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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Ungritted road an ice rink, say police

Police confirmed they asked roads agency, Transport Scotland, to grit the road.

Calls for cash to grit roads

LOUISE LEE
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THE COST of gritting and emergency road repairs has spiralled out of control, leaving the council with a £500,000 budget headache.

And as snow brought yet more travel chaos to West Highland roads this week, community councillors are calling for the gritting of all rural roads.

But they demand that the Scottish government should foot the bill to keep Argyll's roads clear and safe.

'We live in a rural area and the Scottish government tells us all its policies are set out to support us,' said Katie Cox of Taynuilt, 'but our road wasn't gritted this week, and this time the mini bus taking pupils to school came off the road and had to be pulled out of a ditch.'

'I've written to the Scottish government to ask for more money and they directed me to Argyll and Bute council.'

'It seems daft to think that people are living in rural areas and can't get out. We pay the same taxes as anyone else and should get the same roads treatment. Our children have a human right to an education.'

Oban community councillor Marri Malloy agreed that Holyrood should provide extra cash for gritting. She said: 'We need to complain that the council doesn't get enough cash and community councils should join together to make a noise about it.'

Chairman of Connel community council Les Stewart said he was sympathetic to the council's

position: 'It is time that instead of bashing the council, community councils should make sure the areas that needed to be gritted are prioritised.'

Barcaldine community councillor Margaret Adam said the main routes were 'relatively good' but the roads to places such as Bonawe and the Isle of Eriska were treated later in the day, which caused problems with people getting to school, work or appointments. 'Everyone should be treated the same,' she said.

In Glen Orchy, community council secretary John Kerr said that Argyll and Bute council did a 'fairly good job' of getting isolated places gritted, when they eventually got to them. He said: 'We are used to the fact that we are far down the gritting list and it has just become normal. People adapt their lives and accept the treatments they are given.'

To meet the half-a-million overspend in treating winter roads this year, Argyll and Bute council has had to dip into its reserve budget, which is set aside for emergencies.

Last month, the council's roads chief Jim Smith told councillors: 'The current level of budget provision is insufficient even for the mildest winter.' An Argyll and Bute council spokesman said: 'There's no reduction in service.'

A Scottish government spokesman said: 'We're committed to supporting rural life, rural communities and the rural economy.'

'The council is allocated money to meet the roads maintenance programme and it is up to it to prioritise the spending.'



GRITTY ISSUE: an HGV lorry moves cautiously along the A85 near Oban as drivers faced difficult driving conditions on Tuesday

TIMESLINE

Ungritted road an ice rink, say police

FOUR CARS skidded off the road on Wednesday morning due to a lack of grit on the road, a Police Scotland spokesman told *The Oban Times*.

The Benderloch to Barcaldine road was likened to a 'skating rink' by one driver, who passed the stricken vehicles.

Police confirmed they asked roads agency, Transport Scotland, to grit the road.

'Challenges' ahead for Oban pontoons

PONTOONS in Oban Bay may not be in place for summer 2015 because of 'challenging' costs.

Council development boss Fergus Murray is in charge of the installing the pontoons.

But he said it was proving 'challenging given the licensing conditions and costs associated with even a small scale facility'.

Talking up work in the Corran halls

A JOB fair gets under way today, Thursday at the Corran Halls in Oban from 11am.

The event, supported by Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell and the council's employment partnership group, will give employers such as the Scottish Salmon Company, Diageo, Lidl and Carr Gorm the opportunity to meet potential employees and school leavers.

Agreement over airport fuel issue

A LONG-RUNNING dispute over night-time refuelling at Oban airport has been resolved.

A council spokesman confirmed: 'The fuel supplier will be resuming its night-time fuelling service'.

Dental unit described as 'obsolete'

A MULTI-million pound dental facility in Oban may be 'obsolete' when a town-centre practice opens later in the year, the area's community health partnership (CHP) public partnership forum heard on Monday.

Duncan Martin, a CHP elected-representative to NHS Highland, said that the state-of-the-art dental access centre, housed in the Lorn and Islands hospital, had lain empty for more than two years due to a lack of interest from any dentist wanting to rent the facility.

The ongoing saga of NHS dental care in Oban took a turn for the worse this week when a meeting of community representatives heard the 'three seats in the hospital' were not as yet

rented out, and that no bids for the hospital facility were in the pipeline.

Tom Dolan, a representative on the health board's public forum, said: 'It is a real problem that there is a facility in Oban lying empty and no one wants to take it on because the financial terms being offered are so poor. 'Does that mean the facility is obsolete?'

Duncan Martin suggested the restrictions on carrying out private dental work might be acting as a disincentive to prospective practitioners.

'Well, it might be obsolete because of the Scottish government rules surrounding the split of patients a dentist can take in the NHS practice' he said. 'Anyone who rents the centre

will only be able to do 30 per cent of private work.'

He explained that at time when the town was 'crying out for dentists', because of the fact there would soon be more dental chairs available in Oban, the costly unit would be unlikely to attract any dentist willing to move to the area.

He continued: 'This is the issue at the heart of the current situation. 'It will be very difficult to attract a dentist or dental practice to the area under terms which sees them pay a large rent for a practice where 70 per cent of their work must be NHS.'

'It is understood that more money can be made by dentists working in their own setting, as only 20 per cent of all their work

needs to be undertaken for the NHS.'

Caroline Henderson, NHS Highland's acting primary clinical manager for Oban, Lorn and the Isles, did not challenge the use of the word 'obsolete' to describe the dental unit.

She said: 'Senior managers are looking into the situation and we will just need to wait and see what happens. There are other options for the use of the dental access centre and these are being progressed by managers.'

A NHS Highland spokesman said: 'We are investigating some options to provide a full complement of dental services from the Oban dental access centre. We will keep the public informed of any developments as soon as they happen.'

Perfect score for hospital

LORN AND Islands hospital saw 100 per cent of accident and emergency (A&E) patients within NHS waiting time guidelines, recent statistics have shown.

The Oban hospital, run by NHS Highland, had perfect results during the period of February 16 to 22, seeing all patients within the recommended four-hour maximum waiting

limit. The positive result was published on the new NHS Performs website.

A&E waiting times figures for January 2015 show that NHS Highland treated 94.8 per cent of patients at its main medical sites during the month within the stipulated timescales.

This was significantly above the Scottish national average of 85.4 per cent.

More OAPs enlist in the vigilante band patrolling Oban parking bays

MORE pensioners have joined in the work of Oban's car parking vigilantes.

Last week, *The Oban Times* reported that a group of OAPs had placed hand-written notes on car windscreens and threatened to report drivers to the police for bad parking and bad driving.

Anne Philip, 70, a visitor from Grangemouth, said: 'I was in the town to see Anything Goes at the Corran Halls. I arrived early with my sister, Jean, and I asked her to go and get a parking

ticket. Jean went to look for change and I stood by the car.

'A man in his late 60s approached me and said, "You can't drive like that in Oban, you missed my car by millimetres". I didn't think I had, but he said, "Where's the parking ticket for your car?" Before I could explain, he said, "You are the sort of person we report to the police here".

'He then stormed off. I was quite shaken up by him. What a busy body. Jean could hardly believe me when she came

back from getting the ticket. That's when I read the story in *The Oban Times* and saw this was part of a bigger story.

'I think I will take the train next time - or use my bus pass.' At least six cars had notes placed on them this week. One shown to *The Oban Times* read 'No parking. You have harmed (sic) me'. The message appears to have been written by someone who has recently visited the Monte Carlo resort in Las Vegas as the note was on complimentary hotel notepaper.

One of the three original OAP car parking vigilantes known to be working in the town said: 'Not all the new incidents are connected to us. There must be a splinter group picking up all the cars that we miss.'

An Argyll and Bute council spokeswoman said: 'If a member of the public has concerns about parking, we would encourage them to contact our parking team on 01546 605514 or email enquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk.'

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TIMESLINE

Extra service on track for summer

SCOTRAIL's summer 2015 timetable will see a new Saturday morning service between Oban and Glasgow from May 23. The enhanced timetable will deliver an extra train departing Glasgow Queen Street at 05.20, arriving in Oban at 08.35. In the opposite direction, a new service will depart Oban at 05.21 arriving at Glasgow Queen Street at 08.37. As a result of this additional service, the current 08.11 Oban to Glasgow Saturday service will switch to a later departure time of 08.57, bringing it into line with the Monday to Friday timetable.

Trading standards in VAT scam alert

ARGYLL businesses should be wary of a £790 VAT letter scam. Argyll and Bute council's trading standards team has issued a warning after a letter titled 'UK - DATA CONTROL - Missing information about your VAT Registration Number' was sent to some local companies. The letter claims to be a request to update VAT registration numbers, but businesses may end up paying £790 a year for three years if they sign up. For further information contact trading standards on 01546 605519.

WW1 website will focus on Argyll

THE IMPACT of the Great War on the people of Argyll is poignantly described on a new website. The website will include treasured letters and photographs from the battlefields and the home front. The council's culture and libraries service has also provided additional information for the website. To view the website, visit scotlandswar.ed.ac.uk/argyllbute.

Shoppers set for a fall after temporary repairs to slab

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PEDESTRIANS in Oban's George Street are falling victim to a 'dangerous' paving slab that has even tripped up the roads authority in its attempt to repair the walkway.

Last week, two elderly women - aged 90 and 80 respectively - were the latest casualties when they stumbled over the dislodged slab, which lies outside the Whisky Shop.

The 80-year-old woman had to be taken to Lorn and Islands hospital for treatment on Thursday.

And the previous day the 90-year-old woman was comforted by staff at the Whisky Shop as she recovered from the shock of tripping on the loose paving stone.

The problem of fixing the slab is exacerbated by the fact that it lies beneath a gutter that sprays water onto the pavement, thus loosening the slab whenever a temporary repair is carried out.

Roads agency BEAR Scotland is responsible for repairs to that section of pavement.

Manager of the Whisky Shop Bobbi-Jo Wallace said: 'It is so dangerous. On Thursday, four people came in to complain about it, but there is nothing we can do about it.'

'If we fix it ourselves, or mark it in some way, then we could be liable for any injuries.'

'I would say people fall on a daily basis, yet it has been fixed twice in the year-and-a-half since we moved the shop to this unit.'

Community councillor Grant Nicholson, who also works in the Whisky Shop, called the paving slab 'lethal' for people unaware of the problem.

He said ambulances were regularly called for people who had been badly injured after tripping on the slab. He said there were many other loose paving stones on the street.

Mr Nicholson said: 'The slab was fixed at 5pm on Friday by



LETHAL: Grant Nicholson, a staff member at The Whisky Shop, points out the dangerous slab

BEAR Scotland. They've done a good job, but they have not solved the underlying problem, so I've no doubt it will become loose again shortly.

'The concern is that there is a hole, the size of a 20 pence piece, in the underground pipe that

carries water from the downpipe. When it pours with rain it washes the cement away and the paving stone becomes loose again. What we need is an emergency team which responds quickly to incidents in Oban.'

A spokesperson for BEAR

Scotland said: 'We are aware of ongoing difficulties on George Street with the paving slabs and on Friday sent a squad out to specifically look into the area in question.'

'A repair was carried out to secure and make the area safe.'

MULL lines



NEW HALL CASH: councillor Mary-Jean with some of the youngsters set to benefit from a new hall in Tobermory

Thinking Day cash boost

A CELEBRATION of the Guide and Scout movements saw a cheque for £10,000 presented for a new hall in Tobermory.

Thinking Day and Founder's Day on February 22 was celebrated by Mull Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts getting together for morning worship at Tobermory parish church, led by the Rev Johnny Paton.

After church, the groups enjoyed an afternoon of games and activities in the old hall on the theme of children's play from around the world.

Councillor Mary-Jean Devon presented a cheque for £10,000 from the Kenny McIntyre Memorial Fund towards the cost of a new hall planned for the Guide and Scout movements.

The day finished with the lighting of candles for children around the world and campfire songs. Everyone left with a Thinking Day and scouting badge and a slice of a world cake baked by Rainbow and Scout mum Joyce Malcolm.



DISCOVERY: Pupils from Ulva primary school make a number of investigations on Ulva beach

Life's a beach for pupils

THE EIGHT pupils who attend Ulva primary school enjoyed gym sessions last week while exploring the world of outdoor learning and creating a beach school.

The head teacher, staff and pupils have been working together to put opportunities in place thanks to a successful application for £2,000 from the Scottish government's access to education fund.

Argyll and Bute council's spokesperson for education and lifelong learning councillor Aileen Morton said: 'The council's education service takes every opportunity possible to help the development of our children and young people, and through improving experiences at school we are working to improve their life chances. Learning is enhanced through practical means such as additional and new school materials, sharing resources and activities and enabling children to meet and work with their peers. Physical activity can develop fine motor skills, and skills for life, learning and work.'

Pupils travel by bus to Salen primary school, a distance of 10 miles, where they have weekly PE sessions, working on large apparatus, working with other pupils from the island and enjoying the freedom of space afforded by the large gym hall.

Outdoor learning is being developed at a beach a short walk away from the school with support from staff at Tobermory harbour. The grant helps towards the cost of transport for the weekly physical education classes at Salen primary school and resources to accommodate the extra pupils there.

Waterproof clothing has been bought for outdoor education. The grant has also helped with staff training to deliver beach school and forest school activities.

Sea eagle watching site

THE MULL sea eagle site is likely to be situated within Quinish Forest, near Loch Torr at the north of Mull, en route to Dervaig when travelling from Tobermory.

Every year the location of the Royal Society Protection of Birds Mull sea eagle watching hide site is chosen on the nesting of the sea eagles themselves.

The birds chosen this year are Sula and Cuin. Sula is seven-years-old and hatched in a nest in Norway in 2007. She was one of the first eaglets to be released as part of Scotland's 'East Coast Project' - the third phase in the reintroduction scheme to return white-tailed sea eagles to the UK which started on the Isle of Rum in 1975.

Sula is now a fully mature bird with a pale head, yellow beak and eyes and, of course, the trademark white tail; plumage they moult into by the time they are about five-years-of-age. She first appeared on Mull in 2010.

Close ups of Sula and Cuin and any chicks depends on the eagles using the same site and is always subject to change when the birds nest and produce eggs. If all goes to plan the starting point for the RSPB hide will have lovely views over Loch Torr, giving visitors a chance to see waterbirds, hen harriers, buzzard and short-eared owls as well as white-tailed eagles.

Mull produces the goods

THE FRENCH Institute (Scotland) (FIS) is using three Mull producers to showcase the best of Scottish larders.

FIS runs the 'budding chefs programme' which aims to develop gastronomic connections between French and Scottish cooks and showcase the best of both larders.

The FIS will be hosting a group of 10 students at Glengorm Castle to look at the Highland cattle stock and consider the provenance of the animals in cookery.

The programme will take place in March when it is planned to take 10 French chefs-to-be to Mull.

The group also plans to visit Loch Fyne Oysters, Guy Grieve at Mull's Ethical Seafish Company, based in Salen, and Island Bakery and Isle of Mull Cheese in Tobermory.



Sunday, March 15, is Mother's Day, when everyone likes to spoil the special lady in their lives and show her just how much she means to them.

This year, let The Oban Times do this for you, as we have fantastic prizes to give away in our marvellous Mum's the Word competition.

All you have to do to win is tell us - in no more than 50 words - why your mum is one in a million.

And the three best entries will win one of these terrific prizes:

- A private showing of a film of their choice for up to 22 guests with a bottle of bubbly, buckets of popcorn and soft drinks, courtesy of Oban's Phoenix cinema
- A meal for two at a select restaurant
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Complete the attached coupon and either send it to us at the address below, or hand it in to our office. This coupon must be completed for your entry to be valid.

The closing date is Monday, March 9, so give your mum a Mother's Day to remember, and enter today.

Send your entries to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB by Monday, March 9, 2015

My Mum is one in a million because (50 words)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your name:

Address:

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Daytime telephone number:

Age (if under 16)

Terms and conditions: Please post your entries to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Entries to be in by 12 noon Monday, March 9, 2015. Normal Oban Times rules apply. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. No cash alternative.



NEW COMPUTER: Oban Boys Brigade junior section members Daniel Pearson, Archie Malloch and Robbie MacKay with some of their new equipment

Brigade's feeling grand

EQUIPMENT worth £1,000 has been bought for the Boys Brigade in Oban, with a grant from Scottish Sea Farms and the Heart of the Community Trust.

The new computer, printer, projector and screen will be used to help with administration and organisation of the group.

Cameron Harris, captain of the 1st Oban Company Boys Brigade, said: 'It will really help the company greatly enhance the leaders' delivery of fun and educational activities for the boys.'

Efric makes arts history

CAMPBELTOWN woman Efric McNeil has made history by becoming the renowned Glasgow Arts Club's first female president.

Ms McNeil, who went to school in Campbeltown before training in Glasgow as a chartered accountant, was delighted to be given the prestigious title at the club's AGM.

She is the first woman to occupy the post in the club's 148-year history.

Rally insight at car club

RALLY car navigator Chris Hamill gave a presentation on his hobby to the February meeting of Oban and district classic vehicle club.

Chris, who navigates for Oban driver Shaun Sinclair, had just returned from the Snowman Rally in Inverness, where the pair finished a creditable seventh.

The presentation included

details of all the paperwork, rally notes and equipment required to satisfy current rally legislation, along with interesting in-car camera footage of some of the pair's recent rally events.

Earlier in the month, club members and their partners enjoyed their annual club dinner at the Lochnell Arms, North Connel.

Loch Etive review awaits judgement

THE JUDICIAL review of a council decision to grant planning permission for a fish farm on Loch Etive has concluded at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. Friends of Loch Etive (FoLE) had mounted a legal challenge after Argyll and Bute council gave the go-ahead to fish farm company Dawnfresh to develop the Sailean Ruadh (Etive 6) site. The four-day review was held between February 17 and 20. If the court upholds the council's decision, FoLE may be liable for substantial legal costs. A spokesman for the Court of Session said the judge was now considering the case and would give his judgement at a later date.

£137,234 to help people find jobs

A SHARE of £6.5 million Scottish government money has been given to Argyll and Bute council to help young people get jobs. The local authority is to receive £137,234 to fund ways of helping young people into work either through employment or vocational opportunities. It will also go towards strengthening links between schools and employers and help prepare vulnerable people for work.

BUT HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE 'INTERESTED' IN DEVELOPING PLANS FOR OBAN BAY Marina plan flounders as it is declared 'not viable'

LOUISE LEE
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OBAN Bay Marine's (OBM) plan for a transit marina in Oban Bay has this week suffered a financial setback. But Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) remains interested in funding the project. Argyll and Bute council plans to build marina infrastructure to the north of the North Pier which will scupper the cash it was expected to provide for OBM's marina project to the south of the pier. OBM's eight-year-long battle for the wee bay was considered 'not viable' because of 'state aid' issues which would bar the local authority from putting the cash required into the project. Forty Oban businesses which each put £1,000 into the pot to kick-start the project back in 2010 say that the project must still go ahead. Douglas Cowan, Highland Islands Enterprise (HIE) area manager for Argyll and the Islands, said: 'We have discussed various different projects to deliver transit berths into Oban with various parties including



PONTOONS: transit marina plan blown out the water.

Oban Bay Marine and Argyll and Bute council over a number of years and have provided support in the past to help move things forward. 'We remain interested, given Oban's strategic location, and are happy to discuss specific proposals.' Chairman of community business body BID4Oban, Graeme

Bass said: 'BID4Oban Limited is deeply disappointed to learn that funding for the long-planned marina - a project in which so many businesses and individuals have invested so much capital, time and effort - will not now be forthcoming. 'We would welcome the opportunity to engage with key stakeholders to determine what other

alternatives might exist to bring the marina plan to fruition - a permanent facility of this nature can only be to the benefit of businesses and residents of Oban and, in particular, to our visitors.' Argyll and Bute council's head of development, Fergus Murray, said the plan was not viable on the limited funding that would have been available to the group. In 2008 almost £2 million had been ring-fenced for the project through CHORD funding. Argyll and Bute council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) agreed in April 2014 to consider a business case from OBM in order to allocate funding. The organisations stumped up the cost of funding the consultation and work for a business plan. The business case was submitted to the local authority in November 2014. In a letter last week to OBM, in response to the business case, Mr Murray, said it was 'NOT [sic] considered a viable option to proceed with'. He outlined council concerns regarding the cost of building the marina versus concerns about the profit and sustainability of

the project. Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) area chairman, councillor Roddy McCuish, said: 'There is a strong will and desire to have a marina in Oban. 'Part of the business case for the White Building on the North Pier depends on the increase in visitors from the sea. 'We will shortly be extending the pier and that will incorporate a step ashore facility/marina. 'This is, of course, subject to a full business case and following the usual procedures and members' approval.' An Argyll and Bute council spokesman said: 'The council recognises the importance of a transit berthing facility for Oban. 'It is currently working to bring forward information to elected members on a long-term integrated solution, to be taken on as part of our Lorn Arc regeneration initiative. 'It is expected that a proposal will go before the OLI area committee later in the year. 'In the shorter term our focus is on providing a temporary step ashore facility for the cruise ships visiting Oban this summer.'

Three midwives 'insufficient' for Argyll mothers

AN NHS Highland proposal to train three midwives as sonographers to provide pregnancy scans is said to be 'insufficient' in meeting the demands of mothers-to-be in Argyll and Bute. Mary Galbraith, a Labour party candidate, said while some progress had been made in her campaign for scanning, more than three midwives would be required to provide for the needs of pregnant women. Ms Galbraith said: 'I'm disappointed the announcement doesn't even mention that only three midwives will be trained to do scanning. Which three places won't have local trained personnel on-site, and how can services be assured with such a small team for the whole area? If they think this is a good news story, why is the health board hiding these crucial details?' An NHS Highland spokesman said: 'We have identified that three midwives fully trained to provide scanning would meet the demand that would be required in Argyll and Bute and would also allow for cross cover when needed. 'If we had too many midwives carrying out scanning the number of scans they would carry out individually would be very low and they would therefore not be able to keep their skills and knowledge levels up-to-date which could be detrimental to the service.'

Adventure leader jailed for 'gross breach of trust' against youngsters

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AN OUTDOOR adventure course leader has been jailed for 18 months for abusing three young boys in the 1980s on an island south of Oban. Torquil Johnson-Ferguson, 65, was convicted last month by a jury at Oban Sheriff Court of lewd, indecent and libidinous practises towards the boys on three separate occasions between 1981 and 1986. He appeared before Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC on Monday for sentencing. Johnson-Ferguson, Solwaybank, Chapel Knowe, Canonbie, Dumfries and Galloway, committed the offences when the boys were aged nine or 11 years, 11 or 12 and 13. They had been attending adventure courses on the island of Rua Fiola, off Luing, owned by Johnson-Ferguson and his wife, where they ran Wild Island Exploration Ltd from 1976 to 2014. Sheriff Ruth Anderson said she took into account Johnson-Fer-



GUILTY: leader sentenced to jail

guson was appearing as a first offender; that, for the most part until these offences, he had led a stable family existence and on the whole a good life and thirdly, over a number of decades many youngsters had benefited from his leadership, inspiration and time spent on the island. 'Nevertheless the matters which I must pass sentence on today come out of that same past and have resulted in your downfall by your lewd and libidinous practises and behaviour towards each of these young trusting boys in the 1980s,' she told him. She called the offences a 'gross breach of trust' and added that his actions had repercussions that echoed down the years, affecting his victims physically and mentally. 'The fallout from your actions continue to affect [the victims] to this day,' she told Johnson-Ferguson. 'I am of the view that the only appropriate sentence in respect of this course of criminal conduct is a custodial one.' She also placed Johnson-Fer-

guson on the Sex Offenders' Register for 10 years. Defence solicitor Gary McAteer had told Sheriff Anderson that, unsolicited, his client's family had received references for Johnson-Ferguson which had described him as 'generous', 'patient', 'dedicated' at what he did and 'inspirational'. 'He stands before the court a changed man in the sense that this whole process has had a detrimental effect on him both mentally and physically,' said Mr McAteer. He told Sheriff Anderson that Johnson-Ferguson, who needed a hearing aid throughout the trial and sentencing to follow proceedings, had suffered a heart attack three or four days after his conviction. He also had other significant ailments including mental health difficulties. 'He has found the whole process traumatising. 'He has also suffered from morbid depression in the months leading up to the trial,' added Mr McAteer.

Playgroup funds are in good heart

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FRIENDS of Oban Community Playpark volunteers were jumping up and down with joy on Monday to discover they had gained another £20,000 towards a new playpark for the town. Scottish Sea Farm's Heart of the Communities Trust has made the award. 'We are absolutely delighted about this,' said Lyndsay Elliott, chairman of the fund-raising group, 'as it means that with the SportScotland and The Robertson Trust money, we are fully funded for phase one for five to 15-year-olds.' The money means that funds raised locally can now be used towards the £150,000 target for phase three, the under-fives playpark. 'It's still too early to say when we will reach our target for the under-fives area as we have yet to find a large fund that fits our project,

but we will be continuing with fundraising and are looking for continued support from the community,' added Lyndsay. 'We are awaiting the outcome of a funding application from the Royal Bank of Scotland to complete the funding for phase two, the multi-sensory garden, although we've made progress there too with building supplier Jewson donating the materials which will allow us to upgrade the paths so they are suitable for wheelchairs and buggies.' The tender document for the design and installation of phase one of the park, on the old playpark site next to Atlantis Leisure, is to be made public this month and next, with the successful contractor selected at the end of April. The multi-sensory garden will update the current Millennium garden, and the under-five area is planned for part of the green field site next to the garden.

Nuisance call rules 'tougher'

GOVERNMENT plans for harsher punishments for nuisance callers have been welcomed by Argyll and Bute MP, Alan Reid. It was announced this week that, as of April 6, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will no longer have to prove that the cold calls are causing 'substantial damage or distress' before taking action to stop those who are responsible. 'Nuisance phone calls are an infuriating part of everyday life,' said Mr Reid.

Population guru sought for HIE

HIGHLANDS and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is on the hunt for a population guru, it announced this week. The senior post will provide a focus for HIE's involvement in partnership projects aimed at achieving population and economic growth in the area. The two-year appointment follows the Argyll and Bute economic summit last year.

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ADVERTORIAL

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Hotel trust backs young performers

CRERAR Hotels Trust, a charitable arm of the hotel group which has four establishments in the West Highlands, donated £4,000 last Friday to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's junior conservatoire drama programme.

The money will be used as a scholarship fund for talented, disadvantaged Scottish students between 14 and 18 years. Paddy Crerar, chief executive of the hotel chain and chairman of the trust, said: 'We are delighted to help these youngsters find inspiration, and to acquire new skills and confidence in the performing arts.'

Crerar Hotels includes the Oban Bay and Isle of Mull hotels and the Glencoe Inn.

Rockfield head to take up new post

PARENTS and pupils at Oban's Rockfield primary were disappointed to learn that the school's headteacher is leaving to take up a job in Orkney.

James Wylie, who was appointed last October to take charge of the town's largest primary school, departs in Easter.

Cleland Sneddon, the council's executive director of community services, said: 'James has contributed greatly during his 10 years at Rockfield, Kirn and Craignish schools. We wish him every future success.'

Four-month-old Oban-Seil service taken over as company 'wound up'

STEVEN RAE
srae@obantimes.co.uk

A BUS company providing a service between Oban and the Isle of Seil has given up the route to a rival firm only four months after taking it on.

Anderson Coaches, based in Tayvallich, took over the 418 Argyll and Bute council-tendered service in October 2014.

The route includes stops in Kilmore, Kilniver, and Park primary school, among others.

On Friday, managing director Roddy Anderson said that the company was 'being wound up' and that as a local employer, he was too upset to speak further.

A former driver, who worked for Anderson Coaches from 2003 to December 2014, said that all the former Anderson drivers had found alternative employment.

A statement on Argyll and Bute councils website stated that: 'Due to unforeseen circumstances, outwith Argyll and Bute council's control, service 418 will be operated entirely by West Coast Motors from Monday, February 23, onwards for the foreseeable future.'

A spokeswoman for the council added that the provision of the services were on a short-term basis until the council was in a position to invite formal tenders for the contracts.

Changes to the services include: route 418, leaving Ellenabeich



An Anderson Coaches vehicle on the 418 route departs from outside the Caledonian Hotel in Oban

at 8am, will no longer stop at Barran Estate at 8.43am, instead serving the Kilmore lay-by and continuing as normal towards Oban. The 6.01pm departure from Ellenabeich will now leave at 6.08pm and will run the consequent seven minutes later throughout the rest of the journey.

Colin Craig, managing director

for West Coast Motors said: 'Argyll and Bute council asked us to pick up the service as of Monday, February 23.

'The alterations listed have reverted the services back to the way they ran when West Coast previously provided the route.

'They were changed at the time so services didn't clash with other buses on a similar route.

'West Coast Motors is happy to provide this service and plans to bid for the route on a long-term basis when it comes out to tender.'

Anderson Coaches previously operated services 421, 422 and 423 in the Mid Argyll area from October 2013, but notified the council that it would cease to operate them from December

20, 2014. These services were, therefore, also re-tendered back to West Coast Motors.

Roddy Anderson's father Fergie, who is now retired, started Anderson Coaches 44 years ago, on the site where the Tayvallich Inn now sits and the pair also have a connection with the inn, which they ran for a short time in the from 2003-08.

Homeless campaigners raise £700

SUPPORTERS of Oban's HOPE Kitchen held a sponsored 'sleep-out' on Saturday, to raise awareness of the challenges faced by homeless people.

Sue Vest, service manager of HOPE kitchen, said: 'Eleven people including staff, volunteers and supporters of HOPE spent Saturday night on the streets of Oban, raising awareness of the plight of homeless people.'

'Their efforts raised more than £700 for the cause. Even at this time of year with the weather as it is, we still support rough sleepers in the area.'

The sleep-out was organised

by Jess McPhee, catering coordinator at HOPE, who has made this an annual awareness and fundraising event.

The group camped down mainly outside Waterstones on George Street, although others did move to different parts of the town to highlight the fundraising endeavour.

Held in winter, the harsh weather is used to make people aware of the struggles homeless people face during such cold conditions.

Sue added: 'I would like to thank all who have supported this great event, raising several hundred pounds for our funds.'



SLEEPING ROUGH: some of the hardy bunch who took part in HOPE Kitchen's sponsored sleep-out

Bridges closed for repairs

CONNEL bridge on the A828 will be closed to traffic for five consecutive nights this month, one of three Argyll bridges to undergo essential maintenance work.

The A82 Tulla bridge at Bridge of Orchy and the A85 Falls of Cruachan bridge are the other two affected by the work, which is to be carried out by BEAR Scotland.

The overnight work at Connel starts on Monday, March 16, between midnight and 6am, and is to be completed by 6am on Saturday, March 21.

As well as structural maintenance, electrical work will be

undertaken to address recent signalling problems at the bridge. Traffic will be diverted along the A85, A82 and A828 trunk roads, via Tyndrum and Ballachulish.

The Tulla bridge on the A82 will be closed for resurfacing on Thursday, March 5, between 8pm and 6am.

Bridge investigation works are to be carried out on Falls of Cruachan bridge, directly West of the Cruachan visitor centre, on March 9, for three days, between 7am and 7pm, with one overnight closure on Tuesday, March 10 between 9pm and 6am.

Press is the only true way to generate maximum results from a campaign

STEWART MILNE
chairman, Stewart Milne Group

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Leading Scottish business figures have joined the campaign to highlight the importance of newsbrands and recognise their increasingly multi-platform readership.

Stewart Milne, chairman of Stewart Milne Group, said: "With online seemingly taking hold of the way we buy products, it's easy to think moving your marketing budget to a digital or online platform will generate better results than more traditional media. But a fully integrated media plan that includes press is the only true way to generate maximum results from a campaign."

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ISLAY LETTER by Hugh Smith

Fitting memorial to a true Islay son

THE Ballygrant monument that commemorates the life and career of the Highland folk tale collector and Kilmeny dominie Hector MacLean has undergone a much-required renovation, which has been financed by the Glasgow Islay Association.

The Glasgow Ilich provided the memorial to the eminent Gaelic scholar and were also responsible for the provision of the also recently-renovated monument at Bridghead which commemorates John Francis Campbell, Iain Òg Ile, with whom MacLean worked closely in the collection and preservation of the folktales of the islands and West Highlands.

Hector MacLean was born on Islay in 1818. His mother, Janet, was of mainland stock and his father and namesake came from a long-established local family and he operated a trading vessel which served parts of south Argyll and the north of Ireland.

Hector was educated in the school at Kilmeny and went on to Edinburgh University. He spent two years there before returning home following the sudden death of his father.

On his return, he moved in with his sister and mother, who ran the Red House Inn on the outskirts of Ballygrant.

Shortly afterwards, he became tutor at Islay House to Iain Òg Ile, the heir apparent to the estates of the Campbells of Shawfield.

In the early 1840s, he was appointed schoolmaster at his old school in Kilmeny and was to remain there until the introduction of the 1872 Education Act. He retired in that same year and was awarded a small pension.

He died at Ballygrant in 1893 and is buried at Kilmeny cemetery and his final resting place is marked with a tombstone, also provided by An Comunn Ileach.

Despite his many achievements, he was not widely popular among some of his fellows Ilich and there were those who accused him of practising the black arts.

Baseless though these allegations were, it was known that MacLean had a deep interest in mesmerism and hypnosis.

The renovated monument lies in the grounds of Kilmeny school. It is in the form of a medieval Celtic cross and is now much more evident passing through Ballygrant. The Glasgow Islay is to be congratulated on ensuring the survival of these monuments which commemorate the life and work of Campbell and MacLean, who remain two of 19th century Islay's most accomplished figures.

Home bell rings finally for Florence

THERE was an air of sadness among pupils, staff, parents and friends when they bade farewell to Bowmore primary school headteacher Florence MacDougall, who has taken early retirement after 16 years in the hot seat.

Before being appointed as headteacher, she was a teacher at the school for 16 years and had seen many changes during that time.

But her departure did not go unmarked and this special milestone saw well-wishers packing out the school's assembly room.

Presentations and speeches were made, the school choir entertained and the ensemble musicians hit all the right notes. Songs and poems were performed with gusto, the Highland dancers were at their nimble best and local Baptist minister Jim McNulty offered a special prayer.

Everyone enjoyed the cake baked by the school secretary and got stuck into the buffet prepared by the kitchen staff.

Florence intends to enjoy her retirement and she and her husband Rop are shortly to visit New York. She will also have more time to spend with her first grandchild, William, and that will certainly keep her busy.

Well done Florence and we all wish you a long and happy retirement.

Death of Milda Martin is sad news

WE are sorry to learn of the death in her Bearsden home on February 24 of Glasgow Ileach Milda Martin. She was 75 years of age and had suffered from a progressive illness. I will be paying tribute to this well know Ileach in my next letter. Meantime, sincere condolences are extended to her husband Alex and all the family. Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810 658.

PROMOTION: Deputy assistant chief officer Paul Connelly

Paul's ladder to promotion

ARGYLL'S fire service chief is taking on a new regional role, supervising seven areas of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

Deputy assistant chief officer Paul Connelly has been promoted to head of service delivery for the West of Scotland.

Mr Connelly will oversee the seven areas served by dedicated SFRS local senior officers.

He was previously local senior officer for Argyll and Bute and Dunbartonshire.

Mr Connelly, who has 29 years' service, said it was 'a great honour' to be asked to take on the role.

Backing for dialysis unit

CAMPBELTOWN should have a kidney dialysis unit open by this summer.

A community £100,000 fund-raising campaign for the Kidney Dialysis Endowment Fund at Campbeltown Hospital to open the NHS Highland-run unit has reached its target.

Chairman Councillor Donald Kelly said: 'The committee is reassured by a letter from Maureen Watt, Holyrood minister for public health, that Argyll and Bute's Community Health Partnership has agreed to meet any shortfall in the capital costs of establishing the unit.'

'See Me' in new ideas challenge

GRANTS of up to £20,000 are on offer to groups with new ideas about how to tackle mental health discrimination in the Highlands and islands.

'See Me', the national programme to end the stigma of mental illness, is holding an event in the Royal Highland hotel in Inverness on March 18 to recruit leaders to champion the cause of mental health patients in the region.

Eleanor Ogilvie, See Me communities programme manager, said: 'We want people to tackle the issues through our champions and funding programmes.'

'As part of our Community Innovation Fund project, we will award grants of between £2,000 and £20,000 to groups which have innovative ideas to tackle discrimination.' For information, contact Rebekah.moore@seemescotland.org or visit www.seemescotland.org

Seonag's legacy for Appin village

IN last week's Oban Times (Feb 26), a report headed 'Jam lady Seonag leaves a lasting legacy and a sweet taste for village', it was stated that Seonag Morrison was heavily involved with the 'Natural Childbirth Trust'.

This was incorrect. It should have read 'National Childbirth Trust'. We apologise for the confusion.

TIMESLINE

Equal pay gap is being narrowed

THE pay gap between men and women within Highland council is narrowing, according to an audit for the year.

A report for 2014 showed an improvement in both full and part-time positions compared to 2013.

The pay differential within Highland council has reduced by 29 per cent in management roles and by 28 per cent in head and deputy teaching roles, according to the report.

Councillor Maxine Smith, chairwoman of the resources committee, said: 'Significant improvements have been made since the first equal pay audit and it is important that we continue to close the pay gap between men and women.

'We must demonstrate that we place equal value on our female workforce and ensure that there is no glass ceiling in Highland council for women.'

Fewer drug cases but help needed

THE NUMBER of people carrying illegal drugs in Lochaber has dropped this year, but police are calling for help from the public to continue this trend.

Chief inspector Colin Gough, who is based in Fort William, said 20 people had been caught with illegal substances between April and December 2014, compared to 25 in the same period the previous year.

Mr Gough said the help of the public was crucial to reduce drug-taking in the area.

He said: 'We rely on community engagement to crack down on drug supply. We would encourage people to continue to engage with us by whatever means they wish.'

Crimes can be reported by calling 101, or contacting Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800555111.

Online switch to save council cash

ALMOST half of Highland council services will be carried out online by April 2017.

This is the aim of the local authority's new 'digital first' programme, which is expected to save £1.3 million in four years.

In the next two years, council staff will work to make their website simpler and more convenient to carry out tasks online instead of by phone or face to face.

Councillor Maxine Smith, chairwoman of the council's resources committee, said: 'New technology provides an opportunity to release significant savings. The majority of our customers will welcome user-friendly digital services.'

'We are well aware, however, that some customers will require additional support to access online services and will still want to phone for services or talk about them face to face.'



TOP JOB: Deirdre Michie
High school pupil now commands the heights of the oil industry

A FORMER Oban high school pupil has been named as the new chief executive of Oil and Gas UK.

Deirdre Michie, daughter of the former well-respected MP for Argyll and Bute Ray Michie, moved to Lochneil when she was seven and then to Oban when she was nine, studying at both Benderloch and Rockfield primaries.

Her father, Iain, was also a well-known figure in the town, having worked as a consultant physician at the county hospital in the town.

A law graduate from Dundee University, Deirdre will take up her position from May 1. She will be based in Oil and Gas UK's Aberdeen office and will also have an office in London.

She said: 'I am really delighted to have been appointed to this important industry role and look forward to working with the high-performance team that is Oil and Gas UK. It is a role I will greatly relish.'

Family friend Graeme Pagan, who is a retired solicitor in Oban, said: 'I was very dear friends with both of Deirdre's parents and knew her from a very young age. I am thrilled to bits at her appointment and wish her all the best in her new role.'

Man threatened staff in hospital

POLICE had to be called to Lorn and Islands hospital in Oban on Friday afternoon after reports of a disturbance.

A 42-year-old man had been brought into the accident and emergency department having been found in what appeared to be a drunken state.

He was arrested and charged with behaving in a threatening manner towards staff.

And a man, 23, was arrested by police on Thursday, February 26, after a disturbance on Shore Street in Oban. Police found what was suspected to be class B drugs on him.

Caitlin's dress sense poses fashion dilemma for stars

Colonsay singer's query about the colour of a dress at a wedding on the island sends Twittersphere into meltdown. LOUISE LEE reports on how a casual comment sparked an instant internet sensation

IT WASN'T Kim Kardashian's derrière or Madonna's high-heeled stumble at a music awards that broke the internet ceiling – it was a 21-year-old Gaelic musician from Colonsay with a picture of her friend's mum's mother-of-the-bride dress.

The question on everyone's lips last week was 'What colour is the dress?'

Celebrity 'A-listers' such as Taylor Swift, Justin Bieber, Dame Judy Dench and Stephen Fry joined the world's most powerful political leader, US president Barack Obama, in speculating over the colour of 'the dress'.

For the dress in question presented people with a real visual puzzle: some saw it clearly as a black and blue garment, while many others as white and gold. Apparently, it all depends on the optical trick the image plays on the neural receptors in the retina.

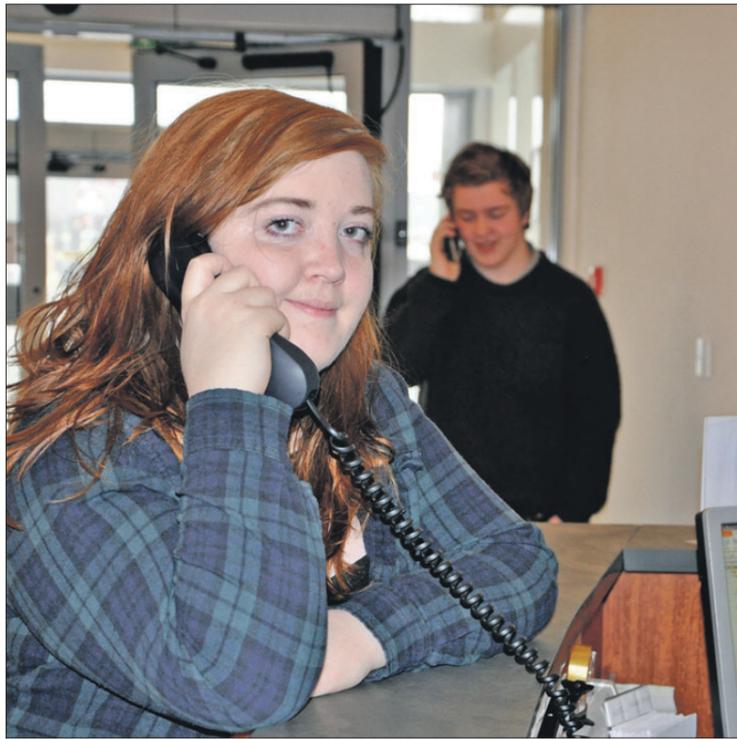
The *Oban Times* can reveal the colour of the dress is blue and black.

Our information comes from a wedding guest at the marriage of Grace and Kier Johnson on Colonsay and who saw the outfit first hand.

It all began when *Oban Times* reader, Caitlin MacNeil of Colonsay, asked people on her social network site Tumblr: 'Guys please help me - is this dress white and gold, or blue and black?'

Saying the colour was 'freaking' her out, she asked her 2,000 followers for an opinion. Five hours later, 16 million people had commented on the colour. The sheer volume of comments set a world record for internet use on one subject.

At one point there were more than 5,700 tweets a minute using hash tag #thedress, with 670,000



HOT LINE: Colonsay singer Caitlin MacNeil and her brother Liam handle calls from all over the world

“In the morning, staff had to come up to my room in the hotel telling me 'Good Morning America' was on the phone because no one could get through on my mobile phone**”**

CAITLIN MACNEIL



THE DRESS: chose your colour

users on Caitlin's internet pages at its peak, more than has ever been known in the history of the worldwide web.

To date, the image of the party-dress-and-shrug has been shared upwards of 80 million times around the globe. It has broken world records for internet use.

Caitlin had been stranded on Colonsay with her brother Liam after playing at a wedding, and only posted the photograph of the dress on Wednesday when she arrived in Oban.

They were staying at The Caledonian hotel in Oban when the story went viral - in a stratospheric sense.

'We were stuck on Colonsay for longer than we had thought after playing in the band at the wedding,' Caitlin explained.

'When we arrived in Oban we booked in the hotel and during the night we kept hearing the phone ping with new messages.'

She continued: 'In the morning staff had to come up to my room in the hotel telling me 'Good Morning America' was on the phone because no one could get through on my mobile.'

Three-quarters of all countries have smaller populations than the amount of people who tweeted about the colour of the dress.

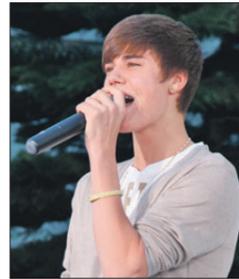
Hitting the headlines on every continent, the story was front page news in China, Russia and America.

Liam, 18, also a guitar student, added: 'It has gone mad. We both know this will all be over in a few hours and it will go back to normal in a few hours.'



Taylor Swift

© Carriemelson | Dreamstime.com



Justin Bieber

© Carriemelson | Dreamstime.com



Stephen Fry

© Carriemelson | Dreamstime.com

TIMESLINE

Kintyre airbase is ready for take-off

MACHRIHANISH airbase has made it to the shortlist of five possible sites for Europe's first ever spaceport.

The UK government has ruled out RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks, leaving the airbase, Glasgow Prestwick and Stornoway in Scotland and Newquay in England and Llanbedr in Wales in the running.

The decision is the outcome of a three-month consultation and paves the way to making commercial space flight operations in the UK a reality.

The next step is for the Department of Transport to develop a detailed specification of requirements, before inviting proposals. This is due to be published later this year.

'Campbeltown on the Kintyre Peninsula is the obvious choice,' said Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid.

Body of learning for eager pupils

PUPILS at St Columba's will be taught a lesson with a difference next week, when Glasgow Science Centre On Tour's team visits the Oban primary school.

The children will learn about human anatomy, discovering how the digestive system works and getting involved in other interactive workshops and demonstrations on March 14.

Michaelina MacLellan, the headteacher, said: 'We are delighted that Glasgow Science Centre On Tour's team is giving us an exciting insight into the human body and all its amazing functions.'

'Special thanks goes to our science teacher Kirsty Blainey for organising this special visit.'

Pitch inspection is 'fair and equal'

A FIFTY per cent discount for under-17s, VAT exemptions for advance block bookings and floodlights and changing rooms included in the cost, are among the changes in a review of pitch charges by Argyll and Bute council.

The council said the review was aimed at ensuring fair and equal access for everyone.

The council's spokesman for Community and Culture, councillor Robin Currie, said: 'It is only right and fair that a policy should be introduced to ensure all parts of Argyll and Bute have the same charge for the hire of synthetic pitches.'

'To give clubs and individuals time to adjust to the new charges, we have arranged a phased approach over four years.'

Arthur bids a long goodbye to colleagues

MARIAN MILLER
 mmiller@obantimes.co.uk

WYVEX Media Ltd., holding company of *The Oban Times*, said farewell on Friday to one of its longest serving members of staff, group operations director, Arthur Gillies.

Arthur, 61, started in newspapers in his home town of Campbeltown as an apprentice compositor at what is now *The Oban Times*' sister paper, the Campbeltown Courier.

National publishers Johnston Press bought over the Campbeltown Courier in 1977 and Arthur's employment continued with Johnston Press until Howard and Joan Bennett bought over *The Oban Times* Group in 1983.

Arthur moved to Oban with his wife, Jean, in 1986 when he became commercial manager of the company. He became group general manager in 1989.

In his 46 years in the newspaper industry, Arthur has overseen huge changes, from the 'hot metal' days when *The Oban Times* was printed in Oban to introducing colour to the pages and being at the forefront of new technology.

He has been instrumental in the development of Wyvex Media as a publishing group, including its special publications, now based in Edinburgh, and diversifying beyond newspapers.

Arthur was heavily involved in the expansion of *The Oban Times*' production, advertising and editorial departments from the small wooden building at Crannog Lane to the refurbished print building next door.

Howard Bennett paid full tribute to Arthur at a presentation in the Oban offices on Friday, saying he had played a major part in the growth of the company since 1983 and thanked him for his contribution.



FOND FAREWELL: Wyvex vice-chairman Joan Bennett and chairman Howard Bennett with Arthur Gillies (centre) on his retirement from the group 16_110arthur01

Theft leaves club high and dry

A THEFT of a boat engine from Benderloch has left a university scuba diving group devastated.

Police have been conducting door-to-door inquiries into the incident that happened between February 23 and February 27.

Victoria Presly, one of the diving instructors for the Aberdeen university group, said: 'Due to a lack of funds, we have been storing our RHIB (rigid-hulled inflatable boat) outside a house in Benderloch as a short-term solution until



SHIPSHAPE: Aberdeen students with their RHIB

we have the money to store it in one of the local marinas or boatyards.

'Last weekend, a few club members went across with the plan of having the engine visually inspected. However, when they met at the house, the outboard was gone. The cables and brake line had been cut and the engine removed.'

'We are all devastated that this has happened, especially given the fact that we wanted to move it over to the Oban area in order to get more use out of it as a club. We

definitely cannot afford to replace it and so if anyone had any information about it, we would be ever so grateful.'

'It's such a shame as it was our most valuable asset and it's been in the club for at least 10 years.'

The engine is a Honda 1997 BF90 with a replacement engine control unit. The serial number is BBBE 1004440.

Information about the theft should be passed to Sergeant Allan Moore at Oban police station, who can be contacted by phoning 101.

Argyll Voluntary Action

Volunteer of the Year 2015

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Celebrating Argyll and Bute's Volunteers

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Nominations are now OPEN - an opportunity to put forward members of your community who should be recognized for all the voluntary work they do and the impact they have on our towns and villages.

Council Chambers Kilmory
Wednesday 3rd June
10.30am - 2.30pm

Tickets from Argyll Voluntary Action on 01586 554744 (michele@argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk)
www.argyllcommunities.org argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk

Nomination forms now available in AVA offices or online!
Deadline: Monday 20th April 2015

Argyll Voluntary Action, 21 High Street, Oban PA34 4DG
 Charity No: SC029947 Company No: SC277345

Plockton

THE SOUTH west Ross district community drama festival was held at Plockton high school on February 20 and 21.

Adjudicator for the event was Paul Fowler and four plays entered.

Winners were Plockton amateur dramatic society with A Respectable Funeral, by Jimmy Chinn.

The producer was Gill James, with Dave Charnley as stage manager.

Runner up was Lochcarron drama east team with its play Have a Nice Day by Lynn Brittny.

The producer was Charlie Harkins and stage manager was Anne Harkins.

Both plays go forward to the Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA) divisional finals in Wick on March 20 and 21.

DURING January nine inches of rain fell in Plockton, with only two dry days.

The warmest temperature was 12.4°C and coldest was -3.5°C.

COMMUNION was held in Kyle Free Church on the weekend of February 21 and 22. Assisting minister was the Rev Paul Gibson from Perth Free Church.

MORE than 40 people attended a quiz and pot luck supper in Plockton hall organised by Plockton horticultural and handicrafts society.

Aberfeldy

PERTSHIRE and Angus provincial Mod is to be held on June 12 and 13 in Breadalbane community campus.

The syllabus for the event is now available online at aberfeldymod.org.uk or from secretary Catherine Stewart, 22 Viewfield Place, Perth, PH1 5AG. Telephone 01738 259006.

THERE were fears a burn in Aberfeldy may have been contaminated after a lorry overturned outside Dewar's distillery on Friday morning.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency was called to the incident because a substance from the lorry was leaking into the burn at around 6.40am. However, it emerged the lorry had been delivering wood pellets to the distillery for its biofuel burner. The driver of the lorry was treated at the scene by paramedics for minor injuries.

Eigg

AN EXHIBITION dedicated to the Isle of Eigg will launch in Edinburgh later this month.

The event, on March 26, will be held at the capital's Scottish Storytelling Centre and is set to feature paintings of landscapes on the island and crafts by Eigg-based artists Libby Galli, Catherine Davies and Jenny Robertson, as well as music and poetry.

If the exhibition, entitled Eigg Island, and the fundraising beforehand is a success, proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to Eigg Heritage Trust.

Callander

TWO POLICE officers were injured last week when their vehicle overturned on the A84 near Callander while responding to a call.

The crash occurred approximately three miles south of the village on February 25 at around 3.20am.

Both men were taken to Forth Valley Royal Hospital for treatment, with the road closed for several hours while investigation work was carried out. Police Scotland said inquiries into the circumstances of the crash were ongoing and neither officer had life-threatening injuries.

Glencruitten

RESULTS of the whist drive held at Glencruitten Golf Club, Oban, on February 17:

Ladies: 1 Helen Pearson, 2 Rebecca McPhee, Booby Amanda MacKenzie. Travelling prize: Rosie MacGillivray. Gents: 1 Carol MacDougal (Acting), 2 George MacKenzie, Booby Lewis McPhee. Travelling prize: Keegan McPhee.

Lewis and Harris

A TWO-day event including a golf competition, dinner and disco will mark the 40th anniversary of the Lewis and Harris Reunion.

The committee is searching for former pupils to attend the event in Stornoway on April 3 and 4, which will raise money for Eilean Siar Foodbank and the RNLI. Further information is available on thebigreunion2015.myevent.com



POINTING THE WAY: Tony Gill by the Ardfern sculpture. 08_3099finger01

Ardfern sculpture needs a spruce up

A GIANT wooden fore-finger pointing to the Ardfern turn-off on the A816 needs to be refurbished.

Craignish community council members recently discussed methods of preserving 'The Way in Elm' created by nationally renowned sculptor Robert Coia. Mr Coia carved it from a piece of reclaimed wood in 2006 as part of an arts festival which is now defunct. Community council member Tony Gill said: 'We needed something unusual to highlight the events. Originally it was for sale and is still listed on Mr Coia's website.'

'Now it is well weathered but needs some sort of preservative to ensure it remains for future generations.'

Ballachulish

BALLACHULISH primary school pupils have found a new way to recycle - without a bin or empty bottle in sight.

The children have set up a swap shop and have been bringing in unwanted toys to trade with each other as part of the school's eco-friendly activities.



BARGAIN TIME: Ballachulish pupils take part in a swap shop at school

Lismore looks to the stars for book

CHILDREN at one of Argyll and Bute's island primary schools have reached for the stars to produce their own celebrity cook book.

The 12 pupils at Lismore primary school were set the challenge of raising funds so that they could attend an outdoor activity week with other schools at the end of May.

The primary five to seven children, all very keen bakers, came up with the idea of a cook book and decided to reach for the stars and write to a number of celebrity chefs, explaining about their project and asking for recipes.

Their ambition paid off and the finished product is now a fantastic collection of offerings from some of the best celebrity and Michelin-starred chefs in Britain.

The Lismore School Cook Book features recipes from Delia Smith, Michel Roux Junior, Martin Wishart, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and many more.

The recipes include Marco Pierre White's Lemon Tart, Mary Berry's Wonderful Apple Cake and Antony Worrall Thompson's Carrot Cake Muffins.

Responding to the children's handwritten letters, the celebrity chefs sent their own personal notes of encouragement as well as sharing their recipes.

Tom Kitchin and Tom Kerridge donated signed copies of their own cook books to help the pupils' fundraising efforts and Antony Worrall Thompson told them he would visit them in person.

Head teacher Catherine Davies said: 'This has been a fantastic learning opportunity for the children to develop many skills for life and work, including graphic design, letter writing and computer research.'

'This is just one of the ways that our 12 pupils engage with the wider world.'

'The children are delighted with the many personal responses from the

famous chefs and are really looking forward to launching their cook book.'

Classroom assistant Hazel McCormick, who led the enterprising project, said it had helped the children realise that they could achieve great things even though they belong to a small island school of just 12 pupils.

Argyll and Bute council's policy lead for education and lifelong learning councillor Aileen Morton was delighted at the amazing response to the children's cook book project.

She said: 'In all of Argyll and Bute's schools we are ambitious for our young people right from the start.'

'They are encouraged to be enterprising, to use their initiative and their imagination and to aim high. It is clear that the pupils at Lismore have really taken that to heart by reaching for the stars to produce their wonderful cook book.'

The cook book will be launched at the school's Fair Trade café tomorrow March 6 between 1pm and 3pm.

MORVERN lines

The worst road in Scotland

THERE'S an old song called 'The Rocky Road to Dublin'.

If Highland council doesn't do something soon there will be another one written about the 'Potholed Road to Lochaline' which, with any luck, will be a chart-buster.

It is unlikely that a road exists in the Highlands these days which does not have potholes and hasn't deteriorated during the past few months, but there can be very few in such a poor state of repair as the A884 from Carnoch Bridge to Lochaline.

Pot holes as deep and as wide as mine-shafts are everywhere with some sections little better than the beds of many adjacent rivers. No-one expects a motorway but Morvern's main highway cannot have been as bad 150 years ago.

The local council road squad does its best but shovelfuls of cold tar thrown down one day seldom lasts more than 24 hours. Whole sections of the carriageway need to be repaired and tarred.

The real problem is that no-one locally now appears to be sufficiently motivated or interested to lobby the Highland council's roads department for a greater share of the road maintenance budget.

Local estates and businesses, which rely on the A884 for filling and servicing their holiday cottages, providing agricultural supplies and importing thousands of tons of material for second homes and multi-million pound hydro electric schemes, could and should be applying pressure, but do nothing.

Delivery van and local bus operators are already counting the heavy maintenance costs and it cannot be long before many of them refuse to come to Lochaline.

Where are our community councillors, Highland councillors, MSPs and MPs, the development company and the Morvern Trust who were all elected to do their best for the community?

Too busy trying to find yet another arts and crafts grant or trying to persuade us who we should be voting for in the next election.

What a pity author Sir Compton Mackenzie, who wrote 'Whisky Galore' and 'Rocket's Galore' isn't still alive as he could have written a brilliant book about Morvern's roads and the village at the end of it.

It reminds me of a ditty someone penned about Lord Leverhulme's herculean efforts to rejuvenate the local economy of Lewis and Harris in the 1920s: 'And all that was left of Lord Leverhulme's plans were some empty houses and some half-built dams and the locals, with no regrets, sat and smoked their cigarettes.'

Perhaps the answer is for the Scottish government to impose a levy on commercial road users.

It is they who are ultimately to blame for the poor state of our highways.

So if you intend visiting Morvern or aim take the ferry to Mull be prepared for burst tyres and wrecked suspensions!

New paper on Mull Gaelic place names

THE HISTORY and translation of local Gaelic place names always arouses great interest.

Mull is fortunate to have a fascinating new paper on the subject written by well known Gaelic singer and composer Alasdair Whyte from Salen.

Alasdair, of Glasgow University, whose grandparents lived at Fiunary, made famous by the great Macleod ministers, has had a first class paper published in 'Clann Tuirc' - the Journal of Scottish Name Studies on the Gaelic place names of Gruline, near Loch Ba, which is well worth consulting by anyone with an interest both in the area and the subject. It is available online at <http://www.clanntuirc.co.uk/JSNS/JSNS8.html>



POPULAR: the MBA Dibidil Bothy on Rum

Mountain bothy anniversary

THE HIGHLY popular Mountain Bothy Association (MBA) exists, in its own words, 'to maintain simple shelters in remote country for the use and benefit of all who love wild and lonely places'.

This year the MBA is 50 years old and to mark the occasion, the association has compiled an anniversary book.

It tells the story of how Bernard Heath formed the association 50 years ago. It recalls how some of the buildings which are today's bothies were found. It includes tales of work parties, some of which have found their way into MBA folklore, and shows that although materials and methods of working may have changed, the enthusiasm of volunteers has not.

Illustrated by photographs, line drawings and cartoons, it is a celebration of 50 years of activity by volunteers who take delight in maintaining these simple shelters.

The book costs £10 per copy including postage and packaging. All profits from its sale will go towards furthering the work of the association. An address is available online.

Many of the MBA's shelters are often old and disused shepherd and stalkers' houses. Rum has two, Jura two and Mull and Morvern have one each at Tomleibhe in Glen Forsa, and Leacraithnaich near Loch Ternait, north east of the head of Loch Aline.

There are two MBA shelters north of Oban. The most notable is in Appin and was the birthplace of James Stewart (James of the Glen) who was hung at Cnap a'Chaolais near Ballachulish in 1752 for the murder of Colin Campbell (the Red Fox), an official of the British government - a murder that he did not commit. This event formed the basis of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel 'Kidnapped'.

Iain Thornber
iain.thornber@btinternet.com

Fort William

ABRIDGED minutes of the Fort William community council meeting on February 17 in the Nevis Centre.

Steve Pimborough from Lochaber Advice and Transport Booking Service gave a talk about the facility, which is a pilot scheme, recently extended until October. He explained the aim was to provide advice and support about making transport arrangements for people facing difficulty in attending appointments, admission or discharge from hospital.

Working with doctors, Raigmore and Belford hospitals, Highland council and other groups, Lochaber Advice and Transport Booking Service collates information to make the best use of existing transport.

Community councillors discussed the parking problem at Grange Road which

they said was not new. They agreed drivers should be made aware that parking on the road could often make it 'single track' and dangerous for pedestrians, particularly children, to cross.

Members had noticed cars parking in bus stops on Lundavra Road and asked if this was an offence. Councillor Brian Murphy said he would check.

Community and Highland councillors are continuing to push for the proposed A830 link road to Caol.

Nevis Bridge was still awaiting repair.

A discussion took place about a proposed small hydro scheme in Glen Nevis but members were unsure if the community council would need to set up a trust to create and run the scheme. This would be discussed as a single item at next month's meeting.

Ullapool/Stornoway

FERRY operator Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) has agreed to do an extra sailing between Stornoway and Ullapool on Fridays and Saturdays in the summer.

The decision was made to run the extra

sailing of the MV Isle of Lewis vessel, with the aim of supporting the isles' tourism industry.

CalMac will now approach Transport Scotland to secure funding for a 10-week period to confirm the sailings.

Coll

TRADITIONAL music lovers will be looking forward to an award-winning harp and flute duo coming to An Cridhe on Coll this weekend.

HOOT - Helen MacLeod on the harp and Emma Wilkins on the flute - are versatile musicians, having individually performed with groups ranging from Scotland's professional orchestras to pop groups Belle and Sebastian and Texas.

As recent recipients of both the

Enterprise Music Scotland Residency Project and the Tunnell Trust for Young Musicians, HOOT have dazzled audiences with their eclectic mix of music and sparkling personalities.

Sponsored by Enterprise Music Scotland, tickets cost £10 for adults and £5 for children.

