes of the people and business of the area in finding a solution to the issues affecting the Rest and Be Thankful.

On the group are Jane MacLeod from the Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce, Argyll and Bute Council, and it is headed up by former deputy-provost councillor Dougie Philand and Donald Clark of the George Hotel in Inveraray.

While the group has been set up informally to begin with, Mr Clark feels it is the right move, enabling the group to develop ideas away from the Scottish Government and freeing the area from 'being held to ransom by the Rest and Be Thankful'.

Mr Clark said: 'All things that are outside our [the people of Argyll and Bute] control are conspiring to work against us resolving the issue of the Rest and Be Thankful.'

'If Westminster can fix a train track in Dawlish in a little more than a few weeks at a relatively reasonable cost then it is time the Scottish Government did the same for us in Argyll.'

'The road is having an impact on our day-to-day lives and costing businesses thousands of pounds. We cannot get our food and drink out and we can not get tourists in. All this amounts to millions of pounds of business a year.'

'It will eventually mean jobs and people moving out of the area. The matter is now urgent and we can not put up with second best.'

'The government doesn't want to spend the money. There is simply no argument I have heard that says we need to spend the amounts the Scottish Government are suggesting a permanent solution will cost.'

'Our estimates say we could drill through for a fraction of the £100 million that the Scottish Government tells us it will cost.'

'I have no doubt that all the ongoing work the Scottish Government is doing through the helicopters they are bringing in and out and monitoring the route on a 24-hour basis are costing a huge amount of money. Perhaps it is time that it was all put into finding a permanent solution.'

Mr Clark said there are three options the group are considering at present including: a flow over canopy, digging a sump and gully under the road and building the alternative road on the other side of Glen Crow.

Island ferry to resume freight service

A MAJOR milestone will be reached on Monday February 29 when the Kerrera Ferry resumes carrying freight.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL)'s contractor, George Leslie Ltd, has undertaken works to extend both slipways, removing the tidal restriction from this ferry service. Works will now start

on the breakwater at Kerrera. CMAL's Project Manager, Ruairidh Campbell, said: 'We are delighted to resume the freight service to the island.'

'We ask that anyone wishing to transport goods to or from the island to contact Kerrera Ferry Ltd as soon as possible, as there is likely to be a backlog.'

Partner speaks out after driver jailed for causing death crash

A TAYNUILT woman has said that while court justice has been done, nothing will take away the life sentence of losing her partner, who died in a road accident in October 2013.

Following a collision on the A85 near Dalmally, Julie Cameron, 41, and her boyfriend Julian Kneeshaw, a 44-year-old carpenter, from Calgary Bay on Mull, who was a passenger in the car, were cut out of her vehicle. Mr Kneeshaw later died from chest injuries he sustained in the accident.

On February 3, 2016, James Fergusson, 57, a renewable energy technician from Oban, was convicted of dangerous driving at the High Court in Edinburgh and sentenced to

four years in jail. He was also banned from driving for five years and ordered to sit an extended test before getting his licence back.

Ms Cameron said that she saw Fergusson's car and braked sharply causing her car to hit the soft verge of the road before it spun across the road crashing into another vehicle.

Ms Cameron said: 'We all see people on roads around here driving dangerously every day, and if they are going to drive like that and cause accidents they need to take responsibility for it.'

'I'm glad some kind of justice has been done, but whatever time this man serves in jail is nothing to the life sentence Julian's family have been given.'

Young artists in Argyll get creative at Benmore weekend

ARGYLL Youth Arts, a hub creating art events and opportunities for young people in Argyll and Bute, held its annual activities weekend at Benmore last month.

Argyll Youth Arts' is a collective of creative and cultural organisations from the region placing young people at the centre of their working practice, including Oban's Rockfield Centre, Artmap Argyll in Lochgilphead, Tarbert Arts and Leisure Centre, Dunoon Burgh Hall, Helensburgh Cove Park, and Islay and Jura Youth Action.

Last month, 40 young artists, performers and musicians from all over Argyll braved Storm Gertrude to travel to Benmore Outdoor Centre near Dunoon for an activities weekend of art, music, drama and film workshops. Seventeen-year-old Oban High School student Ross Christie said: 'The Benmore weekend was a great opportunity for artists of all sorts,

and was really helpful for the young promoters' team. We got the chance to talk about possible upcoming collaborations and events around Argyll, such as Helensburgh's Festival of Architecture, live music sessions, and fine art workshops. Hopefully we're now equipped with skills to facilitate young artists in Argyll and Bute.'

Iona Young, Oban's Young Channel Manager, said: 'It was great getting to see all sorts of different arts. I loved the freedom everyone had while doing the different forms of art. It really allowed everyone to express themselves.'

The month features a 24-hour session making horror films and light painting in Lochgilphead, a sleeper at Mull Theatre exploring the use of food to make art, and a guitar, bass and drums clinic with Deacon Blue's Gregor Philip and Lewis Gordon, and drummer Danny Grant, at The Tower Digital Arts Centre in Helensburgh.

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc

Argyll Reinforcements



Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (SHE Transmission) intends to reinforce the existing transmission network in Argyll to enable renewable energy to connect to the network and enhance security of supply.

We will be holding public exhibitions in regards to three projects, two of which are new:

- Inveraray to Crossaig overhead line replacement project
- New substation located near Ardbrecknish and new overhead line to Dalmally (new)
- Replacement overhead line between Taynuilt and Ardbrecknish (new)

We will be holding public exhibitions on the following dates where we warmly welcome members of the public to find out more and comment on the proposals.

Exhibitions	Location	Venue	Date	Time
	Inveraray	The George Hotel	Tues 8 March	14:00 – 19:30
	Dalmally	Community Centre	Weds 9 March	14:00 – 19:30
	Taynuilt	Village Hall	Thurs 10 March	14:00 – 19:00
	Kilchrenan	Village Hall	Tues 15 March	14:00 – 19:30
	Portsonachan	Village Hall	Weds 16 March	14:00 – 19:30
	Skipness	Village Hall	Thurs 17 March	14:00 – 19:30
	Tarbert	Village Hall	Tues 22 March	14:00 – 19:30
	Lochgilphead	Argyll Inn	Wed 23 March	14:00 – 19:30

For further details about the project please visit our website: www.ssepd.co.uk or contact our Community Liaison Manager, Kelly Scott on 0734 202 6270 or Kelly.Scott2@sse.com.



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MacKenzie's delight at winning local by-election

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

THE SNP's Julie MacKenzie has promised to be accessible and listen to people following her win in last week's by-election.

The SNP vote in the Oban North and Lorn by-election last Thursday (February 18) was almost double that of the runner up. Ms MacKenzie won the seat with 1,113 first-preference votes.

A total of 2,630 valid votes were cast with a turnout of 33.84 per cent. Nine votes were rejected.

Andrew Vennard, Scottish Conservative and Unionist took 609 votes, Independent Kieron Green received 608 votes while

Pat Tyrrell, Scottish Green Party, took 300 votes.

Ms Mackenzie, who grew up on Seil and now lives in Oban with her partner and two children, told us: 'I'm honoured to be sitting here as an SNP councillor. I'm an activist who's become a politician. It's been a whirlwind. I spent my first days answering letters of congratulation. We celebrated with a fantastic team – I wouldn't be here without them. I would like to thank my voters and fellow candidates for making it an enjoyable and positive experience. It was heartening to see the Greens coming through.'

Her priority, she said, is to find her feet and to be accessible and listen to people. 'My time spent as a community councillor [in Oban] made me feel people were

not being listened to,' she said. 'The first thing I'll do is hold regular surgeries, not just in Oban but across the ward, to find out exactly what's affecting people and take it from there, issue by issue, and hopefully sort it out.'

Her candidate statement elaborated: 'I share your concerns about our area: our roads, the empty shops, ferries and public transport, digital connectivity, housing, cut backs in employment and education, and business rents increasing against a backdrop of ever-deeper austerity cuts. I will fight hard to oppose the proposed savage council cuts to front line services and staff, and also vigorously oppose any action that damages the most vulnerable in our communities.'



Julie MacKenzie shows her delight after winning the seat for Oban North and Lorn in the by-election last Thursday. Her vote was almost double that of the runner-up, Andrew Vennard. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

LORN lines



Adam, his younger sister Ellen and mum Angela with Rotarians George Miller, Iain MacIntyre and Frank Walton. Mr Walton was representing MacQueen Bros. Charitable Trust as a trustee.

Adam's delight at new set of wheels

HAVING outgrown his existing tricycle, a youngster from Barcaldine was delighted when Oban Rotary Club and MacQueen Brothers Charitable Trust bought him a new one.

Adam Hutchison, who has cerebral palsy, took delivery of his state-of-the-art machine last week, which has sophisticated gears and offers easier handling.

Its purchase was co-funded by the Rotary Club of Oban and MacQueen Bros. Charitable Trust.

Iain MacIntyre of Oban Rotary Club said: 'This particular make of recumbent bike – Trix Melon – is manufactured and supplied by the Hase Company in Germany, which specialises in bikes that make it easier for people with disabilities to become more mobile.'

'The suspension can be extended to accommodate a person of up to 6'4" tall.

'With the improved gear system young Adam will be able to keep up with the rest of his family, who are keen cyclists, on the local cycle path.

'All involved were moved by the sheer delight on Adam's face as he tried out his new trike. His parents Gregor and

Angela have passed on Adam's previous bike to the council with the hope that someone else will benefit from it.'

Song and dance at Tainuill ceilidh

A CEILIDH in Tainuill village hall last Saturday night attracted a large crowd.

Oban High School's Emma Hill gave a stand-out performance on the bagpipes, while the high quality music continued with Shona Masson (fiddle) and Inveraray's Jake MacKay (mouth organ), and Agnes Liddell Eilidh Lawson and Jodi Anderson (Laura Munro dancers) delighted the audience with their polished highland dancing performances.

The visiting group from Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association sang beautifully under well-known conductor Kenny Thomson, with solo performances by Alison Wood, Gordon McKeever, Alasdair MacMillan, Joy Dunlop and Donald-Iain Brown.

Another association chorister, the legendary Donnie Maroot, had the audience in stitches with his quick-fire round of jokes.

Fear an Taighe for the evening was Alasdair MacMillan.

Family appeal for help to trace missing Fife man

A MAN missing from home since February 5 was seen as late as last weekend in the Oban, Mull and Lochaber areas.

The family of Robin Millar, 44, from Newmills in Fife, contacted *The Oban Times* in a bid to find out what has happened to him.

His family say they are 'beyond worried' and are making daily appeals for help to find him.

Mr Millar was seen driving his white Fiat Doblo van, registration number SC51 LWX, near Kincardine.

Police in Fife have issued a fresh appeal for information on Mr Millar's whereabouts following reports that his van was seen in the Creran area of North Argyll.

Mr Millar has not been in contact with friends or family



Robin Millar

since early February and concern continues to grow for his welfare.

Mr Millar is a keen hill walker and police believe he may have visited Oban and Mull between February 12 and 19. Members of the public in these as

areas are asked to come forward if they have information that may help locate him.

Mr Millar is described as white, 5ft 9ins tall, slim with a shaved head, large ginger and white beard, and he wears glasses.

Sergeant Tony Rogers from Dunfermline Police Station said: 'At this time we are focusing our inquiries on the Oban and Mull area, as well as the wider Argyll and Bute region. We are keen to hear from anyone who believes they have seen Robin in the past week.'

'Once again, we would also ask Robin to make contact with family, friends, or with police to let us know he is safe.'

Those with information can contact Police Scotland on 101.

Oban has vision to help charity

THE OBAN community is being encouraged to hand in unwanted glasses to Specsavers in a bid to provide eyecare and glasses for people in developing countries who otherwise would not have access to optical care.

Specsavers is supporting the charity Vision Aid Overseas (VAO), which raises money by collecting old glasses for recycling.

Specsavers Oban makes huge donations of specs to VAO every year thanks to the generosity of local residents. In 2015, the George Street opticians donated more than 1,000 pairs of specs. So far this year it has collected more than 400 frames.

Kenneth MacDonald, director of Specsavers in Oban, says: 'The support we have received for VAO from locals has been brilliant over the years and we would love for that to continue.'

'We collect glasses in store all year round, meaning that whether you've postponed your New Year clear out or are thinking ahead to a spring clean, if you come across any old and unwanted frames you can recycle them with us.'

Specsavers and VAO have a joint commitment to provide eyecare for people living in Zambia. As part of its ongoing fundraising for the charity, Specsavers has to date channelled more than £800,000 into the Zambian partnership.

AFTER working for six months solidly and being fairly wrung out I needed a break from work.

People, it seems, now call this cash rich and time poor. I doubt if my husband would agree with the cash rich bit - but you get the idea.

I had been toying with the idea of heading to Paris again. My companion and I had travelled to the city of lights for a number of years.

But after the events of late October it was suddenly not as welcoming as it used to be.

After panicking that I might never take a holiday ever again, there is always something I can find to do at work, a lovely friend took me in hand and suggested a visit to the Isle of Islay.

To the area called The Oa, in fact, and in particular to the lodges at Coillabus.

Whilst I was perfectly happy to go to Islay, as it is close enough to be far away, I was slightly concerned that the weather would impede our enjoyment.

I was wrong, and my friend was absolutely correct when I said I would not be disappointed with the weather or Islay life.

We made our way to Islay on the last CalMac ferry of the day laden down with (completely unnecessary supplies as of course there is everything you could ever want on the island including in-house chef services) - it was very exciting to actually be on the fancy ship Finalaggan.

The relatively new fleet member is like a cruise ship - in fact a smaller version of the QM2 with all her lighting and glass features.

Aboard ship most European nationalities were represented including three German men and a 'flying' Dutchman (he was on a trip for 48 hours to see all Islay island distilleries including Jura).

Our first lesson was this: be nice to the people you meet on a ferry because you will meet them time and again over the coming days as you play pas de bas around every monument, beautiful beach, distillery and awe inspiring view on the island.

We arrived into Port Ellen in the dark. Very quickly the lights of the village were behind us as

we made our short trip to the cottage.

There is nothing like arriving on a new Scottish island - so many opportunities, so many experiences - the smell, the silence the wildlife, the pace of life.

Let me explain, I am not very good at directions.

Correction, I am not good at listening or taking directions - I trusted my companion to be good at that.

But I hadn't actually sent her the directions, and as a busy hotel manager she was also ready for a break from organising other people's lives.

So in spite of seeing the name of the lodges clearly written at the side of the first road we went down, I decided that a wee trip to the end of the road at The Oa sounded all very romantic in the dark.

How right I was. After an amazing and unexpected late night lightshow - otherwise known as the Northern Lights we made our way back to the cottage and began to take up residence.

It was very easy to take the stuff we had dumped in our car earlier that day straight out into an 'antechamber' to be sorted and carted off into our bedrooms.

In all, unpacking of our many belongings took about ten minutes.

Before any length of time, at all, we had shaken off the woes of the world and we were in the hot tub, in the darkness with a near-full moon catching the sparkles in our champagne flutes (plastic of course).

A good night of sleep ensued on a fantastic bed with superb pillows.

I woke up to what I thought was a big bird dancing on the turf ceiling. I was chuffed to bits that wildlife watching was not going to be a problem.

I was thinking this was an eco house to rival all eco houses if an actual Golden Eagle or the resident chuffs dancing on the ceiling - or grass turfed roof, without knowing it was on top of a house.

It wasn't until after a finely scrambled Islay egg, and buttered toast that I saw a reflection of the 'bird'.

It was in fact a very naughty black-faced sheep breaking all the rules about where it should be and having a jolly good time sunbathing on the roof.

I laughed and laughed. And that was when it hit, that moment that always gets you on holiday - I like to call it separation anxiety, the worry of work. I mean how could they possibly cope without me.

Nothing can quell those anxious feelings other than a look at my emails and a check of my phone.

So I allowed myself a good look at my phone while the sauna was heating up. My head was settled - all was well, they were coping.

If I could, I would like to list for you the many, many memories I made in Islay during my mini break. But the best things are not about a checklist and ticking them off. The best things are Islay itself. Explored at its best it is about wandering and chatting and being guided by the island weather and the people you come across.

A good starting point for us was a book kept in the house, written by the owner, that provides great information about food deliveries, where to get stuff, taxi companies (for a night out at one of the many lovely places to take of a light refreshment), people to speak to - to buy fish from and every detail including the owners' 'full cousin' who is also a masseuse who will come to the house.

When people find out you are staying at The Oa they are interested in asking lots of questions.

When you say you are at The Oa they will make an 'ooohhhh' sound when you say you are at Hester's place.

The second thing people ask is 'Have you been in the hot tub?'

Days on Islay started to melt into one another very quickly, but every moment was savoured.

We walked, talked, hot tubbed, sang (at the top of our voices) listened to Scottish music band Skipinnish and good old Van Morrison on CD, visited every distillery on the island, and even took a trip to Jura.

We visited the post office in Portnahaven, and in Bridgend, The hotel at Port Askaig, watched football and ate a splendid meal in the village pub with a rather enthusiastic Manchester City fan, visited ancient rocks and (by comparison) some modern Neolithic settlements, took photos that show some of the beauty of the island and relaxed.

The lodge was at the centre of everything we did - it wasn't a base, it was the heart of our holiday. It gave us real honest no-problems-whatsoever surroundings in which we could relax and enjoy the island the sunsets the views, but most of all gave us the opportunity to enjoy ourselves.

What makes the lodges even more exciting for me, was the woman who built them. Hester is not someone who has built a holiday lodge and run away. Following in the tradition of her family, who have worked the land at The Oa for decades, she too is making the land work for her in a very modern way.

Hester's dad was on the land everyday while we were there still working with the sheep and cattle.

There was something very authentic in The Oa experience. So much so that I didn't want to give up hope that I might actually return to Islay to enjoy the same relaxation that I had felt when I was there. Something I hadn't experienced for a long time.

It was so lovely to be somewhere that was no bother to enjoy, no bother at all - not even with those sunbathing sheep.

ISLAY

'close enough to be far away'

by Chief Reporter Louise Glen

The welcome in Port Ellen will always be remembered.

Registered charity SC032157

Pontoons will be open from Easter until 31st October

20 new visitor berths were added last year

38 berths have inclusive water and power.

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Public demand their say over parking charges

OBAN TIMES readers, both online and through our letters page, have said they are keen to be consulted on plans for increasing parking charges, writes Louise Glen.

While most people are disappointed that they have to pay for parking, some people believe Argyll and Bute Council simply haven't thought about the consequences of what they want to do.

Business owner Robin Kincaid, of Oban Sea School, said: 'The council will have to think through the needs of the motorist in conjunction with the duration of the parking space.'

'Those that want short-term parking have less of a problem as there are several options near Oban town centre.'

'Those that want to park for a number of days will need spaces and a mechanism for paying.'

'There are a number of businesses in Oban, as well as on the islands, that need to have a reliable facility where people who need to leave their vehicles for a number of days can find a space.'

'We need to know this information sooner rather than later so clients can be informed.'

'The last thing they need is to be hunting about looking for a parking spot when the clock is ticking to get on the ferry or other vessel on time.'

Mr Kincaid continued: 'There has been mention about what is to happen to the old bowling alley building and I believe it has to be flattened.'

'This would be the ideal place for a multi-storey car park, maybe on two or three levels, with the ground floor being retail outlets or sheltered housing, with the parking above. It would seem that the town is forever expanding and the number of parking spaces generally is being reduced.'

Mrs M Nicholson of Dunollie said: 'Give the people of Oban a break and show some common sense – we are already the most



penalised town in Argyll for parking. Enough is enough.'

Bill Murray of Oban added: 'Why is the council not taking the opportunity to give residents and visitors in Helensburgh, Dunoon, Rothesay and Inveraray, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown the opportunity to add to the income stream.'

'After all, the income from parking fees and penalties collected from motorists in Oban, which amounts to a considerable sum of money is not ring-fenced but benefits all of Argyll and Bute.'

One woman who did not want to be named said: 'We pay our dues per services. The council should manage these monies more efficiently and not subsidise them with unreasonable parking charges.'

From our website at www.obantimes.co.uk, Lorraine Craig said: 'Nightmare. So where are hard working, out-of-town people meant to park? Yet again targeting hard-working people.'

Christine Ross said: 'But it won't bring the librarians back' in reference to council cuts to all high school librarians in Argyll and Bute.

The official parking consultation will get under way in the next few weeks. The council said a previous consultation was 'only to gather people's views'. During this time, members of the public can make representation to the council about the new parking charges of £1 per hour for car parks including Atlantis, Lochavullin and Ganavan beach.

Concerns over A85 closures

A FORMER MP has voiced his concerns about the time it takes to open the A85 after an accident.

It comes after a lorry blocked the road between Connel and Taynuilt last week, creating an 84-mile diversion.

Alan Reid said: 'Single-track roads just get grid locked. There

should be equipment on hand to deal with these incidents.'

'The money it would cost would be saved by the community not having to make long detours.'

'There has been so many accidents on that stretch of road, they should have equipment locally to deal with it quickly.'

Gigha attraction welcomes green-fingered helpers on unofficial gardening holidays

GREEN-FINGERED helpers are lending a hand at one of Argyll's most beautiful gardens – with many of them never having been asked.

The 54-acre Achamore Gardens were developed by former island laird Colonel Horlick in 1944 and feature some of the most impressive blooms of rhododendron species and other 'tender' plants from around the world. Colonel Horlick collected the plants himself, bringing them back to Gigha's relatively warm microclimate.

Over the years, the number of staff employed to maintain the gardens has reduced. At one time more than 20 people worked in the gardens; at the moment, there is a 'small dedicated team' that maintains the grass and garden areas.

The gardens are now owned and managed by the Isle of



During the summer Gigha's relatively sheltered climate means Achamore Gardens comes alive with colour.

Gigha Heritage Trust on behalf of the islanders of Gigha.

The large scale of the gardens does not seem to have put off some enthusiastic helpers who bring their own gardening equipment when they come

to the island to stay. And even those who visit for just one day help out without being asked.

Ken Deacon, who runs the Gigha Hotel with partner Andzela Bajoruniene, says that instead of weeds putting guests

off coming to the island it has, in fact, become an attraction, especially to those people who are on the island out of season.

Mr Deacon, who took over the lease of the hotel last year, said: 'There are a band of visitors who come to the island throughout the year and without it being an official visit or anything, they go along to the gardens and weed.'

One islander who did not want to be named said: 'The gardens are so big and take a tremendous amount of work to bring into order, it must seem like a huge task.'

'But we have all seen the people who come over and spend the day helping out with weeding – with or without permission. I wouldn't say that the trust had let the gardens go, so much as other people can see the huge potential in putting in the time and work in to make

them the 'jewel in the crown' they are advertised to be.

'The crown is a little bit rusty to be honest. If it wasn't for the weekly weeders then heaven knows what the state of the garden would be.'

The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust, which took over the running of the island, including the gardens, some 14 years ago also organises regular weeding weekends.

A note on Achamore Garden's Facebook page reads: 'If anyone is able to spare any time there are volunteer opportunities at Achamore Gardens. Everyone is welcome, regardless of experience. The work varies from weeding and planting to wood supplies.'

A group from New Caledonian Woodlands recently visited the island to help with managing the garden.

Concerns raised over cost of health and social care plan

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

BOARD members at NHS Highland waved through plans for the Argyll and Bute Integrated Health and Social Care project without knowing how much it would cost.

A special meeting held in Inverness on Tuesday afternoon heard the plans had been developed in response to 703 replies to its consultation over a six-month period.

Praising the plans, board members said the final document was exceptional.

However, Ann Pascoe, a non executive of the board said: 'We don't know how much it will cost.'

Mrs Pascoe then made reference to a morning meeting that had suggested the cost of the strategic plan may be in the region of £6.5 million.

She said: 'Now we have approved this plan and it might cost £10 million.'

'I am concerned we do not know the final figure.'

But she continued: 'I think the plans are brilliant.'

Asking if the board would see the plans again with the budgets attached, board members were told 'no'.

Stephen Whiston, Strategic Planning and Performance at the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership said: 'Funding [projections] will come to a future meeting as part of a wider budget.'

'The Integrated Joint Board has to approve its strategic plan with budgets.'

'It will be brought to the board as part of our health funding. But members will not see the plans again. This will be the last time you see them.'

Other member of the NHS Highland board raised concerns about not knowing how much the plan cost but when it came to approve the strategic plan it was waved through unanimously by members.

Meanwhile, it has also come to light that the computer systems for health care in Argyll and Bute Council and in NHS

Highland do not speak the same 'virtual language' and a computer system to service the integrated health board will need to be found.

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'In Argyll and Bute we have had significant experience of joint working across health and social care for a number of years and we are continuing to build on this with the introduction of the Health and Social Care Partnership.'

'With regard to IT we have an Information Sharing Protocol in place which allows the sharing of information between the NHS and Council and there will also be arrangements in place to allow health and social care staff to access the respective systems from a single PC while at the same time ensuring data confidentiality.'

'As part of our strategic plan the HSCP will also continue to invest in new technology in order to continue to improve the services delivered to patients and to support staff in delivering these services.'

Woman lied about being assaulted by partner

A WOMAN told Oban Sheriff Court that she lied when she said her former partner had assaulted her and then found herself having to continue with the lie.

Cara Jane Lees, 29, of 15E Corran Brae, Oban, admitted falsely telling two constables on December 7, 2015 that she had been assaulted by her then partner, wasting police time and rendering him liable to suspicion and accusation of assault.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty told the court last week that the matter had gone as far as Lees' former partner going on trial at Oban Sheriff Court and Lees giving evidence; but during the lunch-time break in proceedings she was seen in discussion with the man, despite being warned not to before hand.

'When she returned to court she said she had been lying,' the fiscal said.

Defence agent Jane Thomson

said the couple had 'a turbulent relationship with chronic drug use in the past'.

Lees, she said, 'had on impulse told social services the lie and had been pushed by social services to contact the police and one lie lead to another. She found herself continuing in this lie. She apologises to the court.'

Sheriff Mungo Bovey QC ordered Lees to undertake a two-year supervision order and to carry out 175 hours of unpaid work within the first year.

Kevin Hobbs joins CMAL as new chief executive

CALEDONIAN Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) has appointed Kevin Hobbs as its new chief executive officer.

Mr Hobbs, who currently owns a ports, marine logistics and shipping consultancy, has held a number of senior management positions during his 25-year career in the maritime industry and will take over on April 1 from the current CEO, Tom Docherty, following a short handover.

Mr Hobbs was director at the UK's third biggest port, Milford Haven Port. He was responsible for all operations at Pembroke Port and Milford Docks, including the ferry terminal, general stevedoring, Wales' largest fishing dock, operation of the marina and Milford Haven Ship Repairs. He also ran the estates department, where he, together with his colleagues' assistance, gained outline



Kevin Hobbs

operating five ferries across the Irish Sea.

Erik Østergaard, CMAL's chairman, said: 'The board and staff warmly welcome Kevin to the CMAL team.'

'Kevin brings strong commercial leadership and a wealth of operational management experience, which will be an excellent match for the future projects and challenges faced by CMAL as we continue to provide world-class infrastructure support and ground breaking vessel technology across the Clyde and Hebrides.'

Kevin Hobbs said: 'This is a very exciting time in CMAL's history, with an ambitious programme of fleet renewal and harbour development.'

'I look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead and to meeting and working with the communities that CMAL serves.'

POLICE FILES with Sergeant Alan Moore

Driver charged with careless driving

AN OVERTURNED lorry at Achanacroish Bridge on the A85 near to Connel brought the entire area to a standstill shortly after 7.50am last Thursday morning (February 18).

Sergeant Alan Moore praised the patience of drivers who were encouraged by Traffic Scotland to take an 84-mile detour via Lochgilphead to reach their destination.

Sergeant Moore said: 'A 51-year-old driver left the carriageway spilling his load onto the beach. SEPA and health-and-safety officers secured the area making sure large amounts of oil and diesel did not make their way into Loch Etive.'

'Scottish Fire and Rescue officers and officers from Oban Police Station were on site until much later in the day when the vehicle was finally removed by specialist equipment.'

'The driver has been charged with careless driving and reported to the Procurator Fiscal.'

Teenager allegedly threatened police

A 19-YEAR-OLD man was arrested in the early hours of last Friday morning (February 16) after being threatening and abusive to police officers.

The man allegedly resisted arrest in 'a violent manner'. He was later released from police custody and a report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

Reported to Procurator Fiscal

TWO men found brawling in the street in Oban after a night out in the pub have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

A 28-year-old and an 18-year-old were alleged to be fighting in the street shortly before 2am on Monday morning.

Both men were charged. The younger man was reported for carrying an offensive weapon.

Youth arrested over drug allegations

A TEENAGER is alleged to have been travelling on the Glasgow to Oban train carrying ecstasy tablets and cannabis. He has been reported to the procurator fiscal.

The 16-year-old was arrested by the police after getting off the 3.28pm train on Thursday February 18.

He was taken to Oban Police Office where officers informed the youngster a further search of his person was to be undertaken. Police then found what is believed to be the Class A and Class C drugs hidden on the young man.

Technology Matters with John Orr



Tomorrows World? Smarthome automation is here.

Science fiction is becoming everyday technology for an increasing number of homes. A smarthome combines control of lighting, heating, security, audio, and access to create a stylish, comfortable and thoroughly modern home. And far from being a gimmick the smarthome can save energy, can enhance security and can add convenience.

With switches and sensors linked to a mini server it is possible to automate many aspects of your home or office. Blinds that react to light and radiators that come on when the temperature dips would be obvious examples. The use of sensors which in turn link to a computer allow subtle control of energy across the whole house. A more sophisticated approach introduces connectivity so that the controls of for instance, your heating or outside lights, can be managed from your smartphone when you are away from home.

What does that mean in practice? At a simple level you can control your home from afar. Most phones now incorporate GPS and that opens up another level of sophistication. Your phone can utilise GPS to automatically instruct your heating or lights to

come on when you are within a specified range of home.

With IP CCTV cameras now more affordable than ever other avenues of convenience and security open up. Your doorbell can alert your smartphone to the presence of a caller. You can view the caller on the smartphone and converse with them and again use the smartphone to instruct the smarthome computer to open a gate or garage door so that your caller can make a delivery while you watch.

The computing power to achieve this is relatively modest and the cost of cabling each room back to a little mini server is not that significant in the overall build cost of a new home. Similarly in an existing house wi fi rather than cable can be utilised to connect sensors and actuators.

Some products controlling specific things such as lights or heating have been on the market for a wee while but the real key to smarthome performance is to adopt a system such as Loxone which integrates all services through a miniserver and smartphone app in an easy to use format.

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Coll

AN CRIDHE community centre on Coll is calling on islanders to get involved with upcoming events.

There will be a tree-planting meeting on Wednesday March 2 from 2pm until 3pm, where residents can have their say on where they think 400 trees should be planted in the grounds of the centre.

The tree planting will take place on Sunday March 27. For further information call 01879 230000.

An Cridhe, which means 'The Heart', is also looking for people to take part in its annual Easter concert.

Anything from performing a sketch, singing, dancing, telling jokes to helping behind the scenes is welcomed. To get involved, call 01879 230000.

THIS year's Coll Bird Festival will take place slightly later than usual so there is a higher chance of seeing a corncrake.

The three-day event will take place from Friday May 13 to Sunday May 15.

There will be a variety of events for all ages including guided walks, boat trips to Lunga, talks, a beach clean and a barbecue.

For further information, visit www.collbunkhouse.com or telephone 01879 230000.

Plockton

PLOCKTON and district horticultural and arts and crafts society held a quiz and pot luck supper in Plockton hall on February 5 with more than 40 people enjoying the event.

On February 6 Dave Mockett organised a curry evening in the hall to raise funds for the children's trip to Peru, with around 30 people attending.

On January 22, 40 people attended the annual Burns supper organised by Robert Kennedy. A total of £270 was raised and donated to Plockton Music School.

The AGM of Plockton and district tourist organisation was held in the hall on January 18. All the office-bearers were re-elected.

Weather: in Plockton there was six inches of rain in January with seven dry days. The warmest day was 15.4°C and coldest was -1.9°C.

Cowal

VISITORS to Cowal can expect to be inundated with recommendations about what to see and do in the area, as a workshop on the subject took place earlier this month.

More than 16 businesses in the area attended a workshop titled Get Wild About Argyll at Benmore Botanic Garden.

The workshop and mentoring scheme is part of Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative.

Both land and marine tourist operators were represented at the full-day workshop, which equips business owners, and their staff members who interact with tourists, with the tools to speak knowledgeably about what to see and do during their stay.

Get Wild About Argyll was first trialled in the Oban and Lorn and Mid Argyll areas in early 2015.

The initiative was a finalist in the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Nature of Scotland Awards last November.

Tiree

PUPILS at Tiree High School raised £518 for charity by organising a dodge ball tournament.

The event was organised by S1 to S3 to raise money for the British Heart Foundation.

Primary school pupils took part in the event and some dressed up in costumes including pirates, farm animals, fisherman, musicians, crofters and tourists.

In the end it was the pirates and the tourists who battled it out in the final, with the tourists winning the tournament.

Tiree

KILBRANDON SWI held its February meeting in Seil Hall.

Members brought along their favourite starters and everyone sampled them. Recipes were swapped and there followed an interesting discussion about favourite recipes and cooking techniques.

Kilbrandon SWI welcomes new members. It meets at 7.30pm on the first Tuesday of every month.

Barra

A PUBLIC meeting on the St Brendan's hospital and care home project in Barra will be held today (Thursday) in Castlebay Community School from 7pm-9pm.

Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles chief executive, said: 'We would encourage and welcome folk coming along to hear what progress is being made and what the next steps are.'



Ardnamurchan

Budding chef Niamh makes her mark

BUDDING chef Niamh MacLellan cooked some tasty meals to take third place in the Springboard Scotland Future Chef north of Scotland regional final.

The S3 Ardnamurchan high school pupil kept her nerve under stressful conditions against nine other chefs.

Niamh cooked pan fried duck breast, wild mushroom gnocchi, savoy cabbage and pancetta parcels with a blackcurrant sauce. This was followed by champagne poached peaches and

greek yoghurt terrine with a peach sorbet.

Ardnamurchan school said it was an incredible achievement for Niamh's first entry at this level and they are proud of her success and excited about the coming years.

They would like to thank Bryan MacDonald, head chef at Crannog Seafood Restaurant for his commitment and mentoring and to the restaurant for its support.

Thanks also go to West Highland College tutor Michael Campbell and to Niamh's family.

Niamh worked hard in the kitchen to prepare her meals for the regional final.



Left to right: Maggie, Kathleen, Nicola and Ellen with staff at the health board offices.

Lifeboat guild welcomes health staff donation

NHS Western Isles staff handed over a cheque for £251.10 to Stornoway Lifeboat Ladies Guild.

The money was raised by staff at the health board offices on South Beach Street, Stornoway, in December by holding a Christmas jumper day and a hamper raffle. As winners of the 'best decorated office' at Christmas, accountants Kathleen MacLennan and Nicola Pearson were given the choice of which charity should get the funds - and plumped for the RNLI.

For Kathleen in particular, her family ties to the lifeboat and the sea

are strong. Her brother is a fisherman while her father, John MacLennan, was a crewman on the lifeboat for 25 years and is now chairman of the Stornoway branch of the RNLI. Her partner has also joined the lifeboat.

Kathleen said: 'With all these connections and living in an island community, we are so thankful to have the station here.'

Nicola, from Oban, agreed their winnings should go to the RNLI.

Ellen MacDonald, chairwoman of Stornoway Lifeboat Ladies Guild, and treasurer Maggie Macleod were

delighted to receive the cheque. Ellen said: 'We really appreciate this donation. We are very thankful for everything the community does to support us because there are so many different charities in Stornoway. Being an island community, everyone is aware of the dangers of the sea and the lifeboat service is a necessary and well-supported part of our community.'

The RNLI does not receive any direct government funding and is dependent on charitable donations for its survival.

Mull

BIG LOTTERY chief executive Dawn Austwick and director for Scotland Jackie Killeen recently dropped in on Home-Start Lorn.

The charity funding bosses were interested in meeting Home-Start's Mull Co-ordinator and finding out about the exciting work of the project they are funding to extend family support to Mull.

Pictured, right, are Bob Clarke, Home-Start Lorn chairman, Jackie Killeen, Big Lottery chief executive, Dawn Austwick, Big Lottery director of Scotland, and Sarah Stanley-Wright, Home-Start co-ordinator on Mull.



Morar

MORAR Community Council met recently and among the items discussed were:

Bus shelter for Morar: the possibility of getting a bus shelter was discussed in more detail. It was agreed that before deciding on the type of shelter, the site should be confirmed. Two sites were proposed - by the Morar falls and the junction by Twelve Penny House. The community council will approach landowners to ask for their initial thoughts.

Benches and tables: secretary to confirm when the allocated benches will be placed and by whom. A few more sites were identified - by the Morar Falls on the east side of the bridge, by the old pier foundations; Marie Curie Field of Hope, by the Morar junction from the main A830 road; Silver Sands beach by Kinigarry.

Senior Citizen's Christmas lunch: the meeting was informed that the lunch had been well-attended and enjoyed by everyone. Members were pleased. However, it was noted that in the future the cost should be more closely monitored - the total this year was £1,500, with an additional £169.97 for presents for those not able to attend.

Rhubarb pavement: this is still to be fixed. The secretary will follow this up.

Christmas lights: Mallaig Community Council has supplied the contact details for the company it had used.

Highland-wide local development plan: any comments on the plan can be forwarded to the chairperson or secretary.

Relationships with the wider community: it was suggested that current high school students aged over 16 residing in Morar would be invited to the community council meetings and to help look after a Facebook page. Secretary will send the invitation.

Nick Murray has been invited to the

community council meeting to discuss the future of the games field. A representative from Morar Community Trust will also be invited to give an update on its current and future operations.

Finances: the community council received a letter from the A J I Gower's Charitable Trust informing that the grant of £5,000 previously received annually has been allocated to Morar Community Trust. Members expressed concern as this fund has been used to improve the village and donated to community clubs and organisations. Without this fund the community council may not be able to continue to help in this way. The secretary will contact the Gower's trust and convey the confusion this has generated.

Update on the current balance cannot be provided until the bank account is accessible to the new signatories.

Still to be paid out: payment for the Christmas tree and donation to Lady Lovat Primary School. These will be paid out as soon as the signatories have been changed; chairman will contact the bank to organise this.

Any other business: A member asked if anyone had noticed, or had any idea, what was happening with Morar playpark, by Lady Lovat primary. It seemed it had been abandoned during construction. Highland Council had been questioned about it but no clear reply was given.

The owners of Morar Hotel have suggested a viewpoint by the Lovat Cross, a community council member will assess the condition of the existing bench and grounds and have a look if he can find drawings of the old plaque.

The Screen Machine is conducting a survey on rural residents' thoughts about local cinemas. The service provided by the Screen Machine is highly valued by all members. The community council suggests everyone fills in the survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ScreenMachine15.

MORVERN lines

The HHX-files: the secrets of Kingairloch war

SUBMARINES are in the news these days, nuclear ones to be precise, as the main UK political parties continue to debate the whys and wherefores of renewing Trident.

Fortunately no such shilly-shallying happened during the Second World War, evidenced by top secret operations which took place in localities up and down the West Coast of Scotland.

In an effort to protect Allied shipping, the government of the early 1940s ordered the training and preparation of human torpedoes and midget submarines in remote sea lochs. Security was tight because of the nature of these activities and the equipment being trialled. Only bona fide residents and military personnel were able to come and go and even they needed the most up-to-date coloured passes.

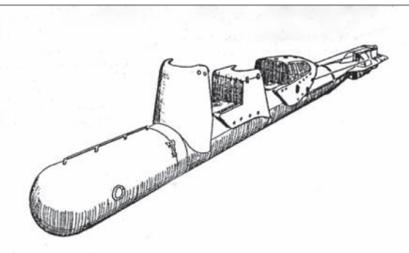
The Morvern Peninsula was one such 'protected area' with sentry boxes at the top of the slips ways on either side of the Corran Narrows and 24-hour check-points manned by armed soldiers on the approach roads.

As an example of how seriously the military monitored and regulated the movement of people, animals and goods, there is a story told of a Glasgow undertaker returning a body to the peninsula for burial who was forbidden to take his horse onto the ferry because he did not have the correct paperwork. He was ordered to report to the nearest command post to obtain clearance and was told that if he returned without it a bullet would be put through the side of the coffin to ensure there was no spy hiding inside!

So what was it that the Royal Navy were so anxious to protect in Morvern? The answer was a base in Loch a' Choire, Kingairloch, containing experimental two-man, torpedo-like craft with detachable war-heads, known as 'Charlots' and one-man midget submarines called 'Welmans'.

Work on them had been carried out by the 12th Submarine Flotilla in Loch Erisort on Lewis in 1942 but the weather there was so bad and communications and supplies so difficult that the operation was moved to Kingairloch - known as Port HHX - the following year.

There the base was centred round HMS *Titania*, an old-fashioned looking WW1 depot ship, known affectionately by everyone who served on her as 'Tiddly Tites', anchored half-way up the north side of Loch a' Choire. The loch was ideal. It was shallow at one end and deep at the entrance where it joins Loch Linnhe where two massive, anti-submarine and torpedo wire nets were suspended five to six fathoms below the surface to protect the base and on which divers trained during the hours of darkness.



An artist's impression of one of the midget submarines trialled at Kingairloch.

In charge of the operation was Commander W R (Tiny) Fell CBE DSC RN who, along with his wife, befriended Mrs Emily Strutt, widow of George Herbert Strutt, the Derbyshire Cotton magnate and proprietor of Kingairloch Estate. The arrival of this top secret project in the loch brought with it many problems for local residents. Their letters were censored and their activities restricted to the estate unless they had special permission to leave.

Initially there was some resentment to the intrusion and the security issues but it quickly disappeared when the Navy helped out with rations, provided farm labour and even established a telephone line from HMS *Titania* to Kingairloch House.

One of Mrs Strutt's daughters recalls her mother was so patriotic and war conscious she wouldn't even look in the direction of the loch in case she saw something she wasn't supposed to know about. Mrs Strutt was so obsessed with the thought of a Nazi invasion that she kept a large bottle of poison in the strong room and sent word round her employees telling them that should the enemy arrive she would give them a spoonful to prevent them being captured and tortured. After the war the bottle was sealed inside a heavy lead box, rowed out into the middle of the loch and dumped overboard.

Thanks to the operation at Kingairloch many hundreds of enemy ships were sunk. One of the most famous was the disabling of the *Tirpitz*, Germany's largest battleship, in a Norwegian fjord leading ultimately to her being sunk by the RAF and the Fleet Air Arm in November 1944. Amongst the min-submersibles developed in WW2, was a type of underwater canoe called a 'Sleeping Beauty', 12 feet long and driven by an electric motor. These too underwent sea trials in Loch a' Choire before being shipped out to the Far East for use against the Japanese. On one exercise 15 of them had to be scuttled and all the crew involved were captured and executed.

There is little evidence of any war time activities to be seen above the surface of Loch a' Choire today except for a few massive chains and the rusting remnants of the practice nets and a few derelict buildings. It would be a graceful act on the part of the Royal Navy if they would consider erecting a plaque by the loch side in memory of the charioteers and submariners who lost their lives developing and operating these unique and dangerous craft.

Iain Thornber
Iain.Thornber@btinternet.com



Loch a' Choire, Kingairloch.

The deadline for nominations is March 2 2016

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Jacobite train operator banned from running on mainline track

CAREN MCPATE
fort@obantimes.co.uk

THE COMPANY that runs the popular Jacobite steam train has been banned from running on the mainline railway until safety concerns are addressed.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has issued a prohibition notice to West Coast Railway Company Ltd (WCR), which operates the Fort William to Mallaig tourist attraction between May and October.

The train crosses the Glenfinnan viaduct, a location made famous in the Harry Potter films, and brings a huge boost to the local economy.

The decision by ORR was taken after concerns were raised about WCR's management of safety, following a number of incidents over the past year.

In March 2015, Network Rail issued the company with a temporary suspension notice after a WCR train in England came close to crashing into a passenger train travelling at 100 miles per hour.

The ORR issued an improvement notice requiring the firm to strengthen its approach to safety management. However, safety issues have continued.

The regulator considers that WCR continues to present a safety risk. Ian Prosser, HM

Chief Inspector of Railways at ORR, said: 'A decision to stop a train operator from running rail services is not taken lightly.'

'However, my concerns about West Coast Railway Company's lack of appreciation of the seriousness of a collective range of incidents over the last year, coupled with ORR's concerns on the company's governance, regrettably make this prohibition necessary.'

'These failings create a significant risk to operations on the mainline network.'

He added: 'We want to encourage successful business operations on our railways and hope WCR will be able to put in place steps to ensure



The famous Jacobite steam train crosses the Glenfinnan viaduct and is a popular attraction.

fit and proper safety management with a view to resuming operations. Our inspectors stand ready to work with the company to support and advise as it strengthens its approach to safety.'

Steps that WCR must take include: the introduction of clearer governance structures with proper accountability for safety, more robust risk assessments, and enhanced processes for managing staff with a focus on safety culture.

The Oban Times contacted West Coast Railways, but it said it was not able to comment at this time on the ban or its implications for the Jacobite service.

TIMESLINE

Can recycling firm owner's appeal

A BUSINESSMAN who ran a firm recycling aluminium drinks cans in Lochaber is keen to hear from communities who would like to help continue the project.

Robert McClymont operated the business from Kinlochleven.

Schools and community halls benefited from his initiative.

Interested communities should email rmcclymont@aol.com or call 07787 811817.

Heating oil stolen from Ardgour tank

A LARGE quantity of heating oil was stolen from a tank at an Ardgour property.

The theft took place between Friday February 12 and Sunday 14.

In a separate incident, a coin-operated carwash machine at Onich filling station was forced open and money taken during the first week of February.

Anyone with information should contact police on 101.

CalMac manager features in video

CLARE MacNeil, CalMac's Fort William tour office manager, features in a two-minute film about what it's like to work in the tourism sector.

The video was produced by Skills Development Scotland for its world of work website.

Committee pulls plug on webcasts

LOCHABER Committee meetings will no longer be available to watch online.

Last year there were only 15 live webcast views and 25 views of archived meetings.



Budget axe hangs over Blas Festival

AN AWARD-WINNING festival will be under threat if its funding is cut.

The annual Blas Festival is facing an 81 per cent drop in its grant as part of Highland Council's budget being considered today (Wednesday).

However, organisers say the event has been singled out as the council is not cutting funding to other cultural events.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal's chief executive Arthur Cormack said: 'Cuts of some kind seem inevitable and we would expect to take our share of them. However, the recommendation to cut the funding for the Blas exclusively is inequitable.'

Speaking about today's special council meeting, budget leader councillor Bill Fernie said: 'We can't protect everything.'

'No-one wants to cut services or reduce funding, but we have no option but to deliver a balanced budget.'

Poem found in Fort charity shop raises £700



Nigel holds the auction catalogue in which the book was placed, alongside assistant manager Anne Mulhern, volunteer Cynthia Cassidy and Sharon Smith with the cheque.

A POEM written by Oscar Wilde in the late 19th century was discovered in a Fort William charity shop and bought by a mystery bidder at auction for £700.

Volunteer Nigel Colburn discovered the book, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, among a box of books that had been donated to the Cancer Research Shop in the town centre.

Nigel is an avid reader and noticed that this one was unusual.

The 68-year-old has volunteered at the shop for five years and his main responsibility is looking after the books. He said: 'Last year we received many donations of books in this particular box and this one stood out.'

'It wasn't until I opened it that I realised it may have some value as each of the illustrations were initialled and it had been printed in Germany in 1923. It's quite rare. I looked for a similar

copy on the internet and saw there was one for £450.

'After consulting with the shop manager Sharon Smith, I spoke to our area manager and he advised me to contact an auction house.'

'It was estimated to go for around £200 to £250. I couldn't believe it when it went for £700. It's more by luck than judgement. I'm proud and delighted that this sum of money is going to Cancer Research and Sharon's shop.'

The book, which was written by Wilde in 1897, was sold last month and after deductions from the auctioneers, the Cancer Research Shop has just received a cheque for £629.

It's the largest amount of money the shop has received for one item.

Shop manager Sharon Smith said: 'This was like finding a gold jewel. We were all ecstatic. We would like to thank whoever handed in the book.'

Bidvest Trade Show welcomes local food businesses in its 40th year



Following on from its rebrand to Bidvest Foodservice Oban last month, the formerly named Fortheith Foodservice is holding its 40th trade show for chefs and caterers on Thursday 3rd March. This award-winning show offers exclusive on-the-day offers for visitors.

Bidvest Foodservice launched its first Scottish food brochure last year containing hundreds of Scottish products produced by local and regional suppliers. Now with a collection of over 600 Scottish products from over 100 suppliers, the company is ready to showcase its Summer range to help inspire your summer menus.

In addition to Scottish specialities, customers of Bidvest Foodservice have access to over 13,000 products from within their own Brand ranges and from recognisable branded favourites across food, non-food, beers wines and spirits. This can all be delivered on one order, alongside local products.

The Bidvest Foodservice teams in Scotland have been working in close partnership with customers and Scottish suppliers to help promote Scotland's reputation as the 'land of food and drink', providing a route to market for niche products and helping customers to develop menus and products that suit their individual needs. Several local producers from Argyll are now working in partnership with Bidvest Foodservice Scotland.

In addition to its food credentials, Bidvest Foodservice Scotland recently won the Scottish Wholesale Achievers 'Corporate Responsibility' award for its work within local communities.

What will Bidvest do for your catering business?

We're here to make your life easier, focusing on getting the basics right so that you can concentrate on serving great food. You can order online or through your local telesales teams over the phone and with our fleet of multi-temperature vehicles you can be confident that your products will always arrive in the best possible condition.

Real value

In addition to competitive pricing, attractive monthly promotions and Safari loyalty rewards, you can also take advantage of a wide range of value added services. From the latest insights, recipe ideas and serving suggestions to menu planning and printing support, we'll keep you informed about current industry trends and support your growth. If you need up-to-date advice, nutritional information or guidance, our Advice Centre is only a phone call or click away.

Get in touch with us in Oban on 01631 569100 or visit www.bidvest.co.uk and we look forward to seeing you at the show on the 3rd March.

Calling all caterers to the 40th year of our Oban Tradeshow:

An award winning event by Bidvest Foodservice Scotland

- Exclusive on-the-day OFFERS
- Circa 80 national, regional and local suppliers
- Ideal opportunity for sampling and menu planning
- Free parking
- Trade-only event

Corran Halls, Oban
Thursday 3rd March
10:00-16:00

You can pre-register by calling us on 01631 569100

Agenda: the people ● the issues ● the back story

A people-powered health service

In the past 10 years, levels of chronic ill health in the UK have risen dramatically. We eat, drink and smoke too much and we don't take enough exercise. But here in Argyll and Bute, we have the prescription to change that. As Oban, Lorn and Islands physiotherapy team leader Derek Laidler explains, exercise is the best medicine

You may have missed the news but scientists have identified a new 'wonder medicine'. It's been proven to help prevent diseases as diverse as diabetes and dementia, cardiovascular disease and colon cancer, it can reduce the risk of having a stroke or having a fall, it can prevent obesity, ease depression, pain and many other symptoms associated with chronic medical conditions. It helps with some common effects of aging by strengthening bones and muscles, and best of all it's freely available to everyone – age, ethnicity, shape or size doesn't matter. Why has this new wonder drug not been headline news and why do most of us choose to ignore its benefits?

The 'medicine' I'm talking about is physical activity – exercise, and, of course, it's not new; over two thousand years ago Plato noted that "Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being, while movement and methodical physical exercise save it and preserve it."

Modern science, however, has taken a while to catch up with the Greek philosopher and has only recently cast its enquiring eye over the physical effects of exercise. What we have found is that in many circumstances, exercise out-performs medicine in disease prevention and symptom control. In Oban, 40 per cent of the community has a chronic medical condition that could be improved or prevented with exercise. If it came as a pill we would all be taking exercise every day.

Exercise as medicine has an image problem and for a physiotherapist like myself, this presents real problems in my work. Exercise forms the core of almost everything we do as a profession and I've seen some amazing, life-changing results when I've helped people to follow simple rehabilitation exercise programmes. All too often, however, I've felt the frustration of watching people struggle with everyday tasks, disrupted by pain or disability, simply because they choose not to follow self-management advice, often seeking a 'quick fix', easy option rather than trusting their own body's ability to improve through exercise.

Part of my job is to understand why people make these decisions and I've realised it's partly due to our traditional attitude towards exercise; that it's something optional, something to do if you have enough time, something people choose to do for enjoyment and not health. Partly it is our attitudes towards health and health services, which are based on symptom management once a disease is established rather than preventing disease in the first place – an approach comparable to repairing a damaged aircraft halfway through a long haul flight rather than effective maintenance on the ground.

As a result, the relationship between the public and the NHS has evolved over many years to the point where there is a temptation to delegate responsibility for our own health to doctors, nurses and other health professionals; we wait to be told what ails us and what medicine we need to take

to fix the symptoms. Often the underlying illness could have been avoided with the right advice and some simple lifestyle changes. We've become passive rather than proactive and we need to become better informed, better supported and better behaved when it comes to our own health. We need 'people powered health services'.

People-powered health is about integrating the social into the medical by combining clinical expertise with self-management information and peer support to improve health outcomes, joined up services with the individual at the centre, getting the right information at the right time and practical support to manage potential health problems.

This doesn't mean removing personal choices, after all one of the best things about being an adult is the ability to make your own choices – right or wrong. But with choice must come the acceptance that responsibility for your health ultimately lies with you.

In reality this means knowing where to turn before things go wrong, as well as expert help for those whose health has left them struggling to manage. We need to start supporting and training carers to help rehabilitate their clients rather than just doing tasks for them, access to appropriate exercise opportunities for everyone regardless of age, shape, size or medical conditions, services aimed at preventing people falling rather than just those aimed at rehabilitation after a fall. As a result our busy GPs could have more time to spend with their patients, hospitals would only care for patients who really need to be there for expert and timely investigation and intervention. We need a community that knows how to stay healthy and has quick access to advice and services when needed.

In Oban, we already have the framework in place to make this work. We have the clinical expertise – excellent consultants, GPs, nurses and allied health professionals delivering evidence-based treatment and self-management advice. We're currently going through a process to integrate health and social services to ensure the managers of health services delivering rehabilitation and self-management information are the same managers responsible for the care services that deliver the rehabilitation and support self-management.

What about the peer support element? This is where Oban is way ahead; we already have that peer support in place. We have Lorn and Oban Healthy Options (LOHO).

Like George Bernard Shaw, the enlightened volunteers who set up and run LOHO recognised the positive impact exercise has on the



Derek Laidler believes exercise is the best medicine. 17_07DerekLaidler03

health of our community some years ago. LOHO employs experienced exercise professionals who work closely with NHS services to provide expert guidance to groups or individuals who need support and motivation to engage in safe and effective exercise programmes. Supported by Atlantis Leisure and funded predominantly by charitable funds, this unique community enterprise initiative is aiming to make Oban the healthiest place in Scotland. All they need to make that happen is a community willing to join in.

I have seen the amazing impact LOHO can have; it currently provides excellent local services to help people lose weight, improve chronic health conditions, recover from serious illness, reduce risk of falls and improve their quality of life as well as their health. If exercise is medicine then who better to deliver it than exercise professionals and the LOHO staff?

Getting help to improve your health in Oban has never been easier.

The

past 10 years has seen an alarming rise in levels of chronic ill health. We eat, drink and smoke too much and we exercise too little. Innovation and new medicines cannot keep pace with the damage we are doing to our health.

In addition, we have a rapidly ageing population. Even if we had the funding, on projected demographic figures, we don't have the human resources to provide the health and social care we will need in the near future. We need to change the way we think about our own health.

Nine out of 10 people who report their health as 'good' also report that they are 'happy'. That is not a coincidence. So why not resolve today to take more responsibility and control of your health?

If you need help, ask your GP about Lorn and Oban Healthy Options. If you want to help others improve their health why not contact LOHO about volunteering with them.

Whether you need help or can offer it, let's support LOHO and the NHS to really deliver People Powered Health Care and make Oban the healthiest place in Scotland.



If exercise is the best medicine then who better to deliver it than exercise professionals and the LOHO staff? ”

Derek Laidler
Physiotherapy Team Leader
Oban, Lorn and Islands



New group looks ahead at first meeting

THE NEWLY-FORMED Fort William First group has held its first meeting and 'want to get more people involved in what's happening in the community'.

The group is made up of all eight members of the now defunct Fort William Community Council who resigned last month saying they were 'tired of being ignored' by Highland Council.

Office bearers were elected and discussions about a strategy to move forward were discussed at the meeting last week.

The group's chairman Duncan Brown said: 'We really respect the efforts that Lochaber councillors make on behalf of residents, but we think that sometimes our local government prevents them from fully doing the best that they are capable of.'

'We will be looking to establish a Lochaber council which will be in tune with 21st century realities.'

'We need more people involved in what's happening around them so that things are done for them and with them.'

Mr Brown added that the name of the group is likely to change to reflect the whole of Lochaber.

The next meeting will take place on March 23.

The group is keen for more people to attend once they have secured somewhere permanent to meet.

Innovative bid by parents to build their own school

CAREN MCPATE
fort@obantimes.co.uk

PARENTS and residents in a highland village are hoping to build their own school in a project believed to be the first of its kind in Scotland.

Cash-strapped Highland Council doesn't have the funds to replace the ageing Strontian primary in Ardnamurchan.

So community members have taken it upon themselves to build their own and lease it to the council.

A site beside Ardnamurchan High School has been identified for the new build, which is estimated to cost around £700,000, not including the fixtures and fittings.

Strontian primary currently has 34 pupils and four children in the nursery.

Strontian Community School Building Group (SCSBG) is



The community wants to replace the current Strontian primary with a new building.

leading the project. Parent and chairman of the group, Donald McCorkindale, said: 'When talking about developing the existing building or replacing it, Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) is building in the area and there

was an idea that the new school could be built in such a way that in the future it could be easily converted into housing. 'It may be that in the long term, the primary may be within the high school premises.'

There's not the space there should be or could be. There was talk about doing up the existing building or replacing it. Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) is building in the area and there

Mr McCorkindale added: 'Highland Council seems pleased with the way it's going forward.'

'The next stage is firming up the plans that the steering group, the council and the housing trust have.'

If funding is secured the new school could be complete by August next year.

Strontian Primary School head teacher, Pamela Hill, said: 'The proposed new school project is an exciting prospect not only for pupils, parents and staff but also the wider community. A steering group has been established who are working with the Highland Council and Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) to develop this innovative project.'

'Support for the project so far has been fantastic and as a school, we are looking forward to seeing the proposals come to life.'

More break-ins and shoplifting

THERE were seven more break-ins in Fort William, Ardnamurchan, Caol and Mallaig in 2015, rising to 22 from the previous year. Shoplifting rose to five incidents in Caol and Mallaig, compared to none in 2014, while thefts from vehicles dropped from 10 to two.

Budget axe falls on council services

THE BUDGET has been set for the Western Isles with a further £1.4m of cuts made to services.

This is part of an overall package of savings being made by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Some of the savings will be made through roads maintenance, increasing charges at Stornoway abattoir and considering its future operation, and scrapping the funded discount scheme on the inter-island ferry services.

There will be a review of residential provision at Hillcrest children's home and respite

centre in Stornoway and a shared head teacher for Lionel school and Sgoil an Taobh Siar.

Switching off all street lights between May and October will also be looked at.

Comhairle leader Angus Campbell said: 'This has undoubtedly been a difficult

process for the comhairle and our communities.'

'Following extensive consultation we have listened carefully to our communities and their priorities.'

I believe that this has been reflected in the outcome of the budget.'

Canine partners improving lives

A WOMAN who uses a wheelchair has told how a dog has helped improve her quality of life and to be more independent.

Fiona Barcenas, along with her husband Armando and two-year-old labrador, Barnum, gave a presentation to the Rotary Club of Lochaber on behalf of Canine Partners.

The charity transforms the lives of people with physical disabilities by partnering them with assistance dogs, enabling them to enjoy a greater independence and quality of life.

Fiona said: 'Barnum helps me with practical tasks such as loading the washing machine, dressing and lifting dropped items.'

Barnum is also trained to warn Fiona in advance of criti-

cal health incidents, such as seizures and to alert her husband when she needs attention.

Canine Partners currently has 25 dogs working in Scotland and is hoping to secure land in Stirling to develop the first training centre north of the border.

The charity also works closely with the uniformed services to provide assistance dogs to those injured while on active duty.

Rotary Club president Terry Lee said: 'This amazing dog has certainly given Fiona greater independence and quality of life with its ability to give practical help with everyday household tasks.'

'The club was truly inspired by Armando and Fiona's presentation and we wish them well in the future.'



Fiona, Armando and Barnum were welcomed to the Rotary Club by past president Sheana Fraser and president Terry Lee.

MSP meets with smelter bosses

HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP John Finnie has had talks with bosses of Lochaber's under-threat smelter and hydro-electric power station.

Last month, Rio Tinto Alcan, which employs around 170 people, announced it is carrying out a review of its assets in the area.

Mr Finnie met with the company's senior vice president Pierre Chenard, vice president Patrick Tobin and general manager of the Lochaber smelter Brian King.

The MSP said: 'I am reassured important stakeholders including Scottish Development International, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highland Council are working closely with the company and that all options, including

the status quo, remain on the table. The smelter's own hydro station is capable of generating more hydro power than the plant needs and the option of selling clean energy into the national grid is being explored. Lochaber needs the smelter and I'd like to think, notwithstanding global challenges around aluminium, Rio Tinto needs Lochaber. It's difficult but I trust everyone can be patient and let this review run its course.'

Highlands and Islands MSPs Rhoda Grant and David Stewart were also due to meet officials from Rio Tinto yesterday (Wednesday) following a weekend meeting in Fort William where Mr Stewart was briefed by some of the plant's union shop stewards.

Strathallan welcomes prospective pupils and parents to open morning

THE prestigious Strathallan school in Perthshire will open its doors to prospective pupils and their parents on Saturday March 5, 2016.

The Open Morning will run from 10am to 1pm and is a chance to see the school in action, as well as to meet staff and pupils.

The event is for children aged nine and over and their families. Pupils from Argyll will be part of the welcome team showing prospective students around the campus.

Lisa Leslie, marketing executive at Strathallan, said: 'Our Open Mornings are a great chance for visitors to hear about life at Strathallan from a pupil's perspective.'

'It is usually one pupil per family and they will visit all the main areas of the school including a boarding house, classrooms, dining hall, art school and new multi-sports facility.'

Strathallan, founded in 1913, is ranked as the top Scottish Boarding School by A Levels created by the website best-schools.co.uk.

Its campus in Forquardenny, Perthshire includes a 19th century country house, modern accommodation, a purpose built computing centre, a sports hall and gymnasium, seven rugby pitches, 12 tennis courts, 3 of which are indoor, shooting ranges and in the summer term a nine-hole golf course.

The 2016/17 Autumn term will begin on Wednesday August 31.

Those interested in attending the Open Morning should contact Felicity Legge on 01738 815 003 or admissions@strathallan.co.uk or complete an online form at www.strathallan.co.uk. If none of these dates suit, parents can arrange a personal visit.

For further information about Strathallan School, visit www.strathallan.co.uk



Open Mornings:
General: (Entry age 9+)
Date: Saturday 5th March 2016
Time: 10am start

www.strathallan.co.uk
Forquardenny, Perth, PH2 9EG

Please register for our Open Morning online or to arrange a personal visit contact:

Felicity Legge
Admissions Secretary
T: 01738 815003
E: admissions@strathallan.co.uk

Registered in Scotland as a charity number SC008903

More people urged to use village stage

MORE people are being urged to use a village theatre that has been graced with performances from well-known artists to community pantos.

Kinlochleven School Theatre opened last year and has already played host to fiddle and accordion duo Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham and the Kakatsitsi drummers from Ghana.

The events have reminded those who run it what a valuable resource they have in the village.

Resident and musician Sarah Fanet is hosting a concert at the theatre next month. She said: 'More recently, the community production Glen of Thrones with its 40 actors and a band showed the technology is there to host a wide variety of events in a venue fitted with a retractable seating system for an audience of up to 122. These successes and assets must

encourage us to want more as we have the capacity to host concerts, plays, productions and all sorts of artistic events.'

'We have many talented artists around Loch Leven whose ideas and contribution will be valuable.'

'We must invite established performers and make sure that the likes of Phil and Aly do not skip Lochaber and certainly not Loch Leven when they tour Scotland.'

An evening with Sarah Fanet is a special concert for St Patrick's Day on March 17. It will be a celebration of WB Yeats, Ireland's national poet, through music and songs, with musicians, some from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Sarah added: 'Let us make sure our local children get inspired. We have a theatre and we must use it.'

The concert is at 7.30pm, tickets are £10 from the Leven centre or Ballachulish visitors' centre.

Committee seeks funding to help heat Spean Bridge hall

A COMMUNITY hall committee is hoping to secure money to heat up the building.

The Spean Bridge centre was built in the 1980s, but it can be very cold in the morning and struggles to retain heat.

The committee has submitted an application to the Climate Challenge Fund, which awards grants of up to £150,000.

If successful, the money would be used to insulate the hall and make it more energy efficient.

Residents were recently invited along to share their ideas.

David MacFarlane, chairman of the committee, said: 'Some of the windows have been double glazed so we want to do the rest of them and change the other half of the lights to LED lighting.'

'Everyone wanted a new heating system, but that does not apply to this grant. However, it's something we are hoping to look for in the future. The hall is booked most weeks with playgroups and yoga and holds private functions.'

'If we got the grant to insulate the building it will help in letting people want to use it.'

TIMESLINE

Skye film-makers' awards success

YOUNG film-makers from Skye and the islands scooped some of the top awards at the annual national Gaelic film awards ceremony attended by stars of the big screen.

The FilmG competition crowned Ross McKenzie, 14, from Sleat, best young film-maker and Hamish MacLeod, from Breakish, took home the best documentary award.

There was also success for Fèis Eilean na Hearadh, which won best film, and Fèis na Hearadh (The Harris Festival) took the top award in the youth competition.

Society spotlight on Mulroy battle

THE NEXT meeting of the Lochaber Local History Society sees Andrew Wiseman speaking on The Last Battle of the Clans: Latha na Maoile Ruaidh - The Battle of Mulroy, 1688.

This famous last clan battle took place in Lochaber and was marked by a Cairn on the Braeroy road above Roy Bridge some years ago and is of great interest locally.

The meeting takes place on Thursday March 3 at 8pm at the Ben Nevis Hotel.

Pupils need votes to land bed cash

ST BRIDE'S Primary School is appealing for votes to help win money to install raised beds and a fruit orchard.

The school in Onich is in the running to win funds from a scheme with Tesco using money from the carrier bag charge.

Votes can be cast at the Tesco store in Fort William from this Saturday to Sunday March 6.

Wedding dress up for grabs in raffle

A BRIDAL shop is raising money for charity by raffling a wedding dress worth up to £1,000.

Money raised will be split between Lochaber Action on Disability (LAD) and Fighting for Frances, a charity set up to raise money for stem cell treatment for Frances O'Connell.

Tickets are available from LAD and Marina's Bridal, both in Caol shopping centre.

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Established 1861 No 8216

Connectivity. It's not just a buzz word, it's a lifeline, particularly when you live and work in rural Scotland.

Having a connection to people, to transport links and services – and to mobile technology – is crucial in our modern world if we are to thrive as communities.

When businesses don't have a regular, dependable access to ferries, trains and buses, it's not just an inconvenience, it can mean the difference between a business either thriving or dying.

When people don't have that same regular, dependable access to transport links and services, such as healthcare and education, it means they can no longer work and live in their chosen community, but are forced to move out of the area.

The same is true when we are denied reliable connectivity to mobile technology that Scotland's urban communities take for granted.

For the majority of companies and organisations in the region, the fact that Argyll and Bute lacks a decent mobile signal means businesses in the region are at a disadvantage. As Nicholas Ferguson, CBE, who heads up the Argyll and Bute Economic Forum, explains in our front page story, we want to make it simple for people to be here. For businesses, for people living and working here, for visitors.

Argyll and Bute has all the ingredients to thrive and grow, but connectivity to mobile technology is crucial. That's why it is so important that we have organisations such as the Economic Forum fighting our corner.



'Maids of Morvern' captured in painting

Sir, Regards your few lines in *The Oban Times* of February 4 about waterfalls going up, not down on Mull, I thought you might be interested in a similar phenomenon in Morvern.

Enclosed is a print of my painting King George V (KGV). In the background can be seen the waterfalls going up as the burns go over the edge of the escarpment in a south west storm force or above.

The moor inland would get a double soaking. The phenomenon is known locally as the 'Maids of Morvern'.

As chief engineer with David MacBrayne Limited and CalMac, I noticed this on several occasions.

In these conditions I would not expect the KGV to go

beyond Tobermory, lying there until it was time to return to Oban, with several hundred passengers stranded in Tobermory – a bonus for local business people providing for the hungry and thirsty.

When I worked on the ferries, sailing to Coll, Tiree, Barra and Uist, seeing the Maids of Morvern in action, we would expect to get a hammering once we got beyond the sound of Mull and out into the Minch.

We were made of sterner stuff in those days and got many a hammering.

Today a slight breeze will keep the ferries tied up. We must have been mad!

Tam Robertson, Oban.

Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



MAR A bhios fios aig neach sam bith a th' air a bhith a' leughadh phàipearan-naidheachd bho chionn ghoirid tha an deasbad phoilitigeach mun BhBC ann an Alba air teasachadh às ùr.

Tha fras de litrichean air nochdadh a' fàgail air Riaghaltas na h-Alba gur e amasan fèin-riaghlaidh na dùthcha a th' air cùl gach atharrachadh a tha e a' moladh anns an tagradh a chuir e air Cairt a' BhBC. Ach, biodh sin mar a bhitheas, saoilidh mise gum bheil beachd agus moladh an Riaghaltais a thaobh craoladh na Gàidhlig tur ceart!

Their an seanfhacal gur fhiach deagh sgeul innse dà uair, ach mun àm a tha luchd-amhairc BBC Alba air cuid de phrògraman fhaicinn ceithir neo fiù 's leth-dusan uair, chan e a-mhàin gum bheil na sgeulachdan aca air an teanga tha iad cuideachd air fàs seachd searbh sgith gan coimhead!

Nach sònraichte ma-thà an dil-seachd a th' aig luchd-leantainn na seirbheise seo is fhathast còrr air seachd ceud mìle a' coimhead ris gach seachdain a dh'aindeoin 's ged

nach eil uimhir de phrògraman ùra rim faicinn 's a dh'arramaid. Thug beachd Riaghaltas na h-Alba air Cairt a' BhBC an aire gun do thuit àireamh luchd-amhairc dà phuing sa cheud an-uiridh, a' chiad crìonadh bho thòisich an t-seirbheis faisg air ochd bliadhna air ais, agus ged a dh'fhàs àireamh nam fileantach a tha ga chòimhead rud beag, tha amharas làidir a' nochdadh gum bheil dìth stuth ùr a' toirt buaidh.

Bho thoiseach cùise bha argamaid làidir ga chur gum bu chòir dhan BhBC an aon ìre taice a chur ri telebhisean Gàidhlig 's a tha e a' toirt dhan Chuimris, ach mar a tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba a' togail san tagradh seo chan eil luach nam prògraman Gàidhlig bhon BhBC ach an ceathramh uimhir de na tha Chuimris a' faotainn bhuaite air S4C.

Dà cheud is trithead uair a thide dhan Ghàidhlig luach còig millean, ma choinneimh còig ceud is fichead uair dhan Chuimris aig luach fichead millean!

Bheil barrachd luach ga fhàsgadh à airgead na Gàidhlig na tha fìor sa Chuimrigh? Rinn Riaghaltas na

h-Alba cuideachd argamaid làidir mu cho cudromach 's a tha taic craolaidh dha amasan leasachaidh na Gàidhlig agus cuideachd na buannachdan eaconamach a tha an cois a' ghnìomhachais, is dh'iarr e nach bi aig BBC Alba ri pàigheadh airson prògraman bhon BhBC.

'S dòcha gur e comhairle bhuaip nach d' fhuair aca, a thaobh tuilleadh taice ionmhais, a th' anns an tagradh seo bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba ach cha tig fàs gun iarraidh agus tha fhios gum bheil luchd-amhairc BBC Alba airidh air co-ionannachd seirbheis ri luchd-amhairc S4C!

USERS and supporters of Gaelic welcome the Scottish Government's submission on the BBC Charter renewal that the corporation's support for Gaelic should match what it gives to the Welsh language.

BBC Alba and Radio nan Gaidheal's weekly reach to more than three-quarters of a million underlines the vital significance of broadcasting to the future of the language.

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

Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



FilmG awards night a star-studded success

WHAT a superb night everyone had at FilmG, the Gaelic film-making awards, last Friday.

Chris Paterson, one of my boyhood sporting heroes, presented an award and justified his lack of Gaelic by explaining that, coming from the Borders, he struggles enough with English!

Still Game star and Gaelic learner Sanjeev Kohli presented an award alongside *River City* actress Dawn Steele. I told Dawn I used to enjoy watching her as Lexy in *Monarch of the Glen* every Sunday night 'when I was a wee boy', which I don't think went down too well.

It was great to see celebrities at the awards but my real excitement was reserved for the A-listers including Donnie Dötaman, Cathy Bhàn and Fergie MacDonald.

Fergie was on great form and I had a great blether with him about his column in this paper which I used to enjoy reading.

Aside from the social side of things, the standard of film making, particularly in the junior competitions, was fantastic. Congratulations to all the winners and competitors – especially Fèis Eilean na Hearradh (to whom myself and *Rapal* presenter Emma Lamont, presented the prize for Best Film) and the other competitors in that section whose films were thoroughly enjoyable: Tiree High School, Hazlehead Academy and Dingwall Academy. Congratulations also to The League of Highland Gentlemen who scooped the award for best comedy in the senior sections.

Glasgow Islay Choir Concert

WESTERTON Hall, Bearsden, will play host to the Glasgow Islay Gaelic

Choir concert tomorrow (February 26).

Fresh from its impressive second place finish in the Lovat and Tullibarrine at the Mòd in Oban, the choir is sure to be in top form.

I am really looking forward to the chance to conduct Glasgow Islay Junior Choir at the concert – which will be our fourth live performance together.

We've been working on a few fun pieces to perform along with the senior choir and on this year's Mòd pieces.

We're still looking for new members, so if anyone knows of any young folk enthusiastic about Gaelic singing, send me an email or go along to the Gaelic School at 6pm on a Monday night.

Dance returns to Glasgow Islay

GLASGOW Islay Association will celebrate its 154th annual gathering on Friday March 4 in Glasgow University Union.

Doors open at 7pm, with the concert at 7.30pm. I'm thrilled to be singing at the concert, alongside a stellar line-up featuring Catriona Macneil, Alison Campbell and Donald Iain Brown.

The evening will be chaired by Gordon Gillies, the piper is Andrew MacCowan, the accompanist Kirsteen Grant and music from the Bearsden Fiddlers.

An exciting aspect about this year's gathering is the inclusion of the dance after the concert – something the Glasgow Islay stopped doing in recent years because of falling attendances.

Trail West will begin playing for the dance at 10.30pm.

I make no apology for writing often in this column about how fond I am of the association dances.

These dances in the second half

of last year were all encouragingly busy, leading people to talk about something of a revival.

It would be so wonderful if the Glasgow Islay dance was equally busy, and became a regular date for the diary again.

Tickets for the gathering are £10 (£8 for students) and available on the door, through the Facebook page or from the committee.

Tickets for the dance are also available from the Park Bar and the Islay Inn. Dance tickets are required in advance as the union's bouncers prefer people to have tickets – but can be left on the door if need be.

What's on

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

Friday February 26: Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir Annual Concert, Western Hall, Bearsden, 7.30pm.

Saturday February 27: Glasgow Skye Association's Buntata 's Sgadan, Crawford Hall, 7.30pm.

Friday March 4: Glasgow Islay Association Annual Gathering concert, 7.30pm, and dance, 10.30pm, Glasgow University Union.

Saturday March 5: Glasgow Uist and Barra Piping Competition, Piping College, Otogo Street.

Saturday March 5: Clydebank Highlanders' Supper Dance, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, to the music of Charlie Kirkpatrick's Band. Tickets, £15, available from committee or by phoning 01389 879749.

Pub scene

Islay Inn: Friday February 26: Black Velvet. Saturday February 27: Auld Skool. Wednesday March 2: Quiz Night.

Park Bar: Friday February 26: Martainn Skene. Saturday February 27: Dùn Mòr. Sunday February 28: Dùn Mòr.

Disbelief and dismay at proposed charges

Sir, Words cannot describe the disbelief, dismay and disgust that the majority of people in Oban have at Argyll and Bute Council's decision on parking charges.

We pay our dues to provide services. The council should manage this money more efficiently and not subsidise its coffers with unreasonable parking charges.

Perhaps £100,000 is a bit excessive for the chief executive salary at Argyll and Bute Council – to say the least.

Name and address supplied.

Think again and plan for long-term future

Sir, Argyll and Bute Council needs to think again about parking charges.

Those who want to park short-term have less of a problem as there are several options in Oban town centre to do this.

Those who want to park for a number of days will need spaces and a mechanism for paying. A barrier car-park with tickets issued on arrival and payment on return would seem to be best for this. If it was close to the ferries and trains, as in Shore Street, this may work well as a dedicated longer term car park.

There are a number of businesses in Oban as well as on the islands which need to have spaces where people can leave their vehicles for a number of days.

We need to know this information sooner rather than later so clients can be informed. The last thing they need is to be hunting for a parking spot when the clock is ticking to get on the ferry on time.

There has probably been a mention as to what is to happen to the old bowling alley building and I believe it is to be flattened. This would be the ideal place for a multi-storey car-park, maybe two or three levels, with the ground floor being retail outlets or sheltered housing with parking above.

It would seem the town is expanding but the number of parking spaces is being reduced.

I have no idea as to the economics of such a venture, but with ferry sailings getting more popular year on year there has to be some extra provision for long-stay parking.

In this consultation period, our council has to make it work in the short-term and be planning for the longer term.

Robert Kincaid.

Enough is enough – stop penalising Oban

Sir Are Oban councillors suffering from a bout of amnesia?

Not many months ago, a large number of column inches in *The Oban Times* was taken up with councillors giving Scotrail and their staff grief because they were only allowing 15 minutes free in their private car park.

Lo and behold, our hypocritical councillors are now proposing to do away with the 10-minute free parking in Oban. Your free prescriptions will cost at least 25 pence in parking to collect from the main chemist in town and collecting heavy items from shops will incur a similar fee.

On top of that the council proposes to do away with the free car parks which will be a major headache for people who live out of town but work there daily.

How long before it feels the wrath of Aldi and Tesco when their cus-

tomers can no longer find a parking space? I expect they will migrate to the likes of the hospital car park, which is free and already being used by people working in town making it almost impossible to park for clinics or visiting.

We will end up with the hospital charging for parking. Where will it end? Bed and breakfast owners will be standing at their gates waving to visitors as they drive through Oban, people visiting the islands for the day will have nowhere to park – the list goes on. Give the people of Oban a break and show some common sense – we are already the most penalised town in Argyll for parking. Enough is enough.

M Nicolson.

Share burden across Argyll and Bute

Sir, I was intrigued by your report on Argyll and Bute Council's plans regarding parking charges and wondered why only Oban and Fionnphort and not the other main residential areas were mentioned.

These are Helensburgh, Dunoon, Rothesay, Inveraray, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown.

If this was not an omission, why is the council not taking the opportunity to give residents and visitors in these areas the chance to add to this 'income stream' which it seems to favour.

Shouldn't the burden of saving the council be spread over the whole of Argyll and not only applied to Oban and Mull?

After all, the income from parking fees and penalties collected from motorists in Oban, which amounts to a considerable sum of money, is not ring-fenced but benefits all of Argyll and Bute.

Bill Murray, Oban.

Press policy

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

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

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

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

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

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

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.



Are you a wedding specialist? BOOK YOUR STAND!

Brides, Grooms and their families are invited to this fabulous free event to meet, greet and discuss all things wedding-themed with local specialists. Our visitors can look forward to a glass of fizz on arrival, goodie bag, bridal fashion show, beauty tips and advice and a prize draw not to be missed!

- **When?** Sunday 20th March, 10am-5pm
- **Where?** The Corran Halls

If you wish to feature your business at the wedding show, please get in touch with Nicky on 01631 568000.

- > cinema, radio and what's on listings
- > leisure ideas
- > local events

Arena

Legendary Colin leaves legacy of The Rockfield Polka

A FITTING musical tribute to the late legendary accordionist Colin Campbell has been produced with the launch of his CD album named *The Rockfield Polka*.

The signature tune that gives its name to the album was inspired by the campaign to save the former Rockfield Primary School and turn it into a creative community hub.

The album is a compilation of Colin's own arrangements as well as traditional Scottish tunes and classics, such as *The Blue Danube* played with Colin Forgive and Lisa Moyes.

Recording of the album was finished shortly before Colin passed away in September 2015. A family production, nephew Colin plays second accordion, drums and piano and granddaughter Lisa on fiddle. Colin himself plays lead accordion, harmony accordion and midi-bass. The album is a legacy to not only a legendary musician but a visionary for the future of the Rockfield Centre in Oban.

When plans were announced to demolish the former Rockfield Primary School, Colin, his wife Lorna and daughter Fiona were at the forefront of a campaign to save the building. After Oban Communities Trust

helped research publishers and work on the cover design, which features the band against the backdrop of the Rockfield Centre building.

It was also one of Colin's greatest wishes that his music be published. Now Marianne Rugar Jarvstrat of Bombadil Publishing is helping to push this forward which will add to the last album Colin created.

Lorna said: 'We hope everyone will agree the Rockfield Polka album is a fitting legacy to Colin's musical talents.'

Gordon McNab, chairman of Oban Community Trust said: 'Colin was one of our stalwart supporters and we are indebted to him and his family for raising interest in the Rockfield Centre. This album, *The Rockfield Polka*, is a fitting reminder of Colin's fine music making. We hope to play the Rockfield Polka tune and other works on the album often at our events – and most particularly when the centre doors of the old building opens for the community once again.'

The CD is for sale in the Oban Music Shop, direct from Lorna Campbell on 01631 562930 and online from www.colincampbellmusicoban.com and www.amazon.co.uk



A FITTING musical tribute to the late legendary accordionist Colin Campbell has been produced with the launch of his CD album, named *The Rockfield Polka*.

Harris teenagers are reel deal after scooping top accolade at film awards

The Harris Festival and The League of Highland Gentlemen scooped top awards at the annual National Gaelic Film Awards ceremony, which was attended by stars of the big screen.

MG ALBA, the Gaelic Media Service, was celebrating another successful FilmG competition, its prestigious Gaelic screen talent awards, which this year were streamed live for the first time.

The award ceremony was held at The Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow (Friday February 19) and hosted by Fiona MacKenzie, face of BBC ALBA, and Niall Iain

Macdonald, TV and radio presenter.

This year's competition theme was 'Clìù' (Fame/Reputation) which inspired an array of filmmakers in both the Youth Category (aged 12-17) and the Open Category (aged over 18), with a total of 78 films being submitted.

Winning the top award in the Youth Competition was a film by Fèis na Hearadh (The Harris Festival) called *Droch Shìde* (Bad Weather). The clever idea and the excellent acting gave this film the edge it needed to take the title of Best Film home to Harris.

The film features a group of teenagers who grow suspicious when they realise that school teachers and local officials are plotting to keep the weather in Harris bad in order to keep any visitors away.

Unfortunately, only Emma MacLeod from the team who made the film was able to attend, and she was presented with the award by Skipinnish lead singer Robert Robertson and Rapal presenter Emma Lamont.

In the Open Category, a film made by the band, The League of Highland Gentlemen,

won the award for the Best Comedy. The band is made up of musicians from the West Highlands and Islands, including Seonaidh MacIntryre from South Uist, and for a change they came together to make a comedy about the controversial ferry sailings between Mallaig and Lochboisdale.

Their film *Seachdain gun Seòladh* (A Week without Sailing) follows the ferry called the Loch Never, which travels between Mallaig Street and Uist Street in Glasgow but for various reasons never makes it to its final destination.

Actor, Sanjeev Kohli, said: 'It's great to be back at the 'sgoinneil' (fantastic) FilmG Awards and see this year's batch of Gaelic talent accept their awards.'

'I haven't been practicing my Gaelic much since last year so this is the push I need to get the textbooks out again – can't have these capable young'uns getting in ahead of me!

'Seriously, well done to everyone involved, I've had a great night.'

Every film entered in this year's FilmG competition is available to view online at www.filmg.co.uk.



MG Alba freebie for aspiring media professionals

MG ALBA (The Gaelic Media Service) is offering current and aspiring Gaelic media industry professionals the opportunity to participate in the Celtic Media Festival 2016 which takes place in Dungarvan, Waterford from April 20-22.

Five bursaries are to be made available to individuals between 18-30 years of age looking to pursue a career in Gaelic media or individuals and freelancers currently working with an independent production company that is involved in the making

of Gaelic programmes for BBC ALBA.

The grants available will cover the registration fee for the festival, accommodation throughout the event plus cost of travel to the Celtic Media Festival.

Iseabail Mactaggart, MG ALBA Director of Development and Partnerships said: 'The Celtic Media Festival is a key networking and knowledge sharing event for media practitioners from the various Celtic nations and regions.'

'We are keen to ensure that the next generation of

Gaelic media professionals have the opportunity to attend this festival to learn from some of the most experienced media professionals in the Celtic countries and also from countries further afield such as Australia and New Zealand.

'MG ALBA is ambitious for the growth of its supply sector, and we hope that this festival will inspire future generations of Gaelic media professionals to adapt an international outlook from the outset.'

Previous attendees in-

clude Vicky Kilgour who is currently employed by Bees Nees Media, making programmes for BBC ALBA and TG4, and who debuted on BBC ALBA as a presenter on the Tthree Music Festival last year.

Vicky Kilgour said: 'I was delighted that MG ALBA afforded me the opportunity to attend the Celtic Media Festival. Attending an event like that, and having the opportunity to make contact with and learn from professionals in other countries who work at various

levels in the industry, was a great stepping stone for my career development.'

'I was able to quiz them about how they got to where they are, and the sessions offered a Celtic wide perspective on issues to do with broadcasting in general, but particularly minority language broadcasting.'

Anyone interested in the bursary support from MG ALBA should email eilean.green@mgalba.com for an application form which must be submitted by 5pm on Friday March 4.

Young dancers put to test in Ardnamurchan



The girls were put through their paces to become dance leaders.

f09dancingno_Pupils in dance course

ENTHUSIASTIC dancers from around Lochaber gathered in Strontian to take part in their level four dance leaders course.

The four-day course was held at Ardnamurchan high school and the Sunart Centre during the February mid-term break, with the 18 young students all staying at the Ariendale bunkhouse.

The course tutor, Arlette George of Salen, taught the girls many skills including what it takes to be a good leader, how to create dance pieces from the simplest of stimulus and how to plan a dance session from warm up to cool down. They learned a variety of new games and exercises and, of course, danced.

The girls were all aged between 12 and 14 and each one produced some beautiful dance motifs and took their turn to teach the rest of the group.

The course also included a dance workshop with Amy Gallagher, who is High Life Highland's movers and shakers tutor.

Fiona Beattie, from High Life Highland's active schools programme and organiser of

the event, said: 'Throughout the four days it was clear to see the girls confidence growing in both their leadership and planning skills, but also in their choreography skills.'

'It is great to see another batch of young leaders ready to lead in their communities. Fiona outlined that this is the first step in opening up a range of opportunities for the dancers adding, 'from here active schools coordinators will be able to help the girls find volunteering opportunities in their local primary schools and dance groups.'

'All the volunteering that the girls do will be recognised and rewarded by Highlife Highland's leadership programme, which has partly funded the course.'

'Also funding it was Awards for All, which has now allowed Ardnamurchan high to provide four leadership courses in the past year. This is great news for the community and also for the young people.'

Fiona would like to thank everyone who was involved in making the course happen and the students for being so well behaved and enthusiastic to learn.

Youngsters prepare for life in hospitality thanks to Diageo course

A GROUP of six young people from Oban are looking forward to entering the world of work after graduating from Diageo's award-winning skills training and employability programme.

The Diageo Learning for Life: Hospitality and Bartending Course is delivered by The Springboard Charity, Diageo's specialist training partner, and it ran for the first time in Oban – giving young unemployed people from across

the area the chance of a lifetime.

The six-week course includes two weeks of work experience at some of the area's top restaurants and bars.

Many graduates across the country have started their careers in hospitality and this group hopes to follow suit.

The knock-on effect of the successful Learning for Life courses across Scotland has seen 71 per cent of all graduates going into sustained employment.



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Arena

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'Beyond the Room' – Bridge House art annual portfolio course exhibition

WITH students coming to Ullapool from as far as Achiltibuie and Toronto, and all ages from school sixth formers to the retired, Bridge House Art's full-time visual arts portfolio course comes to an end with an exhibition of work entitled 'Beyond the Room' at the An Talla Solais gallery in West Argyle Street, Oban, next to the Caledonian Hotel.

The exhibition is open to the public from Sunday February 28 until Sunday March 6 from 10am to 5pm.

Course students will be present throughout to talk about the work of the group.

The exhibition will show the broad span of work the students have chosen for their personal projects, in a wide range of mediums – from painting to printing, collage to couture and books to boxes, as well as the portfolios of other work they have produced during the five-month course.

This exhibition marks the 15th year of Ullapool's

Bridge House Art's popular and highly-regarded Portfolio Course, run by founder Eleanor White who is assisted by a range of tutors from within and outwith the local artist community.

Originally run from the Bridge House Art premises on Old Moss Road, the course has expanded and for the past few years has used the more extensive facilities available at An Talla Solais, giving the centre an extra creative buzz that lasts from October through to March, with students being taught for four days each week and continuing to use the facilities over the other three days.

'Our Portfolio Course is the highlight of Bridge House Art's annual programme of art courses and events and we all, students and tutors alike, find it a tremendously invigorating and exciting time,' says Eleanor White. 'Not only is there a cauldron of creativity drawn from far and wide, but the mix of ages,

backgrounds, life experiences and outlooks gives the group real energy and we tutors see them growing in ability and confidence throughout their time here.'

This year has seen a group of 13 students converge on Ullapool for the course, some taking a period of intensive study and practice before heading off to art school and a career in art, others looking for a change of life opportunity, while others simply want to develop a skill that has given them a lifetime of pleasure.

Most students stay in Ullapool for the duration of the course, giving welcome winter lets for local holiday accommodation providers and, of course, many are captivated by the village's charms – if not Ullapool's winter weather.

The course is divided into two terms either side of a Christmas and New Year break, with the first term given over to modules of learning and practicing different artistic methods

– still-life drawing and painting, figure drawing and painting, landscape, printing, textiles, book-making, etc – whilst during the second term students pursue a personal project to explore and develop their artistic ideas and skills.

Throughout the course the work of other artists is studied in the context of work being done by the students, with a focus on modern and contemporary artists – as well as looking at the work of past portfolio course students, many of whom have gone on to develop successful careers in the visual arts.

Additionally, local artists give inspirational talks to the students on their work



'Beyond the Room' - Bridge House art annual portfolio course students who were photographed ahead of an annual exhibition.

and methods. Students are encouraged to develop their critical faculties through a series of in-depth explorations of the work of a range of contemporary artists.

South Uist Gaelic singers are shortlisted for arts award

A GAELIC singing group from South Uist has been shortlisted in the The Epic Awards, celebrating the achievements of voluntary arts groups across United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

Guthan an Iar was set up by renowned Gaelic singer Gillebride MacMillan, with a view to keeping the oral song traditions of Uist alive. It is made up of singers from the Uist community, who bring song-poems – many of which are in danger of dying out – to the wider

public through performances at ceilidhs and concerts.

The Epic Awards are run by Voluntary Arts with the support from Spirit of 2012, and many of the 60,000 voluntary arts groups eligible in UK and ROI have put themselves forward for the awards.

The judging panels in each of the nations have selected eight groups from Ireland, six from Wales, eight from Scotland and nine from England to be awarded shortlist status.

Argyll community projects invited to vie for award and £5,000

COMMUNITY projects in Argyll and Bute are invited to enter an awards programme, which could see them share a funding boost of £75,000 to make a difference in their area.

The Clydesdale Bank Spirit of the Community Awards 2016 is open for applications. The awards are open to a range of initiatives across the third sector, which can demonstrate support for the local community. This could

include projects helping to get people ready for the workplace, ventures promoting healthy relationships with money or schemes aiming to protect the environment.

Five projects will be selected in each of the three categories and all 15 winners will be awarded £5,000 each.

For further information or to enter, visit www.cbonline.co.uk/foundation

Argyll and The Isles has #ScotSpirit

Argyll plays a starring role in VisitScotland's new Spirit of Scotland social media marketing campaign

PEOPLE in Argyll and the Isles are being asked to get behind social media movement that aims to harness the power of the nation behind tourism.

VisitScotland's first-ever global campaign is shining a spotlight on the stunning beauty the region and the unique opportunities it offers for superb outdoors activities.

Tiree – with its well-deserved reputation as Scotland's premier watersports destination – and waterman William MacLean – a 'born and bred' islander who is the owner of local watersports company Wild Diamond. Both have starring roles in inspirational new adverts and films which will be seen by prospective visitors the world over as part of

the new 'Spirit of Scotland' campaign.

Unveiled on February 10 by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, the campaign is based on an innovative creative approach which seeks to go beyond standard destination marketing, fundamentally changing the way the national tourism organisation markets and sells the country around the world.

Images of Tiree will be beamed worldwide as part of the new VisitScotland cinematic TV advert set to be shown to audiences across the USA and UK. The advert shows the famous Tiree Wave Classic – the UK's premier windsurfing competition, which takes place each October – alongside a specially commissioned soundtrack

by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) and voiceover by *Game of Thrones* star Iain Glen in the UK version and Perthshire born actor and star of *The Good Wife*, Alan Cumming, in the US version.

Tiree's William MacLean is the subject of one of the 12 beautifully-shot, documentary-style film on visitscotland.com which capture the spirit of Scotland through the eyes of those who live and work here.

In 'William's Story', he shares his feelings for Tiree and for Scotland, speaking about the lifestyle he and his family enjoy on the island, 'the sense of peace and relaxation' it evokes, and his passion for windsurfing.

William has been in-

involved in the Tiree Wave Classic for more than 20 years and, having been a competitor since his teens, is now one of the organisers of the popular event, which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary.

The event host is Wild Diamond, the company William set up 18 years ago. Based in the township of Cornaig in the northwest of Tiree, Wild Diamond offers a range of watersports including windsurfing, kitesurfing, stand-up paddle-boarding, surfing lessons, kayak hire, sandyahting and a surf shop.

Mr MacLean said: 'It was a real privilege for me to be asked to be in one of the films, which is part of VisitScotland's major new marketing campaign, and

I am delighted that Tiree is being promoted in the stunning new TV ad as well as the online film.

'VisitScotland has played a vital role in establishing Scotland's credentials in the global outdoor sporting community over the past 20 years that we have been working with the national tourism organisation.

'It is fantastic to now see VisitScotland really going for it and showcasing Scotland's potential to a worldwide audience.'

David Adams McGilp, Regional director at VisitScotland, said: 'I'm delighted that our new campaign – which is designed to engage with as many potential visitors as possible – is now live.

'The new TV ad and online film featuring Tiree

and William really are breath-taking, so I'm sure they will inspire many more people to come to explore the inimitable pleasures of Argyll and The Isles.

'The campaign is about so much more than stunning imagery though; it's about igniting 'people power', so we hope everyone who cares for Scotland – including those who live and work in Argyll & The Isles – will get behind the #ScotSpirit movement and become ambassadors for the region as well as for Scotland.

'Argyll and the Isles is a unique destination – we've so much here which truly embodies #ScotSpirit – so I look forward to seeing that highlighted and celebrated through social media.'

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

To advertise in our community noticeboard call 01631 568000

FORT WILLIAM ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Musical Evening
 on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at 8pm
 GUEST ARTISTES:
 Gordon Pattullo & Malcolm Ross
 Railway Club Inverloch
 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

Fiddlers Rally
 Saturday 5th March
 Nevis Centre,
 Fort William
 At 7pm
 Ticket £10 at the door
 Children Free

The Dead Stations
 Mike Vass & Mairi Campbell
 28th February 3pm
 Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern
 £9 / £6 / £5 (carer) / £20 (family)
 Afternoon tea £5 - prebook by 20th Feb
 Song and instrumental workshops
 Info at
 www.craignishvillagehall.org.uk
 To book: 01852 500746 or
 cvh.artsevents@gmail.com or
 www.ticketsource.co.uk/
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Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club
MONTHLY CLUB NIGHT
 Thursday 3rd March 2016
 at 7.30pm
 Royal Hotel
 Guest Artist:
 Gary Sutherland
 Admission £4
 All welcome!

Oban & District Guide Association
Family Ceilidh Dance
 Saturday 27th February 2016
 Argyllshire Gathering Hall, Oban
 7.00pm – 10.00pm
 Adults £5 Children £2.50 (over 5 years)
 Family £12.50 (2 adults & 2 children)
 Tickets available from Rainbow, Brownie & Guide Unit Leaders or at the door.
 In Aid of Guide Hall Funds
 Licenced Raffle

A fundraising Soup Lunch
 in aid of Oban Pipe Band will be held in Oban Pipe Band Hall Shore Street on Saturday 27th February 2016
 From 12 noon - 2.00pm
 Admission £3.00
 Charity no. SC004610

Oban U3A monthly meeting
 Tuesday 1 March 2016 at 10.30am
 Studio Theatre and cafe area, Corran Halls, Oban
 There will be a talk this month, so do come along.

Comunn Gàidhealach An Oban cèilidh
 Saturday 5th March 2016
 Masonic Hall, Albany Street, Oban. 7.30pm Admission: £6.00
 Featuring: Riona McCormick John Joe MacNeill Morag Smith Graham Campbell Hector MacFadyen (Accordion) Aaron Husain (Piper) Bean an Taighe: Moira Dunlop Raffle, tea and home baking

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 - Left between places when dancing? (5)
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LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

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E	L	U	R	U	L	E					
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Pull-out and keep - part 1

THE BRIDEGUIDE



Welcome to the first BrideGuide

Nicky Murphy
Sales Director
The Oban Times

Despite the stresses and financial strains that the current economic climate has brought us in recent years, there is one major life event in which people are still happy to spend money – a wedding. The UK's most popular wedding website hitched.co.uk surveyed thousands of newlywed couples last year to reveal an industry worth £10 billion. According to Brides Magazine, the average figure for the cost of a UK wedding is a whopping £24,000.

But remember, this is just the average cost, not a target for what you should splash out – many people spend less (or more). Almost a quarter of people surveyed spent less than £5,000 on their wedding. This just goes to show the vast differences in budgets - which means there is no one-size-fits all solution. When it comes down to it, it's a lot of money to spend on a single day, but totally worth the lifetime of memories you'll have from it!

The UK Academy of Wedding and Event Planning have identified some key trends for 2016, so if you're looking for the best way to make sure your wedding day is seriously stylish, they have some great ideas.

Personalisation is becoming more popular as couples realise their wedding is a celebration of their life together. And who can resist the glitz and sparkle of old Hollywood? That glamorous red carpet vibe is finding its way into weddings in 2016. If Hollywood glam is a little too polished for you, you'll love the eclectic décor trend. Seating will take an alternative turn, with ghost chairs and lounge style furniture set to take centre stage. Abundant florals is a trend we love, with green, nature inspired weddings and hanging flower centrepieces- stunning! And finally, great food can make a lovely wedding completely incredible. More and more of us are fond of fine local food nowadays, and providing an amazing culinary experience for your guests at your wedding will be a big thing in 2016.

Many couples will want to do something to make their big day unique, different and memorable for their guests; from personalised stationery to the cutting of the cake, there are thousands of unusual ideas out there to help brides and grooms make their wedding stand out, so peruse our guide and visit the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show to start planning your perfect day!

Argyll and Bute Civil Ceremonies

"It is your day so we do it your way" – this is the motto of Argyll and Bute registrars who are here to help couples make their special day the unique, magical experience they want.

There is a lot more choice and freedom now for couples getting married. Changes in legislation mean they are no longer limited to "traditional" venues such as registrar offices or hotels. In the last year for example we have had civil ceremonies held in castles, gardens, yachts, beaches and even people's own homes. Our focus is on making it possible for couples to have the day they are dreaming of. Getting in touch with us as early as possible helps to achieve this.

We encourage the inclusion of music and poetry in our ceremonies – which

is not to say couples must have this – but we give couples as much choice as possible so their day is perfect from start to finish. In addition to this we are now allowed religious content and alternative ceremonies such as handfasting and candle ceremonies which are becoming really popular.

Having the ceremony where the reception is held, such as a hotel, castle or gathering hall, has become a popular trend, but there are several stunning council marriage rooms available throughout Argyll and Bute. These include a new facility in Helensburgh, Castle House in Dunoon, the Linda McCartney Garden in Campbeltown, Mount Pleasant House on the Island of Bute and a room overlooking picturesque Tobermory Bay on Mull.

Increasingly, couples are going to the registrar for ceremonies to renew their wedding vows, or a baby naming ceremony these can even be combined for a special family day. Depending on the venue, council marriage rooms can seat from 2 to 80 guests. If however, couples would prefer an intimate ceremony just for themselves then we can also arrange witnesses for them.

There is no residency requirement to get married in Scotland, but every couple is required to give the registrar in the district they wish to be married at least 28 days' notice.

We encourage couples to make contact with the registrar early, as different couples will have different requirements. For example, if you are divorced or a surviving partner, you will

need specific documents and there are different rules that apply for couples that are coming from out with the EU. We take great care to assist couples and make sure that everything is in order and stress free. Forms are valid for three months, but you can book ceremonies a year or more in advance.

The letters of thanks, emails and wonderful feedback we receive from couples is tremendous and greatly appreciated by registration staff – it is great to hear "You gave us the day we always wanted".

Look for the council's dedicated registration webpage coming out in summer 2016. Meanwhile visit argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/marriages for more information and contacts.



Photo: Gary/Bonar Photography

The dress

Choosing a wedding dress can be one of the most exciting parts of planning a wedding, but it can also be daunting.

Most brides will search online and in magazines to get inspiration when it comes to their wedding dress, to prepare themselves for when they start visiting bridal wear shops. But a recent survey conducted on hitched.co.uk revealed that only 21.7% of brides bought what they'd always dreamed they would be wearing on their wedding day, and over 30% surprised themselves and bought something completely different than what they had in mind.

Finding the perfect dress isn't always easy, so to help make shopping as fun and as easy as possible, here are some tips to help you through the entire process.

• Before you go:

Think about your wedding and what kind of dress is appropriate- beach vs ballroom, winter vs summer, etc. Consider your body shape and personal style. Be realistic. Spend some time looking at magazines and wedding blogs before hitting the shops, and clip the styles you like. Then set a budget- the average

boutique wedding dress is over £1000, but there are less expensive alternatives. Don't forget to budget in the shoes and accessories.

• Trying it on:

Give yourself plenty of time- it can take up to six months for a dress to be made to order or alterations made, but don't shop more than a year in advance as styles change. Most bridal shops are by appointment so book early. Bring only your mum and one or two friends at most, and leave the kids at home. Also consider high street shops, online or even charity boutiques. Wear appropriate underwear, including a strapless bra, and don't wear makeup so as to protect the dresses. Wear heels a similar height to those you will have for the day. Don't get discouraged, as you may try on dozens of dresses before you find the one! Once you find it, shop around for the best price if possible. When you find your dream dress, hang it carefully in a box and put it away somewhere safe until the big day!



The venue

Finding the perfect venue is at the top of any engaged couple's list. With the venue playing a vital role in the success of your day, it's the big decision you really need to get right.

Just like viewing a new property it is easy to become overexcited and fall in love with a place without checking the venue can cater to your requirements, so here, with the help of hitched.co.uk, we answer that age old question - how to choose a wedding venue?

• Location, location, location

'When you're looking for your dream wedding venue, make sure you narrow your search down to a practical range. There's no point falling for a fairytale castle wedding venue if it's not practical for you to plan and your guests to get to.

• Capacity

If you have a huge family and will need a venue that can host a huge crowd, cross intimate, boutique venues off your list. Likewise, if you fall for a large capacity wedding venue but have a guest list of 20, will you feel lost in the cavernous spaces?

• Factor in your budget

Find out how much the wedding packages cost and if there's any room for negotiation. If not, cut your losses and move on, as there's nothing worse than falling for something and

finding out it's way out of your price range.

• Make a list

Have a list of venues you love, but also have a list of your non-negotiables. If you have your heart set on having your favourite rock band play at the reception, check that there aren't sound restrictions. Perhaps you fancy candles everywhere – make sure there aren't rules against open flames.

• Think food and drink

Are you happy to have in-house caterers and the standard alcohol the venue offers? If you want to bring in external caterers for a speciality meal and you want to provide your own alcohol, make sure you check there aren't fees for this. Some venues don't offer catering at all.

• Ceremony set up

Do you want a wedding where everything takes place at one venue, or have you thought about a religious service or a register office ceremony? Check what the ceremony options at the venue are. If you are looking to marry somewhere else, consider the distance between the places and how easily you (and your guests) can travel between the two.

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Our stunning venue has a civil marriage licence and can hold ceremonies for up to 80 guests. The hotel can cater for up to 140 guests for your wedding meal and 200 guests for your reception. We offer the best balance of service, food and organisation designed to meet your desires. From the initial meeting, to the first full day of married bliss, our professional and experienced wedding team will help guide you through all details and any queries, large or small.
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www.strathmorehotels.com

It's your big day
You choose where to spend it...
Argyll and Bute Civil Ceremonies
When it comes to life's momentous occasions - getting married, reaffirming vows or naming a baby, choosing where to hold the ceremony plays a significant part.
Our team of registrars are here to help you plan this important day in your life.
You can contact the team by email: registrars@argyll-bute.gov.uk or call 01631 567908 to be directed to your appropriate point of contact.
Argyll and Bute Civil Ceremonies Full of Perfect Places, for your Perfect Day.
We will be delighted to see you at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show on Sunday 20th March.

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www.marinasbridal.co.uk • 01397 704009
THE SCOTTISH WEDDING AWARDS 2014
THE SCOTTISH WEDDING AWARDS 2015 FINALIST

Hair and beauty

With the Big Day around the corner, bridal beauty gets high on the agenda as soon as the countdown says four weeks to go!



Being in the spotlight is not optional when it is you who is getting married. The month to the marriage can be quiet demanding so here are a few ideas for the picture-perfect you:

Beauty tips for the face and skin:

- Say no to processed foods and focus on staying hydrated at all times.
- Bite into fresh fruits and veggies- being high on fibre they offer antioxidants for the youthful look.
- Start body brushing before bathing to stimulate lymphatic system and exfoliate the skin.
- Salt scrubs from organic products are a great way to getting that glowing skin.
- Deep cleansing facials can be tried for removing blackheads, pimples and toxins. Remember to include neck, elbows, arms etc. in your cleansing routine so that they

don't spoil the show by being in complete contrast to your clean and clear face!

Beauty tips for the hair:

- Work on the final cut, colour and style for the pre and post events so that you know the complete look and aren't in for any surprises.
- Keep your tresses neat, get rid of the split ends and treat uneven textures to make the hair look smooth and shiny
- Include hair care as a part of your regime, pamper your hair and invest in quality products while keeping your individual needs in mind.

While taking good care of your hair, face and skin, do make time for regular exercise. Besides being a mood enhancer, it tightens skin and tones muscle. Smile, stay happy and feel blessed to welcome the next beautiful phase of your life!

17th century charm at the Galley of Lorne

Beautifully located on the shore of Loch Craignish in the pretty village of Ardfern lies The Galley of Lorne Inn. The 17th Century former Drover's Inn oozes character and charm and the location the perfect backdrop for stunning wedding photos!



The Inn's Restaurant doubles as a private function suite and you can be married indoors or outdoors on their sundeck overlooking the loch.

The Inn's Chef Sean Beaton is fast gaining a reputation for some of Argyll's finest food and his ethos of using fresh locally sourced produce translates through to the Inn's wedding menus which are individually created for each bride & groom.

Although the Inn only has 7 bedrooms, they are able to cater for Weddings of up to 120 daytime guests and up to 230 evening guests! There are plenty of accommodation options nearby so if you are planning some lavishly large nuptials then you shouldn't overlook this little gem of an Inn.

Proprietor Andrew Stanton will manage every aspect of your big day from initial consultation to your departure as Mr & Mrs and having looked after numerous weddings large and small, you'll be in good hands."

For more details visit www.galleyoflorne.co.uk or call Andrew for a chat on 01852 500 284.

Aosdàna - beautiful jewellery

Created for Aosdàna by Scottish designer, Hannah Louise Lamb, this 18ct yellow and white gold ring depicts the distinctive coastline of Iona. Two interlocking pieces of gold, one 18ct white and one 18ct yellow join together to create the island's coastline. The coastline range also includes versions in 9ct gold or silver with additional diamond settings, perfect for engagement or wedding rings.

To see our full range of wedding jewellery, call into our gallery on Iona, open for the coming season from Monday 21st March or visit us online at aosdanaiona.com.

Country Bumpkin Cakes

Country Bumpkin Cakes, based in Campbeltown is owned and operated by Fiona McArthur. Fiona is dedicated to providing you with a personal, one of a kind cake and an enjoyable experience from ordering to eating. Using the finest quality ingredients, she can work from any idea you might have to help you design a delicious and truly personal cake that will be talked about for years to come. If you want something a little different to cake ask about a dessert table, cupcakes or cake pops as a delicious alternative.

Her motto is, when it comes to cake, anything is possible.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGH Highland Wedding Show Sunday 20th

Planning the perfect wedding in the West Highlands?

Don't miss the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show!

If you are getting married this year, next year or in the future, don't miss the fabulous Oban Times Highland Wedding Show.

This free event will showcase the very best of local wedding service providers. From stunning bridalwear to creative make-up and hair and everything in between. Delicious, designer cakes, beautiful flowers, striking limos, stylish stationery, sparkly jewellery, room décor with the WOW factor and much, much more.

If you want to have a good chat with one of our featured photographers, then this is the place to do it. The Highland Wedding Show gives you the ideal opportunity to meet and greet the best in the business, and take your time over discussing your exact ideas and special requirements.

As well as a glass of fizz to welcome you on arrival, entry into our fabulous prize draw and access to special offers, relax and take your seat for the fabulous bridal fashion show, learn the latest tips and tricks from make-up artists and gain some fabulous ideas for beautiful wedding hair styles from local salons and bridal hair specialists. It's not all about the girls! Spruce will be there with fabulous grooming for the - you guessed it - groom!

The bridal fashion shows will showcase the latest collection of bridal gowns and accessories from Marina's Bridal who is based in Fort William. This is the chance to gain some real inspiration



from the catwalk and chat to Marina about your style ideas be it traditional, contemporary, vintage or themed - there's lots to talk about!

When it comes to cakes and favours you'll find the cream of the crop in all their delicious glory! Elegant, bold, Madeira sponge, chocolate fudge, red velvet, lemon drizzle, coffee, walnut or banana - whatever takes your fancy in whatever colour, style and size your heart desires!

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Bridal packages tailored to suit beautiful you



[f](https://www.facebook.com/TrinityHairdressing) See us at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show
3 High Street, Oban, PA34 4GB
01631 566696

Oban Times WEDDING SHOW March 2016



We are still confirming the line-up with more to come but we are delighted to present so far:

- Argyll & Bute Council Registrars
- The Corran Halls
- Marina's Bridal
- The Write Image Photography
- Krisp Print Stationers
- The Little Bespoke Bakery
- Loch Fyne Oysters
- The Thistle and the Rose Wedding Florist
- Cromlech Events
- Ardanaiseig Hotel
- Oban Chocolate Company
- The Flower Shop
- MyDentist Oban
- Privage Aesthetics
- Trinity Hairdressing
- Spruce Hair & Beauty
- Portsonachan House Hotel
- Chalmers of Oban
- Creations 4 Occasions

When: Sunday 20th March

Time: 10am-5pm

Where: The Corran Halls, Oban

What to expect: A relaxing, yet fun day, glass of fizz on arrival, fabulous bridal fashion shows at 12 noon, 2pm and 4pm, hair & make-up showcase, prize draw, music and more

And watch this space for more! We will be featuring more of our wedding specialists exhibitors in next week's Oban Times!

For further information, or if you are a wedding supplier wishing to book a stand, get in touch!

Nicky Murphy 01631 568000 or email nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk

Superb facilities at Machrihanish

A fantastic venue with great facilities in Campbeltown

The Officers Mess at the Machrihanish Airbase is a large, modern function venue situated close to the airbase entrance. It can accommodate up to 500 people for a function/reception and up to 168 people for a sit-down meal. Recently redecorated to a high standard, it is an excellent venue for weddings, functions, conferences and educational uses such as training days.



The building boasts a number of features including:

Spacious reception, dining & dance floor areas, 2 bars, neutral decor, external patio areas with ample space for outdoor seating, large fitted kitchen with high specification appliances, oil fired central heating, extensive car parking and multiple W/C facilities (including disabled toilet). For information on hiring this venue for your event, please contact 01586 551555 or email enquiries@maccld.co.uk. - See more at: <http://www.machrihanish.org>

Trinity Hairdressing



Trinity Hairdressing recently celebrated 11 years in business and is highly regarded as one of the foremost salons in Argyll. Trinity's professional team, fronted by Craig and Linda, offers unique solutions and the latest trends in haircuts, hair colour, care and styling. Whether you are searching for a completely new look or already have a style that you love but want the protect and nurture, look no further. Every bride visualises their perfect hair style as part of their overall wedding day look. Trinity are specialists in creating beautiful hair, whether your chosen style is contemporary, traditional or vintage. The team is ready to centre their attention all on you, so call to arrange a time to pop in to discuss your dream design, or chat with them on their stand at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show.

Cakes and flowers

The cake and flowers will play a significant part on any wedding day. They will be a huge focal point, and are a great way to personalise the wedding to match the couple's personalities and interests.

There are plenty of things to consider when choosing a cake for the big day, from the shape, to the flavour and of course, the decoration. The options when it comes to picking a cake are seemingly endless. You can have a classic wedding cake, cupcakes, a naked Victoria sponge cake, a dessert buffet or even a tower of cheese wheels if you don't have a sweet tooth. Another tradition is to serve a fruitcake either as the groom's cake or as a layer in the bride's cake, preserving the top tier for the christening or the first anniversary.



iced elegance from The Little Bespoke Bakery Company - Photo: Crieff Photography

The wedding flowers should reflect the bride's personality, style, aspirations and dreams. Floral designers use various types of flowers, colours design styles and techniques to make each wedding beautiful for the bride in a way that is unique and special to her.

According to the Flower Trends Forecast report, the keywords for wedding flowers in 2016 are lavish and lustre- sensual and tactile, rich in textures,

combining sheen and sparkle for a luxe look. Two colour palettes are especially hot. One is a bright and sassy sorbet palette, using lemon-yellow with rich blue, coral, spring green and powder blue.

Whatever your taste and style, the wedding professionals in our guide are ready to help make sure all the details are right, down to the cake and the flowers!



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We invite you to call us, email us or visit us in store to discuss your flowers. During consultation we will discuss the look that you want to go for, including colours and flower types.

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We look forward to seeing you at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show on Sunday 20th March

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WEDDINGS

Let us add the magic touch to your wedding day at The Galley of Lorne Inn

The Galley of Lorne Inn, Ardfern, by Oban, PA31 8QN

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Wedding Stationery

Choose from our catalogue, full of stunning wedding stationery samples.

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An insight into some of our fantastic exhibitors

Come along and see them at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show on Sunday 20th March

Privège - look good, feel great

Get that fresh, youthful glow as you glide down the aisle. At Privège Medical Aesthetics Doctor Amanda Michlewski (trained as a GP in Oban!) and Doctor Andrew Haslett (Aesthetic Surgeon) are at your service to give you advice, free consultations and answer any questions you have on how to best to achieve the look you've always dreamed of for your big day.

Tailor make a package to get the treatments you want and deserve, without emptying the wedding fund!

Live demonstrations and treatments available at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show - see you there.



The Thistle & The Rose

Weddings are their specialty The Thistle & The Rose The Thistle & The Rose is Oban's newest floral design studio, creating and delivering beautiful flowers for those special occasions. With specialist training and 17 years' experience in weddings throughout Argyll, owner Justine Robertson is fully committed to providing brides with professional, friendly and dedicated service.



After serving as supervisor at Castle Stalker Café and running Glencoe Café, Justine has returned full-time to her love of floristry. 'Wedding flower design is our specialty,' Justine shared. 'We offer everything from exquisite bridal bouquets to a full wedding package, and can provide a variety of candelabras, arches, dressed bay trees, vases and table centres.'

The Thistle & The Rose welcomes enquiries from individuals and businesses, from bespoke bouquets for special occasions and dinner party table designs to full scale floral creations for your event. They deliver within a 25 mile radius of Oban and can travel most anywhere in Argyll, the Islands and further afield for weddings.

'Flowers are our passion!' Justine said. 'When you order with us, we can guarantee that your order will be skilfully created, perfectly created and hand delivered by us with care. We believe that every delivery should have the "wow" factor.'

For an initial wedding consultation ring Justine on 0771 716 1651 to arrange a meeting, and look for her workshop to open on Glengallen Road in mid-March.

Mydentist Oban - for dazzling smiles

Your smile is one of the first things people notice about you especially on your wedding day. Why not let us ensure that you have the most dazzling smile ever on your special day!

They have a full selection of cosmetic and hygiene options including tooth whitening treatments which can be tailored to your needs.

They also have a range of dental plans and finance options, including interest free, to make that smile even more affordable.

Contact the practice team on : 01631 563006 who will be happy to advise and help make your day fantastic.



Cromlech Events - transforming spaces

Cromlech Events is a company that specialises in transforming events, catering for all types of special occasions from Weddings to Charity Balls. Cromlech can provide chair covers, sashes, table cloths, napkins, stunning centrepieces, sparkly curtains, candy carts, wishing wells, wishing trees and much more. Choose from a wide variety of styles, colours and materials. Cromlech also have a laundry division and can provide an excellent aftercare service cleaning your special garments from Wedding Dresses to Kilts to delicate Christening gowns. Let Cromlech take on the hard work so that you can concentrate on enjoying your day. All event decor is tailored to your specification. Simply give us a call on 01369 701515 to discuss your needs..



Marina's Bridal - stunning dresses



The award-winning Marina's Bridal is run by Marina (you guessed it!) who has over 30 years experience as a highly skilled seamstress. Marina will tell you - and rightly so - that the dress is the most important decision of all. Marina's Bridal was established in 2013 and has been a huge success ever since.

From the moment you walk in you feel relaxed, welcomed and absolutely the most important person in the room.

Experience what it feels like to be a princess bride for the day, take your time and try on all the dresses that you've ever dreamed of - there is a beautiful selection of bridal dresses, bridesmaids and flower girls outfits from major and bespoke designers, in all styles.

Marina offers a personal, professional service and the best possible value for money. So say 'I Do' in style - Marina's Bridal will have you looking wonderful for your special day.

The Flower Shop - floral flair!

An experienced businesswoman, who has taken over a Lochgilphead florist, is now offering blooming new services.

Corrina Charlwood first got her taste for business while working with her father at his haulage company after leaving school. Wanting to continue in his footsteps, she later set up her own cleaning business which she ran for 10 years.

Corrina bought The Flower Shop on Lochneil Street last year and with support from Argyll and Bute Council's Business Gateway is expanding the services on offer, including wedding planning.

The response to Corrina's new business venture has been so positive she is now offering personalised cards and candles to order and is looking to expand into wedding and party planning and providing a hire service for vases and event decorating which will allow her to expand on her existing flower range.



Ardanaiseig Hotel - romantic seclusion



A truly unique highland gem sitting in perfect seclusion on the banks on Loch Awe, it is known as the most romantic hotel in Scotland. The Ardanaiseig strives to provide a completely bespoke wedding package, taking care of every fine detail. With all of the grounds at your disposal, can you imagine a more perfect place to celebrate this wonderful event in your life? The summer brings with it a Champagne reception on the lawn and the freedom for guests to explore the incredible flora and fauna surrounding the hotel, whilst Autumn and Winter make for the perfect fireside celebration in the drawing room or library. Contact the wedding events team at ardanaiseig on weddings@ardanaiseig.com and know that you are in great hands. www.ardanaiseig.com

Loch Fyne Oysters - a Fyne location

Using only the finest locally sourced produce and luxury Loch Fyne seafood, the culinary team will create a sumptuous menu which can be perfectly complimented by a thoughtfully designed wine list. Situated at the head of Loch Fyne in Argyll on the West Coast of Scotland, the Loch Fyne Oysters location presents a truly impressive landscape for your special day.

Stunning woodlands, lush greenery, breath-taking mountains and the spectacular beauty of Loch Fyne combine to offer ample opportunity to create a wedding album that you will cherish forever.

www.lochfyne.com



The Little Bespoke Bakery

The Little Bespoke Bakery, on the Isle of Mull, has been delighting customers since it opened last year with home-made artisan cakes and treats for all occasions. Owner Sarah Fraser has a love of designing and decorating cakes coupled with artistic flare and perfectionism.

'I'm passionate about ingredients; we use local free range eggs, Scottish butter and the finest vanilla and chocolate and we bake in small batches to order,' said Sarah.

The Little Bespoke Bakery has a small range of classically-designed Wedding cakes but is making a name for itself with individual consultations to create beautiful bespoke wedding cakes customised to perfectly complement a client's wedding and character.

'It all begins with a personalised wedding cake sketch to help you visualise your dream cake; we are even able to offer a mounted copy of the design as a keepsake,' said Sarah.

After the design comes the cake and a choice of delicious flavours and iced, buttercream and 'naked' finishes; clients are provided with tasting boxes to try before deciding

The bakery also offers dessert and cake tables for weddings; a beautiful centrepiece with a selection of cakes, cupcakes, iced biscuits and meringues; the latter three can be customised as wedding favours.

* Prices on request, booking essential and delivery available.

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Colonsay Book Festival

THE fifth Colonsay Book Festival has announced its line-up this year, featuring a poet, historian, journalist, crime novelist, and nature and travel writers.

The island 'getaway' weekend presents six authors over Saturday and Sunday April 23-24 in Scalasaig Village Hall, with performance poetry and a literary quiz in the pub during the evenings.

'We have a small but broad programme, to appeal to as many people as possible,' explained director Dilly Emslie. 'People love the informality and friendliness. We have a lot of loyal audience members: they listen to everybody and can talk to the speakers.'

Saturday begins at 1.30pm with nature writer Jim Crumley, who has written more than 20 books, mostly on Scotland's

landscape and wildlife. Dilly continued: 'Our mantra is to celebrate the best of Scottish writing, and the best of Scotland, so Jim fits in very well.'

Jim will read from his latest book *Nature's Architect*, on reintroducing beavers and other wildlife.

Veteran journalist and travel-writer Julie Davidson will talk about her Radio Four Book of the Week, *Looking for Mrs Livingstone: the intriguing story of Mary*, the courageous and stoical, yet long-overlooked wife of Scots explorer David Livingstone.

'Mary's own experiences travelling in uncharted Africa were quite exceptional and unique,' the festival's website explains: 'she was the first white woman to cross the Kalahari, and she did it twice – pregnant.'

The Great War's centenary, eminent Scottish military historian Professor Sir Hew Strachan, author of *The First World War and From Waterloo to Balaclava*, will discuss his specialist subject, before Cumbrian-born poet Jacob Polley, who also teaches at St Andrews University, reads from his three prize-winning collections of poetry, *The Brink*, *Little Gods and The Havocs*, and his novel *Talk of the Town*.

Glasgow-born Denise Mina, author of 12 crime novels including the DI Alex Morrow series, has set her latest Tartan Noir book in Loch Lomond and Helensburgh. 'She is a first class writer,' Dilly said: 'Her novels are gripping yarns, and she's a very entertaining talker. The audience will be charmed by her: she is funny, spiky and feisty.'

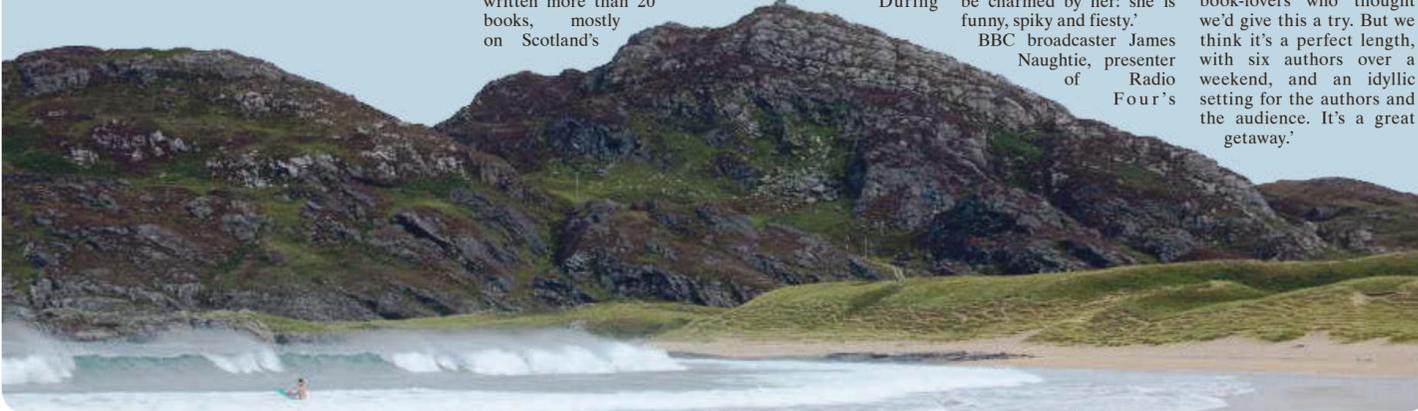
BBC broadcaster James Naughtie, presenter of Radio Four's

Bookclub and an anchorman on *Today* from 1994 until 2015, joins the festival on Sunday fresh from covering the US primaries, launching his second political thriller, *Paris Spring*.

Dilly said: 'It's a chance to meet Jim in his new role as a novelist, getting into the minds of fictional characters, rather than real ones.'

She continued: 'Our audience is roughly between 70 to 100, and that's not counting locals. People know they don't have to book tickets – they can just turn up – but there is a finite capacity with accommodation, which is booking up.'

'The festival is run by amateurs and we make no pretensions that it's a slick machine. None of us had any experience; we're just book-lovers who thought we'd give this a try. But we think it's a perfect length, with six authors over a weekend, and an idyllic setting for the authors and the audience. It's a great getaway.'



Young people express themselves at arts weekend at Benmore

ARGYLL Youth Arts, a hub creating art events and opportunities for young people in Argyll and Bute, held its annual activities weekend at Benmore last month.

Argyll Youth Arts' is a collective of creative and cultural organisations from the region placing young people at the centre of their work, including Oban's Rockfield Centre, Artmap Argyll in Lochgilphead, Tarbert Arts and Leisure Centre, Dunoon Burgh Hall, Helensburgh Cove Park, and Islay and Jura Youth Action.

The collective says that through this network it is able to connect more and share ideas and inspiration with all the groups, generating new and exciting creative relationships, as well as promoting and celebrating

the fantastic work that is happening in pockets across the area.

At the hub's core are 10 young arts promoters, and 10 schools TV channel managers, who produce fortnightly news programmes showcasing and celebrating the achievements of young people across the region.

Last month, 40 young artists, performers and musicians from all over Argyll braved Storm Gertrude to travel to Benmore Outdoor Centre near Dunoon for an activities weekend of art, music, drama and film workshops.

One young artist, 17-year-old Oban High School student Ross Christie, told *The Oban Times*: 'The Benmore weekend was a great opportunity for artists of all sorts and was really helpful for the young promoters

team. We got the chance to talk about possible upcoming collaborations and events around Argyll, such as Helensburgh's Festival of Architecture, live music sessions, and fine art workshops. Hopefully we're now equipped with the skills to facilitate young artists in Argyll and Bute.'

The network's activities this month feature a 24-hour session making horror films and light painting in Lochgilphead, a sleeper at Mull Theatre exploring the use of food to make art work, and a guitar, bass and drums clinic with Deacon Blue's Gregor Philip and Lewis Gordon, and drummer Danny Grant, at The Tower Digital Arts Centre in Helensburgh.

Argyll Youth Arts is run by Comar, a Mull-based multi-arts organisation

formed in 2013 by the merger of Mull Theatre and An Tobar, which 'connects and supports artists and audiences across Mull, Iona and beyond', and presents around 100 events each year in live music, visual arts, theatre, crafts, dance, film, literature and comedy.

Creative Scotland gave Comar £400,000 to lead Argyll Youth Arts in 2014, and its biggest event in the calendar is the Benmore activities weekend.

Iona Young, Oban's Youth Channel Manager, told us: 'It was great getting to see all sorts of different arts. I loved the freedom everyone had while taking part. It really allowed everyone to express themselves.'

Mason Tomsett from Dunoon, added: 'It's brilliant – there's nothing else like this for us.'

2016 charities day set to be a right royal affair

OBAN and Lorn Lions Club are all set to mark this year's charities day a very special celebration for a VIP.

The annual day, which showcases many of the north Argyll area voluntary groups, is taking place on Saturday June 11. As an added bonus this year, the group will celebrate the Queens 90th birthday in style.

Group member Jim Edge said: 'Because the event will be bigger this year, we need any group or charitable organisation who would like a stall on this day to contact us as soon as possible.'

'This year as part of the celebrations, MacQueens Charitable Trust is sponsoring the best dressed stall competition, with a first prize of £300, second £200 and third £100 – there will be an appropriate theme reflecting the occasion.'

Mr Edge added that stalls will cost £25 each.

For further information contact Oban and Lorn Lions Club by email on oban3108@aol.com, or by telephone on 01631 562762 or 562090. Application forms can be collected from Hannah's Store on Stevenson Street.

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Claim your pass, using the Oban Times application form, and pay just £13.20. A child's annual pass will cost just £10.80. Children under three go free of charge. Your annual pass will entitle you to 12 months unlimited entry to The Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary Oban and Sea Life Loch Lomond Aquarium, 20% discount in the Sea Life Sanctuary and Loch Lomond gift shops, 20% off hot drinks at the centres, a half price guide book and entry to our special events at both sites including our Easter Eggstravaganza and Santa at Sea Life fun day to name a few.

To claim this offer, complete the below application form and, along with an up to date passport sized photograph, take it along to the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Oban (photos are required for both adult and child passes). This offer is valid until March 31st 2016. You can also post your application, complete with a stamped self-addressed envelope, photo and a cheque for the appropriate amount, made payable to Merlin Entertainments, to Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE.

2016 APPLICATION FORM

Application Form

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FURTHER PASSES

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Adult (£13.20) Child over 3 (£10.80) (tick box selection)

Name.....

Adult (£13.20) Child over 3 (£10.80) (tick box selection)

Name.....

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I have enclosed all photographs required Cheque enclosed (postal applications only)

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Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip (U) 112mins
Daily Except Sat, Sun: 16:30, Sat: 16:15, Sun: 12:00
Through a series of misunderstandings, Alvin, Simon and Theodore come to believe that Dave is going to propose to his new girlfriend in New York City - and dump them. They have three days to get to him and stop the proposal.

Breakfast at Tiffany's - Silver Screening (PG) 112mins
Sun: 14:30
Concessions (age 60+) entry just £2.50! Includes complimentary tea and cake. A young New York socialite becomes interested in a young man who has moved into her apartment building.

Dad's Army (PG) 119mins
Sun: 14:15
The Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard platoon deal with a visiting female journalist and a German spy as World War II draws to its conclusion.

Deadpool (15) 126mins
Fri: 18:30,21:00, Sat: 18:30,21:15, Sun: 16:30,19:30, Mon, Tue, Wed: 18:45,21:00, Thu: 18:45
Based upon Marvel Comics most unconventional anti-hero, DEADPOOL tells the origin story of former Special Forces operative turned mercenary Wade Wilson, who after being subjected to a rogue experiment that leaves him with accelerated healing powers, adopts the alter ego Deadpool.

Goosebumps (PG) 123mins
Daily Except Sat, Sun: 16:15, Sat: 11:30,14:00, Sun: 12:00
A young kid teams up with the niece of young adult horror author R.L. Stine after the writer's imaginary demons are set free on the town of Greendale, Maryland.

NT Live: Hangmen 180 min (15)
Thu: 19:00
In his small pub in the northern English town of Oldham, Harry (David Morrissey - The Walking Dead, State of Play) is something of a local celebrity. But what's the second-best hangman in England to do on the day they've abolished hanging?

Kids Club: Minions Movie (U) 91 min
Sat: 12:00
Minions Stuart, Kevin and Bob are recruited by Scarlet Overkill, a super-villain who, alongside her inventor husband Herb, hatches a plot to take over the world. Adults & Children £2 entry.

The Finest Hours (12A) 137mins
Fri, Mon, Tue, Wed: 18:30, Sat: 16:30, Sun: 17:00
Parent & Baby Screening Tue: 11:30
In February of 1952, one of the worst storms to ever hit the East Coast struck New England, dragging an oil tanker off the coast of Cape Cod and literally ripping it in half. On a small lifeboat faced with frigid temperatures and 70-foot high waves, four members of the Coast Guard set out to rescue the more than 30 stranded sailors trapped aboard the rapidly-sinking vessel.

The Revenant (15) 176mins
Sat: 12:00
Inspired by true events, THE REVENANT captures one man's epic adventure of survival and the extraordinary power of the human spirit. In an expedition of the uncharted American wilderness, legendary explorer Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio) is brutally attacked by a bear and left for dead by members of his own hunting team. In a quest to survive, Glass endures unimaginable grief as well as the betrayal of his confidant John Fitzgerald (Tom Hardy). Guided by sheer will and the love of his family, Glass must navigate a vicious winter in a relentless pursuit to live and find redemption.

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies (15) 128 mins
Fri 20:45, Sat & Sun 19:00, Mon Tue Wed Thurs 21:30
Jane Austen's classic tale of the tangled relationships between lovers from different social classes in 19th century England is faced with a new challenge – an army of undead zombies.

Coming Soon

Kids Club: WALL-E - (U) 99 mins - 05/03/2016
Children's Classic. In the distant future, a small waste-collecting robot inadvertently embarks on a space journey that will ultimately decide the fate of mankind. Adults & Children £2 entry.

How to be single (15) 04/03/16
Comedy drama about two young women who feel unable to commit to long term relationships and therefore attempt to live the single life.

Zoolander 2 (12A) 04/03/16
Comedy sequel in which two male supermodels return from self-imposed exile and help an Interpol detective investigate the murders of several pop stars.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arena

> cinema, radio and what's on listings > leisure ideas > local events

Outdoor enthusiasts flock to Fort William for annual Mountain Festival

THE GREAT outdoors and everything it has to offer was showcased at the Fort William Mountain Festival (FWMF) 2016.

The annual event was staged in and around Fort William, the heart of the 'Outdoor Capital of the UK' over five days.

It kicked-off on February 17 with a torch-lit descent of Aonach Mor, followed by gondola rides to watch expert skiers, boarders and bikers ride the slopes.

Later that night there was an evening by *The Adventure Show* with Dougie Vipond and Cameron McNeish.

Organised by Highland Mountain Culture Association, the festival included a superb line-up of climbers and explorers, mountain films, inspirational speakers and skills workshops.

Some of the highlights included a showcase by climber Greg Boswell, who narrowly survived an attack by a grizzly bear in Canada.

Rock climber Dave MacLeod, who lives near Fort William, shared training and techniques during workshops at his own climbing

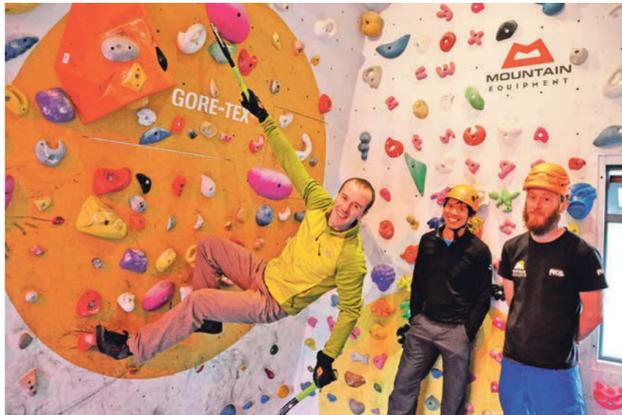


Fort William Highland Mountain Culture Association chairperson Mike Pescod, right, presented mountaineer Mick Tighe with his award. Photograph: John Paul Peebles, Abrightside Photography.

wall, built in his garage. Meanwhile, legends of the downhill and enduro mountain bike scene in Scotland shared their passion, knowledge and experiences.

The event also saw the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain

Culture presented to Mick Tighe, from Glen Roy. Nominated by the public and his peers as a mountain hero who celebrates achievement, accomplishment and the spirit of adventure, Mick is the ninth recipient of the award.



Climbing enthusiasts Yan Wong and James Cooper received some top tips from Dave MacLeod. 21_f09climbing_Mountain festival climbing workshop

Mike Pescod, chairman of the Highland Mountain Culture Association, said: 'Mick embodies the spirit of mountaineering perfectly, from its slightly rebellious side to its social and cultural side.'

'He has dedicated his life to moun-

taineering and has helped countless others do so as well.

'It was Mick who first came to rescue me after an accident 11 years ago, so it is on a very personal level that I say I am delighted that Mick is the recipient of this year's award.'

Stage set for drama festival

The North Lorn Drama Festival will be taking place next month and will consist of seven plays across two nights.

Four adult groups will be performing at the festival, which takes place on March 16 and 17 at Appin Hall and three junior groups will be taking part.

Beth Parkin, secretary of North Lorn Drama Festival said: 'Most of the adult plays will be comedy, but one of the junior groups will be performing *Toy Story*.'

Beth, who recently took over as secretary with her daughter, Jane, said: 'It's been hectic. It's the first time I have had anything to do with the drama group, but I think we will have a good turn out. It should be a good night for everyone.'

Tickets can be purchased on the door on the night with a reserved seat ticket being £8; and unreserved ticket is £5; and an unreserved junior ticket costs £3.

Cove Park wins new funding

Cove Park in Helensburgh has been awarded funding from two UK trusts to support the development of a new educational and participatory programme.

Hands-on Cove Park has received funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Robertson Trust.

The arts programme will launch this summer and will consist of a variety of classes, workshops and public events. Opportunities for both the local and wider community to get involved will be made available.

Hands-on is made possible by the expansion of the Artists Centre. The programme will have spaces that are dedicated to its events and activities.

Budding astronomers can reach for the stars at Coll & The Cosmos



IT'S A fact-nearly half the population of Europe cannot see the Milky Way because of light pollution. And entire generations have grown up seldom seeing star clusters or even constellations. Even for those who live in rural areas, there is nothing like seeing the sky as our ancestors did.

There's something about astronomy that is deeply engrained in human culture, going as far back as music, dance and poetry.

Coll & The Cosmos is a weekend-long stargazing astronomical voyage of discovery on Scotland's first Dark Sky island, the Isle of Coll. A sparse population, geographic isolation and outdoor lighting management make the night skies over Coll among the darkest in Europe, garnering it a designation by the International Dark Sky Association.

'With skies that dark, many deep sky objects can be seen with the naked eye. Some of these include star clusters such as the Beehive and Double Cluster, nebulae such as the Great Orion Nebula and the Andromeda Galaxy,' said George McConnachie, manager

of Coll Bunkhouse, and development manager for Development Coll, which promotes the sustainable development of the island. 'The bright band of the Milky Way can also be easily seen arching over the night sky regularly throughout the year.'

The course, a collaboration between Coll Bunkhouse and Cosmos Planetarium, is presented by astronomers James Green and Steven Gray, who lead participants in approximately 10 hours of hands-on learning and sky gazing activities using a range of observation techniques and astronomical equipment, from binoculars to large telescopes with Bluetooth capabilities. Guests will enjoy the six-metre indoor planetarium – a digital, in-the-round immersive multi-media theatre experience, so even if the weather doesn't cooperate, participants can get a virtual tour of the night sky in all its glory. During the day, gazers will observe the sun's flares, filaments and sun spots using Hydrogen Alpha and white light solar telescopes.

'It doesn't matter if you're a complete

beginner or a budding astronomer, the event is suitable for all,' George said. 'The indoor planetarium and digital projector make an amazing classroom to learn all about the major objects in the night sky, but the highlight of the event is hands-on stargazing using an array of astronomical equipment. Visitors can also bring along their own telescopes if they need help learning to use them.'

Time off during the afternoon means that stargazers can become beachcombers, and with 23 beautiful

beaches to choose from, there is no shortage of places to go.

Coll has amazing stretches of coastline which make walking an absolute pleasure, and bikes can be hired from the local post office. There is an abundance of wildlife all year round, with a wide variety of bird and marine life.

Coll & The Cosmos weekends for 2016 will run on March 19-20, April 4-5, September 3-4 and October 8-9. For more information visit collbunkhouse.com/dark-skies-coll-cosmos or ring 01879 230217.



RSPB Coll - A great place to be – regardless of the colour of the sky!

While waiting for the dark, why not use some of the light to visit our reserve on Coll? At this time of year, while walking through the reserve, you'll encounter wintering barnacle, white-fronted and greylag geese. The fields and machair areas are good places to see feeding lapwings, curlews and golden plovers.

Our car park is a great spot for star-gazing and later in the year is a prime spot to hear the elusive corncrake calling. In early spring, you will find yourself surrounded by breeding waders and have regular views of hunting birds such as hen harrier and merlin.

RSPB Coll 01879 230301 (Mon-Fri)

Or email coll@rspb.org.uk

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Dun Froach

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Or see the Visit Coll Website www.visitcoll.co.uk

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Sheep stockjudging success at Dalmally



A packed audience watches John MacPherson, left, and judge David Morrison from Dalwyne farm, Ayrshire, in the Dalmally ring.

IT WAS another successful stockjudging for North Argyll branch of the Blackface Sheep Breeders Association.

Held in Dalmally Mart, courtesy of United Auctions, the annual stockjudging competition on Friday February 12 attracted 140 people.

Judge for the occasion was David Morrison from Dalwyne farm, Ayrshire.

Branch committee member and honorary president of the Blackface Sheep Breeders Association John MacPherson

said: 'We would like to thank the judge, all stockmen and women for their tremendous show of stock at the Dalmally stockjudging. Many thanks also to all the stockjudgers and sponsors for their continued support and everyone who came along to make it a successful event. Well done everyone.'

Winners

Individual, and North Eastern trophy: 1 Alec MacPherson; 2 Alan MacKenzie; 3 Jimmy Wright.

Team: 1 Grant MacPherson,

Alec MacPherson, John MacPherson; 2 Jim Fairlie, Stephan Z, David Murray; 3 David Jackson, Jock Jackson, Richard Smith.

Young Farmers' class and Suie Lodge cup: 1 Alan MacKenzie; 2 David MacArthur; 3 Robert MacKellar.

Ladies, and Youngs Animal Health shield: 1 Katie Fairlie; 2 F MacDiarmid; 3 Gillian MacNeil.

Under-14: 1 Rachel McNaughton; 2 Sophie MacGregor; 3 Emma MacGregor.

Tup hogg homebred class, and Bill Black shield: 1 Messrs Jackson, Pole; 2 Messrs Camp-

bell, Succothmore. Open tup hogg class: 1 Luss Estates; 2 Messrs J and J MacPherson,

Balliemeanoich; 3 Burnbank/ Balliemeanoich. Winner of overall champion-

ship: Champion sheep - Messrs MacArthur, Arnicle. Winner of the draw: Robert Kay.

Market Reports

STIRLING

More than 4,000 sheep sold at Stirling

United Auctions sold 4,304 prime sheep, including 3,000 lambs, at Stirling on February 18.

Prime sheep sold to an average price of 181p/kg.

Leading prices

Lambs per head

Doune Farms (BTex) £106; Cherryfield (Tex) £102; South Flanders (Char) £95.50; South Baldutho (Suff) £95; Abbey (Chev) £92; Carhurlie (Zwar) £92; Home Farm (Mule) £90; Markethill (BF) £87.

Lambs per kilo

Ardachearnmhor (BTex) £223; Harviesmailing (Tex) £212; West Park (Chev) £201; Auchenflower (Suff) £195; South Flanders (Char) £193; Low Tiffergus (Mule) £189; Ardachearnmhor and Tay and Torridon (BF) £184; Carhurlie (Zwar) £161.

Ewes

Kyle (Tex) £141; Cherryfield (Cont) £131; Gartvaigh (Suff) £118; Garden House (ContX) £92.50; Aikengall (BFL) £90.50; Carhurlie (Zwar) £88.50; Pitsundry (Chev/Mule) £87.50; Prieston and Huntingfaulds (Mule) £78.50; Newhouse of Glamis (Chev) £77.50; Kyle (BF) £73.50.

Tups (77) - North Balloch and West Carse (Tex) £125; Easter Greenhill (BTex) £109; Pitsundry (Suff) £100; Aikengall (BFL) £97; Glendamp (BF) £81.

HEYLIPOLE AND RUAIG TOP TIRE CATTLE SALE

Trade was mixed as United Auctions held its Three early spring cattle sale on February 13.

A total of 310 store cattle and suckled calves sold at levels in keeping

with current mainland trends, though failing to keep up with last year's averages.

This downward trend in values is the result of the continuing fall of prime cattle values. Bullocks sold to average £783 per head or 215 pence per kilo. Heifers sold to average £649 per head or 203 pence per kilo. Bullocks sold to a top price per head of £1,140 for Limousin crosses from Heylipol Farm, while Ruaig sold Limousin bullocks to 268 pence per kilo. Charolais heifers from Heylipol Farm sold to £1,060 per head and the same farm achieved 260 pence per kilo, also for Charolais heifers. Cast cows from Croish sold to £810. A feature of the sale was the annual consignment of 87 Charolais, Limousin and Aberdeen Angus bullocks and heifers from Heylipol Farm which sold to average £970.57 per head or 227.06 pence per kilo.

Principal lots and prices

Top prices per head

Bullocks

AAx: £1,070 (5) and £1,010 (5) - Heylipol Farm. BRBx: £905 and £875 (3) - Ruaig. CHARx: £1,120 (2), £1,100 (2), £1,060, £1,040 (8), £1,020 (3), £990 (3), £950 and £940 - Heylipol Farm.

HEX: £865 - 3A Caolis.

LIMx: £1,140, £1,070 (2), £1,000 (2), £990 (2) and £970 (2) - Heylipol Farm

: £955 - Ruaig (2) and 1 Kenovay (2): £940 (2) - Heylipol Farm: £925

(4) - 3 Kenovay: £920 (4) - Heylipol Farm: £915

- Ruaig : £910 (2) and £900 (2) - Heylipol Farm.

SALx: £865 - 6 Crossapol.

SIMx: £810 - Lochphuil.

Heifers

CHARx: £1,060, £1,000 (4), £990 (2), £970 (2), £960 (3), £930 (9) and £920 - Heylipol Farm.

LIMx: £960 and £890 (2) - Heylipol Farm.

SALx: £690 (2) - Drum-aglea

SIMx: £780 - Lochphuil.

Bullocks

AAx: 232p (5) and 230p (5) - Heylipol Farm: 211p - Hillcrest.

BRBx: 263p, 247p (3), 240p, 229p (2) and 218p - Ruaig : 207p - 15 Crossapol : 200p - Parkhouse.

CHARx: 258p, 250p, 247p (3), 246p (3), 240p (2), 236p, 235p (5), 230p, 228p (2), 226p, 225p (2) and 209p - Heylipol Farm.

HERx: 190p - Hillcrest.

LIMx: 268p - Ruaig : 252p (2), 250p (2), 246p and 235p - Heylipol Farm : 234p (2) - Ruaig : 233p - Vaul : 233p (2) and 231p (2) - Heylipol Farm : 229p - Ruaig : 228p - Hillcrest : 225p (4) and 223p (2) - Heylipol Farm : 222p - Ruaig : 221p - Mainroad and 1 Kenovay (2) : 220p - Hillcrest : 219p (2) and 217p (2) - Heylipol Farm : 211p (2) - 6 Barrapol, Heylipol Farm (3) and Ruaig.

SALx: 247p, 244p and 225p - 6 Crossapol : 212p - Drumaglea (4) and 6 Crossapol (2).

SIMx: 227p and 224p - Lochphuil: 218p - Ruaig.

Heifers

AAx: 211p(3) - Hillcrest.

BRBx: 200p - Parkhouse.

CHARx: 260p (2), 231p (3), 228p (5), 224p (9), 217p (2) and 215p - Heylipol Farm.

LIMx: 234p - Ruaig : 223p - Heylipol Farm and Ruaig : 221p (2) - Hillcrest : 219p (2) - Heylipol Farm : 217p (2) - Hillcrest : 210p - Ruaig.

SALx: 225p - 4 East Baugh : 206p (2) - Drumaglea.

SIMx: 214p and 210p - Lochphuil: 210p - Ruaig.

In-calf cows

£720 - 6 Crossapol.

In-calf heifer

£815 - 13 Moss.

Cull cows, per head

£810 - Croish : £800 - 6 Barrapol : £795 - Ruaig and Parkhouse : £745 - Parkhouse : £750, £740 - Druimasaidh

Cull cows, per kilo

130p(3) - 6 Barrapol (2) - Heylipol Farm : 112p

- Croish : 111p - Druimasaidh and Parkhouse.

Nine new monitor farms in Scotland

Scotland's farmers are set to benefit from nine new Monitor Farms

NINE new monitor farms are to be set up across Scotland, all based at farm businesses typical to their location.

The initiative is the result of collaboration between Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and AHDB Cereals and Oilseeds, with support from The Moredun Foundation.

While each monitor farm will have a different focus determined by the predominant farming in that area, the farms will work together to bring all relevant aspects of farm businesses to each group.

The principle of monitor farms is familiar to Argyll and Bute, with a number of local farmers taking part in similar benchmarking initiatives over the past decade.

Douglas Bell, head of industry development at

Quality Meat Scotland, said: 'QMS has been at the heart of Scotland's monitor farm programme since the concept was introduced into Scotland in 2003. The blend of farmer to farmer learning, augmented by expert input, has successfully facilitated knowledge transfer and sharing of best practice within the farming sector.'

'Each of the new monitor farms will have its own dedicated management team and an associated business group that will evaluate solutions and best practice before sharing its findings, both with the wider community groups and more generally, through various media channels including a dedicated website.'

Each monitor farm will be run for three complete livestock cycles or cropping years, holding 18 meetings across the period and be linked between meetings through social and traditional media.

Harehead Savivatu star of Luig sale

THE LUING Cattle Society held its 51st Premier Sale at Walleys Marts, Castle Douglas.

A strong entry of stock on February 5 saw a bigger in-calf heifer section and a packed ring full of buyers ready to do business, however cautiously.

Pedigree Luig in-calf heifers opened the sale with top price of 2,800 guineas for the reserve champion, a home bred pair from Messrs CJ and JM Symons, Attonburn, Kelso selling to N Campbell, Currburn, Kelso.

Overall 53 in-calf heifers - 21 more than last year - averaged £1,918.

Pedigree bulling heifers were next, with 111 animals selling to an average of £1,241.

The first prize bulling heifers from D and A Stanners, Tynedale, Prescot, sold to P Simmers, Backmuir, Keith, for 1,600gns. Bulling heifers sold to an average of £1,488.

Cadzow Bros, Isle of Luig, sold 17 bulling heifers, averaging £1,198.

In the male section, 27 bulls were forward, with 23 specimens selling to average £4,914.

The top price reached 17,000gns, the second highest for a Luig bull, for Harehead Savivatu from Prof WA Penny CBE, per N Anderson, Harehead, Duns. He was a joint purchase

from P Simmers, Backmuir and D Sawrij, Keadzie Farms.

Cadzow Bros, Luig paid 7,000 guineas for another from the same herd, Harehead Sumo.

Other top prices included Luig Sherman from the Cadzow Bros, selling for 7,000gns to Prof WA Penny CBE.



Top priced bull, Harehead Savivatu.

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Women starting out in property are hardest hit by gender pay gap

Salaries of UK surveying professionals are at the highest in nine years, but the gender pay gap for new entrants now stands at 28.7 per cent, according to the RICS and Macdonald & Company UK Rewards & Attitudes Survey 2016.

Highlights

- Male property professionals earn on average £7,000 more than female counterparts
- Gender pay gap most prominent among 18-22-year-olds
- Sector salaries up 7.1 per cent overall

The gender pay gap

Salaries for UK property professionals have continued to rise at an average increase of 7.1 per cent in 2016, according to the latest survey by RICS & Macdonald & Company.

However, the gender pay gap continues with male property professionals earning £7,000 pa more on average than female counterparts (£57,509 versus £45,689). While this gap has closed slightly, from

27.0 per cent last year to 25.9 per cent in 2016, the discrepancy is evident across all age groups and is most acute for those aged between 18-22, where the difference in average salary is 28.7 per cent.

Competition for talent

Competition for talent continues with the average salary increase awarded to respondents who moved employer in the last year reached 16.2 per cent, while the average increase received by respondents under 30 jumped by 12 per cent.

Bonuses awarded to entry level candidates jumped by 79 per cent this year and employees at this level are also most likely to move job. Of those who indicated they are likely to look to change roles this year, 35 per cent are relatively inexperienced, compared to 19 per cent last year.

The fact that 64 per cent of respondents reported a rise in salary will offer comfort to the many women in the sector, especially those at entry level, who are once again confronted with a signif-

icant gender pay gap. The industry must urgently take action to create a more balanced workforce that attracts the best talent if it wants to remain competitive.

We can achieve this by introducing inclusive working practices such as flexible working. These are key to employee engagement, and in an increasingly competitive market, employers cannot afford to create working environments that only serve the needs of a small majority of the workforce.

We've launched an Inclusive Employer Quality Mark, which asks employers to put inclusivity at the heart of what they do, and aims to support them in sharing best practice, and we would urge all firms to put their money where their mouth is by signing up. Until there is a true commitment to change within the sector, we will continue to see results like these and the subsequent drift of talent away from our sector.

RICS Equalities Manager Justine Wallis-Leggett

A regional focus

Looking at the picture across the UK, those working in greater London continue to earn, on average, the most (£65,050) and command a premium of 20.8 per cent over the South East and 52.2 per cent over Ireland. The majority of the rest of the UK have indicated only a slight growth in average annual salaries, with the greatest growth seen in Scotland (+2 per cent) and the Midlands (+1 per cent).

Our qualifications continue to show their merit with a FRICS earning £69,885 in comparison to a non RICS counterpart (£43,905) while those with a RICS part qualification secured the highest average salary increase up £5,198 from £37,837 to £43,035 (+13.7 per cent).

Download the executive summary for the RICS and Macdonald & Company UK Rewards & Attitudes Survey 2016 at www.rics.org/uk/news/news-insight/press-releases/women-starting-out-in-property-hardest-hit-by-gender-pay-gap/.



RICS awards showcase talent

SCOTLAND'S most impressive new and regenerated building projects will go head-to-head, as shortlists are announced for RICS Awards 2016.

The awards showcase the most inspirational regional initiatives and developments in land, property, construction and the environment, celebrating the achievements of professionals working in both the built and natural environment.

The iconic Helix & The Kelpies in Falkirk, The Capitol Redevelopment in Aberdeen and the Borders Railway are a few of the projects competing from across the country.

Celebrating talent

The eight category winners will be selected from the 34 shortlisted entries to the awards. One shortlisted entry will also receive the coveted Project of the Year, Scotland award.

The winners from all categories will then be invited to represent Scotland and compete against projects from across the

UK at the overall RICS Awards in London, where last year's Scottish Project of the Year winner, Advocate's Close, took the UK national title.

The eight categories are:

- building conservation
- commercial property
- community benefit
- design through innovation
- regeneration
- residential
- tourism & leisure
- infrastructure

There are some great projects of all sizes shortlisted for the RICS Awards 2016, which demonstrate the quality of new and regenerated developments across Scotland, and it is sure to be a difficult judging process.

During the last few years Scottish winners have also seen great success at the Award finals in London, gaining UK-wide recognition for the quality of work taking place in the Scottish built environment.

Sarah Speirs, Director RICS in Scotland Judging for the awards will take place in coming

weeks, with the RICS Awards 2016 Scotland ceremony being held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa on 14 April 2016.

The RICS Awards national ceremony will take place in London in October 2016.

The Awards Shortlist includes:

Building Conservation – Sponsored by Wise Property Care

- Hawkhead Village
- Lewis Castle
- The Capitol Redevelopment
- The Surgeons' Hall Museums
- Townhouses at 31-33 Court Street, Haddington

Infrastructure – Sponsored by Sika Liquid Plastics

- Borders Railway
- Seabraes Pedestrian & Clyde Bridge

Commercial – Sponsored by Colleys

- Aker Solutions HQ Aberdeen International Business Park
- St Andrews – Premier Inn and M&S Simply Food

Regeneration

- Helensburgh Town Centre Public Realm
- Laurieston Phase 1A
- Pannure Street
- Pennywell (Urban Union)

Community Benefit – Sponsored by British Gas

- Glasgow Women's Library, Bridgeton
- Johnstone Town Hall
- Pinkston Watersports
- Ronald McDonald House

Scottish Opera's Theatre Royal

Residential – Sponsored by NHBC Scotland

- 35-37 Queen Street
- 53-57 Queen Street
- Earls Green
- Lairds Gate, Stewarton
- Laurieston Transformational Regeneration Area, Phase 1A
- New build mainstream & supported accommodation & training facilities for veterans

Polnoon

Sunnymead

West Burn Lane

Design through Innovation – Sponsored by Forbo Flooring Systems

- Dalmonach Distillery
- Pannure Street
- The City of Glasgow College – Riverside Campus
- Tourism & Leisure
- 35-37 Queen Street
- Scottish Opera's Theatre Royal
- The Helix & The Kelpies

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Offers over £2,500 per annum are invited for the summer lease of the above mobile snack bar site.

Argyll and Bute Council are prepared to offer the successful bidder an annually renewable lease of the site for a maximum of 5 years which will allow trading from Easter to the 31st October each year.

Closing date for offers: Friday 4th March 2016.

For further information contact:
The Estates Office, Argyll and Bute Council, Customer Services, Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre, 38 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh G84 7PG.
Telephone 01436 658957.

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CEOL-NA-MARA CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL

4 bedroomed family bungalow in excellent order conveniently located on the outskirts of Craignure within easy walking distance of the ferry and amenities. Large well-maintained garden with garage and outbuildings. DG and oil CH.

OIRO £270,000.

For viewing and further information contact the seller's agent, W Graham Sutherland. 07540 293360. wgrahamsutherland@gmail.com

Tel: 07540 293360

Want to sell your home this year?

Can't believe it is nearly Easter already – 2016 is flying by! Traditionally sellers perceive the Easter break as a deadline for getting their property on the market. However, many buyers will be monitoring listings all year round - maybe waiting for their house to sell, or sitting in rented accommodation waiting for their dream house to appear. Estate Agency isn't as seasonal as it once was. Online listings are nowadays accessible from a variety of devices anytime of the day and night. It was recently reported that over 95% of buyers are beginning their search online. Therefore, now, more than ever before, sellers need to be sure they choose an agent who will maximise their property's exposure and present their property effectively to the online buyers scouting the internet listings.

We suggest looking at three main factors that will have a dramatic effect.

1. Asking price:
Many clients we speak to overestimate the value of their home due to the sentimental value they attach to it. We realise it can be personal having your home critiqued. Estate agents professionally value your property taking into consideration the facts at hand, the property and the local market, devoid of personal attachment.

The price is the first thing that will attract a buyer. If you are seeing low offers or few viewings, this could be the reason. In the current market, the seller needs to be flexible – consider lower offers, and request feedback regarding these offers to shape your plan going forward!

2. Let buyers see the potential:
It's all about first impressions! Especially in summer, make sure your garden/close is neat and tidy, front door/fences are painted and your windows are clean. If all of these are in good order it gives buyers confidence that the whole property is well maintained. You may love your music room, brightly coloured bathroom, and cat ornament collection – but that doesn't mean everyone else will. Some buyers can visualise the potential of a property and imagine themselves living there, however some can't, so it's best to do everything you can to help buyers imagine your property as their home. Neutral colour schemes, decluttering and presenting the property in a clean and tidy condition, all increase the effectiveness of the photography and hence your chances of receiving an offer.

3. Online presence:
A few images and a description simply will not cut it anymore. Buyers are researching the market online before picking up the phone to an agent. At West we review our online listings on a regular basis to ensure we are marketing our listings as effectively as possible. But don't be afraid to speak up if you feel there's something missing from your listing. At West we include plentiful high quality photography, detailed floorplans and concise descriptions for all our listings. At West we believe giving buyers all the relevant information online maximises a listing's chances of being noticed and increases the number of viewing appointments.

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Properties for sale

<p>The Knoll, Duncraggan Road, Oban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached Victorian Villa • 3 Bedrooms / 2 Bathrooms • Elevated situation above Oban Bay • Large decking with views across Oban Bay • Extensively renovated throughout • EPC Rating - D <p>OIRO £380,000</p> <p>The Knoll - A beautiful detached 3 bedroom Victorian villa with stunning views across Oban Bay. The property retains many of its original features and has been renovated to a high standard by the current owner.</p>	<p>Merlin, Craignure, Isle Of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spacious Detached Bungalow • 3 Bedrooms / 2 Shower Rooms • Mature garden • Stunning panoramic views • Within walking distance of Craignure Ferry Terminal • EPC Rating - F (18) <p>OIRO £255,000</p> <p>Merlin is a delightful 3 bedroom detached bungalow enjoying uninterrupted panoramic views of the Sound of Mull and Loch Linnhe from its secluded position above Craignure on the Isle of Mull.</p>	<p>Plots at Dervaig, Isle Of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two woodland plots • OIRO £45,000 each • Planning permission in principle • Plot 1 - 0.40 Acre • Plot 2 - 0.42 Acre • Close to Dervaig village • Option to purchase additional ground <p>OIRO £45,000</p> <p>Plots 1 and 2, West Ardu, Dervaig - Two secluded woodland plots close to the village of Dervaig on the Isle of Mull. The plots offer an excellent opportunity to build a house in a secluded woodland setting.</p>	<p>Betts Field, Arle, Isle Of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large plot with views of the Sound of Mull • In excess of 1 Acre • Private shore access • Planning permission in principle <p>OIRO £110,000</p> <p>An exceptional plot overlooking the Sound of Mull on the Isle of Mull. The plot offers an excellent opportunity to purchase a sizable plot in excess of 1 acre with beautiful panoramic views and private access to the shoreline.</p>
<p>8 Java House, Craignure, Isle Of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terraced House • 3 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom • Excellent location close to Craignure ferry termin • Large rear garden • Excellent family home • EPC Rating D (59) <p>OIRO £115,000</p> <p>8 Java Houses - A well maintained, 3 bedroom terraced house located in Craignure on the Isle of Mull. This reasonably sized property benefits from a generous garden and would make an excellent family home.</p>	<p>Plots East of Ardtreatle Cottage, Dalmally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two generous 0.5 acre plots • Stunning glen view • Rural location • Planning permission in principle • Close to local amenities <p>OIRO £65,000</p> <p>We are delighted to market two 0.5 acre plots in a stunning secluded glen setting. Close to the town of Dalmally in the heart of Argyll, these plots offer the combination of rural living with the convenience of all amenities closeby.</p>	<p>1 Riverside Court, Tobermory, Isle Of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern ground floor flat • 2 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom • Move in condition • Factored Development • EPC Rating - D(68) <p>OIRO £110,000</p> <p>1 Riverside Court - A modern and spacious ground floor flat in a modern development in Tobermory. This 2 bedroom flat forms part of a small block of 4 flats at the top of the Riverside Court development.</p>	<p>35 Pulpit Drive, Oban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-detached bungalow • 3 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom • In excellent condition • Easily maintained garden • Quiet location • EPC Rating D (62) <p>UNDER OFFER OIRO £169,000</p> <p>35 Pulpit Drive A spacious 3 bedroom semi-detached house located on a quiet cul-de-sac in Oban.</p>

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Full and Part Time Positions Available

We are currently recruiting for Full and Part Time Care Assistants to join our experienced team at Lynn of Lorne Care Home. You will be responsible for implementing the provision of quality care for elderly residents, ensuring they each retain their dignity and individuality. You'll also be closely involved in the general activities of the Care Home and responsible for maintaining a safe and secure environment for residents, staff members and visitors.

Applicants will have experience and a genuine interest in working with elderly residents within a caring environment. GCF/NVQ in Care is not necessary for this post, however candidates should be willing to participate in Vocational Training Programmes.

Applicants should be able to communicate effectively at all levels and be comfortable working in a Team. Satisfactory Police Check and DBS/CRB check applies to this role.

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Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at the Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
15/02843/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse (amendment to planning permission 07/02221/DE1)	Land South of Lios Mhoire Ardconnel Terrace Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 5DJ	Oban Area Office
16/00033/PP	Erection of single storey extension and increase in roof height (amendments to planning permission 14/01931/PP - Demolition of existing boat house and erection of replacement boat house)	Killiemore Kilfinichen Tironan Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA69 6ER	Sub Post Office Bunness Isle of Mull
16/00320/PP	Alterations and partial change of use of ferry terminal to form cafe (Class 3)	Caledonian Macbrayne Ltd Railway Pier Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4DB	Oban Area Office
16/00345/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land South West of Goiretan Beag Tairnait Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Tairnait
16/00369/PP	Erection of 11 dwellinghouses	(Phase 3) Land East of Dunavon Connel Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Connel
16/00402/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Plot 2 Cnoc Fennaig Balvicar Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Balvicar
16/00406/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Garden Ground of Moorcroft North Connel Oban Argyll and Bute PA37 1QZ	Sub Post Office Connel
16/00410/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Plot 5 Ardmore Road Salen Aros Isle of Mull	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
16/00489/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 13/00479/PPP - Site for erection of dwellinghouse and installation of sewage treatment system	Land North of Campbell Hall Cottage Ledaig Oban Argyll and Bute PA37 1RT	Oban Area Office

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
16/00220/PP	Erection of extension and porch, installation of two ramps and associated works	Parish Church Victoria Street Tormory Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6PH	Tormory Area Office
16/00221/LIB	Internal alterations (including installation of low rise lift), erection of extension and porch, installation of two ramps and associated works	Parish Church Victoria Street Tormory Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6PH	Tormory Area Office

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 1A Marne Lochgillhead Brae PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
16/00365/PP	Change of use of millround agricultural building to form cafe	Balnahard Bothy Kiloran Isle of Colonsay Argyll and Bute PA61 7YT	Sub Post Office Isle of Colonsay

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Central Validation Team, 1A Marne Brae, Lochgillhead PA31 8RD.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.

Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website.

Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds

2 x Part-time Receptionists (approx. 15 hours per week)

Reliable, flexible and friendly seasonal staff needed. Previous experience in hospitality, sales or heritage setting required. Knowledge of local area an advantage.

www.dunollie.org for full job description / fiona@dunollie.org or 01631 570550 for more info.

Closing date 10th March 2016 at 5pm

Dunollie House, Oban, PA34 5TT

Position: Shop Receptionist
Location: Dunstaffnage Marina, Dunbeg, Oban
Salary: TBC (Depends on experience)

Role: The role of the shop assistant/receptionist is to ensure the effective and efficient running of our Marina Shop and Chandlery. Being a customer based role, previous experience with polite telephone manners is desired but not essential. Previous computer experience is a must.

Responsibilities: Welcome customers when entering the shop and assuring that everyone is being looked after. Taking customers registration details and collecting payments.

Handing out brochures when required. Answering all inbound phone calls and passing customers to the right department/person and or taking bookings. General Admin duties. The ideal candidate will be enthusiastic, confident, friendly, organised, well presented and most importantly reliable.

Apply by sending CV to [Ranulph.McLauchlan](mailto:Ranulph.McLauchlan@oban.gov.uk) either by email or post
info@dunstaffnagemarina.com
Dunstaffnage Marina, Dunbeg, Oban, PA37 1PX

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The successful candidate will have at least 2 years' practical salmon farming experience. You should be able to demonstrate competence across a wide range of farming disciplines including: health and safety awareness, fish health assessment, cage and moorings maintenance, feeding optimisation and skilled seamanship. Above all you should have the drive and ambition to improve your career through training and development. **A commercially endorsed Day Skipper qualification (or equivalent) is essential for this position.**

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If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Claire Scott on 01786 445521 or email claire.scott@scottishseafarms.com for an application pack. All applicants must have a current driving licence.

Closing date: Friday 11th March 2016

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About the Role

Supporting the Scottish Government Youth Employment Initiative, Skills Development Scotland is committed to offering Graduate opportunities within our Regional Operations Directorate.

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This role will be based in Oban.

About You

The successful candidate must have a minimum 2:2 degree and disciplines of particular interest are community education, teaching and social sciences and you must be committed to undertake further study at postgraduate level while carrying out the duties of a Trainee Careers Adviser. You must also have a genuine desire to work in this profession and geographical area.

The role will require strong interpersonal skills with the ability to engage customers in a school, post school and office environment. In order to support the government's initiative on youth employment candidates must be aged 24 or younger on April 30th 2016.

Due to the rurality of the location you must possess a driving licence and access to a vehicle.

To apply please visit: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/current-vacancies/>

Closing date for applications Sunday 13th March.

69% of the business community read the regional press

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Mrs Hannah Joan MacAllister has registered the croft Crag Mhor, Isle of Colonsay on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by the 10th November 2016.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C2337.

BREEDON AGGREGATES

BREEDON AGGREGATES BLAST AT BANAVIE QUARRY WEDNESDAY 2ND MARCH BETWEEN 12PM-2PM

Bid4OBAN Ltd

Notice of AGM

Tuesday 15 March 2016

At The Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Breadalbane Street, Oban

6.00pm for Members, 6.20pm for General meeting

www.highland.gov.uk

The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

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 9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal

Reference Number	Development	Address	Proposal Description
16/00598/FUL	Land 150M NE of Achnalea Ardour		Proposed dwelling house - amended site location to 14/04241/FUL
16/00681/FUL	Allt Na Lairige Hydro Scheme		16.5km buried cable for connection of Allt na Lairige Hydro Scheme to the distribution network

Time period for comments 14 days.
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING DIRECTIONS ISSUED

D L Cameron
1 - 6 Corriebeg, Kilmallie 0.318 ha - Existing house site
4.85.61910
Conditions: 3b, 4

I Ashcroft
5 & 6 Sanna, Ardnarmurchan & Sunart
0.168 ha - Site for a dwelling house
4.86.59758
Conditions: 1, 2, 3b, 4

R J Cameron
7 Upper Inveroy, Kilmonivaig 0.306 ha - Site for a dwelling house
4.86.59213
Conditions: 2, 3b, 4, 8

Conditions

(1) Acquisition of area within 5 years of the date of direction and notification made to Commission within 3 months of acquisition.
(2) To provide a site for a dwellinghouse
(3) Complete enclosure of the land with a stock proof fence within 4 months of: (a) the proposed development completion
(4) That fence shall be maintained in good order and repair by each successive owner or occupier of the land.
(8) The Direction will expire 3 months from the date of the Direction unless an application for registration of the making of the Direction is submitted before the expiry of that period.

Any person with an interest in the application may appeal against a decision to the Scottish Land Court within 42 days of the date of this advert.

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 11 THREE-POINT MOORINGS WITH CAGES, LOCH LINNHE, INVERNESS-SHIRE

Notice is hereby given that Marine Scotland Science has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of 11 three-point moorings with cages at:

Location	Latitude Co-ordinates	Longitude Co-ordinates
Loch Linnhe, Inverness-Shire	56° 50.184' N 56° 44.143' N 56° 42.612' N 56° 42.292' N 56° 42.032' N 56° 38.876' N 56° 35.254' N 56° 36.546' N 56° 28.959' N 56° 30.841' N	05° 06.721' W 05° 14.949' W 05° 15.509' W 05° 17.684' W 05° 12.783' W 05° 20.919' W 05° 19.122' W 05° 23.049' W 05° 30.021' W 05° 27.667' W 05° 37.955' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Oban Library, 77 Albany St, Oban PA34 4AL.

Objections relating to safety of navigation or environmental issues in respect of the application should be made in writing to:
Licensing Operations Team, Marine Scotland, Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DB within 28 days of the date of this notice or by email: MS.MarineLicensing@scotland.gsi.gov.uk, quoting reference: **MCMS/05853**
Marine Scotland Science

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES **Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES**

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Jo Carson has registered their croft 26 Auchinahard, Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 4th November 2016.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is A0684.

First Registration of a Croft

Donald James Galbraith has registered their croft Bracarina, Glenelg, on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by November 8, 2016.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C2309.

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Messages will appear in the issue dated Thursday 11th February

Deadline for your messages - 12noon, Monday 8th February

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DEATHS

BAND - Janet Robertson, born September 1, 1918 at Cloichfoldich, Fort William, oldest daughter of Robert and Janet Marshall, formerly of Marshall and Pearson. Passed away peacefully on February 16 at Sister Dora's Care Home, Stafford, aged 97. Wife of the late John Band, and dearly loved mother, grandmother and great grandmother.

BEATON - Peacefully at Abbeyfield House, Ballachulish on February 22, 2016, Archibald Beaton (Archie), in his 101st year, beloved husband of the late Elizabeth Campbell (Lizzie), much loved dad of Sheena and Donald and cherished grandpa of Diarmid, Amy, Dawn and Kenzie. Will be sadly missed.

McCULLOCH - Peacefully at Oban Hospital on February 19, 2016, John Thomson McCulloch (Jack), 21 Mossfield Drive, Oban, in his 94th year. Dear brother, uncle, great-uncle and a good neighbour and friend. Funeral service will be held at Oban Parish Church on Monday, February 29 at 1pm. Family flowers only.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HART - Robert and all Jock's family would like to thank all friends and relatives for their kind sympathy following their sad loss. Thanks to all staff at Eadar Glinn and Lorn Medical Centre. Thanks to Rev Dugald Cameron and Ted Heath for the lovely service, to D&A Munn for funeral arrangements and to everyone who attended the service and graveside. Retiring collection raised £243.63 for RNLI Oban branch.

MACDONALD - Ishbel, Joe and family would like to thank those who sent cards and Mass cards following the sad loss of Donald, a loving brother, brother-in-law and uncle. We would like to thank Bishop Joe Toal for his assistance

with Fr Tom, also Mr Peter Rose the organist. We thank Fr MacKinnon and Deacon Thomas for their weekly visits to Donald for spiritual needs. Thanks also to the doctors and nurses at Tweeddale Surgery, the staff at Victoria Court for their loving care and to the staff in Ward 1, Belford Hospital. Special thanks to Scott Greenlees of McLellan Undertakers for professional and efficient arrangements, to Charlie Toal for preparing Donald's final resting place, Ronnie Campbell for gaelic prayers at the graveside, also the young piper and Mr Valley and staff of Stronlissit Hotel for excellent catering.

MASON - Hazel, John and Lorna and their families would like to thank everyone most sincerely for the love and support shown to them following the recent sad loss of Bill, a loving father, father-in-law, seonair, brother, uncle and friend. Thank you to all who cared for Bill over the past few years. Also to all who attended the funeral. Special thanks to Rev Jeff McCormick, Catriona MacFarlane and all at Hamish Hoey and Son for the efficient funeral arrangements and the Falls of Lora Hotel for providing the funeral tea. The retiring collection for the Friends of the Beatson was £650.87.

PORTER - Richard and Dixie would like to thank their family, friends and neighbours for the cards, calls, flowers and visits following their recent loss. Special thanks to Dr Fiona MacLennan and the paramedics for their dedicated care and support. A sincere thanks to Hamish Hoey and Son for their caring and efficient funeral arrangements and to Rev. Dugald Cameron for his visits and comforting service at church and graveside. Finally thank you to everyone who attended the service and kindly donated £631 to the Glasgow Renal and Transplant Unit.

MEMORIALS

BROWN - In loving memory of my dear husband Alaisair who died on February 25, 2005, also my brother-in-law Hector, who died March 24, 2004, also remembering loved ones gone before and since. Time passes and memories stay. Loved and remembered everyday.

- Seasonaid, 11 Balephuill, Tiree.

CAMERON - Ian D (Hoots) 1954 - 23/2/2014. It has been two years since you passed. Remembering you is easy. We do it every day.

It's the heartache of losing you That never goes away. Love always.

- Elaine, Kara, Craig and grandchildren.

CHISHOLM - Stewart (Chubby). In loving memory of a devoted father and grandpa, who died February 24, 2012. Dragons live forever. But not so little boys. Painted wings and giant strings make way for other toys.

One sad night it happened Jackie Paper came no more. And Puff that mighty dragon ceased his fearless roar. Forever in our hearts.

- Natalie, Morgan, Owen and Brione xx.

CHISHOLM - James Stewart (Chubby), February 24, 2012. Miss you pal.

- Love Jim and Freda.

CLARK - In loving memory of Gary, died February 24, 2012. You are loved and missed. Always in my heart.

- Gran and family.

COOPER - In loving memory of our beloved mum, gran and great gran Dorothy, who died on February 23, 2006. Also our dad and pop Eddie, who died April 5, 1993. Gone from our lives. But not from our hearts.

- Tricia, Caroline and families.

DAWSON - Treasured memories of Alan, who passed away on February 25, 2015. A much loved and missed husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather and great-grandfather. Remembered with much love and admiration by all the family.

- Betty and family

GIBSON - In loving memory of our dear mum and granny Marybell, who died February 23, 1987. The gates of memory never close.

We miss you more than anyone knows.

- Iain and family, Dalmally and Margaret and family, Canada.

MACDOUGALL - Gur n-ionndrainn, Dad.

- Eleanor

MACGILL - In loving memory of Donald MacGill, who passed away February 23, 1991. Always in our thoughts. Beloved husband of the late Nancy and dear father of Anne and Neil.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of our dear mum Veronica, who passed away on February 25, 2000. Love and miss you always.

- Yvonne, Richard, Michael and Innes x

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of Veronica a much loved sister and auntie who passed away February 25, 2000.

Always in our thoughts. And forever in our hearts.

- Violet, Iain, Janette, Jennifer and families.

The Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

MACVICAR - In loving memory of my dear wife Teena (Christina MacInnes) died March 1, 2007. They say in time you do forget.

to some that may be true but no morning dawns, no night returns without a thought of you.

- Johnnie

For a loving mother and nana. You left us happy 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.

The Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

MORTON - In loving memory of Catherine Morton, passed away on February 24, 1995. Beloved wife and mother to John, John and David.

Forever in our thoughts. Beloved daughter-in-law to Mary.

Always in my thoughts

- Mum

Beloved mum, mum-in-law and nana

Love and miss you always

- Norman, Karen, Christopher, Lewis and Arran

NICOL - In memory of Claire Nicol, died February 25, 2015. Much loved mother, mother-in-law, granny and great granny. Always in our thoughts.

ROBERTSON - In loving memory of my dear mum Agnes, who passed away February 26, 2012. Sadly missed, now with my dad Alex.

Always in my thoughts.

- Jim, Jessie and family

The Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

The Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

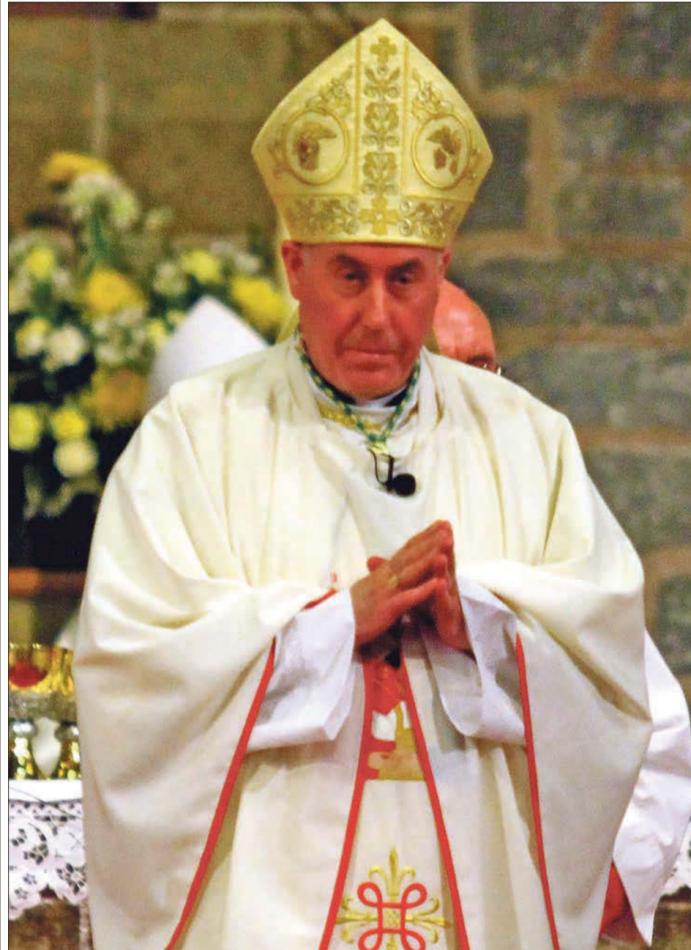
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Archbishop Cushley praises the 'long and distinguished history'.



ARCHBISHOP Cushley address at the Church of Christ in Argyll and the Isles.

ARCHBISHOP Cushley praises the 'long and distinguished history of the Church of Christ in Argyll and the Isles' in his homily on the occasion of the Ordination of Mgr. Brian McGee as Bishop of Argyll and the Isles.

In his homily, Archbishop Cushley, spoke of the journey of St Columba to Iona 1,400 years ago, where he and his successors became the undisputed religious and moral leaders of the people. While the monks of Iona were known and respected throughout Europe for centuries.

Bishops' Conference of Scotland, Archbishop Philip Tartaglia, said: 'I congratulate Mgr Brian McGee on his nomination and consecration as Bishop of Argyll and the Isles and look forward to welcoming him to the Bishops' Conference.'

The Episcopal Ordination of Monsignor Brian McGee as the new Bishop of Argyll and the Isles took place at St. Columba's Cathedral in Oban today, Thursday 18 February at 7.00pm. The new Bishop will be consecrated by Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

'When I was Bishop of Paisley, Brian was one of my priests. He was a dedicated pastor and a thoughtful priest. I have no doubt that he will make his own distinctive and valuable contribution to the deliberations of our Conference.'

'The President of the

LIFE lines Council Budget

The news that Argyll and Bute Council proposes to save £695,000 on elected member and officer efficiencies alone could be regarded as a good start on the £10 million budget reduction for 2016/17.

household recycling performance. Sadder is the saving of £553,000 by cutting funding to early year education and care providers, and the £191,000 reduction of school librarian services and the direct loss of ten jobs. We can only hope that these positions are reinstated as soon as the local authority finances are restored to a position of security. Understanding the educational and emotional benefit of

books and reading is a foundation of a free society, and immeasurably more important than Christmas lights, which are to be funded from the revenue budget until 2019. Most of us can live with less frequent grounds maintenance, saving £76,000; and we are already accustomed to prioritisation of property maintenance programmes that will save a further £123,000. Look on the bright side - the council will

spend £75 million to encourage people to move to Argyll and Bute, and £60 million on roads, schools and historic buildings by 2018. A further £12.5 million attract business growth, so short-term austerity and a £10million reduction in services gives way to a long-term regional development and £147.5 million of investment. When there are no more cuts to be made, the only way is up. JA

Thought for the week

TWO BLACK HOLES COLLIDE? This week I discovered that black holes aren't what I imagined but that they are objects with such huge mass and gravity that even light cannot escape from them. When two holes collided, scientists recently recorded that this caused ripples in space-time which had been

predicted by Einstein's theory of general relativity but don't ask me to explain this! I also heard of a professor on the radio claim that the human brain is the most complex thing ever discovered. So if we live in such an amazing universe, both in the vastness of space and in our own heads, how is it that we are instructed to

His disciples saidLord teach us to pray'... So Jesus said to them, 'When you pray say; "Our Father"'. (Luke 11:1-2)

call its creator 'Father'? We are told that Jesus is uniquely able to call God 'Father' as he is God's only begotten son. But how do we know this? Jesus asked his disciples 'Who do people say that I am?' Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, Son of the living God'. 'Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you', says Jesus,

'But my Father who is in Heaven'. (Matt 16:16-17) In His light we see light, His Father becomes our Father. 'The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.' (Rom.8:16)

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MARTIAL ARTS

WITH IAIN RODGER



Mark Welsh and Rhodaigh Hanlin in action during the 'knockdown fighting' course held in Oban Martial Arts Centre.



Chloe and Katie MacDonald



Chris Rowan in action during the West of Scotland Open BJJ championships at Ravenscraig. Chris came away with a bronze medal



Lee Williamson, sitting, lifted gold in the over 30s-category at the BJJ championships.

Kyokushinkai Karate

Caledonia Kyokushin held a 'knockdown fighting' course on Saturday February 13 at the Oban Martial Arts Centre. Nine adults from Caledonia Kyokushin and eight Junior's from Senshi Do Kickboxing attended the gruelling session which was taught by Shihan Iain Rodger and Senpai Mark Welsh.

This Saturday sees the Scottish Open Knockdown championships in Glasgow which is organised by Iain Rodger on behalf of the Independent Kyokushin Karate Union.

Classes are as normal in Oban, Thursdays at 6pm for Junior's (8-13) and from 7pm for 14 years and over.

For club details contact Iain Rodger on: iain@ikku.co.uk or 07584 166542.

BJJ

Oban BJJ travelled down to Ravenscraig sports centre in Motherwell on Saturday February 13 for the West of Scotland Open BJJ tournament.

Seven competitors from the team competed in gi (wearing the suit) and no gi (shorts and shirt). This was the busiest tournament yet with 43 teams and up to 16 competitors per weight class.

The day started with no gi with Sean Rowan, Chris Rowan and Dawid Loukil entering in their respective weight class and 15 year old Andrew Ritchie entering his first comp as a juvenile.

Sean lost on points in last 20 seconds of his match while Dawid and Chris fought through to their finals, Chris submitting all his opponents along the way and Dawid dominating his fights to get to his final showing much improved composure, Chris lost in his final to a tough opponent while Dawid won his.

Young Andrew lost on points to a far more experienced opponent but showed great potential for the future.

Dawid and Chris were then invited to enter the absolute division (all the medal winners from different weights at the same experience level) both showed a great mix of escapes and finishes and Dawid reached final but got beaten by his opponent with a North South choke with one minute to go.

The afternoon was gi divisions with Sean Rowan, Chris Rowan, Mateusz Grabiec, Jarek Cimoszuk and Lee Williamson entering and young Andrew again entering the juvenile section.

Sean and Mateusz were in the same weight division and both went out in the semi-finals and ended up against each other for bronze which Mateusz won. The improvement in Sean over the last few

months has been phenomenal and he can count himself very unlucky not bringing home a medal.

Jarek steam-rolled his division all the way to the final but was unfortunately caught in an arm bar while ahead on points. Chris fought through to a play-off for bronze and Andrew got caught in a triangle to get silver.

The last bracket was Lee Williamson in the seniors (over 30's) Lee beat his younger opponent with a baseball choke and beat his much younger muscular opponent in the final to take gold to the surprise of some watching showing that good technique beats strength.

To take away eight medals in the busiest tournament they have entered was far beyond any expectation for such a small club, compared to the larger city teams from up and down UK that had entered, and with much more experienced players.

The association Oban BJJ, with Marcos Nardini who holds monthly seminars in Oban has taken the club to a different level and the final team showings showed Oban BJJ a very impressive fourth out of 43 teams.

For club details contact Coogie Potter on: coogiepots@gmail.com

Shukokai Karate

Argyll Martial Arts (incorporating Argyll Shukokai) classes continue as normal with coaches Kenny Gray, Flo McBurnie, Andrew Lawson and Andrew Buchanan passing on their knowledge to the students.

For club details contact Kenny Gray on: kenni.gray@btinternet.com

Kickboxing

Exciting times at Senshi Do Kickboxing, this coming Saturday February 27 sees Andrzej Dariusz Pytko fighting in the IKKU Scottish Open, Scotland's premier full contact karate tournament, everyone at the club wishes him the best of luck.

Also training hard for The Kyokushin Cup tournament on April 9 are Sara MacIntyre, Jessica Graham, Kaitlyne MacLeod, Codie McCulloch, Daniel MacInnes, Angus Files, Robbie, Billy and Adam Bratton, Conner Maclean and Kieran Johnston, this again is a full contact tournament.

Training times are Wednesday 6:30pm for juniors, 7:30pm for Seniors and Sundays 11am for Juniors, 12 noon for Seniors and Sharon's Women Only class at 2pm.

For details on the ladies-only class phone Sharon on: 07508 726334. For Kickboxing club general enquiries contact Wullie Rodger on: shihanwill@gmail.com

Abbie turns out for Scotland

A FORMER Oban High School pupil received one of the highest accolades in sport earlier this month when she turned out to play for her country.

In the 74th minute of the recent women's Scotland v Wales 6 Nations rugby match, Oban's Abi Evans, 19, stepped on to the pitch and competed for her country.

The result might not have gone her way, with Scotland losing the match 23-10, but the Obanite is excited about the future.

Abi said: 'It was a good and really competitive game, although it wasn't the result we were wanting.'

'I'm now looking to keep my place in the squad. I'm just going to keep training hard.'

'Our next game is away to Italy on Sunday, which I am really excited about.'

When speaking about how it felt to play for her country, the 19-year-old said: 'It's just amazing. It's crazy, emotional and it is

Women's rugby

what I have always wanted to do.'

Abi, who started playing rugby when she was 12-years-old, swam for Scotland at national level for six years.

She made her international rugby debut for Scotland in the 2015 6 Nations opener against France and has played for her country five times in total, having started four of those.



Abi taking part in fitness training at Murrayfield with the Scotland squad.



Senpai Mark Welsh takes the students through some stretching exercises at the recent knockdown fighting course run by Kyokushinkai Karate Club.

Silverware for Mull hockey team

AFTER just three training sessions together, Mull Hockey Club picked up their first piece of silverware, winning an indoor tournament in Oban recently.

The newly established team, which was set up by Jonathon Keller, who is a maths teacher at Tobermory High School, made it out of the group stage of the tournament finishing in second place and went on to compete in a 'tight and competitive' semi-final.

The island side were 1-0 down with less than a minute to go, but managed to score and take the game in to extra time, where the golden goal rule was being implemented, meaning the first team to score wins.

They managed to edge their way to victory and the final beckoned.

Venessa MacLean, who played in the tournament

Hockey

for Mull, said: 'We had already lost to this team earlier in the day so focus was on enjoying ourselves and being proud of what we had achieved already.'

Mull found themselves 4-2 down at the interval, but after giving it their all in the second half the score finished 4-4 and another round of extra time, and golden goal, was on the cards.

The Islanders may have felt a slight feeling of déjà vu as they scored another golden goal and were crowned winners of the tournament.

Mull's Kara McKee also won Women's Player of the Tournament and Jonathon Keller won Men's Player of the Tournament.

Vanessa MacLean added: 'We should do this every week.'

Women's Shinty Development Day

AFTER the highly successful Women's Shinty Development Day in the North, the Women's Camanachd Association are pleased to announce that on Sunday February 28 a second development day will be held at Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

This opportunity is open to all women's teams. The day will run from 11am-3pm

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Sygenta 6, Under 13s 1. Saints scorer was Ruairidh Munro. Campbeltown Pupils v Under 14s, postponed; Dumbarton United 4, Under 15s 2. Scoring for Saints were Rory Dowd and Scott Mossman. Busby v Under 16s, postponed; Ardencaple 5, Under 19s 5. On target for Saints were Fraser MacFarlane (2), Jay Cooper, Connor Howe and Alan Buchanan.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s no game; Baljaffray v Under 14s; Under 15s v Busby; Port Glasgow v Under 16s; Under 19s v Milngavie.

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competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.
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Lorne beat Allan Glens and the weather for hard-fought win

Oban Lorne	19
Allan Glens	10
BT West Division 1	

OBAN Lorne welcomed third place Allan Glens for Saturday's West Division 1 fixture. With Glencruitten being unplayable the fixture was switched to North Connel.

The Green Machine were looking for a second consecutive win that would lift the team into fourth place in the division. A strong squad was selected for the game with no significant changes from the previous weekends 26-17 win over Garnock.

It was Allan Glens who made a stronger start to the game and had the Oban defence under pressure for the first 20 minutes. Oban were struggling to get out of their own 22 by conceding too many penalties and also making several unforced errors in some horrible weather conditions.

Oban finally managed to gain some field position when scrum half Dom Ma made a good break on the half-hour mark. The good field position resulted in Oban gaining a penalty from the Glens defence which was narrowly missed by Finlay Carmichael.

The home side took some confidence from this and played some good rugby in the next few phases of play. A series of quick rucks were pressurising the away defence whose discipline took its toll with their scrum half being sin binned by referee Willie Malone.

From the resulting five-metre scrum Oban No 8 Airidas Savickas (Irish), scored the first try of the day to put Oban 7-0 ahead with Carmichaels successful conversion.

Allan Glens refused to let this try set them back as they raced upfield towards the tryline. Both teams played the remaining time of the first half with 14 players with Oban's Struan Smith being sin binned due to persistent off-

side by the Oban team. Glens hit back with a well-taken penalty to narrow the gap to 7-3.

The home side were hoping to escape into the half-time break ahead in the game but the visitors had other ideas. A well driven maul in the 22 resulted in a try giving the away side a narrow 10-7 lead at the break.

On the basis of play in the first half the visitors merited their three point lead. They were playing the poor conditions much better than Oban and were making far less silly mistakes.

The exposed conditions of North Connel took its toll on the both teams in the second-half with each side struggling to create any attacking phases of note and maintaining any significant field position.

On 65 minutes, Oban's Struan Smith had a try disallowed as the referee could not see the grounding. This kick-started the Oban team into life for an eventful last 10 minutes of play.

With 10 minutes to go Oban were awarded a penalty try from a five-metre scrum. This was Oban's strongest area of play all day with the scrummage destroying anything in its path.

Oban led 14-10 going into the last phases of the game and were looking good to secure a narrow victory. Vice captain Craig Wright secured the win in almost the last attack of the game with a try from the back of a driving maul.

Oban Lorne recorded a hard fought 19-10 win against a very well organised Allan Glens team. The win lifts the team into fourth place in the league with three games in hand against the teams above them.

This Saturday the Green Machine host second placed Newton Stewart in a rearranged fixture. Newton Stewart are having a great season, only losing twice to league leaders Glasgow Academicals.



Oban Lorne's No 8 Airidas Savickas (Irish), scored the first try of the day to put Oban 7-0 ahead. 15_t09rugby01

Kick off will be at 3pm with the game hopefully taking place at Glencruitten if the weather allows.

BT Women's National League Broughton v Oban Lorne

Oban Lorne Ladies travel to Edinburgh to take on Broughton RFC this Sunday. Oban Ladies have been performing well in their first season in National Division 1.

Despite only two wins from eight fixtures the team are safe from relegation and will be hoping for a couple more wins in their remaining games to climb up the table.

U16 and U18 West Cup

Oban's U16 and U18 Rugby teams will be playing in the West Regional Cup this weekend.

The U18 team have a tough fixture away to Allan Glens on Saturday while the U16s host Whitecraigs at Glencruitten on Sunday, KO 2pm.



Struan Smith tries to break through the Allan Glens defence. 15_t09rugby02

Camanachd take on Lochside Rovers Shinty

OBAN Camanachd and reserve team Lochside Rovers will play a pre-season match as part of the club's preparation for the new season which gets underway on March 5 when Camanachd travel to play Glenurquhart while Lochside Rovers are at home to Inveraray in South Division 1.

This friendly encounter will give both teams much-needed game time and will be played at Ganavan with a 1.30pm throw-up.

Lochside's pre-season has been disrupted with games scheduled against Lochaber and Newtonmore cancelled due to the weather.

Camanachd have had more success racking up games against Inveraray and Kilmallie as the countdown to the start of the 2016 season continues, added to that and supplemented by training sessions twice a week they are well prepared for what is a tough start to their Premier League programme against Glenurquhart away followed by Kyles Athletic at home and then the club travel to Skye to take on the newly-promoted islanders.

The Oban outfit will be looking to make a good start to the league campaign and kick on from the positive finish they had at the end of last season.

Results and fixtures Football

LAST Saturday's results: Premier Division - Campbeltown Pupils v Alba Thistle, postponed; Oban Saints no game; Premier Division One - Kilbowie Union 0, Dunoon 1; Premier Division Two - Tarbert v FC Clydebank, postponed; Jimmy Marshall Cup, 2nd round - Lochgilhead Red Star 2, Fynnart 4; Coronation Cup, 1st round - Dunoon Athletic 1, East Kilbride YM 5.

This Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division - Campbeltown Pupils v Shawlands FP; Premier Division One - Dunoon v Ferguslie Star; Kings Park Rangers v Lochgilhead Red Star; Jimmy Marshall Cup, 2nd round - East Kilbride v Oban Saints; St Joseph's FP v Tarbert.

Saints on Marshall Cup duty

OBAN Saints' bid for a third Jimmy Marshall Trophy final appearance in four years gets under-way this Saturday at K-Park, East Kilbride against last season's beaten finalists East Kilbride Amateurs. The match will kick-off at 1pm with referee Michael McCart in charge.

The amateur wing of highly ambitious Scottish Lowland Football League club East Kilbride have taken the Scottish Amateur Football League by storm in recent seasons securing an unprecedented four consecutive league titles in a relentless march to the top division where they currently occupy fourth place with 13 points from six games played.

Kilby's impressive league form includes a thumping 6 - 0 win against reigning Champions St Joseph's FP and a 4 - 0 victory against another of the top flights' established clubs Finnart.

The only black marks on Kilby's league record so far are the 2 - 0 away defeat against fellow title challengers Goldenhill and a share of the points in their only previous encounter with Saints which ended 0 - 0 at Glencruitten on the opening day of the season.

In addition to their hugely impressive league exploits EKFC

Amateurs have also recorded some highly-commendable cup runs reaching the sixth round of the Scottish Amateur Cup in each of the last three seasons including this season's recent exit at the hands of the all conquering Colville Park.

Kilby have also reached the last 16 of this season's West of Scotland Amateur Cup where they will face either Kilbirnie, St Mungo's or Finnart for a place in the quarter-finals.

In just their third appearance in the Jimmy Marshall Trophy Kilby will hope to go one better than last season's 2 - 1 cup final defeat to Premier Division Champions St Joseph's FP and will provide a stern test for tournament veterans Oban Saints.

For their part Saints have a decent record in the competition having reached at least the semi-finals stage in five of the past nine seasons and will be looking to add to their single cup triumph in 2014.

Manager Alex Craik will have a strong squad to choose from with Myles McAuley and Martin Bonnar back in training after lengthy spells out through injury as he looks to launch what he hopes will be another long unbeaten run after the narrow 2-1 West of

Football

Scotland Amateur Cup defeat to Colville Park two weeks ago.

Saints midfielder Donnie Campbell trained with the Scottish Amateur International Select on Sunday and took his place in the line-up for their friendly match against Lanark United Juniors at Hampden Park last night (Wednesday).



Donnie Campbell

Lancaster 'A' consolidate title favourites tag after whitewash over Markie Dans 'B'

A REJUVENATED Lancaster 'A' returned to league duties after their enforced sabbatical looking to consolidate their championship favourites status. The Lochavullins Cellars inactivity due to international commitments presented the pacesetters an opportunity to put breathing space between the outfits, although Lochnell could still yet prove to be a thorn in both their sides.

A near-full capacity crowd welcomed Lancaster 'A' as they crossed the Esplanade to take on Markie Dans 'B'. This is not uncommon for one of Oban's most popular drinking establishments. However, on this occasion many of the spectators were bona fide followers of the home side, buoyed by three consecutive victories.

You could argue that these successes were not against the same calibre of player they were about to face, but nonetheless there was genuine optimism amongst their band of intrepid fans, at least early in the evening.

Not for the first time this season Lancaster 'A' decided to take their pool clinic on its travels,

much to the dismay of the home side's players and supporters alike. The doctors of destruction opened up with the now customary clean sweep of the doubles and inside 10 minutes it was fairly evident Markie Dans 'B' were next in line to receive their pool prescription. Unfortunately for the hosts, they continued to haemorrhage games as a rampant Lancaster 'A' cleared frame after frame with surgical precision.

The home side's support aid, which was previously full of enthusiasm had well and truly dispersed to the bar as Lancaster 'A' clinically finished off the contest without reply, to complete their operation.

Last week's fixtures threw up more than one whitewash, surprisingly the second wasn't provided by Lochnell who did continue their assault on the championship by thrashing newcomers Wide Mouthed Frog.

A slip-up for a household name in the singles allowed the Wide Mouthed Frog an unexpected but welcomed solitary success, but their inexperienced side were no match for the title challengers.

A special mention for Lochnell must be made as they took the time to show their opponents possible scenarios and escape routes that they may come across before the end of the season, a gesture that is applauded by the league committee.

Old guard

The second granny of the night belonged to the Lochavullin who provided the hospitality for Outreach. Is it coincidence that the Lochavullin's best performance to date was accomplished using seasoned campaigners? The answer is probably not, but the availability of the old guard on a weekly basis is proving to be their captain's Achilles heel.

A top-five position looks like being beyond the Lochavullin now, but if they can select their more experienced cueists more often they could ascend up the league table.

The concluding tie saw fourth battle fifth, as the Lancaster 'B' attempted to leapfrog opponents Markie Dans 'A'. It was a banker stalemate in the eyes of the majority and predictably that is how the match panned out, but once

Pool

again Markie Dans 'A' will feel this was another one that they let slip away. Three games to the good heading in to the concluding doubles Markie Dans 'A's profligacy raised its ugly head once more and a determined Lancaster 'B' pulled an unlikely draw out the bag to take a share of the spoils.

A wee reminder that the Gordon & Strathern Monthly flyer takes place tomorrow night (Friday) in the Lancaster Hotel starting at 7pm. Any player looking to take part should enter their name no later than Friday afternoon via Facebook or at the hotel's reception.

Results: 18/02/16 - Gluepot P-P Lochavullins Cellar; Markie Dans B 0-12 Lancaster A; Wide Mouthed Frog 1-11 Lochnell; Lochavullin 12-0 Outreach; Lancaster B 6-6 Markie Dans A

Fixtures: 25/02/16 - Lochavullins Cellar v Markie Dans B; Lancaster A v Lancaster B; Markie Dans A v Wide Mouthed Frog; Lochnell v Lochavullin; Outreach v Gluepot

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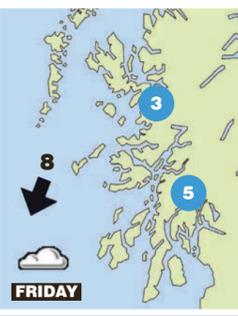
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WEATHER

Thursday Light cloud
Winds light south easterly
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

Friday Light cloud
Winds light north north easterly
Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.

Weekend Outlook Ligh cloud Saturday
Sunny intervals on Sunday
Winds light north easterly
Temperatures 0°C to 5°C.



Stop Press: New pontoons recently installed by North West Marine at Kyle Lochboisdale for visiting yachts

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 25, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am			pm		
Thur	01.14	0.7	07.04	4.0	13.47	1.0
Fri	01.47	0.9	07.34	3.9	14.17	1.2
Sat	02.18	1.0	08.03	3.8	14.46	1.4
Sun	02.49	1.2	08.31	3.6	15.15	1.5
Mon	03.23	1.5	09.01	3.4	15.49	1.7
Tues	04.03	1.7	09.37	3.2	16.40	1.9
Wed	04.59	1.9	10.26	3.0	17.52	2.0

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

ArdriSHAIG	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

INSIDE part one of our wedding guide pull-out
THE BRIDEGUIDE
 includes full details of The Oban Times Highland Wedding Show



SCOTTISH
SEALIFE
 SANCTUARY

INSIDE
 Annual pass reader offer
 see page 17 for full details

Jacobite train operator banned from running on mainline track

CAREN MCPATE
 fort@obantimes.co.uk

THE COMPANY that runs the popular Jacobite steam train has been banned from running on the mainline railway until safety concerns are addressed.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has issued a prohibition notice to West Coast Railway Company Ltd (WCR), which operates the Fort William to Mallaig tourist attraction between May and October.

The train crosses the Glenfinnan viaduct, a location made famous in the Harry Potter films, and brings a huge boost to the local economy.

The decision by ORR was taken after concerns were raised about WCR's management of safety, following a number of incidents over the past year.

In March 2015, Network Rail issued the company with a temporary suspension notice after a WCR train in England came close to crashing into a passenger train travelling at 100 miles per hour.

The ORR issued an improvement notice requiring the firm to strengthen its approach to safety management. However, safety issues have continued.

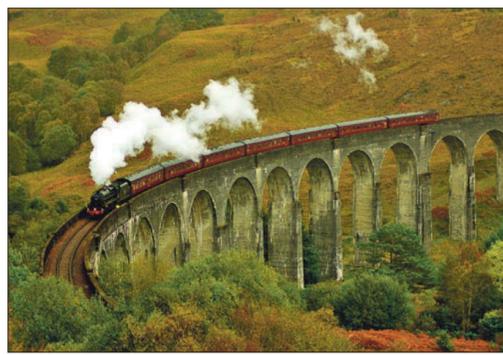
The regulator considers that WCR continues to present a safety risk. Ian Prosser, HM

Chief Inspector of Railways at ORR, said: 'A decision to stop a train operator from running rail services is not taken lightly.'

'However, my concerns about West Coast Railway Company's lack of appreciation of the seriousness of a collective range of incidents over the last year, coupled with ORR's concerns on our railways governance, regrettably make this prohibition necessary.'

'These failings create a significant risk to operations on the mainline network.'

He added: 'We want to encourage successful business operations on our railways and hope WCR will be able to put in place steps to ensure



The famous Jacobite steam train crosses the Glenfinnan viaduct and is a popular attraction.

fit and proper safety management with a view to resuming operations. Our inspectors stand ready to work with the company to support and advise as it strengthens its approach to safety.'

Steps that WCR must take include: the introduction of clearer governance structures with proper accountability for safety, more robust risk assessments, and enhanced processes for managing staff with a focus on safety culture.

The Oban Times contacted West Coast Railways, but it said it was not able to comment at this time on the ban or its implications for the Jacobite service.

TIMESLINE

Can recycling firm owner's appeal

A BUSINESSMAN who ran a firm recycling aluminium drinks cans in Lochaber is keen to hear from communities who would like to help continue the project.

Robert McClymont operated the business from Kinlochleven.

Schools and community halls benefited from his initiative.

Interested communities should email rmcclymont@aol.com or call 07787 811817.

Heating oil stolen from Ardgor tank

A LARGE quantity of heating oil was stolen from a tank at an Ardgor property.

The theft took place between Friday February 12 and Sunday 14.

In a separate incident, a coin-operated carwash machine at Onich filling station was forced open and money taken during the first week of February.

Anyone with information should contact police on 101.

CalMac manager features in video

CLARE MacNeil, CalMac's Fort William tour office manager, features in a two-minute film about what it's like to work in the tourism sector.

The video was produced by Skills Development Scotland for its world of work website.

Committee pulls plug on webcasts

LOCHABER Committee meetings will no longer be available to watch online.

Last year there were only 15 live webcast views and 25 views of archived meetings.



Budget axe hangs over Blas Festival

AN AWARD-WINNING festival will be under threat if its funding is cut.

The annual Blas Festival is facing an 81 per cent drop in its grant as part of Highland Council's budget being considered today (Wednesday).

However, organisers say the event has been singled out as the council is not cutting funding to other cultural events.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal's chief executive Arthur Cormack said: 'Cuts of some kind seem inevitable and we would expect to take our share of them. However, the recommendation to cut the funding for the Blas exclusively is inequitable.'

Speaking about today's special council meeting, budget leader councillor Bill Fernie said: 'We can't protect everything.'

'No-one wants to cut services or reduce funding, but we have no option but to deliver a balanced budget.'

Poem found in Fort charity shop raises £700



Nigel holds the auction catalogue in which the book was placed, alongside assistant manager Anne Mulhern, volunteer Cynthia Cassidy and Sharon Smith with the cheque.

A POEM written by Oscar Wilde in the late 19th century was discovered in a Fort William charity shop and bought by a mystery bidder at auction for £700.

Volunteer Nigel Colburn discovered the book, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, among a box of books that had been donated to the Cancer Research Shop in the town centre.

Nigel is an avid reader and noticed that this one was unusual.

The 68-year-old has volunteered at the shop for five years and his main responsibility is looking after the books. He said: 'Last year we received many donations of books in this particular box and this one stood out.'

'It wasn't until I opened it that I realised it may have some value as each of the illustrations were initialed and it had been printed in Germany in 1923. It's quite rare. I looked for a similar

copy on the internet and saw there was one for £450.

'After consulting with the shop manager Sharon Smith, I spoke to our area manager and he advised me to contact an auction house.'

'It was estimated to go for around £200 to £250. I couldn't believe it when it went for £700. It's more by luck than judgement. I'm proud and delighted that this sum of money is going to Cancer Research and Sharon's shop.'

The book, which was written by Wilde in 1897, was sold last month and after deductions from the auctioneers, the Cancer Research Shop has just received a cheque for £629.

It's the largest amount of money the shop has received for one item.

Shop manager Sharon Smith said: 'This was like finding a gold jewel. We were all ecstatic. We would like to thank whoever handed in the book.'

Climbers still missing on Ben Nevis



A huge operation has been taking place on Ben Nevis to find Rachel Slater and Tim Newton.

TWO CLIMBERS remain missing on Ben Nevis despite several searches.

Rachel Slater, 24, and Tim Newton, 27, have not been seen for 11 days.

The alarm was raised for the couple, from Bradford, when they failed to turn up for work after a weekend climbing. Treacherous weather conditions and a risk of avalanches have suspended searches which are not likely to resume until this weekend.

The operation has involved Lochaber Mountain Rescue (LMR), RAF Mountain Rescue Service, search and rescue helicopter R951 and the Search and Rescue Dog Association Scotland.

A statement from the families of Ms Slater and Mr Newton said: 'We are extremely grateful to members of the

emergency services and search and rescue personnel who are searching for Rachel and Tim.'

'The overwhelming response from members of the public and the climbing community has greatly assisted the search effort and we appreciate all the support and words of encouragement.'

Meanwhile, LMR found two men who were lost on the summit of Ben Nevis on Saturday night. They were located in the summit shelter 'cold and a wee bit desolate, but lucky guys'.

In a separate incident, a man who died after being rescued following an avalanche on Creag Meagaidh, on Wednesday February 17, has been named as Adrian David Bankart, 54, from Derbyshire. His friend was taken to Belford Hospital.

Screen Machine
 Scotland's Mobile Cinema

Fort William Thu 25 - Sun 28 Feb
Torrion Tue 1 March
Gairloch Wed 2 - Thu 3 Mar

Snoopy and Charlie Brown (U) 93 mins
 25/02 at 5.30pm, 27/02 at 2pm, 01/03 at 5.30pm, 02/03 at 5.30pm "sweet, charming, lovingly rendered."
 Herald

Star Wars: The Force Awakens (12A) 135 mins
 25/02 at 8.30pm, 26/02 at 5.30pm, 01/03 at 8.30pm, 03/03 at 8.30pm "... the magic is back" Telegraph

The Revenant (15) 156 mins
 26/02 at 8.30pm, 27/02 at 5pm, 02/03 at 8.30pm
 "Di Caprio delivers a barnstorming performance."
 Observer

The Danish Girl (15) 120 mins
 27/02 at 8.30pm "a beautiful, humane and moving biopic." Telegraph

National Theatre: Les Liaisons Dangereuses
 (15) 181 mins inc interval £14/£12
 Sex, intrigue and betrayal in pre-revolutionary France. An encore screening. 28/02 at 7pm "Theatre at its most seductive." Evening Standard

The Lady in the Van (12A) 104 mins
 03/03 at 5.30pm "brilliant portrayal of a truly odd couple." Telegraph

Book now at: www.screenmachine.co.uk. Tickets also at the cinema 30 mins before screenings: Cash only, no cards. £7.50
 Adults and £5.50 Concessions (except for NT: Les Liaisons Dangereuses - £14/£12)

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New group looks ahead at first meeting

THE NEWLY-FORMED Fort William First group has held its first meeting and 'want to get more people involved in what's happening in the community'.

The group is made up of all eight members of the now defunct Fort William Community Council who resigned last month saying they were 'tired of being ignored' by Highland Council.

Office bearers were elected and discussions about a strategy to move forward were discussed at the meeting last week.

The group's chairman Duncan Brown said: 'We really respect the efforts that Lochaber councillors make on behalf of residents, but we think that sometimes our local government prevents them from fully doing the best that they are capable of.'

'We will be looking to establish a Lochaber council which will be in tune with 21st century realities.'

'We need more people involved in what's happening around them so that things are done for them and with them.'

Mr Brown added that the name of the group is likely to change to reflect the whole of Lochaber.

The next meeting will take place on March 23.

The group is keen for more people to attend once they have secured somewhere permanent to meet.

Innovative bid by parents to build their own school

CAREN MCPATE
fort@obantimes.co.uk

PARENTS and residents in a highland village are hoping to build their own school in a project believed to be the first of its kind in Scotland.

Cash-strapped Highland Council doesn't have the funds to replace the ageing Strontian primary in Ardnamurchan.

So community members have taken it upon themselves to build their own and lease it to the council.

A site beside Ardnamurchan High School has been identified for the new build, which is estimated to cost around £700,000, not including the fixtures and fittings.

Strontian primary currently has 34 pupils and four children in the nursery.

Strontian Community School Building Group (SCSBG) is



The community wants to replace the current Strontian primary with a new building.

leading the project. Parent and chairman of the group, Donald McCorkindale, said: 'When talking about developing the existing building or replacing it, Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) is building in the area and there

was an idea that the new school could be built in such a way that in the future it could be easily converted into housing. 'It may be that in the long term, the primary may be within the high school premises.'

There's not the space there should be or could be. There was talk about doing up the existing building or replacing it. Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) is building in the area and there

Mr McCorkindale added: 'Highland Council seems pleased with the way it's going forward.'

'The next stage is firming up the plans that the steering group, the council and the housing trust have.'

If funding is secured the new school could be complete by August next year.

Strontian Primary School head teacher, Pamela Hill, said: 'The proposed new school project is an exciting prospect not only for pupils, parents and staff but also the wider community. A steering group has been established who are working with the Highland Council and Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) to develop this innovative project.'

'Support for the project so far has been fantastic and as a school, we are looking forward to seeing the proposals come to life.'

More break-ins and shoplifting

THERE were seven more break-ins in Fort William, Ardnamurchan, Caol and Mallaig in 2015, rising to 22 from the previous year. Shoplifting rose to five incidents in Caol and Mallaig, compared to none in 2014, while thefts from vehicles dropped from 10 to two.

Budget axe falls on council services

THE BUDGET has been set for the Western Isles with a further £1.4m of cuts made to services.

This is part of an overall package of savings being made by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Some of the savings will be made through roads maintenance, increasing charges at Stornoway abattoir and considering its future operation, and scrapping the funded discount scheme on the inter-island ferry services.

There will be a review of residential provision at Hillcrest children's home and respite

centre in Stornoway and a shared head teacher for Lionel school and Sgoil an Taobh Siar.

Switching off all street lights between May and October will also be looked at.

Comhairle leader Angus Campbell said: 'This has undoubtedly been a difficult

process for the comhairle and our communities.'

'Following extensive consultation we have listened carefully to our communities and their priorities.'

I believe that this has been reflected in the outcome of the budget.'

Canine partners improving lives

A WOMAN who uses a wheelchair has told how a dog has helped improve her quality of life and to be more independent.

Fiona Barcenas, along with her husband Armando and two-year-old labrador, Barnum, gave a presentation to the Rotary Club of Lochaber on behalf of Canine Partners.

The charity transforms the lives of people with physical disabilities by partnering them with assistance dogs, enabling them to enjoy a greater independence and quality of life.

Fiona said: 'Barnum helps me with practical tasks such as loading the washing machine, dressing and lifting dropped items.'

Barnum is also trained to warn Fiona in advance of criti-

cal health incidents, such as seizures and to alert her husband when she needs attention.

Canine Partners currently has 25 dogs working in Scotland and is hoping to secure land in Stirling to develop the first training centre north of the border.

The charity also works closely with the uniformed services to provide assistance dogs to those injured while on active duty.

Rotary Club president Terry Lee said: 'This amazing dog has certainly given Fiona greater independence and quality of life with its ability to give practical help with everyday household tasks.'

'The club was truly inspired by Armando and Fiona's presentation and we wish them well in the future.'



Fiona, Armando and Barnum were welcomed to the Rotary Club by past president Sheana Fraser and president Terry Lee.

MSP meets with smelter bosses

HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP John Finnie has had talks with bosses of Lochaber's under-threat smelter and hydro-electric power station.

Last month, Rio Tinto Alcan, which employs around 170 people, announced it is carrying out a review of its assets in the area.

Mr Finnie met with the company's senior vice president Pierre Chenard, vice president Patrick Tobin and general manager of the Lochaber smelter Brian King.

The MSP said: 'I am reassured important stakeholders including Scottish Development International, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highland Council are working closely with the company and that all options, including

the status quo, remain on the table. The smelter's own hydro station is capable of generating more hydro power than the plant needs and the option of selling clean energy into the national grid is being explored. Lochaber needs the smelter and I'd like to think, notwithstanding global challenges around aluminium, Rio Tinto needs Lochaber. It's difficult but I trust everyone can be patient and let this review run its course.'

Highlands and Islands MSPs Rhoda Grant and David Stewart were also due to meet officials from Rio Tinto yesterday (Wednesday) following a weekend meeting in Fort William where Mr Stewart was briefed by some of the plant's union shop stewards.

TIMESLINE

Skye film-makers' awards success

YOUNG film-makers from Skye and the islands scooped some of the top awards at the annual national Gaelic film awards ceremony attended by stars of the big screen.

The FilmG competition crowned Ross McKenzie, 14, from Sleat, best young film-maker and Hamish MacLeod, from Breakish, took home the best documentary award.

There was also success for Fèis Eilean na Hearadh, which won best film, and Fèis na Hearadh (The Harris Festival) took the top award in the youth competition.

Society spotlight on Mulroy battle

THE NEXT meeting of the Lochaber Local History Society sees Andrew Wiseman speaking on *The Last Battle of the Clans: Latha na Maoile Ruaidh - The Battle of Mulroy, 1688*.

This famous last clan battle took place in Lochaber and was marked by a Cairn on the Braeroy road above Roy Bridge some years ago and is of great interest locally.

The meeting takes place on Thursday March 3 at 8pm at the Ben Nevis Hotel.

Pupils need votes to land bed cash

ST BRIDE'S Primary School is appealing for votes to help win money to install raised beds and a fruit orchard.

The school in Onich is in the running to win funds from a scheme with Tesco using money from the carrier bag charge.

Votes can be cast at the Tesco store in Fort William from this Saturday to Sunday March 6.

Wedding dress up for grabs in raffle

A BRIDAL shop is raising money for charity by raffling a wedding dress worth up to £1,000.

Money raised will be split between Lochaber Action on Disability (LAD) and Fighting for Frances, a charity set up to raise money for stem cell treatment for Frances O'Connell.

Tickets are available from LAD and Marina's Bridal, both in Caol shopping centre.

Oban Times
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Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc

Argyll Reinforcements



Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (SHE Transmission) intends to reinforce the existing transmission network in Argyll to enable renewable energy to connect to the network and enhance security of supply.

We will be holding public exhibitions in regards to three projects, two of which are new:

- Inveraray to Crossaig overhead line replacement project
- New substation located near Ardbrecknish and new overhead line to Dalmally (new)
- Replacement overhead line between Taynuilt and Ardbrecknish (new)

We will be holding public exhibitions on the following dates where we warmly welcome members of the public to find out more and comment on the proposals.

Location	Venue	Date	Time
Inveraray	The George Hotel	Tues 8 March	14:00 - 19:30
Dalmally	Community Centre	Weds 9 March	14:00 - 19:30
Taynuilt	Village Hall	Thurs 10 March	14:00 - 19:00
Kilchrenan	Village Hall	Tues 15 March	14:00 - 19:30
Portsonachan	Village Hall	Weds 16 March	14:00 - 19:30
Skipness	Village Hall	Thurs 17 March	14:00 - 19:30
Tarbert	Village Hall	Tues 22 March	14:00 - 19:30
Lochgilphead	Argyll Inn	Wed 23 March	14:00 - 19:30

For further details about the project please visit our website: www.ssepd.co.uk or contact our Community Liaison Manager, Kelly Scott on 0734 202 6270 or Kelly.Scott2@sse.com.



More people urged to use village stage

MORE people are being urged to use a village theatre that has been graced with performances from well-known artists to community pantos.

Kinlochleven School Theatre opened last year and has already played host to fiddle and accordion duo Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham and the Kakatsitsi drummers from Ghana.

The events have reminded those who run it what a valuable resource they have in the village.

Resident and musician Sarah Fanet is hosting a concert at the theatre next month. She said: 'More recently, the community production Glen of Thrones with its 40 actors and a band showed the technology is there to host a wide variety of events in a venue fitted with a retractable seating system for an audience of up to 122. These successes and assets must

encourage us to want more as we have the capacity to host concerts, plays, productions and all sorts of artistic events.'

'We have many talented artists around Loch Leven whose ideas and contribution will be valuable.'

'We must invite established performers and make sure that the likes of Phil and Aly do not skip Lochaber and certainly not Loch Leven when they tour Scotland.'

An evening with Sarah Fanet is a special concert for St Patrick's Day on March 17. It will be a celebration of WB Yeats, Ireland's national poet, through music and songs, with musicians, some from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Sarah added: 'Let us make sure our local children get inspired. We have a theatre and we must use it.'

The concert is at 7.30pm, tickets are £10 from the Leven centre or Ballachulish visitors' centre.

Committee seeks funding to help heat Spean Bridge hall

A COMMUNITY hall committee is hoping to secure money to heat up the building.

The Spean Bridge centre was built in the 1980s, but it can be very cold in the morning and struggles to retain heat.

The committee has submitted an application to the Climate Challenge Fund, which awards grants of up to £150,000.

If successful, the money would be used to insulate the hall and make it more energy efficient.

Residents were recently invited along to share their ideas.

David MacFarlane, chairman of the committee, said: 'Some of the windows have been double glazed so we want to do the rest of them and change the other half of the lights to LED lighting.'

'Everyone wanted a new heating system, but that does not apply to this grant. However, it's something we are hoping to look for in the future. The hall is booked most weeks with playgroups and yoga and holds private functions.'

'If we got the grant to insulate the building it will help in letting people want to use it.'

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People's Games postponed for year

THE LORNE Highland Games, which is held on the last Sunday in June, has been cancelled due to a volunteer shortage.

The event had become a highlight of Oban's annual calendar and was known locally as the people's games.

Kieron Green, a member of the organising committee, said: 'Due to several retirements from the Lorne Highland Games committee, it will not be possible to run the event this June.'

'The games will, however, be back in 2017 and we are looking for volunteers for the committee, and we are also looking for organisations, community groups and individuals willing to assist on the day.'

'A specialist knowledge of Highland games isn't required, but car park attendants, ticket/programme sellers, go-fors and people capable of erecting tents are always valuable.'

Chairwoman, Dee Bradbury said: 'It is with a heavy heart that I must step down as chairwoman.'

'My new job as Scottish Rugby representative to Rugby Europe will mean a lot of travelling, particularly at the time of the games, leaving me unable to devote the time the games needs.'

Anyone wishing to volunteer should email secretary@lorne-highland-games.org.uk

Highland Show to clash with EU referendum

THE in/out vote on EU membership is set for Thursday June 23 is a date that clashes with the opening day of the Royal Highland Show.

Organisers of the Royal Highland Show are urging attendees to consider setting up a postal vote.

Connectivity key to Argyll success, says forum chief

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

PEOPLE in Argyll and Bute should accept nothing less than 4G provision from mobile phone providers, according to the chairman of Sky plc.

Nicholas Ferguson, CBE, has been heading up the Argyll and Bute Economic Forum for the last 12 months and says the potential in the area is 'immense', but people have to start working together to achieve it.

The forum was set up in October 2014 to drive forward economic process throughout the region. This report is the first from its members who work in key business sectors, lead agencies and government.

Mr Ferguson, who is a life-long resident of Tignabruich, was speaking ahead of the report's publication on Tuesday (February 23). He said that top of the group's agenda for change are mobile technology and connectivity.

'The situation with mobile phones is concerning,' Mr Ferguson said, 'but where there are obstacles coordinated efforts



Nicholas Ferguson CBE

must be made to campaign for, and achieve, change.

'Mobile connections were stated by everybody we talked to as a problem.

'I think the Conservative government has made the biggest mistake in not recognising the worth of mobile phones and instead considered them as a luxury item.

'If the government had realised mobile phones were an essential item then it could have charged higher spectrum fees and we would never have had the

problem with them we do at the moment. Can you imagine if the government had allowed patchy development with electricity?'

He continued: 'It was a mistake to give out telecommunication licences that did not cover the entire UK and demand that these were delivered.'

'The lack of provision is beginning to limit the area. I can give you two examples.

'Firstly, people need information as they go. Ferry timetables, bus timetables, Air BnB, holiday information are all taken from mobile phones and when your phone doesn't get a signal it makes being in Argyll and Bute more difficult. We want to make it simple for people to be here.

'And secondly, we have all these wonderful festivals taking place in Argyll and Bute where people sell food, drink and clothing amongst other things. People don't tend to carry cash the way they used to, so they use a mobile card reader but, of course, it doesn't get signal.

'I have heard of people missing out on £5,000 worth of sales because there is very little signal in Argyll.'

Mr Ferguson said he had spoken to many people about the problem, including Oliver Letwin MP, advisor to Prime Minister David Cameron on government policy; the Scottish Government, the mobile phone providers and Alex Paterson, 'the man who gets things done from Highlands and Islands Enterprise'.

Mr Ferguson vowed: 'I will not let it go, we need ubiquitous 4G in Argyll and Bute - nothing less will do.'

Saying that a shared vision on many matters was the key to an area's success, Mr Ferguson said: 'From business leaders to newspaper editors and teachers, the private, public and academic sectors must come together to drive prosperity in one of Scotland's most promising regions.'

'I was asked to look at Argyll from a business perspective. Like any business, if we are to achieve our potential we need a shared vision, with all our members working to make that vision a reality.'

'Argyll and Bute can clearly succeed and grow. We have strong advantages in two of the

world's fastest growing industry sectors, namely tourism and food and drink production, particularly aquaculture.

'We have a strong entrepreneurial tradition and many great small businesses. We have good education and one of the finest environments in which to live. We have an economy of opportunity here to be developed.'

'Marketing the area should be coordinated across all agencies involved. Schools and businesses must forge stronger links so that young people are aware of careers opportunities on their own doorstep.'

'Agencies should focus their spending where possible on local producers and suppliers. 'It's about everyone coming together to back Argyll and Bute. It's a great place with great potential.'

'A shared vision will bring the prosperity that's there for us to create.'

The Economic Forum will meet again in late March. Mr Ferguson said it would be a monitoring group to ensure plans laid out in the report were delivered.

Oban Express staff left stunned as Menzies Distribution axes 30 jobs at town depot

MORE than 30 staff members at an established Oban parcel business have been told their jobs are on the line, in spite of its parent company denying in last week's *Oban Times* that there were any concrete plans for change in the business.

Oban Express was bought by Menzies Distribution in late November 2015. At that time the business ran 45 vehicles, with depots in both Oban and Glasgow.

A company employee who did

not want to be named said this week: 'We were all lined up and each of us had an interview with the bosses.'

'No-one is happy about it. I cannot for a minute imagine this is what the former owners thought would happen when the business was sold.'

'We have been told that a skeleton staff will be kept on in Oban - maybe 11 people - and there are a couple of jobs in both Fort William and in Lochgilphead we can all apply

for. It is the end of an era.'

Another man said: 'This is disgusting behaviour from a national company.'

'I think we all knew the writing was on the wall. 'People want to get parcels all over the area for the cheapest price and it is not cheap to get parcels to the Highlands and Islands.'

'I am now looking for a new job along with 20-odd other people. It is going to be tough.' When the business was

taken over in late November, managing director Forsyth Black said: 'We have now strengthened the geographical reach of our specialist parcel consolidation service, which dramatically cuts the cost of delivery to isolated areas for national carriers.'

In June 2015 Menzies Distribution acquired AJG Parcels of Inverness. It described that move as 'another strategic purchase for specialising in hard-to-reach areas'.

Last week *The Oban Times* was told by a spokesman for Menzies Distribution: 'Our HR team has confirmed that while we are reviewing our operations in Oban, no conclusion has yet been reached and shared with our employees.'

'In the event that any changes do emerge, our employees will be the first to know.'

An updated statement from the company was requested this week, but no reply was received at the time of going to press.

TIMESLINE

Driver arrested on leaving ferry

A MAN who may have been driving 'for years' without an official driving licence was stopped on Shore Street, Oban as he drove off the CalMac ferry from Tiree this week.

Police officers were alerted to the fact that the 65-year-old Tiree man had arrived on the mainland, driving his car on his own, and was believed to be driving on a provisional licence.

Sergeant Alan Moore said: 'A man was arrested on Monday afternoon on alleged driving offences. He was charged with driving without insurance while alone in a motor vehicle without a suitable person next to him.'

A report has been made to the Procurator Fiscal.

Resurfacing work planned on A83

MOTORISTS using the A83 are soon to benefit from an improved road surface on a 1km section between Dalchenna and Auchindrain following an investment of £245,000 from Transport Scotland.

The resurfacing improvements will take place between south of Argyll Caravan Park to Auchnagull and are planned to begin on Monday February 29 for approximately two weeks.

The improvements will be carried out between 7am and 7pm each day from Monday to Friday with no weekend working planned.

Oban Times
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Bidvest Trade Show welcomes local food businesses in its 40th year



Following on from its rebrand to Bidvest Foodservice Oban last month, the formerly named Fortheith Foodservice is holding its 40th trade show for chefs and caterers on Thursday 3rd March. This award-winning show offers exclusive on-the-day offers for visitors.

Bidvest Foodservice launched its first Scottish food brochure last year containing hundreds of Scottish products produced by local and regional suppliers. Now with a collection of over 600 Scottish products from over 100 suppliers, the company is ready to showcase its Summer range to help inspire your summer menus.

In addition to Scottish specialities, customers of Bidvest Foodservice have access to over 13,000 products from within their own Brand ranges and from recognisable branded favourites across food, non-food, beers wines and spirits. This can all be delivered on one order, alongside local products.

The Bidvest Foodservice teams in Scotland have been working in close partnership with customers and Scottish suppliers to help promote Scotland's reputation as the 'land of food and drink', providing a route to market for niche products and helping customers to develop menus and products that suit their individual needs. Several local producers from Argyll are now working in partnership with Bidvest Foodservice Scotland.

In addition to its food credentials, Bidvest Foodservice Scotland recently won the Scottish Wholesale Achievers 'Corporate Responsibility' award for its work within local communities.

What will Bidvest do for your catering business?

We're here to make your life easier, focusing on getting the basics right so that you can concentrate on serving great food. You can order online or through your local telesales teams over the phone and with our fleet of multi-temperature vehicles you can be confident that your products will always arrive in the best possible condition.

Real value

In addition to competitive pricing, attractive monthly promotions and Safari loyalty rewards, you can also take advantage of a wide range of value added services. From the latest insights, recipe ideas and serving suggestions to menu planning and printing support, we'll keep you informed about current industry trends and support your growth. If you need up-to-date advice, nutritional information or guidance, our Advice Centre is only a phone call or click away.

Get in touch with us in Oban on 01631 569100 or visit www.bidvest.co.uk and we look forward to seeing you at the show on the 3rd March.

CREATE SUMMER

Calling all caterers to the 40th year of our Oban Tradeshow:

An award winning event by Bidvest Foodservice Scotland

- Exclusive on-the-day OFFERS
- Circa 80 national, regional and local suppliers
- Ideal opportunity for sampling and menu planning
- Free parking
- Trade-only event

Corran Halls, Oban
Thursday 3rd March
10:00-16:00

You can pre-register by calling us on 01631 569100

Bidvest Foodservice Scotland
Inspired by you

Bogged down in red tape

LOUISE GLEN and SANDY NEIL
editor@obantimes.co.uk

TWO 'notes of interest' have been placed with Argyll and Bute Council to take over the running of public toilets at Ganavan beach, a-mile-and-half north of Oban.

But instead of accepting one of those offers, Oban, Lorn and The Isles area committee has decided to market the lease at Ganavan, plus adjacent land.

At a meeting of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee last week, councillors were told it had received two unsolicited expressions of interest for the toilets.

The building and land will be offered for long-term lease or, depending on the offers received, an alternative option for the council developing a facility on the site which it would then lease. The second option would depend on a business case showing this would be financially viable.

Area committee chairman Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'This area lends itself to development and it's vital to have it advertised as soon as possible to make sure the council receives good value if the go-ahead is given for a leasing arrangement.'

'There is no doubt that potential development will enhance an already popular location, and will be of huge benefit to local users and visitors alike. 'I feel confident there will be formal expressions of interest and look forward to receiving development proposals and ideas to make this site the very best it can be.'

Ganavan is popular with kayakers, cyclists, walkers, dog walkers and the many visitors to this spectacular coastal location. Following the announcement,

The Oban Times went into the town centre to ask people their views on the sale at Ganavan.

Richard Maxwell, of Oban said: 'Seven years ago it was handed to the public and the public should have it.'

'You could have a nice wee place selling ice-cream, or swings for the children, because there's not much in the town.'

'It's ridiculous having parking meters out there. You have to pay to take the kids out there. Tourists and locals have to pay to park, and they'll just go away.'

John McDonald: 'The thought there would be any restrictions [on parking] is frankly astonishing.'

Other members of the public, who didn't want to give their names, said: 'If it goes into private ownership, the parking fees will be exorbitant. If it restricts access to local people then it's not a good thing. It's a lovely beach. It should be public access at all times. I would hate for there to be restrictions, but you've got to raise money for it.'

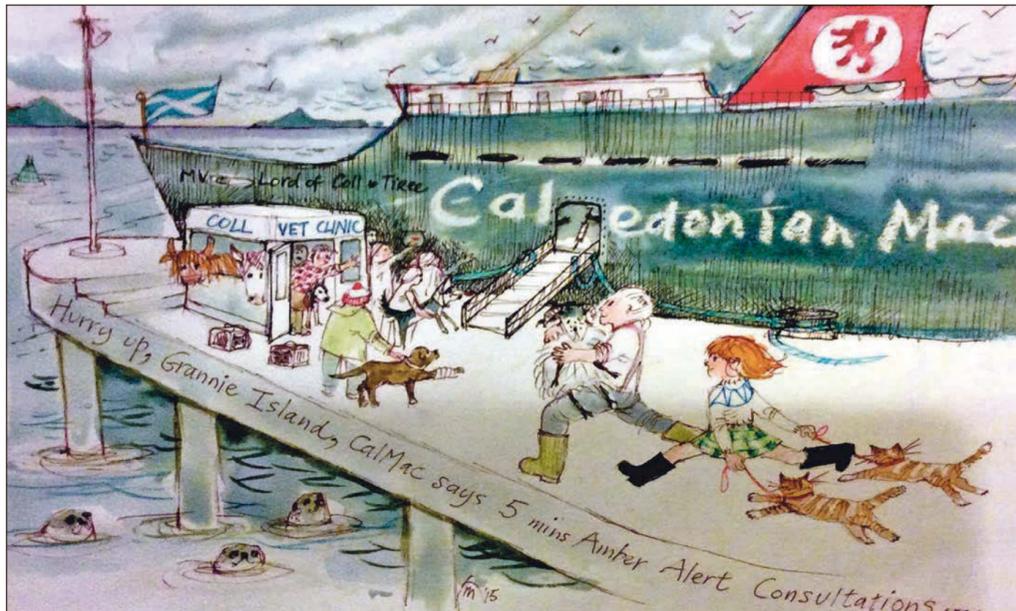
One woman demanded: 'Knock down the houses and put it back to the way it was. It's a beach on a housing estate, really. It could have been a good local amenity back in the day, but it wasn't managed well.'

While a man from Dunbeg said: 'It should be an accessible, free beach. I hope somebody buys it and does something with it.'

'There's a couple of swings and it really needs updated. If it's sold they could do more with it, and maybe then people wouldn't mind paying a small charge for parking.'

And a dog walker from Oban said: 'I don't think people should be paying parking charges because it's a public beach. The council don't even keep it nice.'

Islanders give vet a special send-off



ISLANDS vet Pat Boyd was presented with a unique farewell card, above, when he retired recently after serving the animals of Coll and Tiree – and their owners – for 35 years. The one-off card, created by children's author and illustrator

Mairi Hedderwick – whose Katie Morag series of children's picture books are set on the Isle of Struay, a fictional counterpart of the real-life island of Coll where Hedderwick has lived at various times for much of her life – captures the unusual

challenges for an island vet, and Hedderwick's humour, with a pier-side clinic on Coll.

A group of well-wishers gathered at Coll's community centre, An Cridhe, to bid a fond farewell to Mr Boyd, who ran the Coll and Tiree practice with his wife

Judith. Following a presentation of gifts – which included a Hebridean throw, a case of wine, a wooden bowl crafted on the island and the humorous card – the Boyds enjoyed a fine dinner at the Coll Hotel, hosted by the island's farmers.

OAP guilty of indecent practices placed on Sex Offenders' Register

A 74-YEAR-OLD man has been found guilty of two serious offences against two children following a jury trial at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

At the beginning of the trial, pensioner Stanislaw Madej pled not guilty to nine charges; he was acquitted of five of these.

On Friday (February 19), Madej, of 3 Stalcraig Crescent, Oban, was found guilty by majority verdict of lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards one child (Girl 1), and guilty by majority verdict that on various occasions he committed lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards a second child (Girl 2).

The jury returned unanimous verdicts of not guilty on two other charges involving Girl 1.

The offences were said to have taken place in Oban between January 9, 1998 and December 5, 2014.

Both of Madej's victims gave evidence by video link.

The court heard his crimes came to light after Girl 1 had sexual health lessons at her school, following which her mother and teachers noticed a change in her behaviour.

Her mother said: 'I was stunned for a couple of minutes. I believed her immediately but had to find out if she was telling the truth. But I knew she was telling the truth.'

During evidence, Girl 1 told the court: 'I thought it was about time I told her [mother] because I remember it quite a lot. I was doing health stuff in school. It was wrong what he done to me. I think it was wrong.'

She added: 'I was too young to know he was doing something wrong to me. He used to tell me he had done it to [Girl 2] as well and not to tell anyone or he would get taken away.'

Girl 2 told the court: 'Nothing physical happened but inappropriate comments.'

She said that when she was six or seven years old he asked her if she would like to make love to him. He showed her a novelty keyring which depicted a man and woman having sexual intercourse. She also said normal hugs and kisses went on too long and he referred to her as 'gorgeous' and 'sexy'. She said: 'As a teenager I realised things weren't right. I didn't want to be round him. It made me feel uncomfortable. I would avoid him.'

When challenged under cross-examination that she was misconstruing Madej's actions, she said: 'Why make up something so hurtful?'

She said that when she learned of Girl 1, she decided to speak up: 'I felt I have to back her up because of what happened to me as a child. It was wrong.'

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said police seized 15 pieces of IT equipment from Madej's home.

A Police Scotland specialist said only one laptop was of relevance; on it he found one photograph of Girl 1 sitting on towel, naked, in the lotus position.

He said: 'There was no evidence of distribution of the photograph and no internet history of relevance to this case.'

Madej an electrical engineer for 55 years, admitted he had a drink problem and suffered from depression.

He said: 'I was clean for about 15 years then started having relapses. My mother, father and wife died in a short period of time, we had been married for 42 years.'

Madej denied the allegations made by the two girls and said

he believed one of the mothers had put them up to it.

He said he had found the obscene keyring, hung it up in his shed and thought nothing of it. He said Girl 2 had found it by accident.

When asked about the photograph of Girl 1, he said: 'I did not take that photograph; the first time I ever saw that photograph was when I saw it in court, here.'

Defence agent Edward Thornton produced a series of photographs inside the house where the naked photograph was said to have been taken. These showed discrepancies in the background.

Mr Thornton added: 'Innocent, common actions like a cuddle or a kiss can be given different connotations years later.'

'[Girl 1's] allegations are based on flashbacks, false or vague memories influenced by health education lessons and family tensions.'

Sentence has been deferred until April 11 for reports. Sheriff Mungo Bovey QC ordered Madej's passport be surrendered to the court. Madej was placed on the Sex Offenders' Register.

Action group aims to deliver on the Rest

AN ACTION group has been set up to take forward the wishes of the people and business of the area in finding a solution to the issues affecting the Rest and Be Thankful.

On the group are Jane MacLeod from the Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce, Argyll and Bute Council, and it is headed up by former deputy-provost councillor Dougie Philand and Donald Clark of the George Hotel in Inveraray.

While the group has been set up informally to begin with, Mr Clark feels it is the right move, enabling the group to develop ideas away from the Scottish Government and freeing the area from 'being held to ransom by the Rest and Be Thankful'.

Mr Clark said: 'All things that are outside our [the people of Argyll and Bute] control are conspiring to work against us resolving the issue of the Rest and Be Thankful.'

'If Westminster can fix a train track in Dawlish in a little more than a few weeks at a relatively reasonable cost then it is time the Scottish Government did the same for us in Argyll.'

'The road is having an impact on our day-to-day lives and costing businesses thousands of pounds. We cannot get our food and drink out and we can not get tourists in. All this amounts to millions of pounds of business a year.'

'It will eventually mean jobs and people moving out of the area. The matter is now urgent and we can not put up with second best.'

'The government doesn't want to spend the money. There is simply no argument I have heard that says we need to spend the amounts the Scottish Government are suggesting a permanent solution will cost.'

'Our estimates say we could drill through for a fraction of the £100 million that the Scottish Government tells us it will cost.'

'I have no doubt that all the ongoing work the Scottish Government is doing through the helicopters they are bringing in and out and monitoring the route on a 24-hour basis are costing a huge amount of money. Perhaps it is time that it was all put into finding a permanent solution.'

Mr Clark said there are three options the group are considering at present including: a flow over canopy, digging a sump and gully under the road and building the alternative road on the other side of Glen Crow.

Island ferry to resume freight service

A MAJOR milestone will be reached on Monday February 29 when the Kerrera Ferry resumes carrying freight.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL)'s contractor, George Leslie Ltd, has undertaken works to extend both slipways, removing the tidal restriction from this ferry service. Works will now start

on the breakwater at Kerrera. CMAL's Project Manager, Ruairidh Campbell, said: 'We are delighted to resume the freight service to the island.'

'We ask that anyone wishing to transport goods to or from the island to contact Kerrera Ferry Ltd as soon as possible, as there is likely to be a backlog.'

Strathallan welcomes prospective pupils and parents to open morning

THE prestigious Strathallan school in Perthshire will open its doors to prospective pupils and their parents on Saturday March 5, 2016.

The Open Morning will run from 10am to 1pm and is a chance to see the school in action, as well as to meet staff and pupils.

The event is for children aged nine and over and their families. Pupils from Argyll will be part of the welcome team showing prospective students around the campus.

Lisa Leslie, marketing executive at Strathallan, said: 'Our Open Mornings are a great chance for visitors to hear about life at Strathallan from a pupil's perspective.'

'It is usually one pupil per family and they will visit all the main areas of the school including a boarding house, classrooms, dining hall, art school and new multi-sports facility.'

Strathallan, founded in 1913, is ranked as the top Scottish Boarding School by A Levels created by the website best-schools.co.uk.

Its campus in Forgandenny, Perthshire includes a 19th century country house, modern accommodation, a purpose built computing centre, a sports hall and gymnasium, seven rugby pitches, 12 tennis courts, 3 of which are indoor, shooting ranges and in the summer term a nine-hole golf course.

The 2016/17 Autumn term will begin on Wednesday August 31.

Those interested in attending the Open Morning should contact Felicity Legge on 01738 815 003 or admissions@strathallan.co.uk or complete an online form at www.strathallan.co.uk. If none of these dates suit, parents can arrange a personal visit.

For further information about Strathallan School, visit www.strathallan.co.uk

STRATHALLAN
Opportunities for all to excel



Open Mornings:
General: (Entry age 9+)
Date: Saturday 5th March 2016
Time: 10am start

www.strathallan.co.uk
Forgandenny, Perth, PH2 9EG

Please register for our Open Morning online or to arrange a personal visit contact:

Felicity Legge
Admissions Secretary
T: 01738 815003
E: admissions@strathallan.co.uk

Registered in Scotland as a charity number SC008903

Partner speaks out after driver jailed for causing death crash

A TAYNUILT woman has said that while court justice has been done, nothing will take away the life sentence of losing her partner, who died in a road accident in October 2013.

Following a collision on the A85 near Dalmally, Julie Cameron, 41, and her boyfriend Julian Kneeshaw, a 44-year-old carpenter, from Calgary Bay on Mull, who was a passenger in the car, were cut out of her vehicle. Mr Kneeshaw later died from chest injuries he sustained in the accident.

On February 3, 2016, James Fergusson, 57, a renewable energy technician from Oban, was convicted of dangerous driving at the High Court in Edinburgh and sentenced to

four years in jail. He was also banned from driving for five years and ordered to sit an extended test before getting his licence back.

Ms Cameron said that she saw Fergusson's car and braked sharply causing her car to hit the soft verge of the road before it spun across the road crashing into another vehicle.

Ms Cameron said: 'We all see people on roads around here driving dangerously every day, and if they are going to drive like that and cause accidents they need to take responsibility for it.'

'I'm glad some kind of justice has been done, but whatever time this man serves in jail is nothing to the life sentence Julian's family have been given.'

Young artists in Argyll get creative at Benmore weekend

ARGYLL Youth Arts, a hub creating art events and opportunities for young people in Argyll and Bute, held its annual activities weekend at Benmore last month.

Argyll Youth Arts' is a collective of creative and cultural organisations from the region placing young people at the centre of their working practice, including Oban's Rockfield Centre, Artmap Argyll in Lochgilphead, Tarbert Arts and Leisure Centre, Dunoon Burgh Hall, Helensburgh Cove Park, and Islay and Jura Youth Action.

Last month, 40 young artists, performers and musicians from all over Argyll braved Storm Gertrude to travel to Benmore Outdoor Centre near Dunoon for an activities weekend of art, music, drama and film workshops. Seventeen-year-old Oban High School student Ross Christie said: 'The Benmore weekend was a great opportunity for artists of all sorts,

and was really helpful for the young promoters' team. We got the chance to talk about possible upcoming collaborations and events around Argyll, such as Helensburgh's Festival of Architecture, live music sessions, and fine art workshops. Hopefully we're now equipped with skills to facilitate young artists in Argyll and Bute.'

Iona Young, Oban's Young Channel Manager, said: 'It was great getting to see all sorts of different arts. I loved the freedom everyone had while doing the different forms of art. It really allowed everyone to express themselves.'

The month features a 24-hour session making horror films and light painting in Lochgilphead, a sleeper at Mull Theatre exploring the use of food to make art, and a guitar, bass and drums clinic with Deacon Blue's Gregor Philip and Lewis Gordon, and drummer Danny Grant, at The Tower Digital Arts Centre in Helensburgh.

McEwens est. 1868 Department Store

BLUE CROSS EVENT

FINAL SALE PRICES

HURRY ENDS SATURDAY!

SELECTED LINES. SELECTED DEPARTMENTS

McEwens, George Street, Oban



LOCHABER Rugby Club held its annual dinner dance in the Alexandra Hotel in Fort William on Saturday. Members, friends and family came together to enjoy food, music and dancing. There were no games played at the weekend as the pitch at Banavie was waterlogged. Lochaber play Shetland this Saturday at home, kick-off 2pm. Photo: John Paul Peebles, Abrightside Photography

Pam leads chase for Nevis Radio high pin trophy

Tenpin bowling

A TENPIN bowling singles league is running for the next few weeks.

After week one Pam Weller leads the scratch league with 20 points, followed by Gary Cowan with 19 points, and Erik Tot in third place with 18 points.

The handicap league is led by Erik Tot on 20 points, followed by Gary Cowan on 19 points, and Pam Weller in third place on 18 points.

Pam Weller leads the chase for the Nevis Radio high pin trophy with 523 pins, followed by Gary Cowan in second with 510, and Erik Tot in third with 453 pins.

The top individual scratch game this week came from Gary Cowan with a 212 whilst Pam Weller had two good games of 201 and 193.

Pam Weller had the best three game scratch series with 513 whilst Erik Tot had the best three game handicap series with 660.

Hard day at the office as Fort lose six against Formartine

Formartine United	6
Fort William	1
Highland League	

FORT William were beaten 6-1 in their first competitive match played since the start of January. The Claggan side were up against Formartine United at North Lodge Park, who are currently sitting third in the league table.

Wet and frosty weather conditions have resulted in pitches home and away being unplayable. The Fort, currently sitting second bottom in the league, have had several matches postponed and now face a backlog of games.

At Saturday's match Formartine's Cammy Keith scored after

just 11 minutes, with a second goal from Stuart Anderson in the 36th minute.

Fort William's Iain MacLellan made the score 1-2 at half-time, but just a minute after the break, a goal came from the opposition's Garry Wood.

Formartine went well ahead with a further two scores from Keith and one from Anderson.

Fort were without club captain Darren Quigg, Ryan Hunter and midfielder Scott Chisholm, who all missed out through illness.

Richard Tawse and John Cameron were available again and return to the squad.

A post on the club's Facebook page said: 'This was a hard day at the office for the Fort, especially

Football

when you consider it was our first competitive fixture in seven weeks. The Fort's goal was an Iain MacLellan screamer.

'We put this result behind us and look forward to Wednesday's game against Forres Mechanics in The Bredon Aggregates Highland League Cup.'

The Fort were due to play Forres Mechanics yesterday (Wednesday) in the cup at Mossset Park.

Team: MacLennan, Foggo, Broomfield, Tawse, Porritt, Mainland, Hull, Rennie, Cameron, Davidson, MacLellan. Subs: MacPhee, Taylor, Moffat, MacRitchie, Lieder, Fell, Hunter.



Kilmallie's Martin Stewart deals with the goal threat from Glenurquhart's Fraser Heath. Photos: Neil Paterson



Kilmallie's Grant MacKenzie shields the ball from Glenurquhart's Stuart Reid.

Last gasp goals secures win for Kilmallie

TWO last minute goals saw Kilmallie beat Glenurquhart 4-2 on Saturday. The score at Blairbeg, Drumnadrochit was 2-2 until the last 10 minutes. The shinty season gets underway on March 6. Kilmallie's first game is at home to Caberfeidh in the Marine Harvest National Division while their second string travel to play Boleskine in North Division 2.

Barrington is Blackwater Dam race winner

IT was perfect winter conditions and stunning views for the 27 runners who took part in the Blackwater Dam race recently.

The latest round of the winter league at Kinlochleven was won by Andrew Barrington, LAC (Lochaber Athletics Club), in a time of 1:15. A good effort after racing through the deep snow at Carnethy the day before.

The ever-consistent Craig Mattocks (Gala Harriers) came second with Jon Gay (LAC) running strongly to secure third place. Young Steven Burns (LAC) was fourth.

First lady and eighth overall was Helen Gertig (unattached) in 1:27 with the well travelled Kate Jenkins (Gala) in second place.

Third place went to Lucy Prins (LAC). A special mention to Mo Aitken (LAC) whose efforts in the January 100-mile challenge paid off by taking around 12 minutes off her previous best for a new PB.

Top 10 finishers (LAC unless otherwise stated): 1 Andrew Barrington 1:15:49; 2 Craig Mattocks (Gala) 1:17:58; 3 Jon Gay 1:21:01; 4 Steven Burns 1:22:30; 5 Aidan Donnelly 1:24:27; 6 Barrie MacKinnon 1:25:19; 7 Mark Willets 1:25:34; 8 Helen Gertig (unattached) 1:27:14; 9 Allan Lamont 1:27:36; 10 Neil Wasldidge 1:27:48.

The club's next winter league race is the New Cow Hill figure of eight (short, four to five miles) this Sunday February 28.

Registration from 10am, race starts at 11am at Braveheart car park. Race organiser is Ian Adams. Helpers and marshals are needed, visit lochaberac.co.uk for more information.



Runners set off from Kinlochleven on the Blackwater Dam race.

Lift builders revisit Glencoe Mountain

THE workers who built the first lifts on Glencoe's Meall a'Bhuiridh mountain 60 years ago were invited back to celebrate the anniversary.

Many of those involved in the operation are now in their late 80s and 90s and made the trip through typical Glencoe weather of high winds and heavy snow to reminisce.

The guests included 98-year-old Philip Rankin, credited with having the original vision and being instrumental in building and operating that first uplift.

Also attending was engineer Jimmy Hamilton who is credited with designing and building many of Scotland's early lifts. To celebrate there was a torchlight procession, fireworks, old videos, pictures, a cake and lots of speeches.

It allowed the current generation of skiers the opportunity to pass on thanks for what these early pioneers of Scottish skiing achieved. Managing director of Glencoe Mountain Resort, Andy Meldrum, said: 'Talking to these early pioneers was an amazing

Skiing

experience, listening to stories of how it took two weeks of work by willing volunteers to inch by inch move a gearbox up the hill, made me realise just how lucky we are now with all the modern equipment we have.

'One thing, however, that has not changed at Glencoe is that spirit and energy that means customers will grab a shovel and help dig out lifts in the morning. That pioneering spirit is still alive and well at Glencoe.'

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Stop Press: New pontoons recently installed by North West Marine at Kyle Lochboisdale for visiting yachts

WEATHER

Thursday Light cloud
Winds light south easterly
Temperatures 1°C to 4°C.

Friday Light cloud
Winds light north north easterly
Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.

Weekend Outlook Ligh cloud Saturday
Sunny intervals on Sunday
Winds light north easterly
Temperatures 0°C to 5°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 25, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am			pm		
Thur	01.14	0.7	07.04	4.0	13.47	1.0
Fri	01.47	0.9	07.34	3.9	14.17	1.2
Sat	02.18	1.0	08.03	3.8	14.46	1.4
Sun	02.49	1.2	08.31	3.6	15.15	1.5
Mon	03.23	1.5	09.01	3.4	15.49	1.7
Tues	04.03	1.7	09.37	3.2	16.40	1.9
Wed	04.59	1.9	10.26	3.0	17.52	2.0

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardershaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate