

# The Oban Times

## & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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guide to

## Spring gardening

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### Connel man awaits bail hearing in India

A BAIL hearing will take place in India today (Thursday) to determine if Connel man Billy Irving can be released from prison pending trial.

Billy, 33, was arrested in October last year as part of the crew of an AdvanFort anti-piracy vessel operating in Indian waters.

The authorities accused the captain of the boat of trying to buy fuel illegally and carrying weapons without a licence, with the crew held jointly liable.

Thursday's hearing is a continuation of a hearing scheduled for last week, and comes days after Billy's girlfriend, Yvonne MacHugh, presented a petition with more than 144,000 signatures to Downing Street demanding action from the Prime Minister to speed the release of Billy and his five British colleagues.

His father, Jim, said Billy was starting to lose hope, but is keeping his fingers crossed today's hearing may finally see him released from jail.

He said: 'Being India, the hearing might be Thursday, it might not.'

'It's getting a bit warmer in India now; in the mid 30s reaching the 40s and there's no air conditioning so we're hopeful this is successful.'

He added: 'The petition to the UK Government has 144,000 names on it and if they ignore that it shows how arrogant they are. Surely they must do something?'

### Call for whisky tax to be dropped

ARGYLL and Bute's MP has called for the tax on whisky to be dropped, saying the near 80 per cent levy is 'grossly unfair'.

Alan Reid called upon fellow Liberal Democrats to lobby their Conservative coalition partners for a reduction on the tax.

And while he accepted Chancellor George Osborne was unlikely to cut the duty ahead of this week's budget, he says something should be done in future. He said: 'A lot of countries have tax regimes that benefit their own brands, yet we tax ours highly, benefiting imports. My view is alcohol should be taxed per unit rather than this unfair system.'



Oban High School's Alison MacVicar won best performance in the junior category at the FilmG awards.

### Oban pupil shines brightest at FilmG awards

AN OBAN High School pupil and a group from Castlebay Community School were among the main winners at this year's FilmG, the National Gaelic Film Awards.

Stars of stage and screen, including actors Greg Hemphill and Gary Lewis, helped to hand out the prizes at the sixth annual awards, held at The Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow, last Friday.

This year's competition theme was 'Rùn' (Love/Secret/Intention) which inspired an array of ideas for filmmakers in both the

12-17 age-group and the adult category, with a total of 76 films being submitted.

52 pupils from Castlebay Community School on Barra scooped two awards: the S2 pupils from Castlebay Community School on Barra scooped two awards: the

#### Performance

And the best performance in the 12 - 17

age group went to Oban's Alison MacVicar for her portrayal of Morag in Thoir an Aire! (Watch out!)

Other winners included Sgoil Lionacleit, Benbecula, who won Best Production in the 12-17 age category for their entry, An Tòimheachan (The Riddle).

Also from Benbecula, Fiona McAndrew, a student at Lewis Castle College, won Best Student Film for her music video, Gàidhlig mo Rùn (Gaelic my Love).

Best Documentary in the adult category went to Dòmhnaill Eòghainn MacKinnon from Harris for An Sgoil Bheag mu Dheireadh (The Last Little School).

HILL farmers in Argyll have warned they may have to give up rearing lambs unless action is taken to prevent sea eagles snatching newborn sheep.

While there seems to be some consensus between farmers and conservationists, who support relocation of nests near livestock farms, there is doubt the measure would work.

Not only does the farmer lose the value of the lamb, but the ewe often struggles to breed again when a lamb is taken, diluting the genetic value of stock.

The apparent agreement comes days before the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) presents its findings on sea eagle management to the Scottish Government following a survey of west coast farmers earlier this year.

Farmers have warned that no action is not an option, with some sheep breeders saying they have figures to prove up to 10 per cent of their stock can be taken by the birds each year.

One Lorn hill farmer, who did not want to be named for fear of threats from environmentalists, said it was 'vital' the Scottish Government introduced measures to help relocate troublesome birds, after losing 33 lambs from his near 600-strong flock to a nesting pair last year, costing him around £4,000.

He said: 'They're taking six per cent of your stock. I've got more than 50 years worth of records and you'd normally see a loss of less than one per cent each year. Six per cent is a huge number.'

Not only does the farmer lose

Mull's David Woodhouse operates a tourism business centred on sea eagles, taking advantage of the island's extensive population of the birds.

While he refutes suggestions the birds take live lambs, he has backed calls for powers to relocate troublesome sea eagle nests.

He said: 'If the process is right, I'd support relocation - but only if it's right for the birds.'

Mull's RSPB officer, Dave Sexton, said: 'At this stage, trying to move individual eagles or pairs does not look like a promising or workable solution.'

'Where it has been tried with other birds of prey, generally they return to the same area, regardless of distance.'

Andrew Bauer, NFUS' deputy director of policy, said: 'What we need is a sustainable solution without breaching Scotland's obligation to the European Birds Directive.'

'It will be for ministers to make any decision, but to sheep farmers this is a growing problem.'

### Further doubts over railway pier barrier

AN AGREEMENT has been reached to allow bin lorries access to Oban's Railway Pier, but there is fresh doubt as to why the controversial barrier blocking their way was erected.

Scotrail met with councillors, council staff and representatives of Oban Community Council last week to discuss problems with the barrier, erected last year without prior advice to Argyll and Bute Council.

Scotrail told the meeting the erection of the barrier was a 'le-

gal and necessary' requirement in order to comply with Transport Scotland's audit of stations and its responsibility related to rail associated car parks.

However, Transport Scotland has told *The Oban Times* Scotrail chose to install the barrier - with their support.

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## Father of boat tragedy victim praises safety improvements

THE FATHER of one of the four men who lost their life on Loch Awe five years ago this week has praised the work already done in improving safety on the loch.

Tomorrow (Friday) marks five years since Craig Currie, William Carty, his brother Steven and Thomas Douglas fell from their boat and drowned in the freezing loch.

A fatal accident inquiry found the men were not all wearing suitable lifejackets and had been drinking before attempting to cross the loch to their campsite, a site where a memorial cairn now stands.

A community safety company, Lochwatch, was established in the wake of inquiry's findings and has carried out a major loch safety campaign in-

cluding the purchase of lifesaving equipment and a patrol boat. Speaking to *The Oban Times* in the week of the anniversary, Craig's father, Les, said it was imperative that people continued to support the efforts of Lochwatch.

Mr Currie, whose family has so far helped to raise more than £10,000 for Lochwatch, said: 'Putting efforts into fundraising helps us as a family and we have more events planned for the end of this week.'

'When I tell people it is five years since Craig died they can't believe it. Most people remember it being a lot more recent.'

Asked about the role of Lochwatch, he replied: 'I think Lochwatch has done a great job and their message of loch safety is an on-going thing.'

'You can't say they have done this and that and we all forget about it, we have to keep alerting people to the dangers on lochs.'

Councillor Louise Glen Lee, Lochwatch secretary, said: 'The loss of these fishermen is still at the forefront of many people's minds, as is the loss of others on the loch, and these are incidents we can't have repeated.'

'Lochwatch is not only working at a local level but is working with the Scottish Government to keep loch safety on the national agenda.'

Lochwatch has applied to buy 0.4 of a hectare of land at Kinachreacan, by the loch, from Forestry Commission Scotland under the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS). The memorial cairn to the four men stands within the area applied for.

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## A82 to close at Pulpit Rock for five nights

WORK to widen the A82 at Pulpit Rock will see the road closed overnight for five days next week.

Starting on Monday March 24, the 10pm-6am closures will last until Friday March 28.

Dominic Murphy, Transport Scotland project manager, said: 'While we have tried to minimise the number of overnight closures, they are necessary to ensure the safety of road users and road workers while critical works are underway.'

'We would like to thank the local community and road users for their continued patience during these works.'

The A82 will be closed at Pulpit Rock, south of Ardlui, but will remain open on either side of the closure.

Diversion routes for through traffic are northbound via the A83 at Tarbet, A819 and A85 and southbound via the A85 at Tyndrum, A819 and A83.

## Oban councillor confirms resignation

ARGYLL and Bute councillor for Oban Fred Hall has stood down, as he revealed in *The Oban Times* that he would do.

The former police chief inspector for the town confirmed his resignation on Friday, saying he was doing so as he could no longer support the principles of the SNP, under whose banner he was elected, before resigning from the party in May last year.

An by-election is likely to be held on May 22, when the European Parliamentary Elections will be held, although the date is yet to be confirmed.

A spokeswoman for the council said: 'Councillor Fred Hall has advised the council of his resignation with effect from Friday, March 14.'

'The council's returning officer will now make arrangements for a by-election in accordance with normal procedures.'

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The waters off Portree provide a picturesque setting for Row St Kilda crew training.

## Countdown to daring 100-mile charity row

AN 18-FOOT wooden boat being used for a daring 100-mile charity row from St Kilda to Skye will be christened at an official naming ceremony at the lifeboat station in Portree on April 5.

The larch skiff, which was built in Greenock in the 1890s, has been undergoing a painstaking refurbishment at Waterloo Boatyard at Breakish on Skye to make her seaworthy for the perilous journey.

Her crew of eight Skymen have been using a similar vessel, built at Penfeler near Portree, for sea training until the boat is ready in two weeks' time.

But preparations for the

attempt, which is being undertaken in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers, have been beset by bad weather and equipment failure.

Row St Kilda to Skye expedition leader Donnie Nicolson, 40, said: 'Coming back from the Isle of Rom to Portree we snapped an oar.

Once the green light is given, 22 people, including the back-up team, will sail to St Kilda on support vessels, including the Broadford-registered fishing boat Dunan Star II and Portree cabin cruiser the Aimee-Louise.

The skiff will be lashed to the fishing boat's foredeck on the way out before being lowered into the water off St Kilda for the long row back home.

'Once we get the boat we will

be frantically training and we will try to get some 40 and 50-mile trips in. If the crew is not ready and the boat is not ready we will not go.'

The row could be made in May or June when fair weather is most likely, Mr Nicolson said.

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'Once we get the boat we will

The eight men will take turns at the four oars throughout the non-stop journey, which is expected to take two days.

Portree girls Rosin McDaid and Cathryn Baillie, together with Gill Housby from Carbost will share the coxswain's duties using a similar rota system.

Meanwhile, Mr Nicolson has traced a great-great grandson of Thomas Orr, the man who built the skiff. And John Kirk, who lives in Greenock, was delighted to learn of the St Kilda row.

Mr Nicolson said: 'He was super excited to hear about the adventure and that his great-grandfather's boat was still going on.'

CAMPAIGNERS have given a cautious welcome to Highland Council's decision to put the closure of 23 of its 35 service points on hold.

The offices, where people can pay bills or get face-to-face advice from staff, were due to be axed after the finance, housing and resources committee backed the controversial move.

But furious opposition from communities, many in the west Highlands, forced a rethink on closing Gairloch, Lochcarron, Broadford, Kyle, Fort Augustus, Kinlochleven, Acharacle and Mallaig service points, among others.

Instead, the council agreed at its meeting last Thursday to set up a 10-member cross-party customer services board to consult local communities and staff on the future of each office over the next 15 months.

The new policy does not guarantee the service points will stay open, only that a 'future service delivery model' will be agreed for each location.

The council will also spend £68,500 on improving its website so the public can conduct more transactions online and on the Alness service centre, which handles phone queries from

customers. Speaking after the debate, which saw an opposition motion to retain all the offices defeated by 43 votes to 31, Sleat Community Council chairman Roddy Murray described the decision as 'a step in the right direction'.

Mr Murray, who co-ordinated efforts in south Skye and Lochalsh to collect a 1,400-name petition against the closures, told *The Oban Times*: 'We have achieved our objective in making the council come out and speak to communities so that's a success.'

'We would have liked to see the closures done away with altogether but at least now we have a consultation exercise.'

### Viable

'What we want to know now is what the remit of this group is, and the criteria it is going to apply to decide whether or not these places are viable and if a business case can be made for them.'

Depute leader David Alston added: 'Our aim is to allow members of the public to contact the council in a way and at a time which suits them best - by phone, online, walk in face-to-face in some places, and face-to-face by appointment in others.'

pendent group Carolyn Wilson said: 'We will have to make sure that we do our bit to find ways of making these service points viable and keeping them open.'

'The administration said it can give no guarantees so it's up to people to use them or lose them.'

She added: 'It was really disappointing that members of the administration who gave really good reasons why service points should remain open voted against us.'

Council leader Drew Hendry said: 'This plan clearly sets out how we are going to go about our review over the next 15 months. We will be consulting in each local community to find a solution that meets the needs of local people.'

'The measures respond to the representations we have been receiving from the public, allowing us to go forward in a positive way.'

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## Wheelchair-bound CalMac passenger felt 'humiliated'

### Failures see staff forced to carry woman off vessel

A WHEELCHAIR-bound woman said she felt 'humiliated' after a lack of disabled facilities saw her carried off a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry at Mull.

The *MV Hebridean Isles* has been deemed 'not fit for purpose' by a community councillor on Mull after a disabled passenger had to be carried off the vessel while her powered wheelchair was brought down separately on ropes.

Craiginn's Passenger Access System (PAS), owned by Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL), was not working at the time - because of wet paint.

CalMac has now apologised for

the incident, which the passenger described to *The Oban Times* as 'the worst moment in my wheelchair life' at Mull.

Mull community councillor and owner of The Isle of Mull Hotel, Neal Goldsmith, has been approached by four other disabled ferry-users in recent weeks with similar complaints.

He said: 'If I told you that you could come into my hotel but I have no disabled facilities, then I would have environmental health on my case.'

'If that lift is not working and they know they can't unload and offload passengers appropriately, then that

boat is not fit for purpose and there needs to be some sort of emergency back-up plan.'

Referring to the *Hebridean Isles* incident, a spokeswoman for CMAL said the incident with the PAS happened because 'non-slip paint had taken longer than expected to dry due to the air temperature'.

A CalMac spokesman said: 'We can confirm that a situation arose on the *MV Hebridean Isles* when a passenger with mobility issues encountered problems disembarking because of a combination of the lift breaking down, the non-availability of the passenger access system in Craiginn and a breakdown in

communications onboard. We have fully accepted we were at fault and apologised profusely to the individual concerned and assured them that steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence. This has been accepted and both sides consider the matter closed.'

On its website, CalMac advises passengers who might need assistance when travelling, to tell them 'at least 48 hours before'.

Many of CalMac's larger ferries were built before the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) came into force and some aspects of their design can present challenges for people with reduced mobility.

### Group funds more life-saving public defibrillators

THE SAFETY of the four million annual visitors to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs received a boost with funding confirmed for another four life-saving public access defibrillators.

The Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs charity has joined forces with the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team to roll out the second phase of an ambitious park-wide health and safety initiative to purchase public-access defibrillators.

They will be based at Balmaha, Trossachs Pier, Stronachlacher and Balquhidder Glen, with them all to be in place before the Easter holidays.

This will take the number of public access defibrillators to 12 in villages and other key locations around the national park to improve the life survival chances of park visitors and local residents.

This is in addition to providing some mountain rescue teams in the area with lightweight mobile units.

This latest batch of units is being funded through the Friends of Our Park visitor giving scheme, business sponsorship from Loch Katrine Steamship Company and the Oak Tree Inn, Balmaha, as well as a generous donation from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

'Sudden cardiac arrest' are the UK's biggest killer and it is vital that defibrillators are easily accessible in different parts of the Park to improve life chances. The current survival rate for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest where CPR is performed is less than five per cent and with readily accessible defibrillation this can be raised to more than 50 per cent.'

James Fraser, chairman of the friends said: 'We are delighted to be supporting the latest phase of this important life-saving initiative which is aimed at making the national park a much safer place. This is a great initiative which will be of direct benefit to visitors as well as residents in some of the more popular tourist hotspots and sparsely populated communities where speedy access to emergency services is limited because of the distances involved.'

Stuart Ballantyne of Trossachs Search and Rescue Team said: 'It is great news that additional funding is being made available by the friends to enable us to speed up the roll out of more life-saving public access defibrillators in the national park which is the busiest outdoor recreation area in Scotland.'

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Friends trustee, Sheila Winstone, hands over a new defibrillator to Stuart Ballantyne, centre, and Gordon Young from the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team beside the red phone box at Trossachs Pier where the life-saving equipment will be housed.



## Mull's fantastic four hit all the right notes

PIPERs from Tobermory High School, on the Isle of Mull, have won the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships Quartet Competition 2014.

The fantastic four, Corrie MacKenzie, Fraser Mitchell, Alexander Anderson and their teacher, Calum MacLean, competed alongside 10 other schools on March 9 to become Scottish Schools Champions for 2014.

The group will receive a shield, trophy and prize money which will be used to purchase another set of bagpipes for the Mull and Iona Schools Pipers.

David Johnston, chairman of the committee behind the competition,

which has the motto Every School Needs a Pipe Band, said: 'The championships are basically a celebration of Scottish culture, music and heritage as expressed through pipes and drums so it's fantastic to see the very best of schools sharing this passion through the competition.'

Francesca

'This event has been a great platform for schools to come together. There were students from the independent sector, to the state sector to the far top of the country, right down to the south but they've all shared the same interest in the music of the bagpipe which is just great to see.'



The fantastic four won the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships Quartet Competition 2014.

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## Lorn Lines

TWO THOUGHTFUL girls from Lochinell Primary School have organised a coffee morning this Saturday in Benderloch to raise funds which will allow two of their classmates to attend Riding for the Disabled more often.

The two hosts of the fundraiser, 10-year-old Freya MacKeanie and 9-year-old Eilidh MacPherson know how much their two disabled school friends benefit from the riding group and they want to help them attend more often.

The coffee morning will take place in Benderloch's Victory Hall between 10am and 12pm this Saturday.



THE Scottish Women's Rural Institute's under-35 champion, Sally Weaser, was the guest at the Oban branch's March meeting. It was another busy night with new members and guests attending Sally Weaser's polymer clay demonstration and workshop. Sally shared her in-depth knowledge of the colourful medium, and demonstrated how to make beads and buttons. She was inspired to start her handmade jewellery business, Boafrosh, having been a SWRI member for a year.

The institute provided a creative outlet for her talents and with the encouragement and support of the Oban members, she took the plunge and started her business. Sally is running polymer clay workshops for rural members later in May, and full day courses in Craobh Haven. Fingerless gloves were the challenge for the monthly handicraft competition, and it was gold for Joan Maclean, Jenny Miller and Anne Malloch and silver for Margaret Devine, Ruth Russell and Fiona MacCallum.

In the housewives' competition, it was gold for Jenny Miller's butterfly cakes with silver for Ruth Russell and red for Ann Malloch.

In preparation for the big area show on April 19 in the Corran Halls, the next meeting will be a flower arranging demonstration by Karen Mackie.



Dunbeg Primary School pupils show off their certificates

15\_t12dunbegprimary

POETIC pupils from Dunbeg Primary School have won a writing competition and will have their poems published in a young writers' anthology.

All 18 pupils in primary four and five were successful and will have their poetry published in a collection which will be released on May 31.

Their teacher, Miss Glenda Marwick who entered them into the competition is delighted with the budding young writers' success and believes the competition helped them to use their imaginations.



KILMORE'S young and not-so-young residents gathered in the village hall last Wednesday for The Kilmore and District SWRI's annual beetle drive.

After a hectic and very competitive six rounds, the teams broke up for some light refreshments. There was also a produce

stall, a bric-a-brac table and a raffle. Altogether, £184 was raised.

The next meeting of the SWRI will be on Wednesday, April 9 at 8pm in the Kilmore Community Hall when there will be a presentation on the work of The Children's Hospice Association Scotland.

## Bridge of Orchy lorry crash closes A82 for 12 hours

A LORRY carrying hydrogen peroxide caused a 12-hour A82 road closure near to the recently upgraded bridge on the south side of Bridge of Orchy.

The northbound HGV crashed at around 11am last Tuesday after a wheel caught the nearside verge, causing the

vehicle to tip over. Suspecting the liquid would be leaking Police Scotland closed the road at Glencoe and Tyndrum but an operation to recover the vehicle prevented any leakage.

Hydrogen peroxide has a number of uses, including hair dye.

It was a product

particularly for rural areas, which require more generalists than better financed city hospitals. The majority of trainee doctors in recent years have tended to specialise, increasing the problems.

### Appeal

Some rural areas have also found it difficult to attract permanent appointments for clinical positions,

but John said the location was part of the appeal.

He said: 'I worked in Lancaster and Kendal as a consultant surgeon since 1995, but I decided I would like to have a change. I saw this

position and it appealed - I really like the idea of rural surgery.'

'I like building relationships with patients over a period of time and I can do that far more here.'

'I'm also really fond of this part of the world, having been coming up here most of my life.'

'There is a huge amount to attract people to the Highlands and to me it's slightly baffling whenever I hear about problems related to recruitment.'

He added: 'Delivery of surgical care is a team effort. It's not just about me, it's about the whole

team.' His appointment may also lead to the introduction of new services, with John investigating carrying out vascular surgery at the hospital.

John moves to the area with his wife Nicky, a GP who will this summer take up her new job at Taynuilt Medical Practice.

Donald Watt, Clinical Services Manager at the hospital, said: 'John's appointment completes the three surgeon posts we have here. We're delighted to bring him on board and he'll be a great addition to our local health services.'

team.

## Bypass route options go on public display

NINE options for a replacement route round the rockfall-prone A890 Strome Ferry bypass will be presented to the public at two drop-in sessions next week.

The consultation events, in Lochcarron Village Hall on Thursday and in Achmore Village Hall on Friday, will run from 1pm to 7pm.

Representatives from Highland Council and consultants URS Infrastructure and Environment UK Ltd will be present to take comments and answer questions.

Possible alternative routes include a bridge across the narrows between Lochcarron and Strome Ferry and a by-pass through Attadale Estate between Strathcarron Junction and Glen Udalain.

The long process to select a preferred option for the new route started in autumn 2012, when the council appointed URS to carry out the appraisal.

The council is expected to select its preferred route in autumn 2014 based on the consultants' recommendations.

The bypass has been affected by rock fall and intermittent closures since it opened in 1970.

## MSP invests in Mull hydro scheme

AN MSP who has spoken out in favour of renewable energy is putting his money where his mouth is by investing in a hydro scheme on the Isle of Mull.

Mike MacKenzie, an MSP for Highlands and Islands, has shown his support for Green Energy Mull's (GEM) hydro scheme project by becoming a voting member.

The project is a 400kw hydro scheme that will generate an income stream for the islands of Mull and Iona, returning between £30,000 and £100,000 per year in net profit.

To raise capital for the scheme, shares in GEM are being sold and nearly £400,000 has been invested.

Richard Thorne, operations and development manager at Mull and Iona Community Trust, said: 'It is especially good that Mike believes in this scheme and is willing to put his money where his mouth is.'

Mr MacKenzie said: 'I am delighted to be able to help this very innovative and pioneering project. Scotland has an enormous renewable energy potential and I am passionate about communities realising these opportunities and having ownership of their own projects.'

## Ploughing match postponed

THIS year's Lorn Ploughing Match has been postponed for one week after organisers deemed the field at Dunach Estate, Kilmore, to be too wet.

The event was due to take place this Saturday but will now be held on Saturday, March 29.

A number of prizes are on offer, including *The Oban Times* Trophy for the best rig.

Four pairs of horses are expected to compete in a horse-drawn plough section.

# Tiree welcomes £1.1m of road improvements

THE ISLE of Tiree will see a roads improvement programme worth £1.1m carried out on its roads this year - the first major works there since the break-up of Strathclyde Regional Council.

Tiree will be the main beneficiary of Argyll and Bute Council's Roads Reconstruction Programme spend in 2014 - 2015, worth around £7m across the county, as every council-owned road on the island will undergo surface dressing work from April.

This is the final year of the £21m three-year capital project, which aims to improve the council's main routes. Since 2011 the council has upgraded nearly 40

per cent of its A class roads, amounting to 400 kilometres.

Catriona MacLennan of Tiree-based haulage company MacLennan Motors said: 'Argyll and Bute Council has always tended to just patch up the roads on Tiree, which I always thought was just throwing money away.'

'It is fantastic this much money is being directed to Tiree because for the past 20 years they have been neglected.'

The island is very fortunate to get this level of investment and I look forward to seeing a good job well done.'

The Isle of Mull has been allocated £1.42m to upgrade sections of the A849 at MacCal-

lum Garage, Assapol Cottage to Fraoch Mor, Hazelbank Cottage and Callachay.

Elsewhere in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, a total of £290,000 will be spent carrying out inlay work on Oban's Campbell Street, Dalriach Road and Polvinster Road.

Carriageway resurfacing will also take place on the A816 at Oude Dam.

On the A819, south of Kilchurn, £246,000 has been set aside for carriageway widening and overlay work, while the crumbling B845 between Taynuilt and Kilchrenan will receive much needed strengthening and widening work worth £200,000.

Carriageway widening and overlay will take place on the A816 between Kilmuir and Scammadale, worth £110,000. The council has also recently agreed to adopt the former private section of Achaleven Road in Connel and has allocated £57,000 to bring it up to standard.

Asked how he would cope with a reduced budget, Mr Robertson replied: 'I am comfortable with that because of the huge investment we have made in the roads; it is spend to save, if you like.'

Councillor Louise Glen Lee congratulated the roads department on its work but urged it to speak with BEAR Scotland on the deterioration of the area's trunk roads.

## Morvern Lines



The stone at Kiel which may have been intended for Charles Cameron, architect to Catherine the Great of Russia.

RUSSIA is in the news these days and although it lies more than 1,500 miles away, there was a time when there were a number of links binding Morvern and Mull to the ruling families of this vast and powerful empire.

The first was Charles Cameron (1743-1812) whose family, the Jacobite Camerons of Glendessary, lived at Acharn in Morvern. Charles became architect to the Russian Empress, Catherine II, known as 'The Great'. Cameron arrived in Russia in the summer of 1779 and through his talent soon came to the attention of the Empress.

His first work was to alter and enlarge Tsarskoye Selo Palace, the former residence of the imperial family near St Petersburg, whose façade is a staggering 1,200 feet long.

Having delighted the Empress with this she commissioned him to build the Agate Pavilion in the palace grounds, described by experts as 'the most exquisitely elegant, neoclassical interior in 18th century Europe'.

He also built the 'Cameron Gallery' which is the only building in the world, it is believed, to be named after its architect. In later years when the Empress was too old and heavy to walk up the steps of the 'Kamenorova Galleriya', he added an inclined ramp to assist her.

Charles Cameron found Russian workmen lazy, incompetent and thieving and more used to working with wood than stone so he imported labour from Scotland; perhaps even from Lochaber and Morvern.

He died in St Petersburg. His grave is no longer known and his distinguished career disappeared into oblivion and obscurity for many years thanks to the anti-Jacobite brigade.

Back in Morvern there are a number of Cameron of Glendessary gravestones in Kiel. One very fine table-tomb is complete in every sense of the word except that it lacks an inscription.

It is thought to have been commissioned for Charles by his family in the hope that one day his body would come back to Morvern from Russia. It seems it never did and the stone was left unmarked.

The second link was Catherine Mackinnon who was born in 1778 at Usken on the Ross of Mull. Her mother was a Macdonald and her father, John Mackinnon, known locally as 'Gobba Fada', (the tall smith), was a cattle dealer and blacksmith at Gribun around 1800.

One of his direct descendants was Donald Mackinnon, first elected Professor of Celtic Languages, Literature, History and Antiquities at Edinburgh University, a chair he occupied from 1882 to the year of his death in 1914.

According to several sources Catherine went to live with an aunt in Edinburgh when she was in her early twenties.

There she met Norman Macleod of Fiunary and an English woman whose husband held an official position in St Petersburg. Both encouraged her to travel to Russia where she met someone who introduced her to a member of the Russian Imperial Family.

However, according to Ross of Mull tradition, the Russian Royal Family was cruising in Scottish waters; they came ashore near Gribun where during a walk met Catherine and her family.

Taken by her natural charm and pleasant manner they invited her to return with them to Russia. Her parents consented, feeling that she would have greater opportunities there than on Mull.

Whatever the true story is we will never know but Catherine, the blacksmith's daughter from Gribun, served three Czars and was nanny and governess to their children; this is why Alexander II was able to speak fluent English whenever he visited London. He even picked up some Gaelic from Catherine and could sing a few songs in the language!

When the Crimean War began in 1853, Catherine, now an old lady, decided she could not live in the palace while Russian troops were killing her countrymen, so she asked if she could retire. Sad to let her go, the Czar asked if there was anything he could do. 'Nothing', was her reply, except to order his army commanders to show mercy to any Highlanders wounded or taken prisoner. This he did.

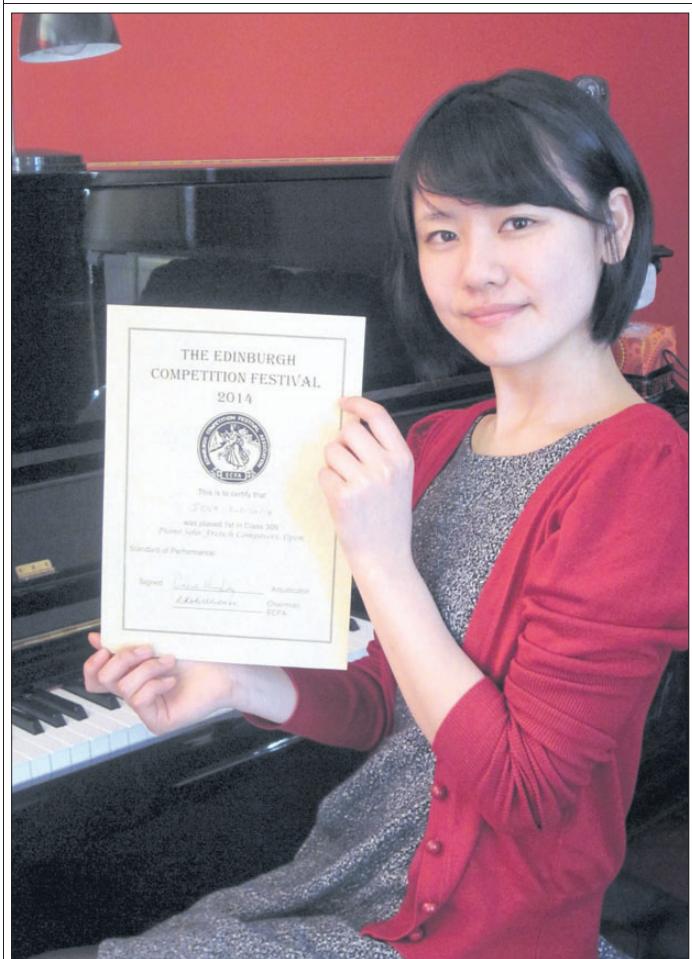
After the Crimean War ended and shortly before she died in 1858, Catherine wrote to her family in Mull to tell them that she had lent a considerable fortune to a Col. Michael Kirikoff of the Emperor's Guard at St Petersburg.

He was to return it to them in full but it never reached Mull. Interestingly The Oban Times tried to help her relatives by publishing articles and letters on the subject, but the whereabouts of the 'Russian Fortune' remains a mystery to this day.

When Catherine was dying it is said that the Czar came to her bedside every day to read to her from the Gaelic Bible from which she had taught him.

The Imperial Family never forgot her and some years later, according to *The Oban Times* of July 2 1892, Czar Alexander III ordered a length of tweed from her old home on the Ross of Mull to remember her by.

Iain.Thornber@btinternet.com



Lena Kurishita with her prizewinners' certificate.

## Piano student hits all the right notes

A YOUNG piano student has repaid her tutor's faith in her by winning a prestigious competition in Edinburgh.

Lena Kurishita, 17, began lessons with Oban piano teacher Kenny Harrover two-and-a-half years ago, when her family moved to the town from Japan.

And two weeks ago the teenager won the piano solo French Composers competition

at the Edinburgh Competition Festival.

A delighted Kenny said: 'She had passed her grade 4 exam in Japan but I saw a lot of potential and catapulted her to grade 8.'

'She is totally committed to learning and is very talented.'

The event gives Kenny's pupils and other young pianists the chance to play in public, while raising money to maintain Oban Music Society's piano.

the Lady Fermoy Cup at the Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival, will play her prizewinning Edinburgh piece at the Piano Fun event in Oban's Glencruitten Parish Church on March 30 at 3pm.

The event gives Kenny's pupils and other young pianists the chance to play in public, while raising money to maintain Oban Music Society's piano.

No-one from the estate provided a comment.

Up for demolition: the old school at Kingairloch.

## Lucky Mull reader wins bike hire and rail tickets

A LUCKY reader has won a day's bike hire and a free railway journey as part of a competition run by *The Oban Times*, Nevis Cycles and ScotRail.

Mrs JM Davies, of Bunessan, Isle of Mull,

correctly answered the question: What bike hire discount does Nevis Cycles offer to people using the Freedom of Scotland Travelpass? The answer was 15 per cent.

The competition was published in *The*

*Oban Times* on February 27. Mrs Davies has been given a day's free bike hire for two adults from Nevis Cycles in Fort William, plus two free, first class, anytime return tickets on any ScotRail journey.

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## Man threatened to publish intimate photos of ex on Facebook

FOLLOWING a bitter break-up a man threatened to post intimate photographs of his ex on his Facebook page, Oban Sheriff Court heard on Monday.

First-time offender Joseph Kulaszewicz, aged 40, of Tigh Ban, Kilchrenan, admitted sending a text to the woman on November 15 last year threatening to put the pictures online.

Prosecutor Fiscal Eoin McGinty said Kulaszewicz took umbrage to the complainer having a photograph of him on her Facebook account.

The fiscal said: 'On November 15 he texted her: "Delete. If not I will put your photos on my profile. You know what kind of photos I have of you." She was sufficiently alarmed to contact the police.'

Gordon Seaton, Kulaszewicz's defence agent, presented two references of good character to Sheriff Douglas Small, adding: 'He is well thought of in the community, both personally and as a good worker.'

Sheriff Small fined Kulaszewicz £450.

## Text message to former partner leads to £250 fine

A TEXT message to a former partner cost a man a £250 fine when he appeared before Oban Sheriff Court on Monday.

The message sent by Duncan MacMillan, age 43, of Glenura, Ardconnel Road, Oban, was received by the woman on December 21 last year when at her place of work in the town.

MacMillan pled not guilty to sending a message which was of a grossly offensive, or indecent or obscene or menacing character; uttering threats with the message.

She told the court she was in tears after reading the text.

MacMillan never denied sending the message, but told the court: 'It wasn't meant to be offensive, it was just the wrong wording.'

'I was trying to make my point.'

'Childish name-calling is almost becoming an offence,' said MacMillan's defence agent Edward Thornton.

## Wrong address given in court

AN ADDRESS provided in Oban Sheriff Court for James Hendry, who was convicted earlier this month for sending abusive, derogatory and sexual remarks, was incorrect.

The procurator fiscal service was provided with the address of 5 Combie Street, Oban, for Hendry, 32, when it should in fact have been 5 Combie Court, Oban.

Following the offence, Hendry was returned to prison to complete the remaining 182 days of an unexpired sentence.



Fiona Bennett and David Vick have arranged for McCraig's Tower in Oban to be lit up in support of Epilepsy Scotland's Purple Day. 16\_112epilepsy01

## Purple tower puts spotlight on epilepsy

MCCAIG'S Tower is to be lit up in purple - the colours of Epilepsy Scotland - in a bid to raise awareness of the condition.

The charity's international Purple Day on March 26 will see events held across the world but McCraig's Tower will be one of the few Scottish landmarks to be bathed in purple light.

Fiona Bennett, from Ardgartan, and Taynuit's David Vick, who have both suffered from epilepsy, are leading the local efforts to mark Purple Day.

Fiona, who came up with the McCraig's Tower plan, said: 'When you are first diagnosed after having a seizure at work "out of the blue".'

A mechanic to trade, David is unable to drive for fear of suffering a seizure.

'But everyone has a story about epilepsy and you are certainly not alone. By lighting up the tower I hope to make more people

aware of the condition and help them understand it.' Based on Epilepsy Scotland's estimates nearly 1,000 people in Argyll and Bute and more than 3,000 people within NHS Highland could have the condition.

Fiona was diagnosed at 17 and although she said the condition 'hugely impacted' on her life - she once suffered a seizure while crossing a road - the effects of the condition have lessened with medication and she has not fitted in 10 years.

David, however, has only recently been diagnosed after having a seizure at work 'out of the blue'.

A mechanic to trade, David is unable to drive for fear of suffering a seizure.

'It has totally knocked me,' David admitted. 'I'm a mechanic that can't drive and I love classic cars, so I took the news pretty hard. It

was like someone had chopped my legs off. The seizures come without warning and afterwards you feel disorientated, like feeling really drunk. I hope that by raising awareness of this condition I can make people think about it more and recognise when someone has had a seizure.'

With the help of Louis Barrow from Oban's Corran Halls, it is hoped McCraig's Tower will be lit up in the days leading up to Purple Day.

Epilepsy Scotland Public Affairs spokeswoman Allana Parker said: 'We applaud Fiona Bennett's efforts in arranging for Oban's prominent McCraig's Tower to glow purple on March 26.'

'I'm sure Fiona's example will inspire others to ask for their local landmarks to be part of international Purple Day.'

## Quarry raffle cash boosts care home funds



Wendy King (left) presented Abbeyfield Care Home's deputy manager Louise Duffy with a generous cheque after holding a fundraising raffle.

A LOCHABER care home is well on its way to funding much needed new facilities thanks to a generous donation.

Wendy King held a raffle in Glensanda Quarry, where she works and raised £2,620 for Abbeyfield Care Home in Ballachulish.

Thanks to this boost, the charity has almost reached its £10,000 target to install a new bath with an electric moving seat.

Louise Duffy, deputy manager at Abbeyfield, said: 'Wendy did a great job. Facilities like this make such a difference to the residents and we always have a list of things to upgrade or replace. We're an independent charity and so much of what we

do depends on donations and fundraising from local people.'

Ms King, a kitchen assistant at Glensanda Quarry, owned by Aggregate Industries, acquired prizes such as an iPad mini, a laptop, a sat nav and a TV and DVD player for her raffle.

She said: 'We received a couple of donations but the large majority of the money came from raffle ticket sales. My nan spent the last year of her life in Abbeyfield and the care she received was fantastic so it's really nice to be able to give something back.'

Ms King and Ms Duffy thanked Aggregate Industries for allowing the raffle to go ahead, local businesses for donations and everyone who bought tickets.

Managing director of Scotgold, Chris Sangster, said: 'The deal is subject to a couple of regulatory issues we're proceeding with at the moment, which should take another month or so.'

'The prices have picked up quite nicely of late, but people are optimistic and pessimistic in equal measure.'

'You could put 100 people in a room and they wouldn't agree on prices.'

'However, the recovery at the moment would appear to be sustainable and that's not a bad place to be.'

Should it be finalised, the agreement to take on new investors would see a new company established, Marketco, which will market a proportion of future gold and silver produced on site in Cononish in the form of 'dore' bars, low purity bars sold for further refinement.

These would be marketable

as Scottish gold and silver, with Scotgold to sell it to Marketco at a premium of 10 per cent.

Scotgold would retain 40 per cent of the shares in Marketco, with investors retaining the other 40 per cent and Strathfillan Community Development Trust holding 20 per cent.

The value of Scotgold's project had dropped massively after last summer's crash in the price of both gold and silver.

With 160,000 ounces of gold and 596,000 silver in the Cononish hills, near Tyndrum, its value had gone from a high of nearly £190million in September 2012, to a low of around £124million in January this year.

Since the turn of the year there has been a steady climb in the value of the metals, although the combined value as of Monday of just over £139million is still £49million below its peak value.

## South Uist man arrested twice in a month

A YOUNG fish-farm worker from South Uist managed to get arrested twice within the same month when working on Mull, for passing counterfeit notes and taking a car without permission.

John Anthony MacNeil, aged 21, of Clover, Ardnamona, South Uist, came away from Oban Sheriff Court on Monday with a total of £550 in motoring fines and a community payback order including 90 hours unpaid work.

The offences all date back to 2012. He admitted that on July 14 he passed or tendered as genuine a counterfeit £20 note at the Tobermory Co-op and also at the Mishnish Hotel; the next day he did the same at MacGochan's Bistro and again at the Co-op.

MacNeil also admitted motoring offences in July 19 when he took and drove away a car without the owner's consent; drove without due care and attention, crashing the car into a fence and no valid insurance.

Sentences had been deferred from previous hearings.

Defence agent Edward Thornton said that MacNeil had been working on a fish farm on the island.

'He found these [counterfeit] notes within the room he was renting, they were relatively amateurish copies.'

## New room helps patients

A NEW rehabilitation room at Oban's Lorn and Islands Hospital is to provide a significant boost to people aiming to get back on their feet.

Kitted out with state-of-the-art equipment, the hospital's physiotherapy department is using the room to help in-patients regain the full use of their legs and arms following accidents and for procedures to remedy heart problems or back surgery.

The first floor room, which is in addition to the physiotherapy room on the hospital's ground floor, was formerly used by the Macmillan nursing team, which has moved into a new, purpose designed area.

Derek Laird, acting team leader of the hospital's physiotherapy department, welcomed the addition of the new space.

He said: 'This is a huge benefit to patients. From an in-patient point of view, it's vital we've got a space where we can work with them without the distraction of the ward. From our point of view, it means we can run rehabilitation classes without interfering with clinical areas, for example when classes are running.'

'Last year, we had about 2,500 patients. There can be days when we can see 10 or 20 people per day, so this is a big help.'

New equipment bought by the hospital to help with patient rehabilitation includes a recumbent bicycle worth £2,500, which was paid for by Argyll Beatz Cardiovascular Disease (ABC), and a £5,000 MotoMed machine, which uses 'resistive feedback' to aid mobility recovery, which was bought by the hospital.

## Mod 2017 planning underway as town forms organising committee

PLANNING for the 2017 Royal National Mod in Fort William is underway after the local organising committee (LOC) was formed at a public meeting last week.

The Gaelic cultural showpiece was universally hailed as a huge success when it was last held in the Lochaber town in 2007.

Now the new LOC faces the daunting task of making the 2017 Mod even better by enlisting a team of local volunteers to ensure the event runs smoothly at grassroots level.

But it was a muted start for the campaign as only around 15 people turned up to Caol Community Centre to appoint the committee.

Opening the meeting, Janet MacDonald, convenor of An Comunn Gàidhealach, the national body in overall charge of the Mod, said: 'It's

amazing to think that it will be 10 years since the last Royal National Mod was last in Fort William.'

'I am pleased to see you and I would like to have double this number here - but I'm sure you will all do your best to ensure we have a successful Mod here in three and a half years' time.'

Ronald Cameron, vice-convenor of Meur Lochabair, the local branch of An Comunn which runs the provincial Lochaber Mod, was appointed LOC convenor, with Linda Campbell secretary and Sandra MacCallum finance convenor.

More people will be needed to lead committees to co-ordinate fundraising, fringe events, accommodation, stewarding and transport of competitors between venues.

Linda Campbell said: 'If we can't get these positions filled we will

have to go out from here tonight and see who we can get involved. We have to work with local people to make sure this is a success.'

Councillor Brian Murphy suggested the LOC should again set up a liaison committee with sponsors Highland Council and look at setting up a base on the High Street.

He said: 'There are plenty of vacant shops and it would be good to get that started early so you can start fundraising as soon as possible.'

Asked by Councillor Murphy how much funding would be needed, Mr Cameron said: 'The Inverness Mod has to raise £30,000 this year so I would think it would be of that order.'

Fort William will host the eight-day celebration of Gaelic music and culture from October 13-20, 2017.



Looking forward to 2017: Back: An Comunn Mòd development officer James Graham, An Comunn convenor Janet MacDonald, LOC convenor Ronald Cameron, An Comunn chief executive John Morrison, and LOC member Ann-Marie MacRae. Front: Katie McCluskie, Moira Robertson, Sandra MacCallum and Linda Campbell of the LOC with Councillor Brian Murphy. 20\_12mod01

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**GLENORCHY**

THE FIRST of two Glenorchy Camanachd grant applications to community benefit funds has been successful.

The shiny club had requested £250 from the An Suidhe Wind Farm micro grant fund, via Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council.

Last Wednesday at the March meeting of the community council, there was unanimous agreement that the money should be granted.

The club has started a second team for the 2014 season and requires extra funding for sticks and first aid equipment.

Another grant application for £500 from the community council's own grant funds will be considered at the next meeting on May 14 in Bridge Orchy Church.

**TIREE**

TIREE High School will hold its annual concert on Thursday, April 3 at An Talla, showcasing all the talent in both the primary and secondary classes.

In the run up to the concert, many pupils will be practising their instruments more often.

The school is using the rehearsals as an opportunity to raise money for CLIC Sergeant's Children's Cancer Charity by getting everyone involved in a Practise-a-thon.

Children taking part in Music Club and music lessons will be asked to participate in a sponsored practise for five minutes every day for a week.

Children will collect signs to say they have completed their practise each day.

A spokeswoman for the school said: 'We are not looking for lots of contributions and sponsoring your child 50p for the week of Practise-a-thon would be more than fantastic.'

'It's a great opportunity to encourage children to practise outwith lessons while raising money for a good cause.'

The concert starts at 7.30pm.



Achaleven Primary School pupils spy the slimy Jelly Ear fungus in the playground.

**Mini mycologists on mushroom march**

WHILST exploring the school garden, the pupils at Achaleven Primary could have been mistaken for mini-mycologists - or just 'fun guys'.

The pupils were very excited to discover some Auricularia auricula-judae - commonly known as Jelly Ear fungus, growing in the school playground.

As keen eco-warriors, they studied the fascinating properties of the fungus, which can grow on dead wood, and discovered they

can shrivel up to about half their original size when dry. However, the fungus can easily be rehydrated to its former glory just by placing the wood in water.

Mrs MacPherson inputted the find on a Scottish Fungi website and the school's record has been logged with the Highlands Biological Recording Group. One of the pupils said: 'It was great to be able to log onto their website and see their record - this is what real mycologists do!'

a trip to Senegal and Gambia following the journey of some of these birds to their wintering grounds.

Admission is by donation and all funds raised go to the trust's work with local schoolchildren. The event starts at 7pm. Everyone is welcome.

**GLENELG**

GLENELG Primary School pupils will show support for a campaign to give small producers across the world a fair price for their produce when they stage their first ever Fairtrade fashion show next Wednesday.

The 26 children on the school roll will take to the catwalk wearing clothes made from Fairtrade cotton and perform a dance routine.

Acting head teacher Kate MacArthur said any money made will go towards Fairtrade organisations and school funds. The evening starts at 7pm.

**BENDERLOCH**

AFTER award winning performances at Celtic Connections, Marit Fält and Rona Wilkie will play Benderloch's Victory Hall

served by Mairi Hunter and Jenny Huntley.

Competition results: A pair of knitted socks: 1 Ann Watson, 2 Marion MacGregor, 3 Margaret Galloway. A cushion: 1 Ann Watson, 2 Margaret Galloway, 3 Bunty MacGregor.

Playing songs from their debut album, Turas, they explore the rarely probed similarities between their cultures, with their playful, borderless wanderings through the music of their people weaving an irresistibly alluring sound. For tickets for the gig, this Saturday, March 22, from 8pm, phone Campbell & Joy on 01631 720247.

**KILLIN**

AT THE March meeting of the Killin SWRI, the ladies had a most interesting talk from Catriona McGeough, who runs her business at Balquidder.

Catriona explained about the making of Harris Tweed, which is traditionally hand woven and still must be obtained from Harris Tweed official Orb logo.

The ladies were invited to make covered buttons, which was a great success. The evening was then rounded off with a cup of tea and biscuits

ACCLAIMED piper Fred Morrison will be the headline act at a concert in Glengarry Community Hall tomorrow night.

Members of Lochaber Schools Pipe Band will also perform at the event, which starts at 7.30pm.

**DUROR**

AN AWARD-WINNING yachtsman held a lecture in Duror and Kentallen Community Centre.

Bob Shepton, 78, of Appin gave an account of his sail through the North West Passage, from Greenland to Alaska in a small boat. Mr Shepton was named Yachtsman of the Year in January by the Apollo/Yachting Journalists' Association. Proceeds went to Duror Primary School.

**COLONSAY**

TEN TEAMS have been confirmed for this year's Colonsay Rugby Festival, which takes place on July 26 this year.

Among those who have confirmed are teams from Islay, Coll, Lomond, Strathendrick, Edinburgh and Oban Lorne.

The tournament began three years ago and has been growing in popularity every year.

**DUNVEGAN**

KNOCKBRECK Primary School in north Skye will hold its annual show tomorrow (Friday).

This year, the school's four pupils and two nursery children will entertain their local community at Hallin, north of Dunvegan, with a performance of Sleeping Beauty.

**MULL**

THE SCOTTISH Salmon Company has received no objections to add two 100-metre circumference cages and extend the seabed mooring area within the existing area near Mull at Geasgill, Loch Na Keal.

Mull businessman and councillor, Calum MacLachlann, confirmed that members of the Mull fishermen's association have met and are not objecting.

Councillor Fiona Brown added: 'We do, however, have to query the salmon company for putting their moorings out with the salmon site.'

**SPEAN BRIDGE, ROY BRIDGE AND ACHNACARRY COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

SPEAN BRIDGE, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council met at Spean Bridge Primary School.

Members raised concerns about a proposal to move the Spean Bridge Post Office into the village Spar shop. These included clutter and queuing difficulties, particularly during the tourist season while others expressed fear about security and lack of privacy.

It is thought postal transactions will mirror store opening hours, currently 78 hours a week in winter and 92 in the summer. All present at the meeting were asked to individually respond to the consultation, which can be done on the Post Office website.

The malfunctioning flashing warning light and the blocked carrier pipe in Roy Bridge have again been reported to BEAR Scotland and fast repair has been promised.

It was also noted that BEAR is carrying out a full accident investigation at the Brackletter junction on the A82 to determine the cause of the recent tragic accidents in an attempt to make the road safer.

Concerns were raised about the absence of warning signs on the A86 at the Spean Bridge play park, promised to be in place by spring. Chairman and secretary John Fotheringham will raise the issue again.

After further complaints about the roads at Inveroy and the help of Councillor Bill Clark, Highland Council's Transport, Environment and Community Services Committee have agreed to clear the ditches and patch up the road.

The next community council meeting will be at Spean Bridge Primary School on Tuesday April 1.

**STRONTIAN**

PLAY Pieces theatre group will bring its new contemporary work Forcan Beaga (Little Forks) to The Sunart Centre in Strontian next Wednesday.

The performance, which is in Gaelic and English and combines drama with live music, gets underway at 8pm.

Councillor Hamish Fraser, chairperson of Highland Council's Gaelic implementation group, said: 'We are delighted to be supporting Forcan Beaga as a unique way of presenting Gaelic in theatre and we look forward to the public enjoying the performances later this month.'

**SOUTH LOCHABER**

SOUTH Lochaber Primary Schools will compete in a dodgeball tournament on Tuesday (March 25).

Pupils in P5-7 from Duror, Glencoe, Kinlochleven, Ballachulish and St Bride's will take part in the competition in the Duror and Kentallen Community Centre.

**COLONSAY**

TEN TEAMS have been confirmed for this year's Colonsay Rugby Festival, which takes place on July 26 this year.

Among those who have confirmed are teams from Islay, Coll, Lomond, Strathendrick, Edinburgh and Oban Lorne.

The tournament began three years ago and has been growing in popularity every year.

**World Book Day fun**

Pre-school and primary pupils dressed in their pyjamas for the day and brought their favourite bedtime story and cuddly toy to school.

**Pyjamas, toys and bedtime stories**

IT WAS certainly not a sleepy day at Strath of Appin Primary on World Book Day, despite the pyjamas, cuddly toys and bedtime stories.

Staff and pupils enjoyed a day of book-themed activities and quiet reading time.

They also brought in photographs of themselves reading in unusual or interesting places, which included reading up trees, on diggers, in a wheelbarrow, on horse-back and even on a pair of skis.

A 'Big Book Quiz' in the form of a clan challenge kicked



For the recent World Book Day pupils at Dunvegan Primary School were asked to dress up as a favourite character from a book and the rest of the children were asked to guess who they were.



Spean Bridge primary was among the Lochaber schools marking World Book day. Staff and pupils got into the spirit of the event by dressing up as characters from their favourite children's book.



PORTREE Primary School pupils and staff celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as their favourite characters.

The children took part in a quiz and were each given a £1 voucher towards a new book.

Head teacher John Finlayson joined in the fun dressed up as Long John Silver from Treasure Island.



RHUHAORINE Primary School pupils have done their bit for Fairtrade Fortnight this week, asking their school fruit supplier to send them only Fairtrade bananas.

Primary 6 pupils, who sent the letter, received a reply from Argyll-based fruit supplier Breckenridge explaining they will be giving them Fairtrade bananas in future.

The company also donated a basket of fruit to the school for their open day today (Friday).

Pupils of all ages will be going bananas with stalls, baking, recipes and music dressed in yellow or in their pyjamas.

Money raised will go towards Fairtrade Fortnight.

Ruth Reid, headteacher at Rhuhaorine, said a big 'thank you' to Breckenridge for their support.

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RHUHAORINE pupils go bananas for Fairtrade.

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## Villagers' explosion fears as lorry burned for an hour

RESIDENTS in a Lochaber village feared a blazing lorry could explode and destroy their homes as they waited for an hour for firefighters to arrive.

The MAN truck burst into flames just yards from Morar railway station around 2.30pm on Monday.

The driver called 999 as the fire took hold in the tipper unit behind his cab - but the appliance from Mallaig station three miles away could not be dispatched because too few retained firefighters were available.

Meanwhile, the crew at Acharacle, the next nearest station, were attending a chimney fire.

The lack of local cover meant two appliances from Fort William - 43 miles away - had to be tasked to attend the incident.

According to local sources, the lorry was carrying a gas burner, bitumen, tar and equipment for putting in new barriers at the village level crossing over the West Highland line.

When it became clear that fire crews would be delayed contractors doing the work asked local people to help put out the inferno.

When that failed, the driver took the blazing vehicle away from houses and the hotel to open ground next to the local garage, where the fire was put out.

The truck burst into flames near Harlosh B&B, owned by Phil and Maggie Hunkin.

Ms Hunkin told *The Oban*

*Times*: 'One of the guys knocked on the door and asked if we had a fire extinguisher. It was getting quite scary. There was a lot of oil around and the side of the lorry was melting.'

'We did have visions of it blowing up. If it had, it would have destroyed the terrace of houses opposite and probably ours as well.'

'We took the precaution of opening our windows so there would not be a vacuum if there was an explosion. It was quite shocking to see really.'

One local man, who asked not to be named, said: 'It is just as well it was not a house fire or somebody trapped in a car because it could have been a very different story.'

'If it had exploded it would have been curtains, especially if there was no fire brigade to put it out. The cab engine was still running and they got it away from the houses and the hotel to open ground near the garage where there was a water supply to extinguish the fire.'

'At the end of the day the contractor had to make their own arrangements to put the fire out with garden hoses.'

'The driver was criticised for driving it away but I think he made the right decision and should be commended.'

He added: 'The locals are concerned about fire cover - it's not just Mallaig but Morar and Arisaig as well. The fire service is not meeting response times at the moment.'

## Recruitment problems

SCOTTISH Fire and Rescue Service area manager Scott Hay, the local senior officer for the Highland area, admitted there were problems in recruiting enough retained firefighters to respond to emergencies.

Mr Hay said the fire was reported at 2.36pm and the Fort William crews were on scene at 3.32pm.

He said: 'We always try to get there as soon as possible. At Mallaig we have eight retained crew and we only need four to staff the appliance to go to a job. Yesterday we dropped below that number.'

'Acharacle would have responded, but they were out at a

chimney fire so the next available station was Fort William. We do have periods of time at stations across the Highlands, Mallaig being one, where there are huge challenges for fellows who are part time fire fighters and have full time jobs.'

Mr Hay recognised that asking retained crew to balance providing operational cover with their primary employment can be difficult - and a suggested a possible solution.

He said: 'Locally we are targeting parent toddler groups because stay-at-home mums are a big resource.'

'If they want to join and help that could give us 24/7 cover.'



## Syeda hits the high notes at festival

Fort William girl Syeda Choudhury won the clarsach solo (advanced) competition at Lochaber Music Festival on Saturday. Syeda, 15, who was representing Lochaber Music School, performed the Massacre of Glencoe and the Banks of Allan Water as her own choice pieces. The six-day festival, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, concludes tonight with a final concert in Caol Primary School. See festival special, pages 12 and 13. 20\_f12fest04

## Pupils gear up for forest challenge

SCHOOL pupils from Lochaber and Skye will compete for honours in the fifth Leananachan Challenge round forest trails near Fort William tomorrow (Friday).

So far 45 runners from Mallaig, Portree and Lochaber high schools are booked in to take part with others yet to confirm, Isabel Campbell of organisers

Lochaner Rural Education Trust (LRET) said yesterday morning Races over set courses start from the trust's An Clachan base at Torlundy at 11am with athletes competing for individual and team trophies.

SI-2 runners run 3.5-kilometres, S3-4 5.5 kilometres and S5-6 eight kilometres on trails in Leananachan Forest.

All competitors receive a medal struck in memory of LRET trustee Peter English who inspired the inaugural challenge.

Last year, Lochaber High School pipped Portree and Mallaig to win the event overall.

Forestry Commission Scotland and Active Schools co-ordinators are providing support on the day.



## Commonwealth baton to come west

WEST HIGHLAND and island communities will celebrate the countdown to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games when they welcome the Queen's Baton relay after its global journey through 69 nations and territories of the Commonwealth.

The baton will arrive in the Western Isles on Monday, July 7 and will make its way north from Castlebay to Daliburgh, Benbecula, Tarbert and Lionel.

The baton comes to the Highland mainland for two full days on July 11 and 12. The relay will be at

Inverness Castle to start the ment of an international journey south to Argyll and Bute, with visits to Drumnadrochit, Fort Augustus, Spean Bridge and Fort William.

Highland Council con- On Sunday, July 13, the venor Jimmy Gray said: 'This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. The baton will visit more than 400 com- munities in total, offering people across Scotland a chance to be a part of the excitement, celebrations and countdown to the nation's biggest-ever sporting and cultural festival.'

Thousands of people will find out on March 31 whether their nominations to become baton bearers have been successful.

Further highlights on the baton's journey, as well as street-level details and full programme of events, will be announced nearer the time.

On July 23, the message Her Majesty placed in the baton will be read at the opening ceremony.

## Post Office makes island allowance

THE POST Office has extended its mortgage lending to other Scottish islands after criticism of a policy to limit services to people on Skye - but some islands remain excluded.

After a review of its policy following public and political pressure, mortgages have now been made available to customers in Skye, Bute, Lewis and Harris, mainland

Orkney, mainland Shetland, Arran, Mull and Islay. But a councillor for one of the islands still excluded, Barra's Donald Manford, said: 'Not only does this undermine our most vulnerable communities, it raises fears that this discrimination might be extended to other services.'

The Post Office said it would continue to review its policy.

## High hopes for Marie Curie appeal

FUNDRAISERS for Marie Curie Cancer Care in Oban hope generous donors in the town will once again turn out in force for the annual Daffodil Appeal.

In Oban in 2013, Oban and Lorn branch volunteers

amassed more than £1,000 in donations in just two days of collections at Tesco - the highest total raised by any group in the charity's west region.

They will be at the store again this Friday and Saturday.

Lilian said: 'The communities of Oban and Lorn are so supportive of Marie Curie.'

'We get a lot of money from retiring collections and anything that is raised here stays here.'

'I think the goodwill people show towards the charity has grown over the years.'

'Young people seem to be very aware of what the charity does and the children from the high school are very generous when we are collecting in Tesco.'

There are big changes coming in 2014 as Marie Curie looks to promote the work it does for all end-of-life patients, not just those with cancer.



Lillian Kermode, left, and Jenny McEvoy pictured at the Scottish Parliament.



## Shore Street Dental

Shore Street Dental Surgery in Oban is delighted to welcome Stewart Wright as new Associate Dentist. He believes in taking a holistic approach to dental care. He looks not just at his patients' teeth and gums, but takes into consideration their general health and wellbeing.

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preventive treatment. And I try to keep the monthly cost of the plans as low as possible.'

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# Retail park could force Fort firm out of business

## Jobs at risk if new site not found

### EXCLUSIVE

REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS  
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

might think I might not be here in six months time and take them. They all have families and they are better looking after themselves.

[Website design company] Hotscot have got to get out of here as well but it's easier to find offices. If you are looking for a workshop and a yard it's a different story.'

Hotscot boss Robert Hawkes said relocating in Fort William would cause few difficulties.

He said: 'This suits us because we are looking to make some changes to the business and this fits in well with our plans.'

Morbaine director Alex Brodie anticipated the bid being lodged next month and if approval was granted by October work could start early in 2015.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'Morbaine has a contract with the owner to buy the land subject to vacant possession.'

'In terms of relocating Mr Whitehead or him finding another spot that's up to him and the existing landlord.'

'From now he has nine months to find an alternative so it's a little extreme to say he can't find anywhere and will throw the men off site.'

Morbaine say the development would bring 150 permanent jobs and £10m of investment to the area, as well as further jobs during construction.



Micky Whitehead: closure fears

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# Take a LOOK at what LOCHABER has to offer

LOCHABER is going from strength to strength with a number of new projects and buildings regenerating the area, providing facilities to be enjoyed by locals and tourists alike.

The Outdoor Capital of the UK truly offers something for everyone with a wide range of places to eat, visit and stay, Lochaber really is springing back to life.

The area's biggest town, Fort William, has recently seen a new police and ambulance headquarters open as part of the massive Blair Mhor development, bringing state of the art facilities to the area and the arrival of new stores on the High Street is driving shoppers back to the town centre. With a mix of national names and one-off stores, there's something for everyone, and the High Street houses a range of bars, cafes and restaurants to rest your legs after a long day of shopping.

If adventure suits you better than a day at the shops, Lochaber offers skiing, water sports, climbing or even a trip up Ben Nevis, the highest mountain

in Britain. For the more easy going outdoor lover, Lochaber features some of the most beautiful walks in the country, from forests to beaches and lochs.

The Lochaber Music festival held this week brought the area to life, with performances and competitions to showcase the best local talent, in singing, poetry and a number of varying instruments.

Investment is being ploughed into Mallaig, with work due to begin on new marina facilities and a jetty, enhancing a village already popular with locals and tourists.

New accommodation will soon be available in South Lochaber as a project to build a new hotel and self catering flats in Onich has been approved, meaning there will be even more places to stay during a trip to Lochaber. So as winter gives way to spring why not get out and about in the Outdoor Capital and see the best Lochaber has to offer, you won't be disappointed.



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## Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar

Just a short walk from Fort William itself, the Glen Nevis restaurant is situated at the foot of Ben Nevis by the River Nevis.

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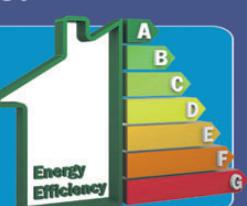
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## Enquiries continue into babygrow mystery

MYSTERY surrounds a bloodstained babygrow found in Fort William as enquiries continue.

The 0-1 month size garment was found on a footpath connecting Plantation and Upper Achintore last week and police later confirmed the blood was human.

All babies aged from newborn to three months in the Fort William area have been accounted for and the investigation is ongoing.

Jackie Carswell, an Upper Achintore resident, said: 'Myself and all of my neighbours were interviewed last Wednesday but from what I've heard nobody seems to know anything and I've heard nothing since. I'm sure it will come out eventually but I just hope it's nothing sinister.'

The babygrow is a Next product made of white cotton with cartoons of Native Americans, trees and totem poles. It has not been available to buy since 2010.

### Open-minded

The senior investigating officer running the enquiry, detective inspector Richard Baird said: 'There are a number of possible explanations as to how the babygrow came to be found with blood on it and we remain open-minded about this.'

'I am appealing to the people of Fort William to assist us with this investigation. Someone is missing this item and it's crucial that we find out who so we can be sure that everyone is safe.'

'If anyone has information about this type of babygrow or how the bloodstained item came to rest on the pathway I would urge them to report this to us.'

Anyone with information is encouraged to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111 or online at [crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org).

# Court finds man not guilty of assaulting Mallaig trio

THE LAST of four men accused of assaulting three members of the same Mallaig family in a series of drink-fuelled incidents in the fishing port has been found not guilty.

Samuel Sean Robertson, of 11 Gordon Brown Place, Mallaig, had denied punching Hugh MacIntyre on the head following an altercation with Mr MacIntyre's son Gregor.

Robertson, 20, previously lodged a special plea of self defence and at Fort

William Sheriff Court on Friday claimed Mr MacIntyre was the instigator. He said: 'He was aggressive and pushed me, he was shouting 'I'm going to f\*\*\*ing kill you'. I punched him and he came at me again. He pushed me on the chest and I punched him again.'

Mr MacIntyre denied pushing the 20-year-old in his testimony in court last month, but after hearing Robertson's evidence procurator fiscal Laura Ryan said she was no longer seeking

a conviction. Fort William FC player Sean Grant, 24, was appearing for sentencing after previously admitting punching Gregor, his cousin, on the head at East Bay during the fracas.

Miss Ryan told the court that Grant, 5E Ulva Road in Soroba, had only been trying to restrain his cousin and had only punched him to calm him down.

She said: 'There was no injury and it was suggested to police that this was the way these matters would be sorted in

the family.' Defending, Hamish Melrose said: 'Mr Grant wasn't there when the other incidents occurred, he tells me he was busy chatting up a female.'

'He has lost six days' pay and I think he has already been punished enough by the amount of time he has had to take off work to attend court.'

Sheriff Noel McPartlin agreed and admonished Grant.

Robertson and co-accused Lewis MacDonald, of Camanachd Crescent,

Fort William, were previously cleared of assaulting Gregor MacIntyre at Davies Brae in the early hours of September 9 2012. They had denied repeatedly kicking him on the head and body, resulting in a broken jaw and bruised ribs.

At the same hearing last month, Dominic Dempster, of 10 Blaven View in Mallaig was found not guilty of punching Gregor's younger brother Ewan on the head.

## Inspectors praise school's progress

ARDNAMURCHAN High School has been praised by education inspectors for progress made in tackling issues identified during a previous visit last year.

A report from a follow-up inspection in January by Education Scotland staff noted 'significant improvements' in monitoring and tracking the progress of young people.

Advances in learning and teaching, self-evaluation and in the quality of the curriculum were also highlighted.

Under the leadership of headteacher Christopher Millar-Craig and his management team, the school was developing 'a more comprehensive system to evaluate and improve the quality of its work'.

The report stated although there was scope for further improvement in consistency, pace and challenge in lessons, it acknowledged that in the last two years every pupil has gone on to college, higher education, training or employment.

The positive impact of the

work of parents, partners and pupils themselves was given plus marks, with examples being the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, the Christmas show, charity fundraising, leadership of the pupil council and vocational curriculum opportunities.

Mr Millar-Craig said: 'In 2013 the school was already deemed "good" under the headings of improvements in performance, learners' experiences and meeting learning needs.'

However, in common with many other schools at the time, self-evaluation was identified as a key area for improvement and development.

'We still have areas to continue to improve on and we look forward to working with parents, pupils, staff and the council's quality improvement team as we continue to strengthen these areas. My thanks to all staff, pupils, parents, partners, and staff-stakeholders of Ardnamurchan High School who have supported the hard work and huge efforts over the last year to secure the improvements so far.'

## Raasay group in pontoon fund bid

RAASAY Development Partnership is to apply for funding for a pontoon on the isle's pier.

If successful, the group could receive some or all of the money required from the Coastal Communities Fund. It is thought the work will cost around £150,000.

Lloyd Gudgeon, development officer for the partnership said: 'Having pontoons would encourage yachtsmen to bring their boats to Raasay and it would also benefit local fisherman. This is the final year that Coastal Communities is offering funding so it's sort of a last ditch attempt to secure the money. We also want to put in showers blocks and some things like that.'

The Raasay Development Partnership will find out if their application has passed the first stage shortly after the deadline at the end of April.

## Skye doctor calls for greater awareness of concussion in sport

A SKYE doctor is calling for greater awareness of concussion in sport.

Rural practitioner Dr Jonathan Hanson believes a better recognition of the seriousness of head injuries will help to ensure people take part in exercise more safely.

Dr Hanson, team doctor for the Scotland rugby squad, will travel to Aberdeen on Wednesday to stress the issue at a seminar on the pitch-side and primary care management of concussion.

He said: 'Head injury in sport is certainly a hot topic these days and I hope that the seminar will contribute further to raising awareness of concussion and the problems associated with it.'

'Concussion is a major problem that is under recognised and must be taken seriously by parents, sports people, administrators and medics, and the seminar aims to address this.'

## Achintore Road litter pick

FORT William Accommodation and Marketing Group will be litter picking along Achintore Road next Tuesday, starting from the West End car park at 10am and working along to the Croft Anna Hotel.

Organiser Andrew McSorland said: 'If you have the time, please come along and give us a helping hand.'

## Lochaber Natural History Society

LOCHABER Natural History Society will meet on Monday (24th) at the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William.

This month's meeting starts at 7.30pm and features a lecture on the plants and projects of the Benmore Botanic Garden by curator Peter Baxter.



## Race night romps home with £983 for school

Upper Achintore Primary School parents, teacher and friend association raised £983 for school funds at a race night in Fort William Shinty Club on Saturday night. Committee member Jackie Carswell said: 'Thanks to all the local businesses who sponsored the races and to all those who donated raffle prizes.' Above, the committee enjoyed their night in the shinty club.



Surveying work for the pillar support for the pontoon footbridge at Lochmaddy harbour has been completed. Work on the development is underway. f12uist1no

## Lochmaddy harbour boost for visiting yachts and cruise liners

A PROJECT to upgrade Lochmaddy harbour for visiting yachts and cruise liners is underway following a £380,000 investment from The Crown Estate.

The revamp at the North Uist ferry port - a vital link in north west sailing routes - includes pontoons with 26 berths and floating walkways, lighting and electricity, and a car and bus park.

The development, which will be fully operational in May, is likely to bring substantial economic benefits for local businesses through increased marine tourism.

Until now, cruise ships are seldom seen at Lochmaddy because low tides limit passenger

shore access. But deeper water at the end of the new pontoon walkway will allow tender boats to ferry people between ship and shore at any time, meaning cruise companies are more likely to include Lochmaddy on their itinerary.

It is estimated the first year of operation will see 357 visiting boat nights and seven cruise liner visits.

### Pontoons

Income generated will be used for further pontoons and shore-based facilities, as well as community events.

Angus Macaulay, chair of project leaders Comann na Mara, said meetings were planned over the next two weeks with local tourism businesses

to highlight potential economic spin-offs. He told *The Oban Times*: 'This development will not only service the coastal community it will be the core of the island as well.'

'When the cruise ships come in people will want to visit places of interest across North Uist.'

'These new facilities will benefit the local economy by taking advantage of the huge and growing opportunities in marine tourism, ensuring that the Western Isles is firmly on the map for sailing.'

Comann na Mara secured the funding after becoming the first organisation in the UK to secure a local management agreement with the Crown Estate.

The scheme was set up to

help local groups manage areas of seabed and foreshore by developing projects with proven benefit to the community.

Alan Laidlaw, the Crown Estate's rural and coastal manager in Scotland, said: 'This is exactly the sort of project which local management agreements are designed to support.'

'It will generate local economic benefits, provide a really valuable facility for the community and strengthen the wider north west sailing network.'

Other LMAs include a Portree harbour project to expand capacity for cruise ships and the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust's plans for a walkway, pontoons and more moorings at Ardminish Bay.

## Rotary team to clean up path

THE ROTARY Club of Lochaber will hold its annual spring clean in Fort William on Sunday.

This year the team will blitz the path between Upper Achintore and Plantation.

The club is encouraging members of both communities to join them from 9.30am.

Residents of Upper Achintore will meet at Nairn Crescent and those at Plantation will gather at Muga pitch.

## Fuel consultation welcomed

WESTERN Isles Council has welcomed an Office of Fair Trading (OFT) consultation on the dominance of Certas Energy in supplying fuel to local filling stations.

The OFT move follows an investigation into Certas' possible infringements of competition law by locking retailers into five-year contracts to deter rival suppliers.

Councillor Kenneth Murray, chair of environment and protective services said it was 'essential' that opening up the market led to lower prices at the pumps. He said: 'The comhairle will fully participate in the consultation with the continued goal of bringing benefits to consumers and businesses in the Outer Hebrides.' A Certas spokesperson said retailers would be given a range of contractual options' in future.



Helen MacGillivray, 29, f12helen01



Set for a makeover: Ardgor Village Hall.

## Sustainable Ardgor powers ahead with green hall project

A SCHEME to transform a rundown village hall in Ardgor into an energy efficiency hub for the community is underway.

Sustainable Ardgor will repair and renovate the hall to cut its carbon footprint by 50 per cent and become a base for other carbon reduction activities in the area.

The 1936 building has been in a state of disrepair for years and is fitted with outdated infrared heating which scorches those too close to it but fails to heat the premises.

But now the hall will become a model of energy efficiency measures

after insulation, draught proofing, double glazing, LED lighting and light tubes are installed.

The improvements will reduce running costs and ensure a warmer, drier environment for hall users.

The newly fitted-out premises will also be used as a hub to co-ordinate local efforts to help tackle climate change, with activities designed to help local residents improve home energy efficiency, increase food waste composting and recycling, and cut down on car journeys.

Information on local walks, heritage and a car-sharing scheme could also feature.

## Body found in search for missing hillwalker

THE BODY of a man has been found during the search for a missing hillwalker in the Western Isles.

The discovery was made in a gully on the craggy ridge of Sgaoth Aird, North Harris on Monday afternoon.

Edward Jackson, 55, was last seen in Tarbert, North Harris, at the Maraig to Urgha path area on Saturday morning as he set off on a walk.

Mr Jackson, from Preston, was staying at the Harris Hotel while on a walking holiday.

After a week's stay Mr Jackson was due to leave on Sunday morning to return to the north of England but worried staff alerted the police at noon as he had not been seen.

Hebrides Search and Rescue and coastguard volunteers searched the hills in rain, fog and wind. Rescue team leader John Norfolk described the conditions as 'quite brutal'.

He said: 'I don't think that was a contributing factor but there was bad visibility, a lot of hill fog and sometimes hail. It wasn't a particularly dangerous route, there are walks there that you could take kids on.'

'He was an experienced walker and well equipped, he would have been well prepared for his route.'

A Leverburgh RNLI lifeboat, a Stornoway coastguard helicopter and police with dogs aided the hunt before members of the search and rescue team recovered the body and brought it down from Sgaoth Aird.

A police spokesperson said next of kin have been informed.

## Cruach Brenfield Wind Farm

### Community Consultation Days



Please join EDF Energy Renewables at our public consultation days to view and comment on plans for an 18 turbine wind farm to the west of Ardrishaig, near Loch Gilp in Argyll and Bute.

We are keen to continue our engagement with the local community, and would like to invite local residents or anyone else who might have an interest in these plans to attend one of our Community Consultation Days:

**Tuesday 25th March 2014, 2.00pm – 8.00pm**  
**Lochgilphead Community Education Centre**

**Wednesday 26th March 2014, 2.00pm – 8.00pm**  
**Ardrishaig Public Hall**

For further information please call Freephone 0800 612 3161 or visit [www.edf-er.com](http://www.edf-er.com)



## Music school students kick off tour in Glenfinnan

PLOCKTON Music School's students are on the move again as their tour starts on Monday.

The S6 pupils of Sgoil Chùiliú Na Gàidhealtachd will perform at the Church of St Mary and St Finnan in Glenfinnan on Monday night

# The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

IT IS A highly emotive subject, but emotion isn't going to resolve the long-running debate about sea eagle management on Scotland's west coast.

The only way this argument will ever be truly be put to bed is by taking the time to appreciate each other's side of the argument.

For the first time, locally at least, both sides of the fence agree that breeding pairs of sea eagles should be relocated away from livestock farms when there is an identified problem; not culled and not left alone when there is evidence to suggest predation of livestock.

One hopes that such views are adopted at national level - and that there will be similar appreciation of each other's argument when it comes to deciding on what constitutes a problem.

## GLASGOW LETTER

### Annual concert

THE ANNUAL concert of Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association took place in Glasgow University Chapel on Friday March 14 and attracted a good audience welcomed by choir president Amanda Milne.

Broadcaster Jo Macdonald provided a brief synopsis of the choral items and soloists were Kirsteen MacDonald, Joan Morrison, Gordon McKeever and Donald Iain Brown who were all in excellent form.

Guest artist was Alastair Iain Paterson who accompanied some of the singers and played a selection on the piano. Catriona MacRae delivered the vote of thanks.

Following the concert there was an informal ceilidh in the Glichris Centre at which a cake with 60 candles appeared at midnight for the birthday of vice president Alasdair Macmillan.

### Great War pipe music

THE FIRST in a series of five concerts featuring the music and composers of the Great War will take place in the College of Piping, Otago Street, on Saturday March 29 at 7.30pm.

On this occasion the music will focus on Argyll, on its pipers and composers. An award of £7,500 to the Scottish Piper's Association from the Heritage Lottery Fund has allowed the research into the war which had 2,500 pipers involved and in which some 500 pipers lost their lives.

This first concert will hear the stories of the pipers related by historian Colin Campbell with the music being provided in the first half by a quartet from the School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming and in the second half by professional pipers Stuart Liddell and Alasdair Henderson. Admission is free and refreshments will be available at the interval.

### Gaelic mentoring programme 2014

PLAYWRIGHT'S Studio, Scotland, in partnership with the National Theatre of Scotland, is inviting applications for a new playwright mentoring programme.

Two writers will be chosen to work with Iain Finlay MacLeod in the development of a new play, with three mentoring sessions and at least one visit to a theatre. Applicants must be Gaelic speaking writers at any stage in their career and at the end of six months they must be committed to delivering a complete script. The closing date for applications is Friday March 28 and these should be sent to info@playwrightsstudio.co.uk or sent to Mentoring Applications, Playwright's Studio, Scotland, CCA, 350 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3JD. Further information is available at www.playwrightsstudio.co.uk.

## Govan Gaelic Choir Concert

IT IS pleasing to note last year's winners of the Lovat and Tullibardine Shield at the National Mod will be having a concert this year.

It will take place in Partick South Church on Dumbarton Road on Wednesday March 26, at 7.30pm, and the guest artists will be Robyn Stapleton, this year's winner of the BBC Radio Scotland Young Musician of the Year, and Alastair Iain Paterson who was one of the six finalists in that competition. Tickets, cost £8, are available from choir members or at the door.

### Stirling concert

THE ARTISTES at the final concert of the Stirling branch of An Comunn, to be held in the Lesser Albert Hall on Saturday March 22 at 7.30pm, will be singers Fiona MacKintosh, Catriona Watt, and Iain Beag, pipe R Innes Smith and the Cluaran Dancers.

### Diary dates

**Friday March 21:** Glasgow Skye Association, Cothrom na h-Oigridh (Youth Concert), Airlie Theatre, Hyndland Secondary School, 7pm.

National Piping Centre Concert featuring CLASP winners (Competition League for Amateur Solo Pipers), 7.30pm.

**Saturday March 22:** Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Ceilidh, Crawford Hall, Partick, 7.45pm. An Comha Gaidhealach, Stirling Branch, Ceilidh, Lesser Albert Hall, 7.30pm. Ceol's Craic, CCA, Sauchiehall Street, 8pm (launch of Willi Campbell's new CD). Bardic Supper: Westburn Church Greenock, 7.30pm. Beith Gaelic Day, Beith Community Centre, 45-47 King's Road, Beith, KA15 2BQ, telephone 01505 228141.

**Tuesday March 25:** Live at the Star, Admiral Bar, 72a Waterlo Street, 8pm - The Once.

**Wednesday March 26:** Govan Gaelic Choir Annual Concert, Partick South Church, 7.30pm - see above.

**Friday March 28:** Glasgow Uist and Barra Association Ceilidh Dance, Crawford Hall, Partick, 9pm - 1am. Helensburgh and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh Dance, Commodore Hotel, 8pm. Partick Folk Club, St Peter's Church Hall, Hyndland Street-Club Night.

**Saturday March 29:** Pipes and Pipe Music of the Great War, College of Piping - see above.

### Pub scene

MUSIC in the Islay Inn this weekend will be provided by Gunn Sound on Friday and Carnaby Street on Saturday while in the Park Bar it will be Erisky Lilt on Friday with Scott Harvey on both Saturday and Sunday.

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

## YOUR LETTERS

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

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including 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

## PRESS POLICY

WE AT The Oban Times do our utmost to make sure that all our reports are fair, accurate and balanced, but we accept that, on occasion, mistakes can occur in the hectic process of producing the biggest local newspaper in the West Highlands.

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

The Oban Times adheres to the Press Complaints' Commission's Code of Conduct.

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

## Clarification

WE HAVE been asked to point out that the third-placed winner in our Bonnie Babies competition is Heidi Poulton Ellis, not Heidi Poulton as was printed.



## Old Hesperus and Pharos at Oban

This week's flashback photograph is from our files and features the old lighthouse ships, Hesperus and Pharos, moored at the Lighthouse Pier in Oban in days gone by. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

## Letters to the editor

PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB  
email: editor@obantimes.co.uk

www.obantimes.co.uk

Telephone: 01631 568000  
Fax: 01631 568001

### Diversion route fails first test

Sir,

I have driven over A83 The Rest and be Thankful regularly for more than 50 years and I am appalled at the complete failure of the diversion route on its first major test.

I traversed the Old Military Road twice in each direction and on each occasion I was delayed by more than 25 minutes. The route is closed during the hours of darkness on police instructions.

More than 25 personnel, two breakdown trucks, a snowplough and a digger are on standby - daily cost?

The main problem area and source of all the major delays is a 300m stretch of the A83 on the longest and steepest slope in Glen Croe and slides have enveloped both the A83 and the Old Military Road.

The experts gave various options - a new road through Glen Kinglas to Loch Lomond, upgrading the forestry road on the south side of the glen, a 2.2km tunnel - with these schemes priced from £30m to a £100m.

The cheapest option was the Old Military Road and erection of protective netting above the road at £10m to £15m.

Not surprisingly, this cheapest option was adopted without indicating it would only be open for 11 hours per day - six hours in mid winter - on safety grounds.

I have consistently argued that a 350m single carriage-way tunnel be cut into the hillside at this the main problem area. This can be activated as soon as any slip occurs with gates to close the road and controlled by traffic lights.

The experts claimed any roadside covered roadway could not be constructed without lengthy total road closures and yet in their last phase managed to dig a large 30m x 60m sump on the main problem gully without any impact on traffic flow.

With precast concrete roofing and side panels a permanent and cost effective solution could be up and running in months.

Landslides on this section are going to be a continuous problem which will worsen over the years with our changing

weather pattern. The people of Argyll are resilient and patient but are coming to the end of their tether when they see money being wasted on a failed solution and no long-term permanent answer appearing.

**Donald Clark, fifth generation hotelier, The George Hotel, Inveraray.**

Sir,

I note with dismay your report in *The Oban Times*, March 6, in which Councillor Fred Hall announces his impending resignation because he can no longer support the SNP government's principles with regard to abolition of corroboration.

I also note that Councillor Hall's 'high principles' offer no hope of an improving outcome to the 170 women in Scotland who last year reported a rape to the police, only to be denied their day in court and subsequently any hope of justice.

One hundred and seventy lives ruined as a result of the failures of Scottish justice.

Councillor Hall's principles are also at odds with those of his erstwhile colleagues in the police who have been driving the reforms.

I do hope Councillor Hall's manifesto will explain his own proposals for improvement of justice for rape and domestic violence victims although as a local councillor reformation of laws is not his remit.

**Dot Macdonald, Arisaig, Crannag A Mhinisteir, Oban.**

**Public inquiry not a waste of money**

Sir,

I feel I must reply to Graeme Pagan's letter to the editor in *The Oban Times* of March 13.

Graeme Pagan was not in the room and did not have to witness what our mother had to endure during her stay at Oban's Lorn and Islands Hospital.

Whilst I understand everyone is entitled to their own opinion, I find the wording of his letter unacceptable.

If what had happened to our mother happened to any member

of his family while they were in care at the hospital, I'm sure he would go down any avenue possible to get answers on what went wrong.

At the end the only thing that matters is that our mum died in severe pain, not properly medicated and not given the correct care for her needs.

And the hospital blamed junior doctors for these failings.

So I say if a public inquiry stops this happening to any other family in Oban, then it is not a waste of money.

Public inquiries are in place when there is a genuine public concern regarding specific events - in my mother's case, her treatment at Lorn and Islands Hospital - and if speaking out has given others the strength to come forward on their experience of lack of care at the hospital then I feel I have done the right thing.

I will add that all care given to the 170 women in Scotland who last year reported a rape to the police, only to be denied their day in court and subsequently any hope of justice.

Cats are territorial animals and do not like being kept together in large numbers like that and get easily distressed.

What on earth did so many cats come to be kept like that and not put up for re-homing?

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</

# your essential guide to Spring Gardening

**SPRING** is in the air! The sun is out, the weather is getting warmer and the birds are singing.

And the weeds are growing.

So it is with inevitable dismay (or delight, depending on your disposition) that we must return to the shed and whip out the gardening tools - and get ready to tend to the garden's needs again.

It's a chore, but springtime is the most important time of year - get the foundations right now and your plants, lawn and planters will be much easier to maintain throughout the year.

Any leftover weeds from the autumn should be dealt with first - a must for those

who didn't have time to get them dealt with before the end of the last growing season.

For those with greener fingers, those problems will already have been dealt with; but there's always something to do in the garden.

Most of us will start the season with a trip to the garden centre to see what plants are available and that's an ideal chance to take a look at what else your garden might need.

Perhaps that old hose is leaking a bit too much for comfort, or you desperately want a bench - or set of goals - in your garden to make it that bit more enjoyable.

Either way, you'll have an opportunity to plan out your garden for the year ahead - and maybe even ensure some fun and

frolics when the sun is shining.

And when you're picking plants, think about how they will work in your garden - and how much you want to work for them.

Will they require hours of maintenance each week? Do you need to replant every year? What colour they flower can even be vitally important to the layout of your garden.

Remember, though, not to be too ambitious. It's better to get the simple things right first then develop as time goes on. Do too much too soon and your garden could end up looking a mess.

Once home, the hard work begins! Take advantage of the wet weather to dig the ground when its soft - it'll save your

back later and if you start early enough, the roots won't even have started bedding in yet.

If you're starting from scratch, get the pegs and string out and plan your planting. From grass to bushes, trees and flower beds, getting your planting schedule right is as important as your layout - and make sure you've got plenty of compost too.

Remember, there are hungry birds about too, so if you can propagate in a cold frame or greenhouse first, that will help. If not, craft yourself a scarecrow. You'll be amazed at how well they work.

Once it's growing, you'll just have the joy of maintenance on your hands - remember to get all the equipment you

need for this task throughout the year. Lawnmowers, snippers, weeders and chainsaws all make light work of heavy tasks so - ensure you're well stocked.

Of course, you could do all this yourself. You might thoroughly enjoy it and it might be fun.

Or it could be your idea of the worst weekend ever. That's where the west coast's superb gardening service firms can help. There is a large selection of people in the area who can do the whole lot for you - and sometimes for an easy fee. Give them a phone and get a quote and see what they can do for you, both in terms of layout and maintenance throughout the year.

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# what's on

THE OBAN TIMES  
FREE EVENT LISTING

**THURSDAY - March 20 to March 22**

7.30pm, 60th North Lorn drama festival, Appin Village Hall  
**SATURDAY - March 22**  
10.00am, Fundraising Coffee Morning for RDA, Victory Hall, Benderloch.  
10.15am, Annual Boat Jumble and Car Boot Sale, Craignish Village Hall, Ardnfern.  
3.00pm, National Collective Argyll Café Session, Rowantree Hotel, Oban.  
7.30pm, Oban Bach Choir and Orchestra, St. John's Cathedral, Oban.  
7.30pm, Family Ceilidh, Skipinnish Ceilidh House, George Street, Oban.  
7.30pm, Annual Harris Ceilidh, West End Hotel, Fort William.  
8.00pm, The Lorn Show Ceilidh Dance, North Connel Hall.

**TUESDAY - March 25 to March 28**

Lorn Drama Festival, Corran Halls, Oban.

**Friday - March 28**

7.00pm, Lochaber Rural Education Trust - A Feathered Journey, An Clachan, Lochaber Rural Complex, Aonach Mor Road, Fort William

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THE 40th Lochaber Music Festival draws to a close tonight (Thursday) with a celebration concert in Caol Primary School. The event at 7pm will feature performances from some of the top young musicians, singers, verse speakers and dancers who took part in the five-day competition held at various venues in Fort William.

The Premier Scots Traditional Award on Saturday afternoon at Lochaber High School saw an exceptionally high standard of performance from the five instrumentalists chosen by adjudicators to go forward to the final.

Rhona MacKintosh (violin), Liam Stewart (accordion and piano), Helena Rose (clarsach), Finlay Cameron (bagpipes) and Hannah MacRae (violin) all impressed with their superb musicianship, but after some deliberation the judges announced Helena, who is from Roy Bridge, as the winner.

Adjudicator Lydia Jackson praised not just the quality of the playing but also the excellent tuition carried out by music teachers in the area.

Monday evening saw string solos and ensembles and Tuesday evening we hold the Young Musician competitions sponsored by The Rotary Club of Lochaber. In addition, there will be Premier Vocal and Instrumental awards as well as Brass and Woodwind ensembles.

Lochaber Music Festival Association chair Lilian MacDonald told The Oban Times: 'There has been a good representation at different levels of performance throughout the festival with great support from audiences at the venues. I would welcome everyone to attend our closing concert - it promises to be very special.'

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Front: Laura Robertson of Lochaber Pipe Band won the 10 and under chanter solo own choice march in the opening event of the Lochaber Music Festival. Ivan Davies from Roy Bridge, right, was second and Owen Pescod, left, from Banavie Primary was third. 20\_f12fest01

Rhona MacKintosh, 14, and 16 year-old Hannah MacRae, right, both scored an exceptional 94 marks to win their violin Scots solo classes. 20\_f12fest10

Back left: Finlay Cameron, 12, from Roy Bridge, won the bagpipe solo, age 15 and under, own choice strathspey and reel. 20\_f12fest05

Back centre: Liam Stewart, 16, from Fort William, was winner of the accordion solo (advanced), own choice march, strathspey and reel. 20\_f12fest09

Back right: Amelia Gillies of Lochaber Music School won the clarsach beginners clarsach solo, own choice, with Thig Am Bata. 20\_f12fest06



From front, Sean MacDonald of Lochaber High, Graham Laidlaw from Banavie Primary and Patrick Turner of Fort William RC Primary took first, second and third, respectively, in the 12 and under chanter solo own choice march. 20\_f12fest02



Wallace Dempster, 13, of Lochaber Pipe Band took first place in the bagpipe solo, 1st year piobaireachd, own choice. 20\_f12fest07



Spean Bridge girl Carla Berardelli of Cothromen Ceol Beul Aithriseach, right, won the bagpipe solo (novice) own choice march. Lochaber High's Sine MacRae, left and Amber MacDonald, centre, were second and third, respectively. The girls are pictured with adjudicator Rory Grossart from Glasgow who plays with the Scottish Power Pipe Band which claimed third place in the World Pipe Band Championships in Glasgow last year. 20\_f12fest03



The top table at the Ryan MacPhail Memorial Fund Sportsman's Dinner, from left: Willie Henderson, Councillor Roddy McCuish, John Rowbotham, Alan MacPhail and Ted Heath. 16\_t12ryan01

## Annual Sportsman's Dinner raises thousands for Oban charity

OBAN'S Ryan MacPhail Memorial Fund is £7,100 better off following another successful Sportsman's Dinner.

The evening, which was chaired by former Oban High School PE teacher Ted Heath, took place last Saturday in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls.

joined by regular speaker, Oban councillor Roddy McCuish.

The annual event is the main fundraiser for the Ryan MacPhail Memorial Fund, which mainly supports charities to the

benefit of young people and sports.

The charity was established by Alan and Amanda MacPhail, whose son Ryan was killed in a sledging accident in 2003.

## Fantastic musicians perform at Taynuilt's Winter Ceilidh

WELL-KNOWN duo Michael and Joanie Garvin were joined on stage by their children at the final Taynuilt Winter Ceilidh.

At last Saturday's ceilidh, Michael and Joanie Garvin, who regularly perform as an accordion/fiddle duo, were joined on this occasion by their three children: Sarah (clarsach), Calum (accordion) and Anna (fiddle).

The Garvin family played

impressively together and there were further fine performances from Michael and Calum and Michael and Joanie.

Obanpiper Andy Matthews started off the proceedings with a good selection of rousing pipe tunes and the Isla Sinclair Dancers, namely Fiona Cruikshanks and Ailie Munro, produced

excellent highland dancing performances.

The audience was treated to some wonderful solo singing in Gaelic from BBC Alba television presenter Linda MacLeod and Mod gold medalists Lyle Kennedy and Alex MacDonald.

Fear an Taighe for the evening was Duncan MacDonald who kept proceedings flowing smoothly.



The three soloists from the final Taynuilt Winter Ceilidh: BBC Alba television presenter Linda MacLeod and Mod gold medalists Lyle Kennedy, left, and Alex MacDonald.

## Fred Morrison performing in Glengarry on Friday

ACCLAIMED piper Fred Morrison will be the headline act at a concert in

Glengarry Community Hall tomorrow night.

Members of Lochaber Schools Pipe Band will also perform at the event, which starts at 7.30pm.

# Exceptional talent at Lochaber Music Festival



Rona Nicolson and Ally Weir were both winners in the piping competitions. Rona was placed first in the 18 years and under own choice jig, while Ally won the own choice senior piobaireachd. 20\_f12fest08



Fort William brother and sister John and Katie Stewart-Stevenson won their violin Scots solo classes at the festival. John, 14, was placed first in the intermediate own choice slow air, and march and strathspey, and Katie in the beginners' own choice slow air and march. 20\_f12fest11

**Traditional music classes winners:**  
Chanter solo aged 10 and under - Laura Robertson, Fort William RC Primary; Chanter solo aged 12 and under - Sean MacDonald, Lochaber High School; Chanter solo aged 13 and over - Ewan MacGregor, Lochaber High School; Bagpipe solo novice March - Carla Berardelli, Cothroman Ceol Beul Aithriseach; Bagpipe solo 1st year Piobaireachd - Wallace Dempster, Lochaber Pipe Band; Bagpipe solo intermediate - Alister MacRae, Lochaber High School; Bagpipe solo aged 15 and under March - Finlay Cameron, Roy Bridge; Bagpipe solo aged 15 and under Strathspey and Reel - Finlay Cameron, Roy Bridge; Bagpipe solo 2nd year Piobaireachd - Ruairidh Shaw, Lochaber High School; Bagpipe solo 3rd year Piobaireachd - Finlay Cameron, Roy Bridge; Bagpipe senior Piobaireachd - Ally Weir, Lochaber High School; Bagpipe solo 18 years and under Jig - Rona Nicolson, Lochaber Pipe Band; Bagpipe Quartet 18 years and under - Lochaber Pipe Band Quartet, Fort William.

Clarsach solo beginners - Amelia Gillies, Lochaber Music School; Clarsach solo elementary - Ayla Barr-Moir, Lochaber Music School; Clarsach solo intermediate - Lorna Linfield, Lochaber Music School; Clarsach solo advanced - Syeda Choudhury, Lochaber Music School; Clarsach solo open - Helena Rose, Roy Bridge; Pianoforte solo Scots secondary age - Liam Stewart, Fort William.

Violin solo Scots beginners - Kate Stewart-Stevenson, Fort William; Violin solo Scots elementary - Mairi Bell, Fort William; Violin solo Scots intermediate - John Stewart-Stevenson, Fort William; Violin solo Scots advanced - Rhona MacKintosh, Roy Bridge; Violin solo Scots open - Hannah MacRae, Lochaber High School.

Fiddle Group 18 years and under - Lochaber Music School Traditional Group; Fiddle Group open - Sgoil Chuil Loch Abar (Lochaber Music School).

Tin whistle elementary - Joe Lennon, Roy Bridge.

Accordion solo beginners - Max Campbell, Cothroman Ceol Beul Aithriseach; Accordion solo elementary - Finlay Cameron, Roy Bridge; Accordion solo advanced - Liam Stewart, Fort William.

Premier Scots Traditional Award - Helena Rose (clarsach), Roy Bridge.

More results and photos in next week's Oban Times.



Winners of Rockfield's Got Talent were Daniel and Kayla. 16\_t12rockfield03



Runners up, Humbugs. 16\_t12rockfield02

## Dancers wow judges at Rockfield's Got Talent

PUPILS at Oban's Rockfield Primary School turned event organisers as they produced the annual Rockfield's Got Talent.

The primary five to seven pupils allocated themselves places on the various committees responsible for management, catering, auditions, prizes, finance, stage management and VIPs.

Over 10 weeks, the pupils carried out an auditions process and worked with local businesses to put on a show last week in Oban Primary Campus' main hall.

Bossards and Dolce Vita helped the catering team,

while Bank of Scotland gave the finance committee some advice. There was technical assistance from Louis Barrow of the Corran Halls and Cameron Harris of Highland Photos. Oban businessmen Neil Matheson, Matheson's Furnishings, and Neil Armour, Tesco, helped the management committee.

Pupil Toni-Marie MacCorquodale, of the management committee, said: 'The teachers helped us with letters but they weren't allowed to help us with anything else.'

'We had to book the hall, go to meetings, phone people, and make sure all the other teams were doing

their jobs.'

'After organising this everyone feels really confident. We are all tired but we would happily do it all over again.'

After 105 auditions, 16 acts were put through to the final where they performed in front of a judging panel of former head teacher Jack Degan, former teacher Ann MacIntyre and Oban High School's head of music Morven McKerrell.

The winners were Daniel and Kayla, who performed a medley of Highland dancing, and runners up were dance team the Humbugs.

## Oban Phoenix Cinema

<b>The Invisible Woman</b>	Thurs 20th 18.00	Mon 24th 15.00
<b>A New York Winter's Tale</b>	Thurs 20th 21.00	
<b>Her</b>	Fri 21st 15.00	Sat 22nd 19.00 (Screen 2)
	Sun 23rd 19.00 (Screen 2)	Mon 24th 20.30
	Tues 25th 18.00	Wed 26th 19.00 (Screen 2)
	Thurs 27th 15.00	
<b>Need for Speed</b>	Fri 21st 18.00 3D	Sat 22nd 18.00 2D
	Sun 23rd 20.30 3D	Mon 24th 19.00 2D (Screen 2)
	Tues 25th 19.00 3D (Screen 2)	Wed 26th 20.30 3D
<b>300: Rise of An Empire</b>	Fri 21st 21.00	Sat 22nd 21.00
	Sun 23rd 18.00	Mon 24th 18.00
	Tues 25th 21.00	Wed 26th 18.00
<b>Frozen</b>	Thurs 27th 21.00	
	Sat 22nd 13.00 (Sing-a-long), 15.30 3D	
	Sun 23rd 13.00 3D, 15.30 (Sing-a-long)	

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### The Invisible Woman (12A)

Nelly, a happily-married mother and schoolteacher, is haunted by her past. Her memories, provoked by remorse and guilt, take us back in time to follow the story of her relationship with Charles Dickens with whom she discovered an exciting but fragile complicity. As Nelly becomes the focus of Dickens' passion and his muse, for both of them secrecy is the price, and for Nelly a life of "invisibility".

### Monday 24th Silver Screening Special - The Invisible Woman (12A)

One night in winter, Peter Lake (Colin Farrell) orphan and master-mechanic, attempts to rob a fortress-like mansion on the Upper West Side. Though he thinks the house is empty, the daughter of the house is home. Thus begins the

love between Peter, a middle-aged Irish burglar, and Beverly Penn (Jessica Brown Findlay) a young girl, who is dying.

### Her (15)

Theodore is a lonely man in the final stages of his divorce. When he's not working as a letter writer, his down time is spent playing video games and occasionally hanging out with friends. He decides to purchase the new OS1, which is advertised as the world's first artificially intelligent operating system.

**It's not just an operating system, it's a consciousness," the ad states. Theodore quickly finds himself drawn in with Samantha, the voice behind his OS1. Having fallen in love with his OS1, Theodore finds himself dealing with feelings of both great joy and doubt.**

### Need for Speed (12A)

Fresh from prison, a street racer who was

framed by a wealthy business association joins a cross country race with revenge

in mind. His ex-partner, learning of the plan, places a massive bounty on his head as the race begins.

### 300: Rise of An Empire (15)

After its victory over Leonidas' 300, the Persian Army under the command of Xerxes marches towards the major Greek city-states. The Democratic city of Athens, first on the path of Xerxes' army, bears its strength on its fleet, led by admiral Themistocles. Themistocles is forced to an unwilling alliance with the traditional rival of Athens, oligarchic Sparta whose might lies with its superior infantry troops. But Xerxes still reigns supreme in numbers over sea and land.

### Frozen (PG)

Fearless optimist Anna teams up with Kristoff in an epic journey, encountering Everest-like conditions, and a hilarious snowman named Olaf in a race to find Anna's sister Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom in eternal winter.

## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

SATURDAY, MARCH 22nd, 2014 at 7.30pm  
St. John's Cathedral, Oban

### THE CREATION an oratorio by Haydn

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Rowantree Hotel, Oban  
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All are welcome - Free

#### LOCHABER RURAL EDUCATION TRUST

#### A Feathered Journey An Clachan, Lochaber Rural Complex, Aanoch Mor Road, Fort William

Friday 28th March 2014  
7pm - 9.30pm  
All Welcome  
Admission by Donation.

#### Am Mòd Nàiseanta Rioghail - An t-Òban 2015

#### Cèilidh Teaghlach - Family Cèilidh Skipinnish Cèilidh House, George Street, Oban

Saturday 22nd March 2014 at 7.30pm

£6 admission

Artists: Margaret MacLellan, Duncan MacDonald, Oban High School Traditional Music Group, Bradford Instrumentalists, Adele Askew Dancers. Bean an Taighe: Joanie Garvin

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## Mary's Meals benefits from Connel soup lunches



A group of fundraisers packed Connel Church Hall again on Saturday at their second soup lunch in the space of six weeks. The Connel Friends of Mary's Meals raised £602.59 on the day and, added to their total from a lunch on February 1, they have now raised more than £1,000 for the Dalmally-based charity. 16\_t12ea01

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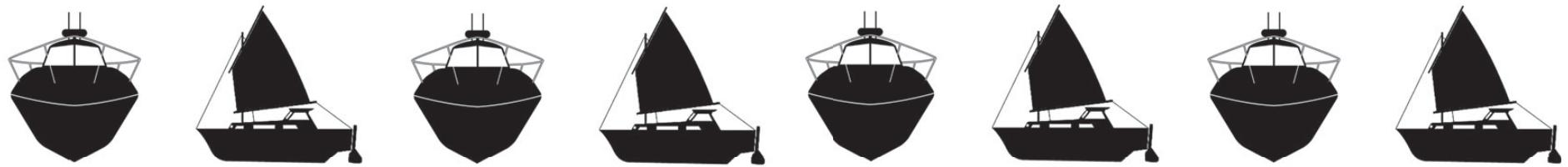
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## Countdown to the boating season!

Spring is in the air after a long damp winter and time is marching on to get boats ready for the season. All those jobs that were going to be done over the winter will no doubt still be waiting so it's time to get the overalls on and get cracking to get boats ready for launching. It's important to arrange your launch date with the boatyard first and then prepare your work list prioritising on the important jobs. Be prepared with the right tools for the work in hand – rags, silicone and normal grease, petroleum jelly, lubricating and penetrating oils, degreaser, rolls of tape, engine spares and treatments for your water and fuel tanks. If not doing your own preparation engage the professionals as soon as possible, remembering this is their busy time of year and you may have to wait!

### Hull

It's important to remove as much old anti-fouling from the hull as possible to ensure a good surface for re-application and it may be necessary if there's a big build up to remove it all. Be guided by your chandler on choice of anti-fouling. This will be dictated by use of the boat and the area where the boat is kept. A wide range of anti-fouling is available from specialist racing finishes to cruiser and powerboat coatings. Apply according to instructions with a stronger build-up in high impact areas – leading edges, such as fin and skeg and keel to hull joints. Remember to anti-foul support points before the boat takes to the water.

### Keel and Rudder

Before anti-fouling inspect the keel for signs of rusting, pitting and wear at the keel to hull joint – check for athwartships play and stress fractures and get a professional to look at any problems. Check keelbolts, inspect the rudder and skeg fittings as well as the propeller and grease the shaft well. Check for any play in bearings, stock or quadrant. There should be minimal movement.

Grease steering cables. Note if the anode is doing its work and replace if necessary. At this stage it's good to look at the paddle wheel on the log and smear silicone grease on the blades to spin freely – if not then it needs to be taken apart and greased. Better now than when the boat is in the water.

### Topsides

Topsides should be cleaned of winter dirt and any damage repaired. Apply a protective wax and polish well – an extensive range of products is available and your local chandler will advise. This will keep your boat looking pristine and protected throughout the season.

### Powerhouse

Service inboards and outboards. Change oil if this wasn't done at lay up, filters, internal anodes and top up gear box oil if required. Check engine belt tension and engine mounts are secure and inspect the underside of the shaft log and have it re-bedded if there is any sign of leakage. In saildrives the oil level and integrity of the garter seal must be checked. Bonding wires from the anode and earthing wires from the starter motor need looked at as well as the seacock. Clean the terminals and smear them with petroleum jelly. Check bilge pump impellers and gaskets,

grease and replace if necessary. With automatic bilge pumps, check float switches work and the strumbox is clear. Manual strum boxes should be pumped through to see hose is clear of blockages. Look for wear on hoses and electrical connections as well as servicing seacocks. Dry the bilge thoroughly, so if water appears after launching you know there's a problem.

Inspect the gas system thoroughly – and any alarms that need to be working and ensure it conforms to current gas regulations. A manufacture or replacement date will be printed on it and replace if it's five years old. Check hose clips and tighten.

Batteries should have been on trickle charge over lay-up but if not re-charge now and check electrolyte levels if not sealed. Ensure the battery tray is dry tighten securing straps and see all gassing vents are clear. Clean terminals and coat with petroleum jelly. Fuel tanks should be full from laying up. If not, drain water off and treat with a diesel biocide.

### Deck

Before re-stepping mast, check sheaves for wear, any cracking at rigging terminals, swages for broken strands and tape split pins and bottlescrews once after rigged. Check masthead lights, instrumentation and VHF radio are working. Inspect stanchion bases for play and remove plastic lifeline sheathing to check for corrosion. Inspect anchors, chain and connections for corrosion, replacing anything suspect. Clean a manual windlass, check for wear and grease. Remove the gypsy in powered versions, grease the drum, look at the foot switch for wear, clean and grease electrical connections. Overhaul winches - strip down to check for



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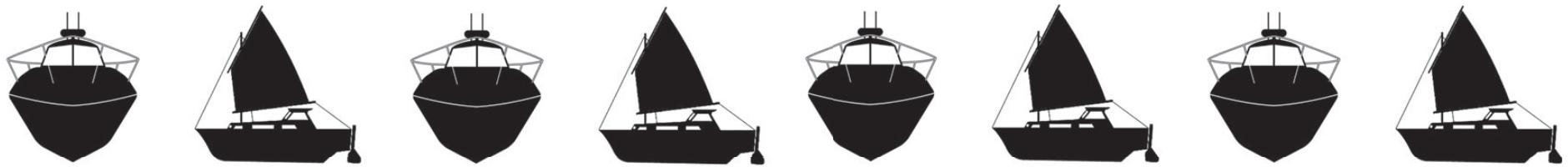
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wear, soak components in degreaser and re-grease. Springs and pawls need a light oil. Check over furling gear to make sure of smooth operation.

Varnish any wood on deck, touch up paintwork and polish bright work. Overhaul warps and sheets and replace as required.

#### Interior/ Safety equipment

Clean the interior thoroughly. Pump fresh water through the water tank, fill and add purifier. Run washing-up liquid into the heads and pump out several times. Re-install VHF, navigation and other equipment etc removed for winter storage. Thoroughly check safety equipment - fire extinguishers, flares, life-rafts, life-jackets, rubber dinghies and repair or replace.

Inflate lifejackets using the mouth piece looking for wear and damage and leave inflated overnight to check for leaks. If automatic, check the firing head is still primed, unscrew the canister and look for wear, smear silicone grease on the firing cap and replace. Invert MOB lights to check they still work and change bulb and batteries if not squirming WD40 on the copper contact strip inside. Silicone grease should be used on rubber seals.

Remember an RNLI safety check is available to see if your safety equipment is up to scratch as well as looking at other areas of safety aboard. You can take your lifejackets for inspection at your local RNLI station as well.

Make an inventory and display in boat so items can be found quickly and easily. If sails were not checked for wear at laying up do so now and get advice from your sailmaker as required – stitching may need replaced, repair patching carried out. Similarly clean

berth cushions before replacing - the interior should be fresh and inviting for the start of your season.

#### Expert advice

If you launch the boat yourself get organised with tools and a selection of split pins, tape, extra anti-fouling and a brush. Otherwise liaise with your boatyard over launching and whether you need to be there. Don't forget professional advice is always available from your boatyard manager, chandler, or sail-maker - these people are experts in their field so if in doubt about anything - ask.

After all the hard work, thoughts can turn to planning your activities on the water – whether it be cruising, fishing or racing to enjoy a safe and successful 2014 season.

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## Motors & Drivetimes

### new car index

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59 Suzuki SX4 GLX 1.6 saloon, Cherry Red, 21,500 miles.....£6,450
10 Fiat Qubo Active 1.4, 5dr, silver, 13,500 miles .....£6,150
09 Renault Modus Dyn. 1.5 DCi, Beige, 30,000 miles .....£5,950
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60 Fiat Grand Punto 1.4, 5dr, white, 17,500 miles .....£5,450
08 Renault Scenic Conquest DCi 130, 39,500 miles .....£4,350
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56 Astra 1.6 life, 5 dr, Silver, 50k miles, 46,500 miles.....£3,000

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## Isuzu has the edge with special edition pick-up



Isuzu UK has enhanced the rugged appeal of its award-winning pick-up range with the addition of a special edition, exclusive-to-the-UK model, the Isuzu D-Max Blade. With the new Blade, Isuzu hopes to attract new customers to the Brand including those who may not have considered a pick-up vehicle previously.

The new special edition, which goes on sale in April, boasts a long list of unique style enhancements and technology upgrades certain to help the vehicle stand out from the crowd. Based on a premium model from the D-Max range, the new Blade special edition features more than £5,000 worth of additional equipment and yet is available from just £24,995, representing a saving of £1,000 if the accessories were bought separately.

Prices for the new model are £24,995 for the six-speed manual or £25,995 for the five-speed auto, which compares favourably with similarly specced special edition models from Isuzu's nearest rivals.

The head-turning style of the D-Max Blade starts with the bold 18-inch, six-spoke 'Shadow' alloy wheels shod with 255/60 R18 Pirelli Scorpion Zero tyres. The exterior upgrades continue with a 'Shadow' grey front grille, privacy glass windows, black door and tailgate handles, black roof bars and rear bumper, and heavy-duty side steps. Each exterior addition creates a striking contrast to the two available body colours, solid 'Splash White' or mica 'Cosmic Black'.

The Isuzu D-Max Blade also comes standard with an under-rail bed liner for added practicality while customers can then choose between an Aeroklas hard top complete with internal light or a Mountain Top Black Roller Top Cover which is unique to the Blade and cannot be purchased as a separate accessory. Whichever option customers choose, the tops come supplied and fitted within the on the road price.

The high-value additions to the five-seat pick-up continue inside. Automatic climate control and

premium black leather seats – which have been factory upgraded for 2014 and are heated in the front – will cosset Blade occupants. Customers of the new Blade will also benefit from DAB digital radio via a state-of-the-art Pioneer AVIC-F950 6.1-inch touchscreen navigation system, complete with integrated rear safety camera. The Pioneer system offers an enhanced audio experience and convenience over the already class leading 'surround' system found in Yukon and Utah models.

The Isuzu D-Max Blade is matched to the powerful-yet-efficient 2.5-litre twin-turbo diesel engine, producing 163 PS and 400 Nm of torque, while still returning a segment best fuel economy of 38.2 mpg (combined). The running gear has also been carried over by Isuzu, meaning customers benefit from a towing capacity of 3.5-tonnes and 1-tonne payload.

William Brown, General Manager at Isuzu UK, said: 'The new Isuzu D-Max Blade is a high-value,

high-quality proposition that we hope will widen the appeal of the D-Max further and take us into new market segments. It's been designed to appeal to urban tradespeople as well as recreational lifestyle users looking for a pick-up that stands out from the crowd. The Blade meets the growing demand for a stylish pick-up that doubles up as an everyday workhorse for those who need it.'

Isuzu UK enjoyed its best-ever sales in the UK in 2013 and continues to be the biggest market in Europe for the Japanese Brand by a considerable margin. Isuzu has ambitious growth plans in the UK, and the new Blade forms an important part of its push into new business areas. In addition to product developments, Isuzu is aiming to strengthen its 100 dealer strong network throughout 2014 with new dealer appointments in key areas.

Like all new Isuzu models sold in the UK, the D-Max Blade comes with the company's pioneering five-year / 125,000 mile warranty.

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For an informal chat about the position, please call Niall McCallum, Coudoran Site Manager on 01520 733248.

Closing date for applications is 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

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## CLOSING DATE:

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Registered charity number is SC009068



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Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an lar

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## CLOSING DATE: 11 April 2014

For further information:

Email: [claire.wylie.whc@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:claire.wylie.whc@uhi.ac.uk) Tel: 01397 874510

West Highland College UHI is an equal opportunities employer. We particularly welcome applications from women to increase the diversity of the College Board.

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For more information and to apply please go to [www.crossreach.org.uk](http://www.crossreach.org.uk) or call 01586 552568. Closing date: 4th April 2014.

[crossreach.org.uk](http://crossreach.org.uk)

## CROSS REACH

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In return, the Company offers a comprehensive pay and benefits package including entry into the Company pension scheme. A full, clean driving licence is also essential.

If you are interested in this position please contact:  
Angela Gibson HR Officer, Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, Argyll, PA26 8RH,  
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Email: [angela.gibson@scottishsalmon.com](mailto:angela.gibson@scottishsalmon.com) Closing date for applications:  
Friday 4th April 2014

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## public notices

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To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at [www.argoyle-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argoyle-bute.gov.uk)

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 [www.argoyle-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argoyle-bute.gov.uk). Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02490/PP	Installation of a climbing tower and associated climbing wall, abseil wall, zip wire, crate stack, parachute jump, Jacobs ladder, trapeze and zip wire run	Kilbowie House Gallanach Road Oban Argyll And Bute PA24 4PF	Oban Area Office
14/00333/PP	Installation of buried cable duct and joint box	Calgary Bay Calgary Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Tobermory Area Office
14/00349/PP	Construction of a partially buried abstraction chamber and compensation flow chamber. Erection of raised steel platform	Land Adjacent To Loch Peachill Dam Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6QF	Tobermory Area Office
14/00402/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage with residential accommodation at first floor level	Land West Of Dunearne House Ellenabeich Isle Of Seil Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Balvicar
14/00474/PPP	Site for the erection of 3 dwellings	Land South East Of Dalmally Hotel Dalmally Argyll And Bute PA23 1AY	Sub Post Office Dalmally
14/00531/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage (amended house design in relation to planning permission 12/02046/PP)	Plot 1 Aultin Farm East Of Glen Houses Aultin Farm Dervaig Tobermory PA75 6QW	Sub Post Office Dervaig
14/00538/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of oil tank and formation of vehicular access	Land South West Of Drimmin Kilcrenan Taynuilt Argyll And Bute PA35 1HF	Sub Post Office Taynuilt
14/00554/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and alterations to existing access	The Stacyard Knockan Aultin Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA67 6DP	Sub Post Office Bunessan
14/00607/PP	Change of use of gate lodge to new heritage centre and tea shop	Gatelhouse St Conan's Kirk Lochawe Dalmally Argyll And Bute PA33 1AQ	Sub Post Office Dalmally
14/00622/PP	Change of use from bunkhouse/self catering unit and recording studio to form dwellinghouse and store room	Mucrahan Lodge Dervaig Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Dervaig
14/00631/PP	Installation of septic tank with soakaway and erection of compound to facilitate chemical toilet waste disposal unit	Public Toilet Scarinish Isle Of Tiree Argyll And Bute	Tiree Area Office

## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/00420/PP	Alterations to form two new windows, new door and rooflight	Murenn Rockfield Road Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6PN	Tobermory Area Office
14/00541/PP	Installation of replacement roof covering to kitchen extension	Ilybank Dervaig Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6QJ	Sub Post Office Dervaig

## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED)

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/00420/PP	Alterations to form two new windows, new door and rooflight	Murenn Rockfield Road Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6PN	Tobermory Area Office

## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED)

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/00420/PP	Alterations to form two new windows, new door and rooflight	Murenn Rockfield Road Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6PN	Tobermory Area Office

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## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED)

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans


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# Business

## Hatchery worker's award success

A FARM technician at Marine Harvest's Inchmore hatchery at Glenmoriston has won a prestigious award for people studying for qualifications in aquaculture.

Simon MacLellan was presented with his award by Scottish Minister for Youth Employment Angela Constance at a ceremony at Dunblane Hydro.

The 26-year-old from Drumnadrochit joined Marine Harvest in 2011 and has just completed an SVQ Level 2 in Aquaculture at Inverness College UHI.

Simon's manager had studied for the SVQ Level 3 previously and recommended it to him as a good way to learn more about the industry. He now hopes to move on to study the SVQ Level 3.

Simon said: 'I'm absolutely delighted with the award and I am so happy to have been put forward for it and to win.'

'I joined the company with no experience of aquaculture and combining working on the job whilst studying the SVQ has helped give me the knowledge to progress. I'm really glad to have made the choice to work in aquaculture and particularly Marine Harvest.'

Alan Sutherland, managing director of Marine Harvest Scotland said: 'We're really pleased for Simon as this is a major achievement. He thoroughly deserves the award as working and studying at the same time is always a challenge.'

'The aquaculture industry has changed and developed since its earliest days and now offers a great employment opportunity for young people and a great long term career. We look forward to watching Simon's progress with us in the years to come.'

LANTRA's Learner of the Year Awards celebrate the achievements of young people and new entrants within Scotland's land-based and aquaculture industries.



Oban Whisky and Fine Wine manager, Euan Finlayson. 07\_t12whisky1

## Interest in Japanese whisky prompts jobs hope

JAPANESE whisky has been the surprise hit at Oban Whisky and Fine Wines, which has seen a steady stream of trade since it opened in December.

Manager Euan Finlayson has been surprised by the interest in the tipple from the far east, which has gained a popular following within the local area

- while tourists tend to favour the Oban and Tobermory malts.

Either way, the selection of unusual and hard to find drams at the shop has seen it build a solid fan-base - and Euan hopes to be able to employ more staff in the summer.

He said: 'We opened just before

Christmas and there's been good interest. It's been really interesting. The tourists to the area have incredible whisky knowledge so they know what they're looking for. The Japanese whisky has been popular too though - it rivals some of the best Scottish whisky.'

'Hopefully we'll be taking on two or three members of staff in the summertime.'

Euan was formerly manager at Guise Clothing, his family's business on Argyll Square which closed on February 1.

The shop stocks fine wine as well as rare and unusual whiskies from across Scotland and the world - and even cigars.

## New scheme to boost west coast food and drink exports

FAMOUS food and drink from the west coast will receive fresh exposure across the world under a new scheme to boost international exports.

The total value of Scotland's overseas food and drink exports has already increased by 52 per cent between 2007 and 2012, with exports of Scotch whisky rocketing by 87 per cent in the decade to 2012 to £4.3billion.

Hoping to grow that even further, the new Scotland Food and Drink Export Plan, developed jointly by the industry and government, aims to capitalise on the industry's already tremendous success by focusing on 15 key export markets.

A team of global experts will be deployed in the seven highest priority markets - North America, France, Germany, the

Middle East, China and Hong Kong, Japan and South East Asia - to open up new opportunities to drive international sales for Scotland's food and drink firms.

The Scotland Food and Drink Partnership - comprising the Scottish Government, Scotland Food and Drink, Scotland Development International and the main exporting trade associations - have drawn up the

strategy together, and each has contributed towards the £4.5million in funding.

Food and Drink secretary Richard Lochhead launched the plan with the Partnership at Nairn's Oatcakes in Edinburgh. He said: 'Scotland's food and drink is going global. But we can do so much more. I'm delighted the partnership has drawn up this excellent plan to help widen

our reach and meet demand, and I'm confident this will reap huge rewards for Scotland in the coming years.'

The group's chief executive, James Withers, said: 'We shouldn't underestimate the significance of this plan. This is about industry leadership and making a giant stride towards internationalising a whole sector of Scotland's economy.'

STAFF at Cameron House welcomed Scottish youth employment minister Angela Constance MSP last week as the hotel launches its own training academy.

While there, the minister learned how the Loch Lomond-side hotel plans to train its young employees to be the best in the business - as well as how they're preparing to welcome visitors to the Commonwealth Games, Ryder Cup and Year of Homecoming.

Speaking last week, Ms Constance said: 'This week is Tourism Week so it is to be expected that we look forward to the great opportunities that the Commonwealth Games, Ryder Cup and Homecoming present for us to shine internationally.'

'It is also Make Young People Your Business Week and I hope that the excitement building for these sporting and cultural events will inspire more young people into one of our most vibrant and successful industries.'

'The young people I met have thrived since joining the staff at the hotel thanks to mentorship from senior staff and a commitment to in-house training and development.'

'It is encouraging to see such an internationally-renowned and respected business really shout about its relationship with the community, the local labour market, schools and colleges.'

It speaks volumes about the talented people it continues to attract that the hotel has gone so far to establish its own sector-based work academy and I am very keen to hear more about the progress with this.'

The five-star resort employs more than 500 people across its front of house team, restaurants - including the Michelin-starred Martin Wishart on Loch Lomond - spa, leisure facilities, championship golf course and grounds keeping team, with 36 per cent of staff aged between 16 and 24 years old.

Cameron House managing director, Stephen Carter OBE, said: 'We have such strong talent here at the hotel in various roles spanning across food and beverage, lodge housekeeping, spa and leisure. Each of them takes immense pride in being part of the Cameron House family and it's fantastic to celebrate this with a visit from Ms Constance.'

For the last three years, the 132-bedroom resort has invited local schools to an annual careers day to recruit from the local community - which can be up to 200 seasonal and full-time vacancies a year - across the variety of career options available across the resort and golf course.

The new training academy builds on a successful supervisory and junior management programme launched 18 months ago.



Angela Constance MSP, front centre, with the senior management team at the Cameron House hotel.

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## Glencoe wildlife tour company launches fundraising drive in aid of boat builder

A GLENCOE coastal marine wildlife tour company is launching a fundraising drive in memory of the man who built its boats.

Seaxplorer will be offering half price trips for locals and free trips for hospitality and tourism related businesses from March 31 to April 6 in aid of Macmillan Cancer Research. The company will donate the remaining 50 per cent of the normal tariff to the charity, and

thereafter make a donation from each booking until the end of May. Seaxplorer owner Paul Mills said: 'The boats I use are built by Quiniquari Marine which is based in Ballachulish and St Davids in South Wales. The founder of the company 20 years ago was John Price and sadly he died on February 26 after a long battle with cancer at 49. He left the company in the capable hands of his son Rhys, 24, and the

rest of the team. However he was a very dynamic and forward thinking man and will be sadly missed in the industry.'

Seaxplorer is also involved in sponsoring and supporting the Loch Shiel Viking Challenge kayak race on March 29, when the company's newest boat Glencoe Xplorer will provide safety cover. All money raised from the race is also going to Macmillan Cancer Support.



Brian Owen is the new leaseholder at the Dalavich Shop and Post Office and the Wild Rowan Cafe. 16\_t12brian01

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## Bus driver switches route to shop, post office and cafe

A BUS driver has swapped life on the open road for a shop and cafe business in the remote village of Dalavich.

Brian Owen, who has been driving buses for 26 years all over the UK, Ireland and Europe, has taken over the lease of Dalavich Shop and Post Office and the Wild Rowan Cafe. All three businesses are contained within the shop in the centre of the village.

But Brian, who lives in

Connel, is more qualified for the job than many people realise. He has been assistant manager of a supermarket in Pitlochry and ran The Birks Restaurant and the Watermill Tearoom in Aberfeldy.

**Experiences**

Brian said: 'There is a lot involved in running the shop, post office and tearoom but I will be able to call on my previous experiences.'

Brian has been running the

shop since March 1. 'I have wanted to try running a business like this for a while,' he said. 'So, when I heard that the Dalavich shop was up for lease I jumped at the chance.'

'It is an important place for Dalavich; it is the hub of the community and groups meet up here.'

'I really enjoy working here because of the peace, tranquillity and the people - plus the commute to work is beautiful.'

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## United Auctions Stirling

UNITED Auctions had forward 2,026 store cattle, young bulls and cast cows, as well as 1,089 store sheep, at its Stirling sale last Wednesday.

Bullocks – averaged 234.40p (-10.6p) to 276.50p kg for a 298kg SimX from Claisch and £1400 for a 619kg CHX from Forneth.

Heifers averaged 224.80p (-6.38p) to 218.80p kg for a 280kg SimX from Bowleys and £1200 for a 560kg LimX from Barlaugh.

B&W Bullocks averaged 166.75p (+10.71p) to 216.30p kg for a 416kg BFX from

Knockrirock and £925 for a 564kg HFX from Bottoms.

Young Bulls averaged 199.84p to 251.90p kg for a 254kg CHX from Knockrirock and £1026 for 554kg SimX from Shawsmill.

Forward Cattle averaged 178.85p to 218.30p kg for a AAX from Ballaris and £1430 for a LimX from Netherton.

Cast Cows averaged 131.45p to 194.40p for a LimX from Drumoider and £1410 for a CHX from Westerhill.

Bullocks: Up to 250kgs: Getafes £680, 275.30p 251-300kgs: Bowleys £760, 271.00p; 301-350kgs Shoestanes £860, 252.20p 351-400kgs Gilmore Farms £940, 246.10p 400-450kgs: Barlaugh £990, Knockrirock £1050, Prime Sheep including 5,149 lambs and 1,464 ewes and rams at its Stirling sale last Thursday.

Lambs: South Flenders £230 live cattle at their weekly

Heifers: Up to 250kgs – Drumoide £500, 243.20p; 251-300kgs: Bowleys £760, 271.00p; 301-350kgs Shoestanes £860, 252.20p 351-400kgs Gilmore Farms £940, 246.10p 400-450kgs: Barlaugh £990, Knockrirock £1050, Prime Sheep including 5,149 lambs and 1,464 ewes and rams at its Stirling sale last Thursday.

OTM Bulls: Thornyhills (Her) £1210, 126.00p; Balmyle (CH) £1570, 151.50p; Gateside (Lim) £1070, 127.10p; Rossburn (Sim) £1250, 127.80p; Point (X) £78.50.

UNITED Auctions sold 6,131 Prime Sheep including 5,149 lambs and 1,464 ewes and rams at its Stirling sale last Thursday.

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(HB) £89.50; Abbots Neuk (BFL) £96.50; Balbeath (Tex) £121.50; Craigbank (Char) £100.50; Braeacree (Chev) £86.50; Harelawside (Cross) £81.50; Harelawside (Jacob) £46.50; Lochmill (Btex) £88.50;

Rams: Garvagh (Suff) £108.50; West Meikle Pinkerton (BF) £85.50; Craigbank (Tex) £106.50; Wester Bowleys (BFL) £108.50; Ballochgar (Btex) £81.50; Bonreich (Chev) £77.50; Point (X) £78.50.

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240p per kilo and sold to 252.5p per kg 566kg Limousin heifer Mains of Cultmalundie Farm, Perth.

Young Bulls sold to 228.5p per kilo, for a 18 month 710kg Limousin or £1622 per head Gallowhill Farms.

OTM Under 36 month Cattle sold to 211.5p per kg 580kg British Blue Rathillet Farm or to £1436 per head for 720kg Limousin Mains of Beath Farm.

Also forward were 75 cast cows, bulls and OTM cattle. Charolais cow sold to 153p per kg or £1455 from Falleinch Farm, Stirling. Friesian cows sold to 124p per kg or £955 from Wharlawhill Farm, Kinross.

Leading Prices: Cows: AA- 14lp, £965 Immerioin, 137p, £935 Angle Park, 132p, £925 WrBraco, £925 Gelvan view; Lim- 105p, £1035 Upper Spittalton, 15lp, £1065 Milton Mill; BB- 153p, £995 Dalcircha; Char- 153p, £1455 Falleinch, 15lp £1100 West Carse; Luing- 128p, £825 Immerioin; Saler- 126p, £912 Greenraig; Sim- 137p £910 Gelvan View; Fr- 124p, £955 Hillend, 12lp £105 Wharlawhill, 122p £785 Gravstale, 11lp £805 Bonnyhill, 10lp £835 Woodend.

Cast Bull: Sim- £1200 Milton. OTM: Lim- 209p £1413 Preston, 200p £1436 Keirshead; AA- 184p £1233 Durieshill.

## Farming Focus

with Ewen Campbell, SRUC farm manager for Kirkton and Auchtertyre

It gave our visitors a chance to be hands on with the sheep, comparing their assessments of weight and condition with the figures obtained from the read-outs of the weigh crate. But just as importantly, they all expressed interest in how such technology might be able to help them reduce the time taken to sort and manage the sheep in their flocks in the future.

I've also had my hands full with calving. So far, we've had 10 calves born with two more to go. They're all healthy and in good condition and it's a grand sight to see the calves running and jumping about with each other.

We are also having to deal with tiny beasties on the farm – daddy-longleg grubs called leatherjackets. For those who don't know, the grubs live in the soil and eat the roots of grass and can reduce grass growth.

SRUC has been surveying leatherjacket densities in lowland grassland for the past 40 years. This year grub numbers are particularly high so I thought it would be a good idea to check what was happening in our grass fields.

Although grubs were present in nearly all the fields sampled, the majority didn't have enough to be of concern. However, two of the fields I am intending to reseed did have high numbers – over one million per ha in one field – so we will have to sort those out before we reseed.

Anyway, the sun has just popped out, so I better get some sheds mucked out before it disappears again!



Right: Ten calves have been born on the Kirkton and Auchtertyre monitor farm in the last few weeks.

## Crofters support scheme planned

SCOTTISH Ministers are considering setting up a separate support scheme for crofting as part of its new rural development programme, it has emerged.

The move follows a meeting between Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead and Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, with the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF).

Issues discussed included the impact of CAP reform on crofting, growing the number of new entrants and government support to crofting through the Crofting Communities Agricultural Grant Scheme (CCAGS) and the Croft House Grant Scheme.

But it was the prospect of crofters being treated as a special case which delighted the SCF. The Kyle-based organisation has long argued that current grants regimes favours big farmers in non-crofting areas.

SCF chief executive Patrick Krause said: "We had a very positive discussion about some of the main issues facing crofting today, and the Scottish Government's continued commitment to the sector is very welcome. It is great news that the rural affairs secretary is sympathetic to the case for

a separate support scheme for crofting in the new rural development programme, and we look forward to his final decision on that."

"We also look forward to working with the Scottish Government and others to find practical ways in which we can develop crofting, in particular improving access to land, work and homes, and getting more young people into crofting."

Mr Lochhead said: "The Scottish Government fought hard in last year's CAP negotiations to head off proposals that would have disadvantaged crofting and we must continue with this approach as we implement CAP reform in Scotland. In light of the legislative and regulatory requirements on crofting we are sympathetic to the case for specific support for this sector, and I am therefore minded to look at having a separate scheme for crofting in the new rural development programme. It is important to stress, however, that no decisions have yet been taken – we are still seeking views on the new system for direct payments and we are currently analysing responses to the consultation on rural development which closed at the end of February."

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# 20 YEARS AGO



MARCH 10 1994



## Long-serving Kelco employees honoured

A dinner was held in Oban recently to honour three long serving employees of Kelco International Ltd, Baldincaline.

Process operations George Prosser and Hamish Emslie, and maintenance supervisor Neil Jordan were each presented with certificates honouring their 25 years' service with the firm by factory manager, Hugh McLean. t11twentysix

cantabrian

Young athlete enjoys success

Sixteen-year-old hurdler David McFarlane of Mid Argyll Athletic Club gave his club and local athletics a major boost with his success in a national indoor competition at Glasgow's Kelvin Hall last Saturday. t11twentysix

Kelvin Hall last Saturday. t11twentysix

Scouts donate £150 to ARMS

The 1st Argyll Oban Scouts present £150 to ARMS representatives Liz Crawford and Janice Rydings. The money was raised during a sponsored walk on the island of Kerrera. t11twentysix

## Doors open on new Kinlochleven garage

Douglas Grant has just opened his own car repairs garage in his home village of Kinlochleven - 20 years after leaving the area. Born and bred in Kinlochleven, Mr Grant left the village to work with Nissan in Inverness and then moved to Perth as the manager of a car garage, but always wanted to return and open his own business. t11twentysix

## Catering exhibition

CATERERS, hoteliers and restaurateurs from as far as Mallaig and Dunoon were invited to the West Highlands and Islands Catering and Hotel Exhibition in Oban.



Scouts donate £150 to ARMS

The 1st Argyll Oban Scouts present £150 to ARMS representatives Liz Crawford and Janice Rydings. The money was raised during a sponsored walk on the island of Kerrera. t11twentysix

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SCOTTISH FIELD CALE

**BIRTH****BAIN**

Christopher and Helen are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their beautiful daughter, Erika Macdougall Bain, on March 7, 2014. First grandchild for Jim and Lorna, Oban, and John and Jessie, Muasdale. Many thanks to Campbeltown Maternity Unit and the RAH, Paisley.

**GOLDEN WEDDING**

**FORBES - STEWART** - At Oban Old Parish Church on March 19, 1964, by the late Rev. W. MacDonald, Harry to Margaret. Present address - Westray, Connel.

**MATHESON**

**LIVINGSTONE** - In St Kieran's Church, Port Charlotte, Islay on March 25, 1964 by the Rev A Mackenzie, Robert to Chrissie. Present address, Stoneywood, Aberdeen.

**DEATHS**

**CAMPBELL** - Jean. Peacefully on Wednesday March 5, 2014 at Bowman Court, Craignure, Isle of Mull in her 72nd year. Beloved daughter of the late Iain and Nan 49 Main Street, Tobermory. Greatly missed.

**HAGGART** - Peacefully at Belford Hospital on Thursday, March 13 2014, George Alexander OBE aged 85 years. Much loved dad, grandad, great-grandad and brother. Funeral service in Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church, Fort William on Saturday March 22 at 12 noon. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Renal Units, Belford and Raigmore Hospitals.

**KENNEDY** - Suddenly at home on Saturday, March 15, 2014, aged 71, Donald, beloved husband to Ann and much loved by all the family. Funeral will take place at Cardross Crematorium on Monday March 24 at 1.15 pm. No flowers please. Retiring collection / donations if desired for Cancer Research (UK) Scotland.

**KENNY** - Siobhan Ann. Peacefully at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley on March 17, 2014, Siobhan, loving daughter of Elizabeth and John, loving sister of Lauren, Gordon, Fiona and Seoma. Funeral service at Desmond Maguire Funeral Directors, The Mill Funeral Home, 115 Mill Street, Rutherglen G73 2AW on Friday, March 21 commencing at 1pm to which all family and friends are respectfully invited.

**MACINTYRE** - Peacefully in the Belford Hospital on Thursday, March 13, 2014. Donald MacIntyre aged 87 years. Beloved husband of the late Isabel Price and eldest son of the late Donald and Annie MacIntyre, Willow Cottage, Strontian, Argyll. Arrangements by John McLellan Funeral Directors.

**MACMASTER** - Suddenly but peacefully, surrounded by family in the outstanding care of the Belford Hospital on Saturday, 15 March 2014. Donald James MacMaster (Donnie). Loving husband of the late Morag Finnigan. Devoted dad of Alasdair and Jane, father-in-law of Liz and Raiko. Doting grandpa of Caty, Lucy, Callum, Flora and Fiona, a much loved uncle to many and friend to all. A true Highland gentleman. Funeral service on Monday 24 March 2014 at 11am in Caol Church of Scotland. Family flowers only please. Enquiries to John McLellan Funeral Directors.

**WEBSTER** - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on Saturday March 15, 2014, Catherine Webster of the Falls of Lora Hotel, Connel, wonderful mum to Karen and Gavin, sister to Sandra and a loving mother-in-law and granny of six. She will be sorely missed by so many.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**CAMERON** - Bibby wishes to express her sincere thanks to all family, friends and neighbours for their love and support, kind messages of sympathy, cards, letters, phone calls, flowers and help with catering on the sad and sore loss of her dear sister, Catherine. Grateful thanks to doctors and all medical staff for their caring attention over the past year, to Rev Donald McCorkindale for such a sensitive and comforting service, Ross and Calum for their thoughtful choice of music, Stuart and Alasdair for their beautiful Gaelic singing, and Chris for piping at the cemetery. Special thanks to Scott of John McLellan, Funeral Directors for the kind and courteous way he guided me through this difficult time, to the

many from far and near who attended the funeral service and paid their last respects at the graveside, and contributed to the retiral collection of £1,525 for Lochaber Cancer and Palliative Care Fund and Cancer Research UK.

**CAMERON** - The family of the late Ian D Cameron would like to thank all relatives and friends for all their help and kind words at this sad time. A special thanks to the Highland Hospice for looking after Ian and medical staff who cared for him, also thanks to Mike McFall for his handling of all the funeral arrangements.

**CRAWFORD** - Catherine, Joanne, Cara and family would like to thank all family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues for the many flowers, cards, phone calls, words of comfort and kind expressions of sympathy received following the sad loss of John. Grateful thanks to doctors and nursing staff at the Mid Argyll and Golden Jubilee hospitals, and also to the paramedics for their efforts. Our thanks to Rev Roddy MacLeod for a comforting and uplifting service; to Donald MacDonald Funeral Directors for considerate and professional services and to the Stag hotel for excellent purvey. Finally, thank you to all who attended at church and graveside to pay their respects. The retiral collection has raised over £620 to date, for Macmillan Nurses and Mid Argyll Hospital.

**GILLIES** - The family of the late Jean Gillies wish to thank everyone for their kindness, support, cards, telephone calls, visits and flowers following their sad loss. Sincere thanks to doctors and staff at Taynuilt Surgery and staff of Ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital for their care and attention. Thanks to Rev. Robert Brookes on March 23, 2000. A dear friend and godmother. Sadly missed.

**MACGREGOR** - In loving memory of Annie Mac who died March 23, 2000. A dear friend and godmother. Sadly missed.

**MACKINNON** - In loving memory of our father, grandfather and pops, Angus (Dui) who died March 24, 2013. Loved and remembered every day. The gaol againnir oirbh.

**PATERSON** - In loving memory of a dear son, brother George (Daffy) who passed away March 19, 2013. I hold you close within my heart and there you shall remain.

To walk with us throughout our lives until we meet again. Love Mam, Willie, Janet and Marion.

**PATERSON** - In loving memory of a dear brother, brother-in-law and uncle George (Daffy) who passed away on March 19, 2013. One day we hope the sadness can end until then our hearts struggle to mend. Yet everyday we feel your presence and with that warmth the pain lessens.

- Love Curly and Rhonda. xx

**WHITEHEAD** - In loving memory of our beloved mum Patricia, died March 23, 2013. Your smile has gone forever And your hand we cannot touch

But we have so many memories

Of a mum we loved so much Loved and missed always.

- Christine, Alistair, Elizabeth, Michael, Fiona and families.

The dad we loved doesn't go away He walks beside us every day Unseen, unheard but always near Still loved, still missed and very dear Always in our thoughts

**CAMPBELL** - In loving memory of Ian Campbell (SCAPA) who passed away March 24, 2013. Miss and love you more every day. Always in my thoughts and heart.

- Pauline HAY - In loving memory of James who died March 18, 2006. Always in our thoughts, forever in our hearts.

- Joan, Donald, Anthea, Iain and families.

**MCDONALD** - In loving memory of Lachie, a dear husband, dad, father-in-law and papa who died on March 21, 2002. Loved and remembered today and always.

- Effie and family.

Also remembering Neil, a dear brother and uncle who died January 14, 2006 and Bella a dear sister-in-law, aunt and great-aunt who died March 29, 2010. Always in our thoughts.

- Effie and family.

**MACDONALD** - In memory of Ian, brother, brother-in-law, uncle and great-uncle, who died on March 24, 2012. Always in our thoughts.

- Ethel and Gilbert. Carol, Hugh and family. John, Cath and family.

**MACGREGOR** - In loving memory of Annie Mac who died March 23, 2000. A dear friend and godmother. Sadly missed.

Always in my thoughts.

**MACKINNON** - In loving memory of our father, grandfather and pops, Angus (Dui) who died March 24, 2013. Loved and remembered every day.

The gaol againnir oirbh.

- Kathleen, Duncan, Heather and family in Oban and Glasgow.

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**OBAN TIMES**  
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

# Saints go west as they lose out on penalties

The Oban side will play two games this weekend

## West of Scotland Cup - 4th Round

### Giffnock North 2 Oban Saints 2

(Giffnock won 3-2 on penalties after extra time)

**NORTHOLM PARK, GIFFNOCK** was the venue for this West of Scotland Cup fourth round match between hosts Giffnock North and Oban Saints with the Oban side hoping to bounce back after their disappointing showing against Eastfield in the Scottish Cup the previous Saturday.

Giffnock are the current Caledonian Premier League champions and Saints knew they were in for a tough match and that's exactly how it turned out.

The home side started well and had Saints pinned back in the opening exchanges, but the first chance of the game fell to Saints when Donnie Campbell and Allan MacKay combined to set up Lewis Cameron, but his shot was saved by North keeper Craig Marshall.

After a slow start the visitors were right back in the game and Ross Maitland fired over a great cross to the far post, but Craig MacEwan jumped a bit too early and his header went past the post.

Giffnock looked a well drilled outfit and they took the lead in the 22nd minute in rather fortunate circumstances when a free kick was curled into the box and Myles McAuley, in attempting to clear his lines, only succeeded in knocking the ball into his own net.

### Fizzed

Saints should have equalised a minute later when Ross Maitland fizzed in a wicked free kick, but Alex Craik headed wide of the target from six yards.

The Oban side drew level five minutes before the interval when skipper Marc MacCallum got on the end of a Craig MacEwan corner to head the ball home to make the half time score 1-1 which was just about right on the balance of play.

Saints started the second half well and took the lead in the

52nd minute and what a superb goal it was. Craig MacEwan and Donnie Campbell made progress up the left flank before the ball was played back to Colin Tindall who threaded a great pass to Lewis Cameron.

The young striker took off, leaving three or four Giffnock defenders in his wake, before thumping a great shot past the stranded North keeper.

The visitors were on top at this stage controlling the game and playing some good football into the bargain.

However, a mistake by Colin Tindall in the 63rd minute when he failed to clear his lines allowed Giffnock to break through and Scottish international midfielder Gary Dickson slotted the ball home to make the score 2-2.



Lewis Cameron scored a superb goal for Saints.

Saints skipper Marc MacCallum sustained a nasty knee injury but he showed his courage and determination to win by staying on the pitch until the end of the game.

Both teams went at it hammer and tongs for the remainder of the game as they both knew that the next goal would probably be the winner.

Lewis Cameron had a decent effort for Saints as the clock ran down and Daniel Cassells made a brilliant save from a Chris Paul header to deny North a victory in the dying seconds.

The game moved into half an hour of extra time, but there was no more scoring and so to the dreaded penalty shoot-out.

Saints started the second half well and took the lead in the

## FOOTBALL

Saints' record in penalty shoot-outs has been abysmal recently. They lost the Centenary Cup and Jimmy Marshall Cup finals on penalty shoot-outs last season and this one was to be no different.

The shoot-out started well for Saints with Mattie Rippon netting the first spot kick and Giffnock firing over the bar.

Allan MacKay then scored and so did Giffnock. Next up was Donnie Campbell but Craig Marshall saved, Giffnock then scored 2-2. Craig MacEwan was next, but he shot past the post, then the Giffnock player fired the ball over the bar - still 2-2. Lewis Cameron was next in line, but like Craig, he shot past the post. The pressure was on the last Giffnock player but he calmly slotted the ball home to give his side victory in a hard-fought but sporting cup tie well handled by Ian Hamilton.

### Disappointed

Manager Iain Jackson was disappointed after the game. He said: 'I thought we played very well against a good Giffnock side. We were on top in the second half, then gave away a bad goal for the equaliser. I felt sorry for Colin Tindall as he had played really well all afternoon.'

'The less said about the penalties the better. We just don't seem to be able to handle the pressure in these situations. That's three shoot-outs in a row we've lost, so it can't just be down to bad luck.'

'However, that's the major cups over and done with for this season so we must now concentrate on the Jimmy Marshall Trophy and the league run in.'

Saints have a double header this weekend. On Saturday they take on Castlemlie at home in a Premier Division league match and on Sunday they travel to play Argyll rivals Lochgilphead Red Star in the second round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy.

Saturday's match will take place at either Glen 2 or the 3G (depending on the weather) kicking off at 2pm.

Kilchoan Ladies football team could be heading abroad in search of games. f12kilchoan1no



Kilchoan Ladies football team could be heading abroad in search of games. f12kilchoan1no

# SPOT THE SHINTY BALL COMPETITION

## ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

I May, Pulpit Drive, Oban

J Finlayson, Lansdowne Cres., Kincardine

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.

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

## EASY TO ENTER

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavulin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

## COMPETITION RULES

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition void if in its sole opinion the rules are not being observed or if the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of Wyvern Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.



A record number of players took to the courts for Oban Squash Club's mixed team tournament. 16\_t12squash01

## High standard at Oban squash tournament

## SQUASH

A RECORD number of 30 players took part in the annual Oban Squash Club mixed team tournament on Saturday at Atlantis Leisure.

In the third year of the tournament, organisers were delighted to see a high turnout and a high standard of play that brought together beginners and more advanced players.

## Argyll derby scheduled for Sunday

## FOOTBALL

The first ball was served at 10am and the final stroke played at 5.30pm, as a total of 270 games were played. The winning team was: Paul Kersley, Donald McLennan, Malcolm Croarkin, Gavin McLucas, Andy Mathews, Anna Bateman and Julie McGlynn.

The second half produced a more clinical Athletic with another 10 goals scored without reply through Maitland (2), Gillies (2), Smith (2), and one each for Carmichael, MacLellan, Graham and an own goal.

## Satisfied

Manager Calum Fox was satisfied with the result. He said: 'Right from the first whistle we were in total control and while the convincing result didn't tell me too much about my side, the fact that Lochfyneside never had a shot on target in the match showed we never got complacent, which was the main focus for us after some poor second half performances this season.'

The team attended the Ryan MacPhail Memorial Dinner at night and thoroughly enjoyed the evening was had by all. It's a cause a lot of us back to the hilt as we have friends of Ryan in our club.'

Athletic are away to third Lanark in the next round of the Challenge Shield this Saturday and having won down there 4-0 earlier in the season, are hoping to replicate that result.

## Mini rugby

## Dalriada at

## Lochgilphead

## YOUTH RUGBY

MID ARGYLL RFC hosted the first Argyll and Bute Mini Rugby Dalriada Festival of the season in Lochgilphead.

More than 60 players from primary four to seven gathered on the playing fields at Lochgilphead Campus on Sunday for their first tournament after the winter break.

Teams from Oban, Mull,

Etive Vikings and Mid Argyll

took on each other in a round robin format with matches being played at age groups of

P4/5 and P6/7.

Etive Vikings came out on top at both age groups despite some fierce competition from the other teams.

All the players impressed on the day with some fantastic rugby which is a huge testament to their coaches who have been keeping them training over the winter months.

As usual Mid Argyll RFC

were fantastic hosts and provided food for the players and coaches before their journey home.

The next event will take place in Taynuilt on Sunday, March 30 from noon.

Follow us on  
facebook

## Kilchoan ladies football team may have to travel abroad in search of competition

KILCHOAN'S ladies football team could be set to travel abroad in search of competition.

If the Scottish mainland can't produce any teams, we're thinking of doing a tour of somewhere where girls take football as seriously as we do like America or South Africa though we haven't told our boyfriends yet about these plans. We'd like to have a few practice games here before we go.'

## TRAVELLING

Women from Bristol travelled to Ardnamurchan last year with a male team for a game but this is the only team on the UK mainland Kilchoan Ladies have been able to play. They are now looking at travelling around Britain in search of games, with a trip abroad in sight for the future.

Kilchoan Ladies' 12 players range from age 14 to mid 40s and have played a few matches against teams from Coll and the Uists but are now looking for competitors on the mainland. If their struggle continues, they may set off to tour South Africa or America to find games.

Captain Kayleigh MacGillivray, 23, said: 'We live in a small community in a very remote part of the world but we've built up a really super ladies football team. We've trained regularly, even through this very wet winter, but it isn't much fun unless there are matches to aim for.'

Kayleigh, who is studying PE teaching at the University of Stirling, said: 'We're quite far in the sticks so people often think it's too much to ask to travel out to us but

## WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

we try to tie in with other things happening on the peninsula like music events so it can be a really good day out.'

'We don't expect everyone to come to us, we're willing to meet in the middle and we would be keen to travel around Britain to find other teams. Touring abroad is quite ambitious but it's something we would like to do in the future.'

'It's not that there isn't an interest in women's football, there's plenty of girls who like to play. The problem is getting someone to round them up into a team and get them involved in matches and tournaments.'

Any team that would like to play Kilchoan Ladies can contact Kayleigh at www.facebook.com/KilchoanFC



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# Lovat set the pace in Orion Premiership

## Oban Camanachd start with two wins out of two

**KINLOCHSHIEL** have yet to bank a point or a goal in the Orion Group Premiership but last Saturday's 1-0 defeat at The Dell to Kingussie gave coach Colin Fraser grounds for optimism.

Both Keith MacRae and Gordy MacDonald came through the match unscathed after recovering, respectively, from a hernia operation and a knee injury and will be vital assets in 'Shiel's bid to upset champions Newtonmore at Kirkton.

Fraser told *The Oban Times*: 'It was a close game against Kings and we played a lot better than we did against Glenurquhart the week before. I was a bit disappointed we never took anything out of the game and felt we were still a bit match rusty.'

'Newtonmore will be a tough nut to crack but the boys know what they have to do. Newtonmore are not unbeatable and clearly they are a very good side, but having home advantage will hopefully make a difference.'

'Glen Mackintosh is obviously a big threat to any team, as is their whole forward line but hopefully our defence will be up to it - and I'm sure they will.'

Orion Group Premiership champions **NEWTONMORE** will play their first away game of the season against Kinlochshiel on Saturday.

Last week's 2-0 victory against Inveraray at the Eilan secured another two points for the team but it didn't come easy, according to coach PJ MacIntosh.

He said: 'I was pleased to get a win but it was a bit of a struggle. Inveraray put up a really good fight.'

Looking ahead to Saturday's game, even with a full squad MacIntosh knows Newtonmore will need to be on top form to get another win under their belts.

He said: 'It's our first away game and it's definitely going to be a challenge. There are no easy games in the premier league and Kinlochshiel are very competitive team. You have got to be confident just to be in the right frame of mind but it will be a really difficult game.'

**KYLES ATHLETIC** looked to have halted their poor run of form and confidence is high going into a home match with Lochaber on Saturday.

After two defeats to start their 2014 campaign, Kyles managed a scoreless draw with Glenurquhart in Drumadrochit last week.

Kyles trainer James Perlich said: 'There are some positive signs that a good team is being formed and we are looking to improve again this week but essentially we need more goals.'

'This will happen once players gain more confidence in their positions and are playing alongside each other more often.'

Kyles' junior team secured a good 1-1 draw in Oban against Oban Celtic in their first fixture of the season. Alastair MacKay was on target for the Tighnabruach men.

**LOCHABER** Camanachd travel to Tighnabruach looking for their league first points after

going down 5-1 last weekend to table-toppers Lovat in their opening fixture at Speanhead.

Coach Robert Johnstone felt that result was no disgrace given that his team had not played a single pre-season match - but will hope match sharpness is better for the game against Kyles.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm just down-hearted we did not get a few games under our belt before the season started but that's history now.'

'I don't know whether the pitch at Tighnabruach will be playable so the game could be switched to Lochaber.'

'We have no injury worries. James MacRae got hit on the ribs against Lovat but he seems to be alright.'

'Every game is going to be difficult, Kyles included. We were running rusty against Lovat but we played for the 90 minutes. We'll get our heads down and work hard again against Kyles.'

Orion Group Premiership leaders **LOVAT** welcome Inveraray to Balgate Park with high hopes of extending their perfect start to season.

Victory would make it four wins from four for the Kiltarility men, who are already providing ample evidence that they could mount a serious challenge for the title.

Coach Allan MacRae will still have Lorne MacKay missing through suspension but Calum MacAulay could feature at some stage after being included in the squad for the Lochaber game last week.

MacRae dismisses any talk of silverware as premature with just three games played and is focusing only on the job in hand.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'It is early days yet and there's a long way to go so we are just going to take it one game at a time.'

There are only eight teams in the league and it would only take a few games not to go your way to be back down the table again.

'Inveraray will be a hard game - we had two very close matches against them last season and drew 2-2 with them down there. They are always well organised and very tough to play against.'

He added: 'The boys are looking forward to every game and are really enjoying their shinty.'

**INVERARAY** player/manager Garry MacPherson believes his side deserved better from their encounter with champions Newtonmore last Saturday at The Eilan.

MacPherson spoke confidently of his team's chances in the build up to the tough away tie and claimed the 2-0 defeat didn't tell the full story.

'We deserved a point at least,' said MacPherson, who was impressed with his side's performance level in their first competitive game of the season.

'We missed a handful of good chances and stopped them creating their own.'

Newtonmore went ahead towards the end of the first half and added a second with the last hit of the ball.

### SHINTY

A dominant midfield display from the 'Ray men forced Newtonmore into a tactical reshuffle at half time.

There were standout performances from the McMurdo twins; Euan in his new role at centre was full of energy and Andrew shackled Newtonmore's main goal threat Danny MacRae.

But despite having much of the territory, a rusty Inveraray forwardline couldn't convert the chances on offer.

Calling for his side to reproduce the same form for this weekend's tie with Lovat in Kiltarility, MacPherson added: 'The rate of play last week was fantastic, our defence was solid and I thought our midfield dominated theirs.'

'Lovat are a fit, young team - probably how we were described a few years ago - and have been banging in the goals.'

Douglas Dando and David Robertson, who missed the Newtonmore trip, should be available this week.

**KINGUSSIE** co-manager Russell Jones is hoping for another win at home after a victory against Kinlochshiel on Saturday.

The match was transferred to the Dell as Kinlochshiel's home turf Kirkton Park was waterlogged and Kingussie secured a 1-0 win after a closely fought game.

Jones said: 'We were pleased to get a win and I think we played particularly well in the first half, it was a tight game but our defence in particular played very well.'

Defender Liam MacIntyre has recovered from his broken hand but according to Robertson, has damaged a disc in his back and is doubtful. 'We won't rush him back,' he said.

**BUTE** players and committee members were due to meet for emergency talks on Tuesday night after both the senior and junior sides failed to fulfil their fixtures last Saturday.

With no manager in place last week, Bute failed to raise a first team for the trip to Fort William but club member Barry Martin says the club will not fold.

He added: 'Team morale has taken a nosedive but it is just a matter of getting on with things.'

Bute are scheduled to host Beauly this Saturday in the Marine Harvest National Division and the junior team are to travel to Tayforth.

'We fear no-one,' was the battle cry from **GLENORCHY** coach John Smith as he prepared his side for the visit of National Division title contenders Kilmallie.

Glenorchy made a losing start to 2014 in Glasgow but Smith insists the Dalmally men, on their day, are a match for anyone.

Smith said: 'I have been told Kilmallie will be competing at the top of the league but we fear no-one.'

'If we get our strongest team available we are a match for anyone, especially at home.'

Glenorchy made a flying start to last weekend's match against GMA, with Kieran McKay and Duncan Smith scoring within the first 15 minutes but a Craig Anderson hat trick and a Mark Bain strike completed the scoring in an action-packed first half.

Both teams cancelled each other out in the second half, meaning the final score remained 4-2.

**KILMALLIE** are busy preparing for their game at Glenorchy more in hope than expectation as the rain continues to fall on the west Highlands.

The Caoi side had hoped to switch their game to Caberfeidh last week away from the Canal Parks quagmire but flood prevention work at Castle Leod was incomplete and the game was called off.

Kilmallie coach Duncan Kelly will have a full squad available against Glenorchy except for Michael Rodger, who is serving a one-match suspension.

Kelly told *The Oban Times*: 'I have not seen Glenorchy for four years since I was helping Ali Ferguson at Lochaber so they are a bit of an unknown quantity.'

'But any team that gains promotion by finishing in the top three in the South Division One deserves respect.'

'It will be a really hard game especially considering we have not played for six or seven weeks.'

'It would have been nice to have got a few games under



Action from last Saturday's match between Lochside Rovers and Kilmory. The Mid Argyll side came away with a 2-0 win.

Photo: Kevin McGlynn

our belts because going up to Caberfeidh are never easy at the best of times.'

He added: 'The postponements have been really frustrating - the boys have been training through the week and are physically fit but it is not the same as match practice.'

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OBAN CAMANACHD secured another impressive away win on Saturday as Malcolm Clark's second-half strike ensured they brought both points back from Bute.

But manager Gussie Campbell has warned his players against complacency as the Oban side look to continue their good form against GMA this weekend at Mossfield.

Clark's 55th minute goal last Saturday was the least Camanachd deserved for a dominant display in which they should have scored more.

Campbell said: 'We had a lot of the pressure and a fine strike from Scott Henderson in the 64th minute made it 2-0.'

Most of the play was at the away team's end but the occasional Taynuilt attack was thwarted by a strong Ballachulish defence with youngster Cian MacPhee looking composed at all times.

Ballachulish made the final score 3-0 through a good strike from Lorne Brown in the 88th minute.

To complete a good day for Ballachulish their junior team went down to Aberdour and won 4-3, with goals from Jack MacLean and a winning penalty from Patrick MacLean.

Ballachulish senior team hosts Aberdour this Saturday - weather permitting.

**LOCHSIDE ROVERS** will be relying on their young guns to keep them in South Division One this season after the tenacious teens impressed in the 2-0 defeat to Kilnory on Saturday.

Having lost some seasoned players to the senior side, Lochside fielded a young and inexperienced side in their first fixture of the year and manager David MacLennan was pleasantly surprised by the class of 2014.

He said: 'I was really impressed with the young boys like Daniel MacVicar, Evan MacLellan and Charlie Spreadbury, who looked like he had been playing half-back all his life.'

'But for Ross MacMillan was the best player on the park. It's been a long time since I've seen a debut like that from a young boy of 15.'

'The lack of match practice was evident from Lochside's poor hitting and they conceded two soft goals.'

But looking ahead to this Saturday's derby with Oban Celtic, MacLennan said: 'We have no expectations this season and want to give as many of the young boys a game but everyone knows what the Oban Celtic match is about.'

**OBAN CELTIC** are eagerly awaiting to hear of progress on injuries to Neil Carmichael and Donald MacCallum as they prepare for the Oban derby this weekend.

Celtic face Lochside Rovers at Ganavan on Saturday but have a selection headache, with other players having work commitments.

Oban Celtic president David Hamilton said: 'Donald and Neil both came off in the first half last weekend and we are hoping they are back for an important game on Saturday.'

Taynuilt had the better of the attacking play in the first half but could not really test David MacPhee in the home goal.

Grant MacKenzie, who was injured at half time, came fairly close for the home team with two fine strikes into the side netting, but the first half ended goalless.

He added: 'I thought we were unlucky not to win and we should have made more of having the wind behind us in the second half.'

'But for our first game of the season I thought our fitness was very good.'

Taynuilt had the better of the attacking play in the first half but could not really test David MacPhee in the home goal.

Hamilton said the 1-1 draw last week with Kyles Athletic was a 'point dropped'.

He added: 'I thought we were unlucky not to win and we should have made more of having the wind behind us in the second half.'

'But for our first game of the season I thought our fitness was very good.'

Taynuilt had the better of the attacking play in the first half but could not really test David MacPhee in the home goal.

Despite being on the wrong end of a 3-0 scoreline **TAYNUILT** manager Davy Thomson was full of praise for his side in their



### Fixtures

Saturday 22 March

**Orion Group Premiership**  
Kinlochshiel v Newtonmore  
Graham Cameron  
Kyles Athletic v Lochaber  
Colin MacDonald  
Lovat v Inveraray  
Ewan MacRae  
Kingussie v Glenurquhart  
David Mitchell - 3pm

**Marine Harvest National Division**



# The Oban Times

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# Spring gardening

Page 11

## Villagers' explosion fears as lorry burned for an hour

RESIDENTS in a Lochaber village feared a blazing lorry could explode and destroy their homes as they waited for an hour for firefighters to arrive.

The MAN truck burst into flames just yards from Morar railway station around 2.30pm on Monday.

The driver called 999 as the fire took hold in the tinner unit behind his cab - but the appliance from Mallaig station three miles away could not be dispatched because too few retained firefighters were available.

Meanwhile, the crew at Acharacle, the next nearest station, were attending a chimney fire.

The lack of local cover meant two appliances from Fort William - 43 miles away - had to be tasked to attend the incident.

According to local sources, the lorry was carrying a gas burner, bitumen, tar and equipment for putting in new barriers at the village level crossing over the West Highland line.

When it became clear that fire crews would be delayed contractors doing the work asked local people to help put out the inferno.

When that failed, the driver took the blazing vehicle away from houses and the hotel to open ground next the local garage, where the fire was put out.

The truck burst into flames near Harlosh B&B, owned by Phil and Maggie Hunkin.

Ms Hunkin told *The Oban*

## Recruitment problems

SCOTTISH Fire and Rescue Service area manager Scott Hay, the local senior officer for the Highland area, admitted there were problems in recruiting enough retained firefighters to respond to emergencies.

Mr Hay said the fire was reported at 2.36pm and the Fort William crews were on scene at 3.32pm.

He said: 'We always try to get there as soon as possible. At Mallaig we have eight retained crew and we only need four to staff the appliance to go to a job. Yesterday we dropped below that number.'

'Acharacle would have responded, but they were out at a

chimney fire so the next available station was Fort Williams. We do have periods of time at stations across the Highlands, Mallaig being one, where there are huge challenges for fellows who are part-time fire fighters and have full-time jobs.'

Mr Hay recognised that asking retained crew to balance providing operational cover with their primary employment could be difficult - and a suggested a possible solution.

He said: 'Locally we are targeting parent toddler groups because stay-at-home mums are a big resource.'

'If they want to join and help that could give us 24/7 cover.'



## Syeda hits the high notes at festival

Fort William girl Syeda Choudhury won the clarsach solo (advanced) competition at Lochaber Music Festival on Saturday. Syeda, 15, who was representing Lochaber Music School, performed the Massacre of Glencoe and the Banks of Allan Water as her own choice pieces. The six-day festival, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, concludes tonight with a final concert in Caol Primary School. See festival special, pages 12 and 13. 20\_f12fest01

## Pupils gear up for forest challenge

SCHOOL pupils from Lochaber and Skye will compete for honours in the fifth Leananachan Challenge round forest trails near Fort William tomorrow (Friday).

So far 45 runners from Mallaig, Portree and Lochaber high schools are booked in to take part with others yet to confirm, Isabel Campbell of organisers

Lochan Rural Education Trust (LRET) said yesterday morning. Races over set courses start from the trust's An Clachan base at Torlundy at 11am with athletes competing for individual and team trophies.

SI-2 runners run 3.5-kilometres, S3-4 5.5 kilometres and S5-6 eight kilometres on trails in Leananachan Forest.

All competitors receive a medal struck in memory of LRET trustee Peter English, who inspired the inaugural challenge.

Last year, Lochaber High School pipped Portree and Mallaig to win the event overall.

Forestry Commission Scotland and Active Schools co-ordinators are providing support on the day.

# Retail park could force Fort firm out of business

Jobs at risk if new site not found

A LONG-established Fort William firm could be forced out of business if a retail park in the town gets the go-ahead, *The Oban Times* can reveal.

MacPherson Welding and Engineering Services currently occupies part of the site Morbaine Ltd has earmarked for its proposed shopping complex on North Road.

But owner Micky Whitehead says if he cannot find another location his company could fold with the loss of 10 jobs.

Morbaine has lined up supermarket discounters Aldi and Home Bargains for the planned five-unit park, which also includes a fast-food outlet, next to the A82.

The property developers already have permission for bulky goods and non-food stores but needs approval from Highland Council for the change of use.

If planners give the go-ahead, Morbaine will buy the five-acre site between the Rio Tinto Alcan junction and the Ben Nevis Motors Ford car showroom with vacant possession.

MacPherson's owner Micky Whitehead, 54, said his premises stands on the site of the proposed Aldi store.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'Our lease has run out and we have to get out of here because the owners don't want to renew it.'

'Obviously they knew this was coming and they see the potential for big money. At the end of the day I can't blame them but that does not help me.'

'There's no industrial land left in Fort William and if we can't

**EXCLUSIVE**  
REPORT by  
STEPHEN NORRIS  
snorris@obantimes.co.uk



Micky Whitehead: closure fears  
20\_f12firm01

might think I might not be here in six months time and take them. They all have families and they are better looking after themselves.

[Website design company] Hotscot have got to get out of here as well but it's easier to find offices. If you are looking for a workshop and a yard it's a different story.'

Hotscot boss Robert Hawkes said relocating in Fort William would cause few difficulties.

He said: 'This suits us because we are looking to make some changes to the business and this fits in well with our plans.'

Morbaine director Alex Brodie anticipated the bid being lodged next month and if approval was granted by October work could start early in 2015.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'Morbaine has a contract with the owner to buy the land subject to vacant possession.'

'In terms of relocating Mr Whitehead or him finding another spot that's up to him and the existing landlord.'

'From now he has nine months to find an alternative so it's a little extreme to say he can't find anywhere and will throw the men off site.'

Morbaine say the development would bring 150 permanent jobs and £10m of investment to the area, as well as further jobs during construction.



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## Plockton residents' fury at road work cash demand

PLOCKTON residents are furious at being asked to pay thousands of pounds towards resurfacing works.

After a long-running saga over who is responsible for Station Road it was decided the cost of the £17,000 work would be split between Highland Council, Network Rail, and homeowners.

But residents were dismayed to hear that some people would have to pay up to triple that of others, depending on their alleged road use.

Charges range between around £700 to more than £2,000. Resurfacing is already complete with work still to be carried out on drainage.

Residents wrote to Highland Council asking how the amounts were calculated but have yet to

receive a reply. Jane Mackenzie and her husband Calum own self-catering accommodation at Plockton Station and face being charged £2,200.

Ms Mackenzie said: 'I'm assuming it's because we're a business but we only run around seven months of the year and we only use half of the road so I don't see how they can say we have to pay the most.'

### Legal advice

'We challenged them about it but we haven't heard back so we're now seeking legal advice and checking our deeds.'

Linda Inglis, who has lived at number four for 22 years, said: 'I just don't understand how they have decided who has to pay more than others.'

I have the lesser amount to pay but I feel for the ones that have to pay more because we don't think it's justified.'

'We're quite happy to pay if it can be shown that it really is our responsibility to do so, my problem is how they can say who uses the road the most.'

Charlie Macrae, chairman of Plockton Community Council said: 'Obviously we are delighted that work is finally being carried out after years of complaints but residents still have to pay part of the cost.'

'They weren't told they had to pay when we first complained, only when the road got really bad. Some of the residents are refusing to pay and if it's not in their deeds then rightly so.'

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## Enquiries continue into babygrow mystery

MYSTERY surrounds a bloodstained babygrow found in Fort William as enquiries continue.

The 0-1 month size garment was found on a footpath connecting Plantation and Upper Achintore last week and police later confirmed the blood was human.

All babies aged from newborn to three months in the Fort William area have been accounted for and the investigation is ongoing.

Jackie Carswell, an Upper Achintore resident, said: 'Myself and all of my neighbours were interviewed last Wednesday but from what I've heard nobody seems to know anything and I've heard nothing since. I'm sure it will come out eventually but I just hope it's nothing sinister.'

The babygrow is a Next product made of white cotton with cartoons of Native Americans, trees and totem poles. It has not been available to buy since 2010.

### Open-minded

The senior investigating officer running the enquiry, detective inspector Richard Baird said: 'There are a number of possible explanations as to how the babygrow came to be found with blood on it and we remain open-minded about this.'

'I am appealing to the people of Fort William to assist us with this investigation. Someone is missing this item and it's crucial that we find out who so we can be sure that everyone is safe.'

'If anyone has information about this type of babygrow or how the bloodstained item came to rest on the pathway I would urge them to report this to us.'

Anyone with information is encouraged to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111 or online at [crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org).

# Court finds man not guilty of assaulting Mallaig trio

THE LAST of four men accused of assaulting three members of the same Mallaig family in a series of drink-fuelled incidents in the fishing port has been found not guilty.

Samuel Sean Robertson, of 11 Gordon Brown Place, Mallaig, had denied punching Hugh MacIntyre on the head following an altercation with Mr MacIntyre's son Gregor.

Robertson, 20, previously lodged a special plea of self defence and at Fort

William Sheriff Court on Friday claimed Mr MacIntyre was the instigator. He said: 'He was aggressive and pushed me, he was shouting 'I'm going to f\*\*\*ing kill you'. I punched him and he came at me again. He pushed me on the chest and I punched him again.'

Mr MacIntyre denied pushing the 20-year-old in his testimony in court last month, but after hearing Robertson's evidence procurator fiscal Laura Ryan said she was no longer seeking

a conviction. Fort William FC player Sean Grant, 24, was appearing for sentencing after previously admitting punching Gregor, his cousin, on the head at East Bay during the fracas.

Miss Ryan told the court that Grant, of 5E Ulva Road in Soroba, had only been trying to restrain his cousin and had only punched him to calm him down.

She said: 'There was no injury and it was suggested to police that this was the way these matters would be sorted in

the family.' Defending, Hamish Melrose said: 'Mr Grant wasn't there when the other incidents occurred, he tells me he was busy chatting up a female.'

'He has lost six days' pay and I think he has already been punished enough by the amount of time he has had to take off work to attend court.'

Sheriff Noel McPartlin agreed and admonished Grant.

Robertson and co-accused Lewis MacDonald, of Camanachd Crescent,

Fort William, were previously cleared of assaulting Gregor MacIntyre at Davies Brae in the early hours of September 9 2012. They had denied repeatedly kicking him on the head and body, resulting in a broken jaw and bruised ribs.

At the same hearing last month, Dominic Dempster, of 10 Blaven View in Mallaig was found not guilty of punching Gregor's younger brother Ewan on the head.

## Inspectors praise school's progress

ARDNAMURCHAN High School has been praised by education inspectors for progress made in tackling issues identified during a previous visit last year.

A report from a follow-up inspection in January by Education Scotland staff noted 'significant improvements' in monitoring and tracking the progress of young people.

Advances in learning and teaching, self-evaluation and in the quality of the curriculum were also highlighted.

Under the leadership of headteacher Christopher Millar-Craig and his management team, the school was developing 'a more comprehensive system to evaluate and improve the quality of its work'.

The report stated although there was scope for further improvement in consistency, pace and challenge in lessons, it acknowledged that in the last two years every pupil has gone on to college, higher education, training or employment.

The positive impact of the

work of parents, partners and pupils themselves was given plus marks, with examples being the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, the Christmas show, charity fundraising, leadership of the pupil council and vocational curriculum opportunities.

Mr Millar-Craig said: 'In 2013 the school was already deemed "good" under the headings of improvements in performance, learners' experiences and meeting learning needs.'

However, in common with many other schools at the time, self-evaluation was identified as a key area for improvement and development.

'We still have areas to continue to improve on and we look forward to working with parents, pupils, staff and the council's quality improvement team as we continue to strengthen these areas. My thanks to all staff, pupils, parents, partners, and staff-stakeholders of Ardnamurchan High School who have supported the hard work and huge efforts over the last year to secure the improvements so far.'

## Raasay group in pontoon fund bid

RAASAY Development Partnership is to apply for funding for a pontoon on the isle's pier.

If successful, the group could receive some or all of the money required from the Coastal Communities Fund. It is thought the work will cost around £150,000.

Lloyd Gudgeon, development officer for the partnership said: 'Having pontoons would encourage yachtsmen to bring their boats to Raasay and it would also benefit local fisherman. This is the final year that Coastal Communities is offering funding so it's sort of a last ditch attempt to secure the money. We also want to put in showers blocks and some things like that.'

The Raasay Development Partnership will find out if their application has passed the first stage shortly after the deadline at the end of April.

## Skye doctor calls for greater awareness of concussion in sport

A SKYE doctor is calling for greater awareness of concussion in sport.

Rural practitioner Dr Jonathan Hanson believes a better recognition of the seriousness of head injuries will help to ensure people take part in exercise more safely.

Dr Hanson, team doctor for the Scotland rugby squad, will travel to Aberdeen on Wednesday to stress the issue at a seminar on the pitch-side and primary care management of concussion.

He said: 'Head injury in sport is certainly a hot topic these days and I hope that the seminar will contribute further to raising awareness of concussion and the problems associated with it.'

'Concussion is a major problem that is under recognised and must be taken seriously by parents, sports people, administrators and medics, and the seminar aims to address this.'

## Achintore Road litter pick

FORT William Accommodation and Marketing Group will be litter picking along Achintore Road next Tuesday, starting from the West End car park at 10am and working along to the Croft Anna Hotel.

Organiser Andrew McSorland said: 'If you have the time, please come along and give us a helping hand.'

## Lochaber Natural History Society

LOCHABER Natural History Society will meet on Monday (24th) at the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William.

This month's meeting starts at 7.30pm and features a lecture on the plants and projects of the Benmore Botanic Garden by curator Peter Baxter.



## Race night romps home with £983 for school

Upper Achintore Primary School parents, teacher and friend association raised £983 for school funds at a race night in Fort William Shinty Club on Saturday night. Committee member Jackie Carswell said: 'Thanks to all the local businesses who sponsored the races and to all those who donated raffle prizes.' Above, the committee enjoyed their night in the shinty club.



Surveying work for the pillar support for the pontoon footbridge at Lochmaddy harbour has been completed. Work on the development is underway. f12uist1no

## Lochmaddy harbour boost for visiting yachts and cruise liners

A PROJECT to upgrade Lochmaddy harbour for visiting yachts and cruise liners is underway following a £380,000 investment from The Crown Estate.

The revamp at the North Uist ferry port - a vital link in north west sailing routes - includes pontoons with 26 berths and floating walkways, lighting and electricity, and a car and bus park.

The development, which will be fully operational in May, is likely to bring substantial economic benefits for local businesses through increased marine tourism.

Until now, cruise ships are seldom seen at Lochmaddy because low tides limit passenger

shore access. But deeper water at the end of the new pontoon walkway will allow tender boats to ferry people between ship and shore at any time, meaning cruise companies are more likely to include Lochmaddy on their itinerary.

It is estimated the first year of operation will see 357 visiting boat nights and seven cruise liner visits.

### Pontoons

Income generated will be used for further pontoons and shore-based facilities, as well as community events.

Angus Macaulay, chair of project leaders Comann na Mara, said meetings were planned over the next two weeks with local tourism businesses

to highlight potential economic spin-offs. He told *The Oban Times*: 'This development will not only service the coastal community it will be the core of the island as well.'

'When the cruise ships come in people will want to visit places of interest across North Uist.'

'These new facilities will benefit the local economy by taking advantage of the huge and growing opportunities in marine tourism, ensuring that the Western Isles is firmly on the map for sailing.'

Comann na Mara secured the funding after becoming the first organisation in the UK to secure a local management agreement with the Crown Estate.

The scheme was set up to

help local groups manage areas of seabed and foreshore by developing projects with proven benefit to the community.

Alan Laidlaw, the Crown Estate's rural and coastal manager in Scotland, said: 'This is exactly the sort of project which local management agreements are designed to support.'

'It will generate local economic benefits, provide a really valuable facility for the community and strengthen the wider north west sailing network.'

Other LMAs include a Portree harbour project to expand capacity for cruise ships and the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust's plans for a walkway, pontoons and more moorings at Ardminish Bay.

## Rotary team to clean up path

THE ROTARY Club of Lochaber will hold its annual spring clean in Fort William on Sunday.

This year the team will blitz the path between Upper Achintore and Plantation.

The club is encouraging members of both communities to join them from 9.30am.

Residents of Upper Achintore will meet at Nairn Crescent and those at Plantation will gather at Muga pitch.

## Fuel consultation welcomed

WESTERN Isles Council has welcomed an Office of Fair Trading (OFT) consultation on the dominance of Certas Energy in supplying fuel to local filling stations.

The OFT move follows an investigation into Certas' possible infringements of competition law by locking retailers into five-year contracts to deter rival suppliers.

Councillor Kenneth Murray, chair of environment and protective services said it was 'essential' that opening up the market led to lower prices at the pumps. He said: 'The comhairle will fully participate in the consultation with the continued goal of bringing benefits to consumers and businesses in the Outer Hebrides.' A Certas spokesperson said retailers would be given a range of contractual options' in future.



Set for a makeover: Ardgour Village Hall.

## Sustainable Ardgour powers ahead with green hall project

A SCHEME to transform a rundown village hall in Ardgour into an energy efficiency hub for the community is underway.

Sustainable Ardgour will repair and renovate the hall to reduce running costs and ensure a warmer, drier environment for hall users.

The newly fitted-out premises will also be used as a hub to co-ordinate local efforts to help tackle climate change, with activities designed to help local residents improve home energy efficiency, increase food waste composting and recycling, and cut down on car journeys.

Information on local walks, heritage and a car-sharing scheme could also feature.

After insulation, draught proofing, double glazing, LED lighting and light tubes are installed.

The improvements will reduce running costs and ensure a warmer, drier environment for hall users.

The newly fitted-out premises will also be used as a hub to co-ordinate local efforts to help tackle climate change, with activities designed to help local residents improve home energy efficiency, increase food waste composting and recycling, and cut down on car journeys.

Information on local walks, heritage and a car-sharing scheme could also feature.

## Body found in search for missing hillwalker

THE BODY of a man has been found during the search for a missing hillwalker in the Western Isles.

The discovery was made in a gully on the craggy ridge of Sgoaith Aird, North Harris on Monday afternoon.

Edward Jackson, 55, was last seen in Tarbert, North Harris, at the Maraig to Urgha path area on Saturday morning as he set off on a walk.

Mr Jackson, from Preston, was staying at the Harris Hotel while on a walking holiday.

After a week's stay Mr Jackson was due to leave on Sunday morning to return to the north of England but worried staff alerted the police at noon as he had not been seen.

Hebrides Search and Rescue and coastguard volunteers searched the hills in rain, fog and wind. Rescue team leader John Norfolk described the conditions as 'quite brutal'.

He said: 'I don't think that was a contributing factor but there was bad visibility, a lot of hill fog and sometimes hail. It wasn't a particularly dangerous route, there are walks there that you could take kids on.'

'He was an experienced walker and well equipped, he would have been well prepared for his route.'

A Leverburgh RNLI lifeboat, a Stornoway coastguard helicopter and police with dogs aided the hunt before members of the search and rescue team recovered the body and brought it down from Sgoaith Aird.

A police spokesperson said next of kin have been informed.

## We will make you smile

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## Music school students kick off tour in Glenfinnan

PLOCKTON Music School's students are on the move again as their tour starts on Monday.

The S6 pupils of Sgoil Chùil Na Gàidhealtachd will perform at the Church of St Mary and St Finnan in Glenfinnan on Monday night

before travelling to Glasgow to play in St Andrew's in the Square on Tuesday.

### Workshops

The talented musicians then set off for the Music School of Douglas Academy in Mil

## Connel man awaits bail hearing in India

A BAIL hearing will take place in India today (Thursday) to determine if Connel man Billy Irving can be released from prison pending trial.

Billy, 33, was arrested in October last year as part of the crew of an AdvanFort anti-piracy vessel operating in Indian waters.

The authorities accused the captain of the boat of trying to buy fuel illegally and carrying weapons without a licence, with the crew held jointly liable.

Thursday's hearing is a continuation of a hearing scheduled for last week, and comes days after Billy's girlfriend, Yvonne MacHugh, presented a petition with more than 144,000 signatures to Downing Street demanding action from the Prime Minister to speed the release of Billy and his five British colleagues.

His father, Jim, said Billy was starting to lose hope, but is keeping his fingers crossed today's hearing may finally see him released from jail.

He said: 'Being India, the hearing might be Thursday, it might not.'

'It's getting a bit warmer in India now; in the mid 30s reaching the 40s and there's no air conditioning so we're hopeful this is successful.'

He added: 'The petition to the UK Government has 144,000 names on it and if they ignore that it shows how arrogant they are. Surely they must do something?'

## Call for whisky tax to be dropped

ARGYLL and Bute's MP has called for the tax on whisky to be dropped, saying the near 80 per cent levy is 'grossly unfair'.

Alan Reid called upon fellow Liberal Democrats to lobby their Conservative coalition partners for a reduction on the tax.

And while he accepted chancellor George Osborne was unlikely to cut the duty ahead of this week's budget, he says something should be done in future. He said: 'A lot of countries have tax regimes that benefit their own brands, yet we tax ours highly, benefiting imports. My view is alcohol should be taxed per unit rather than this unfair system.'



Oban High School's Alison MacVicar won best performance in the junior category at the FilmG awards.

## Oban pupil shines brightest at FilmG awards

AN OBAN High School pupil and a group from Castlebay Community School were among the main winners at this year's FilmG, the National Gaelic Film Awards.

Stars of stage and screen, including actors Greg Hemphill and Gary Lewis, helped to hand out the prizes at the sixth annual awards, held at The Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow, last Friday.

This year's competition theme was 'Rùn' (Love/Secret/Intention) which inspired an array of ideas for filmmakers in both the

12-17 age-group and the adult category, with a total of 76 films being submitted.

52 pupils from Castlebay Community School on Barra scooped two awards: the FilmG Theme Award and the FilmG Award for Gaelic for their black comedy, An Càirdes Carach (The Fickle Friendship).

### Performance

And the best performance in the 12-17 age group went to Oban's Alison MacVicar for her portrayal of Morag in Thoir an Aire! (Watch out!)

Other winners included Sgoil Lionacleit, Benbecula, who won Best Production in the 12-17 age category for their entry, An Tòimheachan (The Riddle).

Also from Benbecula, Fiona McAndrew, a student at Lewis Castle College, won Best Student Film for her music video, Gàidhlig mo Rùn (Gaelic my Love).

Best Documentary in the adult category went to Dòmhnaill Ògáinn MacKinnon from Harris for An Sgoil Bheag mu Dheireadh (The Last Little School).

## Fresh assurances sought on quality of hospital care

FRESH assurances are being sought by Scotland's health minister of the quality of care at Oban's Lorn and Islands Hospital in the wake of recent concerns.

However Alex Neil MSP has refused to comment on calls for a public enquiry into the quality of care provided by NHS Highland staff at the hospital after details of three recent incidents were revealed by *The Oban Times*.

Mr Neil said: 'It is always concerning to read reports of patients and their families who have experienced care that does not meet the very high standards we expect of our NHS.'

'Whilst it is inappropriate to comment on individual cases we expect health boards to take all complaints seriously, speaking with patients and their families to ensure the NHS learns from their experiences.'

'The safety and quality of patient care is a top priority for our NHS and NHS Highland has assured us that the hospital and its staff can continue to provide a high quality service to local patients.'

'Ministers will seek further assurances around the quality of local care and how all health boards, including NHS Highland, respond to complaints and feedback at their Annual

Reviews later this year.' Calls for an enquiry came after NHS Highland apologised for leaving Oban woman Mabel Braidoow 'screaming in agony' for days after medics failed to properly manage painkilling drugs during her battle with pancreatic cancer last year.

Scott Clark McGregor, meanwhile, said poor treatment by staff left his father, Peter Clark, 'fighting for his life' during his time at the hospital. Another woman said her late husband was left with stitches above his eye after falling out of bed several times.

One of those to make the call for a public enquiry was Alan Reid MP. He described Mr Neil's comments as 'very disappointing'.

'I hoped he'd take it more seriously than that,' he said. 'I think he should take another look at it.'

time at the hospital. Another woman said her late husband was left with stitches above his eye after falling out of bed several times.

Scotrail met with councillors, council staff and representatives of Oban Community Council last week to discuss problems with the barrier, erected last year without prior advice to Argyll and Bute Council.

Scotrail told the meeting the erection of the barrier was a 'le-



## Commonwealth baton to come west

WEST HIGHLAND and island communities will celebrate the countdown to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games when they welcome the Queen's Baton relay after its global journey through 69 nations and territories of the Commonwealth.

The baton will arrive in the Western Isles on Monday, July 7 and will make its way north from Castlebay to Daliburgh, Benbecula, Tarbert and Lionel.

The baton comes to the Highland mainland for two full days on July 11 and 12. The relay will be at

Inverness Castle to start the ment of an international celebration, and to showcase Argyll and Bute to a global audience.'

Highland Council con-

On Sunday, July 13, the vendor Jimmy Gray said:

'This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. The baton will

visit more than 400 com-

munities in total, offering

people across Scotland a

chance to be a part of the

excitement, celebrations and

countdown to the nation's

biggest-ever sporting and

cultural festival.'

Thousands of people

will find out on March 31

whether their nominations to

become baton bearers have

been successful.

Further highlights on the baton's journey, as well as street-level details and full programme of events, will be announced nearer the time.

On July 23, the message Her Majesty placed in the baton will be read at the opening ceremony.

## Post Office makes island allowance

THE POST Office has extended its mortgage lending to other Scottish islands after criticism of a policy

to limit services to people on Skye - but some islands remain excluded.

After a review of its policy following public and politi-

cal pressure, mortgages have now been made available to customers in Skye, Bute,

Lewis and Harris, mainland

Orkney, mainland Shetland, Arran, Mull and Islay. But a councillor for one of the islands still excluded, Barra's Donald Manford, said: 'Not only does this undermine our most vulnerable communities, it raises fears that this discrimination might be extended to other services.'

The Post Office said it would continue to review its policy.

## High hopes for Marie Curie appeal

FUNDRAISERS for Marie Curie Cancer Care in Oban hope generous donors in the town will once again turn out in force for the annual Daffodil Appeal.

In Oban in 2013, Oban and Lorn branch volunteers

amassed more than £1,000 in donations in just two days of collections at Tesco - the highest total raised by any group in the charity's west region.

They will be at the store again this Friday and Saturday

day, hoping to at least match their previous year's total.

Two of the volunteers, Lilian Kermode and Jenny McEvoy, were among the Marie Curie representatives recently invited to the Scottish Parliament, where Linda Fabiani MSP raised a debate to highlight the charity's work.

Lilian said: 'The communities of Oban and Lorn are so supportive of Marie Curie.'

'We get a lot of money from retiring collections and anything that is raised here stays here.'

'I think the goodwill people show towards the charity has grown over the years.'

'Young people seem to be very aware of what the charity does and the children from the high school are very generous when we are collecting in Tesco.'

There are big changes coming in 2014 as Marie Curie looks to promote the work it does for all end-of-life patients, not just those with cancer.



Lilian Kermode, left, and Jenny McEvoy pictured at the Scottish Parliament.



## Shore Street Dental

Shore Street Dental Surgery in Oban is delighted to welcome Stewart Wright as new Associate Dentist. He believes in taking a holistic approach to dental care. He looks not just at his patients' teeth and gums, but takes into consideration their general health and wellbeing.

'I am keen to encourage my patients to take a preventive approach to their oral healthcare so avoiding the need for invasive treatment, as much as possible. There's so much more to being dentally fit and it really isn't that expensive to ensure you are. For this reason I believe strongly in my patients being on a dental plan, such as Denplan Essentials, which helps them pay for all their routine

preventive treatment. And I try to keep the monthly cost of the plans as low as possible.'

For example, for 43 pence per day Denplan Essential patients will get two check-ups, two hygienist visits and all necessary dental x-rays plus a discount off treatment fees. For added assurance the plan includes worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover (Supplementary Insurance) so I know my patients will be looked after when they are away from me.'

If you would like to make an appointment with Stewart or our other Denplan dentists: Helen Rutter and Hitin Wahan, please ring our reception team on 01631 563006.



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MSS1976 03-14

# Hill farmers at breaking point over sea eagles

HILL farmers in Argyll have warned they may have to give up rearing lambs unless action is taken to prevent sea eagles snatching newborn sheep.

While there seems to be some consensus between farmers and conservationists, who support relocation of nests near livestock farms, there is doubt the measure would work.

The apparent agreement comes days before the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) presents its findings on sea eagle management to the Scottish Government following a survey of west coast farmers earlier this year.

Farmers have warned that no action is not an option, with some sheep breeders saying they have figures to prove up to 10 per cent of their stock can be taken by the birds each year.

One Lorn hill farmer, who did not want to be named for fear of threats from environmentalists, said it was 'vital' the Scottish Government introduced measures to help relocate troublesome birds, after losing 33 lambs from his near 600-strong

flock to a nesting pair last year, costing him around £4,000.

He said: 'They're taking six per cent of your stock. I've got more than 50 years worth of records and you'd normally see a loss of less than one per cent each year. Six per cent is a huge number.'

Not only does the farmer lose the value of the lamb, but the ewe often struggles to breed again when a lamb is taken, diluting the genetic value of stock.

'It's heartbreaking when you see the ewe crying its heart out over its missing lamb,' the farmer added. 'You know every sheep and you handle them all.'

Farmers have warned that no action is not an option, with some sheep breeders saying they have figures to prove up to 10 per cent of their stock can be taken by the birds each year.

As for the solution, he said: 'They should be taking these birds and relocating them. If you say cull, you'd be shot down in flames, but if farmers are having trouble and they can prove the problem is here, it should be possible to relocate these birds.'

For the solution, he said:

'They should be taking these

birds and relocating them. If it's right, I'd support relocation - but only if it's right for the birds.'

Mull's RSPB officer, Dave Sexton, said: 'At this stage, trying to move individual eagles or pairs does not look like a promising or workable solution.'

'Where it has been tried with other birds of prey, generally they return to the same area, regardless of distance.'

Andrew Bauer, NFUS' deputy director of policy, said: 'What we need is a sustainable solution without breaching Scotland's obligation to the European Birds Directive.'

'It will be for ministers to make any decision, but to sheep farmers this is a growing problem.'

## Further doubts over railway pier barrier

AN AGREEMENT has been reached to allow bin lorries access to Oban's Railway Pier, but there is fresh doubt as to why the controversial barrier blocking their way was erected.

Scotrail met with councillors, council staff and representatives of Oban Community Council last week to discuss problems with the barrier, erected last year without prior advice to Argyll and Bute Council.

Scotrail told the meeting the erection of the barrier was a 'le-

gal and necessary' requirement in order to comply with Transport Scotland's audit of stations and its responsibility related to rail associated car parks.

However, Transport Scotland has told *The Oban Times* Scotrail chose to install the barrier - with their support.

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- Venue Hire

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## Lorn Lines

TWO THOUGHTFUL girls from Lochinell Primary School have organised a coffee morning this Saturday in Benderloch to raise funds which will allow two of their classmates to attend Riding for the Disabled more often.

The two hosts of the fundraiser, 10-year-old Freya MacKeanie and 9-year-old Eilidh MacPherson know how much their two disabled school friends benefit from the riding group and they want to help them attend more often.

The coffee morning will take place in Benderloch's Victory Hall between 10am and 12pm this Saturday.



THE Scottish Women's Rural Institute's under-35 champion, Sally Weaser, was the guest at the Oban branch's March meeting. It was another busy night with new members and guests attending Sally Weaser's polymer clay demonstration and workshop. Sally shared her in-depth knowledge of the colourful medium, and demonstrated how to make beads and buttons. She was inspired to start her handmade jewellery business, Boafrosh, having been a SWRI member for a year.

The institute provided a creative outlet for her talents and with the encouragement and support of the Oban members, she took the plunge and started her business. Sally is running polymer clay workshops for rural members later in May, and full day courses in Craobh Haven. Fingerless gloves were the challenge for the monthly handicraft competition, and it was gold for Joan Maclean, Jenny Miller and Anne Malloch and silver for Margaret Devine, Ruth Russell and Fiona MacCallum.

In the housewives' competition, it was gold for Jenny Miller's butterfly cakes with silver for Ruth Russell and red for Ann Malloch.

In preparation for the big area show on April 19 in the Corran Halls, the next meeting will be a flower arranging demonstration by Karen Mackie.



Dunbeg Primary School pupils show off their certificates

15\_t12dunbegprimary

POETIC pupils from Dunbeg Primary School have won a writing competition and will have their poems published in a young writers' anthology.

All 18 pupils in primary four and five were successful and will have their poetry published in a collection which will be released on May 31.

Their teacher, Miss Glenda Marwick who entered them into the competition is delighted with the budding young writers' success and believes the competition helped them to use their imaginations.



KILMORE'S young and not-so-young residents gathered in the village hall last Wednesday for The Kilmore and District SWRI's annual beetle drive.

After a hectic and very competitive six rounds, the teams broke up for some light refreshments. There was also a produce

stall, a bric-a-brac table and a raffle. Altogether, £184 was raised.

The next meeting of the SWRI will be on Wednesday, April 9 at 8pm in the Kilmore Community Hall when there will be a presentation on the work of The Children's Hospice Association Scotland.



## Bridge of Orchy lorry crash closes A82 for 12 hours

A LORRY carrying hydrogen peroxide caused a 12-hour A82 road closure near to the recently upgraded bridge on the south side of Bridge of Orchy.

The northbound HGV crashed at around 11am last Tuesday after a wheel caught the nearside verge, causing the

vehicle to tip over. Suspecting the liquid would be leaking Police Scotland closed the road at Glencoe and Tyndrum but an operation to recover the vehicle prevented any leakage.

Hydrogen peroxide has a number of uses, including hair dye.



Caroline Jamieson celebrates her jackpot win. 16\_t12shintyball01

## Nonagenarian celebrates shinty win with a sherry

A SHINTY fan who turns 98 years old next month celebrated with a sherry after winning *The Oban Times*' Spot the Shinty Ball Jackpot of £1,300.

Caroline Jamieson, Taynuilt's oldest resident, was shocked after being told she had won the jackpot. 'I'm completely stunned. I have never won anything

like this in my life,' she said. 'I've won £25 before for a near miss and even that seemed like a fortune. I have been thinking about having a wee sherry but I've got a good excuse now. I'm so excited.'

The Oban Camanachd supporter first got into shinty after she married her late husband, James Jamieson, who

was a committee member with the club. And she followed the team all over the Highlands, cheering on brothers-in-law Donald 'Doodie' Jamieson and Archie MacIntyre Bell, who won Camanachd Cup titles. Caroline is an active member of the community, attending ceilidhs

in Taynuilt and singing with the church

choir. She is a former leader of the Brownies and received an award for her service to the organisation.

Asked how she would spend her winnings, she replied: 'I don't travel far these days but I might go a wee jaunt if I feel up to it. I've just had a new conservatory done, so the money will come in handy!'

## Minister gives A83 priority status

THREE other areas of the A83 near the Rest and Be Thankful will be prioritised for upgrades, Scotland's transport minister has announced.

Following Tuesday's meeting to the A83 Taskforce, the Minister said investigations on the route between Inveraray and Tarbet were ongoing, with plans afoot to shore up hillsides at Cairndow, Glen Kinglas and Loch Shira.

The meeting of the Taskforce was brought forward from the summer in the wake of increased concern over the route, with frequent landslides in the area.

Mr Brown said: 'We cannot prevent landslides from occurring, but we can help manage and reduce the impact and disruption caused to the public and local businesses using this vital route.'

'Investigations at other known high landslide risk areas on the A83 at Cairndow, Glen Kinglas and Loch Shira are on-going and we are looking at options to provide mitigation of a similar level to the Rest and Be Thankful at these locations.'

A council source said: 'When it comes to Tiree High School,

## Tiree parents call for school answers

ARGYLL and Bute Council has denied it is planning to reduce secondary school provision on Tiree - but *The Oban Times* understands the plan is still 'very much on the table'.

Worried parents on Tiree have called for clarity from the council after *The Oban Times* learned the authority is considering removing S4-S6 classes from the island's school, transferring pupils to Oban.

A spokeswoman for the council this week said 'there are currently no plans to reduce secondary education on Tiree, whether at senior phase or across the whole secondary age bracket', but *The Oban Times* has learned that the option is one of many being discussed to improve the school's fortunes.

The group will meet again in June.

- as there is at every school - and these have been discussed at our meetings.'

'We have asked Cleland for some clarity and to confirm or deny *The Oban Times'* article. As a parent council, we are concerned.'

The petition was arranged by parent John MacCaskill, who claims there has been 'continuous decline' at the school in recent years.

Among the concerns highlighted by the petition is a teacher shortage limiting subject choice and quality of education.

'There seems to be a diverse number of concerns in the community; some more serious than others,' said.

'I moved back to the island about seven or eight years ago and I'm reduced to a feeling of guilt that I brought my family

back here. It's the kids' future this impacts on.'

Mr Russell MSP said: 'There is a range of concerns raised by the islanders over education.'

'One is the issue of teacher recruitment; a subject I was speaking on last Tuesday in Oban, urging the council to take a more proactive and aggressive view on recruitment. Argyll and Bute is a great place to live and teach and they need to market that aspect much better. I am concerned about what I have heard and I am now waiting to hear what the council will do next.'

A council spokeswoman said: 'We would encourage anyone with any questions about the school to discuss it with the head teacher directly or attend one of the information events held at the school.'

## CalMac to the rescue as island's fuel pump runs dry

FERRY operator CalMac Ferries Ltd came to the rescue of Tiree residents after the island's fuel pump ran dry.

The tanker taking unleaded fuel to the island at the beginning of last week failed to make the scheduled delivery, so CalMac put on an extra sailing to the island last Wednesday.

Catriona MacLennan of Tiree-based haulage company MacLennan Motors, said: 'Credit where credit is due, CalMac came through for us and their effort was very much appreciated.'

A CalMac spokesman said: 'We are taking our responsibilities to deliver lifeline services very seriously and will always do our best to make sure the islands have what they need to function.'

'Other commitments mean it is not always possible to do as much as we'd like but on this occasion we were pleased to be able to help.'

## Budding politician addresses 1,200 at conference

A POSTMASTER and community councillor from Islay joined a distinguished list of speakers at the Scottish Conservative Party Conference in Edinburgh.

Budding politician Alastair Redman was invited to speak to an audience of around 1,200 delegates on issues of defence, because of his charity work with the Armed Forces.

Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGregor said: 'Alastair Redman spoke eloquently and passionately at our conference in an excellent defence debate which took place following a speech from the Defence Secretary Philip Hammond. I was also pleased to speak in the defence debate. Recent events like the alarming situation in Ukraine are a reminder of how complex and fast-moving international relations can be.'

## Business award for Islay pupils

YOUNG entrepreneurs in primary four and five at Port Ellen Primary School have been working hard to set up and manage their own soap and bath bomb business and are to receive an award from the Social Enterprise Academy.

Scent-Citizens have been heavily involved in the running of the business and now sell their products at school events and at the Islay Hotel.

The children wanted to invest some of the profits they made back into the local community and decided that they would like to help develop the new distillery path. This is the first time an award of this type has been given to an Islay primary school and a group of the children will be attending a grand ceremony to collect their award on June 4.

## New surgeon appointed after long search

AFTER moving to the area from Lancashire in north west England, Oban's new surgeon admits he finds it 'baffling' medics are reluctant to move to the Highlands.

John Abraham joined the staff of the Lorn and Islands Hospital last week, completing the three-man team after an 18-month search by NHS Highland to fill the post.

A general surgeon, John is something of a rarity. The local Community Health Partnership (CHP) last week said the lack of generalists was posing a headache for the NHS across Scotland and

particularly for rural areas, which require more generalists than better financed city hospitals. The majority of trainee doctors in recent years have tended to specialise, increasing the problems.

### Appeal

Some rural areas have also found it difficult to attract permanent appointments for clinical positions, but John said the location was part of the appeal.

He said: 'I worked in Lancaster and Kendal as a consultant surgeon since 1995, but I decided I would like to have a change. I saw this

position and it appealed - I really like the idea of rural surgery.'

'I like building relationships with patients over a period of time and I can do that far more here.'

'I'm also really fond of this part of

the world, having been coming up here most of my life.'

'There is a huge amount to attract people to the Highlands and to me it's slightly baffling whenever I hear about problems related to recruitment.'

He added: 'Delivery of surgical care is a team effort. It's not just about me, it's about the whole

team.' His appointment may also lead to the introduction of new services, with John investigating carrying out vascular surgery at the hospital.

John moves to the area with his wife Nicky, a GP who will this summer take up her new job at Taynuilt Medical Practice.

Donald Watt, Clinical Services Manager at the hospital, said:

'John's appointment completes the three surgeon posts we have here. We're delighted to bring him on board and he'll be a great addition to our local health services.'

## Cruach Brenfield Wind Farm

### Community Consultation Days



Please join EDF Energy Renewables at our public consultation days to view and comment on plans for an 18 turbine wind farm to the west of Ardrishaig, near Loch Gilp in Argyll and Bute.

We are keen to continue our engagement with the local community, and would like to invite local residents or anyone else who might have an interest in these plans to attend one of our Community Consultation Days:

**Tuesday 25th March 2014, 2.00pm – 8.00pm**  
**Lochgilphead Community Education Centre**

**Wednesday 26th March 2014, 2.00pm – 8.00pm**  
**Ardrishaig Public Hall**

For further information please call Freephone 0800 612 3161 or visit [www.edf-er.com](http://www.edf-er.com)



## Publisher confirms new joint bid for Kilbowie House

KILBOWIE House could yet have a new owner this year after a Swedish publishing house confirmed it was submitting a new bid for the crumbling Oban building.

Bombadil Publishing, which specialises in books written by young people, for young people, has struck a deal with Edinburgh firm Deanway Development to submit a joint bid for the Grade B listed former hostel on Gallanach Road.

The proposal will see Deanway outline plans to build two or three

homes on the land associated with the house, with the council set to benefit from 60 per cent of the profits from the proceeds of sale.

Bombadil, meanwhile, will repeat its offer of £2,080 for the building listed at £450,000, with revised survey suggesting restoring the neglected building could cost close to £1million.

Bombadil's chief executive, Marianne Rungard Jarvstrat, said: 'Some nice things are happening now and the council will reconsider the matter in April. If we don't get it this time we will have no choice

but to go elsewhere though. We just cannot wait any longer and we hope this new proposal will be acceptable.'

'Deanway have told the council that [Kilbowie] is a liability and they wouldn't touch it - so I think the council are finally starting to believe us.'

Bombadil say their plans for Kilbowie will generate a £4.5million boost for the local economy over the next five years, with 12 permanent jobs created in the first instance.

Ongoing plans would see the

workforce grow in time, while there would be 'several' conferences hosted by Bombadil over the year.

Marianne added: 'People in Oban, I feel, do want to see this house developed and more jobs brought to the area. This is our last bid for the building and I hope we will be successful as we really like the Oban area and think it is perfect for our business.'

Argyll and Bute's MSP, Michael Russell, has supported Bombadil's bid for Kilbowie House and said he is enthused by recent developments. 'It is looking a bit

better and it looks as though some progress is being made. I just hope the enthusiasm of a growing company to set up in Oban can be reflected by the council in helping to provide jobs.'

Bombadil's previous offer, which represented 0.4 per cent of the council's asking price, was considered 'derisory' by the Oban, Lorn and Isles Area Committee.

The company said it would have considered bidding £200,000 for the property before a neglected roof and last year's storms caused 'extensive' water damage.

During the ensuing assault, MacPhee called to Dale: 'What do you want off him?' Amongst the items they tried to take were his jacket, boots and mobile phone.

After MacPhee threatened the man: 'You going to the police? If you do you are dead.' He did go to the police. When questioned, MacPhee said: 'Some girl asked me to get her stuff back. I just held him down.'

Dale's defence agent Edward Thornton said: 'The attack was completely spontaneous; she took advantage of what occurred