For tickets and more information, contact 01879 230 000 or email info@ancridhe.com

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HM Government

RED NOSE DAY

20% OF THE REVENUE RAISED FROM THIS FEATURE WILL GO TO COMIC RELIEF

Friday 13th March

2015



STARTED in 1988, Red Nose Day is one of the most famous fundraising efforts in the UK. Part of Comic Relief, the fun event has raised more than £700 million since its inception, and continues to grow each year. This year's Red Nose Day, on March 13, has the theme, 'make your face funny for money', encouraging people to be creative with their faces in the name of charity. As part of the event, The Oban Times asked Dunbeg primary school to draw their own versions of the adverts on our red nose page. And as can be seen, the budding artists' 'red nose replicas' didn't disappoint. Head teacher at Dunbeg primary, Sine MacVicar, said:

'Dunbeg primary school is looking forward to seeing our pupils and their creative, funny-face ideas next week. 'The school is delighted to support Comic Relief through Red Nose Day, which is such a worthwhile cause. 'Well done to our primary four and five pupils for their advert drawings too - they've done a fantastic job.' Red noses are available this year in McCaig's Warehouse in Oban, which has taken over the mantle as official seller while the usual supplier, Oxfam, is closed for maintenance. This year, for the first time, nine nose designs have been created, each placed in a 'mystery bag' packaging, meaning that people will get one of the nose designs at random rather than being able to choose a personal favourite.



The children from Dunbeg Primary School with their drawings. 16_t10dunbeg01

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Beckie Jeffery Primary 5

TIMESLINE

Police arrest man in thefts inquiry

A MAN has been arrested in connection with a number of thefts on the Ben Nevis Industrial Estate. Items were stolen from premises on the estate overnight on Tuesday February 24. A spokesman for Lochaber police said: 'Following extensive enquiries and with valuable assistance from members of the public, a 21-year-old male was arrested and charged with a number of dishonesties. A report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.' Police ask that any future suspicious activity is reported by calling 101, or 999 in an emergency.

Shops' top marks on booze sales

SHOPS in Lochaber received a 100 per cent pass rate when staff were tested on the sale of alcohol. All of the stores checked by local police passed a test purchase, when someone under the age of 18 years is instructed to attempt to buy age-restricted products to assess whether staff are working within the law. Chief inspector Colin Gough presented the results of the tests, run in October last year, to Lochaber area committee last week. He said: 'This is absolutely first class. Both large retailers and smaller shops - all of them passed and that's what were looking to achieve all the time.'

Get involved with flood risk plans

A NEW consultation on flood risks has been launched, and people in the Highlands and Islands have been asked for their views. The assessment, by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and local authorities, is thought to be the most comprehensive ever compiled in Scotland. Any opinions expressed could impact how flood risk management is carried out in the next six years. Councillor Thomas Prag, chairman of Highland council's development and infrastructure committee, encouraged people to get involved. He said: 'Everyone should contribute their thoughts and local knowledge.' The assessment can be viewed at <https://frm-scotland.org.uk/>. Paper copies are also available at the headquarters of Highland, Argyll and Bute and nan Eilean Siar councils.

EPILEPSY SUFFERER LEFT 'UPSET AND EMBARRASSED' AFTER THREE DRIVERS REFUSE TRAVEL REQUEST

Taxis snub Kinlochleven woman with medical dog



UPSET: Libby Turner was refused entry to three taxis in Fort William with an assistance dog



IGNORANCE: Staffordshire bull terrier Missy is a seizure alert dog

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A WOMAN suffering from epilepsy was refused a taxi three times on her way to a doctor's appointment because she had a medical dog with her. Libby Turner, from Kinlochleven, said she was 'upset and embarrassed' on Friday when she travelled by bus from Fort William then tried to finish her trip to the town's medical centre by taxi and was told she couldn't take Missy, a seizure alert dog, by three different drivers. She said: 'I've been in a lot of pain so I had an important appointment to have my medication changed but by the time I tried to explain to the

taxi drivers and eventually got on another bus I had missed my appointment. 'I was so upset and embarrassed by the whole thing that I didn't even get licence or registration numbers to report them.' Missy, a Staffordshire bull terrier, wears a harness stating she is a seizure alert dog but Mrs Turner said all three drivers refused to take her. She added: 'The harness makes it very clear she's a medical dog and both my friend and I tried to explain but they weren't having it. 'They kept saying 'no pet dogs' even though she's not a pet.' Highland council is the licensing authority for taxis in the area and a spokeswoman for the authority said it was illegal to refuse an assistance dog.

She added: 'If anyone has been refused access with an assistance dog to taxi services in the Highland council area they should contact Trading Standards, The Highland Council, 38 Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UF, phone 01463 228700 or email trading_standards@highland.gov.uk.' But Mrs Turner said taxi drivers should be more educated on what types of animals they are allowed to take. She added: 'I think it's just sheer ignorance. Everyone knows about guide dogs for the blind or deaf but I don't think many are aware of seizure alert dogs because they're not as common. 'Something needs to be done because it's so unfair and I'd hate for something like this to happen to anyone else.'



Fairtrade football fun for pupils

FORT William children enjoyed a Fairtrade afternoon of fun as pupils of two schools had a game of football. Youngsters from Lochside and Fort William RC primary schools met up for the game on Friday and played with a Fairtrade football, which means workers were paid a proper wage to make the ball. This is part of a campaign run by both schools to raise awareness about fair wages in poor countries around the world.

FAIR WAGE CAMPAIGN: Captains Travis Steadwood, left and Lewis Bradley, right, show off their Fairtrade football before leading their teams in the game. Lochside RC played in blue whilst Fort RC were in green 20_110fairtrade01

Rotary club boosts fragile community groups

TWO fragile community groups in Fort William have received a cash boost from the Rotary Club of Lochaber. Pensioners' social gathering, the Tuesday Club, based in Claggan, was given £360 which will go towards providing transport to and from the meeting, something most members are dependent on. John Harvey, Rotary branch president, said he was

'delighted' to help. He added: 'Rotary funding comes almost entirely from the Lochaber public and we felt that the Tuesday Club, which is run by Lochaber people for Lochaber people, would be a worthy beneficiary of our grant funding.' Rotary members also announced they will be providing new banners to the West Highland Museum, costing more than £700. Mr Harvey said: 'The museum

is a local treasure trove and a major visitor attraction. 'Many people visiting the museum also make use of the shops, refreshment facilities and businesses in the town's High Street and we are keen to encourage visitors and are particularly glad to see the consequent spin-off to the town's economy. 'We are proud to be able to support this valuable heritage venue in Fort William.'



Lucky escape for driver as snow wreaks havoc

Heavy snowfall on Monday night almost caused a 'car-tastrophe' for this motorist. The unnamed female driver, who slid off the 'S' bend on Polvinister Road and ended up with part of her Volkswagen Passat in the burn which runs adjacent to the road, was unhurt. One neighbour, who asked not to be named, said: 'She was shaken up, but not injured, thankfully. I've skidded down that part of the road myself and when you feel the car lose grip on the road, it's terrifying - there's nothing you can do. Because it's off the main road, the street doesn't get ploughed or gritted much, unfortunately, and it's a steep braise.'

Cash to help young people into work

YOUNG people in the Highlands and Islands are to benefit from more than £400,000 of Scottish government funding. The money has been provided to local authorities to tackle youth unemployment through developing vocational and employment pathways for young people, strengthening links between schools and employers and helping vulnerable groups. Highland Council received £362,484 through the scheme and a further £53,286 was given to Comhairle Eilean Siar as part of a £6.5 million investment across Scotland. Roseanna Cunningham, cabinet secretary for fair work, skills and training, said: 'The latest trends on youth employment have been hugely encouraging but there is no room for complacency. 'The Scottish government is committed to supporting more young women and men into jobs and published a new youth employment strategy in December. 'I am very pleased to be able to confirm funding that will give the local authorities additional resources to tailor activity to local need to give young people in the area the best possible chance of success.'

Public to get say on plans for old school

PLANS for Highland Council to take over the mothballed old school in Fort William will be shared with the public later this month. The local authority will move its town offices, including the service point, to the Achintore Road site with work expected to begin later this year, to be completed by spring 2017. Members of the public are invited to attend an exhibition to give their views on the proposal from 10.30am until 7.30pm on Thursday March 19, at

the West Highland Hotel. Councillor Thomas MacLennan, leader of Lochaber area committee, said: 'The proposal to redevelop the site means we'll be able to make savings by delivering our services more cost-effectively and efficiently and at the same time new life is brought to a building near to the centre of the town, which has lain derelict for more than 25 years. 'The public exhibition is a chance for people to come along and look over the proposals for

the development and give us their views and any feedback to the plans. I hope as many people as possible take up this opportunity.' Responses to the plans can be sent to ward manager Dot Ferguson at Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William, PH33 6EL, or email dot.ferguson@highland.gov.uk. Anyone unable to attend the exhibition can view the proposals at the Highland Council service point, Lochaber House, from March 20.

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The harsh realities of economics can almost be as bitter and chilling as a wintry day in the West Highlands - but not quite. The perennial question of how to keep our roads adequately gritted and traffic moving freely and safely is akin to skating on thin ice - if you excuse the simile.

The qualities and quantities of salt applied to our roads. To stay on the straight and narrow, in a fiscal sense, councils have to make more with less.

'Vigilante' wardens beggar belief

Sir, I read with incredulity the article on the front page of The Oban Times of February 26 regarding the self-appointed OAP 'vigilante' traffic wardens.

My first thought was this must be a 'wind-up', a tongue in cheek article or even an early April Fools day episode.

The content of the article beggars belief.

As a senior citizen myself, I have far more interesting and productive activities to pursue than to walk around Oban streets looking at cars.

The traffic wardens, who are paid to do the job have, as we all know, been high profile and seem to obtain results whether members of the general public like it or not, with or without help of 'vigilantes'.

May I remind the folk concerned, let he who is without guilt cast the first stone.

Michael Hopkin, Oban.

No wonder small shops are closing

Sir, With reference to your front page article in last week's Oban Times, it is no wonder small, independent shops on the high street are dying out in favour of supermarkets and internet shopping.

People who support small shops and businesses often have to pay more for the equivalent goods and services found in discount stores and online but he/she also has to pay to

park the car they need to get to shops in the town centre.

To then be hounded by over zealous traffic wardens, as is presently the case in Oban, and now elderly 'vigilantes' shows Argyll and Bute council doesn't want a prosperous town centre, just a ghost town.

What about some sensible central car parking?

Ian Archibald, Glebe House, Oban.

Act now to save vital road network

Sir, I would be very grateful if you could print the following letter regarding the state of our trunk roads.

I am disappointed, yet didn't surprise me, to read in last week's paper of yet another defective road surface, this time at Ballachulish roundabout.

I drive the A82 regularly and feel it is time someone from BEAR or Transport Scotland is held to account regarding the state of our roads.

I can list several examples of sections of road resurfaced within the last two years that have either defective surfaces or defects appearing on them. These include: A82/A86 Spean bridge junction - resurfaced in autumn 2014. This has to be relaid in March 2015; A82 Corryhurachan, resurfaced autumn 2014. It now has several areas where the edge of the road is cracking and potholing. A828 Duror cemetery - resurfaced summer 2014. Now has edge of the road cracking and potholes appearing. A82 Ballachulish roundabout - resurfaced 2013 - surface deteriorating/unsafe.

On top of this list there are sections of the A82 at Onich opposite the

Creag Mhor Hotel, on Ballachulish roundabout and 200m south of Ballachulish roundabout that, as a result of blocked drains, flood and cause a hazard to road users.

I have reported these on several occasions and BEAR apparently fix the problem by erecting 'flood warning' signs. What sort of solution is that? Why does no one dig up the defective drain and repair it?

I can also quote several examples of defective drains in Corpach opposite the Co-op and through Fort William on the railway bridge opposite the Ben Nevis Hotel where the previous operating company, Scotland Transerv, thought fit that rather than repair the drains it would remove them and fill them in allowing water to run towards Inverloch, causing further flooding.

I could go on but it just annoys and frustrates me watching the deterioration of our vital road network. No-one is answering questions. They are just burying their heads in the sand thinking the problems will just go away.

Rory Maclean.

Tug needed for the Minch

Sir, It was dramatic to write the Lysblink Seaways was 'stranded on rocks at Ardnamurchan Point'.

As anyone who went down to Kilchoan Ferry jetty knows, she was resting on the rocks just beyond the big pier.

Another half mile and she would have reached the Ferry Stores.

This proves there needs to be a tug in the Minch.

Georgina Smith, Sanna, Kilchoan.

Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON
robertson@obantimes.co.uk

Kirsteen conducts for 25 years

NOT ONLY did last Friday, February 27, see the 71st annual concert of Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir, it also marked Kirsteen Grant's 25th year as conductor.

This wonderful achievement was marked with an evening of fantastic music in Bearsden hall.

Catriona MacNeil gave a few sets on the pipes. Clare Anne MacNeil sang and played the clàrsach and Mairead MacNeil highland danced.

Iain MacLean and Robert Macnair were the solo singers, while Elizabeth and Alison Campbell sang a duet beautifully.

The junior choir, conducted by John Joe MacNeil, put a smile on everyone's face. Alasdair Gillies was fear an taighe and he took the audience through the varied programme in style - even making time for a wee song himself.

Just as it looked as if the night could not get any better, I won a prize in the raffle! Kirsteen received a warm reception from the audience and said the choir feels like a family, such is the close connection between its members. That really comes across in the excellent sound they produce. Here's to the next 25 years.

#thedress

SOCIAL media was at its bonkers best last week when Alana MacInnes, a South Uist girl living in Glasgow, and Caitlin McNeill, from Colonsay, grabbed the attention of many millions of people across the world with a simple picture of a dress.

The dress, photographed at a wedding the girls were playing at in Colonsay with their band Canach, appeared blue and black to some and white and gold to others.

This strange phenomenon attracted tweets and facebook posts from celebrity superstars such as Taylor Swift and Kim Kardashian, world leaders including the prime

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

'S IOMADH CÀINEADH a gheibh an fheadhainn a tha an urra ri ceadan-dealbhaichid feadh na dùthcha, agus aig amannan saoilidh mi gum bheil iad làn-airidh air sin!

'S tric a chithear cead ga thoirt dha togalach gum chumadh co-fhaireachail an dàrna cuid dhan àrainneachd a tha mu thimcheall, na dha na togalaichean eile mun cuairt.

Chan eil mi fhin idir a' tuigsinn ciamar a tha cead ga thoirt airson ceudan de thaighean a bhith gan togail ann an sgeamaichean mòra feadh na dùthcha gum luchd-dealbhaichid ga chur mar fhaicheadh air an luchd-togail goireasan mar bhùthan, agus fiù 's sgoiltean is eile a bhith mar phàirt den sgeama.

Nach eil e riatanach gu leòr gum bitheadh a' sùileachadh gum biodh ceadan-dealbhaichid air an bonntachadh air dealbhan iomlan air a' choimhearsnachd sam bheil an obair-leasachaidh a' tachairt.

Cha mhòr nach cluinn mi buill agus oifigich Chomhairle feadh na dùthcha a' glaothaich gum mo cheartachadh, agus mo chronachadh, is iad uile ag ràdh rium gum bheil làn phlanaichean gan deasachadh anns gach sgìre. Theagamh gum bheil, ach 's e is coireach gum bheil mise a' togail cheistean gum bheil dearbhadh againn thall 's a-bhos gum bheil amasan agus riaghailtean nam planaichean sin gam fiaradh agus gam bristeadh tuilleadh is tric.

'S dòcha gun can oifigearan gur iad na buill thaghta is coireach is iad a' cleachdadh an cuid cumhachd deamocratach airson bhòdadh an aghaidh stiùireadh nan oifigich. Gun teagamh bidh cùisean an rathad eile aig amannan cuideachd, far am bi oifigear a' moladh rud nach eil anns a' phlana leasachaidh.

'S e fear de na dùbhlain dealbhaichid a tha bailtean-mòra feadh na dùthcha a' fulang an ire gum bheil bhùithean a' gluasad gu pàircan-malairt air iomall nam bailtean. Mar a thugear tha seo a' fàgail bheàrran air sràidean

The GG Concert

GLASGOW Gaelic Musical Association is holding its annual concert on Friday March 13 at 7.30pm in Partick Burgh Hall.

The programme is full of Gaelic choral favourites along with solos from Joy Dunlop, Jayne Morrison, DI Brown and Gordon Mackeeve.

Glasgow Gaelic School folk group will also be performing.

What's on

Friday March 6: Glasgow Islay Association annual gathering concert, Association Union, 7.30pm.

Friday March 6: Latha na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Language Day) at the University of Glasgow, followed by a taigh-chèilidh in the Partickhill Bowling Green Pavilion.

Saturday March 7: Glasgow Uist and Barra Association annual invitational piping competition, Piping College.

Saturday March 7: Clydebank and District Highland Association ceilidh dance, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick.

Thursday March 12: Comunn an Taobh-an-Iar closing ceilidh, Ellangowan social club, Milngavie.

Friday March 13: GG annual concert, Partick Burgh Hall, 7.30pm. Clydebank and District Highland Association ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick.

Friday March 20: Glasgow Skye Association children's concert, Airlie Theatre, Hyndland Secondary School.

Saturday March 21: Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association ceilidh, Partick Bowling Club.

Pub scene

Pub Bar: Thursday March 5: Open Session. Friday March 6: Gunna Sound.

Saturday March 7: Robert Robertson. Sunday March 8: Robert Robertson.

Friday March 6: The Keelies. Saturday March 7: The Ragaels. Sunday March 8: Open Mic.

Robert Robertson
robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk

Ailean Caimbeul

Social media

Our stories about OAP 'vigilantes' taking to the streets to patrol car parking and suggestions that Stafford Street in Oban should be renamed once work to pedestrianise it is complete prompted a lot of response on Facebook:

Gerry Kilmurray: 'We should not have to pay for on-street parking as we pay road tax to go on the street. The parking vigilantes should take up ballroom dancing if they want something to fill their time and let the people in Oban get on with their work.'

April Hendry: 'Who on earth do they think they are? It's none of their business. The traffic wardens are paid to do a job, let them get on with it. Have they nothing better to do with their time?'

Donald Strang: 'Old people with too much time on their hands. Get a grip. Chill out and watch some Murder She Wrote and M*A*S*H.'

Lynne Cornelius: 'Report the dog owners that don't pick their dog [feces] up or even better if they have that much time on their hands why don't the vigilantes pick up the [muck]!'

Tom Hayward: 'As parking was decriminalised last year, why are they bothering the police? The real answer is to make sure there is ample parking. Oh, wait, that would mean less revenue from fines.'

Danni Hay: 'If they keep phoning the

police they will end up in trouble. As someone said if they want to be community-minded they would be better helping with beach cleans, litter picking and dog muck monitoring rather than chasing someone running into the chemist to collect their prescription. Anyone parked for more than a little bit will get caught anyway. Being a vigilante is not a good idea.'

Stafford Street John Gordon Booth: 'Never mind a name, just get the job finished; it's costing a lot of money for all it is... another white elephant.'

'Maybe they should put loads of seats there for the pensioners so they don't have to walk the streets checking people's car tax and reporting them.'

Nikki Warham: 'George Square seems appropriate if that's what it was before.'

Callum Cruickshank: 'A man that had a great impact on Oban was Donald Harper - now there's a name for it.'

Alasdair MacLeod: 'Should be called Chewing Gum Square to pay homage to the rest of Oban's pavements.'

April Hendry: Why change its name just because it's getting work done to it?

Kim Entwistle: 'Why don't you ask the tourists; that's all it's being done for anyway. It's a pain. It is used to be a great place to turn if you needed to go back into town without going all the way up the Esplanade.'

Grazia Grados-Eade: 'The Unfinished Square, or Seagull Rest, or Chill Out And Be Thankful.'

David Crawford: 'Stafford Square.' John Gordon Booth: 'The salt boat was off loading at the North Pier and normally would come off the pier and up Stafford Street then head to the council yard, instead the lorries had to go up to the Corran Halls then down George Street to the council yard.'

'Why can't the council just leave the town alone and, as for pontoons in the bay, roll on the next storm to see how they survive.'

Varinia Thompson: 'Keep it as it is. The poor retailers would have to fork out a small fortune to update their web page, letter heads and business cards unless the council was willing to pay for this. Doubt it though.'

Press policy

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

We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

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

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

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

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

Your letters

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

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

postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a

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

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Crossword grid with numbers 1-24.

- Across: 7 Escort (6), 8 Small digger (6), 9 Avoid (4), 10 Uncompromising method (8), 11 Friendly drink? (7), 13 Aquatic mammal (5), 15 Lawful (5), 17 Used in ammunition (7), 20 Not played at home (4,4), 21 Blow off steam (4), 23 Brightly coloured bird (6), 24 Choose not to participate (3,3)
- Down: 1 Far above ground (4), 2 With bony outgrowths (6), 3 Enterprising (2-5), 4 Gawk (5), 5 Cold dessert (6), 6 Overdetermined (4-4), 12 Made with ornamental patterns (8), 14 Fed up (7), 16 Be that as it may (6), 18 Give time to (6), 19 Be silent, in music (5), 22 It may be proper (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

Grid for last week's crossword solution with words like POLAND, AFFLUENT, FORK, PUSH, PULL, etc.

Cash floods in after team forced to ditch equipment

Thousands praise work of volunteers and donate £2,000 in a week

EMMA CRICHTON
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DONATIONS for Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team (LMRT) have been flooding in since equipment was lost during a difficult night on Ben Nevis.

Rescuers blasted 'inexperienced' and ill-equipped hillwalkers for putting lives in danger when they were stranded on Coire Eoghainn last Wednesday.

The four men were described as 'lucky to be alive' after they ignored instructions from the 26 members of LMRT, who spent 12 hours trying to get them to safety.

One of the walkers had already fallen when the volunteer rescuers reached them and another two also plunged down a ridge after ignoring instructions not to move, resulting in the team abandoning equipment worth thousands of pounds in an attempt to save their lives.

An LMRT spokesman took to Facebook to emphasise the dangers of Ben Nevis and the work carried out by the team, leading to thousands of pounds being donated to thank the volunteers.

He said: 'Everyone in the team is a volunteer, putting their lives on the line for frankly some very inexperienced hill walkers who were not equipped for a winter mountaineering expedition.'

'We do not normally criticise casualties as 99.9 per cent of the rescues we do are for well-equipped, experienced walkers and climbers who have had an unfortunate incident outside their control. We are all mountaineers ourselves and what we do is for our own community, who benefit hugely from the money generated by

“ A line was probably crossed which made the risks a little less palatable ”

LMRT spokesman

outdoor sports in Lochaber. However, a line was probably crossed which made the risks a little less palatable.'

This led thousands of people to praise the work of the team, while others decided to give money to replace the rope and other equipment which was either broken or abandoned in the rescue.

Since the incident last week, more than £2,000 has been donated to LMRT.

Michael Smith, treasurer of LMRT, said: 'A lot of people don't seem to realise what we put in every time we go out on a rescue, so when they saw that it pushed them to donate.'

'Every year it's a struggle to fund what we do and we rely almost completely on donations.'

'Our biggest donations come from families of people who have died on the mountains. We get small donations here and there from people we've saved who have survived but most of our money comes from the families of people we haven't even been able to save. I think that's quite incredible.'



PLAYING THE GAME: students of Lochaber Schools' Pipe Band prepare for 'eyes down' at the fundraising bingo night 20_f10bingo01

Eyes down for bingo winner

A FUNDRAISING bingo night held at the weekend raised more than £2,000 for Lochaber Schools' Pipe Band.

Around 200 people attended the event in Caol community centre and prizes were donated by more than 90 local businesses.

The fundraiser raised £2,471 towards the cost of tuition, instruments and uniforms for young musicians.

Margaret McMaster, band secretary, said: 'The generosity and support of the local businesses and individuals has been amazing. A special thanks to Sandra Fraser and her fundraising team for organising the event.'

Belford wards re-open after virus outbreak

WARDS at Belford Hospital, in Fort William, have re-opened after an outbreak of norovirus forced them to close for almost two weeks.

Both the combined assessment unit and ward one were closed to new admissions and visiting was restricted as patients suffered from sickness and diarrhoea but they re-opened on Friday (February 27).

But staff have restricted visitors to the hospital in an attempt to prevent the virus from returning.

Marie Law, rural general hospital manager for NHS Highland, said: 'Both wards have been able to re-open and normal service has resumed at the hospital. I would like to thank all the staff for working incredibly hard through this difficult period and also thank members of the public

for their understanding about our restriction on visiting.'

Dr Brian Tregaskis, consultant physician and clinical director at Belford Hospital, added: 'We know the virus is prevalent in the community and what can sometimes happen is that people will get admitted to hospital who have the virus or someone will come in to visit a loved one and unwittingly pass the virus on.'

'Hospital staff will, of course, be happy to talk to visitors on the phone so they can get updates on their relatives. However if you feel visiting is essential please contact the ward first by phone before coming to the hospital.'

Whilst the wards were closed, new admissions were assessed at the Belford before being transferred to either Oban or Inverness.

Crumbling junction to be resurfaced weeks after repairs

A CRUMBLING road in Lochaber is to be resurfaced again on Sunday night - just weeks after work on the same stretch.

BEAR Scotland announced this week the A86/A82 junction at Spean Bridge will be repaired again after potholes appeared almost immediately after the road was

resurfaced late last year. The junction will be closed from 7pm on Sunday March 8 until 6am the following morning whilst work is carried out, with access allowed at hourly intervals.

A BEAR spokesman said: 'Access through the closure for any emergency service vehi-

cles will be provided immediately and access for public transport services can also be provided, however, this should be arranged prior to the works commencing.'

Residents of the length of the proposed closure are asked to contact Neil Bruce Low on 07884586367 to discuss access issues.

TIMESLINE

Cash stolen from charity boxes

MONEY has been stolen from charity boxes outside a Fort William restaurant.

Between February 24 and 25 the contents of two cairns at the Ben Nevis Inn, Achintee, were taken. The boxes are collections for the Friends of Nevis charity, which works to preserve and support Ben Nevis and the surrounding area.

Police are appealing for information from the public about this incident, as well as another two thefts in Lochaber.

Overnight on Monday February 23 at Onich service station, an attempt was made to get the cash from inside the jet wash. No money was taken but damage was caused to the jet washer.

Between February 23 and 26, outside Net Store at Mallaig Harbour, two bronze four-blade boat propellers, approximately 55 inches in diameter, were stolen.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to contact Lochaber police by calling 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Former nursery manager jailed

THE FORMER manager of a Lochaber nursery has been jailed for eight years.

Mark MacLennan was sentenced at the High Court in Edinburgh on Friday after being found guilty of raping a three-year-old boy between August 2012 and May 2013.

The 30-year-old also sexually abused a girl on a number of occasions in Stirling, Dunblane and Dunfermline from October 2007 to July 2010 when she was aged between 12 and 15. MacLennan was found guilty in January but sentence was deferred until Friday (February 27) for background reports.

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MV Fingal makes one-of-a-kind Argyll splash

LOUISE LEE
llee@obantimes.co.uk

A ONE-OF-KIND boat launched at the Marine Resource Centre (MRC), Barcaldine is the first to be 'made from scratch' in Argyll for as long as anyone in the boating industry can remember.

The MV Fingal was envisioned, drawn, fabricated, welded, fitted and launched in Argyll. Iona-based Gordon 'Pal' Grant commissioned the vessel from Alutec Marine Limited, Barcaldine as part of his fleet for Staffa Tours running daily from Oban, Mull and Iona to locations on the west coast such as Fingal's Cave and the more remote Treshnish Isles.

Edwin Payne, director of Alutec, told a large crowd who gathered last Saturday afternoon to witness the launch of the passenger boat into Loch Creran, it was 'a very special day for boat building'.

'The project would not have been completed without Murray Cormack Associates naval architects. This is an important day because this is a one-of-a-kind boat. This boat was fully made in Argyll - from the design to the fabrication everything was manufactured at Alutec in Barcaldine and proves we are as good as anywhere to have a boat built.'

'Let's hope its the first of many for Oban.'



PROUD MOMENT: Alutec owner Edwin Payne gives a speech to a large crowd before the passenger boat was launched 16_t10fingal02 and 16_t10fingal08



THE DREAM TEAM: The professionals who worked on the MV Fingal were delighted to be present at its launch in Barcaldine 16_t10fingal07



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WITH MOTHERING Sunday fast approaching on March 15 it is time to make mothers feel special.

Around the world traditions celebrate women and recognise the often-unsung work of mothers.

In Scotland, the Christian festival is celebrated by Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians and it falls on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

During the sixteenth century, people returned to their mother church, the main church or cathedral of the area, for a service to be held on Laetare Sunday.

This was either a large local church, or more often, the nearest cathedral. Anyone who did this was commonly said to have gone a-mothering, although whether this term preceded the observance of Mothering Sunday is unclear.

In later times, Mothering Sunday became a day when domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother church, usually with their own mothers and other family members.

It was often the only time that whole families could gather together, since on other days they were prevented by conflicting working hours, and servants were not given free days on other occasions.

Children and young people who were in service as household servants were given a day off on that date so they could visit their families.

The children would pick wild flowers along the way to place in the church or give to their mothers.

Eventually, the religious tradition evolved into the Mothering Sunday secular tradition of giving gifts to mothers.

By 1920 the celebration of mothers on the fourth Sunday of Lent had fallen away.

At that time a tradition of mother's day was a festival not celebrated in America.

In 1914 in America a woman called Anna Jarvis held a celebration in memory of her own mother in Grafton, West Virginia.

Anna's mother, Ann Jarvis, was a peace activist who had cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the Civil War and created Mother's Day work clubs to address public health issues.

Anna's mother had passed away three years and it was in her memory that she wanted to honour her own mother by continuing the charity work she'd started - and to set aside a day to celebrate all mothers. Americans officially

recognised the second Mother's Day in May as Mother's Day by proclamation of president Woodrow Wilson in 1914.

In the UK in 1920, inspired by Anna Jarvis's efforts in the United States, Constance Penwick-Smith created the Mothering Sunday Movement and in 1921 she wrote a book asking

for the revival of the festival.

Constance was the daughter of the vicar of Coddington, Nottinghamshire, and there is a memorial in Coddington's church.

Its wide scale revival was through the influence of American and Canadian soldiers serving abroad during World War II; the traditions of

Mothering Sunday, still practised by the Church of England and Church of Ireland were merged with the newly imported traditions and celebrated in the wider catholic and secular society.

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Lochaber high school sixth years stopped for a quick photo before boarding the London Eye

Pupils eye up London on trip

MORE than 100 Lochaber high pupils travelled to London for the annual school trip. This was the biggest group in the school's nine years of visiting the capital

and the teenagers enjoyed a long weekend of sightseeing, museum visits, activities and shows. From February 19 to 22, the 109 sixth years experienced the Natural History Museum, the Emirates stadium,

a tour of BBC broadcasting house, the Tower of London and Madame Tussaud's among others. Clear weather on the final day allowed the whole group to see the city from the

London Eye before boarding the buses for the trip home. Lochaber high school head teacher Jim Sutherland said next year's trip was already booked and current fifth years could sign up now.

Veterans invited to afternoon tea

ARMY veterans are invited to join members of Fort William's Royal British Legion branch at an afternoon tea in the town. Anyone who would like to learn more about the work of the group can attend the event in the Alexandra Hotel on Saturday, but members have highlighted a specific opportunity for veterans to speak to the welfare team about any issues they have. Kevin Lane of the Fort William legion branch, said: 'This is an ideal opportunity for all members and fellow veterans to meet and have an informal chat in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, so please come along. The partners of both groups are equally welcome to attend. If anyone has a particular issue they would like to discuss, this can be done privately and in confidence.' The event will run this Saturday, March 7, from 12pm until 4pm.

Gaelic charity to tour battlefields

A SKYE-BASED Gaelic charity has arranged a tour of battlefields and memorials to commemorate Highland troops. The group will visit France and Belgium in June this year, visiting cemeteries and memorials including Festubert, the Somme, Arras and Ypres, where Highland regiments suffered their most grievous losses. A trip to north-France commune, St Valery-en-Caux, is also scheduled. This is where in 1940 the 51st Highland division was captured, resulting in many spending five years as prisoners of war in Germany and Poland. A key part of the trip will be a memorial event to mark the centenary of World War One's battle of Festubert, during which many young Highlanders perished. To book a place or find out more contact Murdo Beaton, Urras an Eilean administrator, 01470 572300 or mnb@theisleofskye.com.

MP secures talks on plans to extend torpedo range

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A CONSULTATION will be held about plans to expand a ministry of defence (MOD) torpedo test range after Highland politicians raised concerns about jobs in Skye and Lochalsh. Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, was due to meet with deputy defence minister Phillip Dune yesterday (Wednesday), who last week announced a £22 million investment in the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (Butec) to expand the range on the Inner Sound between Applecross and the Isle

of Rona, north of Raasay. If the test range is expanded, this will mean the area of sea currently excluded to local fishermen could be doubled. Speaking ahead of the meeting Mr Kennedy said he had not received a letter informing him of the £22 million investment, despite a spokesman from the MOD saying otherwise. He added: 'Extensive checks in my own office have confirmed that neither myself nor any staff member have had either receipt or sight of such a letter. Following telephone conversations with the chief of staff to the defence secretary last week and this morning I am now in

receipt of a copy of the letter. Accordingly, I have now secured an early meeting in London with the defence minister after an emergency meeting of local fishermen on Tuesday night. I am copying all of these fresh details to them in advance.' A spokeswoman for the MOD confirmed a consultation had been scheduled for the summer but declined to comment further. But jobs at Butec, operated by private firm QinetiQ on behalf of the UK government, could also be at risk as plans to close the facility on Rona could lead to the loss of 13 positions. This has led Ian Blackford, SNP UK parliamentary candidate

for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, to raise concerns about QinetiQ staff, as the company terminated trade union recognition in 2012. Mr Blackford said: 'I along with many others have deep concern as to the secrecy and lack of transparency on the proposals to see a doubling of the torpedo range off the Applecross coastline and threat to fishing grounds. A particular concern is that QinetiQ terminated trade union recognition with the workforce and that means, at such a vital time as now, we miss the effective scrutiny on the proposals that the trade unions would have. This is of particular concern given the potential

job losses associated with the intended closure of the Rona facility. I have written to QinetiQ asking that it immediately grant trade union recognition to the workers in Lochalsh and Wester Ross.' A QinetiQ spokesman said: 'For the last three years the employee engagement group, our elected staff consultative body, has proven to be a success, representing all of our employees on key issues affecting QinetiQ's present and future. Employees are free to join a trade union and representation by the union official for an employee continues on an individual basis where appropriate.'

NHS dental care will be available in Highlands

DENTAL services in the Highlands will be available on the NHS to 'everybody who wants it' a Scottish government spokeswoman has confirmed. This comes after Rhoda Grant, MSP for the Highlands and Islands said patients were being forced to transfer to private dentists. Ms Grant said NHS Highland had begun a 'cost-cutting' measure but there were too few private dentists in remote areas for the plan to be practical. She added: 'The Scottish government claims there is too high a proportion of patients in the NHS Highland registered with dentists employed by the NHS. The Scottish government is clearly not happy with paying for proper dental care in rural and remote Scotland, so it is demanding that NHS Highland force patients to transfer to private dental practices. I have written to the Scottish government asking that it abandons this initiative. It is entirely led by a wish to cut costs by promoting private dental health care. All this is to be achieved at the cost of a further reduction in the quality of healthcare in rural and remote Scotland.'

Top marks for Inverloch primary sevens

A HIGHLAND politician praised both the pupils and staff at a Fort William school, after he visited the primary seven class. Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, attended Inverloch primary school on Friday and spoke to children about his work both in the constituency and at Holyrood. The inquisitive pupils asked questions about tuition fees, road repairs and care homes, as part of their class topic on the Scottish government before taking their MSP to try out the school canteen. Mr Thompson said: 'I was delighted to visit Inverloch primary school where I received a warm welcome from pupils and staff. The pupils put me through my paces on a range of issues and I was also treated to a wonderful shepherd's pie and coconut sponge with custard from the canteen. I would like to hail the pupils for the great amount of enthusiasm they displayed for learning and the teachers too, especially class teacher Linda Lees and head teacher Ainslie Burns, who are clearly energetic about advancing the educational experience for all at Inverloch.'



POLITICS: Inverloch primary sevens show Dave Thompson MSP the work they have been doing on the Scottish government. From left: Kian Cameron, Kieran Archibald, Dave Thompson, Klaudia Solinska and Alice Campbell 20_f10inverloch01

Hedgehogs to be cleared off Uists in bid to protect key wader birds

THOUSANDS of hedgehogs are to be removed from Hebridean islands in a new bid to protect wader birds. The group has removed 2,000 in the last two years but has found they are breeding faster than they can be relocated so a new intensive programme has been proposed to completely remove hedgehogs from the Uists. Ian Ross, chairman of SNH, said: 'The hedgehogs are a non-native, invasive species introduced by man in the 1970s and are now having an extremely damaging impact on nest sites, preying on eggs and chicks. Species such as internationally important lapwing, dunlin, ringed plover, redshank and snipe are among those most affected. Action is proposed to counter the worrying

decline in key wader species in the Uists. We and our partners are committed to removal of the hedgehogs which are trapped safely and humanely and removed from the Uists to the mainland.' Libby Anderson, policy director for UHR, said: 'This is a prime example of why species should not be moved into a habitat where they don't belong. Someone brought in four; they had no other animals preying on them, so four became thousands and now they're the ones suffering. We're happy the hedgehogs are being removed because it's in their best interests, as long as it's humane and they're not killed.'

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ENCOURAGEMENT: early years Gaelic officer Erin McHale, back right, and Margaret Mulholland, Highland council's Gaelic development officer, back left, with children and parents at the Gaelic fun morning in Fort William

Looking to the future at Fort William Gaelic fun day

A GAELIC fun day was held in Fort William at the weekend, to encourage young people to learn the language. Parents received information about Gaelic medium education at the event in St Andrews church hall, in the run up to the new Gaelic-only school opening in Caol this year. Children enjoyed music, games and books, all in the traditional language, and similar events are planned for the coming months.

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Spotlight falls on Oban



Reno's Angels, (from left) Morven Wright, Sue Baker, Ellie Cooper (Reno), Kathleen Bate and Fran Melville fight the devil; Roderick MacEachan as Elisha Whitney; Michael Wall (Lord Evelyn) feels seasick as Aimie MacDonald (Hope) looks on;



The passengers and crew of SS American say 'Bon Voyage'



Reno and her angels singing 'Blow'



Michael Wall (Lord Evelyn) and Aimie MacDonald (Hope), the 'happy' couple



Ian Henry (purser) and Stephen Glen Lee (captain) check the passenger list



Billy Crocker strikes again



Reno's Angels: C'mon give us a hallelujah



All aboard the SS American

talent as Anything Goes



Ellie Cooper (Reno) and Stephen Day (Moonface Martin) sing about their friendship.



Photos by Debbie Day and Kyle Murchison

Gabriel Blow'



THE SS American set sail in Oban's Corran Halls last week with a passenger list including a doctor, an odd-job man, tradesman, IT specialist, and shop assistant – but not in their normal guises.

Instead they were transformed into a gangster's moll, a Wall Street tycoon and his assistant, a gangster and a debutante in what has to be one of the best productions that Spotlight Musical Theatre Group has ever staged.

'Anything Goes' is a Cole Porter classic and, with well-known songs such as the title song, I Get a Kick Out of You and De-Lovely, it was always going to be one that could come in for heavy criticism if it was not done well.

That criticism could not be levelled at Spotlight as its fantastic cast and crew had obviously put in a huge amount of work to get this fast-paced musical comedy, set on the SS American sailing from New York to England, as near to perfection as is possible.

'Anything Goes' is one of a long line of Spotlight productions directed by Oban librarian Kevin Baker but on his own admission, probably the best yet.

'I thought it was six months well spent,' said Kevin. 'I thought it was the most professional thing we have done so far, with the sets, costumes and lighting adding to it and the principals all excellent themselves.'

He had special praise for producer/choreographer Louisa Hyde, who has helped Spotlight bring an extra dimension to its productions.

Heading the cast was the talented Ellie Cooper of Connel, who was perfectly cast in the part of Reno, the nightclub singer whose best friend Billy (David Johnston) has fallen in love with debutante Hope (Aimie MacDonald), who is due to marry Lord Evelyn Oakleigh (Michael Wall), a wealthy Englishman, to help keep herself

and her widowed mother Mrs Evengeline Harcourt (Ann Buchanan) in the manner to which they have become accustomed. Roddy MacEachen also carried off the part of Elisha Whitney, a Wall Street tycoon who is rather too fond of a tippie or two, with great gusto.

Throw in a hapless gangster, some disguises, cases of mistaken identity, great comedy timing, some fantastic dance routines, including the whole cast on stage tap-dancing and a magnificent tango scene with Reno and Lord Evelyn, and the production was complete.

All the main characters carried their roles from speaking into singing.

Other highlights were Aimie MacDonald, who has no formal training but her voice is a joy to listen to; Kathleen McGregor, whose comic timing and portrayal of gangster's moll Erma had the audience in stitches as did Stephen Day, as public enemy number 13 Moonface Martin, with a gangster's drawl which carried through to his rendition of *Be Like a Bluebird*.

Louisa told The Oban Times she was delighted with the way the production had gone and with the audiences who attended each night – particularly Friday night – and the actors, none of whom have any tap-dancing experience.

'They were amazing,' said Louisa, 'They all worked so hard. The production team did a sterling job. Ellie Cooper was marvellous, as leading lady and as publicity officer; she just put so much into the show.'

Ellie added: 'From a personal point of view, playing Reno has been a great part with plenty of laughs.'

'It was a good community effort all round. I can't wait for the next one.'

It was certainly a production – running for four nights, selling out on Friday and Saturday night – which the Spotlight 'family' should rightly be proud of and one which people will be talking about for some time to come.



Ellie Cooper (Reno) sings 'Anything Goes'



Kathleen MacGregor (Erma) asks: 'Got any fours?'



Ann Buchanan (Mrs Harcourt), David Johnston (Billy) and Stephen Day (Moonface Martin)



David Johnston (Billy) and Ellie Cooper (Reno) sing 'You're the Top'

Oban part of Scotland's WWI story

AN ACCLAIMED World War One theatre production portraying the grief and guilt of a headmaster who encouraged pupils to fight in the conflict will come to Oban for the first time in March.

Sequamur - created by Isle of Lewis writer Donald S Murray - tells the poignant story of William J Gibson, the headmaster of the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway between 1894 and 1925.

An enlightened and charismatic teacher, Gibson believed in the power of progress

through education. He genuinely believed that service in WWI would bring a new enlightened age to Britain - but endured personal turmoil following the death of 148 of his own pupils.

The 60-minute play is performed in Gaelic but is designed to be fully assessable to all, with live simultaneous translation via headphones for people who do not speak Gaelic.

The play comes to Oban's Corran Halls on Wednesday March 11.

Peat explored by history society

MEMBERS of Lochaber Natural History Society enjoyed a talk about the degradation of Scotland's peat resource.

At the group's February meeting in the Alexandra Hotel, Christina Wood from Scottish Natural Heritage talked about a programme she is involved in which aims to

improve the situation.

This month's meeting on March 23 will see David O'Brien of the Highland Biological Recording Group give a presentation on reptiles and amphibians in the region.

For more information contact Ian Strachan on 01397 712566 or Jon Mercer in 01397 712700.

Free screening of Care: My Story

WHO Cares? Scotland will be hosting a free screening of Care: My Story at Oban Phoenix Cinema at 12.30pm on Monday, March 9.

The film charts the lives of two young people brought up in care in Scotland, following Thomas Timlin and Ashley Cameron as they both start a new chapter in their lives.

This event marks the launch of a nationwide roadshow across Scotland ahead of the

Children and Young People's Act (2015) becoming law on April 1.

It will run for approximately 1.5 hours and include, along with the film itself, a question and answer session with Ashley and Thomas, an insight into local advocacy issues from Argyll and Bute young person's worker Rosemary Drylie and input from a young person with experience of living in care in the Oban area.

Gaelic writers invited to enter submissions for competition

THE GAELIC Book Council is inviting submissions from Gaelic writers for the Donald Meek Award 2015.

The award was established in 2010 with financial assistance from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Creative Scotland and aims to encourage and support Gaelic writers.

Rosemary Ward, director of the Gaelic Books Council, said: 'The Donald Meek award is an annual competition which seeks to encourage new and creative Gaelic writing and we are seeking new works in a variety of genre from emerging and established Gaelic writers.'

'Two new prizes were added to the Donald Meek Award last year, thanks to additional funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig;

a first book (by a new writer) prize and a highly commended prize.

'We are interested in receiving new Gaelic creative works - poetry, short stories, novels or drama - which are, as yet, unpublished but are nearing completion and could be progressed to publication.'

'We will also accept academic works and research studies written in English, but which have a strong Gaelic subject matter, as long as they have not been published before the closing date.'

More information on the Donald Meek award can be found on the website, www.gaelicbooks.org. Applications must be submitted no later than Friday April 3.

Social scene

Golden Wedding Dance, Kilmallie Hall



CELEBRATE: Family and friends gather to celebrate with John and Margaret MacDonald 20_f10gold02



THREE GENERATIONS: The MacDonalds' children and grandchildren enjoyed the party 20_f10gold03



DANCE: Maureen and David Anderson have a jig 20_f10gold07



PARTY ON: Margaret and Ken Bruce enjoy a quick seat with John and Wendy Milton 20_f10gold06



Jeanette Watt, left, and Norma MacLennan lead the Shiftin' Bobbins dance 20_f10gold08

THE KEY to a happy marriage is to 'do as your told', according to a Lochaber man who recently celebrated 50 years with his wife.

John and Margaret MacDonald, from Corpach, enjoyed a fun-filled weekend with family and friends to mark their golden anniversary on February 27.

The happy couple are both keen dancers and held an old ballroom and Scottish country dancing party in Kilmallie Hall on Saturday night before enjoying a dinner with 40 relatives at the Bridge Cafe,



HAPPY COUPLE: Margaret and John MacDonald celebrate their golden wedding anniversary 20_f10gold01



FRIENDS: From left: Roderick and Mary MacKinnon and Jessie Henderson take a break from dancing 20_f10gold05



TOE-TAPPING: The Ian Cruikshanks Band provided the music for the evening 20_f10gold04

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To claim this offer, complete the below application form and, along with an up to date passport sized photograph, take it along to the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Oban. This offer is valid until March 31st 2015. You can also post your application, complete with a stamped self-addressed envelope, photo and a cheque for the appropriate amount, made payable to Merlin Entertainments, to Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE.

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Mid Argyll masterpieces



GOING SOLO: Lesley Burr next to her work Summer Sea at Crinan Harbour. 08_210burr01

RENOWNED Mid Argyll artist Lesley Burr has opened her first solo show for five years at the Crinan Hotel.

Invited guests packed the gallery on Saturday to see Luminous Places, a 36-strong body of work including many local scenes such as; Summer View to the Pier, Ardrishaig; A View Down Loch Fyne and Summer Sea at Crinan

Harbour. Lesley also exhibited paintings from further afield including Over to Varena, Lake Como, Crossing Turkey and Swiss Mountain Sun.

The artist, who lives in Lochgilphead, graduated in fine art from Glasgow School of Art in 1985 and went on to take a masters degree at Dundee.

Originally from Stirling, she's spent the past 10 years

in Argyll, with the landscape and coastline providing inspiration.

She said: 'I tend to work and do sketches from life. I have a group show coming up this autumn in Glasgow with two other artists.'

The exhibition at Crinan Gallery runs until March 26, to check opening times phone the hotel on 01546 830261.

Tune up, tune in – CalMac Culture's search for new music talent 2015

TWO music stars were discovered last year when the UK's largest ferry network operator launched the CalMac Culture Music competition.

Such was the success of the first contest, Caledonian MacBrayne has made the decision to not only repeat it, but, in consultation with Scotland's top festival organisers, to expand the range of available prizes.

This year's competition sees the slots available rise from two to three and brings with it the inclusion of bands for the first time.

CalMac is excited to announce the addition of Best of the West Festival, which takes place at Inveraray.

The competition closes on Sunday March 8.

'Last year's competition was totally new for us and it created a fantastic buzz,' said Cathy Craig, CalMac's Commercial Director.

'There's such talent out there and we are proud to play our part in not only helping that talent to find a louder voice at one of Scotland's top gig venues in Glasgow for

the finals, but then, for the winners, on the stages of two major festivals.

'I know our CalMac culture music team can't wait to hear this year's entries and I'm sure they won't be disappointed – I wouldn't want to be in the judges' shoes if last year is anything to go by; they had some really difficult decisions to make.

'Last year alone, Caledonian MacBrayne helped to support 100 events around Scotland's west coast, a community commitment which is very important to us.

'Our CalMac culture competition helped us to introduce a new audience – both young and older – to the islands and what the thriving cultural scenes there have to offer.'

To enter, all anyone needs to do is create a video of themselves or their band performing their own original composition and post it to YouTube using #CalMacCulture and using the words CalMac Culture Music entry within the title. The competition is open to anyone over the age of 18 years.

Entertainment Guide

Cinema

Oban Phoenix Cinema
Community owned and run
Tel: 01631 562905 www.obanphoenix.com

LISTINGS FOR 6TH MARCH – 12TH MARCH 2015

SELMA (12A)	
Fri 6th: 15:00, 20:30	Sat 7th: 15:25, 20:00
Sun 8th: 15:40, 17:30	Mon 9th: 15:20, 21:00
Tues 10th: 17:00, 21:00	Wed 11th: 16:30
Thurs 12th: 15:00	
JUPITER ASCENDING (12A)	
Fri 6th: 17:30, 3D 17:45	Sat 7th: 3D 14:00, 18:10
Sun 8th: 3D 15:00, 20:45	Mon 9th: 17:00, 3D 18:10
Tues 10th: 3D 15:30, 19:50	Wed 11th: 15:50
Thurs 12th: 16:30	
50 SHADES OF GREY (18)	
Fri 6th: 20:35	Sat 7th: 17:00, 21:00
Sun 8th: 20:15	Mon 9th: 19:50
Tues 10th: 18:20	Wed 11th: 19:45
Thurs 12th: 19:45	
SHAUN THE SHEEP MOVIE (U)	
Fri 6th: 15:30	Sat 7th: 10:30, 13:25
Sun 8th: 11:00, 13:00, 13:15	Mon 9th: 15:00
Tues 10th: 15:00	Wed 11th: 15:30
Thurs 12th: 15:30	
BIG HERO 6 (PG)	
Sat 7th: 11:00	Sun 8th: 10:50
ENO: LA TRAVIATA (12A)	
Wed 11th: 19:30	
NT LIVE: BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL FOREVERS (12A)	
Thurs 12th: 19:00	

FILM SYNOPSIS

SELMA (12A) 128MINS

Oscar Winner for Original Song; Glory - David Oyelowo excels as Martin Luther King in this brilliant account of a key moment in the US civil rights struggle. Spring, 1965. The small town of Selma, Alabama, has become the unlikely flashpoint for the struggle for racial equality. Astute strategist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Martin Luther King Jr (David Oyelowo) knows that the most effective use of non-violence is to provoke a violent response. He selects Selma for a protest march because of its racist governor George Wallace (Tim Roth) and the brutality of its police force. Ava DuVernay's insightful, profoundly moving drama captures the political chicanery surrounding this turning point for the civil rights movement. It also works superbly on a smaller, human scale as a portrait of a flawed man. At the film's center are magnificent performances by a quartet of British actors: David Oyelowo, Tim Roth, Carmen Ejogo as King's wife Coretta, and Tom Wilkinson as President Johnson.

JUPITER ASCENDING (12A) 127MINS

Mila Kunis and Channing Tatum star in a spectacular, cosmos-spanning sci-fi adventure from the directors of 'The Matrix'. Jupiter Jones (Mila Kunis) always dreamed that she was destined for great things. But the reality of her life sometime in the far future is that of a downtrodden toiler cleaner. Enter Caine (Channing Tatum) - a genetically engineered former military hunter who has arrived on Earth specifically to track her down. Addressing her as "your majesty", he reveals that she is at the heart of a war between powerful rival galactic dynasties. Currently, the malevolent Balem (Eddie Redmayne) owns the title to Earth. Jupiter's genetic signature reveals that it is her birthright. The scene is set for a spectacular battle for the planet! More than a decade on from the ground-breaking 'Matrix' trilogy, the Wachowski siblings reclaim their sci-fi crown with this epic space opera thrill ride.

50 SHADES OF GREY (18) 124MINS

EL James's worldwide bestseller springs to life on the big screen. Virginal student Anastasia Steele (Dakota Johnson) goes to interview wealthy, handsome, charismatic entrepreneur Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan). The attraction between them is immediate and electric. But Ana learns that Christian is only interested in a relationship on his own controlling terms. As they embark on an intense and passionate affair, he introduces her to his dark and very particular tastes. Now she finds herself exploring her own desires for the first time.

SHAUN THE SHEEP THE MOVIE (U) 85MINS

Lovable Shaun goes on a crazy adventure in this brilliant animation from the people behind Wallace and Gromit. Daily life on Mossy Bottom Farm is getting just a little bit too routine for Shaun the sheep. So he decides it's time to have a nice day off. Unfortunately, his cunning ruse leads to a series of mishaps that result in the Farmer making an unplanned exit. Now it's up to Shaun and the rest of the flock to make their way to the Big City and recover him.

BIG HERO 6 (PG) 114MINS

A young robotics genius turns crime-fighter in Disney's fun-packed animated action comedy. Troubled 14-year-old technology prodigy Hiro Hamada lives in the futuristic hybrid city of San Fransokyo. Helping him through his difficult teenage years is huggable, lovable, giant inflatable healthcare robot Baymax. When a mysterious villain emerges to threaten the city, Hiro rises to the challenge. He joins forces with can-do chemistry genius Honey Lemon, comicbook fanboy Fred, burly beatnik Wasabi and tactful adrenaline junkie GoGo Tomago. Together, these nerds must overcome their fears and transform themselves into superheroes.

ENO: LA TRAVIATA (12A)

Peter Konwitschny's acclaimed production of Verdi's tragic opera returns to ENO. Glamorous courtesan Violetta sacrifices her carefree, pleasure-filled lifestyle for love after falling for well-born Alfredo. But the couple struggle to make ends meet. When Alfredo is away, his father Giorgio implores Violetta to abandon his son for the sake of the family's reputation. Based on the Alexandre Dumas novel 'La dame aux Camélias', Verdi's masterpiece of love and death, morality and sacrifice, is filled with compelling characters and instantly recognizable melodies. The contemporary staging strips the opera back to reveal its beating heart whilst further underlining the timelessness of its themes. This performance is broadcast live in stunning multi-camera HD from the London Coliseum.

NT LIVE: BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL FOREVERS (12A)

Meera Syal returns to the National Theatre in David Hare's vibrant, uplifting drama of life in the margins. In the shadow of Mumbai airport's luxury hotels, a makeshift slum teems with resourceful people who burn with ambition. But there is a fragile existence, susceptible to the vagaries of the global recession. Then an accusation is made that threatens to shatter the neighborhood. Pulitzer Prize-winner Katherine Boo's stunning non-fiction book 'Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity' is the winner of multiple awards. From this extraordinary source material, distinguished playwright David Hare fashions a colorful stage production that has been described as a true-life 'Slumdog Millionaire' story.

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THIS WEEK'S LISTINGS

MONDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning With Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Jim Edge, 1700 Drivetime With Danni Hay, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen, 2200 American Jukebox with Michelle
TUESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show with Maggie May, 1000 Ken Hunter, 1200 Memories are Made of This with Ken Hunter, 1330 The Quiz with Danni Hay, 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 and Coll, 1900 Country Meets Rock with Len & Ken, 2100 Gordon's Grooves
THURSDAY: 0800 Maggie May's Carousel, 1100 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with DJ Taz, 1900 Christie's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight
FRIDAY: 0800 Jean Ainsley Breakfast Show, 1000 Teeny and Tiny Show, 1300 CLYDE 2, 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: 0900 Maggie's Swingin' Sixties, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowsher, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis
SUNDAY: 0900 Sunday Morning with Breege, 1100 - 1400 Allan, 1630 Archie Darling, 1800 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 1900 New Country Show with David Entwistle, 2100 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott

First Appin Fèis a huge success



GUITAR: children were enthusiastic about the guitar lessons 16_t10appin2



DANCING: Step dancing attracted both adults and children 16_t10appin1

THE FIRST ever Gaelic fèis held in Appin saw almost the whole community turn out for the event.

Fèis Apainne saw dancing and various musical instruments on offer including chanter, fiddle, accordion and clarsach in the village's

primary school last Saturday morning.

Vicky MacLean, from Fèisean nan Gàidheal, said the event had been a huge success with more than 40 children turning out.

Vicky said: 'The organising committee has been excel-

lent in organising the fèis.

'Adults as well as children took part in the event and the range of instruments offered was superb.

'The event will now run on the last Saturday of each month between 10am and 1pm.'



HAPPY: More than 40 children and adults took part in the Apainne Fèis 16_t10appin7

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PERENNIAL WINNERS: Amber and Martin Crowley, centre, celebrate their Gardening Scotland wins last summer.

Ardfern pair first to win Perennial award

TWO ARGYLL College tutors have won a national award for their contribution to the UK's only horticultural charity, Perennial.

Martin and Amber Crowley, who are tutors in both Oban and Lochgilhead, won the Perennial Champion Award for going above and beyond the call of duty for the charity.

The Ardfern couple achieved this by creating the Perennial Garden at the 2014 Gardening Scotland as a 'thank-you' to the

charity which helped Martin during his recovery from guilain-barre syndrome.

The garden went on to win best in show, best newcomer and the artisan award for design as well as a gold medal, putting the charity in the spotlight as a result.

Amber, a lecturer in rural skills and horticulture, said: 'Martin and I feel so honoured to receive such a prestigious award from a charity that we deeply care about.' The couple chose a strong and

bold concept for the Gardening Scotland show garden for Perennial.

Amber explained: 'I designed a garden that represented an individual's struggle from the chaos of unhappy times, represented by shards of black slate, impenetrable spiky planting and raw steel to a calm and gentler time represented by a soft blue and purple planting colour palette and a pretty seating area shaded by a delicate metal pergola hand crafted by Martin.'

'Martin sculpted two giant steel arum lilies, the Perennial logo, which poured water into the garden which flowed through, the healing balm of Perennial, smoothing the path ahead.'

'Perennial is an incredible organisation that helps anyone working in the horticulture industry with any kind of troubles they may come up against.'

'It is obviously a cause close to our hearts, and it was such a pleasure for us to be able to do something to help it,' she said.

Agricultural crime review welcomed

SOLICITOR General Lesley Thomson QC has confirmed she has instructed 'a review of prosecution policy' on agricultural crime in Scotland in answer to a parliamentary question from Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor.

Agricultural crime is on the rise in Argyll with at least six quad bikes and more than 2000 litres of red diesel stolen from farms. Mr McGrigor argued that the impact of agricultural crime could devastate a livelihood and bring hardship to farmers. Initiatives such as Op-

eration Quarterlight have urged farmers and crofters to review their security measures for both their equipment and machinery to ensure they are as robust as possible.

The Solicitor General said: 'A review will ensure that full consideration is given to the impact of these crimes and where appropriate this information is passed to the court for consideration in the event of a conviction.'

Mr McGrigor said: 'I welcome the Solicitor General's assurance that the Crown Office

and the Procurator Fiscal Service treat agricultural crime seriously and are aware of its potentially very significant impacts.

'I am encouraged that she has instructed a policy review which I hope will produce recommendations that do allow the impacts of agricultural crimes to be considered in the justice system. Farmers and crofters often, for example, depend on quad bikes to feed and tend livestock in remote or inaccessible locations and their theft can be devastating.'

Top chef gets creative at Oban's Queens Hotel

A CHEF who has worked in some of the most acclaimed rural restaurants in Scotland is set to create a few culinary surprises at Oban's Queens Hotel.

David Allan is the new head chef at the hotel's restaurant, Cuanra, succeeding Gary Goldie, who left last year.

David, who is originally from Glasgow, has previously worked at Fort William's Inverloch Castle and spent six years at Skye's famous Three Chimneys restaurant, under the tutelage of Michael Smith.

He latterly worked as head chef at the multi-award-winning Duisdale House Hotel, also on Skye.

The 33-year-old said: 'I want Cuanra to be a modern Scottish restaurant, taking classic dishes and putting a modern twist on them.'

'I'll be using the best Scottish produce and sticking to well-known dishes but I will be creating things that diners may have not seen before. There will definitely be a few surprises for people.'

Queens Hotel co-owner

Susan Hyams said: 'People are used to seeing the same things on menus. Eating out can be very predictable these days.'

'We want to offer a menu that will surprise people and reinforce the quality of the produce this area has to offer.'



TOP CHEF: David Allan, new head chef at Cuanra is offering up a few 'surprises' with his menus 15_t10david01

women in business

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Experts in Property Lettings



Jackie Moore, 36, from Oban is Residential Lettings Manager for multi-disciplined land and estates firm Bell Ingram. Based at the firm's Oban office, Jackie oversees all residential lettings for the company and currently manages a portfolio of more than 100 long-standing clients. Her role involves working with both existing and new clients on a daily basis, providing advice on letting, legislation, tenant vetting, arranging property view-

ings and ensuring the eventual long-term let of the properties. Jackie has always worked in the property and lettings industry, cutting her teeth with D M MacKinnon, where she started at the age of 16 as an office junior. Showing a keen eye for business and customer service, she quickly worked her way up to estate agency property consultant and latterly assumed responsibility for lettings. Bell Ingram took the company over in 2008 and her role has continued

and her client base grown. Thanks to her dedication to customer service and her friendly and personal approach to lettings, Jackie has been shortlisted in this year's ESTAS awards for the second year running in both the Individual Excellence Towards Clients and Lettings categories - which will be announced later this month. When she is not busy working hard for her clients, Jackie is busy at home with her two young children.

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Kerrie MacPhail is a breath of fresh air in the male-dominated world of motoring - and she is not afraid of hard work or getting stuck in herself. Kerrie set up Kerrie's Tyre Service in 2005 but has more than 18 years of experience in the trade. She went to work in National Tyres in Argyll Street as a receptionist after doing secretarial and office studies at college, but got bored

and started fitting tyres. They put her through qualifications and Kerrie went on to be a workshop manager for a haulage company for four years. Kerrie has now been trading for eight years and has three great employees, Brian Todd, Neil O'Hara and Nicole Carson. Her father Jim Hastings is always there to lend a hand when need-

ed. She is proud to be providing a service which is not often fronted by a woman, having found herself that it can be intimidating as a female going in to an all-male garage. Kerrie is also a retained firefighter, another job that she loves doing. Being self-employed and working with a great team she can rely on allows her to drop everything when necessary.

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and working in Argyll) based in our newly refurbished office in the centre of Oban. Pop in for a chat next time you're in town! I love what I do and am proud of our proactive and personalised service. I own my business and have worked hard over the past four years to make it a success. It's my biggest investment. I know that your property - whether renting or selling - is your biggest investment. I will work as hard to maximise your investment as I do mine.

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Kath McMahon joined the firm as a partner in its Oban office in April 2010, after moving from another local firm where she had been a partner for many years. Kath has practised continuously in Oban since 1984 following her apprenticeship and work in Inverness and Dingwall. She was asked to return to her home town in that year to develop the family side of law as, until then, all divorces had all to be dealt with in the Court of Session in Edinburgh. Her main area of work is family law and general civil court work and she regularly prepares Bar reports in cases involving children and also acts as curator and safeguarder in the Children's Panel System throughout Argyll.

She is a member of the Family Law Association; is an Accredited Family Law Mediator and is also a director of Family Mediation (Argyll and Bute). Kath is an Honorary Sheriff and is currently the vice dean of the Oban Faculty of Solicitors. Outwith the office she enjoys singing in local choirs, walking locally and further afield and generally considers herself to be extremely fortunate to be able to combine such a challenging and rewarding career with living by the sea on the beautiful west coast of Scotland. Rosanne Ogden is one of the senior solicitors at MacPhee and Partners and specialises in all corporate and commercial property matters. Rosanne has recently moved back to her home town of Oban after working

for a number of years at Brodies LLP, a large Scottish firm of solicitors. She studied and trained as a solicitor in Aberdeen. Rosanne has experience in all rural property matters including forestry, crofting and renewable energy agreements. She acts for a number of developers throughout Scotland in commercial land transactions, in addition to buy and selling commercial premises. In her spare time Rosanne is a keen sailor with a Yachtmaster certificate. She is also an avid horsewoman and instructs for Riding for the Disabled. She sits on a number of committees both locally and throughout Scotland and is currently the Treasurer of the Scottish Young Lawyers' Association.

Farming

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Farmers take dairy crisis to MSPs at Holyrood

FARMERS are calling for Scotland's MSPs to take an active part in helping to resolve the crisis dairy farmers are currently facing.

A meeting with MSPs at Holyrood heard from National Farmers Union Scotland's milk committee chairman Graeme Kilpatrick, who said it was important to increase the price paid to farmers for their milk, and said more prominence should be given to Scottish branded dairy products on supermarket shelves.

John Smith, of Drumalea Farm in Kintyre, highlighted the problems faced by those on the peninsula, as well as Gigha and the Isle of Bute, who had little option but to continue to supply the co-operative First Milk.

First Milk has recently cut milk prices to its members and introduced higher capital investment charges.

Mr Smith said there was a lack of investment in Campbeltown Creamery, which is owned and operated by First Milk, and said further support was needed from the Scottish Government to improve the facilities.

Mr Kilpatrick told MSPs: 'Consumers want to buy Scottish food and drink but we need retailers, processors and politicians to strongly promote our exquisite produce, while also assisting farmers and the wider chain by supporting innovation and investment in the sector.'

'We need Scottish products, like the fantastic Mull of Kintyre cheese, in the prominent positions on our supermarket

shelves, to make it easier for consumers to buy local produce and support Scottish farmers, ensuring that their retail spend stays within Scotland.'

'Dairy farming in Scotland supports thousands of families and hundreds of communities and we need a committed approach from politicians to help ensure the whole dairy chain properly values Scottish milk and dairy products.'

'We all need to work together to secure a bright future for Scotland's dairy farming families.'

Alex Fergusson MSP, who sponsored the event, said: 'The fact that NFU Scotland is coming to Holyrood to give members this briefing sends out a strong signal on just how dire the situation is.'



KINTYRE: John Smith tells MSPs about the current situation for dairy farmers



CHEESE: Mull of Kintyre Cheese is one of the products which farmers want to see promoted on supermarket shelves.

Farming Focus

Lucy Sumsion, NFU Scotland regional manager covering Argyll and the islands, including Arran, gives an overview of current issues in the region.



ALTHOUGH wintry showers still seem to be a frequent occurrence at the moment, there are definitely signs of spring to be seen in the countryside.

Some farmers and crofters will have already started lambing and calving and hopefully we will be seeing green shoots of new grass growth soon.

With better weather on the horizon more people will be taking the opportunity to get out in to the country, often taking their family pet dog for a walk.

We have seen in the press recently some horrific reports of sheep worrying by dogs.

For many farmers and crofters it is their worst nightmare to have a dog or dogs causing damage and distress to their sheep flocks, even more so at lambing time.

Having spoken to a lot of members in the past, I know that another concern about people walking dogs on their farms relates to the danger posed by dogs in, or near, fields with cows and young calves.

Again we have had some frightening reports of members of the public being chased and sometimes seriously hurt by cattle.

National Farmers Union Scotland would urge all members of the public to follow the advice in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which is not to take a dog into a field where there are sheep with lambs and cows with calves.

This year NFU Scotland is also involved in a Scottish campaign to raise awareness about the issue of dog fouling on agricultural land.

The campaign is scheduled to run during the spring and, although intended to be a nationwide campaign, the union is asking all Scottish farmers to

complete a short survey on the level of problem that they have with dog fouling on their land.

That survey will help identify suitable areas where more intensive campaign activity can be targeted to drive a change in dog owners' behaviour and raise local awareness of the problems that can be caused by not picking up dog dirt on farmland.

Penny Johnston, NFU Scotland animal health and welfare policy manager, has been working with Keep Scotland Beautiful and said: 'We want people to take responsible access in the countryside with their dogs but that responsibility must extend to them picking up after their animals.'

'In preparation for the campaign, NFUS is asking all Scottish farmers to complete a short survey on the level of problem that they have with dog fouling on their land.'

'That may help identify suitable focus areas for more intensive local activity.'

'This survey is also a crucial step towards securing support from other stakeholders for the campaign by providing important statistics relating to the scale of the issue and where the problem is greatest.'

'We urge all farmers - not just those on the urban fringes - to take the time to complete this survey and consider whether they may be willing to assist in the campaign once it starts.'

Any farmers or crofters who have a problem with dog fouling are asked to take five minutes to complete the survey, which can be found at www.surveymonkey.com/r/NFUS-dogfouling.

Any NFUS member who may not have internet access can contact me and I will send them a hard copy of the survey.

Scottish produce should be top sellers

SUPERMARKETS are being challenged to play their part in making sure Scottish produce is among the top sellers on their shelves by 2020.

Rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead was speaking at the annual general meeting of the National Farmers Union Scotland when he also set out three key actions to encourage everyone to look for local food.

He said there would be half a million pounds over

three years to help Scottish producers put their products to retailers and catering companies, as part of a UK market development programme starting this month; he would meet supermarket leaders about sourcing; and a campaign to buy local and seasonal would be launched.

Mr Lochhead said: 'Here in Scotland we produce some of the very best food and drink, with excellent national and local delicacies enjoyed by

many.

'But all too often they are not stocked in Scotland. I will be in talks with retailers to agree steps they will take to transform their approach to local sourcing in 2015.'

'But 2015 should just be a start.'

'My challenge is this: let's set ourselves a target of five years and make sure that by then, for items made in Scotland, Scottish products should dominate our shelves.'

Air ambulance charity gains from Luig breeders



The Luig Cattle Society raised £1,200 at its members' annual dinner held in Castle Douglas, the night before the 50th annual sale held last month at Wallet Mart in the town. A cheque was recently handed over to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance by (from left) Una MacQueen, breed secretary; Gavin Davey OBE, chief executive; and Ted Fox, society chairman to Craig Henderson, flight paramedic crew.

Young crofters gathering to plan for the future

A GATHERING of young crofters, postponed from earlier this year because of flooding, is back on the agenda for March.

It will be held at Glencanisp Lodge in Assynt from March 19-March 21, the Scottish Crofting Federation and Crofting Connections-organised event will be the first gathering of young and aspiring young crofters.

They will be addressing the

question of: 'What do we want crofting to look like in 2020 and beyond?'

It is expected that the gathering will not just be a talking shop but will form action plans to be taken forward with help from officials and experienced crofters.

Anyone interested in taking one of the limited number of places should contact Maria at hq@crofting.org

Warning of rural crime increase taken to MSPs

A RURAL crime issue which has been highlighted by police in Oban in recent weeks has been put before the Scottish Parliament's justice committee.

Warnings have been issued for people in the West Highland's rural areas, including land-owners and farmers, to make sure their buildings, sheds and tools are secure following a spate of thefts.

The justice committee heard last week that this trend was on the increase across Scotland.

Jamie Smart, chairman of the

National Farmers Union Scotland's (NFUS) legal and technical committee told MSPs crime in rural parts was rising - some of it opportunistic, but incidents of more organised activity were becoming more common.

He said: 'The countryside by its nature can make farms and rural dwellings a 'soft target' for opportunistic thieves.'

'However, increasingly there are reports of large-scale organised criminals targeting areas for high-value machinery, vehicles

and materials. The most common items targeted by thieves in Scotland over the last 12 months were quad bikes, tools and fuel such as domestic heating oil and farmers' supplies of 'red' diesel.

'Although high-value thefts of machinery such as tractors may be planned and highly organised, the number of stolen tools, gates and wire indicates opportunist thieves continue to operate.'

'NFU Mutual has also identified livestock rustling as an emerging crime across the UK,

with more than 4,200 animals - mainly sheep - reported stolen in Scotland in 2013.'

He called for collective re-cording of rural crime reports to get an accurate picture of the problem; suggested that successful Farm Watch schemes, such as the one run in Argyll and Bute and the Highlands, should receive sufficient resources to be rolled across Scotland and that more police manpower be made available to respond to and tackle rural crime.

Lowest farming income in Highlands

THE Highlands and islands have the lowest income from farming, where agriculture is estimated to have made only a very small profit once support is included.

This information comes from the Total Income From Farming (TIFF) figures released by Scotland's chief statistician, which give near-final estimates for 2013 and initial estimates for 2014.

Over-all poor cereal and potato prices in 2014 have resulted in Scotland's farming not repeating the high levels of income seen in 2013.

The figures show income increased by 29 per cent in 2013 compared to the previous year, but initial estimates for 2014 suggest a drop of 18 per cent.

Agriculture was worth £823

million to the Scottish economy in 2013, up from £630 million in 2012, with potatoes, milk and vegetables all doing very well.

For 2014 it looks like the potato and cereal sectors both suffered from the large drop in price, though the reduction for cereals was offset by a very productive harvest.

Overall, livestock saw a small increase in value, though there was

a small decline in the largest sector, the beef industry, with falling prices and slaughter numbers.

Output from slaughter or sales of cattle amounted to an estimated £710 million.

However, it was a better year for sheep farmers, with increased prices and numbers resulting in a 15 per cent increase in output to £203 million.

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CAMPBELTOWN Motor Company, Argyll's only Peugeot Dealership and Vauxhall Approved Repair Centre, is featuring in a current Sky TV advertising campaign being run by Peugeot. The advert features the 308 PureTech model and was launched on Sky a few weeks ago. Staff have been inundated with customers getting in touch to say that they have seen the advert. Graeme McMurchy of Campbeltown Motor Company said: 'We are delighted the advert is being seen by so many. We are always looking for new ways to engage with our customers and when Peugeot contacted us about this campaign we were keen to be part of it.'

Campbeltown Motor Company is a family-run business with customers from all over Argyll, including many islands. The sales department has access to the extensive range of new and used Peugeot cars...from MPVs, hatchbacks, saloons and estates. The new generation of Peugeot diesel engines offer extremely low CO2 emissions together with outstanding fuel economy and as a result of this many makes and models now have zero road tax. The sales department can also offer a range of other makes and models of used cars. The service department and workshop are equipped to offer the vast range of services that customers expect including servicing, MOTs, warranty work, repairs, tyres, aircon servicing and much more. The fact that the business is located at the end of a peninsula is no barrier as there is a parts delivery five days a week...parts can be ordered one day and arrive the next. Anyone wishing to know more about what Campbeltown Motor Company can offer is more than welcome to phone or pop in for a look round what is in the showroom or chat with the sales and service staff.

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All types of 4 x 4 vehicles Landrovers, any 4x4, Toyotas, Nissan, considered. Also non-runner and accident damaged, MOT failure, single or double cab. Genuine people to deal with.

Telephone 01250 884306
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Contact William 07730 130284 or 07716 200394 or email wlmotorhomes@outlook.com

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£43 million for infrastructure and research and development plug-in vehicle funding

DETAILS of government support up to 2020 has been announced as popularity grows for plug-in vehicles.

A wave of chargepoints to support the fast-growing popularity of plug-in vehicles will be installed across the UK after the government set out £32 million of infrastructure support up to 2020.

Homes, hospitals, train stations

and A-roads will be some of the locations for further chargepoints to maintain Britain's position as a global leader in this cutting-edge technology.

The support complements the fast-growing popularity of ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) with grant claims rising four-fold in 2014 compared to the previous year as take-up of plug-in car grants continues to rise.

In addition, another £11 million of funding has been announced to boost the UK's position as a world leader in low emission vehicle technology innovation.

The funding will be provided to 50 organisations, ranging from small businesses to major universities, working together on 15 research and development projects, which include:

- ✎ the creation of a novel recycled carbon fibre material that will bring lightweight, low cost vehicle chassis structures to the mass market (led by Gordon Murray Design Ltd)
- ✎ development of a zero emission electric bus with

hydrogen fuel cell range extender at a fraction of the cost of the current generation of hydrogen buses (led by Magtec)

- ✎ a prototype zero-emission power and cooling system adapted from a cutting-edge liquid nitrogen powered engine that will dramatically reduce the CO₂ emissions from refrigerated trucks and air-conditioned buses (led by Dearman Engine Company Ltd).

'The public will find it even easier to charge their cars when they are out and about thanks to our £8 million commitment to support new chargepoints across key locations in our towns and cities. And we have also announced another £15 million to continue to back the roll out of convenient home chargepoints across the country.'

'Our support to the ULEV industry will help ensure the innovation that is a hallmark of the British automotive industry will continue to drive development in this vital growth sector.'

The niche vehicle sector, which makes everything from premium sports cars to double decker buses, is a key strength for UK industry and another £500,000 funding will be provided this year to support the development of carbon-saving cutting edge technologies.

The £32 million infrastructure commitment will include:

- ✎ £15 million to continue the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme. ULEV drivers will receive a 75 per cent grant of up to £700 towards installation from 13 April 2015
- ✎ £8 million to support public charging infrastructure across the UK which,

alongside £15 million Highways Agency funding announced in autumn 2014, will deliver chargepoints on major roads and across towns and cities - bidding for these schemes will open in May 2015

✎ £9 million to address other infrastructure priorities, for example, ensuring that the UK's world-class chargepoint network remains accessible and open for users - further details will be announced later this year

✎ The government and industry are also working closely on the Go Ultra Low campaign to increase consumer and fleet uptake. Seven major vehicle manufacturers and the government are backing Go Ultra Low to highlight the increasing variety and benefits of ULEVs.

✎ Comprehensive information about these vehicles, including the location of chargepoints, is available at GoUltraLow.com



Transport Minister Baroness Kramer announced the funding during a visit to Nissan's European technical development centre in Cranfield, Bedfordshire, on February 26.

Earlier, the minister visited Gordon Murray Design Ltd in Guildford, one of the recipients of the new research funding, before touring McLaren's technology and production centres at Woking.

Transport Minister Baroness Kramer said: 'The funding announced marks another milestone in the government's support for ultra low emission vehicles as their popularity takes off.'

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£70 million for first time buyers

£70 million will be invested in a scheme to help eligible first-time buyers on low to moderate incomes buy a home, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has confirmed.

The Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity Scheme (OMSE) provides assistance to eligible buyers in the form of an interest-free loan.

Eligible buyers are normally required to purchase between 60 per cent and 90 per cent of the value of a home, within certain price thresholds, that is for sale on the open market.

In Alloa for a meeting of the Cabinet, the First Minister and Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil visited the home of Craig and Jude Deacons, who purchased a home with assistance from the scheme.

Ms Sturgeon said: 'We want to help today's generation of young people to access home ownership

where this is sensible and sustainable for them.

'This scheme will have a huge impact on people's life chances and will help them make a move from living in the social rented sector, the private rented sector or residing in the family home.'

'We will do all we can, within our powers and our resources, to help people like Craig and Jude get a foot onto the housing ladder.'

Jude Deacons said: 'Craig and I are grateful for the scheme as it has allowed us to secure a great first home fit for our family life.'

'We got married in 2009 just as the housing market changed significantly. We were unable to buy our first home as we had no way of securing the sizeable deposit required, despite both being in full-time employment.'

'As both of us were first-time buyers, the OMSE scheme allowed

us to purchase a house fit for purpose to accommodate our two children.

'Another benefit to the OMSE scheme was that we could look at all homes and not just new builds.'

'This opened up more choice with regards to purchasing the right home for us.'

Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil said: 'The Open Market Shared Equity scheme has not only helped people to buy their first home, it has also helped 'second-stoppers' to be able to sell their home and to move to a new property.'

'The scheme has also helped free up houses in the social rented sector and it will continue to provide priority access to social renters, disabled people, serving members of the armed forces and veterans.'



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Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

TO LET
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Offers to lease should be submitted by the closing date on Friday 17 April 2015 12.30pm.
For further information contact: The Estates Office, Argyll and Bute Council, Customer Services, Blairvadach, Helebrugh G84 8ND. Tel: 01436 658957
Email: propertiesales-lettings@argyll-bute.gov.uk

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west coast recruitment

Supervisor – Inveraray Depot

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

BEAR Scotland provides integrated road infrastructure services throughout Scotland, including managing and maintaining Scotland's Trunk Road Network.

An opportunity has arisen to join the North West Operations team as a Supervisor based out of the Inveraray depot. Reporting to the Operations Manager you will be required to assist with the management of the day-to-day activities relating to the depot and its workforce. This will include preparation of the weekly program, allocating resources and ensuring that productivity and quality targets are met.

You will be directly responsible for supervising the roadwork teams, and will deliver induction and Tool Box Talk training as required, as well as being responsible for ensuring compliance with health, safety and environmental legislation in relation to the depot and site based works. The position also requires participation in the winter maintenance Duty Officer rota.

Excellent verbal and written communication skills are essential, and IT skills are desirable. Candidates should have previous experience of the construction industry, and previous experience of winter maintenance would be an advantage.

You must hold a clean, current driving licence.

To apply online visit www.bearscoot.com

The closing date for applications is **Friday 20th March 2015.**

experience that delivers



ACHA

argyll community housing association

Community Support Assistant

Elder Crescent, Bowmore
12.5 hours per week Monday to Friday
09.00 am to 11.30 am
Salary - £6,045 to £6,679 per annum
Closing Date: 12 noon on Friday 20th March 2015

This post will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Scotland PVG check.

To apply visit our website at www.acha.co.uk/recruitment

If you cannot access the website please contact the recruitment team: Tel 01546 605917 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk

Interviews for this post will be held at the end of March 2015.

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sought to set up and run new Atlantic Islands Centre cafe/restaurant on Luing.

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In this role you will provide admin support to the General Manager and work at our busy parts counter so proficiency in Microsoft Office packages, literacy, attention to detail and good communication skills is a must. Other key responsibilities include sales order processing and filing, dealing with warranties and vehicle registration documents, processing sales and purchase invoices

If you feel you could rise to this challenge and be an asset to Hamilton Brothers email your CV or covering letter to our General Manager
Gavin Reid at: gavinr.hamiltonbros@gmail.com or call on 01586 553031
Closing date for applications 14th March, 2015.
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- Strong interpersonal, influencing and negotiating skills.
- Other duties as and when required.
- Have a flexible approach to work.

This role will initially be a temporary position; running from April to November, operating over a 5 day, 40 hour week. Occasional overtime may be required.

This role could develop into a whisky ambassador role for the right person, but no guarantee could be given at this stage.

Please apply by e-mail only, including your CV & Cover letter to the distillery manager at iam.mcalister@lochlomondgroup.com

Closing date is the 13th of March 2015.

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For the day to day responsibility of the established Highland cattle fold at Auchnacraig Estate on the Island of Mull.

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Phone 07714 352 295 for more details or visit www.kishornltd.co.uk

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public notices

Marine (Scotland) Act 2010
Trot Moorings, Lochleven, Invercoe, Glencoe

Notice is hereby given that Invercoe Caravan Park has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of Trot Moorings, Loch Leven, Invercoe, Glencoe:

Cost		
Location	Latitude	Longitude
Loch Leven, Invercoe	56° 41.446' N	05° 06.496' W
Glencoe, Argyll	56° 41.339' N	05° 06.661' W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Ballachulish Post Office.

Objections relating to safety of navigation or environmental issues in respect of the application should be made in writing to:

Licensing Operations Team, Marine Scotland, Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DB within 28 days of the date of this notice or be email:

MS.MarineLicensing@scotland.gsi.gov.uk, quoting reference: **05447**

Invercoe Caravan Park

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
Finfish Farm, Rubha Stillaig, Loch Fyne, Argyll

Notice is hereby given that The Scottish Salmon Company has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of Finfish Farm, Rubha Stillaig, Loch Fyne, Argyll:

Cost Banding £50k - £2 million		
Location	Latitude	Longitude
Co-ordinates	Co-ordinates	Co-ordinates
Rubha Stillaig, Loch Fyne	55° 51.91' N	05° 19.16' W
Cage Grid	55° 51.89' N	05° 19.03' W
	55° 51.73' N	05° 19.10' W
	55° 51.74' N	05° 19.22' W
Mooring Area	55° 52.01' N	05° 19.32' W
	55° 51.96' N	05° 18.86' W
	55° 51.52' N	05° 19.02' W
	55° 51.58' N	05° 19.48' W
Feed Barge	55° 51.86' N	05° 19.03' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Lochgilphead Post Office, 46 Argyll Street, Lochgilphead.

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: **05460**

The Scottish Salmon Company

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
Marine Fish Farm, Gob a Bharra, Loch Fyne, Argyll

Notice is hereby given that The Scottish Salmon Company has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of Marine Fish Farm, Gob a Bharra, Loch Fyne, Argyll:

Cost Banding £50k - £2 million		
Location	Latitude	Longitude
Co-ordinates	Co-ordinates	Co-ordinates
Gob a Bharra, Loch Fyne	55° 55.98' N	05° 21.59' W
Cage Grid	55° 55.97' N	05° 21.44' W
	55° 55.78' N	05° 21.49' W
	55° 55.79' N	05° 21.63' W
Mooring Area	55° 56.11' N	05° 21.75' W
	55° 56.06' N	05° 21.22' W
	55° 55.64' N	05° 21.33' W
	55° 55.68' N	05° 21.86' W
Feed Barge	55° 55.77' N	05° 21.57' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Lochgilphead Post Office, 46 Argyll Street, Lochgilphead, PA31 8NE.

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: **05464**

The Scottish Salmon Company

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02992/PP	Proposed kayaker's facilities including conversion of workshop to bunkhouse, extension to existing store, erection of pod style timber tents and toilet/shower/laundry facilities, formation of parking provision, installation of septic tank and associated works	Land North East Of Cuan House Cuan Ferry Isle Of Seil Oban Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Balvicar
15/00090/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Land Adjacent To Rowanbank (Plot 1) Dalmally Argyll And Bute PA33 1AE	Sub Post Office Dalmally
15/00101/PP	Upgrading of existing track to form new access	Killiemore Killinichin Tirran Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA69 6ER	Sub Post Office Mull
15/00271/PP	Erection of timber clad polytunnel (retrospective)	The Landscape Centre Unit 1 Lochavullin Drive Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4HW	Oban Area Office
15/00333/PP	Extension to extend seaward the existing slipway structure and to replace the existing breaker structure	Ferry Jetty Land North East Of Ferry Terminal Public Toilet Kerrera Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4SX	Oban Area Office
15/00419/PPP	Site for the erection of 6 affordable dwellinghouses	Land South Of 20 Carnan Road Arinagour Isle Of Coll Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Isle Of Coll
15/00420/PPP	Site for the erection of two chalets	Land South Of 15 Carnan Road Arinagour Isle Of Coll Argyll And Bute PA78 6SY	Sub Post Office Isle Of Coll
15/00421/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land North West Of Arinagour Pier Arinagour Isle Of Coll Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Isle Of Coll
15/00428/PP	Erection of 8 dwellinghouses	Development Site McKelvie Road Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
15/00444/PPP	Site for the erection of two flats	Land North Of Loch Eive House Connel Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1PH	Sub Post Office Connel
15/00445/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land East Of Moorcroft North Connel Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1OZ	Sub Post Office Connel
15/00478/PP	Variation of condition 5 to leave timber untreated in reference to plans 4, 6 and 7 of planning permission reference 12/01674/PP - Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land To South West Of Seaview Ardun Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA67 6DH	Sub Post Office Bunnass Isle Of Mull

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 1A Manse Lochgilphead 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. 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 Manse Brae, Lochgilphead 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.

COUNCILLOR'S SURGERIES

Councillor Roddy McCuish (EW4 Oban South and the Isles)

Councillor Roddy McCuish will be holding a surgery on Friday 6th MARCH from 3:00pm - 5:00pm in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban. He can be contacted by email - roderick.mcuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk or by telephone 01631 567854.

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
Salmon Farm, Maclean's Nose, Mouth of Loch Sunart, Ardnamurchan

Notice is hereby given that Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of Salmon Farm, Maclean's Nose, Mouth of Loch Sunart, Ardnamurchan:

Cost Banding £5k - £50k		
Location	Latitude	Longitude
Co-ordinates	Co-ordinates	Co-ordinates
Maclean's Nose, Mouth of Loch Sunart	56° 41.238' N	06° 02.785' W
Cage Grid	56° 41.018' N	06° 02.466' W
	56° 40.968' N	06° 02.580' W
	56° 41.189' N	06° 02.900' W
Mooring	56° 41.342' N	06° 02.780' W
	56° 41.006' N	06° 02.261' W
	56° 40.857' N	06° 02.594' W
	56° 41.206' N	06° 03.115' W
	56° 41.136' N	06° 02.605' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at The Ferry Stores, Kilchoan, PH36 4LH.

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: **05458**

Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited

OBAN & LORN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Oban and Lorn Tourism Association annual AGM

Thursday 19th March - 6.30pm @

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PROPOSED SHORT LEASE OF A CROFT

Ian Lamont is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to let the whole croft at 2 Ruaig, Isle of Tiree and the whole croft at 7 Ruaig, Isle of Tiree, on a short term lease to Alastair MacInnes of 1A Ruaig, Isle of Tiree, for 2 years.

If you have an interest in these applications, you may submit comments on the proposals in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW (e-mail info@crofting-scotland.gov.uk) within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert.

Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

CROFTING COMMISSION
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD
DECROFTING DIRECTION ISSUED

Name, Croft, Extent/Reason, Conditions, Case number

Mr C D Cameron
 29 Anahelt, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
 0.0063 ha - Other
 4.86.53265

Conditions: 3(b), 4, 5.

Conditions

(3) Complete enclosure of the land with a stock proof fence within 4 months of:

(b) the proposed development completion

(4) That fence shall be maintained in good order and repair by each successive owner or occupier of the land.

(5) site for a turbine house

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.

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

OILFAST LTD of Nethan Street, Motherwell, ML1 3TF is applying for a licence to use GKM Motors, 15a Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, PA34 4HD as operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Scottish Traffic Area, J Floor Argyle House, 3 Lady Lawson Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9SE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

Oban Times Oban Times
PUBLIC NOTICES PUBLIC NOTICES
Oban Times Oban Times

PROPOSED SUBLET OF A GRAZINGS SHARE

Ian Lamont is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to sublet the grazings shares in the Ruaig common grazings pertaining to the croft at 2 Ruaig, Isle of Tiree and the croft at 7 Ruaig, Isle of Tiree to Alastair MacInnes of 1A Ruaig, Isle of Tiree, for 2 years.

If you have an interest in these applications, you may submit comments on the proposals in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW (e-mail info@crofting-scotland.gov.uk) within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert.

Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

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 e-mail: oban.msc@btconnect.com

CROFTING COMMISSION
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD
FIRST REGISTRATION OF COMMON GRAZINGS

The Crofting Commission have registered the following Common Grazings on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Shielfoot Common Grazings, Ardnamurchan & Sunart

Registration Number: CG140

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may appeal to the Scottish Land Court. The appeal must be brought within 9 months from the date of this advert and should be made directly to the Land Court.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home

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
15/00369/FUL	Caravan Park, Tigh Na Mara, Arisaig	Erection of chalet
15/00402/PIP	Land 55M West of Tarbet Gate, Salen, Acharracle	Removal of caravan and erection of house (Renewal of 11/03598/PIP)
15/00441/FUL	Land 40M South East of Meran's House, Carnoch, Glencoe	Proposed dwelling house & detached garage/letting unit
15/00451/FUL	Site 80M East of Moy Farm Tulloch, Roy Bridge	Proposed Dog Kennels
15/00488/FUL	Nevis Range, Torlundy, Fort William	Erection of a storage garage to keep bike equipment
15/00506/FUL	Garage House, Onich, Fort William	Proposed replacement dwelling house
15/00568/PIP	Land West of Samalaman House, Glenuig, Lochailort	New dwelling
15/00609/FUL	Land 65M NW of Loch Eil Lodge, Fassfern, Kinlochell	Erection of dwelling house
15/00641/PIP	Land 150M North East of Arisaig Hotel, Arisaig	Renewal of application 12/00792/PIP for a house

Time period for comments is 14 days

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
 Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008
Planning Application
Pre-Application Consultation

Highland Council is conducting a pre-application consultation on the following development proposal:

Conversion, Redevelopment and Extension of the Former Secondary School building at Fort William Primary School, Achintore Road, Fort William to provide new Highland Council Offices.

Plans of the new development will be on view from the 19th March at the Highland Council Service Point, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William, PH33 6EL, opening hours 9:30am to 4:30pm; Monday to Friday.

A public exhibition will also be held at the West End Hotel, High Street, Fort William on Thursday 19th March 2015, the exhibition will be open between 10:30am and 7:30pm.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposals should do so by writing to Dot Ferguson, Highland Council, Chief Executive's Office, Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William, PH33 6EL, e-mail: ferguson@highland.gov.uk by the 9th April 2015.

PLEASE NOTE: No application has been submitted to the Highland Council in relation to this proposal. Any comments made to the prospective applicant at this time are not representations to the council and would not be considered as part of any future application. If the prospective applicant subsequently submits a formal application for planning permission there will be an opportunity to make representations on that application to the Council.

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DESKTOP COMPUTER Dell Dimension E520, keyboard, mouse and speakers, Windows XP. Intel dual core processor, 1Mb memory, 320 GB hard Drive. Can be seen working, £30 or free to Charity Telephone 01631 564452 Oban.

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THOMSON - McLAUGHLIN

Jean & Cunningham Thomson of East Kilbride have great pleasure in announcing the engagement of their second daughter, Caroline May Thomson to Martin Joseph McLaughlin, third son of Mr John McLaughlin & Mrs Stella Leitch on February 17, 2015. Love and congratulations to you both.

DEATHS

BLACK - Peacefully at Eadar Glinn, Drummoch Road, Oban on February 28, 2015, in her 97th year, Elsie (née MacLean), beloved wife of the late Alasdair Black, much loved mum of the late Betty, a dear aunt and friend. Funeral will take place at Oban Parish Church, Glencruitten Road, Oban on Friday, March 6 at 12.00 noon, thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection/donations if desired for Eadar Glinn Comfort Fund.

DAWSON - After a short illness at Lorn & Islands District Hospital, on Wednesday, February 25, 2015, Alan Dawson from the Isle of Mull sadly passed away. He was the beloved husband of Betty, much loved father of Ann, Linda, Moira, Billy and Louise, brother of Norman and a doting grandfather and great-grandfather to all the family and a good friend to all who knew him. Funeral service, to which all friends are respectfully invited, at Perth Crematorium on Friday, March 6 at 2.00pm. Family flowers only please. Donations may be given at the Crematorium, in aid of Oban Lifeboat Station R.N.L.I.

GALBRAITH - Peacefully at her home, Orchard Park, Ardrishaig, with her family by her side, on February 27, 2015, Mabel Jessie Galbraith, (née Wilson), in her 93rd year, beloved wife of the late Malcolm Galbraith, much loved mum of Marina and Alasdair, adored Nannie Mabel to all her grandchildren; great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren and a dear mother-in-law of Roy and Judy. A dear friend, good neighbour and former work colleague to many. Funeral service was held in Ardrishaig Parish Church, on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, followed by interment at Achnabreac Cemetery. Sadly missed.

LIVINGSTONE - Peacefully at Mull Community Hospital on February 25, 2015, Mary (née Burns) dearly loved wife of David and much loved mother and grandmother. Sadly missed. Funeral will take place at Salen Parish Church, Mull on Thursday March 5, 2015 at 11.30am. Family flowers only please.

MACFARLANE - Peacefully at Lynn of Lorne Care Home, Benderloch on March 2, 2015, in his 94th year, Colin Black MacFarlane, beloved husband of the late Mary. Colin will be sadly missed by his children Rosemary and Peter. Graveside service will take place at Kilbrandon Cemetery, Isle of Seil on Friday March 13 at 12.00 noon. All relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend.

NICOL - Claire Nicol (née Melville), loving mother, grandmother, Nanna and friend to many, passed away peacefully at Lynn of Lorne Care Home, Benderloch on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 in her 94th year. Greatly missed by all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MACKIE - Bill wishes to express his sincere thanks to all relatives, friends and neighbours for their kindness and sympathy shown to him during his recent bereavement. Thanks to Mr Creel and staff of 'A' Ward, Lorn and District Hospital, Oban also to district nurses and carers for their kindness and caring attention at home. Thanks also to Rev James Beaton for comforting service at the Free High Church and Luing Cemetery also to Ian at D & A Munn and to the Glen Hotel for an excellent buffet.

MEMORIALS

BEATON - In fond and loving memory of my dear husband Hugh (Veeke), father, father-in-law, and granddad who died March 6, 1999. No morning dawns, no night returns without a thought of you. - Inserted by his loving wife Bella, Hugh, Mary, Lorna and David.

BURTON - For our boys, Paul Gordon Burton and David Campbell Burton. Our love always. - The Burton family, Oban and East Kilbride.

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of Jane Veitch Campbell (Jean), a dear friend. The years we spent together Always in my thoughts. - Archie Neil.

COUTTS - Treasured memories of my dear mother Isabel, who died March 8, 1992, my dear father Alex, died June 17, 1976, my aunt Jean, died on October 26, 1988 and my brother Alistair, died November 2, 2007. Precious memories never fade away. - Cathie, Inverness.

GALBRAITH - Treasured memories of a dear son and brother Finlay Neil, who passed away on March 5, 2010. In the hours of lonely thinking Thoughts of you are very near Who loved you, sadly miss you As it dawns another year. Sorely missed. - Mum, Dad, and Christine.

KIRSOP - In fond memory of Robert, who passed away March 3, 2012. Loved and missed and always in our thoughts. - Mum and family.

LEITCH - In loving memory of my dear wife Myra, mum and grandma who died so suddenly on March 9, 2005. May the winds of heaven blow gently On that quiet and peaceful spot Where my loved one lies sleeping Too much loved to be forgot. Miss and love you always. - Gus an Coinnichidh Sinn A-Rithist

MACKINNON - In loving memory of our parents, grandparents and great grandparents, Hamish, died March 5, 1997 and Mary, September 20, 2004. Death leaves a heartache no one can heal Love leaves a memory no one can steal. - Love from your girls, Johan, Annie, Marion and families, Killin, Lawers and Fersit.

MACLEOD - In loving memory of our dear mum, granny and great-granny Lottie, who died March 9, 1993 at Sunnyville, Tiree. The memory of your lovely smile, Your eyes and how they shone Our hearts still hold your gift of love To us you've never gone. - Rita, Johann, Morag, Ian and families xx

MACGILVRAY - Cathie, No matter where we go No matter what we do We'll cherish the memories of yesterday and the laughs we shared with you. - Inserted by the family of the late Catherine Anne MacGilvray, (Cayjie) of Cullipool, Luing, who died on March 4, 2014. "Gus an Coinnich Sinn a Rithist" xxx

MACPHEE - Treasured memories of a much loved son and brother, Fraser, who died tragically in an accident on March 8, 2002. In God's hands but forever with us and in our hearts. - Mum, Dad, Catriona, Niall, Ruairidh and Arran.

MAXWELL - In loving memory of my dear husband Alex, died March 7, 2009. They say there is a reason, they say that time will heal But neither time nor reason will change the way we feel For no-ones knows the heartache that lies behind our smiles No-one knows how many times we have broken down and cried We want to tell you something so there won't be any doubt You're so wonderful to think of but hard to live without Love always. - Margaret and family.

MAXWELL - Alexander, greatly missed father and granddad, died March 7, 2009. - Love Diane and family.

MCRAE - Margaret (Daisy Nicholson), died March 6, 2008 in London, Ontario. Dear mother of Mairi and Margaret. - Sadly missed by all the family in South Wales, Canada and Oban.

WANT - In loving memory of my dear wife, Margaret MacKinnon, who died March 3, 2014. I have lost my soul's companion A life linked to my own And day by day I miss her more As I walk through life alone. Love you forever. - Dave

Treasured memories of our dear mum and granny, Margaret MacKinnon who died on March 3, 2014 The years we spent together Those happy days we knew

Are lived again so often In our memories of you We love and miss you. - Gordon, Alasdair, Mairi, Amy, Fiona and Melody.

WANT - In loving memory of my sister Margaret MacKinnon, who died March 3, 2014. Along the road to yesterday That leads me straight to you Are memories of happy days Together we once knew. - Love from Elizabeth

In loving memory of our aunt and great-aunt Margaret MacKinnon who died March 3, 2014. Resting where no shadows fall Loved and remembered by us all. - Roy, Shirley, Aiden and the girls.

WEATHERALL - In loving memory of Jack, much loved husband, dad and grampa (Ali), died March 6, 2010. Always near in word and thought. Forever in our hearts. - Katie, Anne, Carine and family.

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GRADUATION

Neil MacDougall
Son of Mary and the late Neil MacDougall, Oban. Graduated from Durham university with a master of science in new and renewable energy engineering. Neil is the grandson of Hugh and the late Catherine MacCorquodale Oban, and the late Donald and Rosalie MacDougall Oban Seil Croft.



Obituary - Rev. Murdoch MacKenzie

23rd February, 1938 - 3rd February, 2015



MURDOCH MacKenzie was born in Glasgow on February 23, 1938, and died in Edinburgh on February 3, 2015. The family moved from Glasgow to Birkenhead in 1948. At the age of 15, Murdoch felt called to the ministry. After National Service in the RAF, and a first degree at Oxford University, he studied theology at New College, Edinburgh. He married Anne, a doctor, in 1964. In 1965 he became a Member of the Iona Community.

In 1966, he and Anne went to India as Church of Scotland missionaries. Murdoch served in the Diocese of Madras (now Chennai) in the Church of South India (CSI). The CSI was formed in 1947, a union of Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians. Later some Baptists and Pentecostals joined the CSI.

The motto of the CSI is 'That They All May Be One', part of Jesus' prayer recorded in John 17:21, 'that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' The CSI motto was also appropriate for Murdoch, who, all his life, worked for Christian unity.

Murdoch and Anne left India in 1978, but India never left them. They returned several times as visitors and among the many who phoned Murdoch in his last illness were friends in Chennai. A service of thanksgiving and remembrance was held for Murdoch in St Andrew's Kirk, Chennai, on February 23, which, had he lived, would have been Murdoch's 77th birthday.

At the Thanksgiving Service for Murdoch, held in Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh on February 12, the theme of the sermon was 'that they all may be one', preached by Murdoch's great friend and successor at St Andrew's Kirk, Chennai, Rev Dr Peter Millar.

After returning to the UK in 1978, Murdoch had a succession of ministries in Glenrothes, Fife, and south of the border, in ecumenical ministries in Runcorn in Cheshire, in Carrs Lane in Birmingham and in Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire, where his stipend was paid in six equal shares by the Baptist, Methodist, Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Reformed Churches.

The URC, of which he was a minister, is the only

Church in Britain which has achieved a measure of unity by uniting Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England in 1972, the Reformed Association of Churches of Christ in 1981 and the Congregational Union of Scotland in 2000. As well as working with fellow Christians of other denominations, Murdoch reached out to people of other faiths in the UK as he had done earlier in India.

On retreat in 2003 Murdoch and Anne came to Connel where their home was always a place of welcome and hospitality, particularly to people travelling to and from Iona.

They became members of St Oran's Church where Murdoch served in a ministry team under Rev George Cringles. He led worship in Church of Scotland Kirks such as Appin, Bridge of Orchy and Tynnuilt, during vacancies in these parishes.

He supported ecumenical initiatives such as the Good Friday Meditations at St John's Episcopal Cathedral in Oban. He continued to be interested in issues of poverty, justice and peace, as he had been in India and England, and frequently

raised matters of concern with Alan Reid MP. He was also a keen supporter of the Fair Trade group in Oban, which strives to promote less exploitative, more just terms of trade for producers, particularly those in poorer countries.

Eighteen months ago he and Anne moved to Edinburgh to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren. Their departure from Argyll was deeply regretted but the move turned out to be providential because of his failing health. A happy family event occurred in 2014, when Murdoch and Anne celebrated their golden wedding.

However, a list of Murdoch's places of work, interests and even achievements does not do justice to this delightful man. To quote a Christian Aid slogan, Murdoch believed in life before death and he wanted to make life not only bearable, but just for all.

He had a profound faith in God and his Son, Jesus Christ. But his faith was neither severe nor superficial. It expressed itself in a generous, inclusive, unconditional graciousness towards people of all faiths

and none. To borrow the title of the great Christian classic by Thomas a Kempis, Murdoch's life was truly an 'Imitation of Christ'.

He believed in life before death but he also believed in life after death. He faced his end with courage, dignity and faith. When asked to speak about death and dying to a group of medical students shortly before his death, he did so willingly.

He was an ecumenical Christian and a citizen of the world. It was fitting and deeply moving that, at the service of thanksgiving for Murdoch in Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh, the blessing was delivered in English by Rev. Fiona Bennett, minister of Augustine United Church and in Tamil, the language Murdoch spoke in Madras, by Rev Canon Isaac Poobalan, Rector of St John's Episcopal Church in Aberdeen, who grew up in southern India.

Murdoch is survived by his wife, Anne, his daughters, Ruth and Catriona, his son, Iain, his two grandchildren, Hana and Benjo, and his brother, Kenneth. He is also mourned by a host of friends, here in the UK and all over the world.

The Oban Times

& West Highland Times

THE REGIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR THE WEST HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS AND ARGYLL



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Thought for the Week - World Day of Prayer

Jesus said to them: 'Do you know what I have done to you?'

World Day of Prayer is an interdenominational, inter-church, organisation which enables us to hear the voice of people, from a different part of the world each year, expressing their hopes and concerns and bringing them before the rest of the world in prayer.

On Friday March 6 an estimated three million people in more than 170 countries

will gather to observe the day of prayer, using an order of service written by the Christian Women from the Bahamas and translated into more than 1,000 different languages and dialects.

In Scotland alone more than 600 services will be held. The day will begin when the sun rises over the island of Vanuatu and continue until it sets in Alaska some 35 hours later.

The theme of this year's service is taken from the

Gospel of St John: 13 v 1-17 Jesus said unto them: 'Do you know what I have done to you?'

and it challenges us to demonstrate the same radical and unconditional love for others that Jesus showed when He washed the feet of the disciples.

The Bahamas consists of more than 700 islands, scattered over 100,000 square miles in the Atlantic Ocean, only a small proportion of which are inhabited. It refers to itself as a huge family

of islands and in the service the needs of the smallest islands are given as much prominence as those of the larger ones.

Everyone is welcome to attend a World Day of Prayer Service, men, women people of all ages. We work to promote prayerful living and worship for men, women and children and to raise awareness of the lives and concerns of others throughout the world.

Beatrice Keenan

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Claggan Park falls victim to the wet weather once again

Fort William may be allowed to play after the official end of the Highland League season

FORT William Football Club will play their next six games at home as they battle a backlog of 13 games.

The Scottish Highland Football League announced new fixtures on Monday night which will see the Claggan side play two games almost every week until the end of the season on April 18.

First up, the Fort will take on Cove Rangers this Saturday (March 7), before welcoming Forres Mechanics on Wednesday March 11 and Wick Academy the following Saturday.

They will play a further three games at home, against Inverurie Locos, Clachnacuddin and Fraserburgh, before their next away clash against Rothes on April 1.

This comes after a waterlogged pitch at the weekend put paid to yet another home fixture, this time against Inverurie Locos. It has now been more than three months since the Fort last played at Claggan Park, on November 22 last year.

But David MacDonald, vice-chairman of the club, said if the weather doesn't improve Fort

Football

William could be playing after the official end of season.

He added: 'We were worried about trying to squeeze them all in but if we can still play a couple after the end of the season that's a big weight off.'

'The problem is we're not getting dry weather for more than one day so the pitch hasn't had a chance to recover.'

'We went to Claggan on Thursday night and the pitch was just full of puddles.'

'We need the weather to improve before we can even think about playing at home and I wouldn't put money on that.'

There has been at least some good news for the Fort as two new players have signed for the club.

Robert Smith has joined from Shetland and can play either centre-half or right-back and ex-Clachnacuddin midfielder Scott Chisholm has also signed after training with the club for a number of weeks.



Prizewinners of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league 20_1101bowling01

Alleycats prove to be top dogs

ALLEYCATS were the top dogs of this year's Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league, taking first place in both divisions.

After the final night of the competition, the 'Cats had 77 points in the scratch division, three points ahead of second-placed The Creeps. Ardtoe/Nevis Radio took third place, also on 74 points.

Alleycats had a slightly bigger lead in the handicap division, with 69 points, Ardtoe/Nevis Radio were second on 65 and Rotavators were third with 62.

Alleycats swept the board on the final night with the top scratch game of 637, the top handicap game with 823, the best two-game scratch team series of 1,202 and

the top two-game handicap series of 1574. John Weller of the 'Cats also had the top individual scratch game with 240, the single handicap game with 240 and the individual two-game handicap series with 435.

Pam Weller (Alleycats) and Brian Stewart (Ardtoe/Nevis Radio) shared the top two-game scratch series with 341.

Season highs
At the prizegiving in the Nevis Centre on Monday night, a number of season highs were recognised.

Individually, the top scratch and handicap games of the season both went to Tim Attack of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with 216 and 272 respectively. The top two scratch series went to Ron Gretton, Rotavators, with 368

Ten pin bowling

and the top two-game handicap series went to John Weller, Alleycats, with 490.

In the team games, top scratch game of the season went to Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with 661. The top two-game scratch series went to Alleycats with 1,272. British Legion Fort William B had the best handicap game of 920 and the top two-game handicap series of 1,706.

The highest scratch average went to Brian Stewart, Ardtoe/Nevis Radio, with 163 followed by Pam Weller, Alleycats, on 156 and Tony Whitelocke, also of Alleycats on 151.



WINNERS: The top three competitors for boys and girls in the Portree primary school cross country event.

Portree primary hold cross country event

MORE than 100 Portree primary pupils took part in the school's cross country championships.

Children in primaries five to seven enjoyed the annual event and the winners were Charlotte Gordon for the girls and Joe

Cross country

Jones for the boys.

Holly Maclean and Archie MacDonald came in second place and Ellie Dynan and Taylor Matheson were third.

Gary finishes Glen Nevis race in front

GARY MacDonald was first home in Lochaber Athletic Club's (LAC) vitrified fort race on Sunday.

The club member finished the Glen Nevis race in 34 minutes and 32 seconds. Second-placed Steven MacDonald, also LAC, was hot on his heels for the whole three miles, finishing shortly after in 34 minutes and 47 seconds.

Luke Taylor of Highland Hill Runners took third place in the penultimate race of this year's winter league, crossing the finish line in 35 minutes and four seconds.

First lady home was Diane Baum in 39:25, followed by Marie Meldrum in 42:25, both are LAC members. The race also marked another record turnout for the club, with a field of 64 runners taking on the tough uphill route.

The final winter league race for the year is the Glen 10k, on Sunday March 15.

Registration is from 10am at Claggan Park.

Top 20 finishers, LAC unless stated: 1 Gary MacDonald 34:32; 2 Steve MacDonald 34:47; 3 Luke

Taylor, Highland Hill Runners 35:04; 4 Jon Gay 36:04; 5 Bruce MacLean 36:39; 6 Mark Shaw 36:44; 7 Tim Brand 36:57; 8 Hughie MacKintosh 37:12; 9 Douglas Runciemam 38:17; 10 Ian Mackellaig 38:31; 11 Aidan Donnelly 38:50; 12 Gavin MacMillan 39:07; 13 Allan Lamont 39:15; 14 Diane Baum 39:25; 15 Ali Kennedy 39:39; 16 Neil Waslidge, unattached, 39:54;

Athletics

17 Gordie Taylor, Highland Hill Runners, 40:07; 18 Pawel Cymbalista, 40:08; 19 Andy Craig 40:14; 20 Ben Dodman 40:30.



FIRST HOME: Gary MacDonald, front right, was first home of the 64-strong field on Sunday 20_110athletics01

Igor boxes to another victory

Boxing

LOCHABER Phoenix boxer Igor Sliwinski added another victory to his belt at the weekend, when he took on Aberdeen's Jordan Pirie.

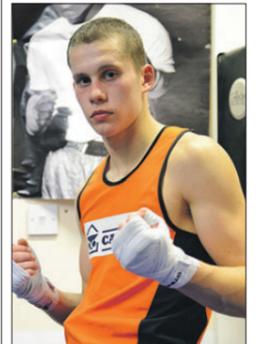
The 18-year-old knew he had a tough fight on his hands with this light welterweight bout as just three years ago Pirie reached the semi-finals of the Scottish Elite championships.

In the first half of the opening round on Friday night, Pirie, of Kincorth Boxing Club, bobbed and weaved, landing hooks with both hands but with a change in tactics Sliwinski began to land shorts with accuracy and one six-punch combination had Pirie on unsteady legs, forcing the referee to issue a standing eight count.

The Kincorth boxer blazed back into action on the resumption but found Sliwinski impossible to deny as he fired another powerful attack and once more the referee issued an eight count. The bell sounded before Igor could find the punches to finish the contest.

The minute rest was enough time for Pirie to recover and for the rest of the contest the two boxers attacked each other with ferocious combinations as one then the other would look to gain ascendancy.

Sliwinski's shots always carried the greater power and on occasion there would be a noticeable dip in Pirie's legs as the shots landed flush. Sliwinski also showed a slightly tighter defence and the unanimous decision was made in his favour.



SUCCESS: Igor Sliwinski was victorious against Jordan Pirie of Kincorth on Friday

'Wee Tri' event for beginners

Triathlon

A TRIATHLON for beginners will be held in Fort William later this month.

The 'Wee Tri' will be held from Lochaber Leisure Centre on March 21 and 22.

Made up of a 400m swim, 15km of cycling and a 6km run, the competition by No Fuss Events is ideal for beginners.

The Saturday (March 21) event is fully booked but spaces are available for day two.

For more information or to book a place contact No Fuss Events on 01397 772899 or at nofussevents.co.uk.



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No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mistaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter. Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.



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New shinty season preview ... New shinty season preview ... New shinty season preview

Newtonmore out to make it six premierships titles in six years



Premiership

AS REIGNING Premier champions and arguably the best side in Scotland, **NEWTONMORE** have nobody to fear, but have it all to do again this season.

Winning the league by three points and losing only two games all season, the team will be looking to keep the momentum going this year.

Manager P J Mackintosh was unavailable for comment, but former manager Norman MacArthur, who is still involved with the club, said they would be pushing for success again.

'I'd say we are in a good position for more success this year. We want to win every game, and we're optimistic about our chances for silverware. We know we can hold our own against any team.'

ONE TO WATCH: Back from injury after a year out with a badly broken finger, Rory Kennedy will be a big boost to the club this season. Normally played in defence, the versatile 22-year-old can fill in any position and will be hungry for success after a season on the sidelines.

WITH 30 years of experience at the club 'new' **LOVAT** manager John McRitchie is looking forward to the season ahead.

The side were runners-up in the premierships last season, and made it two-in-a-row in the MacTavish Cup, giving them rightful status as one of the best sides in Scotland.

'I played shinty, was involved with the running of the club and was manager for seven years, then Allan MacRae took over for a couple of years, and that's me back again, so I know what to expect,' said McRitchie.

'We'll be looking to build on last season and hopefully make it three-in-a-row in the MacTavish Cup, as well as pushing to win the league.'

'We also want to go further in the Camanachd Cup, which I think we've been unlucky in, in the last few seasons, losing to teams we had beaten comfortably in the league, which was frustrating. I don't think there's a team in Scotland we can't beat on our day.'

ONE TO WATCH: Attacker Kevin Bartlett, now in his third year at the club, was the top scorer in the whole of the Marine Harvest Premier League last season.

An experienced international, he will be a vital player for the side which are pushing for league and cup success.

REIGNING Camanachd cup winners **KINGUSSIE** are hoping their strong squad of experienced veterans and exciting up-and-coming youngsters will give the club the balance they need to remain competitive this season.

Finishing fourth last season in the Premier Division and with the Camanachd cup win under their belt, the side are without a doubt one of the top teams in the country.

Manager Russell Jones said: 'We're under no illusions as to how difficult a season lies ahead - the league is just so competitive.'

'We'll be looking for the likes of youngsters James Falconer and Savio Genini to be playing more of a role this season, as well as experienced guys like John Gibson, who was outstanding in the Camanachd cup win.'

ONE TO WATCH: With a hat-trick on his debut against Lochaber Camanachd last season, 18-year-old Savio Genini is one of the brightest stars in the game, and this may be the season where he establishes himself as a first choice striker for Kingussie.

THIS season is looking promising for **KYLES ATHLETIC** after finishing fifth in the league last season.

The club has a smaller squad than some teams, but still managed a mid-table finish in shinty's top tier last season.

Club secretary Mick Atkinson said: 'This year we are hoping to take what we had last season and build on it. I expect a good year from the team.'

The side won the Glasgow Celtic Society cup in 2014 and hope for more silverware this season.

With a couple of players departing, Kyles have welcomed back Andrew King, 25, who was injured last season. Two promising players this year are Matthew MacColl, 26, a full forward in the

second team and Gordon Whyte, 21, centre player in the second team, who may be called up to the first team when needed.

ONE TO WATCH: Forward Roddy Macdonald has consistently been one of the club's top scorers in past seasons. Kyles will be looking for him to continue his sharp shooting as the side aim for a strong showing in both league and cup action.

WITH A 10-team league this season, the Marine Harvest Premiership is expected to be as competitive as ever.

However, **KINLOCHSHIEL'S** assistant manager, Duncan MacLeod, thinks the two extra teams may ease the pressure slightly.

'It's going to be a tight league, but with those extra games, it gives you a chance to make up for any games you were unlucky not to take something from.'

'Our squad this season is probably as strong as any time in the premierships; we've kept most of our players but they've got an extra year's experience so they're stronger and a bit wiser perhaps.'

ONE TO WATCH: Having captained Scotland in last year's international match against Ireland, 28-year-old defender Finlay MacRae will be a key player again this season for Kinlochshiel. Having come through the ranks as a youth player, he is definitely an experienced leader on the pitch.

LAST SEASON was a bittersweet one for **GLENURQUHART**, finishing third in the Marine Harvest Premiership and coming away with runners-up medals in two cup finals.

Manager Billy McLean said: 'As a whole, last year was a very successful season, we just didn't quite get there with the silverware.'

'Third in the league was a great achievement, as with such a competitive league, the first aim is to survive, and is again this year. Third place was great too considering we were third bottom the year before.'

With players Ally MacKintosh and Ewan Brady back through injury and work commitments, respectively, McLean is hopeful his side can compete in what he admits will be an extremely strong league this season.

'With Fort William coming up, who beat us in the cup last season even though they were a division below, and Oban Camanachd also promoted, it's going to be a tough league. Also Lochaber, who I thought were unlucky to finish bottom last season, will be a competitive side this year too, so every game will count.'

ONE TO WATCH: Versatile enough to play anywhere other than up-front, returning half-back Ally MacKintosh will prove important for the club if they want to come away with any trophies this season.

AFTER gaining promotion to the Marine Harvest Premier Division last season, **OBAN CAMANACHD** manager Gussie Campbell is under no illusions how tough a season lies ahead.

'We aren't looking to win the league this year, we just want a season to survive and stay up, instead of yo-yoing up and down like previous years. We want to gain some stability; Oban needs a team in the top tier of shinty.'

Discussing squad issues, Gussie said: 'The cusp of the team from last year has stayed, plus we've signed half-back Scott McKillop from Glenorchy and have a couple of the younger lads coming through. On the downside, we've lost my son Gussie junior through back problems and Gavin Stobart has gone to Australia. It's still a strong squad, but they will be missed.'

'We're also hoping younger lads like Craig MacDougall will come through and do well. We won't be throwing them into games we don't think they can handle but we're delighted with the way they've played so far.'

ONE TO WATCH: The strong, hard-working winger Craig 'Winky' MacDougall will be hoping to impress and gain a regular first team place, along with new signing, half-back Scott McKillop.

INVERARAY player/coach Gary MacPherson said his squad, reduced in size from last season, would be aiming just to stay in

the premier league. And despite his team being regarded as cup specialists, MacPherson remains tight-lipped over the club's chances of silverware this season, having been unable to add any new faces to the squad pre-season.

MacPherson said: 'We seem to have a smaller squad than last year, so we will need to have a consistency in team selection and have as many players as possible available throughout the season.'

MacPherson explained there might also be a need for some re-organisation in the starting line-up this season, to spread his experienced players across key positions.

ONE TO WATCH: Halfback John Kennedy played his first season in the premier league last term and acquitted himself well.

An ageing and under-resourced Inveraray side will be relying more on Kennedy and other young players such as winger Ali McDonald this season.

FORT WILLIAM are set to take on the Marine Harvest Premiership with a new, young squad following the retirement of three key players.



CHAMPIONS: The Newtonmore squad met up with a man used to winning league titles. The Badenoch boys were celebrating winning the Orion Group Premiership title for the fifth time in five years when they bumped into Ally McCoist in Inveraray last season and the former Rangers manager gladly posed for a photograph with the premier league champions. Photo: Lyndsey Robinson

Former Camanachd Cup winning captains Gary Innes, Chris Bamber and Neil Robertson have all retired from the game following the club's promotion from the national division.

The Fort will also be without 18-year-old Lewis Smith, who has given up shinty for a career in the navy.

Looking to the new season, co-manager Victor Smith said: 'We're really looking forward to the challenge.'

ONE TO WATCH: Ryan Campbell, 22. The forward line is looking promising after moving up from the second team this season.

LOCHABER will start their premierships campaign this weekend with former manager Ally Ferguson back at the helm.

Ferguson has a tough job on his hands as the Spean Bridge side finished bottom of the premier league last season, winning just one of their 17 games.

But their luck could be set to change this year as Lochaber won 3-0 in a pre-season friendly against Lovat last month, with goals from Kevin Ferguson, Shaun Nicholson and Findlay MacDougall.

National Division

KILMALLIE'S new manager Mark MacPherson is looking forward to a challenging season in the national division.

The midfielder took over from Duncan Kelly and wants to encourage the Canal Park side to give it their all.

He said: 'Taking over as manager is a massive change for all of us but I'm really looking forward to it.'

'The boys have been training really hard over the pre-season and we've done really well.'

ONES TO WATCH: Jordan MacPhee and Craig MacIsaac, both 18. The pair have both performed strongly in pre-season fixtures showing potential for the coming season.

BALLACHULISH shinty club had a good season last year, but they lost out at a close cup final near the end of the season.

The team won the south league division one before losing a

league play off against a competent Skye team. But all-in-all, the side were strong in the 2014 season.

This year the Ballachulish boys are a young side.

Club chairman Iain Brown said: 'We have a strong mix of under-20s in the team this year. Training has been consistent and steady from the boys in preparation ahead of the next six months.'

ONE TO WATCH: Defender Cian MacPhee, 17, is going into his second full season, and his defensive skills are expected to stand out this year.

SKYE CAMANACHD will have a baptism of fire this weekend when they play Beaulieu at home.

This is the first National Division game for the Portree side since being promoted last season and coach John MacLeod is expecting a tough start.

He said: 'It's going to be a bit more difficult for us after going undefeated last season and Beaulieu will be tough for our first game but we're all really looking forward to it.'

Skye will be without Chris Rose this season, who has decided to

discussing the season ahead and with Lochside finishing mid-table last season in the South Division One, Evans feels that is more than achievable again.

Discussing local rivals Oban Celtic, who they will meet in league action this season, Evans said: 'We played them twice last year and they beat us both times, but they were close games so I hope they have a good team again. Although they are our local rivals, I don't want to see them struggle, so here's hoping there's some good games between us. Also, hopefully the new team Oban Lorn do well too.'

ONE TO WATCH: Utility player Ross MacMillan, who can play any position on the park, has risen steadily through the ranks, and although a tough defender, manager Evans has been known to play him as a striker. Many have said he is likely to be an Oban Camanachd player within the next few years.

STRACHUR are looking forward to the 2015 season with a few fresh faces in the team.

Manager Brian Dickie has led the players in a good pre-season training period, and they're ready

-you're in it to win it,' said Celtic stalwart Hamilton.

'Our team's remained much the same from last season, but some of the younger lads are a bit older and I think will perform a bit better as they continue to mature.'

Lamenting on some of the league restructuring, and the last-minute decision of Glenorchy to remain in a lower division, Hamilton said that it was good to see Bute reorganised after they had a troublesome season last year, winning just one fixture.

He also said he was relishing, as ever, a chance to face Oban rivals Lochside Rovers.

'You always look forward to the derbies,' he said.

'When you win, it gives you the bragging rights in the town.'

ONE TO WATCH: Rising star Rory Bruce, 18, is expected to step up to the plate this season and fulfil the promising potential he's shown since youth level. The small but skilful winger is capable of taking on any defender when he's playing his best shinty.

After a tough last season where they won only one game in the Marine Harvest National Division, and after declining their invitation to stay in the league, the South Division One beckons for **BUTE**.

The club are remaining hopeful that with returning experienced players and a wealth of youth coming through the ranks, better times are ahead.

Club secretary Alan Liddell said: 'We want to get a steady team together and build for the future.'

'The higher the league, the more demanding it is both physically and skilfully, so being in this lower league should help. We had 14 and 15-year-old boys playing last year and, although they put in some great performances, they were always going to struggle at that level.'

'We have former Scotland international Ian Macdonald coming in to play for us, so his experience will obviously be a big boost, and also a few more of the more-experienced guys who didn't play last year for various reasons are coming back.'

ONE TO WATCH: Former Scottish international Ian Macdonald will bring a wealth of experience to the club. The half-back has played in the annual ties with Ireland in the past, and will be a good guiding force to the young players coming through the ranks.

KILMORY will be hoping for an improvement on last year's performance in the Marine Harvest South Division One, finishing bottom last season, but avoiding relegation due to league restructuring.

The Lochgilphead side travel north on Saturday to face Oban Celtic in both of their first fixtures of the season. Celtic will prove tough opponents, as they are hoping for promotion following a third-place finish last season.

By coincidence, Kilmory will also travel to face Oban Celtic in the Gregor Cameron Consultancy Celtic Society Cup first round on March 28.

Their other first round draws include an away tie against Kilmallie in the Balliemore Cup in April.

South Division Two

THE NEW club in town, **OBAN LORN** are starting from the bottom and hoping to develop into one of the most competitive teams in Oban.

Managed by former Oban Celtic manager Jocky Martin, the club won their first friendly two weeks ago, and had some strong performances in a three-team friendly with Taynuilt and Glenorchy at the weekend.

Jocky said: 'There's too many players, especially younger guys, who aren't getting games at the other clubs, so that's why I've set up this team. It's about developing younger players.'

With the club entering the Marine Harvest South Division 2, the Bullough Cup and the Sutherland Cup, Jocky is hopeful that in their second season, the side will pick up some silverware.

ONE TO WATCH: After scoring five goals in the team's first friendly two weeks ago, young David Martin certainly looks to have the eye for goal that teams need to grind out the results.

Fixtures

Saturday March 7

Marine Harvest Premiership
Fort William v Kinlochshiel
Lachie Wood
Glenurquhart v Kingussie
Deek Cameron
Lochaber v Lovat
Innes Wood
Newtonmore v Kyles Athletic
Billy Wotherspoon
Oban Camanachd v Inveraray
Robert Baxter

Marine Harvest National Division

Ballachulish v Inverness
Lochside Rovers
Graham Cameron
Caberfeidh v Kilmallie
John Angus Gillies
Skye v Beaulieu
Evan MacRae

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Beaulieu v Newtonmore
Archie Ritchie
Kinlochshiel v Fort William
Calum Girvan
Kingussie v Glenurquhart
John Matheson
Strathglass v Lovat
Ron Kennedy

Marine Harvest South Division 1

Bute v Lochside Rovers
Ronnie Campbell
Inveraray v Glenorchy
David Mitchell
Kyles Athletic v Taynuilt
Euan Pearson
Oban Celtic v Kilmory
David Stafford
Strachur v Aberdour
John MacGregor

Marine Harvest North Division 2

Aberdeen Uni v Strathspey
Andy MacLean
Boleskine v Skye
Martin MacLean
Glengarry v Caberfeidh
John Wood
Inverness v Lewis
Callum Duff
Kilmallie v Lochaber
Duncan Kelly

Marine Harvest South Division 2

Aberdour v Glasgow Mid Argyll
Jon Gallagher
Col Glen v Oban Lorn
Stuart Carmichael
Glenorchy v Ballachulish
Jim Innes
Tayforth v Bute
Ewan MacDonald

Oban players turn out for Scotland Rugby

OBAN'S Magnus Bradbury starred for Scotland under-20s as they made it two wins out of two at Netherdale in this season's Six Nations campaign. They also recorded an emphatic 45-0 victory over their Italian counterparts last Friday.

Scotland under-20 head coach, Sean Lineen, said: 'The pleasing thing is that we didn't play too well but still managed to win 45-0.'

At Broadwood Stadium, Oban's Abi Evans played for Scotland Women against Italy last Sunday. Despite losing 31-8 Abi played well and Scotland scored their first try of the 2015 RBS 6 Nations tournament.

Under 16s on shield duty this weekend Youth rugby

OBAN/ARGYLL under 16s have been drawn away to Birkmyre on Sunday in the U16 West Regional Shield. The winner will have a home tie in the second round on Sunday March 15.

Lorn carpet bowls

Bowls

	P	Pts
Kilmore	10	94
Cairnbaan	10	92
Benderloch	10	77
Connel	10	52
North Connel	10	41
Easdale	10	34
Taynuilt	9	11

WINNERS of the Kilmore open doubles were Lachie MacLean and Robert Scott from Cairnbaan bowling club, who defeated Lachie and Mary Strathearn from Benderloch bowling club in the final.

Two out of two for Athletic

Oban side leads table as league splits in two

Millerston	2
Oban Athletic	4
West of Scotland AFL	

OBAN Athletic travelled to Lochend high school, Easterhouse, last Saturday to play Millerston on a bumpy and windswept park.

The D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side started well, knocking the ball about from back to front without creating too many chances. Millerston were relying on the long ball to find their strikers but Craig Campbell and David Smith were winning everything in the air and full backs Stephen Kelly and Craig Livingston were starting to make moves forward to support Alan Buchanan and Fraser McFarlane on the wings.

Athletic took the lead the 20th minute when Fraser McFarlane found himself in space wide on the left. He raced into the penalty box and his shot beat the keeper at his right hand post.

The Oban midfield of Stephen Fox, Ryan Campbell and Paul

Carmichael were pushing forward, creating chances for lone striker Kris Gilles, and on the 30 minute mark a through ball from Ryan Campbell to Kris Gillies on the half way line sent Gilles away from his marker before he fired the ball into the net giving the keeper no chance.

Two minutes later, another break saw Kris Gillies find Ryan Campbell with a good pass. Ryan's shot was deflected by a defender whose clearance only found Paul Carmichael and from 35 yards Paul controlled the ball before rifling a great shot into the top left hand corner of the net.

The second half started the same as the first but the weather was now closing in with heavy sleet and hail showers and within 10 minutes Millerston had pulled a goal back with Tom Knight scoring from close range after the ball deflected into his path.

Goalkeeper Craig Maitland, who was playing his first game for four months, produced a great save from the Millerston striker. A great move involving Stephen

Football

Fox, Fraser McFarlane and Ryan Campbell sent Kris Gillies wide on the left and his cross was met by Alan Buchanan who beat his marker before volleying the ball home from eight yards.

Manager Campbell substituted Craig Livingston and Kris Gilles with former Oban Saints player Dene Cassells and Sandy Woods to play the last 20 minutes.

With almost the last kick of the match, Sandy Woods upended David Wilson in the penalty box. Wilson took the spot kick himself and sent Craig Maitland the wrong way to make the final score 4-2. The league now splits into two sections of eight teams who will play each other home and away. Manager Donald Campbell was happy to come away with the three points after a workmanlike performance in difficult conditions. This Saturday Athletic travel to play Corkehill at Cardonald in the first round of the league cup.

Oban Athletic	2
Antonine	1
West of Scotland AFL	

THE PREVIOUS Saturday, Oban Athletic played their first home game in three months at the Oban high school astro pitch.

The visitors were Antonine from the Vale of Leven who have proved a handful for the Woodside Bar-sponsored Oban team in the past.

Athletic took the lead after 35 minutes after a good passing move from defence to midfield resulted in Ryan Campbell passing the ball out to a frustrated Kris Gilles who was an isolated figure at this point in the game.

Kris beat his marker wide on the right wing and ran into the box where he was tripped by his marker with the referee pointing

to the penalty spot. Kris brushed himself down and side-footed the ball into the net sending the keeper the wrong way.

Athletic made a change at half time going with two up front, young Alan Buchanan joining Kris Gilles in attack.

The visitors equalised after Stephen Kelly had knocked the ball out for a corner. The resulting cross was played into the penalty area and was met by William Hall who headed the ball into the top right corner of the net.

The Oban team took a while to settle after this set-back but then started to get a grip of the midfield area with Stephen Fox and Ryan Campbell having two good shots.

On the 70th minute, Alan Buchanan was substituted by Lance McCuish and Steven McLeod

who was injured making way for Scott McLaughlin with Shaun Ford moving back to defence.

With the fresh legs on, the Oban team started to dominate and push for the winner and they thought they had it through Craig Campbell on the 85th minute. A corner from Ryan Campbell was met by Craig whose header from 10 yards was somehow stopped by the studs of a defender on the goal line and was cleared.

However, in the 90th minute another corner from Ryan Campbell was missed by an Antonine defender and fell at the feet of Craig Campbell, who hit the ball under the keeper and into the net to make the final score 2-1.

Referee John Stobbo, who had a good game, blew for full time much to the relief of the home support.



WINNERS: Park 2 won this year's Oban Cricket Festival. 16_110cricket01

Park bowl them over at Oban Cricket Festival

PARK primary school pupils proved they have their eye on the ball as two teams from the school contested the final of the Oban Cricket Festival.

The annual tournament, played in the town's Atlantis Leisure, allows pupils from Park, Rockfield and St Columba's schools to try a fast, indoor form of the game.

Park retained their title from 2013 - the 2014 tournament was cancelled because of flooding in the hall - with Park 2 beating Park 1 in the final.

The tournament, organised by Active Schools and Oban Cricket Club, attracted 14 teams from the three schools and followed taster sessions run by the cricket club at the beginning of the year.

Oban Cricket Club chairman Ronnie Kelly, who helped train the pupils and officiate games alongside the club's vice captain Roger Ashforth, said he hoped to organise follow up coaching

Cricket

sessions at weekends. He added: 'A lot of the kids want to keep playing and the schools have been teaching it in PE. There's also talk of a club being set up in Rockfield school. I think events like these are helping to change attitudes towards cricket.'

'I'm not looking for the next world beater but I think we are showing the pupils that this is not a boring, elitist game; it is a lot of fun.'

Dale Kupris of Active Schools thanked the cricket club for its support and praised the young players' skill levels in this year's tournament.

He said: 'It was a fantastic festival and the children have obviously worked really hard since the taster sessions. I really enjoyed the day.'



IN THE SWIM: two members of Oban Otters swimming club won gold medals at a gala in Grangemouth. Calum Bichener, right, earned nine personal best times and won the 10 - 11 age group 50-metres freestyle in a time of 36.64 seconds. Sam set four personal bests as he struck gold in the 12 - 13 age group breaststroke.

Oban Lorne travel to take on bottom of the table Uddingston

Rugby

OBAN Lorne are back in action this weekend with a trip to bottom of the table Uddingston on Saturday.

The Green Machine have not faced Uddingston this season and will travel for the game as strong favourites against a team which hasn't won a single league fixture all season.

A win for Oban Lorne will be another step closer to overtaking Cambuslang at the top of the table. Despite two promotion places being available, the Oban squad and management team have set a season-long target of winning the Division 2 title and therefore gaining promotion to West Division 1.

Oban Lorne currently sit in second place and have three games in hand over Cambuslang which they currently trail by nine

points. With five league fixtures remaining, Oban could potentially win the league with two games to spare if a bonus point win is achieved in the next three fixtures.

Despite taking on the league's bottom side, Oban coach Corrie Louw knows his team will face a tough encounter on Saturday and is looking for his squad to turn out in good numbers at training this week to prepare for the game.

Kick off on Saturday is 3pm. Argyll and Bute Rugby Football Club is in action this Saturday away to Moffat in West Division 4.

Any player who would like to play should contact Tommy Sutherland or Connor Ferris.



CHAMPIONS: Oban's Park School primary seven and under team which won the national first shinty tournament held in the Nevis Centre, Fort William, last Saturday

Oban Saints back on league duty Football

OBAN Saints will get back to premier division action this Saturday with a home game against in-form Haldane United.

The match is scheduled to be played at Glencruitten but if the weather is bad the match will be switched to the 3G community pitch at Oban high school to make sure the fixture goes ahead.

Kick-off is 2pm with referee John McQuilter in charge.

Manager Iain Jackson said: 'This is a big game for us. If we want to have any chance of retaining our league title we need to win this one.'

'The league table is very tight with Finnart and Haldane joint top at the moment on 21 points, but we have three games in hand. If we won these games we would lead the table by a point.'

'We can't afford any more slip-ups so I'm looking for a big performance from the boys on Saturday.'

'We haven't played well this season so this is a great opportunity for the players to stand up and be counted and get us back on track in our fight to retain the league title. Haldane will be looking for revenge as we piped them for the league championship in a close-fought 2-1 win at Glencruitten in the final game of last season so Saturday's game should be a cracker.'

The Oban side, sponsored by D & K Lafferty, should have a strong squad to choose from for this important match.

Last Saturday's Jimmy Marshall Cup tie with Jamestown was called off by the council on the morning of the game as the pitch at Glencruitten was very wet and with poor weather forecast for the rest of the day it was decided to call the game off which proved to be the right decision.

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Premier Division - Campbeltown Pupils 1, Alba Thistle 2; Premier Division One - Dunoon 2, Rutherglen 2; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star no game; Jimmy Marshall Cup 2nd round - Oban Saints v Jamestown postponed; Coronation Cup 2nd round - Rosehill Star 2, Tarbert 1.

This Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division - Oban Saints v Haldane United; Premier Division One - Dunoon v Inverclyde; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star v South Camlachie; Ferguslie Star v Dunoon Athletic; Division 1B - Rosshill Star v Tarbert.

Oban Saints Youths results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s 5, Kilpatrick 3. Scoring for Saints were Aidan MacPhee (4) and Jamie Forgievie. Under 14s no game; Under 15s v Dumbarston United postponed; Under 16s v Ardencaple postponed; Under 19s 4, Broomhill SC 1. On target for Saints were Connor Howe (2), Zak Straub and Jamie MacPherson.

This weekend's fixtures: Milngavie v Under 13s; Under 14s v Helensburgh; Broomhill v Under 15s; Blairdardie v Under 16s; Baljaffray v Under 19s.

SPONSORS OF THE OBAN TIMES WEATHER AND TIDES

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WEATHER		TIDAL INFORMATION			
Thursday	Heavy rain Winds strong south westerly Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.	Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, March 5, 2015 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)			
Friday	Heavy rain Winds south south westerly Temperatures 8°C to 9°C.	Date	am		
Weekend Outlook	Heavy rain on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds south south westerly Temperatures 8°C to 10°C.	Thur	05.32 3.8 12.15 1.0 17.57 3.9 *** **		
		Fri	00.08 0.8 06.05 3.9 12.44 1.0 18.28 3.9		
		Sat	00.41 0.8 06.36 4.0 13.13 1.0 18.57 3.9		
		Sun	01.12 0.8 07.05 3.9 13.41 1.1 19.24 3.9		
		Mon	01.40 0.9 07.31 3.8 14.04 1.2 19.50 3.7		
		Tues	02.05 1.1 07.56 3.7 14.21 1.3 20.18 3.6		
		Wed	02.33 1.2 08.25 3.6 14.48 1.5 20.52 3.4		
		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	

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Cash floods in after team forced to ditch equipment

Thousands praise work of volunteers and donate £2,000 in a week

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

DONATIONS for Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team (LMRT) have been flooding in since equipment was lost during a difficult night on Ben Nevis.

Rescuers blasted 'inexperienced' and ill-equipped hillwalkers for putting lives in danger when they were stranded on Coire Eoghainn last Wednesday. The four men were described as 'lucky to be alive' after they ignored instructions from the 26 members of LMRT, who spent 12 hours trying to get them to safety.

One of the walkers had already fallen when the volunteer rescuers reached them and another two also plunged down a ridge after ignoring instructions not to move, resulting in the team abandoning equipment worth thousands of pounds in an attempt to save their lives.

An LMRT spokesman took to Facebook to emphasise the dangers of Ben Nevis and the work carried out by the team, leading to thousands of pounds being donated to thank the volunteers.

He said: 'Everyone in the team is a volunteer, putting their lives on the line for frankly some very inexperienced hill walkers who were not equipped for a winter mountaineering expedition.'

'We do not normally criticise casualties as 99.9 per cent of the rescues we do are for well-equipped, experienced walkers and climbers who have had an unfortunate incident outside their control. We are all mountaineers ourselves and what we do is for our own community, who benefit hugely from the money generated by

“A line was probably crossed which made the risks a little less palatable”

LMRT spokesman

outdoor sports in Lochaber. However, a line was probably crossed which made the risks a little less palatable.'

This led thousands of people to praise the work of the team, while others decided to give money to replace the rope and other equipment which was either broken or abandoned in the rescue.

Since the incident last week, more than £2,000 has been donated to LMRT.

Michael Smith, treasurer of LMRT, said: 'A lot of people don't seem to realise what we put in every time we go out on a rescue, so when they saw that it pushed them to donate.'

'Every year it's a struggle to fund what we do and we rely almost completely on donations.'

'Our biggest donations come from families of people who have died on the mountains. We get small donations here and there from people we've saved who have survived but most of our money comes from the families of people we haven't even been able to save. I think that's quite incredible.'



PLAYING THE GAME: students of Lochaber Schools' Pipe Band prepare for 'eyes down' at the fundraising bingo night 20_f10bingo01

Eyes down for bingo winner

A FUNDRAISING bingo night held at the weekend raised more than £2,000 for Lochaber Schools' Pipe Band. Around 200 people attended the event in Caol community centre and prizes were donated by more than 90 local businesses.

The fundraiser raised £2,471 towards the cost of tuition, instruments and uniforms for young musicians.

Margaret McMaster, band secretary, said: 'The generosity and support of the local businesses and individuals has been amazing. A special thanks to Sandra Fraser and her fundraising team for organising the event.'

Belford wards re-open after virus outbreak

WARDS at Belford Hospital, in Fort William, have re-opened after an outbreak of norovirus forced them to close for almost two weeks.

Both the combined assessment unit and ward one were closed to new admissions and visiting was restricted as patients suffered from sickness and diarrhoea but they re-opened on Friday (February 27).

But staff have restricted visitors to the hospital in an attempt to prevent the virus from returning.

Marie Law, rural general hospital manager for NHS Highland, said: 'Both wards have been able to re-open and normal service has resumed at the hospital. I would like to thank all the staff for working incredibly hard through this difficult period and also thank members of the public

for their understanding about our restriction on visiting.'

Dr Brian Tregaskis, consultant physician and clinical director at Belford Hospital, added: 'We know the virus is prevalent in the community and what can sometimes happen is that people will get admitted to hospital who have the virus or someone will come in to visit a loved one and unwittingly pass the virus on.'

'Hospital staff will, of course, be happy to talk to visitors on the phone so they can get updates on their relatives. However if you feel visiting is essential please contact the ward first by phone before coming to the hospital.'

Whilst the wards were closed, new admissions were assessed at the Belford before being transferred to either Oban or Inverness.

Crumbling junction to be resurfaced weeks after repairs

A CRUMBLING road in Lochaber is to be resurfaced again on Sunday night - just weeks after work on the same stretch.

BEAR Scotland announced this week the A86/A82 junction at Spean Bridge will be repaired again after potholes appeared almost immediately after the road was

resurfaced late last year. The junction will be closed from 7pm on Sunday March 8 until 6am the following morning whilst work is carried out, with access allowed at hourly intervals.

A BEAR spokesman said: 'Access through the closure for any emergency service vehi-

cles will be provided immediately and access for public transport services can also be provided, however, this should be arranged prior to the works commencing.'

Residents of the length of the proposed closure are asked to contact Neil Bruce Low on 07884586367 to discuss access issues.

TIMESLINE

Cash stolen from charity boxes

MONEY has been stolen from charity boxes outside a Fort William restaurant.

Between February 24 and 25 the contents of two cairns at the Ben Nevis Inn, Achintee, were taken. The boxes are collections for the Friends of Nevis charity, which works to preserve and support Ben Nevis and the surrounding area.

Police are appealing for information from the public about this incident, as well as another two thefts in Lochaber.

Overnight on Monday February 23 at Onich service station, an attempt was made to get the cash from inside the jet wash. No money was taken but damage was caused to the jet washer.

Between February 23 and 26, outside Net Store at Mallaig Harbour, two bronze four-blade boat propellers, approximately 55 inches in diameter, were stolen.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to contact Lochaber police by calling 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Former nursery manager jailed

THE FORMER manager of a Lochaber nursery has been jailed for eight years.

Mark MacLennan was sentenced at the High Court in Edinburgh on Friday after being found guilty of raping a three-year-old boy between August 2012 and May 2013.

The 30-year-old also sexually abused a girl on a number of occasions in Stirling, Dunblane and Dunfermline from October 2007 to July 2010 when she was aged between 12 and 15. MacLennan was found guilty in January but sentence was deferred until Friday (February 27) for background reports.



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Teenager on fundraising mission

A LOCHABER teen is set to spend a year teaching English to children in China - if she can raise the £5,000 required.

Millie Coleman, from Kinlochleven, is planning a placement with Project Trust in a Chinese secondary school, teaching English as a second language, but will only be able to embark on the once-in-a-lifetime trip if she can find £5,650 for flights and accommodation.

On top of this, the 17-year-old will also need to pay for visas and personal equipment.

The sixth year pupil of Kinlochleven high school has already held a dress down day and bake sale at school, raising £170, and has received £200 from the Rotary Club of Lochaber, as well as a further £50 from Kinlochleven Community Trust

but is now appealing to the people of Lochaber for help to meet her target.

She said: 'Donations like these really make the trip feel real and exciting and I'm incredibly grateful.'

'I still have quite a way to go and so really appreciate any donations big or small.'

Millie will set off late this summer and could be placed in Xinjiang, Gansu or Jiangxi provinces. When she returns, she hopes to go to university to become a Geography teacher.

She added: 'Throughout the year I will be living independently and learning the language first hand through integrating myself into the culture.'

'I will also have the chance to travel around China and explore the wonders for myself. Then I plan to use that degree and gap year experience to train as a teacher and inspire young people to take opportunities to learn and experience the world.'

John Harvey, president of the Rotary Club of Lochaber, said: 'We are delighted to support this Lochaber girl in her Chinese adventure which will have both educational and life-shaping benefits and we look forward to getting feedback from Millie when she returns from her year abroad.'

'It is encouraging to see Lochaber's youngsters taking such giant steps to experience the outside world.'

Donations toward Millie's trip can be made by contacting her on 01855 831008 or goletzko27@gmail.com.

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TIMESLINE

Police arrest man in thefts inquiry

A MAN has been arrested in connection with a number of thefts on the Ben Nevis Industrial Estate. Items were stolen from premises on the estate overnight on Tuesday February 24. A spokesman for Lochaber police said: 'Following extensive enquiries and with valuable assistance from members of the public, a 21-year-old male was arrested and charged with a number of dishonesties. A report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal'. Police ask that any future suspicious activity is reported by calling 101, or 999 in an emergency.

Shops' top marks on booze sales

SHOPS in Lochaber received a 100 per cent pass rate when staff were tested on the sale of alcohol. All of the stores checked by local police passed a test purchase, when someone under the age of 18 years is instructed to attempt to buy age-restricted products to assess whether staff are working within the law. Chief inspector Colin Gough presented the results of the tests, run in October last year, to Lochaber area committee last week. He said: 'This is absolutely first class. Both large retailers and smaller shops - all of them passed and that's what we were looking to achieve all the time.'

Get involved with flood risk plans

A NEW consultation on flood risks has been launched, and people in the Highlands and Islands have been asked for their views. The assessment, by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and local authorities, is thought to be the most comprehensive ever compiled in Scotland. Any opinions expressed could impact how flood risk management is carried out in the next six years. Councillor Thomas Prag, chairman of Highland council's development and infrastructure committee, encouraged people to get involved. He said: 'Everyone should contribute their thoughts and local knowledge.' The assessment can be viewed at <https://frm-scotland.org.uk/>. Paper copies are also available at the headquarters of Highland, Argyll and Bute and nan Eilean Siar councils.

EPILEPSY SUFFERER LEFT 'UPSET AND EMBARRASSED' AFTER THREE DRIVERS REFUSE TRAVEL REQUEST

Taxis snub Kinlochleven woman with medical dog



UPSET: Libby Turner was refused entry to three taxis in Fort William with an assistance dog



IGNORANCE: Staffordshire bull terrier Missy is a seizure alert dog

EMMA CRICHTON
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A WOMAN suffering from epilepsy was refused a taxi three times on her way to a doctor's appointment because she had a medical dog with her. Libby Turner, from Kinlochleven, said she was 'upset and embarrassed' on Friday when she travelled by bus from Fort William then tried to finish her trip to the town's medical centre by taxi and was told she couldn't take Missy, a seizure alert dog, by three different drivers. She said: 'I've been in a lot of pain so I had an important appointment to have my medication changed but by the time I tried to explain to the

taxi drivers and eventually got on another bus I had missed my appointment. 'I was so upset and embarrassed by the whole thing that I didn't even get licence or registration numbers to report them.' Missy, a Staffordshire bull terrier, wears a harness stating she is a seizure alert dog but Mrs Turner said all three drivers refused to take her. She added: 'The harness makes it very clear she's a medical dog and both my friend and I tried to explain but they weren't having it. 'They kept saying 'no pet dogs' even though she's not a pet.' Highland council is the licensing authority for taxis in the area and a spokeswoman for the authority said it was illegal to refuse an assistance dog. She added: 'If anyone has been refused access with an assistance dog to taxi services in the Highland council area they should contact Trading Standards, The Highland Council, 38 Harbour Road, Inverness IV1 1UF, phone 01463 228700 or email trading_standards@highland.gov.uk.' But Mrs Turner said taxi drivers should be more educated on what types of animals they are allowed to take. She added: 'I think it's just sheer ignorance. Everyone knows about guide dogs for the blind or deaf but I don't think many are aware of seizure alert dogs because they're not as common. 'Something needs to be done because it's so unfair and I'd hate for something like this to happen to anyone else.'

MPs press BT on superfast broadband

WORK is ongoing to bring superfast broadband to the Highlands and Islands, but there is still a lot to be done. This is the view of MPs Charles Kennedy and Alan Reid, who met with BT representatives on Tuesday. Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, said slow, unreliable broadband had been causing problems for local people and businesses and many were still unsure of when their communities would be connected to high-speed internet. He said: 'This issue is one that is disproportionately being faced by rural areas across the United Kingdom. 'I recently met with Lochaber businesses Ferguson Transport and Marine Harvest which have been exasperated by BT overlooking substantially-sized businesses in areas such as ours. 'We need a clear blueprint of the exchange upgrades on offer. Provision can then be made for areas not due for an immediate upgrade.' Alasdair Ferguson, managing director of Ferguson Transport and Shipping, said: 'It is essential connectivity is the best it can be for businesses to operate effectively and safely and for business economic growth.' Speaking on Tuesday, after the meeting with Clova Fyfe, head of parliamentary affairs for BT and Bill Murphy, managing director of next generation access, the group behind the upgraded service, Mr Kennedy was more optimistic. He said: 'The meeting was both useful and constructive. 'It is welcome news BT has now acknowledged the strength and sincerity of the points raised. I am glad BT is willing to take up the cases provided to me by constituents. There is, of course, much more work still to do.' Alan Reid, MP for Argyll and Bute, added: 'From what BT told us, it's clear government investment will mean 85 per cent of premises in the Highlands and Islands will get superfast broadband over the next two years. But we want to make sure superfast broadband reaches 100 per cent of our constituents. 'We will be having a meeting with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and BT very soon to pin them down on where the other 15 per cent are, and what HIE and BT are going to do to reach them.' A BT spokesman said the meeting was 'positive' and discussions with both MPs would continue.



Fairtrade football fun for pupils

FORT William children enjoyed a Fairtrade afternoon of fun as pupils of two schools had a game of football. Youngsters from Lochside and Fort William RC primary schools met up for the game on Friday and played with a Fairtrade football, which means workers were paid a proper wage to make the ball. This is part of a campaign run by both schools to raise awareness about fair wages in poor countries around the world.

FAIR WAGE CAMPAIGN: Captains Travis Steadwood, left and Lewis Bradley, right, show off their Fairtrade football before leading their teams in the game. Lochside RC played in blue whilst Fort RC were in green 20_110fairtrade01

Rotary club boosts fragile community groups

TWO fragile community groups in Fort William have received a cash boost from the Rotary Club of Lochaber. Pensioners' social gathering, the Tuesday Club, based in Claggan, was given £360 which will go towards providing transport to and from the meeting, something most members are dependent on. John Harvey, Rotary branch president, said he was

'delighted' to help. He added: 'Rotary funding comes almost entirely from the Lochaber public and we felt that the Tuesday Club, which is run by Lochaber people for Lochaber people, would be a worthy beneficiary of our grant funding.' Rotary members also announced they will be providing new banners to the West Highland Museum, costing more than £700. Mr Harvey said: 'The museum

is a local treasure trove and a major visitor attraction. 'Many people visiting the museum also make use of the shops, refreshment facilities and businesses in the town's High Street and we are keen to encourage visitors and are particularly glad to see the consequent spin-off to the town's economy. 'We are proud to be able to support this valuable heritage venue in Fort William.'

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Loch Etive review awaits judgement

THE JUDICIAL review of a council decision to grant planning permission for a fish farm on Loch Etive has concluded at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. Friends of Loch Etive (FoLE) had mounted a legal challenge after Argyll and Bute council gave the go-ahead to fish farm company Dawnfresh to develop the Sailean Ruadh (Etive 6) site. The four-day review was held between February 17 and 20. If the court upholds the council's decision, FoLE may be liable for substantial legal costs. A spokesman for the Court of Session said the judge was now considering the case and would give his judgement at a later date.

£137,234 to help people find jobs

A SHARE of £6.5 million Scottish government money has been given to Argyll and Bute council to help young people get jobs. The local authority is to receive £137,234 to fund ways of helping young people into work either through employment or vocational opportunities. It will also go towards strengthening links between schools and employers and help prepare vulnerable people for work.

BUT HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE 'INTERESTED' IN DEVELOPING PLANS FOR OBAN BAY Marina plan flounders as it is declared 'not viable'

LOUISE LEE
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OBAN Bay Marine's (OBM) plan for a transit marina in Oban Bay has this week suffered a financial setback. But Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) remains interested in funding the project. Argyll and Bute council plans to build marina infrastructure to the north of the North Pier which will scupper the cash it was expected to provide for OBM's marina project to the south of the pier. OBM's eight-year-long battle for the wee bay was considered 'not viable' because of 'state aid' issues which would bar the local authority from putting the cash required into the project. Forty Oban businesses which each put £1,000 into the pot to kick-start the project back in 2010 say that the project must still go ahead. Douglas Cowan, Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) area manager for Argyll and the Islands, said: 'We have discussed various different projects to deliver transit berths into Oban with various parties including



PONTOONS: transit marina plan blown out the water.

Oban Bay Marine and Argyll and Bute council over a number of years and have provided support in the past to help move things forward. 'We remain interested, given Oban's strategic location, and are happy to discuss specific proposals.' Chairman of community business body BID4Oban, Graeme

alternatives might exist to bring the marina plans to fruition – a permanent facility of this nature can only be to the benefit of businesses and residents of Oban and, in particular, to our visitors.' Argyll and Bute council's head of development, Fergus Murray, said the plan was not viable on the limited funding that would have been available to the group. In 2008 almost £2 million had been ring-fenced for the project through CHORD funding. Argyll and Bute council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) agreed in April 2014 to consider a business case from OBM in order to allocate funding. The organisations stumped up the cost of funding the consultation and work for a business plan. The business case was submitted to the local authority in November 2014. In a letter last week to OBM, in response to the business case, Mr Murray, said it was 'NOT [sic] considered a viable option to proceed with'. He outlined council concerns regarding the cost of building the marina versus concerns about the profit and sustainability of

the project. Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) area chairman, councillor Roddy McCuish, said: 'There is a strong will and desire to have a marina in Oban. 'Part of the business case for the White Building on the North Pier depends on the increase in visitors from the sea. 'We will shortly be extending the pier and that will incorporate a step ashore facility/ marina. 'This is, of course, subject to a full business case and following the usual procedures and members' approval.' An Argyll and Bute council spokesman said: 'The council recognises the importance of a transit berthing facility for Oban. 'It is currently working to bring forward information to elected members on a long-term integrated solution, to be taken on as part of our Lorn Arc regeneration initiative. 'It is expected that a proposal will go before the OLI area committee later in the year. 'In the shorter term our focus is on providing a temporary step ashore facility for the cruise ships visiting Oban this summer.'

Adventure leader jailed for 'gross breach of trust' against youngsters

COURT REPORTER
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GUILTY: leader sentenced to jail

AN OUTDOOR adventure course leader has been jailed for 18 months for abusing three young boys in the 1980s on an island south of Oban. Torquil Johnson-Ferguson, 65, was convicted last month by a jury at Oban Sheriff Court of lewd, indecent and libidinous practices towards the boys on three separate occasions between 1981 and 1986. He appeared before Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC on Monday for sentencing. Johnson-Ferguson, Solwaybank, Chapel Knowe, Canonbie, Dumfries and Galloway, committed the offences when the boys were aged nine or 11 years, 11 or 12 and 13. They had been attending adventure courses on the island of Rua Fiola, off Luing, owned by Johnson-Ferguson and his wife, where they ran Wild Island Exploration Ltd from 1976 to 2014. Sheriff Ruth Anderson said she took into account Johnson-Fer-

guson was appearing as a first offender; that, for the most part until these offences, he had led a stable family existence and on the whole a good life and thirdly, over a number of decades many youngsters had benefited from his leadership, inspiration and time spent on the island. 'Nevertheless the matters which I must pass sentence on today come out of that same past and have resulted in your downfall by your lewd and libidinous practices and behaviour towards each of these young trusting boys in the 1980s,' she told him. She called the offences a 'gross breach of trust' and added that his actions had repercussions that echoed down the years, affecting his victims physically and mentally. 'The fallout from your actions continue to affect [the victims] to this day,' she told Johnson-Ferguson. 'I am of the view that the only appropriate sentence in respect of this course of criminal conduct is a custodial one.' She also placed Johnson-Fer-

Playgroup funds are in good heart

MARIAN MILLER
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FRIENDS of Oban Community Playpark volunteers were jumping up and down with joy on Monday to discover they had gained another £20,000 towards a new playpark for the town. Scottish Sea Farm's Heart of the Communities Trust has made the award. 'We are absolutely delighted about this,' said Lyndsay Elliott, chairman of the fund-raising group, 'as it means that with the SportScotland and The Robertson Trust money, we are fully funded for phase one for five to 15-year-olds.' The money means that funds raised locally can now be used towards the £150,000 target for phase three, the under-fives playpark. 'It's still too early to say when we will reach our target for the under-fives area as we have yet to find a large fund that fits our project,

but we will be continuing with fundraising and are looking for continued support from the community,' added Lyndsay. 'We are awaiting the outcome of a funding application from the Royal Bank of Scotland to complete the funding for phase two, the multi-sensory garden, although we've made progress there too with building supplier Jewson donating the materials which will allow us to upgrade the paths so they are suitable for wheelchairs and buggies.' The tender document for the design and installation of phase one of the park, on the old playpark site next to Atlantis Leisure, is to be made public this month and next, with the successful contractor selected at the end of April. The multi-sensory garden will update the current Millennium garden, and the under-five area is planned for part of the green field site next to the garden.



Lucky escape for driver as snow wreaks havoc

Heavy snowfall on Monday night almost caused a 'car-tastrophe' for this motorist. The unnamed female driver, who slid off the 'S' bend on Polvinister Road and ended up with part of her Volkswagen Passat in the burn which runs adjacent to the road, was unhurt. One neighbour, who asked not to be named, said: 'She was shaken up, but not injured, thankfully. I've skidded down that part of the road myself and when you feel the car lose grip on the road, it's terrifying – there's nothing you can do. Because it's off the main road, the street doesn't get ploughed or gritted much, unfortunately, and it's a steep braise.'

Cash to help young people into work

YOUNG people in the Highlands and Islands are to benefit from more than £400,000 of Scottish government funding. The money has been provided to local authorities to tackle youth unemployment through developing vocational and employment pathways for young people, strengthening links between schools and employers and helping vulnerable groups. Highland Council received £362,484 through the scheme and a further £53,286 was given to Comhairle Eilean Siar as part of a £6.5 million investment across Scotland. Roseanna Cunningham, cabinet secretary for fair work, skills and training, said: 'The latest trends on youth employment have been hugely encouraging but there is no room for complacency. 'The Scottish government is committed to supporting more young women and men into jobs and published a new youth employment strategy in December. 'I am very pleased to be able to confirm funding that will give the local authorities additional resources to tailor activity to local need to give young people in the area the best possible chance of success.'

Public to get say on plans for old school

PLANS for Highland Council to take over the mothballed old school in Fort William will be shared with the public later this month. The local authority will move its town offices, including the service point, to the Achintore Road site with work expected to begin later this year, to be completed by spring 2017. Members of the public are invited to attend an exhibition to give their views on the proposal from 10.30am until 7.30pm on Thursday March 19, at the West Highland Hotel. Councillor Thomas MacLennan, leader of Lochaber area committee, said: 'The proposal to redevelop the site means we'll be able to make savings by delivering our services more cost-effectively and efficiently and at the same time new life is brought to a building near to the centre of the town, which has lain derelict for more than 25 years. 'The public exhibition is a chance for people to come along and look over the proposals for

the development and give us their views and any feedback to the plans. I hope as many people as possible take up this opportunity.' Responses to the plans can be sent to ward manager Dot Ferguson at Lochaber House, High Street, Fort William, PH33 6EL, or email dot.ferguson@highland.gov.uk. Anyone unable to attend the exhibition can view the proposals at the Highland Council service point, Lochaber House, from March 20.

Three midwives 'insufficient' for Argyll mothers

AN NHS Highland proposal to train three midwives as sonographers to provide pregnancy scans is said to be 'insufficient' in meeting the demands of mothers-to-be in Argyll and Bute. Mary Galbraith, a Labour party candidate, said while some progress had been made in her campaign for scanning, more than three midwives would be required to provide for the needs of pregnant women. Ms Galbraith said: 'I'm disappointed the announcement doesn't even mention that only three midwives will be trained to do scanning. Which three places won't have local trained personnel on-site, and how can services be assured with such a small team for the whole area? If they think this is a good news story, why is the health board hiding these crucial details?' An NHS Highland spokesman said: 'We have identified that three midwives fully trained to provide scanning would meet the demand that would be required in Argyll and Bute and would also allow for cross cover when needed. 'If we had too many midwives carrying out scanning the number of scans they would carry out individually would be very low and they would therefore not be able to keep their skills and knowledge levels up-to-date which could be detrimental to the service.'

Nuisance call rules 'tougher'

GOVERNMENT plans for harsher punishments for nuisance callers have been welcomed by Argyll and Bute MP, Alan Reid. It was announced this week that, as of April 6, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will no longer have to prove that the cold calls are causing 'substantial damage or distress' before taking action to stop those who are responsible. 'Nuisance phone calls are an infuriating part of everyday life,' said Mr Reid.

Population guru sought for HIE

HIGHLANDS and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is on the hunt for a population guru, it announced this week. The senior post will provide a focus for HIE's involvement in partnership projects aimed at achieving population and economic growth in the area. The two-year appointment follows the Argyll and Bute economic summit last year.

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Calls for cash to grit roads

LOUISE LEE
llee@obantimes.co.uk

THE COST of gritting and emergency road repairs has spiralled out of control, leaving the council with a £500,000 budget headache.

And as snow brought yet more travel chaos to West Highland roads this week, community councillors are calling for the gritting of all rural roads.

But they demand that the Scottish government should foot the bill to keep Argyll's roads clear and safe.

'We live in a rural area and the Scottish government tells us all its policies are set out to support us,' said Katie Cox of Taynuilt, 'but our road wasn't gritted this week, and this time the mini bus taking pupils to school came off the road and had to be pulled out of a ditch.'

'I've written to the Scottish government to ask for more money and they directed me to Argyll and Bute council.'

'It seems daft to think that people are living in rural areas and can't get out. We pay the same taxes as anyone else and should get the same roads treatment. Our children have a human right to an education.'

Oban community councillor Marri Malloy agreed that Holyrood should provide extra cash for gritting. She said: 'We need to complain that the council doesn't get enough cash and community councils should join together to make a noise about it.'

Chairman of Connel community council Les Stewart said he was sympathetic to the council's

position: 'It is time that instead of bashing the council, community councils should make sure the areas that needed to be gritted are prioritised.'

Barcaldine community councillor Margaret Adam said the main routes were 'relatively good' but the roads to places such as Bonawe and the Isle of Eriska were treated later in the day, which caused problems with people getting to school, work or appointments. 'Everyone should be treated the same,' she said.

In Glen Orchy, community council secretary John Kerr said that Argyll and Bute council did a 'fairly good job' of getting isolated places gritted, when they eventually got to them.

He said: 'We are used to the fact that we are far down the gritting list and it has just become normal. People adapt their lives and accept the treatments they are given.'

To meet the half-a-million overspend in treating winter roads this year, Argyll and Bute council has had to dip into its reserve budget, which is set aside for emergencies.

Last month, the council's roads chief Jim Smith told councillors: 'The current level of budget provision is insufficient even for the mildest winter.' An Argyll and Bute council spokesman said: 'There's no reduction in service.'

A Scottish government spokesman said: 'We're committed to supporting rural life, rural communities and the rural economy. The council is allocated money to meet the roads maintenance programme and it is up to it to prioritise the spending.'



GRITTY ISSUE: an HGV lorry moves cautiously along the A85 near Oban as drivers faced difficult driving conditions on Tuesday

TIMESLINE

Ungritted road an ice rink, say police

FOUR CARS skidded off the road on Wednesday morning due to a lack of grit on the road, a Police Scotland spokesman told *The Oban Times*.

The Benderloch to Barcaldine road was likened to a 'skating rink' by one driver, who passed the stricken vehicles.

Police confirmed they asked roads agency, Transport Scotland, to grit the road.

'Challenges' ahead for Oban pontoons

PONTOONS in Oban Bay may not be in place for summer 2015 because of 'challenging' costs.

Council development boss Fergus Murray is in charge of the installing the pontoons.

But he said it was proving 'challenging given the licensing conditions and costs associated with even a small scale facility'.

Talking up work in the Corran halls

A JOB fair gets under way today, Thursday at the Corran Halls in Oban from 11am.

The event, supported by Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell and the council's employment partnership group, will give employers such as the Scottish Salmon Company, Diageo, Lidl and Carr Gorm the opportunity to meet potential employees and school leavers.

Agreement over airport fuel issue

A LONG-RUNNING dispute over night-time refuelling at Oban airport has been resolved.

A council spokesman confirmed: 'The fuel supplier will be resuming its night-time fuelling service'.

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Dental unit described as 'obsolete'

A MULTI-million pound dental facility in Oban may be 'obsolete' when a town-centre practice opens later in the year, the area's community health partnership (CHP) public partnership forum heard on Monday.

Duncan Martin, a CHP elected-representative to NHS Highland, said that the state-of-the-art dental access centre, housed in the Lorn and Islands hospital, had lain empty for more than two years due to a lack of interest from any dentist wanting to rent the facility.

The ongoing saga of NHS dental care in Oban took a turn for the worse this week when a meeting of community representatives heard the 'three seats in the hospital' were not as yet

rented out, and that no bids for the hospital facility were in the pipeline.

Tom Dolan, a representative on the health board's public forum, said: 'It is a real problem that there is a facility in Oban lying empty and no one wants to take it on because the financial terms being offered are so poor.'

'Does that mean the facility is obsolete?' Duncan Martin suggested the restrictions on carrying out private dental work might be acting as a disincentive to prospective practitioners.

'Well, it might be obsolete because of the Scottish government rules surrounding the split of patients a dentist can take in the NHS practice' he said. 'Anyone who rents the centre

will only be able to do 30 per cent of private work.'

He explained that at time when the town was 'crying out for dentists', because of the fact there would soon be more dental chairs available in Oban, the costly unit would be unlikely to attract any dentist willing to move to the area.

He continued: 'This is the issue at the heart of the current situation.'

'It will be very difficult to attract a dentist or dental practice to the area under terms which sees them pay a large rent for a practice where 70 per cent of their work must be NHS.'

'It is understood that more money can be made by dentists working in their own setting, as only 20 per cent of all their work

needs to be undertaken for the NHS.'

Caroline Henderson, NHS Highland's acting primary clinical manager for Oban, Lorn and the Isles, did not challenge the use of the word 'obsolete' to describe the dental unit.

She said: 'Senior managers are looking into the situation and we will just need to wait and see what happens. There are other options for the use of the dental access centre and these are being progressed by managers.'

A NHS Highland spokesman said: 'We are investigating some options to provide a full complement of dental services from the Oban dental access centre. We will keep the public informed of any developments as soon as they happen.'

Perfect score for hospital

LORN AND Islands hospital saw 100 per cent of accident and emergency (A&E) patients within NHS waiting time guidelines, recent statistics have shown.

The Oban hospital, run by NHS Highland, had perfect results during the period of February 16 to 22, seeing all patients within the recommended four-hour maximum waiting

limit. The positive result was published on the new NHS Performs website.

A&E waiting times figures for January 2015 show that NHS Highland treated 94.8 per cent of patients at its main medical sites during the month within the stipulated timescales.

This was significantly above the Scottish national average of 85.4 per cent.

MV Fingal makes one-of-a-kind Argyll splash

LOUISE LEE
llee@obantimes.co.uk

A ONE-OF-KIND boat launched at the Marine Resource Centre (MRC), Barcaldine is the first to be 'made from scratch' in Argyll for as long as anyone in the boating industry can remember.

The MV Fingal was envisioned, drawn, fabricated, welded, fitted and launched in Argyll. Iona-based Gordon 'Pal' Grant commissioned the vessel from Alutec Marine Limited, Barcaldine as part of his fleet for Staffa Tours running daily from Oban, Mull and Iona to locations on the west coast such as Fingal's Cave and the more remote Treshnish Isles.

Edwin Payne, director of Alutec, told a large crowd who gathered last Saturday afternoon to witness the launch of the passenger boat into Loch Creran, it was 'a very special day for boat building'.

'The project would not have been completed without Murray Cormack Associates naval architects. This is an important day because this is a one-of-a-kind boat. This boat was fully made in Argyll - from the design to the fabrication everything was manufactured at Alutec in Barcaldine and proves we are as good as anywhere to have a boat built.'

'Let's hope its the first of many for Oban.'



PROUD MOMENT: Alutec owner Edwin Payne gives a speech to a large crowd before the passenger boat was launched



THE DREAM TEAM: The professionals who worked on the MV Fingal were delighted to be present at its launch in Barcaldine



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FW

Two out of two for Athletic

Oban side leads table as league splits in two

Millerston	2
Oban Athletic	4
West of Scotland AFL	

OBAN Athletic travelled to Lochend high school, Easterhouse, last Saturday to play Millerston on a bumpy and windswept park.

The D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side started well, knocking the ball about from back to front without creating too many chances. Millerston were relying on the long ball to find their strikers but Craig Campbell and David Smith were winning everything in the air and full backs Stephen Kelly and Craig Livingston were starting to make moves forward to support Alan Buchanan and Fraser McFarlane on the wings.

Athletic took the lead the 20th minute when Fraser McFarlane found himself in space wide on the left. He raced into the penalty box and his shot beat the keeper at his right hand post.

The Oban midfield of Stephen Fox, Ryan Campbell and Paul

Carmichael were pushing forward, creating chances for lone striker Kris Gillies, and on the 30 minute mark a through ball from Ryan Campbell to Kris Gillies on the half way line sent Gillies away from his marker before he fired the ball into the net giving the keeper no chance.

Two minutes later, another break saw Kris Gillies find Ryan Campbell with a good pass. Ryan's shot was deflected by a defender whose clearance only found Paul Carmichael and from 35 yards Paul controlled the ball before rifling a great shot into the top left hand corner of the net.

The second half started the same as the first but the weather was now closing in with heavy sleet and hail showers and within 10 minutes Millerston had pulled a goal back with Tom Knight scoring from close range after the ball deflected into his path.

Goalkeeper Craig Maitland, who was playing his first game for four months, produced a great save from the Millerston striker.

A great move involving Stephen

Football

Fox, Fraser McFarlane and Ryan Campbell sent Kris Gillies wide on the left and his cross was met by Alan Buchanan who beat his marker before volleying the ball home from eight yards.

Manager Campbell substituted Craig Livingston and Kris Gillies with former Oban Saints player Dene Cassells and Sandy Woods to play the last 20 minutes.

With almost the last kick of the match, Sandy Woods upended David Wilson in the penalty box. Wilson took the spot kick himself and sent Craig Maitland the wrong way to make the final score 4-2. The league now splits into two sections of eight teams who will play each other home and away. Manager Donald Campbell was happy to come away with the three points after a workmanlike performance in difficult conditions. This Saturday Athletic travel to play Cokerhill at Cardonald in the first round of the league cup.

Oban Athletic	2
Antonine	1
West of Scotland AFL	

THE PREVIOUS Saturday, Oban Athletic played their first home game in three months at the Oban high school astro pitch.

The visitors were Antonine from the Vale of Leven who have proved a handful for the Woodside Bar-sponsored Oban team in the past.

Athletic took the lead after 35 minutes after a good passing move from defence to midfield resulted in Ryan Campbell passing the ball out to a frustrated Kris Gillies who was an isolated figure at this point in the game.

Kris beat his marker wide on the right wing and ran into the box where he was tripped by his marker with the referee pointing

to the penalty spot. Kris brushed himself down and side-footed the ball into the net sending the keeper the wrong way.

Athletic made a change at half time going with two up front, young Alan Buchanan joining Kris Gillies in attack.

The visitors equalised after Stephen Kelly had knocked the ball out for a corner. The resulting cross was played into the penalty area and was met by William Hall who headed the ball into the top right corner of the net.

The Oban team took a while to settle after this set-back but then started to get a grip of the midfield area with Stephen Fox and Ryan Campbell having two good shots.

On the 70th minute, Alan Buchanan was substituted by Lance McCuish and Steven McLeod

who was injured making way for Scott McLaughlin with Shaun Ford moving back to defence.

With the fresh legs on, the Oban team started to dominate and push for the winner and they thought they had it through Craig Campbell on the 85th minute. A corner from Ryan Campbell was met by Craig whose header from 10 yards was somehow stopped by the studs of a defender on the goal line and was cleared.

However, in the 90th minute another corner from Ryan Campbell was missed by an Antonine defender and fell at the feet of Craig Campbell, who hit the ball under the keeper and into the net to make the final score 2-1.

Referee John Stobbo, who had a good game, blew for full time much to the relief of the home support.



WINNERS: Park 2 won this year's Oban Cricket Festival. 16_110cricket01

Park bowl them over at Oban Cricket Festival

PARK primary school pupils proved they have their eye on the ball as two teams from the school contested the final of the Oban Cricket Festival.

The annual tournament, played in the town's Atlantis Leisure, allows pupils from Park, Rockfield and St Columba's schools to try a fast, indoor form of the game.

Park retained their title from 2013 - the 2014 tournament was cancelled because of flooding in the hall - with Park 2 beating Park 1 in the final.

The tournament, organised by Active Schools and Oban Cricket Club, attracted 14 teams from the three schools and followed taster sessions run by the cricket club at the beginning of the year.

Oban Cricket Club chairman Ronnie Kelly, who helped train the pupils and officiate games alongside the club's vice captain Roger Ashforth, said he hoped to organise follow up coaching

Cricket

sessions at weekends. He added: 'A lot of the kids want to keep playing and the schools have been teaching it in PE. There's also talk of a club being set up in Rockfield school. I think events like these are helping to change attitudes towards cricket.'

'I'm not looking for the next world beater but I think we are showing the pupils that this is not a boring, elitist game; it is a lot of fun.'

Dale Kupris of Active Schools thanked the cricket club for its support and praised the young players' skill levels in this year's tournament.

He said: 'It was a fantastic festival and the children have obviously worked really hard since the taster sessions. I really enjoyed the day.'

Oban Saints back on league duty Football

OBAN Saints will get back to premier division action this Saturday with a home game against in-form Haldane United.

The match is scheduled to be played at Glencruitten but if the weather is bad the match will be switched to the 3G community pitch at Oban high school to make sure the fixture goes ahead.

Kick-off is 2pm with referee John McQuilter in charge.

Manager Iain Jackson said: 'This is a big game for us. If we want to have any chance of retaining our league title we need to win this one.'

'The league table is very tight with Finnart and Haldane joint top at the moment on 21 points, but we have three games in hand. If we won these games we would lead the table by a point.'

'We can't afford any more slip-ups so I'm looking for a big performance from the boys on Saturday.'

'We haven't played well this season so this is a great opportunity for the players to stand up and be counted and get us back on track in our fight to retain the league title. Haldane will be looking for revenge as we piped them for the league championship in a close-fought 2-1 win at Glencruitten in the final game of last season so Saturday's game should be a cracker.'

The Oban side, sponsored by D & K Lafferty, should have a strong squad to choose from for this important match.

Last Saturday's Jimmy Marshall Cup tie with Jamestown was called off by the council on the morning of the game as the pitch at Glencruitten was very wet and with poor weather forecast for the rest of the day it was decided to call the game off which proved to be the right decision.

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures Football

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Premier Division - Campbelltown Pupils 1, Alba Thistle 2; Premier Division One - Dunoon 2, Rutherglen 2; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star no game; Jimmy Marshall Cup 2nd round - Oban Saints v Jamestown postponed; Coronation Cup 2nd round - Rosehill Star 2, Tarbert 1.

This Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division - Oban Saints v Haldane United; Premier Division One - Dunoon v Inverclyde; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star v South Camlachie; Ferguslie Star v Dunoon Athletic; Division 1B - Rosshill Star v Tarbert.

Oban Saints Youths results and fixtures Youth football

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s 5, Kilpatrick 3. Scoring for Saints were Aidan MacPhee (4) and Jamie Forgive. Under 14s no game; Under 15s v Dumbarston United postponed; Under 16s v Ardencaple postponed; Under 19s 4, Broomhill SC 1. On target for Saints were Connor Howe (2), Zak Straub and Jamie MacPherson.

This weekend's fixtures: Milngavie v Under 13s; Under 14s v Helensburgh; Broomhill v Under 15s; Blairdardie v Under 16s; Baljaffray v Under 19s.



IN THE SWIM: two members of Oban Otters swimming club won gold medals at a gala in Grangemouth. Calum Bichener, right, earned nine personal best times and won the 10 - 11 age group 50-metres freestyle in a time of 36.64 seconds. Sam set four personal bests as he struck gold in the 12 - 13 age group breaststroke.

Oban Lorne travel to take on bottom of the table Uddingston

Rugby

OBAN Lorne are back in action this weekend with a trip to bottom of the table Uddingston on Saturday.

The Green Machine have not faced Uddingston this season and will travel for the game as strong favourites against a team which hasn't won a single league fixture all season.

A win for Oban Lorne will be another step closer to overtaking Cambuslang at the top of the table. Despite two promotion places being available, the Oban squad and management team have set a season-long target of winning the Division 2 title and therefore gaining promotion to West Division 1.

Oban Lorne currently sit in second place and have three games in hand over Cambuslang which they currently trail by nine

points. With five league fixtures remaining, Oban could potentially win the league with two games to spare if a bonus point win is achieved in the next three fixtures.

Despite taking on the league's bottom side, Oban coach Corrie Louw knows his team will face a tough encounter on Saturday and is looking for his squad to turn out in good numbers at training this week to prepare for the game.

Kick off on Saturday is 3pm. Argyll and Bute Rugby Football Club is in action this Saturday away to Moffat in West Division 4.

Any player who would like to play should contact Tommy Sutherland or Connor Ferris.



CHAMPIONS: Oban's Park School primary seven and under team which won the national first shinty tournament held in the Nevis Centre, Fort William, last Saturday

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competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

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Claggan Park falls victim to the wet weather once again

Fort William may be allowed to play after the official end of the Highland League season

Football

FORT William Football Club will play their next six games at home as they battle a backlog of 13 games.

The Scottish Highland Football League announced new fixtures on Monday night which will see the Claggan side play two games almost every week until the end of the season on April 18.

First up, the Fort will take on Cove Rangers this Saturday (March 7), before welcoming Forres Mechanics on Wednesday March 11 and Wick Academy the following Saturday.

They will play a further three games at home, against Inverurie Locos, Clachnacuddin and Fraserburgh, before their next away clash against Rothes on April 1.

This comes after a waterlogged pitch at the weekend put paid to yet another home fixture, this time against Inverurie Locos. It has now been more than three months since the Fort last played at Claggan Park, on November 22 last year.

But David MacDonald, vice-chairman of the club, said if the weather doesn't improve Fort

William could be playing after the official end of season.

He added: 'We were worried about trying to squeeze them all in but if we can still play a couple after the end of the season that's a big weight off.'

'The problem is we're not getting dry weather for more than one day so the pitch hasn't had a chance to recover.'

'We went to Claggan on Thursday night and the pitch was just full of puddles.'

'We need the weather to improve before we can even think about playing at home and I wouldn't put money on that.'

There has been at least some good news for the Fort as two new players have signed for the club.

Robert Smith has joined from Shetland and can play either centre-half or right-back and ex-Clachnacuddin midfielder Scott Chisholm has also signed after training with the club for a number of weeks.



Prizewinners of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league 20_f10bowling01

Alleycats prove to be top dogs

Ten pin bowling

ALLEYCATS were the top dogs of this year's Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league, taking first place in both divisions.

After the final night of the competition, the 'Cats had 77 points in the scratch division, three points ahead of second-placed The Creeps. Ardtoe/Nevis Radio took third place, also on 74 points.

Alleycats had a slightly bigger lead in the handicap division, with 69 points, Ardtoe/Nevis Radio were second on 65 and Rotavators were third with 62.

Alleycats swept the board on the final night with the top scratch game of 637, the top handicap game with 823, the best two-game scratch team series of 1,202 and

the top two-game handicap series of 1574. John Weller of the 'Cats also had the top individual scratch game with 192, the single handicap game with 240 and the individual two-game handicap series with 435.

Pam Weller (Alleycats) and Brian Stewart (Ardtoe/Nevis Radio) shared the top two-game scratch series with 341.

Season highs

At the prizegiving in the Nevis Centre on Monday night, a number of season highs were recognised.

Individually, the top scratch and handicap games of the season both went to Tim Attack of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with 216 and 272 respectively. The top two scratch series went to Ron Gretton, Rotavators, with 368

and the top two-game handicap series went to John Weller, Alleycats, with 490.

In the team games, top scratch game of the season went to Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with 661. The top two-game scratch series went to Alleycats with 1,272. British Legion Fort William B had the best handicap game of 920 and the top two-game handicap series of 1,706.

The highest scratch average went to Brian Stewart, Ardtoe/Nevis Radio, with 163 followed by Pam Weller, Alleycats, on 156 and Tony Whitelocke, also of Alleycats on 151.



WINNERS: The top three competitors for boys and girls in the Portree primary school cross country event.

Portree primary hold cross country event

Cross country

MORE than 100 Portree primary pupils took part in the school's cross country championships.

Children in primaries five to seven enjoyed the annual event and the winners were Charlotte Gordon for the girls and Joe

Jones for the boys.

Holly Maclean and Archie MacDonald came in second place and Ellie Dynan and Taylor Matheson were third.

Gary finishes Glen Nevis race in front

Athletics

GARY MacDonald was first home in Lochaber Athletic Club's (LAC) vitrified fort race on Sunday.

The club member finished the Glen Nevis race in 34 minutes and 32 seconds. Second-placed Steven MacDonald, also LAC, was hot on his heels for the whole three miles, finishing shortly after in 34 minutes and 47 seconds.

Luke Taylor of Highland Hill Runners took third place in the penultimate race of this year's winter league, crossing the finish line in 35 minutes and four seconds.

First lady home was Diane Baum in 39:25, followed by Marie Meldrum in 42:25, both are LAC members. The race also marked another record turnout for the club, with a field of 64 runners taking on the tough uphill route.

The final winter league race for the year is the Glen 10k, on Sunday March 15.

Registration is from 10am at Claggan Park.

Top 20 finishers, LAC unless stated: 1 Gary MacDonald 34:32; 2 Steve MacDonald 34:47; 3 Luke

Taylor, Highland Hill Runners 35:04; 4 Jon Gay 36:04; 5 Bruce MacLean 36:39; 6 Mark Shaw 36:44; 7 Tim Brand 36:57; 8 Hughie MacKintosh 37:12; 9 Douglas Runciemam 38:17; 10 Ian Mackellaig 38:31; 11 Aidan Donnelly 38:50; 12 Gavin MacMillan 39:07; 13 Allan Lamont 39:15; 14 Diane Baum 39:25; 15 Ali Kennedy 39:39; 16 Neil Waslidge, unattached, 39:54;

17 Gordie Taylor, Highland Hill Runners, 40:07; 18 Pawel Cymbalista, 40:08; 19 Andy Craig 40:14; 20 Ben Dodman 40:30.



FIRST HOME: Gary MacDonald, front right, was first home of the 64-strong field on Sunday 20_f10athletics01

Igor boxes to another victory

Boxing

LOCHABER Phoenix boxer Igor Sliwinski added another victory to his belt at the weekend, when he took on Aberdeen's Jordan Pirie.

The 18-year-old knew he had a tough fight on his hands with this light welterweight bout as just three years ago Pirie reached the semi-finals of the Scottish Elite championships.

In the first half of the opening round on Friday night, Pirie, of Kincorth Boxing Club, bobbed and weaved, landing hooks with both hands but with a change in tactics Sliwinski began to land short with accuracy and one six-punch combination had Pirie on unsteady legs, forcing the referee to issue a standing eight count.

The Kincorth boxer blazed back into action on the resumption but found Sliwinski impossible to deny as he fired another powerful attack and once more the referee issued an eight count. The bell sounded before Igor could find the punches to finish the contest.

The minute rest was enough time for Pirie to recover and for the rest of the contest the two boxers attacked each other with ferocious combinations as one then the other would look to gain ascendancy.

Sliwinski's shots always carried the greater power and on occasion there would be a noticeable dip in Pirie's legs as the shots landed flush. Sliwinski also showed a slightly tighter defence and the unanimous decision was made in his favour.



SUCCESS: Igor Sliwinski was victorious against Jordan Pirie of Kincorth on Friday

'Wee Tri' event for beginners

Triathlon

A TRIATHLON for beginners will be held in Fort William later this month.

The 'Wee Tri' will be held from Lochaber Leisure Centre on March 21 and 22.

Made up of a 400m swim, 15km of cycling and a 6km run, the competition by No Fuss Events is ideal for beginners.

The Saturday (March 21) event is fully booked but spaces are available for day two.

For more information or to book a place contact No Fuss Events on 01397 772899 or at nofussevents.co.uk.

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WEATHER

Thursday Heavy rain
Winds strong south westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.

Friday Heavy rain
Winds south south westerly
Temperatures 8°C to 9°C.

Weekend Outlook Heavy rain on Saturday
Heavy rain on Sunday
Winds south south westerly
Temperatures 8°C to 10°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, March 5, 2015** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	05.32	3.8	12.15	1.0	17.57	3.9	** ** *	**
Fri	00.08	0.8	06.05	3.9	12.44	1.0	18.28	3.9
Sat	00.41	0.8	06.36	4.0	13.13	1.0	18.57	3.9
Sun	01.12	0.8	07.05	3.9	13.41	1.1	19.24	3.9
Mon	01.40	0.9	07.31	3.8	14.04	1.2	19.50	3.7
Tues	02.05	1.1	07.56	3.7	14.21	1.3	20.18	3.6
Wed	02.33	1.2	08.25	3.6	14.48	1.5	20.52	3.4

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate