

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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special offer
on page 3

Oban Unsigned
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE OBAN TIMES AND OBAN LIVE

win a spot at ObanLive 2017 – see page 7 for details

Don't forget
to turn
your
clocks
forward
this weekend

TIMELINE

Achaleven school marks 150 years

A CELEBRATION to mark 150 years of Achaleven Primary School will be held this weekend. Lunch will be served in Connel Village Hall on both days from noon and the school will be open for tours.

On Saturday night, March 25, there will be a dance, with music from Ross MacPherson and Friends. This will be a great opportunity for former pupils and staff to meet up with old friends and reminisce about school days gone by.

Tickets for the event are on sale from Connel Village Shop, priced £10 - bring your own bottle - or by contacting committee members Marion Fisher, Dawn McBey or Isla Munro.

Tools stolen from building merchant

BUILDING materials and tools were stolen from a building merchant off Soroba Road, Oban, sometime between Thursday March 16 and Friday March 17.

Police are appealing for anyone with knowledge of the theft or who saw anything suspicious at the location to contact Oban Police office directly or to telephone 101.

Police investigate laptop theft

POLICE are investigating the theft of a laptop from a property in Shore Street, Oban, sometime between Thursday March 16 and Friday March 17.

Officers would like to hear from anyone who saw or heard anything suspicious.



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Drink driver who killed vet faces lengthy prison sentence

A DRINK driver who killed an island vet in a head-on collision is facing a lengthy jail sentence. At the High Court in Glasgow on Tuesday (March 21), Thomas Wainwright, 27, was convicted of causing the death of 29-year-old Theresa Wade by dangerous driving.

As the unanimous guilty verdict was announced members of Miss Wade's family shouted: 'Yes'.

The court heard that Wainwright was drinking cider and whisky for eight-and-a-half hours before he ploughed his high-powered Maserati into the white Berlingo van driven by Miss Wade.

Wainwright was on the wrong side of the road and travelling at speeds of up to 95mph in the hire car, which had a black box fitted, just minutes before the crash on October 28 2015 on the A849 near Craignure, Mull.

During the trial, Wainwright and his passenger, 42-year-old Jerome Lopez, claimed Miss



Thomas Wainwright

Wade had been on the wrong said of the road and caused the accident, but the jury did not believe them.

Outside court, Miss Wade's partner of 10 years, Charles Pease, said: 'Thomas Wainwright will have to live with what he did.'

'All Theresa wanted to be was the island vet. People loved her. The unanimous verdict

delivered today has vindicated Theresa quite clearly, and her reputation remains unsullied.

'The verdict has not brought Theresa back, but our faith in justice has not been misplaced.'

Prosecutor Tim Niven-Smith revealed that Wainwright, who worked as the first officer on the £6.2million yacht *MY Mahogany*, based in the south of France, has a previous conviction for driving while unfit through drink or drugs.

At a court in Nice, he was fined 700 euros and given a suspended sentence.

Witnesses from Mull told of how Wainwright, who was drinking with his mother's partner 42-year-old Jerome Lopez, consumed five 500ml bottles of Magners cider in the Mishnish Hotel, a pint of cider in Macgochan's pub, two whiskies in the distillery, all Tobermory, and another two pints of cider in the Craignure Inn, Craignure.

When asked in the Craignure

Inn who was driving the car, because both he and Mr Lopez had been drinking, Wainwright boasted: 'The car knows its own way home.'

He then got behind the wheel claiming he 'had a clear head' and felt fine to drive.

Less than three miles down the road as he headed towards Tobermory on the wrong side of the road his hire car smashed into the Berlingo van driven by Miss Wade.

She died at the scene. The force of the impact was so great that the engine block was pushed into the cabin.

In court, Wainwright and his passenger Mr Lopez tried to blame Miss Wade for the crash and insisted it was she who was on the wrong side of the road.

Wainwright was on Mull, along with members of his family, visiting his sick grandmother. He flew into Edinburgh airport and hired the Maserati.

Judge John Morris remanded

Wainwright in custody and banned him from driving. He will be sentenced next month.

Mr Pease said the night of the crash Miss Wade had phoned to say she would be home soon and he began preparing a meal for them.

He said that when she did not return he thought she had been called out on an emergency.

Mr Pease said he went to bed and was wakened at 4am or 4.30am by the police. He added:

'They advised that she had been involved in a road traffic accident and she had died.'

He, along with Miss Wade's mother Mary and retired vet Jimmy Wilson, help to run the vet practice on the island.

Wainwright will be sentenced next month.

On Tuesday, Inspector Adam McKenzie, divisional road policing inspector for Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Police Division, said: 'Firstly I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the

family of Theresa Wade. Her family were left devastated by this incident in 2015 and continue to come to terms with the loss of their daughter, sister and partner.

Wainwright, during a holiday in Scotland, rented a high-powered vehicle and got behind the wheel while under the influence of alcohol. Without any consideration for the safety of pedestrians or other motorists in his path, he drove at excessive speeds and without due consideration. This resulted in the death of Theresa Wade.

This case unfortunately highlights the devastating effects of drink driving. His utterly selfish decision has completely shattered the lives of Theresa Wade's family and will forever impact on his own life. While we recognise the decision of the court, the damage caused cannot be undone.

'Our message is simple – never drink and drive.'

Collaboration and adventure – tourism summit has it all

REPRESENTATIVES from tourism businesses from across the Argyll and the Isles headed to the banks of Loch Awe on Tuesday March 21 for the sixth annual Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC) summit.

The theme of this year's summit, which took place during Scottish Tourism Week 2017, was City/Coast Connections and the collaborations which can be built between both.

AITC has been working close-

ly with Glasgow Life (formerly Glasgow City Marketing Bureau) on the current year-long Wild About Argyll campaign, and welcomed marketing communications director Tom Rice to the Lochawe stage to talk about how collaborating with Glasgow, the city on our doorstep, can be a win-win for tourism growth across both destinations. Wild About Argyll, which launched in Glasgow's Oran Mor at the end of January, was at the forefront

of the day. The face of Wild About Argyll, ultra adventurer Mark Beaumont, whose 12-day epic adventure lies at the heart of the campaign, dropped in during a training ride and spoke to delegates about his personal highlights from the epic adventure and his belief in the ability of Argyll and the Isles to transform its appeal to a younger more active market.

For the full report from the summit, visit www.obantimes.co.uk



AITC chairman Gavin Dick, director Calum Ross, Mark Beaumont and AITC development manager Carron Tobin together with the summit delegates get Wild About Argyll in St Conan's Kirk.

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Education report is 'worrying'

EDUCATION managers in Argyll and Bute Council should consider their positions after a 'damning report' found four out of five inspection areas as 'weak' – making it the 'worst' ever published, Michael Russell MSP said on Tuesday.

The report, *Inspection and Review – Strategic inspection of the education functions of Argyll and Bute Council* was published at the start of the week and reported that 'urgent and sustained action was required'.

While Mr Russell, a regular complainer about standards in the local authority, called for the resignations of the chief executive and the education

manager, the council responded by raising concerns about the way in which the inspection was carried out and said it would hold a special meeting in April.

Education Scotland said it will carry out a further inspection visit within three months and another visit within six months.

Former education secretary Mr Russell MSP said: 'This is a deeply worrying and a very depressing inspection report.'

'The two questions that must be addressed with urgency are, firstly, how the situation is to be remedied and secondly how it arose. It is at the very least questionable that the current educational key leaders in the

council's senior management team, including the chief executive, who was previously the executive director of community services overseeing education, are the right people to take forward the urgent and far-reaching improvements that are needed.'

Executive director of community services Ann Marie Knowles defended the educational management in the council saying: 'Our children are getting a good foundation for learning when they start their education in Argyll and Bute.'

'They are leaving us well equipped to build happy, prosperous lives.'

'Our service already boasts a number of key strengths and we are already taking action to progress improvement where needed.'

'Change for the better is happening already.'

Questioning the inspection itself, Ms Knowles said: 'We have concerns about the process and outcomes of this inspection which took place in September last year. We will hold a special meeting of the community services committee in April to fully discuss this report and outline those concerns.'

'Education Scotland will be invited to attend.'

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OT
CalMac
'eejits'
ad wins
award

CALMAC'S 'The Two Eejits' adverts, their first aimed at a younger 'millennial' audience, have won a Travel Marketing Award in London and led to a rise in west coast tourists.

The four innovative short films, devised by The Lane Agency in Edinburgh, 'faced head-on perceived issues of bad weather and the lack of anything to do', Calmac explained, 'with plenty ideas for great adventures regardless of rain, hail, sleet, snow or anything else the notoriously fickle west coast weather gods can dredge up'.

CalMac's representative – a Harris Tweed clad puppet called Brian (with an 'i') Ferry – endured a 'long-suffering voyage' alongside the eejits, played by the BAFTA Scotland-nominated Something Something duo of Ian Greenhill and Jordan Laird, as they get to grips with Scotland's west coast.

A CalMac spokesperson added that the duo's well-crafted antics did make an impact, generating an online chatter profile and a rise in customers deciding to jump on board.

The spokesperson added: 'The company was aware from the outset that the series would not appeal to everyone, but was satisfied that the change in approach with its sometimes irreverent humour would strike a chord with its target demographic.'



Ian Greenhill and Jordan Laird with 'Brian Ferry'.



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Kayakers stick oars in over Sound of Jura fish farm plan

KAYAKERS from Mid Argyll have taken to the water to show their opposition to a proposal for a 12-cage fish farm in the Sound of Jura.

The group of 18 kayakers paddled a section of the Scottish Sea Kayak Trail between Carsaig and Crinan, stopping at Dounie, the site of the proposed fish farm.

Local kayaker Libby Anderson said: 'The proposed fish farm is massive and a really difficult hurdle for all but the most experienced kayakers, especially in unstable weather.'

'The bay would be utterly changed and dominated by it. The delight in seeing the many birds and mammals in their natural environment, while paddling in safety close to the shore, would be greatly compromised.'

'As a kayaker I think this area is one of the most special and accessible on the west coast.'

'A growing number of instructors and pupils are becoming involved in kayaking. They use this very popular route espe-



Kayakers from Mid Argyll have come together to show their opposition to the fish farm application in the Sound of Jura.

cially as they can rest, picnic or camp in the much-loved bay at Dounie.'

Will Self of Wild Argyll said:

'Dounie is on a popular section

of the Scottish Sea Kayak Trail and a spur off the new Argyll Sea Kayak Trail. Its sheltered bay is used by kayakers on what is otherwise an exposed stretch

of the Sound of Jura with steep sides and fast flowing water.'

'Dounie is in a very wild location in the heart of the Knapdale National Scenic

Area, which has Scotland's highest level of landscape protection partly for 'views of the sea and remoteness, isolation and seclusion, a place to stay and contemplate'.

Rhod Watt, Scottish Canoe Association Access Advisor said:

'The fish farm would only be 50 metres from the shore, which is much closer to the shore than most fish farms. It is also unclear whether passage between the cages and the shore would be blocked by mooring cables.'

'Even if it is possible for kayaks to pass inshore, this would not be the obvious route for anyone unfamiliar with the site.'

Kayakers would therefore attempt to pass outside the fish farm where turbulent tidal waters are made worse by the effects of the sea bed plateau suddenly dropping off into a deep trench. They would find themselves in entirely more threatening sea conditions.'

To find out more or to sign the online petition, visit douniebay.wordpress.com

Man dies in Barra house fire

A 51-YEAR-OLD man died following a house fire on the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides last Friday (March 17).

The man is yet to be formally identified but his next of kin have been informed. No-one else was injured in the incident.

Police and fire crews were called to the serious blaze at a single storey house at St Barr's Crescent, Barra, at 6.19am.

Firefighters wearing protective breathing apparatus entered the building and got the man out.

He was passed into the care of the Scottish Ambulance Service but died a short time later.

Firefighters used powerful water jets and finally extinguished the flames at around 7.15am. They left the scene around 9.30am.

Local senior fire officer Fraser Burr said: 'The thoughts of everyone at the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are with the family at this difficult time.'

'Barra has a very close-knit community and this tragic loss will be felt by everyone on the island.'

Inspector Roddy Mackay added: 'A joint investigation with the fire service will be carried out and inquiries are at a very early stage.'

Whisky on agenda for MP

ARGYLL and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara has criticised the Chancellor's budget 'tax hike' on whisky as 'deeply unhelpful'.

The SNP MP, who chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group for Scotch Whisky, made the comments during a constituency visit to Islay, where he also collected one of only 522 bottles of a bicentenary special-edition single-cask Lagavulin malt whisky, launched on its 200th year on the island to raise funds for Islay community projects.

The special-edition bottles were sold by ballot and despite fierce competition, the MP finally secured his bottle by digital ballot on March 1. In total, the community legacy has raised £580,000. All proceeds from the legacy bottling will be distributed to local projects, including a donation of £310,000 to Islay Heritage to help the charity build a comprehensive story of Islay's past, based on the island's archaeological sites and monuments.

A total of £60,000 will also go to support the Finlaggan Trust, responsible for maintaining the home of the Lords of the Isles.

For the full story, visit www.obantimes.co.uk

Mull pub celebrating top tourism win

AN ISLE of Mull pub has been crowned the friendliest in Scotland at Scottish tourism's equivalent of the Oscars, writes Martin Laing.

Macgochans of Tobermory picked up Friendliest Pub/Bar at the Scottish Thistle Awards national final last Thursday (March 16).

Oban Winter Festival received a special commendation in the Caledonian MacBrayne – Best Cultural Event or Festival category.

The ceremony, held during Scottish Tourism Week, took place at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre

and was hosted by TV presenter and Deacon Blue drummer Dougie Vipond and former Miss Scotland Jennifer Reoch.

Thistle judges said Macgochans focuses on customer service and an 'excellent use of social media' by the in-house team. They also commended the business's support for local producers and suppliers.

Neil Morrison, owner of Macgochans, said: 'We pride ourselves on providing a true Scottish island welcome, so to get national recognition for this and win Scotland's Friendliest Bar is an absolute inspiration to the team that

they can achieve great things. We are continually trying to improve on what we do and this award drives us forward in our pursuit to make each customer experience something special.'

The four other Argyll and Bute finalists up for awards – The Majestic Line (Scotland) Ltd for Best Accommodation Provider, NVA's Hinterland and Oban Winter Festival for Caledonian MacBrayne for Best Cultural Event or Festival, and Mull Eagle Watch for Scotland CAN DO Award for Innovation In Tourism – were just pipped at the post.

David Adams McGilp,

regional director at VisitScotland, said: 'Huge congratulations to Macgochans for being crowned Scotland's friendliest pub.'

'The team behind this great business – and indeed all of our wonderful finalists from Argyll and Bute – have achieved so much to get all the way through to the national finals of these prestigious awards.'

Their successes demonstrate that the region boasts some of the very best tourism and hospitality businesses in Scotland and the industry here certainly has the passion

as well as the capability of delivering an unforgettable first-class experience for our visitors.'

This year the Scottish Thistle Awards received a record-breaking number of entries, totalling 715, amounting to a 16 per cent increase on last year.

Pictured left to right are Dougie Vipond, Neil Morrison, owner of Macgochans; Gill Ross, general manager of Macgochans; presenter Paul Waterson, chief executive of the Scottish Licensed Trade Association, and Jennifer Reoch.

Hugh Smith's letter from Islay

Bowmore Distillery

STANDING on the south east shore of Lochindaal is Bowmore Distillery, certainly the oldest on the island and considered to be among the oldest in Scotland.

The distillery was established in 1779 by John P Simson, a local merchant, who also set up Kilarrow Distillery in 1766. The latter is likely to have been operating in the Bridgend district although its exact location is unknown and is now numbered among Islay's lost distilleries.

Simson eventually sold the Bowmore distillery to twin brothers James and William Mutter who were of German extraction and had wide scientific farming interests. James was also the Vice Consul representing the Ottoman Empire, Portugal and Brazil through their Glasgow-based consulates.

During their tenure, the Mutters introduced a number of innovations to the island distillery and established the water supply which is still in use today.

They also had an iron steamship built, the SS James Mutter, to import barley and coal from the mainland and transport the Bowmore whisky to its Arches warehouses in Glasgow.

Following the Mutter ownership, the distillery was bought by J B Sheriff and Co who also owned the



Lochindaal Distillery at Port Charlotte. They eventually sold their Port Charlotte distillery to Benmore Distillers in 1921. They were soon to be taken over by DCL and Lochindaal ceased to operate in 1929.

After 25 years, sheriffs sold Bowmore to the Inverness-based William Grigor and Son who, in turn, sold it to whisky broker Stanley P Morrison in 1963, when it became known as Morrisons Bowmore Distillery Ltd.

During the Morrison ownership, vast improvements were carried out to the structure and distilling methods, and one of the warehouses was gifted to the community and now houses the MacTaggart Leisure Centre and swimming pool whose water is heated by residual heat from the distillery condensers.

Following Stanley P Morrison's death in 1971, control of Bowmore, along with the Morrison-owned distilleries at Gartachosan and Glen Garioch, passed to his sons Brian and Tim, and the company became known as Morrison Bowmore Distillers Ltd.

The Japanese drinks giant Suntory, previous shareholders in Morrisons Bowmore, took over the company in 1994 and, now trading as Beam Suntory, it also owns Laphroaig Distillery as well as the Bowmore facility.

During the world war, production at Bowmore stopped and throughout the 1939-45 conflict the distillery housed the RAF's Coastal Command which operated flying boats from Lochindaal on anti-submarine missions in the north Atlantic.

The Mutter connection was recalled 10 years ago when a bottle of 1850 Bowmore Single Malt, produced during the Mutter ownership, sold at auction at McTear's in Glasgow for an amazing £29,400.

Medical conference

MORE than 60 medical students, some from as far as the south of England descended on the island's Ionad Chaluim Chille Ìle from March 9 to 12 to take part in a conference on remote and rural medicine.

The conference discussed the pros and cons of remote and rural medicine as well as giving the students an insight into the advantages and disadvantages of carrying out medical practices in rural areas and remote island communities.

The welcome and introductory talk was given by local GP Dr Angus MacTaggart, fresh from his chairman triumph at the recent Islay Gathering, who is an eager advocate and supporter of remote and rural medicine.

During the course of the three-day conference various speakers addressed such issues as emergency medical procedures, realistic medicine, patient transportation and limited facility problems.

Happily, it was not all nose to the grindstone as, lectures over, the students enjoyed some of the island's varied attractions.

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

Skerryvore's Martin Gillespie helps launch Oban Unsigned

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

HARD work, gigging and getting your name known are the way to make it in the music business says Martin Gillespie of Skerryvore as the search for Oban's next big band gets under way today.

Oban Unsigned launches this week – an opportunity for Oban bands and musicians to play during a prime slot on Saturday afternoon at the town's biggest gig, Oban Live, during the first weekend in June.

And to celebrate the prize of performing on the main stage of the town's biggest festival, founding member of Skerryvore Martin spoke exclusively to *The Oban Times* – which included a few tips on how to make it in the Scottish music scene.

Martin said the hard work and determination of musicians in the early days will pay off and help to sustain earning a living from music for the longest time.

He explained: 'Sometimes people can burst onto the mainstream music industry and within a year they are no longer in it.'

'What we do is something dif-



Martin, left, with his brother Daniel. The brothers, whose band Skerryvore is behind Oban Live, have joined forces with *The Oban Times* to launch an exciting new competition for unsigned bands from Oban and surrounding areas to play at this year's event.

ferent to that. We are constantly thinking about what we are doing.'

'Our first CD was fairly traditional in that we were using existing tunes and bringing them together.'

'Over the years that has changed. We are writing and performing our own music. It allows us to be different, to include our influence on Celtic

music in Scotland and throughout Europe.'

Martin started playing music as a young boy. His mum was the music teacher on the island of Tiree.

He praised the Feis movement which encourages children and young people into making music from 'the chanter, to tin whistles'.

'People would come from all

over the place, what felt like hundreds of children over the years,' he said. In Tiree, the Feis runs for one week in July. Like many places in the Highlands and Islands, the Feis, meaning festival in Gaelic, brings young people together for a week of tuition in West Highland music and culture.

Martin explained that through that movement he and his older

brother Daniel learned to play the instruments they would eventually build their career upon.

From taking part in the Feis children learned how to perform – at concerts and school celebrations. When the Gillespie brothers went to Gordon Conner for tuition they got to play with his ceilidh band, opening up another world.

The boys then started gigging in island pubs before progressing to dances.

Fellow Tiriseach, Angus MacPhail, then encouraged the brothers to take on an island tour.

The brothers, along with island-visiting childhood friend Fraser West, his university friend Alec Dalgleish and band members, undertook an island tour to Kilchoan, Uist, Barra and a home-coming to Tiree.

As the band's reputation grew, they were invited to play at parties and weddings. They also started studying in Glasgow. Martin studied at the Royal Academy of Scotland Music and Drama.

Martin said: 'We were gigging all the time at ceilidhs. We started to go to festivals, performing

at fringe gigs to begin with. 'We did that for a long time, maybe two years, until we were getting on to main stages at festivals. Gigging, working away the whole time.'

At this point two more members, Craig Espie and Barry Caulfield, joined the band. 'The constant evolution of Skerryvore,' Martin argues, 'is one of the reasons for its success.'

From there the band continued to become one of Scotland's premier Celtic and traditional music outfits, joining only a handful who have an international following.

The band can be found performing in England, Scotland, Europe, America and further afield to audiences of upwards of 8,000 at festivals and events.

Martin says the biggest part of the band's success is 'believing in what you are doing and be sure that you want to do it'.

Martin continued: 'Enjoy what you are doing and don't expect things to happen overnight.'

'Be prepared to get out and gig. Work hard and be persistent.'

□ Turn to page 7 for full details of how you can enter the Oban Unsigned competition.

TIMESLINE

SSEN invests £1.4M on Islay

ISLAY'S electricity network is to be improved by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN).

SSEN said the upgrade will offer security of supply by installing a new 11kV switchboard at its power station in Bowmore.

The investment will modernise the existing network and allow full control from SSEN's network management centre in Perth, resulting in quicker restoration times should the power go off.

This project builds on current refurbishment work taking place on the island to upgrade overhead lines in the area and provides the key infrastructure required to supply Islay for the future.

Apology

IN LAST week's *Oban Times*, we reported an agreement had been reached between Argyll and Bute Council and Ann Colthart from Connell following a row over new housing that had been built too close to her property because of a planning error.

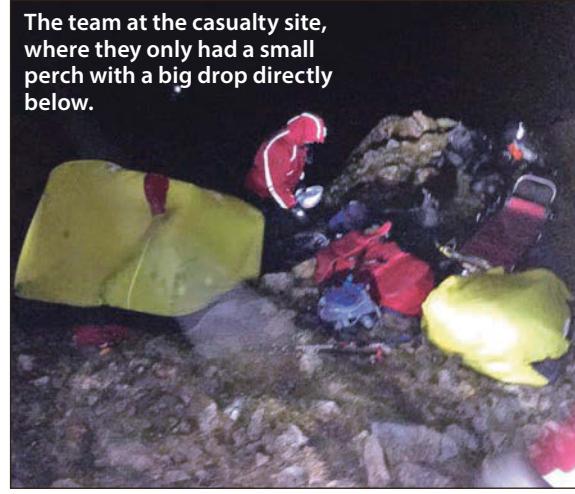
The article stated the new housing was social housing, attributed to Argyll Community Housing Association. This is incorrect.

The homes are mainstream housing which will be sold on the open market.

We apologise for the error.

Oban MRT to rescue at Glen Creran

The team at the casualty site, where they only had a small perch with a big drop directly below.



OBAN Mountain Rescue Team spent a night on the hillside after they were called to a serious incident in difficult conditions on Saturday night.

The team were called out after a hillwalker fell on steep ground on

the north face of Beinn Sgùilaird, in Glen Creran, sustaining serious injuries.

A Rescue 999 helicopter tried to get into the area to complete the rescue, but weather conditions and the lack of a suitable landing

site meant the Oban volunteers were left to complete the safe rescue of the patient.

A Mountain Rescue Team spokesperson said: 'The MRT made best speed with large amounts of kit to the casualty's location and

got him down by means of a cableway and multiple lowers over crags and very steep slopes 600 metres back to the glen.

'We then drove the casualty out of the glen in our specially-adapted Landrover to meet the ambulance further down Glen Creran. Everyone at Oban MRT wishes the casualty a speedy recovery.'

'A big thanks to Police Scotland MRT for assisting us lower down the hill.'

Volunteers have 'whale' of a time on training weekend

VISITORS to Tobermory Bay had quite a surprise last weekend when an invasion of Coastguard volunteers began to 'move' a whale from the beach, writes Louise Glen.

Thankfully the whale was a pretend one and the event was a training course for HM Coastguard rescue teams from across Argyll and the Islands who had convened in Tobermory for the annual maritime training and exercising weekend.

The training started with a minute's silence for colleagues involved in the recent incident off the Irish west coast.

The 30 volunteer coastguard rescue team members were joined by the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, British Divers Marine Life Rescue, Piers Massey from Mull and Iona Community Hospital, as well as the coxswain and crews from the RNLI Tobermory lifeboat.

A range of exercises focused on how to manage mass cetacean strandings, the management and handling of multiple cold water shock and hypothermic casualties and how to work closely with volunteers from the RNLI Tobermory Lifeboat when recovering people from the sea.

Two members of staff from the HMCG Stornoway control room were present for the weekend offering extra insight into the weekend's events.

Sunday morning culminated in an exercise that focused on working with the S-92 HMCG search and rescue helicopter flight from Stornoway and how casualties are transferred from lifeboats to the helicopter and from the shore to the lifeboat.

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POLICE FILES with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

Drugs supply charge

POLICE arrested and charged a 21-year-old man with being concerned in the supply of drugs after he was stopped in Oban town centre on March 15 at 10.30pm.

A small quantity of cannabis was found following a search of the man's flat in Soroba Road.

A report will now be sent to the procurator fiscal.

Cannabis warning

A 20-YEAR-OLD woman was given a recorded police warning for possessing drugs after officers conducted a stop and search on Miller Road, Oban, at 10.55pm on Wednesday March 15 and found a small quantity of cannabis.

Oban Times newsdesk

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OT

Islands pupils scoop first prize in prestigious piping contest

SGOIL Lionacleit band members were celebrating this week after taking first prize in the freestyle competition at the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships in Edinburgh – the world's biggest schools piping event with 62 participating schools.

The win ensured their 2017 competition schedule got off to a fantastic start.

A well known panel of judges from the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association, including Gary West, presenter of the radio programme Pipe Line; Phil Cunningham MBE, famous Scottish folk musician; Craig Munro, Red Hot Chilli Pipers, and Craig Anderson were impressed not only with Sgoil Lionacleit's strong performance, but also

with the creativity, musicianship and feeling that was incorporated into the arrangement, as well as the integrating of piping with such a diverse range of other instruments and artists.

The performance line-up included an ensemble of pipers, snare drummers, base and tenor drummers, a kit drummer, acoustic and base guitarists, pianist, a Gaidhlig singer and three Premier Highland Dancers. The piece was also accompanied by clarsach playing and the judges very much enjoyed this dynamic.

The team included 23 pupils from each of the Southern Isles, aged 11 to 17 years. The judges singled out the particular style of playing, as well as a

distinctive west coast Gaidhlig feeling and musicality which they said came through in the performance.

They particularly enjoyed the build-up of the set from the slow Gaidhlig Air, through to the intervening piece of pibaireachd, finally leading onto the more lively and exciting set of jigs.

The performance successfully incorporated the variety and creativity that the judges were looking for and the pupils were complimented on how well they had achieved this.

For a full report from the contest, visit www.obantimes.co.uk

The youngsters are all smiles after their win in Edinburgh.



Rockfield Primary School's Brendan Bootsma, left, Katherine MacLeod, Innes McKinney, Rhianna McPhee and Euan McCracken contributed ideas to new play map.

Rockfield Centre ready to unveil new play map

A NEW resource for Oban-area families and visitors launches this Saturday at The Rockfield Centre.

The Oban Play Map, created by the Rockfield Centre with input from local families, highlights places for children to play in Oban that are free and fun. The map includes beautiful illustrations with extra play ideas for every kind of weather.

Project co-ordinator Cori Princell said: 'We interviewed children to find out where they play and what they like to do and we were delighted to hear some of the same games we've heard about in our heritage projects.'

'One girl talked about making magic potions with grass and leaves, which reminded us of an older woman telling stories of making mince and potatoes with seeds and stones. We put both of those ideas on the map.'

The map was designed by VS + YO in Glasgow and was supported by Argyll and Bute Council and Oban Lorn and The Isles Health and Wellbeing Network.

The launch event takes place on Saturday March 25 from 2-4pm at The Rockfield Centre. There will be crafts, games and activities and copies of the map will be available for free.

Council duo retire after 63 years of dedicated service



Argyll and Bute Council workers Graham Stone, left, technical officer for Oban and the Isles for 25 years, and Kenny MacDonald, right, a roadman/driver with 38 years' service, were recently presented with a quaich and gifts from colleagues by Callum Robertson, performance manager with the council, on their retirement.

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Oban academics recognised by Highlands and Islands University

THE UNIVERSITY of the Highlands and Islands has recognised the work of two academics at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) UHI in Dunstaffnage, Oban.

Dr Michele Stanley, an expert in marine biochemistry and molecular biology, has been awarded the title of Reader, while her colleague Sheila Heymans, head of SAMS UHI's science department, has been made a Professor.

Dr Stanley, from Bangor, Northern Ireland, has been part of the SAMS UHI community for more than 10 years. She worked as a lecturer before

becoming a senior lecturer in 2010. Dr Stanley is also an active researcher.

Specialising in marine biotechnology, she has conducted research into topics such as the potential to use algal biomass as a source of renewable energy.

She has worked on numerous international projects, secured 30 research grants worth around £8 million, published 40 scientific papers and supervised seven postgraduate student projects.

Professor Sheila Heymans, originally from Namibia, joined SAMS UHI as a lecturer in 2007.

She was promoted to the positions of senior lecturer and head of ecology, before taking up her current role as head of SAMS UHI's science department in 2016.

An expert in ecosystem modelling, Professor Heymans' research focuses on the impacts of manmade developments such as fisheries have on environments and the organisms within them. She has published more than 90 scientific papers, contributed to major international research projects, sits on several key international advisory groups and has supervised PhD students from countries including the

UK, Israel, Turkey and Spain. Dr Stanley said: 'I'm very pleased to have been recognised for my research and teaching over the last 10 years linked to algal biotechnology.'

Professor Heymans said: 'It is a great honour to be awarded this Professorship by the University of the Highlands and Islands, one of the most dynamic and nascent universities in the UK.'

'SAMS UHI is a wonderful place to work and somewhere you can achieve anything you put your mind to.'

At Random

Cheer on the Saints

OBAN Saints have done superbly well this season in all competitions, but particularly the Scottish Amateur Cup.

The Saints are now through to the quarter-finals after a thrilling replay victory against the previously unbeaten Letham from Perth. The Oban boys came from 3-1 down to edge the tie with a brilliant comeback.

Now they are on the road again this Saturday as they head down to Edinburgh to take on Barca Milton 97 for a place in the semi-finals.

Whatever the outcome of this weekend's match, this is a sporting achievement well worth celebrating. More than 600 teams enter the competition each

season so to reach the last eight is great for the club, its players and fans.

Saints have punched way above their weight this season (they are also still in the Jimmy Marshall Cup and going well in the Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division) so deserve great plaudits.

Watch our sports pages for details of their forthcoming fixtures and get along to Glencruitten to cheer on the boys.

Brilliant opportunity

THERE is a genuine sense of excitement building over the line-up for this year's Oban Live.

As details are released of who is scheduled to play at the fantastic music

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



What do you think?

LET ME know by writing to me at The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB, or email mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

TIMELINE

School library rocks after refurb

ROCKFIELD Primary School opened its 'new' library last Friday thanks to cash and book donations from Oban contractors D&K Lafferty.

The £3,000 refurbishment introduces new bookshelves, comfy chairs, a fresh lick of paint and walls decorated with the children's favourite book characters, painted by S3 pupils at Oban High School.

The aim of the new library is to increase the children's enjoyment of reading.

The old library, acting deputy head Laura Fawdry explained, 'was a horrible place to be: there was nothing that would make the children want to come in and pick up a book.'

'Nowadays we cannot get them out. Every class now has a library slot. We have parents coming in for paired reading with the children.'

Head teacher Caroline Fothergill added: 'The last library was not used. We are absolutely delighted with the impact this has had. Children are engaging with reading much more.'

Barcaldine firm wins £2M contract

FUSION Marine has secured a £2 million order from Cooke Aquaculture Scotland for the supply of salmon pens and associated equipment for farm sites on Shetland.

The contract for 38 Triton pens – the largest single order won by Fusion Marine – will ensure that Cooke Aquaculture Scotland is equipped with the latest containment technology for three of its farm sites.

Fusion Marine is currently investing in new staff and production equipment and this latest order will provide an additional boost to the Barcaldine-based company as it continues to grow.

Oban fashion show for charity

A FASHION show raising money for Oban and Lorn Dementia Support Group will be held at McCaig's Warehouse on Thursday March 30 at 7pm.

The show, featuring new season men's and women's clothing, will be hosted by Chalmers of Oban, Edinburgh Woollen Mill and McCaig's Warehouse. Tickets cost £6.

Tourism group earns WorldHost status

ARGYLL and the Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC) has been awarded WorldHost accreditation.

The hallmark of excellent customer service, WorldHost has been used to train more than one million people worldwide and was the programme used for the tens of thousands of volunteers and staff at the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

WorldHost was launched in Scotland in 2014 and since then has trained more than 10,000 staff across the country. To achieve WorldHost accreditation, AITC had to demonstrate that a minimum of 50 per cent of its customer-facing staff attend and pass WorldHost workshops.

AITC's development agent team showed its commitment to providing excellent customer service by attending a WorldHost training day in Portavadie. This workshop includes delegates learning how important it is to the local economy and why it is important for every individual to play their part in growing tourism.

Across Argyll and the Isles, businesses are putting their staff through the programme and achieving WorldHost recognition. To date AITC, which works with Business Gateway to deliver the training, has enabled the free training of 254 delegates across the region.

AITC chairman Gavin Dick explained: 'You only have one chance to make a good first impression and we want tourism businesses across Argyll and the Isles to make the best one possible. WorldHost training gives your staff the confidence and tools to deal with providing great customer service together with what to do in a difficult situation.'

'Our aim is to make Argyll and the Isles a WorldHost regional destination. This is an ambitious target as we need 25 per cent of tourism businesses in each of our towns to go through the training. However, we believe it is achievable and will create a welcome Argyll and the Isles can be proud of.'

 More news available online
OBANTIMES.CO.UK

Cash help for those in hardship

PEOPLE throughout Argyll and Bute who have experience working in the licensed trade but have fallen on hard times are being encouraged to apply for one-off grants as part of an industry charity's 'Glass Half Full' campaign.

Launched last year, The Glass Half Full campaign aims to help current and former members of the licensed trade who have fallen on hard times through illness, unemployment or other factors and would benefit from financial aid for reasons both big and small.

The Scottish Licensed Trade Benevolent Society, known as The BEN, has been providing social, financial and emotional support to members, both current and former, of the licensed trade for more than 150 years including regular discretionary payments as well as one-off grants for emergency situations such as housing repairs, refurbishment or transport costs.

More than 50 per cent of one-off grants since 2011 were for redecoration or household appliances including new cookers, fridge freezers and vinyl flooring, while 19 per cent were for essential bills including mortgage payments, rent, heating, insurance and council tax, highlighting the importance of the service.

To find out more visit www.bensoc.org.uk or call 0141 353 3596.

£4M saves Monarch of the Glen for the nation

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

THE MONARCH of the Glen, the iconic Highland landscape painting of a stag by Sir Edwin Landseer, has been acquired for the nation by the National Galleries of Scotland, following a public fundraising campaign.

The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) had until Friday (March 17) to meet the £4 million price tag to avoid it being sold on the open market and potentially leaving Scotland.

The painting's owner, drinks giant Diageo, agreed to gift half its market value, estimated at £10m, to allow NGS the opportunity to acquire it.

After securing support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Art Fund, NGS launched a public fundraising campaign last month, called Help Save the Stag, to help raise the final £750,000 needed to honour the agreement.

Support for the public campaign came from around the world, with donations received from Anchorage, Queensland, Los Angeles and Hong Kong, and from across the UK from Thurso to Bath, totalling more than £250,000. An additional £100,000 from the NGS acquisition fund - made up of funding



Now the painting is in public ownership, plans are under way to organise a tour of venues across Scotland.

from the Scottish Government and donations from private trusts and foundations - enabled the £4 million target to be reached.

Now in public ownership, the painting is set to become one

of the key attractions at the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh. Plans will also be developed for a tour to venues across Scotland, starting later this year.

The Monarch of the Glen,

painted in 1851, possibly at Glenorchy, depicts 'a monumental stag imperiously surveying the rugged landscape; gorse and bracken are in the foreground and dramatic cliff faces and escarpments form the backdrop', the NGS describes.

'The stag is superbly defined, with every detail precisely established, from the texture of its fur to the moisture around its nostrils. He is a so-called 'royal' or 12-point stag - a reference to the number of tines on his antlers.'

'[It] is one of the most famous paintings of the 19th century and an iconic image which for many encapsulates the grandeur and majesty of Scotland's Highlands and wildlife.'

Sir John Leighton, director-general of the National Galleries of Scotland, said: 'We are thrilled that we have been able to secure this iconic work for the national collection. The enormous support from the public has been incredible with donations coming from all over the world, and from the length and breadth of Scotland and the rest of the UK.'

'Thank you so much to everyone who has donated. Your gift has helped to ensure that this magnificent work will be enjoyed by millions of people

for generations to come.'

Fiona Hyslop, cabinet secretary for culture, tourism and external affairs, said: 'I am delighted that National Galleries of Scotland has secured the funding required to ensure the iconic Monarch of the Glen can remain on permanent public display in Scotland.'

'The overwhelmingly positive response to the public fundraising campaign underlines the importance of the painting to people in Scotland and around the world. I am pleased the Scottish Government was able to provide £100,000 towards its acquisition and a further £75,000 for a tour that will enable communities across Scotland to see it.'

The painting was initially conceived as part of a series of three works which would have been displayed in the House of Lords, but this was deemed to be inappropriate so it was sold to a private collector. From the moment it was first exhibited in 1851 at the Royal Academy it proved immensely popular. In the Royal Academy catalogue it was associated with a poem called Legends of Glenorchy. There is debate over whether this helps identify the site; Glen Quoich has also been proposed.

Dr Thomson and his wife had attended a cheese and wine fundraising event in Kilchrenan Village Hall and after the event set off to walk back to Annat. But Dr Thomson failed to return and was reported missing by his wife, police said.

According to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the alarm was raised at 3.50am and following a major search Dr Thomson's body was discovered in the burn at 5.25am on Sunday March 19.

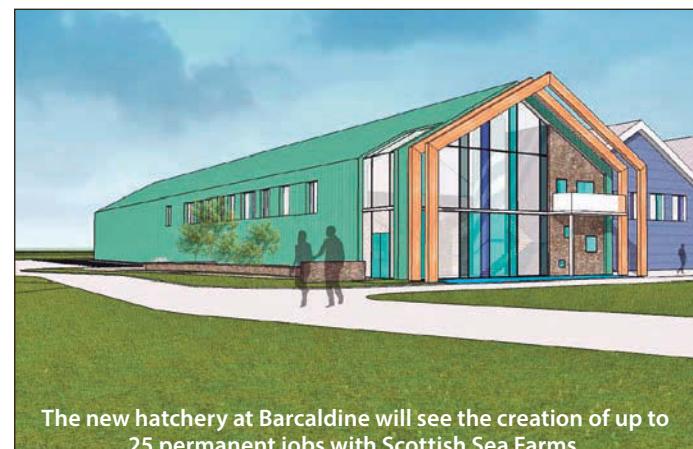
Police Scotland added: 'Enquiries are ongoing to establish the circumstances surrounding his death, which at this time police are not treating as suspicious. A report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.'

Church elder Marilyn Henderson said: 'In the dark and rain it's very hard to know where you are. He must have just fallen. You would not hear because of the noise of the burn. It was torrential rain. The burn was in full spate.'

A spokesperson for the University of Glasgow added their tribute: 'We are all deeply shocked and saddened by Dr Ron Thomson's tragic and untimely death. He took formal retirement at the end of January - less than two months ago - and had been looking forward to travelling.

'As a lecturer in mechanics of solids, he was known to generations of students. His passion was educating the next generation of engineers and he leaves behind a significant legacy in that regard.'

£35m hatchery in Barcaldine approved



The new hatchery at Barcaldine will see the creation of up to 25 permanent jobs with Scottish Sea Farms.



will be transformational for Scottish Sea Farms, raising our production of smolts from five million to 11 million annually, and helping us to meet the rising global demand for our premium Scottish salmon and to grow our harvest volumes and revenues sustainably. It

will also further increase our contribution to Scotland's economic prosperity and the development of our coastal communities.'

Demolition has been under way at the site and construction is expected to start in the next few weeks with the first fish reared in the new facility entering the water in 2019.

Neilson wins Argyll vote to serve on commission



Billy Neilson.

Eilean Siar (Western Isles). Commissioners are responsible for the Crofting Commission's performance, and set its direction and policies on regulatory matters that affect crofters. Rural secretary Fergus Ewing said: 'Crofting is an integral part of Scottish rural life and it is essential that it has dedicated people to represent and reflect the interests and diversity of our crofting communities.'

The elected crofting commissioners will give crofters a stronger say in how they are regulated, bringing valuable local knowledge and experience to the role.'

There are around 16,000 crofters in Scotland, and 33,000 people living in crofting households. Crofts account for about a quarter of land area in the highlands and islands. More than 80 per cent of crofts are in the Highlands and

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Tragic end to night out in Kilchrenan

POLICE are investigating the death of a 66-year-old man who fell into a fast-flowing burn and died.

The man's body was recovered from Kilchrenan Burn early on Sunday morning.

He has been named locally as Dr Ron Thomson, a recently retired Glasgow University lecturer in engineering. Police are not treating his death as suspicious.

The Oban Times understands Dr Thomson and his wife were on holiday from Glasgow and were staying overnight with friends in Annat before they planned to continue their holiday in a motor home.

Dr Thomson and his wife had attended a cheese and wine fundraising event in Kilchrenan Village Hall and after the event set off to walk back to Annat. But Dr Thomson failed to return and was reported missing by his wife, police said.

According to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the alarm was raised at 3.50am and following a major search Dr Thomson's body was discovered in the burn at 5.25am on Sunday March 19.

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'As a lecturer in mechanics of solids, he was known to generations of students. His passion was educating the next generation of engineers and he leaves behind a significant legacy in that regard.'

OT

Taynuilt

AN EXCELLENT turnout of 30 Taynuilt Primary School pupils and 26 adults recently picked up litter around the village.

The annual event was organised earlier than usual as everyone was keen to give the village a tidy up before the spring holiday fortnight.

The organisers thank all the volunteers who gave up their time to improve the look of the village. All proceeds from the event will go towards the P6/P7 primary school trip to Lochgoilhead.

TAYNUILT Primary School pupils have been raising money for Mary's Meals.

Sixty children each received a mug which the charity uses to provide meals in and rattled them at friends and family for six weeks, asking for small change.

As part of the fundraising, the children laid coins along the pavement on Main Street from the phone box to Graham's Grocers and back again. This event alone raised £209.

An impressive final total of almost £1,100 was raised and Mary's Meals was presented with a cheque at the primary school.

LORN Organic Growers still has raised beds available to rent in its polytunnels at Barguillean for growing vegetables this season.

Anyone interested should email Lornorganicgrowers@gmail.com for more information.

Kilbrandon

KILBRANDON Scottish Women's Institute members welcomed guest speaker Tony Hill of Seafari Adventures to their March meeting in Seil Island Hall.

Tony gave members a brief history of how the business started and showed videos of the Corryvreckan, a whale watching tour and a daytrip to Iona.

Members learned a lot about what goes on behind the scenes in the business which is open all year and attracts visitors from far and wide.

It was an interesting evening and Ann Reid gave the vote of thanks.

Inveraray

THE REGENERATION of the historic Argyll town of Inveraray has reached a major milestone as buildings are revealed looking fresher than they have in years.

Four of five chosen priority buildings – the Town House, Chamberlain's House, the Old Temperance Hotel and Relief Land – have been given a new lease of life as part of the Inveraray Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) by being restored to their former glory.

Work on Arkland, the fifth priority building, will be completed by the summer.

Councillor Aileen Morton the council's policy lead for sustainable economic growth said: 'It is really pleasing to see the regeneration work in Inveraray, which started in 2013, reaching this visible stage. The town is looking great and will help our ambition of attracting visitors to come to our historic town.'

The ambitious conservation of the distinctive and important buildings was made possible by the council's contribution of £350,000 and the CARS funding of £970,000 awarded by Historic Environment Scotland. The total budget, which included contributions from the owners, Argyll Community Housing Association and a private sector housing grant, is more than £2million.

The Inveraray CARS scheme will continue until March 2018 with the focus of the final year being supporting community engagement initiatives.



The revitalised Inveraray Townhouse.

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Dalmally farmers to judge prestigious competition at Northumberland show

SYBIL and George MacPherson of Brackley Farm, Dalmally, who featured in the BBC series *This Farming Life*, have been invited to judge the agricultural highlight of the Northumberland County Show, the JS Hubbucks Champion of Champions competition.

The prize is awarded to an exceptional animal picked from the Grand Parade of Champions. Sybil and George said: 'We are delighted and honoured to be asked to fulfil this prestigious role.'

This Farming Life was a 12-part series shown on BBC2 in 2016. It followed the struggles and triumphs of five farming families in some of Scotland's most beautiful and remote landscapes.

Islay and Jura

A DAY of health and well-being workshops proved popular with Islay High School pupils and Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara who took part in a zumba class.

Active schools co-ordinator Nona Thomas and youth development worker Amy Dunnachie organised a day of activities including a talk from the See Me programme, which aims to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination and help young people express their feelings. Internet safety was also a hot topic of the day, alongside cardiopulmonary resuscitation training and a workshop on alcohol and drug awareness by Addiction. On Saturday, Islay and Jura health and well-being co-ordinator Gill Chasemore arranged an exhibition of local service providers, from the Citizens Advice Bureau to Scottish dancing, and invited residents to meet them. MP Brendan O'Hara showed his support visiting



George and Sybil MacPherson.

Sybil and George MacPherson said the TV series 'connected farmers to the public' and informed

them about what goes on behind the scenes on farms all over Scotland.

'Farming is our business,



Islay High School pupils enjoyed the workshops.

all the stalls and talking to members of the community. Gill thanks everyone who contributed and attended the events, in particular Islay High School head teacher Stephen Harrison for his support.

Donations received at the events are going to Islay High School's expedition team for their planned trip to Africa.

MEMBERS of the Appin branch of the Scottish Women's Institute met on Thursday March 16 in Port Appin Hall when president Doreen Evans welcomed Duncan MacCorquodale of the Creagan Inn.

Duncan, who is no stranger to Port Appin, demonstrated three of 'Creagan's Culinary Creations', starting with superfood salad which included kale, quinoa, blueberries and goat's cheese. Duncan's hot dishes were beef stroganoff and teriyaki salmon. Members were invited to sample all three dishes and the verdict was 'absolutely delicious'.

Myra MacDougall led a hearty vote of thanks to Duncan for a most enjoyable evening. After tea, competition results were announced as follows: handmade felted item - Gold, Jane Parkin; Red, Alison MacCorquodale; Blue, Doreen Evans and Green, Catriona MacKenzie. Sugar mice - Gold, Myra MacDougall. The trophy for Mrs Ross's baking competition was won by Chrissie Malone.

Tobermory

SENIOR students at Tobermory High School are continuing preparations for their exams in May and pupils in S1, 2 and 3 have been involved in a variety of learning activities.

These include an RME day on The Creation Story, food tasting in French and preparing for their own parliamentary elections in social subjects.

S3 pupils have been thinking about careers as they begin the process of choosing their subjects for their senior years at school.

Nursery and primary youngsters have been very busy, both in school and out and about in the community.

In the pre-five unit, the pupils decided they would like to learn about travelling using trains and aeroplanes.

Part of the pre-five unit was transformed into a ticket office and pupils exchanged money for tickets for their travels.

The setting was very busy as pupils packed cases and set off on their journey.

Using cardboard boxes, a train was built that ran the length of the building - big enough for all the pre-five passengers. A model train track was set up outside that ran around the playground which also caused great excitement.

P1/2 have been investigating local shops and have visited the bakery, chemist, soap shop and the Co-op. They have then used their knowledge to create their own shop within the classroom and practice many of the roles they have experienced first-hand in the community, learning about the value of money as well as using coins to pay for their purchases.

P3/4 are currently busy exploring polar lands and have discovered what life is like in the North and South Poles. There has also been an increase in the wildlife sightings in the classroom, with sock penguins and a huge polar bear and her cub to be seen roaming free! Base camp has been established and the pupils have been developing their compass and map work with the aid of a giant compass marked out on the floor.

P5/6/7 have been developing their geocaching skills supported by the local ranger who has helped them to hide and locate geocaches around the school, at Aros Park and along the main street. Pupils have used GPS, maps and co-ordinates to find the hidden caches and have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. They are also going to hide a travel bug which they hope to track on its adventures across the globe.

Thank you to all of our community partners that have enhanced and supported our curriculum this term.



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Rural Watch extended across Argyll

RURAL Watch, the countryside version of Neighbourhood Watch, has been extended to more communities in Argyll including Appin, Ardechattan, Connel and Oban South.

The new crime prevention scheme, which encourages people to report suspicious activity online, had its regional launch in Dalmally in February and is also being introduced in Glenorchy and Innishail. It is due to start in Taynuilt, Dalavich and Kilchurn later this year.

It gives residents a line of communication with the police for non-urgent matters and allows police to alert members about crime in their area so they can take precautions to prevent it.

Through the targeted positioning of weather-proof posters and window stickers, it also aims to send a message to potential criminals that, despite being rural, the area is patrolled and watched.

Police Scotland added: 'As part of the Neighbourhood Watch Scotland group, your insurance company may provide a 10 per cent discount on your premiums.'

To register or to find out more go to ruralwatchscotland.co.uk.

Kilmore

THE MARCH meeting of the Kilmore branch of the Scottish Women's Institute was held on March 8 when president Anne Ferguson welcomed 15 members and guests from Oban.

The evening took the form of an open night and after business was discussed and noted, Kilmore member Anne Tully showed slides taken during her visit to a children's hospice in Belarus, where she helped build a play park.

A raffle was held and the money was given to Anne Tully to forward onto the hospice.

Competitions winners: three scones, 1 M Nicholson; 2 A Tully; 3 A Robertson. Heavy crotchet, 1 M Whitton; 2 M Nicholson.

but it is so much more than that. It's a way of life that also involves looking after the countryside and taking very good care of our animals,' they said.

The five Munros on the couple's land have been farmed by Sybil's family for more than 175 years. Their Blackface sheep are very hardy as snow is often still found on their hillsides in June. Some ewes are hefted to high hill areas and are only gathered a few times a year. The suckler herd spends the summer on the farm and during the winter the herd is off the farm on lower ground.

Sybil and George said: 'Our farming life is tough and the ups and downs of looking after animals can be extremely demanding, but never dull.'

WHITE VAN Man

Brexit and Indyref2

YOU WILL be relieved to hear that we are not going to discuss this issue for at least 18 months as I feel quite sure we will all be sick, tired and fed-up of it all by then.

Council elections

ON A SUBJECT closer to home, Argyll and Bute Council goes to the polls in May and there is something that really worries me.

While out and about, taking the opportunity to have a political blether here and there, I am alarmed by the number of people who say they are not going to vote in the local council elections this year.

Several reasons are given, the most popular being 'they make promises at the door and when elected nothing changes,' and 'I don't trust any of them.'

By not voting, people are not helping to make changes. Remember, council elections are not about party politics. This is an election that gives you, the voter, the chance to vote for a candidate you know, you believe in, you trust. One who might stick up for you when you need help and who will listen to you. You don't need to like them.

So please use your vote and use it wisely.

On the day, the outcome of the election is up to the people who vote - you.

Emergency services

FOLLOWING last week's column, I am taking a second look at a subject that makes my blood boil.

That is the fact rural areas of Scotland are suffering from a severe lack of emergency cover from our ambulance service because of present-day working practices.

Here in Oban we have 20 ambulance personnel crammed in to what can only be described as a garage and a small recreation area and office.

It is a building which, in my opinion, is not fit for purpose.

Despite this, our two paramedic crews and our patient transfer crews give 100 per cent to our area.

Despite local efforts, the Scottish Ambulance Service is not helping.

While only having two front line ambulances with paramedics and technicians as crew, those ambulances are getting used as patient transfer vehicles to Glasgow more and more often.

This is not on.

Emergency ambulances should not be used for patient transport unless absolutely necessary and if they are they should be allowed to return to their home station directly.

So the next time you are at an incident wondering where that ambulance is, remember the situation the crews are often in.

The pressure these highly-skilled professionals are under through mismanagement is not of their doing.

Community spirit

ON A happier note, the local community pulled out all the stops when Joe Hunter featured in *The Oban Times* after he had his bike stolen by some mindless, heartless moron.

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of a Just Giving Campaign, Joe ended up taking delivery of a new bike, with the cash to buy the bike raised in three hours.

Well done to everyone who made Joseph so happy. A fine tribute to the people of this area, a brilliant effort made by one and all, Oban at its best.

George Berry.



Music, songs and magic at final Taynuilt ceilidh

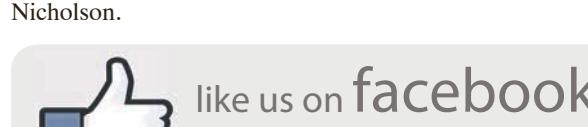
AT THE final Taynuilt ceilidh of the winter series

the audience was treated to an enjoyable selection of music, singing, jokes... even magic tricks!

Some stirring tunes were provided by young piper Calum Garvin, while his parents, Joanie and Michael Garvin played some fantastic sets

Fear an Taighe for the evening was the popular Donnie 'Maroot' MacLeod who kept proceedings flowing smoothly with a huge repertoire of jokes.

To the amazement of everyone, Donnie also performed a number of magic tricks – which may well have been a first for the Taynuilt ceilidh.



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Change for better – the writing is on ground



Volunteers and supporters of Oban Viewpoint Group laid a mile of pennies near the site of its proposed new community centre at a fundraiser on Saturday. Group chairman Andrew Macdonald said the majority of the planned location for the centre, near to the railway line, had been cleared and they hope to continue removing scrub from the area this summer. The group has a social media page that can be found under the name of Soroba Community Centre.

Exchange pupils helped by Rotary cash

ROTARY club members present a cheque to support exchange students taking part in an annual Oban High School trip.

Oban Rotary President Graham Fraser presented a cheque for £500 towards the cost of the project.

Oban Rotary Club has contributed financially to the Laurinburg project since its inception and as part of the events laid on for the Laurinburg students, the club hosts a lunch for the students and their Oban counterparts which enhances the fellowship enjoyed by everyone concerned.

This year will be the 25th

anniversary of the Laurinburg Exchange which involves students from Oban High School hosting fellow students from Laurinburg, in North Carolina, USA.

The students from America come to Oban in June for a fortnight and are housed by students' families and through participating in a variety of pre-arranged local activities they enjoy what is sometimes a life-changing experience in terms of broadening their education.

The exchange is reciprocated later in the year when the Oban students fly out to stay with their Laurinburg counterparts.



When the clocks go forward on Sunday 26th March, remember to reset your heating programmer too Otherwise you could be paying too much

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Oban Unsigned

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE OBAN TIMES AND OBAN LIVE

The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

OBANLIVE

With the abundance of local talent right here on our doorstep, Oban Live and The Oban Times, the event's media partner, have teamed up to give one local band or artist the chance to perform at Oban Live 2017. The winner will join an impressive list of artists from trad-stars Skerryvore and Skipinnish to 80s legends Hue And Cry.

Performing to thousands at Argyll's biggest live music event, taking place at Mossfield Stadium, Oban, on Saturday June 3, the winning act will get their very own half-hour slot to showcase their talents. Last year's event attracted 7,800 visitors to the two-day concert. As well as benefiting from the on-stage exposure, publicity in The Oban Times newspaper, and on The Oban Times and Oban Live websites and social media pages, the winner will also receive tickets to Oban Live on Friday June 2, VIP and backstage access on Saturday June 3, and a merchandise goody bag.

HOW TO APPLY

Carefully read through the terms and conditions below and then head over to www.obantimes.co.uk/obanunsigned where you can apply online. You will be asked to supply the following:

- A web link to your music that is publicly available so we can download and listen, for example Sound Cloud.
- A web link to any film footage you may have
- A photograph of the artist (s)
- Artist logo (if you have one)
- A short description of the artist or band and why you believe you should win (around 250 words).

Applications must be received by noon, Monday April 3, 2017.

SHORTLIST

All entries will be handed over to a panel of judges, including independent judges from local institutions and a representative from Oban Live and The Oban Times. The panel will select a shortlist of entrants to be put forward for a public vote.

Easter Guide

What are you planning for the Easter holidays? From daycations to egg hunts, from festivals to luxury weekends, you are spoiled for choice! Here are just a few of our favourite ideas:

LOOKING FOR ROMANCE THIS HOLIDAY?

Treat yourself to a luxury weekend at one of the area's fine hotels or inns. Some offer packages that include indulgences such dinner each evening, a full Scottish breakfast and a bottle of Champagne on arrival.

CELEBRATE AT FÈIS LATHARNA'S EASTER FEIS

Held at the Oban Primary Campus April 3-7, an annual festival of traditional music, dance, Gaelic song and drama for young people, aged eight to 18. www.feislatharna.org.

TAKE A DAYCATION!

There are so many nooks and crannies to explore around Argyll, and with the rhododendrons in bloom, this is a perfect time to get out and about. Visit one of our National Trust for Scotland gardens, or take the family for a walk at one of the fantastic Forestry Commission trails, such as Fearnach, Sutherland's Grove or Beinn Lora.

OBAK'S BIGGEST CHOCOLATE EASTER EGG HUNT

Hop along to Oban's biggest chocolate Easter egg hunt at the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary in Barcaldine Sunday April 16, featuring hundreds of eggs hidden around the facility. The hunt begins at 12.30pm and is included in the cost of regular admission on the day. www.visitsealife.com/oban.

CADBURY EGG HUNT

Cadbury Egg Hunt at Arduaine Garden will be held April 14-17 from 10am to 4.30pm each day. Collect your hunt map, follow the clues, solve the puzzle and claim your chocolatey reward! Call 01852 200366.



Since its origins, Easter has been a time of celebration and feasting, and many traditional Easter games and customs developed, such as egg rolling, egg tapping, pace egging and egg decorating.

GREAT BRITAIN

Marshmallow bunnies and chocolate eggs in an Easter basket. In some cultures rabbits, which represent fertility, are a symbol of Easter.

Throughout the English-speaking world, many Easter traditions are similar with only minor differences.

For example, Saturday is traditionally spent decorating Easter eggs and hunting for them with children on Sunday morning, by which time they have been mysteriously hidden all over the house and garden. Other traditions involve parents telling their children that eggs and other treats, such as chocolate eggs, rabbits, or marshmallow chicks (Peeps), have been delivered by the Easter Bunny in an Easter basket, which children find waiting for them when they wake up.

Families observe the religious aspects of Easter by attending Sunday Mass or services in the morning and then participating in a feast or party in the afternoon. Some families have a traditional Sunday roast, often of either roast lamb or ham.

Easter breads such as Simnel cake, a fruit cake with 11 marzipan balls representing the 11 faithful apostles, or nut breads such as potica are traditionally served. Hot cross buns, spiced buns with a cross on top, are traditionally associated with Good Friday, but today are often eaten well before and after the celebration.

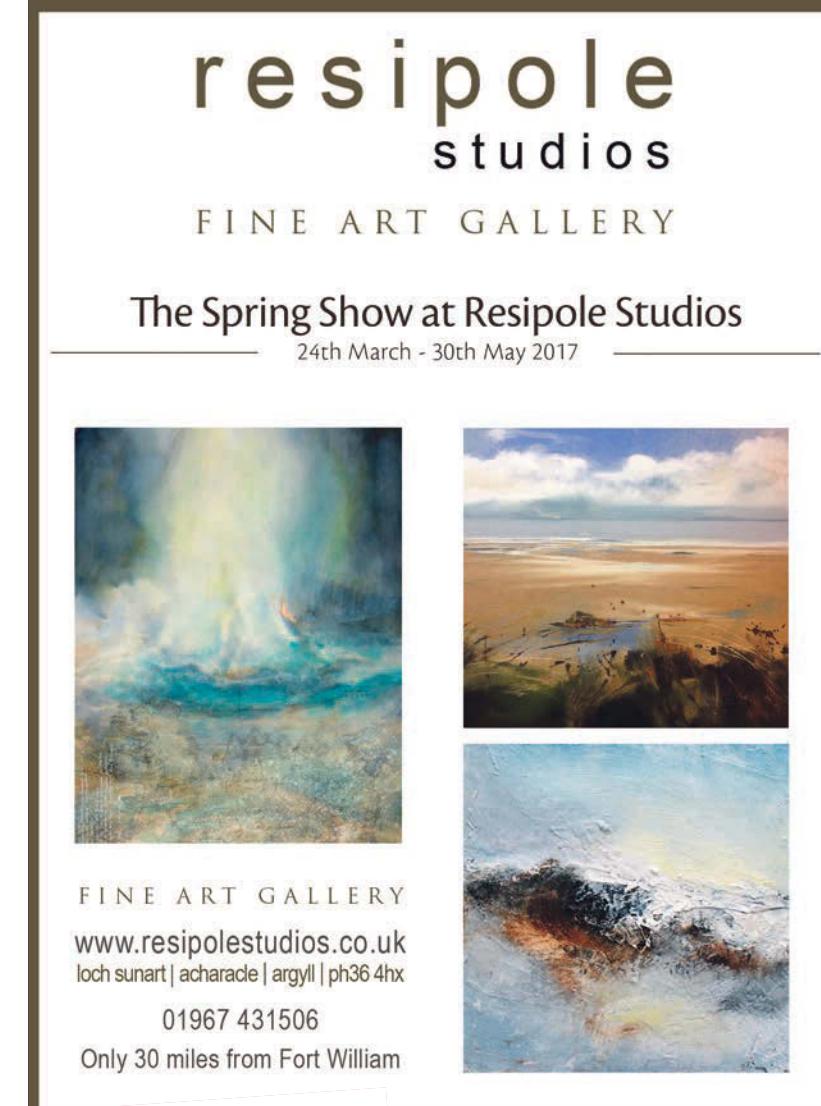
In Scotland, the north of England, and Northern Ireland, the traditions of rolling decorated eggs down steep hills and pace egging can still be seen. Pace comes from the Latin Pacha which means Easter.

NORTH AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

In Louisiana, USA, egg tapping is known as egg knocking. Marksville, Louisiana claims to host the oldest egg-knocking competition in the US, dating back to the 1950s. Competitors pair up on the steps of the courthouse on Easter Sunday and knock the tips of two eggs together.

If the shell of your egg cracks you have to forfeit it, a process that continues until just one egg remains.

In the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda, historically famous for growing and exporting the Easter lily, the most notable feature of the Easter celebration is the flying of kites to symbolize Christ's ascent.



CHURCH SERVICES

VISITATION AT TAYNUILT

Taynuilt
Good Friday Service 3pm
Saturday Easter Vigil 9.30am
Sunday Mass 11am

Dalmally
Sunday Mass 9am

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Fort William
Holy Thursday Night 7pm
Mass of the Lords Supper
Good Friday Service 3pm
Easter Vigil 8.30pm
Easter Sunday Morning Mass 10.30am

Oban Congregational Church

A Celebration Of Easter
+++
Maunday Thursday Communion 6.30pm
Good Friday Church Open for Prayer and Meditation from 2-4pm
Easter Sunrise Service At Pulpit Hill, all welcome, 8am followed by breakfast in the Church Hall
All age Morning Service 11am
Easter Monday coffee morning between 10.30am-12.30pm

St Columba's Cathedral

Corran Esplanade
Oban, OBAN PA34 5AB
Tel: 01631 562123

f
Holy Thursday 7pm
Good Friday 3pm
Easter Saturday Vigil 8pm
Easter Sunday Mass 10.30am

Kilmore and Oban Holy Week and Easter Services

Monday 10th to Thursday 13th

Holy Week Worship 7.30pm

Sunday 16th April 9.45am

Easter Breakfast and Egg-Rolling

10.30am Easter All-Age Celebration

**More info at:
obancofs@btinternet.com
www.obanchurch.com
01631 562405**

Screen Machine

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Coll Thu 23 - Fri 24 March
Tobermory Sat 25 - Mon 27 March
Bunessan Tue 28 March

The Lego Batman Movie (U) 104 mins
"The kids are gonna love it" Rolling Stone 23/03 at 5.30pm, 26/03 at 2pm

La La Land (12A) 128 mins
Winner of six Oscars including Best Actress. "You'll leave with a tear in your eye and a song in your heart" Telegraph 23/03 at 8.30pm, 25/03 at 8.30pm, 27/03 at 8.30pm, 28/03 at 5.30pm

The Eagle Huntress (U) 87 mins
Spellbinding documentary. Mongolian with English narration and subtitles. "entertaining slice of real-life inspirational adventure should appeal to family audiences" Variety 24/03 at 5.30pm

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story (12A) 133 mins
Rollicking Star Wars spin-off. "Loads of action, great effects, good comic relief" Hollywood Reporter 24/03 at 8.30pm, 26/03 at 5.30pm

T2 Trainspotting (18) 117 mins
"a vibrant and welcome reunion" Observer 26/03 at 8.30pm

Moana (PG) 113 mins
"crowd-pleasing oceanic musical" Empire 27/03 at 5.30pm

Book now at: www.screenmachine.co.uk. Tickets also at the cinema 30 mins before screenings. Cash only, no cards. £7.50 Adults and £5.50 Concessions

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Bodach

This week from *The Oban Times'* resident Bodach (Gaelic: old man and, by experience, often a storyteller)

Songs, rockets and Gigha gents in Saskatoon

ISLAND social life in the early 20th century revolved around the ceilidh house, 'danns an rathaid' (dancing in the road) and the luadh (pronounced 'loo-ugh'); the finishing, fulling or waulking the homemade tweed after the wool had been woven and taken from the loom in crofters' homes.

The gathering of six to 14 women sang lustily to lighten the task, as they pummeled the cloth back and forth in unison, thump, thump, thump, on a door-like 'cleith'. The cloth was sewn into a loop and soaked in warm, soapy water, stale urine with melted dog-fish livers to remove oil and dirt as well as soften and shrink the fabric.

The rhythmic waulking songs, known as orain luaidh ('or-in loo-ie'), were led by the best singer, like a shantyman on a ship, and the rest came in on the chorus while the leader took a breath. After nine songs, the cloth ought to be ready, noticeably softer, thicker and more tightly woven.

The ancient tradition, now coldly and clinically carried out in commercial finishing mills, survived long into the 20th century in the Hebrides and was sufficiently strong in 1938 to merit a Luadh Competition at the London Mod.

The Oban Times reported the prizewinners on April 2: Effie MacSkill from Harris, Agnes Gillies from Ness and Jessie MacSween, Marsali MacLeod, Mary Mackay and Joey MacSween from The Battery, Stornoway. The ladies were 'televised' in a BBC Television programme, explaining the waulking and the process of handmade Harris tweed and sang a Hebridean weaving song. By the late 1940s, the finishing of Harris Tweed was being taken over by the mills, and the last domestic waulkings took place in the 1950s.

The great Gaelic folklorist Alexander Carmichael from Lismore collected in his *Carmina Gadelica* a waulking song from St Kilda. Music opens one window onto the strange, vanished way of life on St Kilda, Britain's lost world, from the rowing of boats in surging seas to tales of exile. One Herald reporter, chronicling the island's evacuation on August 29-30,



First Prize Winners of the Luadh Competition at the London Mod

Left to right: Effie MacSkill, Harris; Agnes Gillies, Ness; Jessie MacSween, Marsali MacLeod, Mary Mackay and Joey MacSween, all of The Battery, Stornoway.

The team were televised in the BBC Television Programme from Alexandra Palace. James C MacPherson, the Mod Medallist, explained the Waulking and the process of Hand Made Harris Tweed, and sang a Hebridean Weaving Song. The team is expected to give again a



A Campbell and a MacDonald sit in harmony watching the Highland Games at Saskatoon in Canada, far from their island birthplace off the mainland of Argyll. They are Mr Duncan Campbell, retired postman, and Mr Angus MacDonald, retired employee of the Saskatoon Electrical Department, who were both born and brought up in the island of Gigha.



The prizewinning women of the Luadh Competition at the London Mod; A Campbell and a MacDonald sit together watching the Highland Games in Saskatoon, Canada; and A Company 1st Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in 1958.

1930, recorded a St Kildan cottage in which men in wet blue fisher jerseys and patched trousers sat steaming in the warmth. 'We wait for a sail, like Robinson Crusoe,' he said.

'A stock pot sat by the open fire-place. It contained one household supper of salted mutton, a staple dish, with porridge, syrup, baked scones, dried ling and the exclusive dishes of the islanders - salted fulmar and roasted puffin, the food of a race of expert fowlers. In a corner rested a broom of

gannet's wings used for sweeping the stone floor.

'The transplantation from the island, with its distinctive life and habits, to the routinized mainland will be salutary. No longer will turfs be cut on the Mullack Mhor to be stored in drystone cleits. No more will barefooted St Kildans descend fearlessly that dreaded 1,000ft fall of Conachair to the frothy sea far below in search of the fulmar, that skunk of birds whose flesh, oil and feathers once sustained life.'

Following the evacuation, *The Oban Times*, on March 22, 1958, reported a statement from the War Office on the use of St Kilda. Winston Churchill's son-in-law, Christopher Soames, said the island would be used as an observation post for the guided weapons firing range in the Hebrides.

'Everything possible would be done to make life agreeable for the men,' Mr Soames said, including TV reception from Northern Ireland.

The film *Rockets Galore*, the

sequel to Sir Compton MacKenzie's classic comedy *Whisky Galore*, began filming on Barra in 1958, *The Oban Times* reported on April 5 - 'but nobody is going to get hurt', it added. 'There will be nothing more lethal than a film camera.'

Events of note included the Irish actor Noel Purcell shaving off his beard for the important role of the island priest. The stars of the picture, Jean Carson and Donald Sinden, flew from Pinewood Studios to Renfrew and then by heron aircraft to Barra. Producer Basil Deardon followed by car, and then steamer from Oban, but it is a mystery how the remainder of the cast and 60 technicians reached the island.

On July 7 last year, *The Oban Times* published an article on the great Ballachulish piper Willie Lawrie of the 8th Argylls, who composed the retreat march *The Battle of the Somme*, played on the battle's centenary at the Thiepval Memorial in 2016.

Amongst the photographs, we mistakenly printed one depicting A Company 1st Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, taken in Cyprus in 1958, for which we apologise, and are delighted to set the record straight.

We are further informed this photograph, printed again here, contains at least six Argyllshire boys on two years' national service. They include Tom MacGeachy from Campbeltown, Sandy Munro from Lochgilphead, Colin MacIver from Mull, John Reid from Dunoon, Donald McCuish from Oban and George Ferguson from Barcaldine. The officer in charge was called 'Mad Mitch'.

Finally, far away from conflict, in a photo caption from March 22 1958, *The Oban Times* showed: 'A Campbell and a MacDonald sitting in harmony watching the Highland Games in Saskatoon in Canada, far from their island birthplace off the mainland of Argyll. They are Mr Duncan Campbell, retired postman, and Mr Angus MacDonald, retired employee of the Saskatoon Electrical Department, who were both born and brought up on the island of Gigha.'

MORVERN lines

Distance learning in Argyll

THERE must be quite a number of men and women still living within *The Oban Times'* distribution area whose secondary education came through Argyll's unique Correspondence Tuition course.

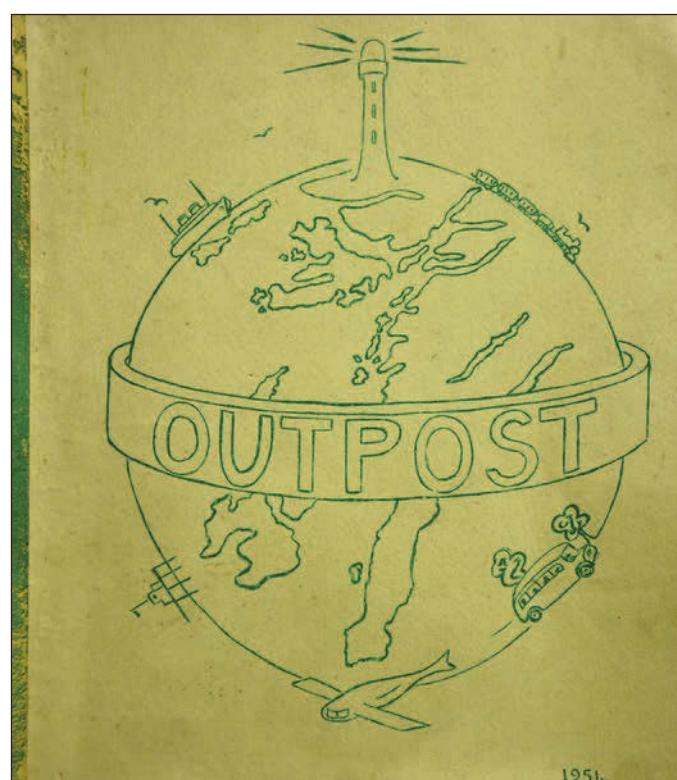
The popular scheme, known affectionately as the 'CT' by everyone who participated in it, was launched in 1939 following the outbreak of the Second World War.

It was the brainchild of Colin M MacDonald, MA, DLitt, who, as well as being director of education for Argyll, was a brilliant author and academic whose contribution to the written history of his native land has yet to be fully appreciated.

The 'CT' was for children who lived far away from any secondary school who would not, or could not, leave home under current circumstances. How it worked in general was that pupils attended the nearest primary school where they were supervised by the teacher who received and returned the regular fortnightly lessons that arrived by post from a team of five teachers in Dunoon.

The lessons covered English, geography, history, arithmetic, algebra, biology and geometry - housecraft for the girls. Pupils successfully completing the three-year course received a certificate. The only downside was that, for obvious reasons, foreign languages and chemistry could not be taught.

However, if a pupil was inter-



Can anyone shed light on when *The Outpost* stopped printing?

ested and the primary teacher was willing to help, which most were, especially in remote schools, extra curriculum was to be had which more than offset the disadvantages of distance learning at that time. Expressing oneself properly and correctly in writing, which is so lamentably lacking these days, was encouraged and for many pupils this was often a stepping stone to higher education in later life.

In 1950, a distinctive green and yellow magazine called *The Outpost* was despatched from

Dunoon at the end of every session to each pupil who had contributed something to it during the year.

Produced on a basic stencil duplicator and running to around 24 pages, *The Outpost* carried a wide range of sketches, poems, letters, old tales - some in Gaelic - puzzles, jokes and conundrums, menus and crosswords.

Here are a few names and some examples from the 1954 issue: Our School, Richard MacNab, Duisky; Our Coronation Plot, Donald McNaughton,

Strontian; Outstanding Events in 1953, Philip Robertson, North Luing; Spring, Hugh MacPhee, Acharacle; An Island Adventure, Alastair Brown, Luing; My Money, Margaret Clark, Dalavich; From the Island of Ulva, Margaret Donn, Ulva Ferry; Ardlussa Youth Club, Christine MacInnes, Ardlussa (Jura); The Age of Speed, Anne MacMaster, Glenetive; Scotch Convoy, Lily Margaret MacNeill, Gigha; My Little Kitten, Annie McDougall, Kilchattan; A Hurricane in the Hebrides, Duncan Logan, Kilchoan; Coll, Margaret Kennedy, Arnigour; It's Spring Again, John Boyd, Lochgilphead; The Friendly Dragon, Mary MacQuarrie, Luing; A daring feat, Alasdair MacLean, Dervaig; Castle Tirrim, Allan MacColl, Acharacle. Early Jura Sailor, Norman MacDonald, Small Isles; A Day at the Island of Staffa, Hugh Russell, Ulva Ferry; The Eagles, Duncan MacMaster, Glenetive; A Fright, Ewen Maclean, Lettermore; Wishing, Jeanette Watters, Glenhurich; Rats, Margaret Cameron, Kilchoan; Jokes, [Boasting explorer] 'I returned from hunting one day and as I was entering my house I came face to face with a most horrible looking animal. Now what do you think I did?' [Bored Listener] 'Threw away the mirror?' [Prison Visitor] 'Don't any of your relatives come to see you?' [Prisoner] 'They don't need to; they are all here.' Riddles [Man] 'Don't you see that there is no fishing sign here?' [Wee Jim] 'But I'm not fishing, I'm only drowning a

worm.' 'What did the powdered egg say to the battleship? - 'You can't shell me.', Farquhar MacInnes, Mornish; Leum a' Ghille Riabhaich, James MacKinnon, Arnigour; Recipe for Swiss Rolls and Cream Horns, Donal McNeill, Gigha; The Enchanted Bottle, Margaret Cameron, Kilchoan; The [Wreck] of the Angela, Hugh Kennedy, Arnigour; The Postman, Ann Shepherd, Dalavich; Bedtime Stories, [There was a young lady named Wemyss whom it semys, was troubled with dremys. She would wake in the night and, in a terrible fright, shake the beymess of the house with her screymess, James McGugan, Lochgilphead].

Writing in the 1955 issue, Mr A J Henderson, assistant director of education, said: '*Outpost* is aptly named, being as it is the magazine of a school housed, not in one building, but in a series of wee schools - those outposts of learning scattered throughout the county. As the Correspondence Tuition pupils turn over these pages, I would like to think that they will derive from them a sense of belonging, a sense of companionship one with another, and a feeling that they are linked by strong though invisible bonds with each other and their teachers.'

As I have no idea when the CT course and *The Outpost* came to an end, I would be grateful to any reader for the answers to these questions and any further information on this fascinating piece of Argyll's unique social history.

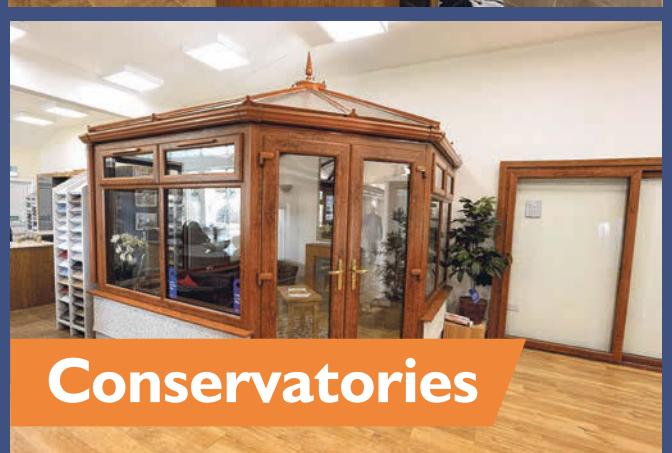
Iain Thorner
iain.thorner@btinternet.com

Mike and Lisa have split up...she's browsing while he's paying



I didn't realise Cairngorm did so much!

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Guess I'd better get comfy. Hey Lisa, we're in the paper!

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Viewpoint



Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

This week, The Oban Times, together with Oban Live, launches Oban Unsigned.

Through this exciting new competition, Oban bands and musicians are being offered the chance to play on the main stage during a prime slot on Saturday afternoon at the town's biggest gig – Oban Live, which will take place the first weekend in June.

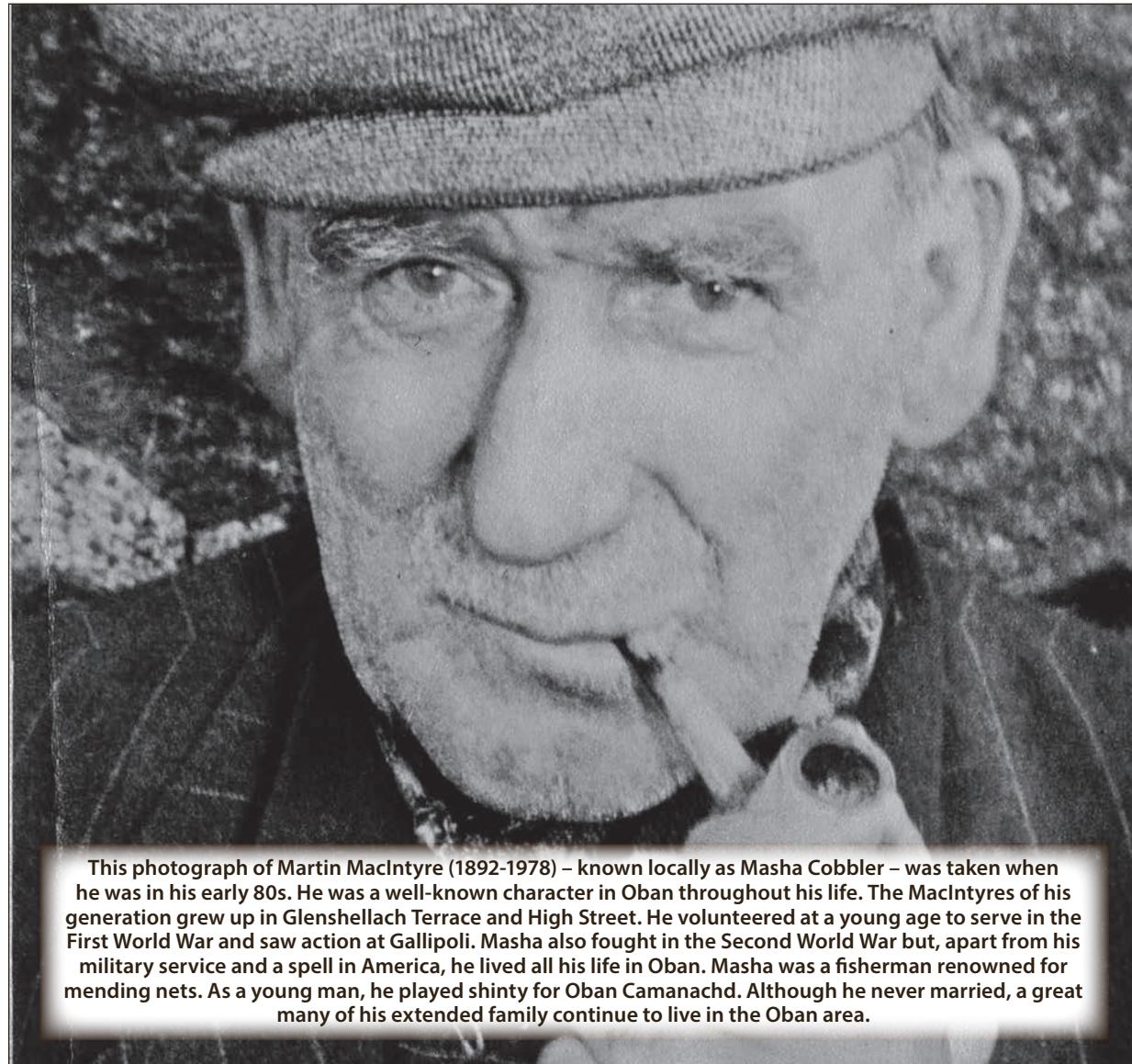
Following last year's event, many people got in touch to say they would love to hear more local acts play at the event. And so The Oban Times and Oban Live listened.

With the abundance of local talent on our doorstep, it is hoped we will be inundated with applications from local musicians and members of the judging panel are excited at the prospect of listening to all your audio and video clips.

So what are you waiting for? This is your chance to get your music out to a wide audience – last year's Oban Live event attracted 7,800 visitors to the two-day concert – and who knows where your music career can go from there. Glastonbury anyone?

Turn to page 7 for full details of how you can enter.

Days gone by – Martin MacIntyre



This photograph of Martin MacIntyre (1892-1978) – known locally as Masha Cobbler – was taken when he was in his early 80s. He was a well-known character in Oban throughout his life. The MacIntyres of his generation grew up in Glenshealach Terrace and High Street. He volunteered at a young age to serve in the First World War and saw action at Gallipoli. Masha also fought in the Second World War but, apart from his military service and a spell in America, he lived all his life in Oban. Masha was a fisherman renowned for mending nets. As a young man, he played shinty for Oban Camanachd. Although he never married, a great many of his extended family continue to live in the Oban area.

Macphail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk

I AM not a great believer in geographical barriers representing inter-human barriers, or indeed geographical links automatically forging human bonds.

In the melting pot of the world, this is one of most complex areas of our existence and throughout history it has been one of the most common causes of both connection and conflict.

From the individual, to the family, to the village, to the island or town, to the city, to the county, to the country and to the continent there are individuals interacting with other individuals that make the potential of different outcomes at each stage exponentially numerous and therefore impossible to generalise.

However, regardless of all that, and in slight contrast to my opening sentence, there are certain very positive links, cultural connections and feelings of fellowship between some parts of the world that exist and can be enjoyed without exclusion of, or prejudice against others.

I can assure readers this is not a political piece born from the debates of last week but merely from the excitement that this weekend I am

going on a stag weekend to Donegal in Ireland. Scotland has long held strong links with Ireland, and Argyll and the Islands especially have ancient connections across the Irish Sea that although less prevalent now are still apparent in the character of the people on both sides of that sea.

With the changing nature of travel and trade away from small vessels on sea-routes to large ferries and land routes the day-to-day links of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with Ireland are more limited now than at any time in our recent history.

The upheaval and complexities of religion and politics have no doubt also affected these links but transcending these differences is the fact that the Gaels of Ireland and the Gaels of Scotland are essentially the same people.

I remember on my first trip Ireland about 15 years ago, flying to Dublin, on to Galway, then out to the rural extremities of Connemara and at all stages of the journey feeling like we were on one big Hebridean Island.

The similarities in humour, in welcome, in hospitality and character

were astounding. The links between both populations were very obvious and the sense of feeling at home was very powerful.

Although separated for many hundreds of years, the cultures still hold these strong links of foundation and have also experienced similar challenges. The cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic oppression suffered by Gaels on both sides of the Irish Sea have no doubt added to the commonalities and affinity between both populations.

Since first receiving a copy of Fergie MacDonald's tape, There's Irish in the Islands, when I was 11 years old, I have been aware of our shared musical culture.

On Friday, when a bus load of 'stag-trippers' from Tiree, Mull, Vatersay, Barra, Islay, Oban and elsewhere arrive in Donegal bearing accordions, bagpipes, tin whistles, fiddles and singing songs, we hope to do our bit to rekindle these ancient links of shared heritage.

The shared links in whisky distillation may also be a relevant to proceedings!



is why we have democracy. Definition of hypocrisy? Asking people to split a union because you're upset they chose to split a union.

Tim Leahy said: A second independence referendum is needed because the situation has changed. The first result was too close for a lifetime decision, too many promises were made, which just haven't happened. Scotland voted to stay in the EU and its position is being ignored by Westminster. For these reasons alone there should be a second referendum. It doesn't mean Scotland should automatically be independent, just that Scottish people should have their voices heard!

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

Will referendum be Sturgeon's undoing?

Sir,

Ever since Nicola Sturgeon became First Minister at Holyrood, she has been utterly obsessed with one thing only: independence.

A dreamy craving to be separated from the UK is much more important, and a greater priority, to her than the 1,001 despairing problems with Scotland's NHS, economy and education. She's not interested, and never has been, in the important 'bread and butter' issues that affect so many people in Scotland, over which they struggle with every day.

Having lost at the ballot box in 2014, she is now daring to impose yet another independence referendum on the people of Scotland. Foolishly thinking they made the wrong choice then, she just can't accept reality. Like a wee girl having uncontrollable tantrums in the school playground, the First Minister has played the part well, daily, over the past three years because she didn't get what she, and her Holyrood crew, desperately coveted.

Stubbornly, and bitterly, refusing to accept that the UK voted to leave the EU, she now seeks revenge by loading her 'independence rifle' – with Brexit bullets – ready to fire at everyone on the other side of Hadrian's Wall. Honestly, this woman seriously needs to go and lie down in a darkened room and get quick and urgent help for the good and sake of Scotland, the nation she is supposed to govern.

There are many reasons we don't want or need independence. For the moment, I'll only make a brief reference to two. One of the fundamental reasons for Scotland to remain a part of the 300-year-old union is an important economic one, which cannot be lightly ignored by any sane person.

Even though our block grant has been cut by Westminster, it still remains a fact, to the annoyance of many English MPs, that we get more per head in public services spending than England. This is reality, whether we like it or not. To the penny, £10,536 is spent each year on people here in Scotland, which is £1,460 more than the UK average of £9,076.

If anyone is fooled into thinking that 'local oil' tax revenues will maintain this spend, they better think again.

In the year 2011/12, Scotland's North Sea oil was doing so well that the tax revenues were worth in excess of £9 billion to the economy. By the year 2015/16, the last time that the figures were assessed, that revenue had been virtually wiped out by the global fall in the price of oil. The revenue had gone from £9 billion to a mere £60 million.

Leading up to the 2014 referendum, we were told that an independent Scotland would be wholly reliant on oil revenues to resolve every foreseeable problem that goes along with governing ourselves.

Which planet are they on? It is high

time Nicola Sturgeon, and everyone who is obsessed with independence, woke up. Last time it saw the demise of the then First Minister Alex Salmond. Maybe Nicola Sturgeon has done us a great favour in calling for another referendum so that hopefully she too might disappear, forever, from Scottish politics.

Donald J Morrison
Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness.

Important questions for MSP to answer

Sir,

I am pleased to see that, after a decade of fence-sitting and mixed messages, Alasdair Allan MSP has finally decided he is in favour of an interconnector and, presumably, the scale of power generation which would justify it.

Mr Allan will be aware that this project would cost at least £600 million and that this very significant funding would come from consumers throughout the United Kingdom.

Can he therefore answer two straightforward questions?

Does Mr Allan believe the interconnector is more or less likely to be built if his party calls for a second independence referendum with the aim of breaking up the United Kingdom into separate states, each with its own economic priorities? And why, in these circumstances, would it be reasonable to expect consumers in London to fund an interconnector for Lewis?

I hope Mr Allan feels competent to answer these questions in person. Failure to do so will be open to the obvious interpretation.

Ada H Campbell,
Druim Dubh, Paibesgarry,
Isle of North Uist.

Bus timetables are lacking connection

Sir,

I am writing in support of all the people you represented in your story in the paper of March 9 on bus services in Lochaber. I am sure each person can detail their own problems with their routes.

I was going to write to you regards the bus service to Raigmore Hospital so now support fully Jan MacLugash's point about Raigmore.

I recently had an appointment at Raigmore at 5pm. I eventually got this time changed. Visits to Belford Hospital informed me I could not get transport if a bus service could take me there.

I had to leave Fort William early in the morning. I watched a couple of NHS transport vehicles pass the bus - empty.

I arrived in Inverness main bus station. I was very surprised there was no bus to Raigmore and eventually, after asking people, I found a bus stop for Raigmore about half a mile away but had to walk down various streets, asking passers by as I did so.

A MORTLEY,

Chairman FOCB, Calgary, Mull.

Ailean Caimbeul

an Eden Court aig Gàidheil a bhith neach a thug taic len cuid lathairachd aig An Taigh-Cèiliadh, cuirm bhliadhnaill Chomann Gàidhlig

Inbhir Nis, a ghabh àite aig Taigh-cluiche Eden Court Dìrhoine seo chaidh. 'S e fior thoileachas a bh' ann uimhir de mhòladh a chluinnint air taghadh eile de shàr sheinneadair agus luchd-cùilidh na Gàidhealtachd, agus gun teagamh rinneadh fior dheagh dheasachadh air a' chuirn.

Tha e glè fhurasta dha Gàidheil agus luchd-taice na Gàidhlig an cuid misneachd a chall ann a saoghal a' cho bheatha a' déanamh tairéir air cànán is a' dualchas, agus tha cuid de na tha' nochtadh ann am piapair-ean-naidheachd agus irisean tamaileachd dà-rìribh. Cha ghabh àineadh gum bheil na h-iomsaighean goirt sin a' torta buidh air cleachadh agus follaiseachd na Gàidhlig aig àm far am bheil i a' stri airson urachadh feadh na dùthcha agus gu sönraichte anns na coimheasachdan san robh i uair na priomh meadhan conaltraidh.

Nach math mar sin gum bheil cothroman den t-seòrsa seo a bha

an phriomh amas aig A' Chomann Ghàidhealach a h-uile cothrom a ghabhail an sin gus an cànán fhoillseachadh is a thogail.

Feasgar an-earran (Disathairne) fao daidh sibh taic a chur ri Mòd Nàiseanta 2017 ann an Loch Abar le tighinn gu Cèiliadh nan Sgitheanach aig Taigh-òsta a' Chinn an Iar (West End) anns a' Ghearsasan far am bithear a' togail airgead dhan Mhòd.

Chun 17 den Chèitean fao daidh sibh beachd a thoir air dreach den treas Plana-Nàiseanta Gàidhlig agus cui ridh Bòrd na Gàidhlig meas air uidh nain cuij obrach, agus luach air bhuir cùl bheachdan

ALL OF us involved in Inverness Gaelic Society's annual showcase Ceilidh House concert at Eden Court Theatre last Saturday have been hugely pleased by audience appreciation. You can hear some of the musicians performing at the Skye Ceilidh in Fort William's West End Hotel on Saturday with proceeds going to National Mòd Locaber 2017.

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

Social media

With Harbour Bowl in the middle of Shore Street being demolished to make way for a new hotel, people had plenty to say about the expected traffic disruptions...

Tom Hayward said: Get used to it. Once the hotel starts operating that's another 80 plus cars emptying into the roundabout, sometimes at the same time as a ferry.

While Ken Johnston added: It's been an eyesore for too long. Yeah, a bit of short term pain but this is a welcome addition. Bottom line is existing hoteliers will have to up their standards at a more affordable price to compete.

Press policy

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

And Andrew Sandilands had a few things to say about our deputy editor and columnist!: I wish that Martin Laing (whoever he is) would stop broadcasting his opinions as they can be rather irritating.

As expected our question 'Is a second independence referendum the right thing for Scotland?' had people commenting...

Tony Garvey said: It's not. Scotland voted against independence and as part of Great Britain voted for Brexit. Now that a minority did not get the results they wanted they are sulking. Suck it up, that

is why we have democracy. Definition of hypocrisy? Asking people to split a union because you're upset they chose to split a union.

Tim Leahy said: A second independence referendum is needed because the situation has changed. The first result was too close for a lifetime decision, too many promises were made, which just haven't happened. Scotland voted to stay in the EU and its position is being ignored by Westminster. For these reasons alone there should be a second referendum. It doesn't mean Scotland should automatically be independent, just that Scottish people should have their voices heard!

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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.

OUTDOORS

TO ADVERTISE IN OUR OUTDOORS SECTION PLEASE CALL OUR SALES TEAM ON 01631 568000

WATT on the Wild Side

Glen Nant – one of nature's wonders

TAKE an enchanting walk through one of our national nature reserve as the path winds through the trees.

Follow the ants for a richly varied trail through atmospheric old oakwoods and thriving new woodland, rich in history and wildlife or gently stroll through the coppiced hazel woods to a quiet picnic area by the River Nant.

Glen Nant, one of the nation's many forests managed by Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES), is a woodland with a long history of human influence.

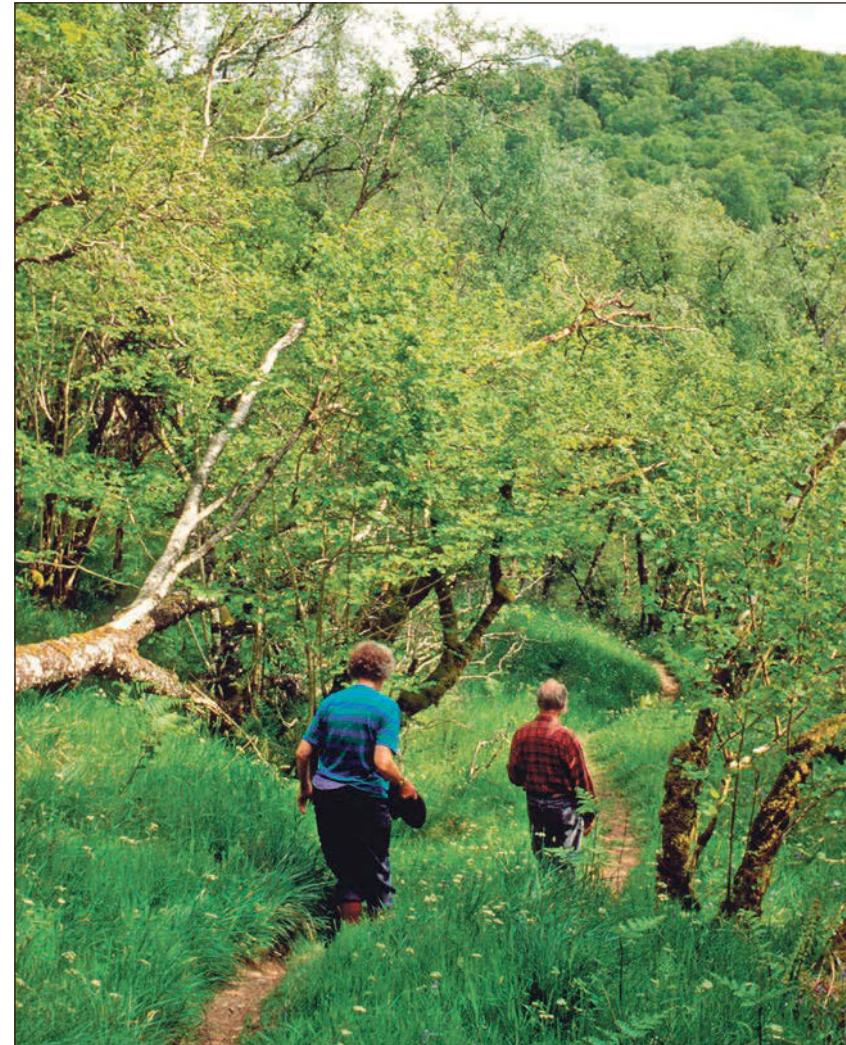
More than 150 archaeological sites have been recorded in the woods and many are charcoal hearths from the era of Bonawe Furnace in nearby Taynuilt. At that time, the trees were harvested to generate wood for shipbuilding and to make charcoal which was then utilised at the furnace to produce iron for industrial use. The furnace even produced cannonballs used during the Napoleonic War.

Glen Nant is a great place to go and stretch the legs on two way-marked walking trails. I chose the popular Ant Trail, a two-mile track which follows narrow gravel paths with some uneven sections.

It has some long, steep slopes and several sets of rough steps. There are some exposed tree roots and potentially wet sections and it includes some narrow bridges ... but it's well worth the effort.

I climbed up the stone steps off the forest road and immediately entered another world. The trees were dripping with moss and lichens and the only sounds were the burn and the birds. These lush Atlantic oakwoods are a patchwork of oak and birch, with hazel, ash, rowan, holly and willow distributed throughout.

This special place is internationally important, not only for its impressive



Glen Nant is internationally important for its flora and fauna.

trees, but also for the copious quantities of non-flowering plants. The peaty ground is home to blueberry, heather, bluebell, wood sorrel and wild honeysuckle. There are also areas of lime-rich soil with primrose, wild garlic and wood anemone in abundance.

There are some interesting snippets of information on the way round the trail which help you to spot features of

interest, including the ant nests which are built from woodland debris and given a thatch of tiny twigs. The nests themselves can rise to two metres tall.

You can also listen for warblers, redstarts and woodpeckers, and watch tits, jays and treecreepers. Sunny glades attract many butterflies and moths, and you may see signs of deer, pine marten and red squirrels.

It was a cool day when I was there but I was glad of the breeze by the time I got to the top of the hill where I was rewarded with a phenomenal vista of Ben Cruachan. There were also some lovely views of the burn as I dawdled over the bridges at the far end of the loop.

As I started walking back down the forest road, I looked forward to the prospect of a flask of coffee at the picnic table on the Riverbank Trail. The Riverbank Trail is a much shorter, quarter of a mile walk and is on a firm gravel surface along its entire length.

Walking down the road, I looked across at the areas where the conifers have been cut down. These might look a bit messy just now but they're being managed to encourage the natural regrowth of the broadleaf species.

There is a lot of heather growing on these sites so visit again in September when they are a lovely shade of purple.

In the past, Glen Nant was a busy industrial site with hundreds of people working in the forests – a very different scene to the tranquillity of the woods today.

For further information, please visit www.scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/glen-nant.

Helen Watt is Communities, Recreation and Tourism Manager for the Forestry Commission Scotland in Oban.

Peatland conservation boost from distillery

MORE than 700 acres of peatlands on Islay are to be restored and conserved under a new partnership between Lagavulin Distillery and RSPB Scotland.

RSPB is partnering Lagavulin Scotch whisky as part of the distillery's 200th anniversary legacy to carry out conservation on large areas of peatland on the island.

Georgie Crawford, Lagavulin distillery manager, said: 'We can't make the distinctive character of Lagavulin, which people around the world have been enjoying for 200 years, without using peat.'

'We are working to be as sustainable as we possibly can in our peat use to ensure we can continue to make Lagavulin for the next 200 years.'

'We recognise that peatland is a vital part of Islay's eco-system and we are delighted to be working with RSPB Scotland to restore and conserve these areas with all the benefits that will bring to wildlife diversity, which in turn adds another element to Islay's rich tapestry for locals and visitors alike.'

Lloyd Austin, head of conservation policy at RSPB Scotland, added: 'RSPB Scotland is very pleased to be working with Lagavulin to restore and enhance Islay's iconic peatlands.'

'This is an important contribution from the whisky industry towards meeting Scottish Government targets for restoring peatlands and ensuring they continue to provide benefits for

biodiversity, carbon and people.' Since it was founded in 1816, Lagavulin Distillery has been making the definitive single malt Scotch whisky through the traditional method of burning peat to dry the malted barley for distilling, imparting the distinctive, pungent smoky flavour which has made Islay whiskies renowned and loved all over the world.

In recognition of the vital role of peatlands in creating Islay's unique landscape and heritage, Lagavulin is investing £60,000 of its legacy fund to help RSPB Scotland to enhance and protect large areas of peat for future generations.

Peatlands are colourful wetlands that support an array of rare plants, unusual insects, and birds such as Scotland's iconic golden eagle. Peatlands also act as huge carbon stores by locking up carbon within their structure, helping to tackle climate change.

RSPB Scotland owns and manages two nature reserves on Islay – The Oa and Loch Gruijanart – where large areas of peatland are in need of restoration. Drainage of the peatlands, prior to RSPB ownership, has dried out the peat, offering very little benefit for wildlife and releasing carbon into the atmosphere.

The Lagavulin legacy project will fund RSPB Scotland to return more than 700 acres to a type of peatland known as blanket bog by reversing the impact of drainage.

A BIOLOGIST known as 'the human swan' is planning to fly the length of the Hebrides on a motorised paraglider.

Sacha Dench, who is also the head of media for the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT), is planning to fly 'from tip to toe of the Hebrides' in May.

Ms Dench said: 'I love Scotland and have spent a lot of time there working on WWT projects and doing aerial photography.'

'I have been to Harris and Skye, and have always wanted to explore more of the islands,

so when I was thinking about my next flight I thought it would be amazing to fly from tip to toe of the Hebrides.'

'It will be a brilliant way to enjoy those really challenging environments – the rugged peaks and the sea.'

Last year Sacha completed a 4,500-mile flight covering 11 countries on a journey following the migration of the endangered Bewick swan from the Arctic to the UK, and meeting communities along the way to discover why the birds are in

such serious decline. Each flight is an astonishing achievement for Sacha as she developed a severe fear of turbulence after an incident when bad weather struck during a journey in a small aircraft.

However, her determination to overcome her fear won out and she learned to paraglide and then paramotor.

As she plans her Hebrides trip she will speak about last year's journey at the Wild Film Festival Scotland in Dumfries on March 26.

'Human swan' flies the Hebrides from 'tip to toe' on a paraglider

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Arena

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

Robert's Ramblings

WITH ROBERT ROBERTSON

When a young chorister looks at the sharp symbol in the key signature of a piece of music (#) and notes its similarity to a Twitter hashtag, one realises one is perhaps dealing with a brand new generation of musicians! There have been a number of moments over the last few months that have brought the existence of this newer and fresher generation to the forefront of my mind.

In February, I spent a couple of days on Islay teaching at the Féis alongside a great team of musicians and friends. I always enjoy a trip to Islay and, as I walked up the gangway onto the ferry (suitcase, guitar, and accordion in hand) I was greatly looking forward to experiencing the delights that Bowmore has to offer – namely Duffy's Bar and Lucci's! While we managed to make a little bit of time to visit those essential tourist attractions, the real enjoyment of our stay on Islay was experiencing the enthusiasm of the youngsters at the Féis. Due to the weather, we were only across for two days rather than the anticipated three; but, despite time constraints, the kids knuckled down and worked extremely hard in order to produce a show to be proud of for the parents on the Thursday night.

It was great to see a Féis so well attended with young islanders that were so eager to learn and such great company. One wee lad took great joy in telling me his success in making drum tutor, Alasdair Murray, search for at least 10 minutes for a set of left-handed drum sticks! This kind of good-humoured nonsense was a fairly regular occurrence over the two days – but so was hard, conscientious learning.

The highlight of the week was the performance of the Féis song during which all ages, from toddler to teenager, joined together to sing that great Islay song, Mo Ribhinn Còibhneil.

There are few things more inspiring than hearing a group of young voices enjoying singing as one. A few weeks ago, I conducted a workshop in Loch-

gilhead for Coisir Òg Dhail Riata – a small choir aged 11-16 years who are really thriving under the conductor's baton of Cheryl Naisby and the Gaelic tutor of Christine Johnston.

Their sound is top-notch and their ardour for Gaelic song is remarkable. Their musicianship was most in evidence after the rehearsal when I sang a few songs with my guitar and the girls added their own natural harmonies. The ease with which they almost subconsciously harmonised was a real eye opener to their talents.

The enjoyment of working with a young choir is something I have been experiencing over the last couple of years down here in Glasgow. About two years ago, Kirsteen Grant (conductor of the Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir) approached me with news that their junior section was without a conductor and, inevitably, would fold as a consequence.

This was a choir for under-19s that had served as a feeder to the adult choir across many generations – and had played no small part in the development of some wonderful singers over the years. I agreed to take the helm, and to steer the choir through the National Mòd in Oban that October. Two years down the line and I am still heading along to the Gaelic School every Monday night at 6.15pm, rehearsing with those brilliant youngsters. It has become an absolute pleasure.

The choir is small in number, with significant years between the oldest and youngest members. This difference in vocal maturity makes producing a unison sound a difficult task and each chorister is, therefore, learning to listen to the person on their left, and the person on their right, and blend their own voice into the overall sound.

The young singers are meeting the challenge head on and with great progress. The senior Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir concert in Bearsden a fortnight ago was our most together performance to date, in my opinion. Through the hard work and endeavour of its members, the choir is constant-

ly showing strong evidence of improvement.

The choir numbers are down to eight after two members left us last week. Those two members leaving was a timely reminder that there are so many opportunities for school pupils to enjoy themselves outside with music and only so many hours in the day.

Music, of course, is not for everyone; and, when kids are naturally inclined towards sport or drama or whatever else, that should absolutely be encouraged. We must, however, ensure that those who are keen on music are allowed to develop their ability; and junior choirs and Féisean are absolutely vital to this development.

I remember over the years, learning instruments and practicing my singing was often a huge pleasure and a means of escapism from the stresses of maths and science tests in school. It was at times, however, also a chore. I was, often to my detriment, and probably to the despair of my mother and father, a perfectionist, who did not take kindly to making mistakes.

At times there were tears, and sometimes I probably never wanted to see an instrument again. I am sure anyone else who has ever learnt an instrument from childhood would attest to that. But, my goodness, am I glad I stuck in? I cannot begin to put a value on the pleasure that I have taken from music over the years. I have made life-long friends, lived unforgettable tales, and, best of all, I even have a column in the *Oban Times*!

Out of all the youngsters I have worked with recently, I would hazard a guess that a fair percentage of them will eventually seek other opportunities and satisfactions in life, and their music will play second fiddle, if you'll pardon the pun, to their career options or their other hobbies. Let us hope, however, that some percentage of them make music their life. If they do, I guarantee they will make great happiness for both themselves and others for many years to come.

Mànran's Touring Tales part two



That's another week completed on our German Irish Heartbeat tour and I have to say it's flown by.

We started the week in Eisleben (the birthplace of Martin Luther) and a sold-out show in the local theatre. This is a town we'd visited and had a ball in two years previously and it certainly did not disappoint this time around.

We were once again staying in a hotel two doors up the road from Luther's geburthaus (birth-house), just the other side of a distinctly un-Lutheran cocktail bar. On our last visit, this had been the scene of that tour's biggest hò-rò gheallaidh as Scottish and Irish tunes blasted long into the night with legendary Irish accordion virtuoso Dermot Byrne leading the charge.

Keen to emulate past glories, we knuckled-down to the task in hand and set about enjoying a couple of post-gig Piña Coladas over a few tunes and songs with the rest of the touring party. If we were struggling to keep up with the heroics of our younger selves, timely reinforcement arrived when Gary Innes received some fantastic news from home: he'd become an uncle for the second time! Cue bubbles, tears of joy and celebratory tunes till well past the usual closing time of a cocktail bar in a provincial German town on a Monday night.

'See you next year but not before!', cried the clearly exhausted barman (delighted with the unexpected windfall but quite glad to see the back of Celtic musicians for a while) as we made the short but increasingly hazy walk back to the hotel.

One of the downsides of the touring life is that you quite often miss out on important moments in the lives of your family and friends but, thankfully, modern technology does help to keep you that little bit closer to home and ensures you can give the celebrations a good shot when the moment dictates.

Next stop was Cuxhaven in the Northwest of the country. Between 1900 and 1969, this was where millions of emigrants would have taken their last steps on European soil before setting-sail for a new life in North America. Our gig here took place in the Hamburg American Line's former ocean-liner terminal: a complex of large, vaulted halls situated beside a now disused railway line on the docks. It was as though the walls were still ringing with the desperate hopes, dreams and trepidations of those leaving their homelands – a truly memorable concert and venue.

The week then took a turn for the arduous as we began a series of gigs literally zig-zagging daily across the full width of the country – a real treat if you've got a penchant for motorways or you're into lorry-spotting but otherwise a bit dull. We would always try to avoid this kind of 6-hour-plus journey on a gig-day but sometimes things don't quite fall into the order you'd like them too and there's nothing for it but to buckle-up and get on with it.

The boys have developed a variety of coping mechanisms for these long days on the road. Gary can often be found watching a film on his tablet; Mark likes to catch up with any football highlights he may have missed; Ross is more likely to be found listening to his favoured album of the moment; Craig floats between watching films and trying to wind me up; I like to write articles for the *Oban Times*; and Ryan is the number one man you want to have sitting beside whoever's driving to keep the chat going, unless he falls asleep!

If the Corkman wanders off to his favoured corner of the Land of Nod then even a pipe chanter blasted directly into his ear-hole won't retrieve him – believe us: we've tried.

Friday was a big day for Ryan and his fellow Irish folk on the tour (the Bernie Pháid Band & the Armagh Rhymers); St. Patrick's Day.

We celebrated the day with a concert in Wilhelmshaven – back once more in the Northwest – and tried to get into the spirit of the thing as best we could, bedecked all in green including a fetching luminous green vest I presented to Ryan just before the gig. Fair play to him: he took to it with very little external encouragement and was soon proclaiming himself 'The Hardest Man in Ireland'. Let's hope he doesn't have to back-up that boast anytime soon.

Now, before signing off on last week's column, I left you on the bombshell that St. Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, may have had his roots in Lochaber. I've been known to appropriate famous persons and achievements for Lochaber in the past but this one may even have a grain of truth in it. One theory has it that the young St. Patrick ("Pat" as he was known then) was born and raised in Banavie around 389 AD, his father being a tax collector for the Romans who had invaded the West Highlands at that time. Of course, no one on the tour believes a word of this – perhaps I lost them when I suggested that the shed in the garden of our old house in Banavie may have been St. Pat's former residence... Furthermore, after a brief bit of googling, it transpires that - far from being a bombshell - the news of St. Patrick's Lochaber roots had previously been published amongst these very pages back in 1948! Must try harder next week. Onwards to Bavaria!

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BBC ALBA

A' cur 's a' Buain

Listings for Thursday 16 March – Thursday 23 March 2017

DIARDAOIN 23 MÀRT

THURSDAY 23 MARCH

17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** – Children's programming

18.35 **Machair** (rpt)

19.00 **An Là** – News

19.25 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)

19.30 **Gach Creutair Beò** – Vets in Scotland – S4, Ep5 (rpt)

20.00 **On the Tracks of the Wild Otter** (rpt)

20.55 **Cuirn @ Celtic** – Moving Hearts (rpt)

21.00 **Ant-lionsachadh Òg** (rpt)

22.00 **Cuirn @ Celtic** – Anna Latharna & Caraidean (rpt)

23.00 **Seòd a' Chìdhsin** – The Kitchen

Coves – S1 Ep1 (rpt)

23.30 **Rapal TBH** (rpt)

Rising (rpt)

23.25 **Cuirn @ Celtic** (rpt)

23.30 **Fonn mo Bheatha** – music chat show (rpt)

DIHAIONE 24 MÀRT

FRIDAY 24 MARCH

17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** – Children's Programming

18.35 **Machair** (rpt)

19.00 **An Là** – News

19.25 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)

19.30 **Gach Creutair Beò** – Vets in Scotland – S4, Ep5 (rpt)

20.00 **On the Tracks of the Wild Otter** (rpt)

20.55 **Cuirn @ Celtic** – Moving Hearts (rpt)

21.00 **Ant-lionsachadh Òg** (rpt)

22.00 **Cuirn @ Celtic** – Anna Latharna & Caraidean (rpt)

23.00 **Seòd a' Chìdhsin** – The Kitchen

Coves – S1 Ep1 (rpt)

23.30 **Rapal TBH** (rpt)

Rising (rpt)

SATURDAY 25 MÀRT

SUNDAY 26 MÀRT

12.15 **SPFL Challenge Cup Final** – Dundee Utd v St. Mirren

14.45 **Seachd** – Inaccessible Pinnacle (rpt)

16.15 **Prògraman Chloinne** – Children's Programming

19.00 **Machair** (rpt)

19.25 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)

19.30 **Latha Bha Siùd** (rpt)

19.55 **Binneas** – Na Trads (rpt)

20.00 **Fonn Mo Bheatha** – music and chat (rpt)

20.30 **Alba: 1996** (rpt)

21.00 **Tatú Rioghail Dhùn Èideann 2015** (rpt)

22.30 **Cuirn @ Celtic** – Capercaille (rpt)

23.15 **Balaigh lasgach Alasga** – Alaska Fish Wars (rpt)

24.00 **Belladrum 2012 Highlights** (rpt)

SUNDAY 26 MÀRT

20.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** – Children's Programming

18.30 **Seachd Lâ** – News Review

19.30 **Alleluia!** – Spiritual music and verse (rpt)

20.00 **Chi mi'n Tir** – From Harris with Love (rpt)

20.30 **Cearcall** – Look back through 80's programme, Cearcall – Ep1 (rpt)

21.00 **Cobhair Chloinne** – Paediatric Retrieval Service (rpt)

22.00 **Céilidh Ulaidh** – Castle Sessions (rpt)

23.00 **Ar-a-mach na Càisge** – Easter Rising (rpt)

23.55 **Cuirn @ Celtic** – Moving Hearts (rpt)

24.00 **Belladrum 2012 Highlights** (rpt)

20.00 **An Lâ** – News

20.30 **ÚR | NEW: Gach Creutair Beò** – Vets in Scotland – S4, Ep6

21.00 **Trusadh – Teachdaireachd na Mara** (rpt)

22.00 **Taghadh Bho Na Trads** (rpt)

22.30 **Peter Manuel – Deireadh an Uilc** – Drama documentary (rpt)

23.30 **Seòd a' Chìdhsin** – The Kitchen Coves – S1 Ep1 (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 27 MÀRT

MONDAY 27 MARCH

17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** – Children's programming

19.00 <b

Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON
robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk


Early Sunday Evenings in the Park Bar

Music in The Park Bar on Sundays has been starting earlier recently. The pub have put on music between 5pm and 8pm a couple of Sundays in the last few months – and the new time has been a great success. I played at 5pm last Sunday for the first time to a nice crowd who were all relaxed in the knowledge that they could listen to music for three hours and still get home at a reasonable time to prepare for work the following morning. Having said that, there were a few well-known characters whose good intentions to head home after the music fell by the wayside after ‘the minutes winged their way with pleasure’, as Robert Burns would have said, amongst the drams, music, and good craic. This will be not be happening every Sunday – the music will still mostly begin at the usual time of 9.30pm; but keep an eye on The Pub Scene section of the Glasgow Letter where now and again I will write confirm the start time of 5pm.

Beware J20!

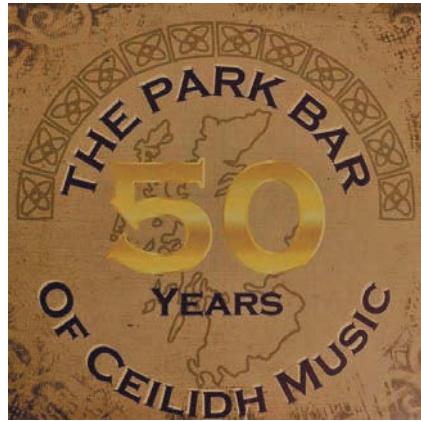
A word of warning: always be aware of packs of J20 Raspberry and Cranberry juice! The bottles are far from secure within the cardboard packaging. On a recent trip to Tesco on Dumbarton Road, I picked up a four-pack from the shelf only for all four bottles to slide out of the cardboard and smash all over the floor. Carnage ensued as innocent shoppers turned the corner and howled in horror as they jumped to the conclusion that the red liquid all over the floor, littered with smashed glass, was in fact blood. I spent the next few minutes assuring everyone that it was only sugary juice and that the assistant would be along presently to mop it all up. When he arrived, I offered to pay for the bottles. He looked at me inquisitively and asked: ‘why would you be expected to pay for it?’ I hesitated and told him that I was always brought up to pay for things that were broken in shops. His response was immediate, witty, and typically Glaswegian: ‘Well you obviously weren’t brought up around here, pal!’

What's On

Friday March 31: The Glasgow Uist and Barra Association Ceilidh Dance in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street.
 Friday April 28: The Glasgow Uist and Barra Association Ceilidh Dance in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street.
 Saturday April 29: The Glasgow Skye Association Annual Spring Concert (Wee Skye), in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street.
 Thursday May 11: Comunn-an-Taobh-an-Iar Annual General Meeting in the Ellangowan Social Club, Milngavie.
 Friday May 26: The Uist and Barra Association Annual General Meeting in Lourdes Secondary School.
 Wednesday June 7: The Glasgow Skye Association Annual General Meeting in Partick Burgh Hall.
 Friday June 9: The Glasgow Skye Association End of Session Social in the Redhurst Hotel, Giffnock.

Pub Scene

Park Bar.
 Friday March 24:
 Saturday March 25:
 Sunday March 26:
 Islay Inn
 Friday March 24: Parting Glass.
 Saturday March 25: Black Velvet.



Scouting for Girls to headline Tiree festival

The multi-award winning Tiree Music Festival has confirmed that Scouting for Girls will travel to the remote island to headline the ‘Best Small Event in Scotland’ as part of their 10th anniversary year.

It is 10 years since the band released their No.1 self-titled album which featured hit singles ‘Heartbeat’ and ‘She’s so Lovely’ – selling over 1 million copies worldwide.

For TMF, this will be the eighth festival since its formation in 2010 that has seen the festival sell out every year and gain a reputation as one of the friendliest and most unique festivals in the UK. The festival will be held July 14-16 once again overlooking the white sands of Crossapol Bay.

Joining Scouting for Girls will be legendary singer-songwriter Dougie MacLean for his second visit to the festival after his spine-tingling performance in 2014. Debuting at the festival will be one of Scotland’s most exciting new voices Siobhan Miller as well as Irish-Bluegrass sensations Jig Jam fresh from their USA tour.

Festival director Daniel Gillespie said: ‘We are delighted to once again bring a world-renowned act to our small magical island and

know that the TMF crowd will create an atmosphere like no other.

‘We are also thrilled to welcome back Dougie as he loved his time on the island in 2014 and his performance in the main tent was one that will never be forgotten – it is the one and only time at TMF when you could have heard a pin drop!’

TMF wouldn’t be TMF without the Tiree strong contingent of Skipinnish, Skerryvore, Trail West, Gunna Sound, Dun Mor and The Defenders, as well as a performance from legendary tutor Gordon Connell and The Cornaig Ceilidh Band.

There will also be a special first birthday celebration for Tide Lines who performed their first ever gig at TMF 2016 and have gone on to take the Scottish music scene by storm.

Funbox will be returning to Tiree with their new ‘Highland Fling’ show and there will once again be a host of children’s activities and workshops throughout the weekend. Final tickets for the festival are now available from www.tireemusicfestival.co.uk.

Early bird tickets for the event sold out in less than 48 hours so early booking is advised.



Scouting for Girls have been confirmed for this year's Tiree Music Festival.

Oban Play Map

Join us at the launch
 Revisit A Postwar Childhood
 Exhibition of memories
 Rockeld School 1945-1955

The Rockfield Centre
 2pm-4pm
 Saturday March 25th

Kids games, crafts and activities
 Tea/Coffee/Cake
 Oban Communities Trust
 SC045503 SC483489

Oban Times LEISURE TIMES

GAIN FANTASTIC EQUINE SKILLS BY FLEXIBLE STUDY

COURSES STARTING THIS SUMMER

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- EQUINE FLEXIBLE STUDIES (HNC, HND)
- BA(HONS) EQUINE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

North Highland College
 University of the Highlands and Islands

Contact: Jane Isaac E: jane.isaac@uhi.ac.uk T: 07990612781



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MONDAY: 08:00 AM on FM, 08:10 Breakfast Show, 09:00 Monday Morning with Stephen, 11:00 Ian Simmonds on Monday, 13:00 Clyde 2 17:00 Drivetime, 18:00 Drivetime, 19:00 Rosie's Highland Fling with Rosie Macoll, 20:00 John McLuckie's Show, 21:00 David Cullen Show, 23:00 station close, midnight Clyde 2

TUESDAY: 08:00 AM on FM, 08:10 Breakfast Show, 10:00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday Morning, 13:00 Macky on FM, 15:00 Clyde 2 17:00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 19:00 Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers, 20:00 Elaine Lamb, 22:00 Northern Soul with Gordon Cove, midnight Clyde 2

WEDNESDAY: 08:00 AM on FM, 08:10 Breakfast Show, 09:00 Sound Scottish Repeat, 10:00 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 11:00 Comfort Zone, 12:00 Comfort Zone, 13:00 Clyde 2 15:00 Elaine Lamb, 17:00 Drivetime, 17:30 Drivetime with Campbell Cameron, 19:00 Country Meets Rock & Roll with Len & Ken, 21:00 Gordon's Grooves, midnight Clyde 2

THURSDAY: 08:00 Breakfast with Laura, 10:00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13:00 Elaine's Time Capsule, 15:00 Gordon Covey, 17:00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19:00 Christine's Collection, 21:00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22:00 Margo till midnight, midnight Clyde 2

FRIDAY: 08:00 Breakfast with Laura, 10:00 Teeny and Tiny, 13:00 Clyde 2 17:00 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 18:45 Sports View, 19:00 Country meets Country with Jackie Craig, 20:00 Lewis Birnham.

SATURDAY: 08:00 Breakfast show with Archie Darling, 10:00 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Cosher, 13:00 Clyde 2 18:00 Sports View with the Dream Team, 19:00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20:00 Dave Lewis, 22:00 Margo till midnight, midnight Clyde 2

SUNDAY: 09:00 Sunday morning with Breege, 11:00 Sunday Morning with Archie, 12:00 Sunday Brunch, 13:00 Clyde 2 16:30 Archie Darling, 18:00 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 19:00 New Country Show with David Entwhistle, 21:00 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott, 23:00 Station close, midnight Clyde 2

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Annual Boat Jumble & Car Boot Sale
 In Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern
 Saturday March 25th from 10.00am - 2pm
 Nautical & non-nautical bargains; new and nearly new items. Bring all the family for a great day out!
 Entry - £3 (includes refreshments). Details - 01852 500689

GLENCRUITTEN CATHEDRAL OF TREES (SCIO)
 INITIAL GET TOGETHER - OPEN TO ALL
 12 Noon Saturday 1st April 2017
 Church Centre, Glencruitten Road, OBAN
 (Tel 07846455500)

If you would like to advertise in the Oban Times Community Noticeboard please call 01631 568000

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WYVEX MEDIA PRESENTS...
The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES **Highland Wedding Show**

Sunday 2nd April 11am - 5pm. Corran Halls, Oban

Brides, Grooms and their families are invited to this fabulous free event to meet, greet and discuss all things wedding-themed with local specialists. From cakes to cars and everything inbetween! Enjoy fizz on arrival, bridal fashion shows, hair & make-up demos and a special prize draw.

FREE ADMISSION.

If you are a wedding specialist and wish to book your stand at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show, don't delay!

Please get in touch with Nicky on 01631 568000. And to all brides and grooms to be... we look forward to seeing you on Sunday 2nd April!

OBAN PHOENIX CINEMA
 community-owned and run
 Tel: 01631 562905 www.obanphoenix.com

Friday 24 – Thursday 30 March

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST | PG | 150 MIN

Fri: 16:30, 18:15, Sat: 11:00, 17:00, Sun: 11:45, 13:00, 19:00, Mon: 16:30, 18:15, Tue: 18:15, 19:30 Wed: 16:30, 18:15, 20:00

3D: 19:30, Sat: 14:00, 20:00, Sun: 16:00, Mon: 19:30, Tue: 16:30, Wed: 19:30, Thu: 17:00

“Beauty and the Beast” is the fantastic journey of Belle, a bright, beautiful and independent young woman who is taken prisoner by a beast in his castle. Despite her fears, she befriends the castle’s enchanted staff and learns to look beyond the Beast’s hideous exterior and realize the kind heart and soul of the true Prince within.

FIFTY SHADES DARKER | 18 | 138 MIN

Sat: 19:45

While Christian wrestles with his inner demons, Anastasia must confront the anger and envy of the women who came before her.

KIDS CLUB: THE LEGO MOVIE | U | 106 MIN

Sat: 11:00

Children Classic. An ordinary Lego construction worker, thought to be the prophesied ‘Special’, is recruited to join a quest to stop an evil tyrant from gluing the Lego universe into eternal stasis.

VICEROY'S HOUSE | 12A | 126 MIN

Fri: 16:00, Sat: 15:15, Sun: 19:30, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu: 16:00 Parent and baby screening: Tue: 11:00

In 1947, Lord Mountbatten assumes the post of last Viceroy, charged with handing India back to its people, living upstairs at the house which was the home of British rulers, whilst 500 Hindu, Muslim and Sikh servants lived downstairs.

SILVER SCREEN - HIDDEN FIGURES | PG | 147 MIN

Sun: 14:30

HIDDEN FIGURES is the incredible untold story of Katherine Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), Dorothy Vaughn (Octavia Spencer) and Mary Jackson (Janelle Monáe)—brilliant African-American women working at NASA, who served as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation’s confidence, turned around the Space Race, and galvanized the world. The visionary trio crossed all gender and race lines to inspire generations to dream big.

THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE | U | 124 MIN

Sat: 13:00

In the irreverent spirit of fun that made The LEGO® Movie a worldwide phenomenon, the self-described leading man of that ensemble—LEGO Batman—stars in his own big-screen adventure. But there are big changes brewing in Gotham, and if he wants to save the city from The Joker's hostile takeover, Batman may have to drop the lone vigilante thing, try to work with others and maybe, just maybe, learn to lighten up.

TRESPASS AGAINST US | 15 | 120 MIN

Fri: 21:00, Sat: 17:30, Sun: 17:15, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu: 21:00

Three generations of the Cutler family live as notorious outlaws among some of the wealthiest lands in Britain. They spend their time hunting, raiding large estates and tormenting the police. In the midst of it all, Chad (Michael Fassbender) finds himself torn between respect for his father (Brendan Gleeson) and a desire for a better life for his children. The law is cracking down on his clan, and the decision might not be his to make...

Arena

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

Three Arts Practitioners Recruited through Arora for Uists and Barra

Three new artist practitioners have been recruited through the award-winning Arora Dementia Friendly Community Project at An Lanntair to work with people living with dementia and their carers across the Uists and Barra. The posts have been funded through Life Changes Trust, with support funding from Alzheimer Scotland and the NHS RemoAge project.

Over several initial visits, research sessions, creative sessions and projects, it was clearly established that paid posts were at the top of the wish list for dementia support in Barra, North and South Uist and Benbecula.

Building on the successful work with artists such as Chris Hammacott working as Quilter in Residence for Solas Day Centre (currently featured in *British Patchwork and Quilting* magazine, March 17 edition), and Dawn Susan of Hebridean Baskets through our Woven Communities Project with University of St Andrews, Arora has recruited local artists with particular skills in community engagement and carer support as well as for understanding of dementia.

Duncan Mackinnon is in post for Barra and Kate MacDonald is in post for North and South Uist and Benbecula, both until

March 31, 2018. Margaret Joan MacIsaac has a fixed hours contract and all three practitioners have been awarded an artist commission.

The work includes intergenerational working with local children and young people, connecting people living with dementia with cultural, community and arts activities and events, and one-to-one work, utilising resources from our new Memory Box Scheme, in connection with Museum nan Eilean and Western Isles Libraries. There will also be outreach work in hospitals and care centres as well as new resources and events for the community to enjoy.

This work is establishing an ethos whereby people with dementia and those who care for them feel they are still part of their own community, supported to do things that are meaningful to them, valued as individuals and involved as members of society.'



Aaaaand relax...

...with our luxury spa facilities

Leisure Club membership at Isle of Eriska Stables Spa

The facilities at the Stables Spa include gym, 17m indoor pool, sauna, steam room, spa pool. We have a 6 hole golf course and you also receive half price fees for the use of the indoor sporting facility.

Members currently also benefit from a 10% discount on spa treatments, and 15% discount on dinner booked in the main restaurant at the hotel and 15% discount on food at The Deck Restaurant.

Annual Membership Fee

Single £500.00

Couple £900.00

Family (2 adults + 2 children under the age of 16) £1200.00

No joining fee in March

Tel: 01631 720371

Email: office@eriska-hotel.co.uk

Website: www.eriska-hotel.co.uk

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*Isle
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Kick it up for Kilbride



OBAN, Argyll-Friends of Kilbride (FroK) will kick off a capital fundraiser with a dinner and céilidh at Kilmore Village Hall near Oban on April 21, featuring fare by Silver Laced Catering and music by The Hollow Mountain String Band.

FroK is a registered charity dedicated to the management of the kirk, which was built in 1249 and modified in the 16th century, as well as the graveyard and associated archaeological sites at Kilbride. It is located three miles south of Oban in Lerags.

At one time, Kilbride, along with nearby Kilmore, was the most important centre in the area. The kirk, now a partial ruin, was built over a much older site of wor-

ship dating from at least the 6th century, when St Brigid founded the parish, and perhaps to the pre-Christian era. The graveyard boasts over a dozen monuments made in the distinctive medieval West Highland style, and chiefs of the Clan MacDougal have been buried there for centuries. James IV mandated that the oldest sons of the Scottish gentry be educated, so starting in the 15th century, clan chiefs from all over Argyll sent their sons to the school at Kilbride. According to archaeologists, there are likely several important heritage sites surrounding the kirk, with much to reveal about life in medieval Scotland.

After submitting a £165,000 preservation plan developed by conservation architect Shauna Cameron of Benderloch, FroK has announced a capital fundraising campaign for preservation work and further archaeological surveys.

'Kick it up for Kilbride' will launch the campaign in fine Highland style with food, fun and fellowship, including a glass of fizz on arrival, a three course meal, followed by dancing and music. Tickets are £21 and include a shuttle bus to Oban. There will also be raffle prizes and multi-media displays about the Kilbride preservation project. The event is BYOB.

Booking is essential. For tickets and information, or to donate, call 01631 565081 or visit www.friendsofkilbride.scot.

Life and soul of Loch Leven Hotel

Anne Horne has been working as a reception supervisor at Loch Leven Hotel for more than 15 years and is usually the first and last point of contact for all hotel guests, taking the initial reservations, warmly welcoming guests on arrival and bidding them farewell after their stay.

Anne is decidedly the life and soul of the hotel and very much

loved by the guests and staff. With her lengthy experience in her role at the hotel Anne's knowledge, not only about the hotel but also about the wealth of things to explore in and around Lochaber, is unparalleled.

Everyone can see that Anne truly cares about her role and the standards of all details of the guest experience. She

supervises all aspects of the day to day running of the hotel, including reception, reservations, breakfast service, lunch service, housekeeping and daily recording of financials.

Craig Innes, the owner of Loch Leven Hotel comments: 'Anne is a real credit to the hotel and we are so happy that she is there to look after our guests.'

SCOTTISH SEA LIFE SANCTUARY

Annual pass READER OFFER

Pay once and come back all year when you claim your 12-month local resident's Sea Life Annual Pass for the cost of just one admission. Customers can use their pass at both the Oban and Loch Lomond Sea Life sites. Visit the seal sanctuary on the shores of Loch Crinan near Oban or see Scotland's only Giant Green Sea Turtle at the Loch Lomond Sea Life Aquarium.

Claim your pass, using the Oban Times application form, and pay just £13.40. A child's annual pass will cost just £11. Children under three go free of charge. Your annual pass will entitle you to 12 months unlimited entry to The Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary Oban and Sea Life Loch Lomond gift shops, 20% discount in the Sea Life Sanctuary and Loch Lomond gift shops, 20% off hot drinks at the centres, a half price guide book and entry to our special events at both sites, including our Easter Eggstravaganza and Santa at Sea Life fun day to name a few.

To claim this offer complete the below application form and, along with an up-to-date passport sized photograph, take it along to the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Oban (photos are required for both adult and child passes). This offer is valid until March 31, 2017. You can also post your application, complete with a stamped self-addressed envelope, photo and a cheque for the appropriate amount, made payable to Merlin Entertainments, to Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE.

2017 APPLICATION FORM

Application Form

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Address.....

Email

The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Adult (£13.40) Child (£11) Pass (tick box selection)

FURTHER PASSES

Name.....

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Name.....

Adult (£13.40) Child over 3 (£11) (tick box selection)

Name.....

Adult (£13.40) Child over 3 (£11) (tick box selection)

I have enclosed all photographs required Cheque enclosed (postal applications only)

Terms and conditions apply. Photocopy application forms will not be accepted. Offer valid until March 31, 2017. Digital users: If you are reading the digital edition of The Oban Times and would like to apply for this offer, please call 01631 568000 or email your name, postal address and email address to readerooffer@obantimes.co.uk and we will arrange the relevant form to be posted to you.

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Win for six Argyll businesses at 2017 Scottish Rural Awards

Six Argyll businesses are celebrating following award wins at the 2017 Scottish Rural Awards last week (Thursday 16 March).

The Puffer Bar and Restaurant on Easdale Island won first place in the Rural Hospitality category, while the Wee Isle Dairy Ltd, on the Isle of Gigha, took home the Runner-up award in the Artisan Food category for their small-batch ice-cream.

Luss Estates Company was the overall winner in the Business Diversification category, with the judging panel praising the company's 'remarkable success story in overcoming the well-documented challenge of running a profitable Scottish landed estate'.

Three Oban businesses are also celebrating success: Oban Winter Festival won the Runner-up award in the Rural Tourism category; Oban Phoenix Cinema took home first place in the Rural Enterprise category, and new broadband installation firm Craine Communications was the overall winner in the Business Start Up category.

Finalists from the Argyll area include marketing and PR agency Brandfire, in Campbeltown (Business Start Up category); bar and restaurant Lord of the Isles, in Craobh Haven (Business Start Up category); and Cologin Chalets and Barn Bar, by Oban (Rural Hospitality category).

The Scottish Rural Awards are the ultimate benchmark of success in Scotland's countryside, highlighting the enterprise, skill and innovation of those who live and work in rural areas.

The event, held at Dynamic

Earth in Edinburgh, is the culmination of a third year of partnership between *Scottish Field* and the Scottish Countryside Alliance to host the awards, in association with the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS). The awards are backed by category sponsors including Aldi, the Bank of Scotland and Subaru UK.

Comedian Fred MacAulay took to the stage as compere for the evening, hosting more than 400 guests and presenting three awards in each of the 11 open categories – a highly commended, runner up and overall winner.

Nominations for the 2017 Scottish Rural Awards officially launched at the Scottish Parliament in September 2016, with over 200 entries received before the closing date of Friday 14th October 2016. Businesses were able to self-nominate, or be nominated by someone else – a friend, family member, customer or member of the public.

Finalists in each of the open categories, which encompass every aspect of rural life, from agriculture and food production, to conservation, education and tourism, were announced in December 2016.

Those who have made special contributions to the Scottish countryside were honoured with two separate accolades last night – the Rural Hero Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Rural Hero award was collectively presented to the crew of Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance for their vital life-saving work carried out across the coun-

try, while the Lifetime Achievement accolade was awarded to Sam Morshead, for his services to racing and to charity.

Richard Bath, Editor of *Scottish Field*, said: 'More than ever before, Scotland's rural communities are displaying a quite remarkable amount of energy, innovation and imagination as they diversify existing businesses and create new and exciting opportunities from scratch. As a magazine we are constantly writing about the rural entrepreneurs who are bringing wealth and jobs to the countryside, so it's exciting for us to be able to honour the men and women who are doing so much to make the economy of rural Scotland a true success story.'

Jamie Stewart, Director of the Scottish Countryside Alliance, added: 'Land-based businesses contribute over £2 billion to the Scottish economy. Despite the multiple challenges they face, they are hugely valuable brand ambassadors for Scotland, and many provide vital support to their local communities. These awards give Scotland a chance to recognise the resilience, innovation and contribution that rural-based people and businesses make to its success.'

Browse the full list of Scottish Rural Awards winners at www.scottishruralawards.org.

For more information and photographs, please contact Mikaela MacKinnon on 0131 551 7919 or info@scottishruralawards.org.

Visit www.scottishruralawards.org | #SRA2017



Puffer Bar and Restaurant – Bruno Berardelli, HW Energy (Rural Hospitality category sponsor); Keren Cafferty and Des Ballantyne, The Puffer Bar and Restaurant; Fred MacAulay, host.



Left: Luss Estates – Patrick Colquhoun, Luss Estates; Patricia Watson, Clarendon Planning and Development (Business Diversification category sponsor); Simon Miller, Luss Estates; Fred MacAulay.



Craine Communications – Robert Scott-Dempster, partner and head of Land and Rural Business at Gillespie Macandrew (Business Start Up category sponsor); Stuart and Caleidh Craine; Fred MacAulay.

Oban Winter Festival – Bruno Berardelli, HW Energy (Rural Tourism category sponsor); Linda Battison; Fred MacAulay.



Left: Wee Isle Dairy – Graham Nicolson, group buying director at Aldi (Artisan Food category sponsor); Harry and Ava Maitland, The Wee Isle Dairy; Fred MacAulay.



Right: Oban Phoenix Cinema – Paul Hegarty, sales director of Subaru UK (Rural Enterprise category sponsors); Jennie Larney and Louise Glen; Fred MacAulay.

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Terms and conditions apply.





Photo: John Baikie Photography

Highland Wedding Show

Sunday April 2, 11am-5pm
Corran Halls, Oban

If you are in the throes of planning a wedding, there is nothing more exciting and self-indulgent than heading to a wedding show, to enjoy a little foretaste of the special day ahead.

We have some wonderful local wedding specialists on hand to discuss all your needs and find the right service or product to fulfil your dreams!



Photo: Photogenic of Scotland



The Oban Times Highland Wedding Show is your local show and offers you the opportunity to talk about what matters to you, whether it's finding the perfect colour combinations between dresses, flowers, cakes and room décor, or discovering the perfect coupling between flavour and design for your beautiful cake.

You can check out the latest trends and tastes from floristry to favours and canapes to cars. Add to that an array of stunning wedding venues where you can bring together all of these elements to create the most wonderful day to remember.

We have teamed up with Argyll and Bute Registrars (ABR) to give you the run down on what to consider when booking your wedding at any venue.

Head of Service, Judy Orr says: 'When it comes to life's momentous occasions, our Registrars work to the motto, "It's your day so we do it your way".'

'This means that our focus is on listening to how you imagine your event will be, and supporting you to achieve this, whether that means providing help in finding the perfect location or guidance on the legal aspects of a ceremony.'

'If you are thinking about a civil wedding or other ceremony in Argyll and Bute, you can be rest assured that you will find the perfect location for your special day.'

'Our Registrars will do all possible to make a couple's wedding day the special, unique event they want.'

'Argyll and Bute's scenery already provides a stunning backdrop. We have conducted ceremonies in a huge range of locations, on beaches, loch sides, in castles and family homes.'

'Our Registrars are keen to do all they can to provide a ceremony matched to the wishes of our couples.'

'We provide guidance in making arrangements for the day such as the legal aspects of getting married. If you are planning a civil ceremony in Argyll and Bute, you will receive a warm welcome and a lot of help from our friendly, reliable and knowledgeable Registrars.'

'Due to a change in legislation there is now no legal requirement for venues to have a licence to host civil ceremonies which makes arranging your civil ceremony a very straight forward process.'

Last year alone the Registrars helped more than 500 couples celebrate their weddings.

Your civil ceremony will include the legal requirements and you can add your own personal touches for example hand fasting, unity candle and quaich ceremony, or music and poetry readings.

Whether you are having a religious or civil ceremony, you will need to contact your local Registrars who will keep you right with the paperwork necessary to make your wedding happen.

Registrars can also help with other important family events such as baby naming ceremonies and re-dedication of marriage vows.

If you are already married but would like

to renew your vows, the Registrars can help. These ceremonies, which couples celebrate at different times in their marriage, have no legal implication but are a public statement of a couple's continued commitment to each other.

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our big day

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Argyll and Bute Civil Ceremonies

When it comes to life's momentous occasions - getting married, reaffirming vows or naming a baby, choosing where to hold the ceremony plays a significant part.

Our team of registrars are here to help you plan this important day in your life.

You can contact the team by email: registrars@argyll-bute.gov.uk or call 01631 567908 to be directed to your appropriate point of contact.

Argyll and Bute Civil Ceremonies Full of Perfect Places, for your Perfect Day.

We will be delighted to see you at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show on Sunday 2nd April.



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BY PERLE HOTELS



SLÁINTE!

Food isn't the only delicious treat to be found on the West Coast. We are also famous for our fine beverages, from celebrated whiskies and award-winning gins to outstanding craft ales.

Whisky

There's something special about the aqua vitae produced on the West Coast. The pure water, pristine environment and smoky peat combine with skills that have been passed down through the generations to produce world-class beverages. It is no wonder the area is also known as 'The Whisky Coast'.

The word whisky comes from the Gaelic, uisge beatha, literally, 'water of life'. Some wonder why Scotch whisky is spelled without the 'e' as Irish and American whiskey. In the 19th century, Irish producers wanted to differentiate their product from the Scottish, so they added the 'e'.

Whether you are a whisky connoisseur or merely whisky-curious, from beloved local pubs to legendary distilleries, there are plenty of opportunities to discover what George Bernard Shaw called, 'Liquid Sunshine'.

Gin

Is gin overtaking whisky as Scotland's national drink? Too bold a claim, maybe. But when you consider 70 per cent of all UK gin is produced north of the border and is shipped to 139 countries, Scottish gin deserves to be recognised as a serious industry.

Distillers here put their own spin on the classic formula of juniper berries, angelica root, cassia bark, cinnamon bark, coriander seed, lemon peel, orange peel, liquorice root and orris root – some brands add dozens of other botanicals that are hand-picked from the local area, such as myrtle, elderflower and heather.

With Scotland's rich history of distilling, matched with the best natural larder in the world, the growth of locally created Scottish gin is a natural progression. So this spring, fill up your glass with a cold Scottish G&T!

Craft Ales

Outstanding craft ales are quickly catching up to Scotch and gin in popularity, and you will find them proudly served at pubs across the West Coast. The craft ale boom is part of a wider UK trend, helped by the progressive beer duty relief that former chancellor Gordon Brown introduced in 2002. Made with pure local spring or river water and distinctive recipes, Argyll's craft ales go down a treat with a meal or at your local.

Oban Distillery

Nestling beneath the cliff that overlooks Oban, Oban Distillery is one of Scotland's oldest sources of single malt scotch whisky and is a stone's throw from the sea. Take a tour of the senses with one of our knowledgeable guides and explore each part of the whisky making process.

Your tour will finish with a dram of Oban 14-year-old malt accompanied by some crystallised ginger – a truly memorable taste sensation!

The Distillery Visitor Centre is open all year round and houses an exhibition area, a well-stocked gift shop and a tasting bar

(seasonal opening hours apply). The guided tours are in high demand so booking ahead is always advisable and can be done through the distillery website, www.discovering-distilleries.com/oban

Why not pay us a visit and learn what makes Oban single malt whisky unique?

Glen Scotia Distillery

Glen Scotia Distillery was founded in 1832 and is one of just three working distilleries in Campbeltown. Glen Scotia is undergoing a renaissance, with a new visitor shop and tours now on offer throughout the year, offering another great reason to visit Campbeltown.

On offer in the new 'Victorian'-themed shop is our core range of malts, premium clothing as well as distillery editions only available at the distillery. Each offering something special but all delivering the characteristic flavour of a Campbeltown single malt. We offer standard tours at

11.30am and 3pm, as well as special managers' tours available on request.

We are also expanding our offering at the Campbeltown Whisky Festival in May so if you can't make it down over Easter, come and see us on May 24-26. To book a tour call 01586 552288 or visit www.glen Scotia.com

Ben Nevis Distillery

Ben Nevis Distillery has been building on its success since its establishment in 1825. It is one of the oldest licensed distilleries in Scotland and continues to go from strength to strength.

The distillery is nestled at the foot of Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis, which has a summit elevation of 4,400

feet above sea level. Incorporated within Ben Nevis Distillery is The Legend of the Dew of Ben Nevis Visitor Centre, built into an old warehouse dating from 1862 and former bottling hall, which still retains some of its original features.

There is a conducted tour of the production areas by a trained guide which

concludes with a complementary 'tasting'.

After your tour around the distillery relax with a refreshment or if you are hungry, try some of their delicious home-cooking in the coffee shop and restaurant. The whisky shop is stocked with a large range of select whiskies, Scottish books and interesting gifts.

OBAN™ DISTILLERY

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For more information visit our website www.discovering-distilleries.com/oban

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Email: oban.distillery@diageo.com

Win a bottle of Oban 14-year-old!

To enter, simply answer this easy question, complete the entry form below and post it to The Oban Times, Distillery Comp, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Entries must be received by midnight, Tuesday April 4, 2017.

Question: How many Oban Distillery Malts are produced?

Answer.....

Name.....

Address

Postcode.....

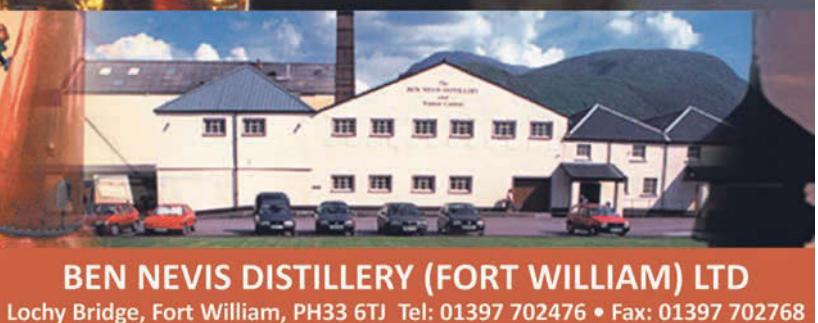
Telephone.....

Email.....

Over 18s only. Winners will be selected at random after the closing date and will receive a 70cl bottle of Oban 14 year old whisky. The prize is not transferable or redeemable for cash equivalent. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopies entries will not be accepted. Winners may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvern Media publication and website. The competition is not open to Wyvern Media and associated company employees and their families. Digital subscribers can enter by printing this page and submitting their entry accompanied by a letter explaining that you are a digital subscriber. The closing date for entries is midnight, Tuesday April 4, 2017.

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ON THE FOOD TRAIL

1. The Stepping Stone Restaurant Balivanich, Isle of Benbecula
2. Isle of Mull Cheese Tobermory, Isle of Mull
3. Island Bakery Dervaig Road, Isle of Mull
4. The Wide Mouthed Frog Dunstaffnage Bay, By Oban
5. Manor House Hotel & Restaurant Gallanach Road, Oban
6. The Queens Hotel Corran Esplanade, Oban
7. Brakes Scotland Glengallan Road, Oban
8. The George Hotel Main Street, East Inveraray
9. Winston Churchill Venison Sandbank, Dunoon
10. The Bridgend Hotel Bridgend, Islay
11. Islay Crab Exports Port Ellen, Islay



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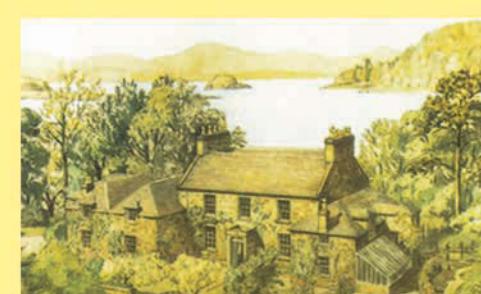
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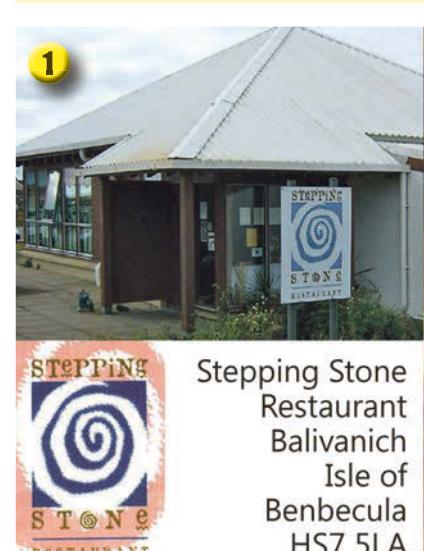


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Bar Menu in Katie's Bar 6.00-9.00pm



The Stepping Stone Restaurant

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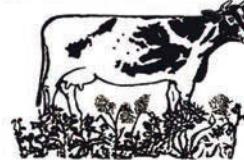
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ON THE FOOD TRAIL

From seafood to cheese, from chocolate to ice cream, the West Coast's larder is overflowing with delectable edibles, and all you have to do to enjoy them is follow the trails.

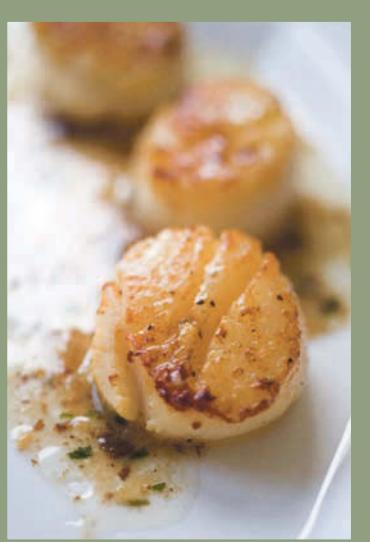
You'll find some of the finest bounty of the sea in the world in Scotland, and its Seafood Trail goes right through Argyll. The secret is the cold, pristine waters, which proffer an impressive variety of top quality fish and shellfish, including oysters, mussels,

langoustines, scallops, crab, mackerel, haddock, herring and more. We export hundreds of tonnes of each year, but the best way to enjoy this fare is at the source, fresh from the local fisherman and prepared simply, to let nature's taste shine through.

Seafood isn't for everyone, but you need not worry, as Argyll has other goodies to experience. Award-winning restaurants, pubs and retail outlets offer Argyll venison,

beef, duck and lamb, in addition to seafood.

The West Coast features on Scotland's other famous food trails, including cheese on Mull, ice cream in Loch Melfort and chocolate in Oban. A variety of locally produced charcuterie, preserves, fresh produce and smoked goodies round out the bountiful menu available here. With something for every taste and budget, there's so much to love about the West Coast's larder!



The West Coast's natural larder

Did you know that Scotland's food and drink industry is worth more than £7.5 billion per year and accounts for 27 per cent manufacturing exports? More than 1500 Scottish producers offer a staggering array of edibles, from global brands to small specialty firms. We are so lucky, with dozens of those producers are right here on the West Coast!

Fun food facts

Berry interesting!

Scottish producers grow more than 7,000 tonnes of berries each year and more than a million tonnes of potatoes.

Poultry in motion

Scotland's hens are busy too, laying about 900 million eggs annually.

Moo-ving on up

The dairy industry in Scotland produces about 1,300 litres of milk per year.

Jewel in Scotland's food crown

There are about 200 shellfish farms based in Scotland, and commercial fish farming accounts for nearly 50 percent of all of our food exports.

Salmon is king

Salmon farming is the most important economic development in the Highlands and Islands and we are the world's third largest producer of Atlantic salmon. The West Coast is also renowned for quality added value products such as smoked salmon and pates.



7

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OBAN & ARGYLL**



FARMING NEWS

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Union has 'huge concern' at fall in cattle numbers

MARTIN LAING

mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

THE results of the Scottish Government's December agricultural survey show that, while winter cereal plantings increased, silage production last year was down.

In the livestock sector, there were rises in sheep, pigs and poultry, but cattle numbers fell to their lowest since the 1950s.

The chief statistician for the Scottish Government released the latest results from the December agricultural survey last Thursday March 16.

The area of winter-sown crops in December 2016 was up on last December at 196,600 hectares, with 2,400 hectares more oilseed rape, 2,300 hectares more wheat, 700 hectares more oats and 400 hectares more barley.

Cattle numbers fell 1.4 per cent, to 1.71 million. There was



a slight decrease in both beef cattle (down 1.2 per cent) and dairy cattle (0.6 per cent).

December sheep numbers increased 1.7 per cent to 5.04 million. Pig numbers continued to rise, with an 11 per cent increase to 368,000, driven by an increase in the number of fattening pigs. In the poultry

sector, a 19 per cent increase in the number of broilers resulted in a seven per cent increase in the total to 14.4 million.

Results for commercial farms only also show that the amount of grass silage produced on in 2016 saw a seven per cent fall, alongside reductions in hay and arable silage. There were an

estimated 41,000 tractors, 3,800 combine harvesters and 956 milking parlours.

NFU Scotland vice-president Martin Kennedy, a livestock farmer from Highland Perthshire, said: 'The figures suggest that an increase in sheep numbers would be expected as a result of a better lambing in comparison to the previous year.'

'We need to drill down and see which proportion of the increase is attributed to breeding stock and which is because of a higher carry-over of lambs into the winter. The beef cattle numbers, however, are a huge concern and highlight the difficulty in maintaining numbers.'

It shows the need for continued targeted support either directly or indirectly to the largest part of our industry.'

NFU Scotland's crops committee chairman Ian Sands, who farms near Perth, added:

'A big factor in the surge in the winter cropping area was the outstanding weather window we enjoyed post-harvest. That spell was some of the best autumn planting conditions that we have had for a few years.'

The union's crops policy manager Peter Loggie said: 'No surprises here. Winter crop plantings are closely linked with planting conditions in the autumn. The conditions in autumn 2016 were much better than in 2015 so winter plantings are up.'

And the union's pigs and poultry policy manager, Penny Johnston, said: 'Good to see increases in both pigs and poultry although this needs to be placed in the context that both the broiler and pig industries have had major setbacks in recent history and these numbers represent signs of welcome recovery rather than expansion.'

Around the markets

STIRLING – Caledonian Marts Ltd sold 164 cattle comprising of 118 prime bullocks and heifers and young bulls and 46 cast cows and bulls on Thursday March 16.

Bullocks sold to 240ppkg for a Limousin from W Dandie and Sons, Learielaw, Broxburn purchased by T Johnston, Butchers, Falkirk, and to £1615 for a Simmental from C Smith, South Flanders, Kippen.

Heifers sold to 240ppkg for a British Blue from M I Wainwright and Sons, Todhall, Cupar purchased by J Hastie, Butchers, Markinch, and to £1564 for a Limousin from J Watson, Pitoyt, Stonehaven,

purchased by H A Black and Sons, Butchers, Lanark and Armadale.

Bulls sold to 170ppkg for a shorthorn from P Quigley and Sons, Harvieston, Gorebridge and to £1538.8 for a Charolais from A MacGregor, Allanfauld, Kilsyth.

Leading prices: Bullocks ppkg

228p Easter Ochtermuthill and Nethermyres, 225p Easter Ochtermuthill and Learielaw, 220p Meadowend and Kinneil Mill, 218p Nethermyres and Spittal, 215p Todhall, Spittal and Meadowend, Heifers ppkg

238p Learielaw and Easter Ochtermuthill, 235p Easter Ochtermuthill, 232p Meadowend, 230p Learielaw

225p Meadowend, Seggarsdean, Moorfield, Nether Longford, Faskine and Mains of Cultmalundie, 222p Pitoyt

220p Gillandersland, Nethermyres and Kinneil Mill

Bullocks per head £1603 South Flanders, £1541 Pitoyt, £1536 Learielaw,

£1516 Greencraig and Pitoyt, £1503 Learielaw, £1496 Pitoyt, £1477 Easter Ochtermuthill,

£1466 Todhall, £1460 Moorfield, £1449 Meadowend,

£1447 Mains of Cultmalundie and Auchmuir, £1440 Spittal, £1435 Easter Ochtermuthill, Heifers per head

£1532 Easter Ochtermuthill, £1524 Greencraig, £1444 Mains of Cultmalundie, £1416 Todhall, £1399 Kinneil Mill, £1390

Nether Longford, £1389 Learielaw, £1381 Moorfield, £1375 Learielaw, £1350 Seggarsdean

Young bulls per head £1301 Solsgirth

Avonbridge, and to £950 from J Craig, Carneil, Carnock. Cast bulls sold to 144ppkg from W and M Wyllie, Broompark, Torphichen and to £1310 from Blairsgreen Farms, Saline, Dunfermline.

Other leading prices: Beef cows per head

£1030 + £1010 Easterton, £980 Blairsgreen, £910 Duallin, £860 Springbank, £850 Seggarsdean

Beef cows ppkg

146p Easterton, 138p Blairsgreen, 134p Duallin, 128p Springbank, 124p Seggarsdean.

B&W cows per head

£880 + £840 Wester Lochdrum, £820 Badenheath, £810 Carneil, £770 Rossbank and North Bankhead

B&W cows ppkg

123p Rossbank, 119p North

Bankhead, 118p Wester

Lochdrum, 115p Badenheath, 113p Carneil

STIRLING – United Auctions sold 5634 prime sheep selling to an average of 161ppkg and 1447 ewes and rams on Thursday March 16.

Hoggs (4187) – Coilaevulin (Btex) £99; Abbey (Tex) £98;

Easter Buchlyvie (Suff) £88;

Ormiston Mains (Chev) £84.50;

West Thomaston (Char) £79.50;

High Dunashery (Mule) £77.50; Pearsie Estate (BF) £75.50

Hoggs (4187) – Coilaevulin (Btex) £226; Balchein (Tex)

206p; Stanley (Suff) 174p; North

Kinkell (Chev) 193p; West

Thomaston (Char) 187p; Little

Pinkerton (Mule) 170p; West

Lethans (BF) 177p

Ewes (1447) – Glenrath (Tex)

£130; Wester Bleaton (Suff)

£102; Mid Cambusnannie

(Cross) £96; Dalachy (Btex) £90;

Wester Bleaton (Mule) £88;

Craigend (Chev) £83; Finnich

Blair (Zwart) £80; Cassindilly

(BF) £62; Craighead of Bamff

(LLeyn) £53; East Tullyfergus

(Easy Care) £47; Lynn (Char)

£40; Tups – Southfield (Char)

£122; Headshaw (Suff) £110;

Headshaw (Tex) £101; Mid

Auchencarroch (Btex) £100;

Mid Auchencarroch (BFL) £71;

West Loch (Cross) £50; East

Tullyfergus (Easy Care) £50.

STIRLING – United Auctions sold 2192 store cattle also 184

cast cows and forward cattle also

forward 1265 store and breeding

sheep on Wednesday March 15.

Bullocks (1249) – averaged

227.40p to 275.40p per kg for a

334kg LimX from Ballikrain and

£1370 for a 697kg SimX from

Oatridge.

B & W bullocks (44) – averaged

132.79p to 149.50p per kg for a

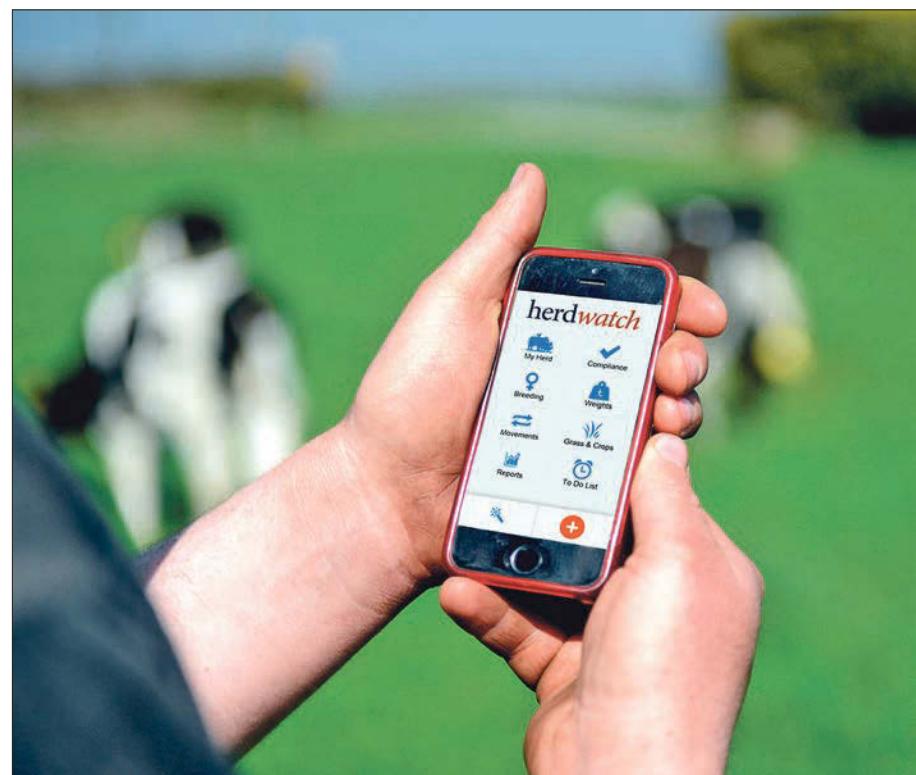
515kg BFX from Gatehead and

£770 for a 515kg BFX from

Gatehead.

Heifers (899) – averaged 218.30p

to 271.00p per kg.



New app helps farmers to reduce paperwork

FARMERS attending this year's Dairy Expo in Carlisle earlier this month (March) were invited to a free trial of farm management app, Herdwatch.

The app is a herd management tool that allows offline data to be entered throughout the day from a phone or tablet. It is currently used by more than 5,500 farmers in Ireland and a rapidly growing number in the UK.

Stephen Hastwell is a dairy farmer from Cumbria who has recently subscribed to Herdwatch. He said: 'I was on the lookout for something that would be easy to use and that would alleviate my paperwork burden. I had never even downloaded an app before but I found the month's free trial an ideal way to make the plunge.'

I love the fact it's fully mobile and

it allows me to record events on the farm as they happen. For example, if I treat an animal, I can record that straight onto my phone. That is automatically put into a report that is sufficient for my farm audits. I do not need to put pen to paper. It's incredibly handy and saves me a lot of time.'

James Greevy, from Herdwatch, added: 'I believe the success of this system is in its simplicity. It is easy to use, practical and yet provides comprehensive records that are fully compliant with quality assurance schemes.'

'Daily tasks such as calf registration and cattle movements take seconds, and can save up to two hours every week from reduced paperwork.'

For more information go to www.herdwatch.co.uk.

NFUS welcomes sky lantern ban in Argyll

SEVEN more Scottish local authorities – including Argyll and Bute – have now banned the release of sky lanterns and helium balloons over their land, but the National Farmers' Union Scotland (NFUS) is calling on 17 other councils to take action. Ahead of bonfire night last

year, the NFUS wrote to all of Scotland's councillors of those local authorities which did not have bans in place. Councils who have banned sky lanterns and balloons since the Union's correspondence are: Argyll and Bute, Inverclyde, Fife, East Lothian, West Lothian and Dundee, with Edinburgh

City Council currently putting measures in place.

They join Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Falkirk, Highland, Perth and Kinross and Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands, which already had a ban in place.

NFU Scotland president Andrew McCornick said: 'Sky

lanterns are seemingly innocent devices, and are beautiful to look at but they can cause untold damage as there is no control over where these burning structures of paper, metal and wood decide to land.'

'Across the UK, there have been many reports of fires started by lanterns and harm to livestock when lanterns have landed in fields and have been eaten. There is a further risk to stock when grass is cut and ensiled for winter feed, and the wire is chopped up and subsequently contained in hay

or silage.'

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The harsh reality for first-time buyers



FIRST TIME BUYERS STRUGGLE TO GET SET UP

- 68 per cent have had to sleep on a mattress on the floor
- 61 per cent have stored their clothes on a temporary clothes rail
- It takes first time buyers 46 weeks to fully furnish their home on average

FIRST TIME buyers are struggling through the first few months of home ownership without essential items of furniture and appliances - and turning to unusual ways to make do, according to new research.

A study of 1,007 first time buyers carried out by interiors retailer Furniture123.co.uk, found 68 per cent have had to temporarily sleep on a mattress on the floor in the absence of a bed.

Meanwhile 61 per cent have stored their clothes on a temporary clothes rail as they didn't have a wardrobe, while 65 per cent have balanced their TV on items like boxes, other than a media cabinet.

And more than half, 53 per cent, of respondents have resorted to a cool box for chilled items in place of a fridge.

Despite this, just 21 per cent claim to have gone more than two weeks without Wi-Fi, and less than 1 in 10, eight per

cent, have gone without a TV set-up - suggesting many are putting connectivity first before comfort.

Sixty two per cent of those who found themselves in these situations said this was due to a lack of funds and the rising costs of getting on the property ladder, while 1 in 4 - 27 per cent - said it was because of poor planning and they were waiting for items to arrive.

Mark Kelly, marketing manager at Furniture123.co.uk, said: 'It's alarming but perhaps not entirely unsurprising to read how many first time buyers are living without the basic furniture essentials when they first buy a home.'

Many are focussing so much on just actually getting the money together for the property they want that they are forgetting that there are some essential items that they will struggle to live comfortably without.

'Our advice to first time buyers would be to create a list of everything they need and the priority in which they need

those pieces of furniture. When cash-flow is an issue during the first few months of mortgage payments, finance options are available to help homeowners spread the cost over several months.'

On average, it takes first time buyers 46 weeks or 11.5 months to fully furnish their home.co.uk.

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Jane Morrison -
Cottages.com,
Business Development Manager

I was brought up in Lochaber and four years ago my partner and I moved to the picturesque village of Port Appin. The majority of my adult life has been spent working in the hospitality trade and for the last 10 years I have worked for Cottages.com. As Business Development Manager for the West Coast of Scotland I am always on the lookout for gorgeous properties. I know the local letting market extensively and also believe I understand how to make sure their rental property generates the biggest possible income with the smallest of Owner effort. On a day to day basis I visit many different properties from historic castles to wee "but & bens". I achieve an immense level of personal satisfaction from helping my new Owners build their business from an initial idea and concept, through to a sustainable holiday letting business.

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CLOSING DATE
FRIDAY 7TH OF APRIL AT 12 NOON

THE NISSEN HUT, TAYNUILT GUIDE PRICE £10,000

The property comprises an old Nissen hut, which has been let in recent years for storage. Nissen huts were invented during the first world war by inventor and engineer Major Peter Nissen to provide easily constructed pre-fabricated buildings. Typically, of steel framed and corrugated construction, Nissen huts continued to be used during the second world war as accommodation for troops, storage or general purposes buildings. Many of the buildings were sold after the war, and due to their construction they are often found in rural locations as general purpose stores.

- Unusual opportunity
- Rural location between Taynuilt and Connel
- Building of 64 square metres (688 square feet)
- Recently used for storage



CLOSING DATE
WEDNESDAY 5TH OF APRIL AT 12 NOON

3 BEN CRUACHAN VIEW, OBAN GUIDE PRICE £150,000

EPC D64

The property comprises a neutrally decorated 3 bedroom detached house. The ground floor is on a split level, with a kitchen and living room to the rear overlooking the garden and having elevated views across the town, and steps up to the hallway and bathroom. On the first floor are two double bedrooms and a single bedroom, all benefitting from views to the rear of the property.

- Well presented 3 bedroom detached house
- Neutral decor
- Practical split level accommodation
- Buy-to-let or first time buyer opportunity

FOR SALE/TO LET + Graham Sibbald

Ref: AJR/77

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- Manufacturing Unit with car parking.
- 917 sq.m/9,866 sq.ft or thereby.
- Offers over £300,000 plus VAT.
- Alternatively a rent of £45,000 plus VAT per annum is sought for the property.

EPC=E

CLOSING DATE - 12 noon, Thursday 6th April 2017

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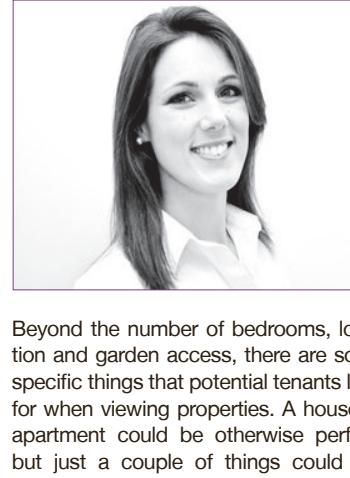
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WHAT TENANTS LOOK FOR WHEN VIEWING A PROPERTY



No awful smells

Whether the previous owner had a pet or just didn't open the windows very often, musty and off-putting smells are enough to make prospective tenants think twice. Airing out a property fully before viewings and a deep clean, including carpets will help make it seem more appealing to potential tenants.

Neutral colours

Make sure the property is decorated in neutral colours throughout. This lets tenants have a 'blank canvas' to customize with their belongings, making the property feel like a home. Settled tenants make good tenants, they really look after the property like their own and stay for longer.

Lots of light

The amount of light that fills a property is an important part of making it look as good as it possibly can. While you can't move windows to try and ensure as much natural sunlight as possible, you can do simple things like making sure the windows are clean. Also changing light fittings or replacing bulbs where necessary, will make the property as light an inviting as possible.

If you would like any advice on preparing your property for letting lease get in touch with the West Team today!

Clean carpets and floors
It's fairly easy to dust down most areas of a house and give the kitchen and bathrooms a good clean, but often the floors are forgotten about. Stains, marks and even smells coming from the carpet can be incredibly off-putting and are sure to make tenants question what else hasn't been cleaned. If the property is furnished, clearing excess furniture lets tenants see the size of the rooms and allows them space for their own furniture.

BEAUMARIS, TOBERMORY



- Detached bungalow
- 3 Bedrooms / 1 Bathroom
- Detached garage
- Quiet location but close to amenities
- Private garden
- EPC Rating - D61

Fixed price

£185,000

Beaumaris - A detached 3 bedroom bungalow located in upper Tobermory on the beautiful Isle of Mull. The accommodation comprises small internal porch, hall, a large lounge with multi-fuel stove, kitchen/diner, 3 double bedrooms and family bathroom. The lounge is well proportioned with central fireplace and large windows allowing plenty of natural light.

MORAY PLACE, FORT WILLIAM



- 3 bedroom ground floor flat
- Unfurnished
- Petting available
- Recently refurbished
- Close to town centre
- Electric heating

£625 PCM

Unfurnished 3 bedroom ground floor flat in highly desirable residential area of Fort William with stunning views out towards Loch Linne. Within walking distance of town centre and Lunderna primary school. Recently refurbished to a good standard. The property consists of hall, 2 double bedrooms, 1 single bedroom, lounge, modern kitchen/dining area & bathroom with shower over bath. Parking available. Landlord registration: 47862/270/19321. EPC: D(62)

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PROPERTIES FOR SALE & TO LET

GLENELG, TOBERMORY



- Mid Terraced House
- 5 Bedrooms/2 Bathrooms
- Detached Workshop
- Central location
- Walking distance to amenities
- EPC Rating - F35

OIRO £240,000

A deceptively spacious 5 bedroom mid-terrace house in Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. The property comprises a small porch which leads to a spacious lounge dining room on the ground floor with the kitchen and family bathroom at the rear. Upstairs there are 5 bedrooms with 1 ensuite shower room. This property benefits from having a sizeable detached workshop at the rear of the garden which could be used as a studio or large home office.

SHUNA TERRACE, OBAN



- 2 bedrooms
- Recently refurbished throughout
- Modern, neutral decor
- Unfurnished

£525 PCM

Modern 2 bedroom flat in upper Oban. Recently refurbished in a modern, neutral decor throughout, the property comprises of 2 double bedrooms - 1 with built-in wardrobe, a spacious kitchen with stunning views, lounge & shower room. Electric storage unit and double glazed windows. Rent excludes Council Tax (Band B) and Utilities. EPC - C75. Deposit & References required. Landlord Reg: 270831/130/07331. AVAILABLE END APRIL.

SHEEPKNOWE HOUSE, BUNESSAN



- Extended Traditional Cottage
- 4 Bedrooms & Bathrooms
- Recently refurbished throughout
- Unique & Private Tobermory
- EPC Rating - F26

OIRO £325,000

A substantial detached granite house positioned in a private position within walking distance of the village of Bu Nessan, on the beautiful Ross of Mull. Built in 1870, the property is full of character and has been lovingly maintained by its current owners. The ground floor accommodation in the front part of the house comprises of a front porch, spacious central hallway, shower room, large dining room, large sitting room and conservatory with patio doors.

CRAIGARD ROAD, OBAN



- One bedroom flat
- Unfurnished
- White goods included
- Town centre location

£460 PCM

Cosy one bedroom flat in Oban Town Centre. This property comes unfurnished with white goods and a large standing double wardrobe in the bedroom. It is freshly painted and has carpets throughout. The property is within walking distance to Oban's sightseeing attractions, the leisure centre and local shops. Deposit and references required. Landlord Registration: 440359/130/08551. EPC - E49. AVAILABLE END APRIL.

WOOD COTTAGE, TOBERMORY



- Extended Traditional Cottage
- 2-3 Bedrooms/1 Bathroom
- Stunning Sea Views
- Unique & Private Tobermory
- EPC Rating - E33

OIRO £250,000

A charming TRADITIONAL COTTAGE in a unique SECLUDED position with SEA VIEWS over the Sound of Mull, only a short drive from Tobermory! VIEWING IS A MUST to appreciate this UNIQUE opportunity! The cottage, which has been sympathetically extended and well maintained throughout, comprises a big and cosy lounge where there is potential to make use of the current chimney and install a wood-burning stove. A superb dining room enjoys the spectacular sea views.

WESTWOOD, OBAN



- Roomlet
- Rent includes bills
- Ensuite double room
- Shared driveway parking

£500 PCM

ROOMLET ONLY - Fully furnished large double room - rent £500pcm inc. bills. Room includes double bed, bedside tables, wardrobe space & TV. Large double room with private WC, and direct access to garden and decked area. Located in large detached house a 10 min walk from Oban town centre & Tesco's. Plentiful driveway parking. Landlord Reg: 362579/130/02211.

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2015/65 Subaru Levorg GT White, STI bodykit, Immaculate condition, 18105 miles.....	£20995
2014/14 Subaru Forester XT Black, Sat Nav, Automatic, Sunroof, 23647 miles.....	£19995
2012/62 Isuzu D-Max Utah Vision Auto Silver, Leather, Truckman Canopy 26265 miles.....	£14995 + VAT
2015/15 Isuzu D-Max Utah Nautlius Blue, Leather, One owner, 24923 miles	£18495 + VAT
2016/66 Isuzu D-Max Blade Auto White, Roller Shutter, Sports Bar Leather, 2287 miles...	£24995 + VAT
2009/59 BMW M3 Black, Full leather, Automatic, Outstanding performance, 55732 miles.....	£21995
2012/12 Range Rover Sport HSE, White, Full Leather, Stunning Car 59985 Miles.....	£25995
2010/10 Volvo XC90 D5 R-Design Diesel, Automatic, 7 Seats, Rear Entertainment system, Leather, 59983 miles	£14995
2010/10 Saab 9-3 Aero TTID Silver, Manual, Diesel, Leather, 35230 miles.....	£7995
2012/12 Nissan Qashqai 1.5 NTEC+ Black, Diesel, Diamond Cut Alloys, 58932 miles	£8495

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16 Renault Clio Dyn Nav TCE, 5Dr, H/B, White, Delivery Mileage	£12,500
65 Dacia Duster Laureate, DCi, 4x2, Black, 5,500 Miles	12,995
64 Honda Jazz, ES+ I-Vtec, 1.4, 5Dr, Brown 29,500 Miles	£7,450
64 Dacia Duster Access, 1.6, 4WD White, 9,550 Miles	£8950
14 Renault Scenic DYN, 1.5 DCi, 7/T, Black, 16,500 Miles	£12,650
14 Dacia Stepway AMB TCE, Black, 15,400 Miles	£6,750
63 Renault Clio DYN, 1.5 DCi, 5 Dr H/B, Black, 42,000 Miles	£7450
62/13 Renault Megane DYN, 1.6, Coupe, Silver, 18,000 Miles	£9,450
13 Hyundai Active, 1.2, 5Dr, H/B, Grey, 28,000 Miles	£5,000
12 Renault Megan I- Music DCi 5Dr H/B, Blue, 59,000 Miles	£5,650
11 VW Polo SEL TSI 1.2, 5Dr, Red, 34,000 Miles	£7,550
11 Renault Megan Coupe, GT-Line TCE, Blue, 25,000 Miles	£6,995
10 Renault Grande Modus DYN, TCE, 1.2, Blue, 31,000 Miles	£3,500
10 Renault Clio DYN, 1.5 DCi, 3Dr, Beige, 54,000 Miles	£3,750
09 Honda Civic ES I-Vtec, 1.8 5Dr H/B, Blue, 55,350 Miles	£4,650
09 Ford Focus Zetec 1.6, 5Dr, Black, 84,000 Miles	£4,250

COMMERCIALS

64 Vauxhall Combo CDTi, White, 5600 Miles	£6,750+VAT
63 Renault traffic, LL29, DCi, White, 10200 Miles	£8,500+VAT
62 Renault Traffic LL29 Sport, DCi, Black, 122,000 Miles	£6,850+VAT
60 Vauxhall Vivaro DCi Van	£6,750+VAT
08 Ford Transit Connect, 1.8 TDL White	£2,750+VAT
08 Renault Master SWB, White	POA

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Community Support Manager

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We are looking for a Retirement Housing Assistant to support the manager in the delivery of our retirement housing service at Lynn Court, Oban.

The Role

You will be responsible for undertaking a range of duties which ensures the development maintains a high level of cleanliness within all common parts. You will provide general assistance to tenants on issues relating to the development and to their Tenancy Agreement. You will also provide cover in the absence of the Retirement Housing Manager.

Hours of employment are 7 per week, Saturday and Sunday; 9am - 12:30pm.

Salary: £3,032 pro rata per annum (£16,244 FTE, £8.33 p/h)

Role Requirements

An interest in working with older people and an understanding of their needs is essential. Although relevant experience in a similar post is desirable, it is not essential as the skills and abilities outlined in the job description are of the highest importance. The successful candidate will also be required to complete a Standard Disclosure check with Disclosure Scotland.

Our Benefits

- Competitive salary, reviewed annually.
- 34 days holiday each year (pro rata for part-time employees). With the option to buy or sell holidays each year.
- Payment of your Standard Disclosure check with Disclosure Scotland.
- A wide range of learning and development activities including management & leadership programmes, job related training and qualifications to ensure your continuous progress.

Online: please visit our website www.bield.co.uk/work-us. You should then click on current vacancies and search for REQ00847 in the key words box.

Paper: if you'd prefer a paper application, please email jobs@bield.co.uk with your name and address and quoting the reference number REQ00847. Alternatively, you can call 0131 273 4022.



Seawater Veterinarian/Senior Biologist

Marine Harvest Scotland is the largest producer of Atlantic salmon in Scotland. The Company employs a workforce of over 600 throughout the Highlands and Islands and produces over 50,000 tonnes of salmon annually. Our farming operations are based in Fort William and the Company prides itself in being a major employer of skilled people and strives to produce high quality, healthy and nutritious seafood in the most sustainable way.

Over the coming years Marine Harvest has announced plans to invest over £100 million to integrate and grow its farming and fish feed production business in Scotland. We are proud of our 50 year heritage in the Scottish Highlands and Islands and the support we have from local communities and our dedicated workforce.

We are currently looking to identify a suitably qualified or experienced fish health and welfare professional with strong foresight and leadership skills to undertake the role of Seawater Veterinarian/Senior Biologist covering the entirety of our seawater operations. This new and senior role is to support and develop the effectiveness of our combined fish health and farm area management teams.

With several direct reports and reporting to the Head of Fish Health the successful candidate will be able to demonstrate an aptitude for managing, motivating and teaching people along with an ability to proactively develop programmes that prevent fish health & welfare problems occurring, minimise medicine use, and provide a comprehensive diagnostic support service. In addition, applicants should have a high degree of computer literacy and some experience of interpretative histopathology.

As extensive travelling is a feature of the job, a current driving licence is essential.

In return the successful candidate will benefit from a salary package befitting the significance of this role, including bonus, company vehicle and the opportunity to develop their career within Marine Harvest.

If you have the drive, commitment and enthusiastic personality that is required for this senior role, please apply in writing stating your reasons for applying and your relevant skills and experiences to:

Gillian Dempster, Human Resources Advisor, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd, Stob Ban House, Glen Nevis Business Park, Fort William, PH33 6RX by 31st March 2017.

ICT Client Liaison Officer

£36,516 - £39,984 Lochgilphead Ref: CTC00330

01546 604334

Closing date: 31 March 2017.

To apply visit our website

www.aryll-bute.gov.uk/jobs



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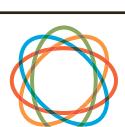
Time-served Motor Mechanic required. M.O.T. Tester an advantage but not necessary as training will be given. Basic computer skills necessary. Attractive salary offered depending on experience. Work wear supplied. 42.5 hour week /overtime available as required.

For further details telephone

01397 772404

or send CV to: Mr. G. Penman
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Tel. No. 01397 772404

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Receptionist Required**

Accounts Assistant/Bookkeeper. Ability to work with SAGE software an advantage, salary dependant on experience. Admin Assistant/Receptionist. Could be full or part time.

This is an opportunity to join an expanding, busy general practice with clients from all over Argyll and the Highlands and Isles, the appropriate candidates will be able to work on their own initiative and be able to have a good relationship with clients and other staff. Both positions would be in our Oban office.

Please email CV to Jean Ainsley CA at jean@ainsleysmith.co.uk
Tel: 01631 567007



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Bealach an Righ, Oban, Argyll PA34 5TG

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Email info@northargyllhouse.org

Marine Husbandry Sound of Mull

Scottish Sea Farms are an internationally recognised farmer of superior quality Scottish salmon. We pride ourselves in providing industry leading and highly personal development paths which build into fulfilling professional careers.

If you are committed to developing our industry and are driven to put your strengths to work, we would very much like to hear from you.

We are currently recruiting for the following positions:

Experienced Marine Husbandry staff

You should be able to demonstrate competence across a wide range of skills including fish health monitoring, stock appetite assessment, boat handling skills, feeding system and boat maintenance whilst being proactive in health and safety. Above all you should have the drive and ambition to further your career through training and development. A formal boat qualification would be desirable.

Trainee Husbandry

Applications are also invited by candidates looking to begin their career in the Aquaculture Industry. We are looking for ambitious individuals who are team players, proactive in health and safety and who have high expectations for themselves and of their employer. In return, we will provide you with a Mentor who will guide you through your first months of employment and a detailed training plan that will enable you to kick start your fish farming career.

All positions are full time, working a 40-hour week, Monday to Friday with 1:3 weekend working required on a rota system. In return, we will offer an attractive salary dependent on experience along with pension scheme, life insurance cover, occupational health support, subsidised gym membership and cycle to work scheme. A current driver's licence is essential.

To find out more please contact Angela Hand, Recruitment & HR Coordinator on 01786 445521 or email angela.hand@scottishseafarms.com for an application pack.

Closing date: Monday 27 March 2017



TSL Contractors is a multi-disciplined construction and civil engineering company with sites throughout the west of Scotland and offices in Oban and Mull. We currently have a number of opportunities to join our busy Construction offices.

BUYER

As an important member of our commercial team based in Oban, you will be responsible for the procurement of materials across the company's sites.

The ideal candidate will have experience within the construction sector and considerable knowledge of construction materials. You should be IT literate, with a good understanding of Microsoft Excel and Outlook. There will be an attractive remuneration package for the position, including a competitive salary (dependant on experience), a company pension and inclusion in the company bonus scheme.

If you are interested in applying for this role, please email your CV and covering letter to our Commercial Manager, David Stewart at HR@tslcontractors.co.uk or for more information, call the Oban Office on 01631 569991

The closing date for applications is Friday 31st March 2017.

ACCOUNTS MANAGER / FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

TSL Contractors are looking for an outstanding Accounts Manager / Financial Controller to oversee the accounts and administrative functions of a busy multi-disciplined business. You will be an excellent multi tasker, proficient with Sage accounts and have a first rate knowledge of MS Excel. The production of Management Accounts, managing cash flow and responsibility for the admin team are all part of the role. Ideally based in our Mull premises, consideration will be given to exemplary candidates being located in our Oban office. A competitive salary is on offer together with membership of the company pension scheme.

For an informal chat and further details please contact John Forbes on 01631 569991. Applications should be submitted to j.forbes@tslcontractors.co.uk by the 31st March 2017

SKILLED GROUNDWORKERS //

PLANT OPERATORS // GENERAL LABOURERS

Required for the Oban and Mull areas. CSCS / CPCS / NPORS are desirable but training can be provided if necessary. Driving licence also desirable, but not essential.

If you are interested in any of the above vacancies, please send in your CV along with a covering letter to Naomi Knight, HR@tslcontractors.co.uk or call 01680 812 475 for further details.



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The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Donald Cameron MSP Highlands and Islands Region is looking for a Caseworker

Donald Cameron MSP Highlands and Islands Region is looking for an enthusiastic and highly organised individual with excellent communication skills to join his team as a Caseworker. The purpose of the role is to support Donald and his team in the effective operation of a Parliamentary regional office, ensuring the delivery of a professional service to constituents. Duties include providing advice and support to constituents and stakeholders, managing constituent casework, including research and liaison with external agencies, record keeping and diary organisation for a busy Highlands and Islands MSP. The successful candidate will be an excellent communicator with an ability to prioritise, a quick and efficient work style, attention to detail and excellent IT skills including Microsoft Office. Enthusiasm, reliability and flexibility are essential qualities. A knowledge of the region would be advantageous and a full clean driving licence would be desirable.

In return the role offers an exciting and rewarding opportunity to become involved in the work of the Scottish Parliament and to support constituents in the Highlands and Islands region.

This is a part time position based in the Oban Regional Office, with occasional requirement to travel within the Highlands and Islands region and to Edinburgh.

Hours: 22.2 per week – based on 37 hours FTE (working pattern to be agreed). Salary: £21,000 per annum (pro-rata). Further details are available here ow.ly/qJ5h309W92U

To apply, please send a copy of your CV, along with a covering statement of no more than one page demonstrating how you meet the requirements set out above to Lois Calder by email to lois.calder@parliament.scot

Closing date for applications is 5 pm, Thursday 6th April 2017. Interviews are likely to be Mon 10th or Tues 11th April, 2017.



Funeral Service Operative

Casual Hours Only

What you need:

> Physical fitness – you'll be lifting coffins and carrying the deceased in a variety of environments and situations

> The flexibility to be part of an 'up to 24 hours on-call' team

> A full UK Driving Licence is essential

This vacancy would best suit a retired individual or someone who is self-employed and/or have a flexible approach to the role.

Please note this is a causal hours only vacancy and on an 'as and when' basis however you will be required to be retained on our "on call rota" month to month.

Please apply in writing with a CV attached to:

Mike McFall Funeral Directors

10 Battlefield Crescent, Inverlochy, Fort William, PH33 6NB

For further information contact our Funeral Home on 01397 701110.



**Due to the award of several long term contracts
OES Ltd require the following personnel.**

Apprentice Electricians

Applications are invited from motivated individuals Our apprenticeship will involve attendance at College on a block release basis, further learning will take place on site.

The apprenticeship will last for 4 years and is administered by SECTT.

Electrician/Approved Electricians

To join our existing contracts team, current grade card with CSCS essential. These roles would suit individuals with Domestic, Commercial & Industrial experience.

Immediate start for contracts within Argyll & Bute and Highland regions

Electrician's Mates/Labourer's

Relevant experience and CSCS endorsement are desirable for these roles, excellent opportunity for individuals to increase their skills base. Long term opportunities available. This may suit individuals willing to re-train from similar roles.

Trainee Multi Skilled Engineers

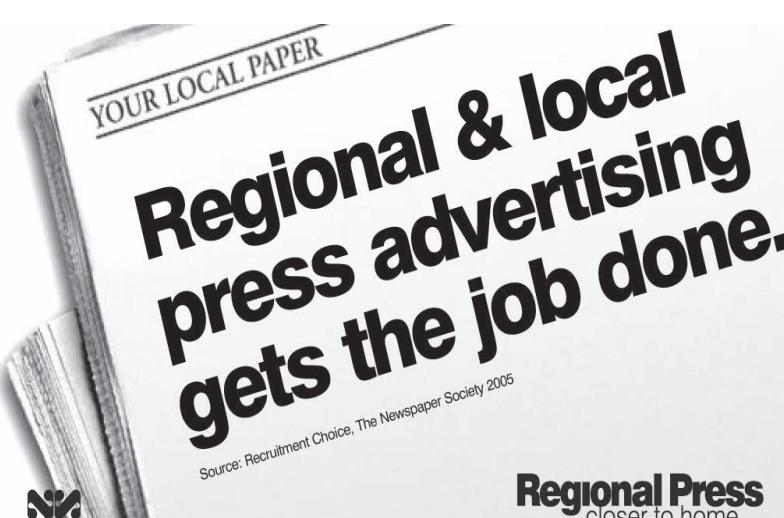
Do to our involvement with 2 long term FM contracts within Oban & Campbeltown, we have an opportunity for individuals to join our Maintenance team.

The successful applicants will receive training for various Building Services disciplines.

We welcome applications from school leavers and individuals willing to retrain for these important roles.

All applications to:

**Angus MacPherson, Managing Director
OES Ltd, 19 Stevenson street, Oban, PA34 5NA
amacpherson@fes-group.co.uk**



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PUBLIC NOTICES

Argyll and Bute Council

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 -13:30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.aryll-bute.gov.uk.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

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
17/00524/PP	Construction of passenger landing pontoon.	Tobermory Harbour Taigh Solais Tobermory Isle of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6NR	Tobermory Area Office
17/00469/PP	Formation of play park	Colonsay Village Hall Scalasaig Isle Of Colonsay Argyll And Bute PA61 7YW	Sub Post Office Isle of Colonsay
17/00637/MFF	Modification of existing shellfish (oyster) farm (increase in capacity by 250 trestles)	Port A Chlaigh Loch Na Keal Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA42 7AX	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
17/00631/PP	Erection of wind turbine (21 metres high to blade tip) and formation of access track	Land East Of Lower Cragabus The Oa Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA42 7AX	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
17/00280/PP	Erection of 15m high lattice tower, installation of 3no antennas, 2no dishes and associated equipment and works.	Land South East Of Oskamull Farm (off The B8073) Ulva Ferry Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA73 6LY	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
17/00568/AMSC	Approval of matters specified in conditions 3,4,5,6,7,8,9 relative to planning permission in principle 15/00421/PPP (Site for the erection of dwellinghouse)	Land North West Of Arinagour Pier Arinagour Isle Of Coll Argyll And Bute PA78 6SY	Sub Post Office Isle of Coll
17/00538/PP	Upgrade of existing telecommunications site (including extension to existing lattice mast)	Telecommunications Mast South West Of Barcaldine Castle Benderloch Oban Argyll And Bute PA30 8LW	Sub Post Office Connel

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.aryll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Council's website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:
www.aryll-bute.gov.uk

Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

www.highland.gov.uk



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk> or electronically at your nearest Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number Development Address Proposal Description

Reference Number	Development	Address	Description
17/01045/FUL	Birch Cottage, Banavie	Fort William	Demolition of Birch Cottage and erection of new house and annex
17/01197/PIP	Land 80M SE Of Dal-Ghorm Ardtroe, Acharcable	Dal-Ghorm Ardtroe, Acharcable	Erection of house (renewal of 13/00670/PIP)
17/01165/PIP	Land 80M East Of Glenview Duror	Glenview Duror	Plot no 2 - proposed site for a dwelling house and detached garage
17/01164/PIP	Land 40M East Of Glenview Duror	Glenview Duror	Plot no 1 - proposed site for a dwelling house and detached garage
17/01094/FUL	Lochaline Fire Station	Lochaline, Morvern Oban	Demolition of building formerly known as Lochaline Fire Station & development of domestic accommodation, incorporating 3 separate apartments
17/00469/FUL	Land 60M To North West Of Benlochy Cottage	Benlochy Cottage, Fort William	Erection of dwelling house

Time period for comments if 14 days & 21 Days for 17/01094/FUL

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk



BLAST AT BANAVIE QUARRY

23rd March

BETWEEN 12:00 – 14:00hrs

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

Argyll and Bute Council

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (B8003 BALVICAR-CUAN ROAD)(NORTH CUAN FERRY) (PROHIBITION OF WAITING) ORDER 2017

NOTICE is hereby given that on Monday 20th March 2017 Argyll and Bute Council made the above named Order under the relevant sections of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended. The Order, which comes into operation on 5 May 2017, introduces waiting restrictions on a section of the B8003 Balvicar-Cuan Ferry Road at the North Cuan Ferry.

Modifications

The restriction on the west side of the road has been reduced in length by 2.5 metres, this is a change to the Order as originally proposed and advertised in the Oban Times on 9 February 2017.

A copy of the Order as made and plan relative thereto are available for inspection during normal office hours Monday to Friday inclusive at the following offices:-

- (i) Balvicar Post Office, Balvicar Stores, Balvicar;
- (ii) Luing Post Office, Luing Stores, Culipool;
- (iii) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Any person, who wishes to question the validity of the Order or any provision contained in it on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or on the grounds that any requirement of that Act or any instrument made under it has not been complied with in relation to the Order may, within six weeks from 24 March 2017 apply to the Court of Session for this purpose.

Jim Smith, Head of Roads & Amenity Services, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD

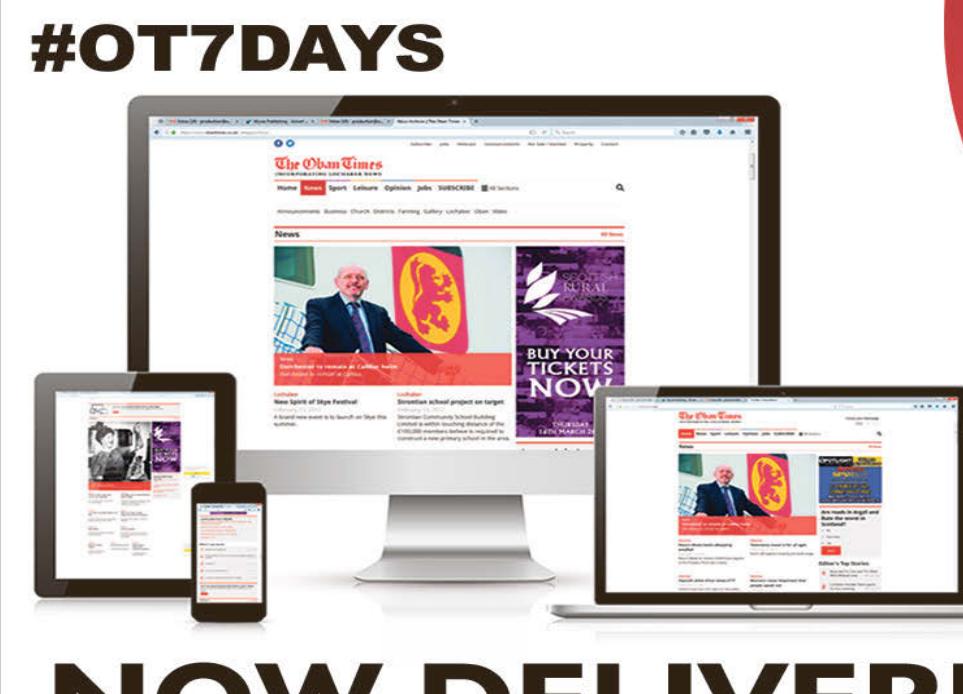
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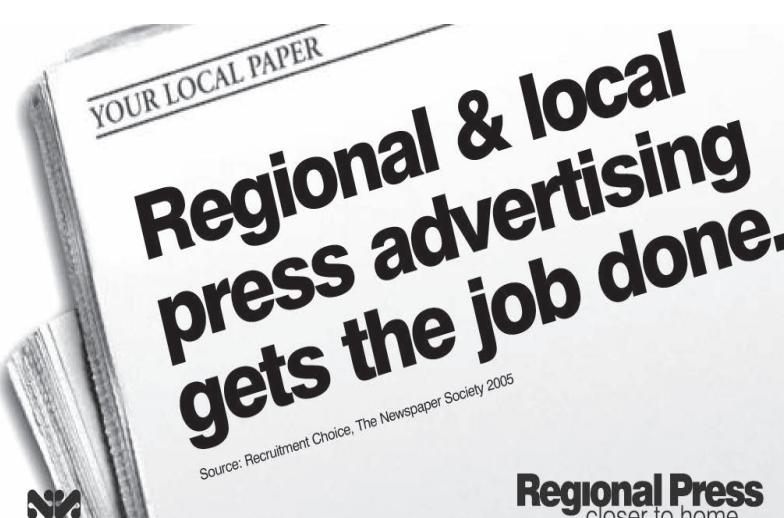
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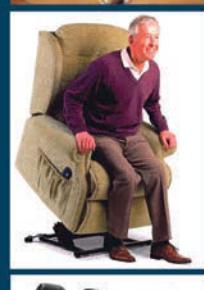


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GOLDEN WEDDINGS

GROUT - MACARTHUR - Jim and Isabel were married at Strachur Parish Church on March 18, 1967 by the Rev. R.S Banks. Ard - Mhor, Deidre, Connel, Oban.

DEATHS

CLARK - After a short illness, surrounded by her family, on Thursday, March 16, 2017, in her 74th year, Eileen nee Parkinson, beloved wife of Bill, loving mother of Billy, Alan, Andrew and Hazel and loving gran. Sadly missed. A Cremation Service will take place at Cardross Crematorium, on Wednesday, March, 29, 2017 at 12.15 p.m. Family flowers only. Retrial collection/donations will be taken for Cancer Research UK.

ELLIS - Peacefully at home with her family, after losing her fight to cancer, on Friday, March 17, 2017, aged 68 years, Emily Ellis beloved wife of the late Frank. Sadly missed.

JORJANI - Dr Jean MacKay, late of Salen, Isle of Mull, passed away in the loving care of her daughter in Reno, Nevada, USA, on March 9, 2017. A loving wife to Mano, adored mother of Linda, David and Daniel and a very special grandma. Jean's ashes will be brought back to her beloved Mull.

MACCALLUM - On March 15 after a short illness at Moss Park Care Home, Isobel MacCallum (née Mann), passed away peacefully surrounded by her family.

Beloved wife of the late Alan and mother of Heather and Linda, loving nannie and great nannie. Funeral service to be held in Kilmallie Parish Church at 10am on Thursday March 30, 2017 and thereafter to Inverness Crematorium at 2pm. Family flowers only.

MACDOUGALL - M.A. T.D. Donald John. Peacefully at Stonehouse Hospital, Lanarkshire on Friday, March 10, 2017 with his family by his side, Donald much loved husband of Pat and a dearly loved dad of Niall. Grateful thanks to all the staff at Lockhart Unit Stonehouse Hospital for the excellent care and attention shown to Donald.

MACFADYEN - Peacefully on March 4, 2017, aged 79 years, Maureen MacFadyen, Tobermory, Isle of Mull. Much loved mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt. Sadly missed by all her family. Funeral was held at Tobermory Parish Church on Wednesday, March 22, 2017 thereafter to Tobermory Top Cemetery.

MAGILLIVRAY - Peacefully, after a short but bravely fought illness, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on March 19, 2017, surrounded by his family, Angus "Gus" MacGillivray, son of the late Angus and Rachel MacGillivray, loving

husband of Elizabeth, father, grandfather, brother, brother-in-law and uncle. Private family cremation. Donations for the Macmillan Suite at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban and Oban Hospice, can be sent c/o D & A Munn Ltd.

MACKAY - Margaret Mackay of Toberonochy, Luing, passed away peacefully on Sunday, March 19, 2017. Solely missed and beloved Mum to John-Neil, Gordon, Sheena and Mairi. Funeral will take place at Kilchattan Church, Luing on Friday March 24 at 1.00 pm. Thereafter to Kilchattan Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection/donations if desired for Alzheimer Scotland and Multiple Sclerosis.

MAULE - Suddenly but peacefully, after a short illness, Stanley (Stan) Maule, aged 91 years, of Kames Cottage, Lochgair, beloved husband of Betty, much loved father of Alistair and a dear brother, uncle and cousin to all the family. A good neighbour, dear friend and much respected former work colleague to many. Funeral service will be held in Lochgilphead Parish Church, on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 12.00 noon, thereafter to Achnabreac Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired, to Macmillan Nurses Mid Argyll. All friends are respectfully invited to attend.

MCINNES - Anna. Peacefully at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, on March 16, 2017, Anna, aged 100 years, beloved wife of the late Ewen.

MORRISON - Ena. Peacefully at her home after a long illness on Saturday March 18. Beloved wife of Dougal, loving mother of Anne Marie, Michael, Donald and Moira, and a devoted grandmother. Funeral on Friday March 24 at 1pm at St Mary's RC Church, thereafter to Glen Nevis.

ROBERTSON - Sadly after a short time in hospital, on Wednesday, March 15, 2017 James (Jim) Robertson, aged 86 passed away. Loving brother to Eoghan and Phil and the late Meta and John. Much loved uncle and great uncle. Funeral to be held at 1 pm on Monday, March 27, 2017 at Kilchattan Cemetery, Luing and afterwards at the Atlantic Islands Centre, Cullipool. Family flowers only please. A collection will be taken for Mary's Meals.

SMART - Sadly after a long struggle, Thomas Smart of Tobermory and Harwich in Essex, at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow, in his 80th year. Devoted husband of Heather, much loved father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He will be sorely missed. The funeral service will be at Tobermory Parish Church on Monday March 27 at 1pm, followed by Cremation at Cardross

on Tuesday. All friends most welcome at the Church and afterwards at The Old Manse. Family flowers only but donations if desired to the National Kidney Foundation c/o Mull Funeral Services, Craignure.

VEITCH (Corporach) - Peacefully at Ballochside Care Home, Huntly on Wednesday March 15, 2017, William John Oswald (Ossie), beloved husband of the late Kate. Funeral service in Kilmallie Church, Corpach on Friday March 31 at 1.00pm, thereafter to Kilmallie Cemetery. All friends are respectfully invited.

WILSON - John (ex Tight Line, Lochawe) peacefully at home in the arms of his loving wife. John Wilson, aged 75 years, of Creag an Airm, Oban, beloved husband of Jacqui, much loved father and cherished brother. Special thanks to the Doctors at Lorn Medical Centre, the District Nurses, Mears Carers, Marie Curie and North Argyll Carers Centre who have all helped to care for John and supported Jacqui over the past two years to enable John to remain at home. Many of whom we came to regard as friends. Thanks also to our families and friends for all their kind messages of sympathy. There will be no funeral as, in accordance with John's wishes, his body has been donated to The University of Glasgow for medical research. They'll find an amazing brain and a good heart. Greatly loved.

- Inserted by Mrs Mary Lamont.

CLARK - Euphemia Elizabeth. Precious memories of my dear aunt Effie, who died on March 26, 2009. 'Loved, remembered and sorely missed every day.'

- Loving niece Mary and husband Bobby.

DEMPSSTER - In loving memory of a dear mother and nana Morag Scoular, who died March 24, 1986. Also her husband Kenny who died December 1, 1989.

- Fondly remembered by Hugh and grandchildren.

HAY - In loving memory of James, a dear husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather, who passed away in March, 2006.

Forever in our hearts

- Joan, Donald, Anthea, Iain and families

MACDONALD - In loving memory of Ian, who passed away March 24, 2012.

Gone but not forgotten.

- Family Livingstone's, Appin and family MacIsaac's, Comrie.

MACNICOL - In loving memory of Seumas (James), who passed away March 20, 2015. Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his family and friends

Nar cridheachan gu bràth.

McNICHOL - Loving memories of dearly loved parents and grandparents, Janet, died March 24, 1986 and Duncan, died November 29, 1987.

Sadly missed.

- Nellie, Tommy and family.

WHITEHEAD - In loving memory of our beloved mum, Patricia, died March 23, 2013. To those who have a mum Love her while you may

Because we wish with all our hearts

Our mum was here today.

Loved and missed always.

- Christine, Alistair, Elizabeth, Michael, Fiona and families.

all cards, kind words and messages of support and sympathy on the sad passing of our mum Hilda. Thanks to Rev Andrew Swift and Jeremy Rivers for their comforting service. Funeral Directors Scott Greenlees at J McLellan & Co, Fort William for their professional service. The retiral collection raised £800 shared between St Mary's Church and Ballachulish Medical Centre. Also thanks to all who helped at Ballachulish Hall and George, Jane and Catherine at church.

MEMORIALS

ARMSTRONG - In loving memory of my dearest mother who passed away March 23, 1975, also remembering dear friends Tootsie and Marie Campbell, Mrs Madge MacIsaac and Rev John MacLeod and his dear wife Dolina, also Donnie Ferguson, a very kind and caring vet and remembering also John Alan MacNeil, Barra and dear friend Nancy Duffy.

- Inserted by Mrs Mary Lamont.

CLARK - Euphemia Elizabeth. Precious memories of my dear aunt Effie, who died on March 26, 2009. 'Loved, remembered and sorely missed every day.'

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Kirk calls on UK Government to respect will of Scottish Parliament



IT would be wrong to stall holding a second referendum says church leader.

The Church of Scotland has responded following First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's announcement that she planned to ask for permission to hold a second referendum on Scottish Independence.

In the 2016 EU Referendum, the Church of Scotland spoke out in favour of continued membership as being in the best interests of Scotland, the UK and Europe. This has been the Church of Scotland's policy since 1996 and it remains the Church's current position.

Rev Dr Richard Frazer, convener of the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland, said: 'The First Minister has declared her intention to seek the authority for a referendum on Scottish Independence. And with a majority of MSPs in favour of independence it is likely that such a vote will be passed.'

The UK Parliament will have the final say on whether to grant the right to hold an independence referendum. It would be wrong if it was withheld.

'In 2014, rather than taking a position on either side of the independence debate, the Church of Scotland consulted individuals and communities on what sort of Scotland they wanted to live in.

'It also hosted, and encouraged others to host, respectful conversations where people expressed their position passionately

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School Sport Awards handed out

SIX PRIMARY schools from Oban, Lorn and the Isles received a School Sport Award last week.

The School Sport Award is a sportscotland programme which is used as a benchmarking tool for schools to assess progress in key areas such as school sport, links to community clubs, competition and celebrating sport.

Councillor Roddy McCuish and Active Schools Co-ordinator Gillian Walker pre-

sented the plaques, commending schools for their tremendous enthusiasm for physical education, physical activity and sport (PEPAS).

Many schools across Argyll and Bute are committed to developing PEPAS and it is important they are recognised for their hard work.

Fantastic initiatives like the sportscotland School Sport Award highlight the commitment schools are making to encourage and

Sports awards

support children and young people to live an active life.

The award also encourages parental involvement, promoting a whole school approach to being active and everyone can see the impact and benefits in each of these schools who have really embraced the award scheme.



Silver award - Park Primary School.



Silver award - Lochnell Primary School.



Silver award - Appin Primary School.



Councillor Roddy McCuish, Rosie Dairon and teacher Nicola Bichard with Dunbeg Primary Schools silver award.



Bronze award - Barcaldine Primary School.



Silver award - St Columba's Primary School.

Impressive bike win for Catriona



Cycling
BARCALDINE cyclist Catriona MacGillivray, already a double Scottish 50 mile time trial champion, recently showed her intent to dominate Scottish women's time trialling this season with a resounding win in the prestigious season-opening Corrieri Classic 10-mile time trial near Stirling.

Backing

Catriona races for the newly-formed RT23 racing team, with backing from local companies Creran Marine and Tralee Bay Holidays.

Her time of 23.07, covering

Catriona MacGillivray on her way to winning the Corrieri Classic 10-mile time trial.

Cycling

the 10-mile course at an average speed of almost 26mph, gave her a clear win over her nearest rival by one minute, 20 seconds and bodes well for her campaign over all the Scottish time trial distances - 10, 25, 50 and 100 miles - this coming season.

New event

There will be a chance to see Catriona and her team-mates racing locally when a new event to the racing calendar, the Tour of Glencoe, takes place on Sunday May 14. This is a hilly time trial through Kinlochleven, starting and finishing in Ballachulish.

Currie bags second place in championship opener

Rallying

MULL rally driver Alasdair Currie kick-started his championship assault with a fantastic second overall.

The 19-year-old is contesting the Fiesta ST Trophy this year in the BTRDA Rally championship. Currie and long term co-driver Steven Brown contested the Malcolm Wilson Rally in Cumbria last weekend and are delighted with the result.

'This has been a long time coming. I am so pleased to get a solid finish especially from such a strong field of drivers. The other competitors have much more experience on gravel than me, so to be right at the sharp end straight away is a huge confidence boost.'



Alasdair Currie in action.

the full championship. There is a lot more to come from me yet and I can't wait to get back out in the car again soon.'

Saints under-16s reach Regional Cup final

OBAN Saints 2001s travelled to Wishaw to take on Wishaw Wycombe Wanderers from the highly-rated Lanarkshire League in the Central Region semi final on Sunday.

This stage of the competition was unknown territory for any Saints team, with the under 16's determined to again prove like other age groups from the Oban Saints stable that they can match up and compete against the big names in the national competitions.

A late switch of venue an hour

before kick-off was not the ideal start but the Oban lads were determined not to let this affect them.

Right from the kick-off the determination and intent was clear to the big travelling support that the Saints were not just there for a day out.

First to every ball and passes flowing, Saints took the lead in the tenth minute when a cross from Cammy Kerr was met perfectly at the back post by Sol Smith.

Saints continued their pres-

sure and grip on the match and in the 18th minute man-of-the-match Smith netted his second goal with a shot from the edge of box. 2-0 Saints.

The Oban side continued to attack and they came close with chances from Kerr, MacLean and Dowd. On the half-hour mark, Keir MacLean hit the back of the net, however, the linesman correctly ruled it offside.

Just a few minutes later there was no doubt about his next goal with a typical poacher's shot leaving the keeper helpless.

No changes were made at half time and being 3-0 down it was no surprise the home team came out at a high tempo, winning a free kick in a dangerous area just outside the box, firing in a shot but Saints keeper Ali Ferguson made an outstanding save to tip the ball onto the crossbar.

Wishaw did have the ball in the net later on but the officials ruled it offside.

Striker Mossman replaced

Kerr and looked lively causing

Park Primary bowl them over

OBAN Cricket Club joined up with Active Schools recently to hold the eighth annual primary seven cricket festival at Atlantis Leisure.

After running cricket taster sessions with all the primary schools in Oban, pupils returned for a day's competition which proved to be a huge success with a great standard of play displayed throughout.

Six teams from Rockfield school, four from Park school and three from St Columba's started by playing a group format where each team played three games. The two teams who came out on top after the group stage were both from Park School and they contested the final in front of the rest of the field.

A great game ensued with some fine batting and fielding from both sides. At the end, Park 4 were the victors, scoring 113 runs against their opponents' 86.

Ronnie Kelly from Oban Cricket Club said: 'The standard of play was absolutely incredible and shows the schools

Cricket festival

These sessions are open to children from P6-S1.

Oban's senior cricket team is practising at Atlantis Leisure every Sunday from 4-5pm and new players are always welcome.



Winners of the cricket festival were Park 4.



Oban Saints 2001s with coaches Donald Black and Mark Anderson.

Saints brought back down to earth

Oban Saints	0
St Joseph's FP	3
SAFL Premier Division	

AFTER the euphoria of the previous week's Scottish Amateur Cup seventh round replay win against Letham, Saints were brought crashing back to earth last Saturday with a crushing home league defeat to a title rivals St Joseph's FP.

The 3-0 reverse leaves Saints 11 points behind Premier Division leaders Goldenhill, albeit with three games in hand. Crucially St Joseph's have now opened up a three point gap on Saints with a further game in hand over their old rivals.

Injuries to Paul Kerr and Scott Maitland forced manager Alex Craik to change his line-up from the previous week with Dene Cassells, Matthew Kelly and Myles McAuley all promoted to the starting line-up.

The gaffer named a strong bench with Martin Bonar, David McArthur and new signing Kerr Newbigging joining last week's substitutes Ross Maitland and Dean Smith.

The visitors kicked off attacking the Mossfield end and created the first opening of the match in the second minute.

Wide midfielders Kieran O'Brien and Martin McComish combined with O'Brien spraying a delicious diagonal ball from right to left sending McComish in behind Matthew Kelly.

However, the low cross from McComish was fractionally too far in front of strikers Gregor Cree and Ryan Halpin.

St Joe's keeper Nathan Bogle, one of 11 new faces in this

season's squad, made a fine save low down to his left in the sixth minute to deny Donald Campbell from Saints' first strike on goal.

The woodwork came to Saints rescue in the eighth minute after Ryan Halpin had beaten Dene Cassells in the air to help on a Nathan Bogle goal kick.

Manager Alex Craik made a tactical switch to a 3-5-2 formation for the start of the second half which saw Matthew Kelly and Paul Carmichael taking the wide roles in midfield.

Kelly immediately pushed forward straying marginally



Craig MacEwan runs at the St Joe's defence.

After a slow start, Saints enjoyed a decent spell of pressure leading up to the quarter hour mark.

The 18th minute saw referee John Scott produce the only yellow card of the match for a late challenge by Kieran Boyce on Paul Carmichael.

A good turn and cross from the corner of the Saints 18-yard box from David Gallagher tested the handling of Thomas McCulloch who needed two attempts to get the ball safe under pressure from Ryan Halpin.

Halpin was enjoying renewing hostilities with old adversary Marc MacCallum and his physical presence was giving the Saints back four plenty to think about.

The visitors broke the deadlock in the 34th minute when Saints failed to clear their lines from a long ball knocked up to Halpin.

The loose ball fell kindly for Scott Smith who smacked the ball into the bottom corner past Thomas McCulloch's despairing left hand.

Saints responded immediately with Brian Mackay running at

the heart of the St Joe's defence and setting up Willie Gemmell for a shot from 18-yards which curled wide of Nathan Bogle's left hand post.

Saints ended a frustrating first half still probing for openings in a solid looking St Joe's back four.

Manager Alex Craik made a tactical switch to a 3-5-2 formation for the start of the second half which saw Matthew Kelly and Paul Carmichael taking the wide roles in midfield.

Kelly immediately pushed forward straying marginally

Football

strike again in the 64th minute. This goal falls into the gift category. Shambolic defending saw Willie Gemmell and Myles McAuley run into each other gifting possession to Gregor Cree who fed Martin McComish on the left of the box and rolled the return ball into the empty net.

Paul Carmichael came close to pulling one back from the restart, making a good near post run to meet Donald Campbell's cross from the left but lifting his cushioned volley over the crossbar under pressure from Craig Cameron.

With 22 minutes remaining, Saints manager Alex Craik made a triple substitution withdrawing Jamie Graham, Willie Gemmell and Brian Mackay replacing them with David McArthur, Ross Maitland and new signing Kerr Newbigging.

While Saints were adapting to the changes, Craig Cameron ventured forward from his defensive beat and fired in a shot which Thomas McCulloch did well to block at his near post. David Gallagher then scuffed a left foot shot well wide spurning a good opportunity to put the result beyond any doubt.

Paul Carmichael continued to have the best of Saints chances and ought to have done better with a 75th minute header. Kerr Newbigging, a good addition to the Saints squad, won a free-kick 20-yards from goal and right of centre.

Ross Maitland curled the ball towards the back post where Paul Carmichael got across Kieran Boyce but flashed his header inches wide of Nathan Bogle's left hand post.

When Saints finally did hit the target, they found Nathan Bogle equal to the task. Kerr Newbigging combined on the right with Matthew Kelly and dug out a good cross for Craig MacEwan who met it with a powerful header. But Bogle dived to his left to tip the ball round the post.

Bogle was off his line smartly moments later spreading himself at his near post to block from Matthew Kelly.

The Maitland and Carmichael combination provided another near thing in the 85th



Paul Carmichael shields the ball from Fraser Murray.

Match report and photographs: Derek Black



66
I'm sure the boys will be fired up for Saturday's Scottish Cup quarter final

Oban Saints manager Alex Craik



Shukokai Karate Club members after their recent grading test success.

BJJ
Oban BJJ are attending seminars and tournaments over the next few days and a full report will be in the next column.

The club is run by Iain (Coogie) Potter who trains under Marcos Nardini. For any enquiries contact Coogie on coogiepots@gmail.com.

Kyokushinkai Karate
Darryl McLaughlin from the Oban club and Jodie Robertson from the Lochgilphead club are training for the Kyokushin Cup event on Saturday April 8 in Glasgow.

Both competitors are taking part in the full contact fighting and kata sections of the tournament.

Darryl has moved up to the cadet category this year having placed fourth in the junior

MARTIAL ARTS WITH IAIN RODGER

section last year. This will be Jodie's first full contact fight. We wish both fighters the very best of luck.

If you are interested in learning Kyokushin karate contact Iain Rodger on: 07584 166542 or iain@ikku.co.uk.

Shukokai Karate

The Dalmally club continues to grow with five new students starting in the past month. This brings the club's membership to 21. The existing members are pictured after their recent grading test success.

Beginners are always welcome at the Argyll Martial Arts classes and if you are interested please contact Kenny Gray on 07884 183905 or 01838 200419 or Flo McBurnie on 07765 931902.

Kickboxing

Six junior members of the club are travelling to Arbroath on Sunday March 26 to take part in the WUMA Scottish Open points tournament. This is a big tournament with participants from all over the UK attending. Club members wish Sara Mac-

Intyre, Angus Files, Cody McCulloch, Robbie Bratton, Billy Bratton and Adam Bratton the best of luck.

The Kyokushin Cup tournament in Glasgow on April 8 is attracting competitors from all over Europe.

The junior fighters mentioned above, along with Logan Galbraith, Jessica McCulloch and Kaitlynne MacLeod, will be taking part in this event.

Training continues as usual: Wednesdays, 6.30pm till 7.30pm for juniors and seniors, 7.30pm till 9pm. On Sundays the juniors are from 11am till 12.30pm and there is a women only session at 2pm.

Find the club on Facebook under Senshi Do Kickboxing or contact Wullie Rodger on 07588 513618 or shihanwill@gmail.com

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1250

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

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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.

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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. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochgilphead, 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

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of Wyvern Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter:

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SHINTY

Best for all shinty news, results and fixtures

Marine Harvest Media Award winners 2016

Champions suffer first league defeat in two years

Oban Camanachd take the honours in action-packed thriller at Mossfield

THE WET weather played havoc with the shinty schedule but Oban Camanachd grabbed the headlines with a win over champions Newtonmore last Saturday.

Marine Harvest Premiership

Oban Camanachd 2

Newtonmore 1

Oban Camanachd took the honours in the Marine Harvest Premiership match of the day beating reigning champions Newtonmore 2-1 at Mossfield.

Scott McKillop hadn't recovered in time from a shin problem so he missed out for the home side.

Newtonmore's Paul MacArthur was also sidelined, with a hamstring problem, so David MacLean started at wing centre. Oban Camanachd made the breakthrough on 18 minutes when Andrew MacCuish collected possession on the edge of the centre circle and beat two players on a 30-yard run forward before his shot went low into the net, taking a bounce on the way.

Lorne Dickie made it 2-0 on 27 minutes when his low effort from the left of the 'D' beat keeper Owen Fraser.

The Oban Camanachd midfield of Daniel MacCuish, Lorne Dickie and Aidan MacIntyre was providing plenty ball for

their forwards and Malcolm Clark, who again played really well, twice went close to adding to the home side's tally.

Newtonmore came back into the game before the break but were unable to reduce the deficit until 68 minutes. Oban Camanachd claimed for a free-hit following a challenge but referee Lachie Wood opted for a throw-up which the visitors won. Glen MacKintosh won possession and made just enough space to beat keeper Gavin Stobart on his left side to make it 2-1.

A terrific 30-yard strike from Matt Rippon was heading for the top corner of the net but 'More keeper Owen Fraser made a brilliant save, stretching to tip the ball over the bar with his caman.

Newtonmore defender Andy MacKintosh was shown a straight red card by referee Lachie Wood following a tussle with Daniel MacVicar in which he grabbed his visor and the home side saw out the closing stages to take the points. MacKintosh only returned from a ban a week earlier as a substitute against Glenurquhart and now faces another spell on the sidelines.

Newtonmore went through the whole of last season only dropping two points – both in draws with Kyles Athletic. In comparison, they have now already dropped three points in

their first three league matches this year so it will be interesting to see how they respond. Next up for them is the opening round of their MacTavish Cup defence when they travel to An Aird to play Fort William.

Oban Camanachd have a bye in the opening round of the Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Society Cup so they will host Kyles Athletic in the league at Mossfield this Saturday.

Boss Iain Hay knows they will need to be at their best to take anything from the game.

Speaking after the win over Newtonmore, Hay said: 'We are creating chances which is encouraging so more goals will come. The forwards are showing good movement and that's good to see.'

'We have also stood up to some physically demanding games over recent weeks and we've shown good battling qualities and I'm pleased to see these areas of our game improve.'

Hay also hopes to have a couple of injured players back soon. He added: 'Scott McKillop has a hospital appointment this week and we hope to have him back before too long. David Lafferty was also at the game today as a spectator and he is working his way back from injury.'

Iain Hay and Fraser Ingles have been working their players hard at training.

'Fraser and I take a night each at training,' said Hay. 'Our fitness is good and that's been evident towards the end of our games already this season. There are a couple of players who have a bit more work to do to achieve full fitness but we are on the right track.'

Kyles haven't had a game for the last two weeks but they had an extended training session after the postponement of their game with Kinlochshiel last Saturday and James Perlich's side will relish the trip to Mossfield.

A large crowd is expected for what should be an entertaining 90 minutes.

Lovat 4

Kilmallie 2

Loat came from two goals down to defeat Kilmallie 4-2 in their 3pm throw-up at Balgate.

Loat manager Fraser Gallacher was without Drew Howie, Martin Mainland and Mark Kelly but Danny Kelly was passed fit to play after suffering a head knock against Kinlochshiel a week earlier. Daniel Grieve started at full back.

Kilmallie boss Mark MacPherson was without six first team players including full back Allan MacDonald, Peter McIntyre and Michael Rodger who began a two-game ban following his red card against Kingussie a week earlier. Craig MacIsaac was free to play but now faces a period on the sidelines as his

booking against Kingussie a week earlier triggers a three-match suspension.

Kilmallie survived a couple of early scares, including a Shane Gillies save with his feet to deny Greg Matheson, before taking the lead on their first serious attack of the game. They played the ball up the left wing and a poor clearance out of the Loat defence fell to Ryan Stewart who made it 1-0 with just four minutes played.

The game then switched from end to end for a period although Lorne MacKay came close to a leveller but Shane Gillies again saved well.

Kilmallie extended their lead on 31 minutes when a ball down the right found Mark Graham who neatly beat his marker to score from 20 yards.

Loat responded almost immediately and pulled a goal back a couple of minutes later. A diagonal ball from left to right caused the problem for Kilmallie. Greg Matheson got to the ball first and scored to make it 2-1.

Loat levelled on 37 minutes. Greg Matheson saw an initial shot blocked but Lewis Tawse was in support and prevented the Kilmallie defence from clearing their lines. The ball fell again for Matheson and he scored from a tight angle on the right to make it 2-2.

It got even better for the home side when a Greg Matheson strike was well-saved by keeper Gillies but Lorne MacKay was on hand to net from the left of the 'D'.

Loat were now 3-2 ahead with three first half minutes remaining, a situation which seemed unlikely just 12 minutes earlier.

The second half never hit the heights of the first 45 minutes. Callum Cruden and Innes Blackhall were having a great battle in the full centre positions and each side enjoyed periods of pressure.

Loat thought they had extended their lead on 55 minutes when a Shane Gillies clearance deflected into the net off Loat forward Greg Matheson but referee Martin MacLean ruled out the effort for a kick on the advice of the goal judge.

The only second half goal came on 63 minutes. Lorne MacKay took possession wide on the right. He was allowed time and space to control the ball before thumping a 25-yard strike into the net to make it 4-2.

A clever Lorne MacKay dummy allowed Greg Matheson sight of goal on 72 minutes but the Scotland marksman put his strike just the wrong side of the post.

Kilmallie almost set up a grandstand finish 10 minutes from time when Mark Graham found space at the edge of the

'D' but his shot went high and wide of goal.

Loat boss Fraser Gallacher gave Calum Macaulay a first start of the season and he was influential with his pace at wing centre causing Kilmallie problems.

Kilmallie missed Michael Rodger's presence and manager Mark MacPherson will be keen to get some of his missing players back.

Both sides will look for more from their defensive players in the weeks ahead.

Kingussie 2

Glenurquhart 0

Kingussie go top of the Marine Harvest Premiership after two late goals gave them a 2-0 win over Glenurquhart in a very close encounter at The Dell.

Both teams went into the game with three points out of a possible four.

Kingussie captain Ryan Borthwick returned after missing the goalless draw with Kilmallie the week before. Rory Mackeagan had recovered from a hand knock sustained in last weekend's draw with Kilmallie.

Garry MacKintosh continued in goal for the 'Glen' but man-marker Connor Golabek was unavailable so Fraser Heath was deployed in defence. Andrew Corrigan was off-shore but John Barr made it back from overseas in time to take up his usual full back position.

Glenurquhart edged the first half but they couldn't convert their chances into goals. Whenever they broke the Kingussie back-line, they found Craig Dawson in confident mode in goal.

Kingussie came back strongly after the break and broke the deadlock on 73 minutes. Rory MacGregor broke down the Kingussie left. The visiting defence had a chance to clear the danger but Ryan Borthwick took the ball from John Barr and beat a defender before cutting in from the left to score from a tight angle.

Glenurquhart's Fraser Heath had played well in defence but he was pushed up front for the closing stages as his team went in search of a leveller.

The next goal came at the other end though when, with 10 minutes remaining, Roddy Young sealed the win. The move started with a Craig Dawson goal hit which was played down the right by wing centre Ryan MacWilliam. Savio Genini collected possession near the corner flag and his cross found James Falconer who saw his shot deflected into the air.

'Glen' defender Lachie Smith, who had a fine game, tried in vain to hit the dropping ball first time but Roddy Young nipped in to strike the ball first time on his

back-hand, sending it high into the net to make it 2-0 to take his side to the top of the table.

Kyles Athletic P

Kinlochshiel P

The clash between Kyles Athletic and Kinlochshiel was postponed on Friday as Kyles' Tighnabruaich pitch was waterlogged.

Kinlochshiel forward John MacRae would have missed this one through suspension so his ban will carry forward to this coming weekend's RBS MacTavish Cup tie at home to Kingussie.

Next up for Kyles Athletic are two difficult away games against Oban Camanachd and Newtonmore.

Lochaber P

Glasgow Mid Argyll P

An unplayable pitch led to the postponement of the match between Lochaber and Glasgow Mid Argyll at Spean Bridge.

Marine Harvest National Division

Oban Celtic 1

Skye Camanachd 3

Skye Camanachd are the early leaders in the Marine Harvest National Division after they beat Oban Celtic 3-1 at Ganavan.

The pitch passed an early morning inspection on the day of the game. However the rain over the previous 48 hours meant the Oban side's ground staff had to put in a power of work to allow the game to go ahead.

Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon was without Rory Bruce and John Hill. George MacMillan stepped in place of Bruce on the wing.

Skye Camanachd co-managers

Willie Cowie and Peter Gordon were without injured duo Steven Morrison and Will Cowie but Iain Nicolson was able to re-join the squad. Danny Morrison and Ally 'Spod' MacLeod also returned after missing the previous week's draw with Caberfeidh.

Oban Celtic created a couple of early chances but Skye keeper Iain MacLeod saved well with his feet on both occasions.

Skye were forced to make early changes when they lost Iain Nicolson after just two minutes after he suffered a blow to the face and then Neil MacVicar on 10 minutes, as he had to leave the field with a thumb injury.

Iain MacLellan came on for Nicolson and Ally 'Spod' MacLeod replaced MacVicar.

MacLellan's introduction proved to be particularly profitable for Skye and he got to a Jordan Murchison corner ahead of his marker on 26 minutes and, with a half swing, sent a low shot into the net to make it 1-0.

The first half was tousy at times but it was Skye who doubled their lead on 41 minutes. A Jordan Murchison shot from 20 yards was saved by Celtic keeper Stephen Davidson but Iain MacLellan pushed the rebound into the bottom corner of the net on his back-hand.

Skye almost had a third before the break but a Jordan Murchison drive cannoned off the post.

The heavy rain had taken its toll on the pitch and the surface started to cut up in the second half.

Skye were the team taking their chances and Iain MacLellan completed his hat-trick on 75 minutes. A Calum Gibb corner came out to around the penalty spot and MacLellan's half-volley



Kingussie captain Ryan Borthwick breaks the deadlock with the opening goal against Glenurquhart at The Dell last Saturday.

Photo: Neil Paterson



Opening goal scorer Andrew 'Papa' MacCuish is stopped in his tracks by Newtonmore's Andy MacKintosh. Champions Newtonmore suffered their first league defeat in two years, going down 2-1 to Oban Camanachd. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.



Glenurquhart's Fraser Heath and Kingussie's James Falconer in action during last weekend's Marine Harvest Premiership match.

Photograph: Neil Paterson.

Camanachd Cup Macaulay Cup MacTavish Cup Celtic Society Cup

Sutherland Cup Balliemore Cup Strathdearn Cup Bullough Cup

sent the ball hard and low into the net to make it 3-0.

Oban Celtic pulled a goal back a minute later when Neil Carmichael capitalised on a defensive slip to score.

There was still time for Iain MacLellan to hit the post and the win takes Skye to the top of the table.

Newly promoted Oban Celtic, for whom Ross MacMillan was again excellent, won't be too disappointed on the back of the defeat.

They have now played both the teams relegated from the Premiership at the end of last season and they'll look to kick on at Bute in the Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Society Cup this Saturday.

Caberfeidh P Fort William P

The match between Caberfeidh and Fort William was postponed on Friday as incessant rain left the pitch at Castle Leod unplayable.

A fixture reverse wasn't an option as An Aird also fell to the wet weather.

Beauly P Strathglass P

The encounter between Beauly and Strathglass was called off on Saturday morning as Braeview Park failed a pitch inspection.

Inverness P Inveraray P

There was also disappointment for Inverness and Inveraray with the Bught Park ruled unplayable on Saturday morning.

Inverness have a MacTavish Cup first round bye on Saturday whilst Inveraray also have an opening round pass in the Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Society Cup so the sides have been scheduled to meet in the league at the Winterton.

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Newtonmore P

Aberdeen University P
The whole Marine Harvest North Division 1 programme was wiped out starting with the game between the Newtonmore second team and Aberdeen University which was postponed on Friday afternoon as the Eilan was waterlogged.

Fort William P Beauly P

There was a Friday evening call-off for the encounter between the Fort William second team and the Beauly second team as the pitch at An Aird was unplayable.

Glenurquhart P Skye Camanachd P

The Glenurquhart reserves and the Skye Camanachd reserves stood down as a couple of days of heavy rain left the Blairbeg pitch waterlogged.

A switch of fixture was also ruled out as Skye's Pairc nan Laoch pitch was also unplayable.

Kinlochshiel P Kingussie P

The meeting between the Kinlochshiel colts and the Kingussie colts was postponed on Friday as the wet weather left Kirkton unplayable.

The clubs were unable to reverse the fixture as the Dell couldn't take two matches.

Marine Harvest South Division 1

Aberdour 5

Kyles Athletic 3

Roddy MacColl came back to haunt his former club as Aberdour beat the Kyles Athletic second team 5-3 in a ding-dong battle at Silversands.

Jack Mitchell was still sidelined through injury for Aberdour whilst Cammy McCue was also missing for the same reason.

With their first team game rained off, Kyles gave forward Sandy MacKenzie a run out with the seconds.

Kyles started well, but the opening goal came at the other end when David MacKenzie

put Aberdour ahead on the half hour mark. Their lead only lasted three minutes though after Sandy MacKenzie equalised.

Aberdour regained the initiative on 35 minutes. An Angus Thorburn thunderbolt was saved but Roddy MacColl was in the right place to slot home the rebound.

Kyles drew level for a second time a minute before the break when Sandy MacKenzie was afforded too much space and he sent the ball past an unsighted Tom Bowerman in the Aberdour goal to make it 2-2.

Aberdour started to take control of the centre line and went in front for a third time three minutes after the restart thanks to a second goal from Roddy MacColl.

Former Kyles stalwart MacColl took his tally to four goals with strikes on 50 and 69 minutes to make it 5-2. MacColl's third came when he took advantage of a defensive lapse and his fourth came when he drifted into space to get onto a clever David McDougall pass to score.

Kyles finished strongly and Craig Martin pulled a goal back to make it 5-3 with eight minutes remaining. The visitors pressed hard during the closing stages but Aberdour defended well and it stayed 5-3 until referee Calum Girvan's final whistle.

Aberdour top the division, a point ahead of Col Glen and Ballachulish in what already looks to be a close, competitive league.

Tayforth 2 Lochside Rovers 1

A Neil Shearer strike eight minutes from time gave Tayforth a 2-1 win over Lochside Rovers at Levenhall Links.

Former Lochcarron player Finlay Stark gave Tayforth an early lead, scoring after just seven minutes.

Craig MacDougall, back in the Lochside Rovers squad after a spell with Oban Lorn, drew the visitors level on 27 minutes.

And that's the way it stayed until 82 minutes when Neil Shearer netted to give Tayforth their first points of the season.

Ballachulish 2 Col Glen 2

Col Glen bounced back from going two goals down to draw 2-2 with Ballachulish at Jubilee Park.

The pitch passed a Saturday morning inspection and Balla' got off to a great start when Lorne Brown put them ahead after a couple of minutes. Brown latched onto a ball over the top from Duncan MacDonald and his first-time effort found the bottom corner of the net.

Lorne Brown got his and Ballachulish's second goal on 12 minutes. This time Ross MacLean floated in a corner to the back post. The ball was missed by the Col Glen defence and Brown found the back of the net to make it 2-0 and it remained that way until the interval.

Tom Irvine pulled a goal back on 68 minutes. The Balla' defence was unable to deal with a cross from the right and the ball found its way to Irvine who beat the keeper to make it 2-1.

It looked as if Balla' would see out the closing stages but when the visitors were awarded a free-hit at the edge of the 'D', the ball was played to Conor Kennedy who became the Col Glen hero with an equaliser on the stroke of full time.

This was a good game and whilst Ballachulish had the better of the first half, they missed chances to put the game to bed and Col Glen turned the tables on them in the second period.

Col Glen stay second in the league with Ballachulish in third spot.

Glenorchy P Kilmory P

The game between Glenorchy and Kilmory was called off as Glenorchy's Mart Park pitch was unplayable.

Bute P

Taynuilt P

The game between Bute and Taynuilt was postponed on Friday.

Glenorchy P Kilmory P

The game between Glenorchy and Kilmory was called off as Glenorchy's Mart Park pitch was unplayable.

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The game between Glenorchy and Kilmory was called off as Glenorchy's Mart Park pitch was unplayable.

Bute P

Taynuilt P

The game between Bute and Taynuilt was postponed on Friday.



Norman Campbell, Newtonmore, clashes with Oban Camanachd's Gary McKerracher at Mossfield Stadium last Saturday. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.

afternoon as the Meadows was unplayable.

Marine Harvest North Division 2

Strathspey Camanachd 0 Glengarry 5

Strathspey Camanachd and Glengarry went into their 1.30pm throw-up at Grantown Grammar School having both won their opening two games of the season.

And it's Glengarry who stay top of the league after a whirlwind start set them on the way to a 5-0 victory.

The home side gave Scott McIntyre a debut in what was at times a physical encounter.

Nick Dalgety has settled in well at Glengarry since his close-season switch from Lochcarron and the Scotland U21 cap put his side in front after just three minutes.

It was 2-0 just a minute later and this time it was Stuart Gregory who did the damage.

Stuart Gregory got his second and 'Garry's third goal on 20 minutes to give the home side an uphill task.

Nick Dalgety got his second five minutes after the restart and Dalgety completed his hat-trick 10 minutes from time to round off the 5-0 win.

'Garry don't have a game this coming weekend in this 11-team league.

Strathglass 2 Lochcarron 5

Lochcarron followed up last week's victory over the Inverness seconds with a 5-2 triumph over the Strathglass second team at Cannich.

Liam Arnott put Lochcarron ahead on 10 minutes but Barry McHister levelled three minutes later.

There was no further scoring in the first half but a goals explosion followed in the final quarter of the game.

Lochcarron's Peter MacKenzie made it 2-1 on 67 minutes and a second from Liam Arnott three minutes later made it 3-1.

Peter MacKenzie got his second on 75 minutes but Simon Owen pulled a goal back for Strathglass on 79 minutes to make it 4-2.

Lochcarron went straight up the park from the restart and Sean MacCuish sealed the 5-2 victory with a strike 60 seconds later to notch up Lochcarron's second win in two outings.

Lochcarron go second in the table and they host the Lovat reserves this Saturday.

Boleskine 0 Caberfeidh 5

The Caberfeidh second team beat Boleskine 5-0 at Smith Park.

Caberfeidh's Neil MacKenzie was free of suspension so he started in defence but Brian

Mackain was missing.

Caberfeidh took the lead after three minutes when John Ritchie set up Stuart Krzyzanowski to score.

Stuart Krzyzanowski got his second on 20 minutes when he collected a long ball forward and turned his marker Krzyzanowski then showed good close control to take the ball goalwards before stroking it home.

Jamie Matheson managed Boleskine last season, after leaving his post, he made a scoring debut for the Caberfeidh reserves against Glengarry a week earlier.

And Matheson got in on the act against his former club with a powerful shot on 35 minutes which made it 3-0 at the break.

Stuart Krzyzanowski and Jamie Matheson were effective as twin full forwards and another blistering drive from Matheson made it 4-0 on 70 minutes.

When referee Archie Ritchie pointed to the penalty spot with 10 minutes remaining, Jamie Matheson stepped up to complete his hat-trick and the 5-0 win gives 'Cagers' their first points of the season.

Lovat P

Lewis Camanachd P

The 12.30pm throw-up between the Lovat seconds and Lewis Camanachd was postponed on Friday evening as it was decided the Balgate pitch couldn't take two games.

Kilmallie P

Inverness P

The match between the Kilmallie colts and the Inverness colts was postponed on Friday as Cannich Parks was ruled unplayable.

Despite the fact their game was cancelled, it was a busy time for Kilmallie. At a specially arranged meeting earlier in the week, Andrew McAlister was appointed second team manager, assisted by Ross MacKenzie.

The duo take over from stalwart Dugald MacPhee, who served the club for 26 years, and his assistant Ken Kennedy.

Kilmallie also launched a drive to recruit new players as well as reaching out to any former players who might want to get involved again. The club is also looking for volunteers who are willing to help out off the field of play.

The Lochaber second team were without a scheduled fixture in this 11-team league.

Camanachd Cup draws

ing. A venue switch to Oban wasn't an option.

The Aberdour seconds were without a scheduled fixture in this seven team league.

WCA Round Up

The Women's Camanachd Association focus was on the Marine Harvest North and South second divisions on Sunday March 19.

Marine Harvest North Division 2

Strathglass 1 Lochaber 1

Strathglass and the Lochaber seconds shared the points in a 1-1 draw at Cannich.

The teams agreed to play 10-a-side for this fixture.

Chloe MacLeod scored for Strathglass and Alison MacVicar got the Lochaber goal.

Strathspey 0 Glen Garry 2

Two second half goals gave Glen Garry a 2-0 win over Strathspey in their 1pm throw-up at Grantown Grammar School.

Elaine Cameron and Siobhan West were on target for 'Garry.

Marine Harvest South Division 2

Ardnamurchan 9 Dunadd 0

Ardnamurchan followed up their win over Lorn Ladies with a 9-0 victory over Dunadd in their 2pm throw-up at Strontian.

Eilidh Ross was again Ardnamurchan's top scorer with five goals whilst Carolanne Cameron was on target twice.

Gillian Gallacher and Joanne Ford got the others.

Glasgow Mid Argyll 4 Cowal and Bute 3

The Glasgow Mid Argyll second team edged out Cowal and Bute by the odd goal in seven in their 12.30pm throw-up at Yoker.

Amy Harris scored twice for GMA with Orla MacCarthy and Caitriona Stark getting the others.

Fay Robertson bagged a brace for Cowal and Bute with Heather Ferguson also scoring.

Five new records at Argyll athletics final

THERE was an entry of 113 young athletes at the Argyll final of Sports Hall Athletics at Atlantis Leisure, Oban, last Sunday.

The final was the last in a series of five competitions held in Argyll during the winter promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club.

During almost five hours of intense competition, five Argyll age records were broken with young athletes from Oban and Kintyre mainly dominating in the boys events and Mull and Kintyre to the fore in the girls events.

Top performer of the day was, without doubt, Ellen MacRae from Salen on Mull who was the under 9 champion winning four events and breaking the Argyll age record in three events and was only 4cms short of the long standing record in the standing long jump with 1.72metres. Ellen started an amazing day winning the high jump on countback ahead of Beth Johnstone from Tarbert with both girls clearing 1.13 metres and exceeding the old Argyll age record of 1.10m. Ellen then moved to the two-lap race which she won by a wide margin in 25.9 seconds and more than a second faster than the existing Argyll record. Ellen was unplaced in the javelin but

proceeded to win the four-lap race by almost three seconds, setting a new Argyll record of 58.4 seconds, more than two seconds under the old record. Ellen now holds four age records as she broke the record in the standing triple jump at the Mull competition in February.

Kirstie broke the Argyll age record in the speed bounce recording 77 jumps in 30 seconds. Mull girls also dominated in the under 7 age group with Palmo Jones from Bunessan winning a close contest ahead of Sienna Munro from Salen and Alexandra Harris from Oban and another Salen girl Flora Thorne in third place.

Violet Campbell was the under 11 champion winning the long jump, triple jump and javelin gaining enough points to finish ahead of Mia Campbell from St. Columba's Primary school and Keira Munro from Salen. Violet, from Glenbarr in Kintyre, comes from a sporting family as the previous day older brother Gregor was second in the Under 13 age category at the Scottish

Road Race Championships at Greenock and oldest brother Cameron was seventh in the under 15s at the same national competition.

Poppy MacKillop from Oban was outstanding in the under 13s winning six out of the seven events to finish well ahead of Eilidh Cameron from Inveraray and Amy Anderson from Kilmichael Glassary. Poppy impressed in the two-lap race with a time of 24.3 seconds just missing the age record by 0.2 of a second.

The under 15 girls contest was the most competitive with three girls in contention up to the last event. The day ended in a tie for first between Jodie Robertson from Lochgilphead and Abbie Cato from Fionnphort on Mull and Zoe Brown from Oban only a few points behind. Jodie won four events including an excellent high jump of 1.51 metres and attempted to equal the Argyll age record of 1.54m held by Molly Reade from Tobermory who has won national titles in recent years.

Abbie was consistent in all seven events and won the speed bounce with 81 jumps in 30 seconds. Zoe excelled in the running events winning both two-lap and four-lap races. Jenny Semple from Campbeltown Grammar was the under 17 champion.

There was one new record in the boys events and it was set by Jack Green from Dalintober Primary in Campbeltown in the under 7 age group. Jack won three of the five events including a new Argyll age record in the two-lap race recording 27.8 seconds to improve the existing record by almost two seconds. Jack was watched by his proud mum Laura, then Laura Paterson from Carradale, who was the Under 9 Argyll champion in January 1995 which was the first winter indoor competitions

Athletics

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were held. In the same contest

Cameron Gilmour from Ardrishaig was second overall thanks to a fine win in the four-lap race in 66.1 seconds and Ruairidh Dalgleish from Salen was third.

Isiah Doxsey from Drumlembie Primary in Kintyre won the under 7s javelin throwing 11.75 metres.

James Muir from Rockfield primary was the under 9 champion

pioneer ahead of Roan McVicar from Tighnabruaich and Keiran Blair from Tarbert in third place.

James won five events with some style and was not

too far off the age records in the two-lap and four-lap races

and also the javelin and speed bounce. Runner-up Roan won the triple jump watched by his mother Nicola who, then Nicola Irvine, was placed third in the under 13s at the first Argyll final in 1995. Third placed Keiran Blair won the high jump clearing 1.08 metres.

George Pagan from Rockfield won the under 11 contest just

ahead of Murray MacDonald from Lochgilphead. George impressed in winning the two-lap in 24.7 and four-lap in 56.3 and also the high jump clearing 1.21m. Murray was placed highly in all seven events in addition to winning the long

jump. Ruairidh Campbell from Glenbarr and Ewan Dowd from Park primary tied for third on overall points with Ruairidh winning the javelin with 17.25m and Ewan the speed bounce.

Lochlain Ellis from Campbeltown was the under 13 champion

winning six of the seven events. Logan Allan from Ardrishaig was runner-up and Finlay MacLean from Rockfield primary

was in third place.

Jake Gillespie from Lochgilphead won a competitive under 15 contest just two points ahead of Sam Coates from Kilmore.

Jake won the four-lap race, triple jump and shot putt while



A youngster clears the bar in the high jump.

Sam won the two-lap race and speed bounce with 83 jumps the highest score of the day from all age groups. Shaun Doy from Lochgilphead won the high jump and long jump.

Stewart Inglis from Oban was the under 17 winner. Oban High School won the girls schools trophy with Lochgilphead High School second and Salen Primary third. In the boys contest, Rockfield Primary were winners ahead of Lochgilphead High School and Dalintober Primary third.

The organisers thank all the young athletes and parents for supporting the competition.



Judge Alfie MacKenzie keeps his eye on the triple jump.



Boys and girls take part in the javelin event.

Lorne under 16s lose out in West Shield semi-finals

OBAN'S U16 team made the trip to Inverclyde on Sunday to take on Greenock Wanderers RFC in the semi final of the West Regional Shield competition.

The Oban side have impressed since dropping out of the West Cup with a narrow loss against Strathaven/Dalziel in February. A convincing 36-5 win at Cartha last weekend set up Sunday's game against a quality Greenock side.

A strong Oban squad of 19 players made the trip with a healthy following of parents and supporters. Unfortunately Oban went down 17-7 with the team failing to hit the high standards set in previous games this season. Oban's only try came from winger Robert McLaughlin, with the score converted by Angus Neil.

With competitive games now at an end for this season, the team will be looking at opportunities for friendly games and to take part in 7s competitions. A record number of games have been played by Oban U-16s this season with the squad playing around 18 competitive fixtures.

Huge thanks must go to the coaching team,



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Relegation battle for Oban Lorne

Rugby

THE BATTLE against relegation in West Division 1 will reach a climax on Saturday at North Connell as Oban Lorne and Kilmarnock square up in a winner takes all contest.

Saturday's victors will secure their place in the league for at least another season while a defeat will see either side's relegation to West Division 2 next season confirmed.

The Green Machine's preparations for the game have been thwarted by a lack of available training areas in the build up to the game with the club putting contingency plans in place by booking the old tennis courts at Atlantis Leisure.

Head coach Corrie Louw should have a full strength team to choose from with no notable injury concerns in the squad and could even welcome back centre/back Row Cammy Smith after a long lay with a knee injury.

Oban Lorne are hoping for a big crowd to cheer on the team on Saturday in what is undoubtedly the biggest game in the last couple of seasons for the team. Saturday's match will kick-off at 3pm at North Connell.

BT West Division 4 Glasgow UJuni Medics v Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute travel to Glasgow on Saturday to take on unbeaten Glasgow University Medics in West Division 4.

Argyll have one league fixture remaining this season after Saturday's game when they welcome local rivals Cowal RFC from Dunoon to Oban on Saturday April 1.

Scottish AFL results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Jimmy Marshall Cup, third round – Houston v Campbeltown Pupils, postponed; Hall Cup, group stage - Lochgilphead Red Star 2, Tarbert 0; Premier Division - Oban Saints 0, St Joseph's FP 3.

This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup, quarter final - Barca Milton v Oban Saints; Hall Cup, group stage - Arkleston v Lochgilphead Red Star, Campbeltown Pupils and Tarbert no games.

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

Youth football

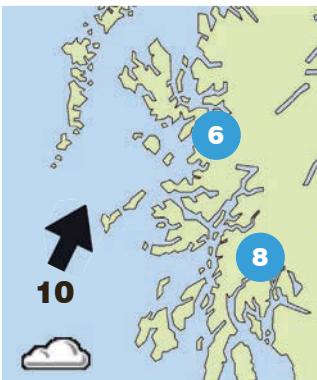
LAST weekend's results: Lochgilphead Red Star 17 Under-13s 2; Both Saints goals were scored by Ross Higgins. East End United 2, Under 14s 1. Saints scorer was Ryan Barclay. Scotstoun Athletic v Under-15s, postponed. Regional Cup, semi-final – Wishaw Wycombe Wanderers 0, Under-16s 3. Scoring for Saints were Sol Smith (2) and Keir MacLean.

This weekend's fixtures - Renton v Under 13s; Drumchapel United v Under 14s; Under 15s v Campbeltown Pupils; Under 16s v Port Glasgow Juniors.



Competition organiser Bill MacCallum checks the result of the girls' two-lap race.

WEATHER	
Thursday	Sunny Winds light northerly Temperatures 2°C to 7°C.
Friday	Cloudy Winds moderate south south westerly Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.
Weekend Outlook	Cloudy on Saturday Cloudy on Sunday Winds moderate south south westerly Temperatures 5°C to 10°C.



TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday March 23, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	
Thur 02.36	2.9	08.11	1.9
Fri 03.27	3.2	09.27	1.6
Sat 04.08	3.5	10.16	1.3
Sun 04.45	3.7	10.56	0.9
Mon 05.21	4.0	11.32	0.7
Tues 05.56	4.1	12.08	0.4
Wed 06.21	0.3	06.29	4.2

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

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Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist
Oban to Coll/Tiree
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The Times, we are a changin'



Our team in Fort William, clockwise from top left, Janice MacAlpin, reporters Katie Carabine, Ellie Forbes and Monica Gibson and sales executive Julie Baird.

TODAY is the day! You spoke, we listened and today *The Oban Times* northern edition starts a new lease of life as the *Lochaber Times*.

The newspaper and website have been running as the northern edition of *The Oban Times* since family-owned publisher Wyvex Media Ltd bought the *Lochaber News* in October last year. But after many readers raised the issue of the paper's name with us, we took what they said on board. Susan Windram, group editor of *The Oban Times*, said: 'We work very closely with the local community and changing the newspaper title to include the name of the area was a very important point raised by the public. We fully agree and, as the main local news source for Lochaber, it makes perfect sense to change the title to the *Lochaber Times*. We have our new, fully-staffed premises on

Fort William High Street and the new local name is a strong reflection of our dedication to delivering the best local news service for the Lochaber community.'

Keith McIntrye, operations director for Wyvex Media, added: 'We hope this change will further communicate our commitment to ensure a strong local publishing presence remains a vital part of the Lochaber community.'

'Renaming the paper and meeting the needs of our local readers was an obvious decision to make and we look forward to delivering news as the *Lochaber Times*'.

Readers can buy printed and digital versions of the *Lochaber Times* every Thursday or access news stories from Lochaber seven days a week online by visiting www.lochabertimes.co.uk

Parents hit out over half-day Friday plan

MONICA GIBSON

mgibson@obantimes.co.uk

CHANGES to secondary school timetables in Lochaber will have a major impact on personal and working lives, according to concerned parents.

High schools across Highland, which have not already done so, will move towards a 33-period week when students start to work on the 2017/2018 timetable.

The changes are part of a decision made by Highland Council (HC) in 2014 designed to allow headteachers to maximise the teaching capacity of their staff and therefore maximise the curricular provision for its pupils.

Some schools have already made this change but a second phase is now expected to be implemented which will see students work a four-and-a-half day 'asymmetric' timetable.

Christopher Miller-Craig, head teacher at Ardmurchan High School (AHS), told *The Lochaber Times* AHS introduced a 33-period week in 2014/15 which has allowed it to operate an integrated senior phase with S4-6 accessing the same curriculum structure and subject offer.

He added: 'In principle, this works well, but to do this, we have had to operate with a timetable of varying period lengths – asymmetric periods – with two days having six periods and three days having seven periods.'

'The new HC structure will operate on an asymmetric week and a shorter Friday, which allows us to move to fixed period lengths. This

we believe, will be more straightforward for pupils and staff. While ensuring we implement the new Highland model, we have also done our best to minimise the impact on the earlier start to the day for our farthest flung pupils and have consulted parents on this.'

'In line with what appears to be an emerging model with many other schools, we aim to start at 8.50am and close at 3.40pm. This will allow the school to close on a Friday after a short lunch break. I would stress, however, that our proposed times are not yet confirmed until deemed realistic from a transport perspective. We also look forward to the benefits to the curriculum and what we aim to offer our pupils through the "virtual school" curriculum made possible with many schools now planning to operate on more closely aligned timetables.'

Currently, the weekly timetable at Lochaber High School is made of 30 55-minute periods. In June the plan is for the school to adopt the new structure, meaning a shorter week and 33 periods of 50 minutes each.

According to head teacher Jim Sutherland, this will result in more teacher/pupil contact, increasing the amount of time teachers spend in the classroom from 24 to 27 periods per week.

Despite this parents have raised concerns about how the students will get to and from school, and how they should be supervised on a Friday when their parents are at work. A parent from Lochaber High School, who preferred not to be named, told the *Lochaber*

Times the new Monday to Friday schedule is manageable for most, but Fridays will cause problems.

They said they were 'gobsmacked' at the lack of transparency from the school and HC and added: 'The Parent Council at Lochaber High School seem to know about the changes but have not released information.'

'There has been no information from the Highland Council and looking at its previous consultations, this is right up there with that – a fiasco. Are families not under enough pressure without adding additional costly car journeys, disgruntled primary pupils, as well as an additional two hours of trying to keep teenagers out of trouble?'

The *Lochaber Times* put these questions to the HC's head of education Jim Steven who said head teachers will play a key role in this move, adding: 'Ten secondary schools have operated this system for the last two years. It is due to the positive response from schools we are now rolling this out across Highland.'

A major concern has been the lack of certainty over bus times in and around Fort William because of Highland Council changing contracts.

Mr Stevens emphasised: 'There is a new bus contract in place and we are working closely with schools to ensure bus times work best for our pupils.'

The *Lochaber Times* understands letters will be sent out to parents of pupils at LHS once timetable changes are confirmed, hopefully by the end of the month.



Finlay Cameron won the Premier Scots Traditional Award at this year's Lochaber Music Festival. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

Finlay's a festival winner

THE 43RD annual Lochaber Music Festival closes tonight after six days of lively performances.

Thirty young chanter and bagpipe players and 20 traditional accordion, fiddle and clarsach performers took part in the first two days of the festival.

Three performers were chosen to compete in the Premier Scots Traditional Award. This included a selection on the bagpipes by Finlay Cameron from Roy Bridge and a set of fiddle tunes from John Stewart-Stevenson of Fort William. Clarsach player Lorna Linfield was unable to attend.

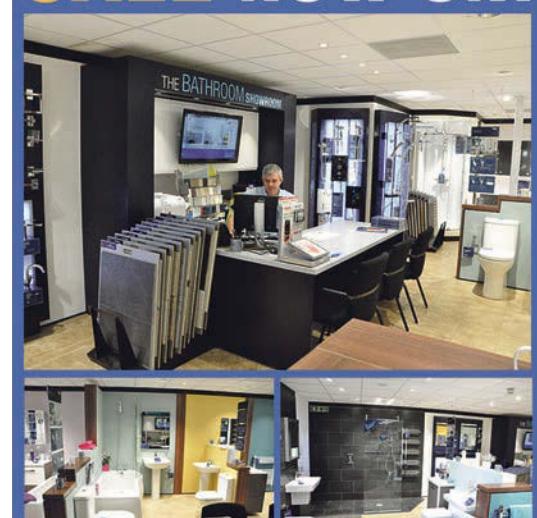
The Premier Award was won by Finlay Cameron.

The event will close tonight (Thursday March 23) at Lochaber High School with a grand concert.



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Caol shopping centre parking fears

CAOL businesses could be suffering because of an increase in the number of cars parking at the village's shopping centre.

People at the school or those using the community centre could be parking at the shopping centre until the new school car park is built. Residents are concerned that people who want to go into the shops have nowhere to park and are turning away.

But when asked about the issue, the Highland Council said: 'School teachers and staff are not using the shop car park area.'

Caol resident Sammy Cameron told *Lochaber Times*: 'If I drive in to the car park and see it's full I think I'll go and get what I need somewhere else. It's not

fair on the shopkeepers. Times are hard enough without losing out on business because people are using the car park for other reasons. Something needs to be done about it. The parking is for people using the shops.'

Caol shop owner Joyce Fraser, whose hairdresser is at the shopping centre, said: 'The car park is full every day. I don't know whether it's teachers or parents dropping their children off, but I am having to come to work for five past, ten past nine, because some of that traffic is gone by then. People are taking up the disabled spaces too. It's frustrating.'

A Highland Council spokesperson confirmed the new Caol Primary School car park will be completed in the next four to six weeks, weather dependent, and will

be used by the school and the community centre.

Caol and Mallig councillor Ben Thompson told *Lochaber Times*: 'I have asked officials to look at whether limited time parking at the shops would work. The council should do everything it can to help those businesses.'

Police in Fort William also said there have been complaints about cars using the road between the Caol shopping centre car park and Erracht Drive, which is for buses only. Mr Thompson commented: 'This was discussed when the proposal for the bus lane was first raised. The comment then from council officials was that if signs alone didn't work, bollards or a chain would be put in place. I think that time has come.'

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FW

TIMELINE**Exhibition puts focus on islands**

Stornoway arts venue An Lanntair is currently hosting an exhibition of student works based on Lewis and Harris.

Ropes of Sand consists of pieces by students on the Masters programme, Art, Space and Nature (ASN) which reflect on a field trip they took to the islands in October last year with programme director Donald Urquhart.

ASN is run from Edinburgh College of Art at the University of Edinburgh. Established in 2003, it is a multi-disciplinary course incorporating the visual arts, architectural and environmental practice.

Following the trip they had developed preliminary works which they presented at the Tent Gallery in Edinburgh and they have now returned to the islands to show the final pieces.

The *Ropes of Sand* exhibition opened on Friday March 17 and runs until Saturday April 8.

£1m cash boost for aquaculture

A £1 million pilot project to boost aquaculture in the Highlands and Islands has been approved by HIE.

The 30-month programme will be run by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in conjunction with Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC) and is targeted at helping small-to-medium-sized enterprises achieve 'greater commercialisation' of new products and services, which is said will have a 'positive and sustainable economic and social impact'.

Projects are expected to boost industry turnover in the region by around £8 million and create up to 50 jobs.

Have your say on life in Portree

People living in Portree are invited to have their say on how to improve their hometown at a workshop next month.

The Highland Community Planning Partnership will be hosting a community workshop on Thursday April 6.

Among other issues, the following themes will be discussed: transport, mental health and wellbeing, poverty, engagement and empowerment and safer, resilient communities.

The event will take place from 11am until 3pm at the Service Point.

For catering purposes, booking is essential. To reserve a space, email info@highlandtsi.org.uk or call 01349 86429. Any dietary or access requirements should also be noted at the time of booking.

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Skye and Lochalsh young carers were described as 'big fans of Pudsey' after they received £82,672 from Children in Need.

Youngsters 'over moon' at cash windfall of £80,000

MONICA GIBSON

mgibson@obantimes.co.uk

A SERVICE which offers support and respite for young people who help look after family members and loved ones has been awarded £82,672.

Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers (SLYC) was set up in 2000 by Marjory Jagger to raise awareness of the needs of young carers aged from five to 18.

The three-year grant will help pay for staff to deliver a range of activity sessions that improve the general wellbeing of young people with caring responsibilities.

This is the information we put in the application form to BBC Children in Need so for

in January for her services to SLYC, told *The Oban Times* the money was given to them by Children in Need and that, because in September 60 per cent of their current funding would no longer be available to them, it had come at a vital time.

She added: 'We are over the moon. The money will go towards their "accept the past and grab the future" project. The youngsters came up with the name and it involved them looking at what aspects of the service have worked in the past and which they felt could be improved.'

'This is the information we put in the application form to BBC Children in Need so for

the youngsters to now know the level of trust that has been put in them and the investment is just so wonderful.'

According to Marjory, around 70 people receive support from SLYC a year. The project's activities include weekly workshops on topics such as home and personal safety, managing emotions and relationships, healthy living, first aid, budgeting, positive decision-making and personal goal-setting.

But she says through its recent work, SLYC has developed to offer a more tailored service.

She said: 'By listening to the young carers and what they need, we have certainly diversified. We now offer a pet welfare

project, for example, and are really looking at providing a more holistic approach for them to tackle everyday life.'

'A lot of young people become a carer overnight and they find themselves with the responsibility of a pet as well as everything else.'

'Of course, looking after pets can be therapeutic but it is also daunting if you don't know much about that animal, especially if they start to become ill.'

'It is not something that you would automatically think of but when you talk things through with the young adults it does make sense.'

Confirmation of the donation was received by SLYC on March

10 and Marjory gathered as many of the carers together to deliver the news.

She said: 'You can see how much it meant to them. We are working on development skills to prepare them for interviews and the end goal is that they can get into work.'

'The organisation is so important for their self-esteem and if that was to be taken away we would be heartbroken.'

'We are still waiting to hear about an application to the Big Lottery which has funded us for the past five years and is due to end in September so this is a big tick that keeps us going down the route we want to be for at least the next few years.'

Future of island piping event is secured

THE future of an island piping competition has been secured for the next five years.

One of the most prestigious events in the piping world, the future of the Pipe Major Donald MacLeod Memorial Competition in its home town has been secured with the sponsorship of £5,000 a year for five years from wind farm charity Point and Sandwick Trust.

The donation means the annual competition, which is organised by the Lewis and Harris Piping Society, can continue to be held in Stornoway, instead of having to be moved to the mainland to reduce costs.

The competition – being held for the 24th time this year and taking place all day in the Caladh Hotel on Friday March 31 – commemorates one of Stornoway's most famous sons.

Born in 1916, Donald MacLeod was one of the most famous pipers of the past century. He was a tutor and a Seaford Highlander but it was for his prolific compositions, including 26 piobaireachs, that he is best remembered.

Created in his honour, the competition features performances from eight of the current best pipers in the world, playing mainly compositions by Donald MacLeod.

These pipers are invited to take part by the Lewis and Harris Piping Society on the back of their success in competitions over the past year.

Dr John Smith, fear-an-taighe of the competition, long-time member and former chairman of the Lewis and Harris Piping Society, said: 'The future of the competition is assured in Stornoway for the next five years because of the pledge by Point and Sandwick Trust.'

Finances around the competition had become increasingly difficult, he revealed: 'Until two years ago they had significant sponsorship, whether from companies such as Tennent's or private individuals who pledged significant sums.'

'But for the past two years it has been quite difficult for them to raise the money required for the competition which is approximately £20,000 a year.'



Point and Sandwick Trust general manager Donald John MacSween and chairman Angus McCormack and piping society treasurer Alistair MacLennan (standing right) and Dr John Smith.

Donations help to bring back ferry for summer

A HIGHLAND community trust (Skye Ferry Charity) paid £30,000 towards the replacement while the remainder from the company itself.

The Glenachulish ferry, which operates from Glenelg to Skye, underwent £80,000 of repairs this winter after having to have its 40-year-old boat's wheelhouse replaced.

Business development officer Jo Crawford said: 'We have 5,000 likes on the Original Glenelg to Skye Ferry Facebook page, so we set out thinking if everyone donates £1



The Glenachulish underwent £80,000 of repairs this winter.

we will reach our target.' But a massive £5,550 was raised during the week – exceeding the company's expectations.

Ms Crawford said: 'People were so generous during the appeal and we got 32 donations of more than £50.'

Now the Glenachulish, which was built for service in Ballachulish before the bridge was constructed, is gearing up to start the season on April 10.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'This was a major development for the ferry and a huge part of its preservation. The ferry is a real lifeline for the people who live here and is a tourist attraction in its own right.'

The ferry, which attracts visitors from all over the world, carries around 35,000 passengers every season.

She continued: 'This is a real indicator of support for the ferry without a shadow of a doubt. It is living heritage and held in such high affection by the community.'

'Everyone is really excited about her starting the season. Glenelg totally changes when the ferry is here, because during the winter there is one road in and out, but everything gets livelier when it comes back. People love it.'

New bid to buy land at Old Man of Storr

A NORTH Skye community organisation has formally submitted a bid to purchase council-owned land at the Old Man of Storr.

The Staffin Community Trust (SCT) has lodged an Asset Transfer Request (ATR) to the Highland Council for a section of roadside ground near the popular island landmark so it can construct a new car park, public toilets and interpretation boards.

The bid to purchase the land comes through new community empowerment legislation.

The plans will create employment and are said to bring a direct economic benefit to the north-east Skye community, as well as the wider island.

A fee for using the car park would be charged, a proposal which SCT says was supported by residents in the community consultation.

The land in question has been valued at £1,000.

If the ATR is granted, SCT will seek funding from a variety of sources to deliver the proposed capital works, which are currently estimated at up to £900,000.

The community has significant concerns about parking congestion and road safety at the busy site, which is off the A855 Portree-Staffin road, and the lack of toilets, which has sparked public health complaints.

Concerns have been further

exacerbated because of increasing visitor numbers to the Storr with an estimated 150,000 people in 2016 – an increase of 60,000 people from 2014's total.

It comes after several years of talks between SCT and the council, a major community consultation and the conclusion of a site options appraisal/business plan by a consultant team.

The ATR is understood to have been one of the first submitted in the Highlands following the introduction of new community empowerment legislation in January by the Scottish Government.

The council has acknowledged the ATR and will respond within six months. The local authority has set aside £400,000 of development funding for car park improvements at the site.

SCT chairman Sandy Ogilvie said: 'This is an exciting and important step forward by the trust and comes after a lot of work in the past few years. The Storr is a world-renowned landmark but also a key gateway to our community. Ownership could secure a range of benefits for local people and businesses while enhancing the visitor experience.'

SCT said Staffin residents had strongly backed its managing or purchasing the site. More than 85 per cent of the respondents to the January 2016 consultation supported the SCT's direct involvement at the Storr.



The SCT has lodged a bid to purchase land at the Storr, above, and the current main car park at the popular Highland landmark.



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Rural careers in spotlight

HIGH school pupils ready to make life shaping decisions had the chance learn about potential careers in rural industries.

Lochaber Rural Education Trust organised a rural skills careers event in Ben Nevis Auction Mart last Friday, March 17. Following on from a successful event last year, 150 second year pupils from Lochaber High School took part.

The day started at 9.30am with stock-judging and mock valuation competitions with prizes donated by Sammy's Chips and Lochaber Leisure Centre. Winning pupils were Robbie Brown and Jordan Campbell and the adult winners were Gillian Mann and Catherine Leckie.

There were presentations by a cattlemen, shepherd, forester, deer stalker, beekeeper, auctioneer, cromach maker, veterinary surgeon and pony keepers.

The pupils split into groups and learned about the skills of John MacKillop, manager/shepherd, Borlum Estate in Fort Augustus; Ewen Campbell, manager/cattleman, SRUC Kirkton; Alex MacDonald, Achnacarry Sports & Country Pursuits; Kate Tuer, Fassfern Forestry; Lochaber Pony Club; Lochaber Beekeepers; Crown Vets and Heather MacNeil, WHC Careers Tutor.

Isabel Campbell from the rural education trust said: 'The event gives pupils the opportunity to discuss the various skills with the speakers at a time when they are making life changing subject choices.'

Lochaber High School teacher Liam Beagant said he was very pleased with the feed back from pupils.

Abandoned bus and cars an 'eyesore' around town

ELLIE FORBES

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A GROWING number of abandoned cars – and a double decker bus – are becoming a 'real eyesore' around Fort William.

Police and the Highland Council have told *The Oban Times* they are aware of the issue but a local voluntary group says the situation needs to be investigated.

Fort William Town Team discussed the matter at its meeting this month after volunteer James Kennedy reported a car had been 'dumped' at the Backlands a few weeks ago.

Mr Kennedy also highlighted the difficulty of scrapping cars now that there is no value in it – a reason why more people are abandoning them. A Town Team spokesperson said: 'Abandoned



Left to right: The abandoned bus at Angus Crescent; the car at An Aird and the van which was reported at the latest Fort William Town Team meeting. Photographs: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

vehicles are a real eye sore. There used to be a scrap value, but this is no longer the case. We need to investigate how to remove these vehicles legally and at low cost. There surely must be a way in these days of recycling and upcycling.'

There are also abandoned vehicles at An Aird and Angus Crescent. A Mazda Tribute has been parked at the roundabout,

near Morrisons supermarket, for some time now with a for sale sign on it. But recently a sign saying 'local authority aware' was seen on the front of the car.

At Angus Crescent, a yellow double decker bus belonging to company based in Blackburn, England, has been left.

At the Town Team meeting, there were questions over whose responsibility it is to remove

and should be contacted on 101. The council is happy to work with landowners in trying to identify the owner of the vehicles if they are defined as abandoned, however, due to the costs of removal, storage and disposal, local authorities throughout Scotland do not have to process such vehicles because of the high costs involved.

However if a request is made from a landowner for the removal of a vehicle and they agree to meet the costs the council will make the necessary arrangements.

A police spokesperson said: 'Officers are aware of the issue. Anyone with concerns about abandoned vehicles should contact the local authority or if the vehicle is considered dangerous contact Police Scotland on 101.'

Fort company holds charity day for Barnardo's



Staff and the community got involved with the charity day last Friday. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

THE FORT William branch of Jewson held a charity day last Friday to raise money for Barnardo's.

On Tuesday March 21 the amount raised totalled £376 with more still to come in. Manager Brian MacInnes told *The Oban Times* he thinks they will have about £500 by the time all the collection buckets are counted.

All the staff at the branch got involved with the event, making homebaking to sell and helping to decorate the office with balloons and banners for the day.

Jewson's partner up with a chosen charity every year and this year they chose Barnardo's.

Mr MacInnes said: 'I set myself a personal target of £500 so I'll be very happy if we reach that.

We got our wives and girlfriends involved with the home baking and the local golf club and hairdressers donated wine and other raffle prizes. There was a huge amount of both staff and community participation in the day. We had customers coming in and our suppliers, too, and a representative from Barnardo's in Fort William. We will be handing over the money once it has all been counted and it will go to the Fort William branch of the charity to help local people.'

More than 80 tickets were sold for the raffle on the day, but Mr MacInnes is keeping the raffle going for another few weeks.

Mr MacInnes said: 'I set myself a personal target of £500 so I'll be very happy if we reach that.

Bid to break down barriers

INCLUSION Scotland has been raising awareness of barriers faced by disabled people in Lochaber.

The organisation is leading a pilot project in the Highlands to increase the participation of disabled people in local democracy.

The group was in Fort William last Friday hearing from the people of Lochaber about the civic barriers they face in local decision making.

Highlands Policy Engagement Officer John Beaton said: 'We are very grateful to Lochaber residents for taking part in the event and sharing

their experiences. We listened to what people had to say. There was a strong theme through the event about attitudes towards disabled people themselves in term of discrimination.'

Mr Beaton said it 'is still early days' but the future of the project will look at breaking down these barriers.

He said the response from Lochaber organisations and the community had been tremendous and emphasised the importance of the Lochaber Disability Access Panel: 'The panel's depth of experience is an integral part of the work in Lochaber.'



John Beaton, left, Inclusion Scotland Highlands Policy and Engagement Officer, with some participants in the Inclusion Scotland 'Getting Our Voices Heard' pilot event last Thursday. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.



Sophie MacKinnon, left, Marley Alston, Fiona Janzen and Emma Vind, with head teacher Rebecca Machin and MP Ian Blackford. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

High school video impresses bank contest judges and MP

AN MP has congratulated a Lochaber school's 'originality' after its recent video entry to a national competition was a hit.

Kinlochleven High School was one of only 12 schools in the UK to reach the finals of a Bank of England competition to promote its new plastic notes.

Ian Blackford, who circulated the entry form to high schools across the constituency, visited the school earlier this month to present an award for their efforts. The representative for Ross, Skye and Lochaber said: 'I was delighted to hear Kinlochleven High School not only took up the challenge, but got through to the final 12 entries across the whole of the UK. I really enjoyed watching the video today and was very impressed by the originality and quality of production and can see why they did so well.'

Highland residents urged to support Earth Hour by MSP

HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP Rhoda Grant is making the World Wildlife Fund's Earth Hour matter by supporting a strong climate change plan for Scotland.

The Earth Hour initiative invites people all over the world to switch off their lights for an hour in support of action on climate change. This year's event will be on Saturday March 25 at 8.30pm.

Mrs Grant is urging her constituents to take part. She said: 'I know some Highland landmarks will be taking part and hopefully the public will follow this lead.'

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TIMELINE

Excluded after 'substance' found

TWO PUPILS have been excluded from Lochaber High School after an alleged drug incident took place on Tuesday (March 14).

A Highland council spokesperson said: 'Following an alleged drug-related incident in school on March 14, a report was made to Police Scotland who are carrying out investigations. Due to ongoing police investigations, we are unable to provide any further information regarding this matter.'

A spokesperson from Police Scotland confirmed they are following positive lines of inquiry 'after a substance was found within a school in Fort William'. The Highland Council said it works closely with parents and partner agencies to educate children about the dangers of substance misuse.

Trust completes Skye path work

THE JOHN Muir Trust has finished repairing the path from Sligachan to Loch Coruisk at Druim Hain on Skye.

Specialist contractors Arran Footpath Partnership have completed 415ms of path construction and 970 square metres of landscaping. This included moving turf to encourage plants to grow back where they have been eroded away as people walk the route.

Since 2014, the trust has spent £210,000 on path repair work on Skye.

Glenelg-based contractor and project leader Donald MacKenzie said: 'The path line is now less intrusive and the newly-constructed footpath will keep walkers on the same line, allowing vegetation to recover over the next few years.'

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FW

Group wins battle for swimming lessons

A CAMPAIGN to set up a Lochaber swimming class for children with additional support needs (ASN) has been successful, writes **Ellie Forbes**.

Amie-Louise Wallace, who set up the Lochaber Autism Support Group two years ago, has been canvassing parents in Lochaber who have children with ASN to assess the need of tailored swimming classes.

High Life Highland has now agreed to the classes.

Amie-Louise told *The Oban Times*: 'I had a meeting recently and I am over the moon to confirm there will be an ASN swimming class run along side the regular classes starting after the Easter holidays. We are just tying up some details.'

'The class will be smaller than regular classes which means spaces will be limited. I am also pleased pool staff will be getting involved in some autism training. This will not only be great for the children but great for the staff too.'

A High Life Highland spokesperson said: 'We are delighted to be working with Lochaber Autism Support Group to trial dedicated weekly lessons for children with additional support needs at Lochaber Leisure Centre when swimming lessons resume after the Easter break.'

'These lessons are also available for children outwith the group and our team would be pleased to help with any enquiries.'

In January, *The Oban Times* was contacted by a number of parents on this issue. One mum, Nikki Jasiczak, said there is 'very little to no activities for children with additional needs, yet they are the children that most require them'.

Amie added: 'All we want is for there to be more acceptance and understanding for people who have autism and we are taking small steps towards this.'

Lochaber Times newsdesk 01397 703003

Caol dad makes it four in a row to honour son

ELLIE FORBES

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A FORT WILLIAM dad will run the Loch Ness marathon in honour of his stillborn son to 'ensure he didn't die in vain'.

Life has dealt the toughest of blows to Michael McGuire after his first child was stillborn at 32 weeks and his wife, aged just 26, was diagnosed with cervical cancer.

The Caol dad has said running the Baxter's Loch Ness Marathon has given him a positive focus to help others in memory of his son.

Determined Michael took up marathon running as special tribute to his son Kyle and as a result he has raised more than £7,000 for charities and causes close to the family's heart.

Michael will be back running the Loch Ness marathon for a fourth time in September and wife Rachel - who is in remission after undergoing grueling radiotherapy and chemotherapy - and the couple's daughter Ameile, seven, will be there to cheer him on.

The couple say they expect to see a reminder of son Kyle in the skies above the Highland race location.

The 34-year-old said rainbows have taken on a symbolic meaning since he and Rachel lost their son almost eight years ago.

'When our only son was stillborn at 32 weeks, it was possibly the worst thing you could endure as a parent. I started marathon running to honour Kyle and



Michael McGuire, pictured with daughter Ameile, is running in honour of his son.

ensure he didn't die in vain,' said Michael.

'Rainbows have become massively symbolic to us and Kyle will always be known as our

rainbow. When we lost Kyle, we travelled home to Fort William from Glasgow and rainbows lit our way and we always felt that was him looking out for us. Ever

“I'm looking forward to making it four in a row for my baby boy”

Michael McGuire

By taking part in the challenging 26.2-mile race, Michael has helped vital funds for charities including the stillbirth and neonatal birth charity SANDS UK and Clic Sargent.

Michael is a volunteer with Simpkins Memory Box Appeal (SiMBA), a charity that provides support to parents who lose a child, and will be raising funds for this cause through his marathon effort.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* Michael said: 'When Kyle died we didn't get any support. We just got handed a leaflet and it was like see you later. But working with SiMBA is just so rewarding. Just to tell people we are here, our phones are on, our door is open - you're not alone.'

We want to get people talking about something that has been a taboo subject for such a long time and not to be afraid.'

'Rachel has been brave beyond words.'

'It was a hammer blow when she was diagnosed with cancer and I felt totally helpless, but she has the courage of a lion and she has pulled through.'

'Running got me out of a hole and has helped to provide light at the end of the tunnel. Loch Ness will be my sixth marathon in the past five years so it has become a bit of an obsession to challenge myself and do something positive.'

'It has helped give me a purpose and I credit that with helping me become a better husband, father and friend.'

'Life is good. We have had our ups and down but we are really turning a corner.'



Mark McCann, ex RAF, Stuart Gallacher, 1st Battalion Scots Guards and Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Lane, ex army, were among the veterans raising funds by bag packing in Morrisons.

Legion volunteers bag £1,280 at fundraiser

THE FORT William branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland raised more than £1,200 by helping customers in Morrisons supermarket pack their shopping bags.

Members raised £1,280.80 which will be used to continue their work supporting local veterans.

Stuart Gallacher, who lost his legs in an explosion while serving with the 1st Battalion Scots Guards in Afghanistan in 2013, was one of the fundraisers, along with retired RAF member Mark McCann and Lieutenant

Colonel Kevin Lane, branch committee chairman.

Lieutenant Colonel Lane explained the money raised on Saturday March 18 would go towards supporting ex-servicemen and their families in a variety of ways.

He said: 'We look after veterans whenever the need arises, from replacement medals, which helps with their well-being, to things like getting them a new washing machine.'

The branch has expressed its thanks to everyone who helped out and to Morrisons.

Roadworks south of Fort William

BEAR Scotland will be carrying out roadworks on the A82 south of Fort William today (Thursday March 23).

The works at Druimarin will take place between 7pm and 7am. A 10mph convoy system will be in place to keep workers and motorists safe. This will be lifted outside of working hours, although a 30mph temporary speed limit will be in place during the daytime as traffic will be running over a temporary surface.

The work is part of a £175,000 project to repair and resurface three sections of the road that have deteriorated badly over the winter.

WHAT'S ON

FORT William Then and Now, the historical 'armchair tour' of the town, is back at the West End Hotel on Thursday March 30.

Following two presentations at the end of last year, it will again be delivered with a touch of West Highland humour by local residents Bill Cameron and Ian Abernethy. The showing will take place in the hotel dining room from 7.30pm until 9.30pm. Admission is £6 with concessions £4. A share of the proceeds will be donated to local charities.

WEST HIGHLAND COLLEGE UHI
Fort William is having an open day on Saturday April 1. Everyone is welcome to go along and find out more about the college from 11am until 3pm.

PIPERS wishing to take part in the Lochaber Piping competition must get their entries in before the end of the month.

The competition will take place on Saturday April 8 from 9.30am but all entry forms must be submitted before Friday March 31. Contact Morag Melville on 703862 for more.

WELL-KNOWN Highland consultant David Sedgwick will present an evening lecture, *Life As A Highland Surgeon*, on Thursday March 30. A buffet will be served from 6.45pm with the lecture starting at 7.30pm at West Highland College UHI, Fort William. Booking essential. Telephone 01397 874874 or email business.whc@uhi.ac.uk

REPRESENTATIVES of Lochaber Sensory Care (LSC) for sight and hearing support will be at Morvern Medical Practise in Lochaber on Tuesday March 28. LSC staff and volunteers will be there from 10.30am till 12.30pm to offer support and advice to those with a sight or hearing loss. The team will also supply NHS hearing aid batteries, re-tube and maintain the hearing aids, and help with any difficulties. No appointment required.

THE 2ND FORT WILLIAM BOYS' BRIGADE will have a parents night on Friday March 31 at 8.30pm in Duncansburgh Macintosh Hall.

LOCHABER Environmental Group and Dive Club UHI are hosting a litter pick/beach clean tomorrow (March 24) from 9.30am until 11am, meeting outside West Highland College UHI.

Lochaber Hope group celebrates

LOCHABER Hope held an open day on Friday March 17 to officially launch the organisation's new premises at Nevis Bridge.

As well as a drop-in session and presentations on some of the group's upcoming projects, the staff thanked everyone who has helped in what Alyson Smith, Lochaber Hope manager described as a 'long, hard journey' to get to where they are now.

Alyson said: 'We invited all the people who have donated to us and helped us raise funds and those who have donated in kind. It's really vital to say thank you to the community.'

Read the full story on our website: www.obantimes.co.uk.

View from the Chamber



LOCHABER, the Outdoor Capital of the UK, has been represented at the Cruise Expo in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Sarah Kennedy, a director of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, had the pleasure of representing Lochaber Chamber of Commerce at the Seatrede Cruise Expo in Fort Lauderdale from March 14 to 16.

For more than 30 years, Seatrede Cruise Global has been the cruise industry's premier global event, bringing together buyers, suppliers and cruise line executives



The MV Boudicca is one of the liners heading for Loch Linnhe.

destination and promote what a fantastic holiday location Lochaber is, and hopefully attract many more bookings for 2018 to the area.

There are currently seven cruise ships arriving in Loch Linnhe this year.

The first will be the MV Hebridean Princess, which was arriving at the Fort William pontoons yesterday (Wednesday March 22).

It is followed by the MV Astoria, arriving on Wednesday April 25, staying overnight and leaving on Thursday April 26, and the MV Boudicca, MV Braemar and MV Black Watch later in the year.

The chamber of commerce looks forward to welcoming these ships and their passengers and crew to the heart of the Highlands of Scotland.

So this was a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase what we can offer as a cruise

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Lawyer warns of 'huge knock on effects' of court trials switch

MONICA GIBSON

mgibson@obantimes.co.uk

A DECISION by a court authority to centralise sheriff and jury trials will have 'huge knock effects', according to a Fort William lawyer.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) has decided all solemn cases from Fort William and Portree will be heard in Inverness. SCTS told *The Oban Times* it recognises the importance of justice being carried out locally and the efficient disposal of business within a sheriffdom is a matter for the Sheriff Principal of that jurisdiction.

A spokesperson added: 'We can confirm that, after consideration, Sheriff Principal Derek Pyle has decided that, subject

to any exceptional cases of particular local interest or where the interests of justice require the local court to be used, jury sittings will move from Fort William Sheriff Court.

'The sitting already scheduled in Fort William for May 29 will be the last sitting to which new business for the court will be indicted.'

SCTS says in 2015-16, one solemn case was heard in Portree and five were heard in Fort William. Meetings were held in Fort William and Portree earlier this month at which the new programme and the procedures and arrangements for solemn work in Inverness were discussed with local court users.

But Hamish Melrose, who has his practice on Fort William

High Street, said the decision which was made without discussion.

Mr Melrose reiterated: 'All sheriff and jury cases, even the preliminary stuff, will be heard in Inverness unless there are special circumstances.'

'I have no idea what amounts to special circumstances but I presume it might be due to age of witness or if they are unfit. It certainly has not been made clear but the plan is for the new system to be in place in two months.'

'The decision has been made by SCTS because it will make things easier for them. But the other side of the coin is the impact on witnesses, lawyers and the accused – they will be huge.'

According to SCTS, managing

sheriff and jury business more efficiently is a key part of the vision for the future of the service.

The transition of business to a number of sheriff and jury courts, one of which is Inverness Sheriff Court, is designed to improve the consistency and quality of service in an area and thereby increase public confidence in the administration of justice.

Mr Melrose also raised concern about costs incurred by witnesses involved in solemn cases who are currently entitled to claim expenses from the Procurator Fiscal.

He added: 'If you think of people from Portree travelling to the mainland as well those from the other side of the water from Fort William, witnesses

are going to have to be provided with accommodation.'

In the case of Portree Sheriff Court, from April 18, some procedural and pre-trial solemn business will transfer to Inverness, but it remains the presumption by SCTS that jury trials will continue to be heard locally at Portree.

SCTS said it is anticipated that cases where a plea of guilty has been tendered at a first hearing will continue to be heard locally at both courts.

Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch told *The Oban Times* she has been campaigning for travelling domestic abuse courts across the Highlands, saying: 'The principle is the same for other cases and I have been assured

the courts in Fort William and Portree will continue to be the courts for all trials except for sheriff and jury cases. Even then, there is discretion to decide a sheriff and jury case should still be heard in Portree and Fort William, although I acknowledge there were few such cases in these locations last year.'

Ms Forbes said a round trip from Portree takes five hours minimum. Travelling from parts of Lochaber and north Skye will take even longer.

She added: 'The proposals are, in part, designed to ensure a common standard of justice for everyone through the court system and I firmly believe access to justice across the Highlands must not become a postcode lottery.'

New trust sets sights on three woodlands

A NEW trust which aims to own three woodlands near Fort William has been formed.

Great Glen Community Woodlands Trust (GGCW) trust is a recently constituted group of residents from Torlundy and Great Glen.

The trust has notified Forestry Enterprise of its interest in buying three Dalvenie, Tomnacharich and East Wood under the Community Assets Transfer Scheme.

GGCW will hold an open meeting at Lochaber Rural Complex at 7pm on March 29 when a representative from Forest Enterprise will advise members of the public who would like to learn more how to get involved. Following the meeting, GGCW plans to form a steering group and request funding for pre-acquisition support. The group then hopes to request an independent evaluation of the woodlands, negotiate this evaluation and request capital funding from the HIE Land Fund in conjunction with other funding partners.

Find us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/obantimes

A production error in last week's edition resulted in two photographs from separate stories being mixed up. We are happy to publish the photos again this week, with the correct captions. Apologies to everyone concerned.



LEG chairman Scott McCombie and former group manager Susan Carstairs are looking forward to working on the new waste and energy project.



Cothrom Lochaber, a support service for people with mental health issues was officially launched in the Nevis Centre on Tuesday March 7.

Osprey nest re-built at forest near Spean Bridge

A PAIR of ospreys will arrive back in Spean Bridge from their African migration this spring to a new nest.

Loch Arkaig Forest was recently bought by Woodland Trust Scotland in partnership with Arkaig Community Forest.

The osprey nest in the woodland was built up over 10 years, with the birds adding new material every spring and was beginning to sag under its own weight.

But Arkaig Community Forest members have re-built the nest in preparation for the

return of the ospreys. George Anderson from Woodland Trust said: 'The birds have failed to lay any eggs in the last couple of years, but have spent a lot of time around the nest. Fingers crossed they will have a more successful 2017.'

TIMELINE

School let prices rise next month

CHARGES for Highland school lets will increase by 10 per cent next month.

Highland Council (HC) says the decision to hike prices was made by councillors at its 2017/18 budget meeting on February 16 and will take effect on April 1.

It is estimated the new charges will generate additional income of £29,437 towards the council's budget gap for 2017/18 of £20,344m.

From April 1, the management of schoollets moves from the council's care and learning service to the development and infrastructure service. Lets affected include fitness classes and sports; charity and community events; creative arts; concerts/dramas; workshops, meetings and conferences; uniformed groups and youth activities; commercial activities; celebrations including discos, weddings and ceilidhs.

Anyone interested in booking a school hall should contact the school to discuss requirements and availability. Further information is available on the council's website www.highland.gov.uk/schoollets.

MP spreads the word on Brexit

IAN BLACKFORD MP is holding public meetings across Ross, Skye and Lochaber to update people on the latest Brexit negotiations in Westminster.

Entitled 'Scotland Post-Brexit', the meetings will be held in Ullapool, Dingwall, Fort William and Portree at the end of March and early April to give as many constituents as possible the chance to attend and express their views.

Dates and venues of the meetings are March 30, Macphail Centre, Ullapool; April 6, The Town Hall, Dingwall; April 11, West End Hotel, Fort William; and April 12, Community Centre, Portree.

Council spotlight on safer crossings

A REPRESENTATIVE from Transport Scotland will attend the Kilmallie Community Council meeting on Monday March 27.

David Devine is due to discuss the 'slower, safer, smilier' campaign for crossings on the A830. The meeting will take place in Kilmallie community centre from 7.15pm.



Bronwyn Strachan cuts the ribbon to officially open studio 2. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

I hope we continue to make memories here

Bronwyn Strachan

Right: Morganisation members Alan Pianosmith, Mandy Scott-Morgan and Dave Scott-Morgan.



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FW

Caol



Children used sweets in their science class.

PUPILS at Caol Primary School have been making pizza during maths and using sweets in science.

Primary two and three pupils made the pizza in class as part of their work on fractions. Primary one pupils discussed the strengths of building materials by making fairy houses out of marshmallows and sweets.

Head teacher Steven Hamilton told *The Oban Times*: 'It is to give real life context to the classes, that is what the curriculum is really pushing for. So they made the pizza and then they talked about cutting it into halves and quarters. And that is a conversation they can take home and continue around the dinner table.'

'The primary ones made fairy houses with a Hansel and Gretel theme. It was fun to see what the children came up with. But again, there was the educational side with how different sweets could withstand different weights and building from the bottom so their creation didn't fall over.'

Mr Hamilton continued: 'The lessons have been food orientated which, we find, is a great way of making learning fun. We also use grapes for counting and try to keep it healthy.'



Caol Primary School pupils have been mixing maths with culinary skills.

Glencoe



FILMING to advertise a new fashion brand from Hong Kong clothing giant Giordano has been taking place in Glencoe, above.

Scottish actor Bryan Larkin, who has featured in films including *London Has Fallen*, is fronting the firm's UK campaign. Larkin, who has also featured in films with fellow Scots actor Gerald Butler and who has recently landed a leading role in a Chinese movie, stars in the new online and print ad campaign.

Kinlochleven school pupils get ready to welcome refugees

KINLOCHLEVEN Primary School pupils are getting ready to welcome children from the Syrian refugee families coming to live in the village this spring.

Children from the school's nursery have made welcome banners and primary one, two and three pupils have decorated gift bags which will contain drawing and art materials, toys and books.

Kinlochleven Primary School head teacher Heather Thomson thanked Liza Heriot and Kate McDade who work in the nursery for all their extra work preparing the banners.

Everyone at the school, which was named a Rights Respecting School last June, has been learning about life as a refugee child through assemblies and global citizenship work.

Ms Thomson told *The Oban Times*: 'Everyone has been working very hard and are very excited to welcome the children and families to our school when they arrive.'

Four Syrian families are coming to Kinlochleven as part of the Highland Council's commitment to house 25 to 30 Syrian refugee families before 2020.



Children from Kinlochleven Primary School and nursery have been making banners to give to the Syrian refugee families arriving in the village this spring.

Sleat

SLEAT Community Council members met on Tuesday February 7 at Ardvasar Hallon. Among the items discussed were:

Skye hospital re-design: Rob Ware asked that someone from the community council convene a meeting of community councils from the south end and Lochalsh/South Ross so NHS Highland can meet residents to give an update on the project. Rob will write to NHS management to suggest a meeting is arranged. Flora Maclean and Veana Cleland will take this up.

The Commission for Parliamentary Reform: A new commission has been established by the Scottish Parliament's Presiding Officer to look at how parlia-

ment works and what improvements could be made. As a result of Professor Robertson being asked to become a member of the commission, there was a public meeting held on March 9.

Brexit: Roddy Murray read out a letter from Kate Forbes MSP about Brexit. This is principally about Scotland's position in Europe following the 2016 Referendum. William Swann, board member of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, gave a view of the agency's stance on Brexit.

This was followed by a general discussion on a number of aspects of the current status on the EU. Roddy Murray will write back to Kate Forbes stating the community's view.

Fairtrade Fortnight fun at school

PUPILS at St Columba's RC Primary School in Caol have been taking part in Fairtrade Fortnight activities.

All classes took part in two competitions. They designed posters featuring the Fairtrade message for one competition. Tommy Richardson, P2, Skye Strachan, P4, and Grace Wegner, P7, were the winners.

The second competition was a 'What is it?' competition in which the children were asked to match products from plant to shelf.

Anne-Marie Dillon and Abigail Wineberg of the Fairtrade Committee said the What is it? competition was to make children aware that Fairtrade products are not just boxes sitting on shop shelves but they begin as plants, looked after by farmers.'

The winners of this competition were Jake Winder, P1, Dylan McPhee, P2/3, Bradley Monk, P4/5, Matt Taylor, P6, and Millie Nixon, P7.

On behalf of the committee, they added: 'We kindly thank the Co-op in Caol for providing the poster prizes. Their generosity was appreciated.'



Winners of the 'What is it' competition.



The winners of the Fairtrade Poster competition.



The town team's existing shed, above, and the new one, below



New Town Team HQ arrives in Fort William

FORT William Town Team's new headquarters has arrived in the Parade.

The green-fingered volunteers were awarded £12,000 last year towards its new hub and it now takes pride of place in the town's Parade.

The town team now has a better base from which it can run its Adopt a Plot scheme and a community tool share partnership, in conjunction with Lochaber Environmental Group.

At the group's latest meeting, volunteer Deneil Smith explained the new garden shed has wooden window shutters and window boxes. The possibility of having fruit trees in planters outside the hub was also discussed.

Deneil Smith said: 'This is a little building that is central and convenient for everyone who wishes to use our community tool share and help with our adopt a plot scheme. The possibilities are endless. With this huge budget we will be able to make our hub secure, add solar lighting, a space to store our gardening tools, furniture to host pop-up events and a secure donations post to help us continue to fund future projects and tiered planters to expand our adopt a plot opportunities and further decorate our constantly improving High Street.'

Lochaline

PRIMARY school pupils have been showing off their creative side to help conserve Scotland's rare pearl mussels.

Sam Firth, a professional film-maker from Drimmin, and Martin Henry, a musician from Glasgow, helped children from Lochaline Primary School create a short musical film about the mussels.

Using a chorus of singing mussels, made from modelling clay, the children described the mussels' life in the river and appealed to humans to protect them. The video marked a further effort by the pupils, who have already helped Lochaber Fisheries Trust improve the breeding success of the mussels on their local river as part of a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Sam said: 'I really enjoyed working with Lochaline school and Lochaber Fisheries Trust. The children were determined to make people sympathetic to the plight of the mussels and they achieved their goal.'

Lucy Ballantyne, from Lochaber Fisheries Trust, said: 'We are thrilled by how Sam has captured the children's imagination. It is clear they care deeply about the plight of the pearl mussels and the future of this species looks much brighter with the children protecting them.'

Arisaig

MEMBERS of Arisaig Women's Institute met on Thursday March 16.

Guest speaker Karen Calder talked about the work of the Mission to Fishermen, covering the many services provided by the charity to current and retired fishermen.

Competitions for a painted/decorated shell and a seascape picture were both won by Helen Lamb, with Julie Cairns second and Anne Cameron third in both as well. Barbara Collins won the raffle.

The next meeting will be on Thursday April 20 in the Astley Hall at 2.30pm. Everyone welcome.



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Lochaber pupils enjoy fun-filled weekend in London

LOCHABER High School pupils experienced the sights and sounds of London on their annual prefects trip.

Forty-four sixth-year students spent the first weekend in March in the UK capital when they enjoyed museum visits, a sightseeing tour of central London, the hit theatre musical *Dreamgirls* and indoor karting.

Other highlights included the chance to see Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Arsenal's Emirates stadium, Madame Tussauds and the London Dungeon, a photo-call at the gates of Buckingham Palace and a flight on the London Eye.

The group had meals out at Carluccio's, the Hard Rock café and other West End restaurants, and enjoyed shopping in Oxford Street before travelling back to Fort William.

Head teacher Jim Sutherland said: 'The aim of the trip was to reward prefects who have contributed much to the school during their six years with us. It helps the young people gain confidence in a city environment before leaving home and, of course, to have fun.'

'This was the eleventh trip to London. Over the years, we have taken around 800 sixth years to the capital. It is a great experience.'



The pupils at the gates of Buckingham Palace.

Lochaber Youth Theatre success

HARD work is paying off for young Lochaber theatre enthusiasts.

Lochaber Youth Theatre (LYT) presented *The School Film* at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, on March 13 and will now take the show to Eden Court, Inverness, for the National Theatre's annual festival of new plays designed to give young people experience of professional theatre.

The School Film centres around a class of secondary pupils brought together to watch the film adaptation of *Great Expectations*.

The twist is that neither the audience or actors can see the film and there are only eight lines of dialogue.

The audience only hears the characters'

inner thoughts as they watch the film. Director Alan Gray said: 'The piece is the most challenging the group has undertaken in my time with them.'

'On reading, the play can appear disjointed, confusing and daunting but I feel the group has risen to the challenge and their hard work has shone through.'

'We now transfer to the Connections festival at Eden Court in April where along with seven other youth theatres from throughout Scotland, LYT will take part in workshops, perform themselves and watch each other perform.'

The group thanks the Nevis Centre for all its help and support throughout rehearsals and on show day.'

Members of Lochaber Youth Theatre in the production of *The School Film* which they performed in *Fusion* at the Nevis Centre in preparation for their appearance in an Eden Court Festival. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

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TIMESLINE

Achaleven school marks 150 years

A CELEBRATION to mark 150 years of Achaleven Primary School will be held this weekend. Lunch will be served in Connel Village Hall on both days from noon and the school will be open for tours.

On Saturday night, March 25, there will be a dance, with music from Ross MacPherson and Friends. This will be a great opportunity for former pupils and staff to meet up with old friends and reminisce about school days gone by.

Tickets for the event are on sale from Connel Village Shop, priced £10 - bring your own bottle - or by contacting committee members Marion Fisher, Dawn McBay or Isla Munro.

Tools stolen from building merchant

BUILDING materials and tools were stolen from a building merchant off Soroba Road, Oban, sometime between Thursday March 16 and Friday March 17.

Police are appealing for anyone with knowledge of the theft or who saw anything suspicious at the location to contact Oban Police office directly or to telephone 101.

Police investigate laptop theft

POLICE are investigating the theft of a laptop from a property in Shore Street, Oban, sometime between Thursday March 16 and Friday March 17.

Officers would like to hear from anyone who saw or heard anything suspicious.

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Drink driver who killed vet faces lengthy prison sentence

A DRINK driver who killed an island vet in a head-on collision is facing a lengthy jail sentence.

At the High Court in Glasgow on Tuesday (March 21), Thomas Wainwright, 27, was convicted of causing the death of 29-year-old Theresa Wade by dangerous driving.

As the unanimous guilty verdict was announced members of Miss Wade's family shouted: 'Yes'.

The court heard that Wainwright was drinking cider and whisky for eight-and-a-half hours before he ploughed his high-powered Maserati into the white Berlingo van driven by Miss Wade.

Wainwright was on the wrong side of the road and travelling at speeds of up to 95mph in the hire car, which had a black box fitted, just minutes before the crash on October 28 2015 on the A849 near Craignure, Mull.

During the trial, Wainwright and his passenger, 42-year-old Jerome Lopez, claimed Miss



Thomas Wainwright

Wade had been on the wrong said of the road and caused the accident, but the jury did not believe them.

Outside court, Miss Wade's partner of 10 years, Charles Pease, said: 'Thomas Wainwright will have to live with what he did.'

'All Theresa wanted to be was the island vet. People loved her. 'The unanimous verdict

delivered today has vindicated Theresa quite clearly, and her reputation remains unsullied.

'The verdict has not brought Theresa back, but our faith in justice has not been misplaced.'

Prosecutor Tim Niven-Smith revealed that Wainwright, who worked as the first officer on the £6.26million yacht *MY Mahogany*, based in the south of France, has a previous conviction for driving while unfit through drink or drugs.

At a court in Nice, he was fined 700 euros and given a suspended sentence.

Witnesses from Mull told of how Wainwright, who was drinking with his mother's partner 42-year-old Jerome Lopez, consumed five 500ml bottles of Magners cider in the Mishnish Hotel, a pint of cider in Macgouchan's pub, two whiskies in the distillery, all Tobermory, and another two pints of cider in the Craignure Inn, Craignure.

When asked in the Craignure Inn who was driving the car, because both he and Mr Lopez had been drinking, Wainwright boasted: 'The car knows its own way home.'

He then got behind the wheel claiming he 'had a clear head' and felt fine to drive.

Less than three miles down the road as he headed towards Tobermory on the wrong side of the road his hire car smashed into the Berlingo van driven by Miss Wade.

She died at the scene. The force of the impact was so great that the engine block was pushed into the cabin.

In court, Wainwright and his passenger Mr Lopez tried to blame Miss Wade for the crash and insisted it was she who was on the wrong side of the road.

Wainwright was on Mull, along with members of his family, visiting his sick grandmother. He flew into Edinburgh airport and hired the Maserati.

Judge John Morris remanded

Wainwright in custody and banned him from driving. He will be sentenced next month.

Mr Pease said the night of the crash Miss Wade had phoned to say she would be home soon and he began preparing a meal for them.

He said that when she did not return he thought she had been called out on an emergency.

Mr Pease said he went to bed and was wakened at 4am or 4.30am by the police. He added: 'They advised that she had been involved in a road traffic accident and she had died.'

He, along with Miss Wade's mother Mary and retired vet Jimmy Wilson, help to run the vet practice on the island.

Wainwright will be sentenced next month.

On Tuesday, Inspector Adam McKenzie, divisional road policing inspector for Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Police Division, said: 'Firstly I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the

family of Theresa Wade. Her family were left devastated by this incident in 2015 and continue to come to terms with the loss of their daughter, sister and partner.

Wainwright, during a holiday in Scotland, rented a high-powered vehicle and got behind the wheel while under the influence of alcohol. Without any consideration for the safety of pedestrians or other motorists in his path, he drove at excessive speeds and without due consideration. This resulted in the death of Theresa Wade.

This case unfortunately highlights the devastating effects of drink driving. His utterly selfish decision has completely shattered the lives of Theresa Wade's family and will forever impact on his own life. While we recognise the decision of the court, the damage caused cannot be undone.

'Our message is simple – never drink and drive.'

Collaboration and adventure – tourism summit has it all

REPRESENTATIVES from tourism businesses from across the Argyll and the Isles headed to the banks of Loch Awe on Tuesday March 21 for the sixth annual Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC) summit.

The theme of this year's summit, which took place during Scottish Tourism Week 2017, was City/Coast Connections and the collaborations which can be built between both.

AITC has been working close-

ly with Glasgow Life (formerly Glasgow City Marketing Bureau) on the current year-long Wild About Argyll campaign, and welcomed marketing communications director Tom Rice to the Lochawe stage to talk about how collaborating with Glasgow, the city on our doorstep, can be a win-win for tourism growth across both destinations. Wild About Argyll, which launched in Glasgow's Oran Mor at the end of January, was at the forefront

of the day. The face of Wild About Argyll, ultra adventurer Mark Beaumont, whose 12-day epic adventure lies at the heart of the campaign, dropped in during a training ride and spoke to delegates about his personal highlights from the epic adventure and his belief in the ability of Argyll and the Isles to transform its appeal to a younger more active market.

For the full report from the summit, visit www.obantimes.co.uk



AITC chairman Gavin Dick, director Calum Ross, Mark Beaumont and AITC development manager Carron Tobin together with the summit delegates get Wild About Argyll in St Conan's Kirk.

Change for better – the writing is on ground



Volunteers and supporters of Oban Viewpoint Group laid a mile of pennies near the site of its proposed new community centre at a fundraiser on Saturday. Group chairman Andrew Macdonald said the majority of the planned location for the centre, near to the railway line, had been cleared and they hope to continue removing scrub from the area this summer. The group has a social media page that can be found under the name of Soroba Community Centre.

Exchange pupils helped by Rotary cash

ROTARY club members present a cheque to support exchange students taking part in an annual Oban High School trip.

Oban Rotary President Graham Fraser presented a cheque for £500 towards the cost of the project.

Oban Rotary Club has contributed financially to the Laurinburg project since its inception and as part of the events laid on for the Laurinburg students, the club hosts a lunch for the students and their Oban counterparts which enhances the fellowship enjoyed by everyone concerned.

This year will be the 25th

anniversary of the Laurinburg Exchange which involves students from Oban High School hosting fellow students from Laurinburg, in North Carolina, USA.

The students from America come to Oban in June for a fortnight and are housed by students' families and through participating in a variety of pre-arranged local activities they enjoy what is sometimes a life-changing experience in terms of broadening their education.

The exchange is reciprocated later in the year when the Oban students fly out to stay with their Laurinburg counterparts.



When the clocks go forward on Sunday 26th March, remember to reset your heating programmer too Otherwise you could be paying too much

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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

This week we report on a decision by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) to move sheriff and jury trials from Fort William and Portree to Inverness.

The implications of this are huge and, like a large rock being thrown into a pool of water, the ripple effect will be felt far and wide.

SCTS has paid lip service to the importance of justice being carried out locally, and really, what this boils down to is money and convenience for SCTS.

But what about the convenience of witnesses, the

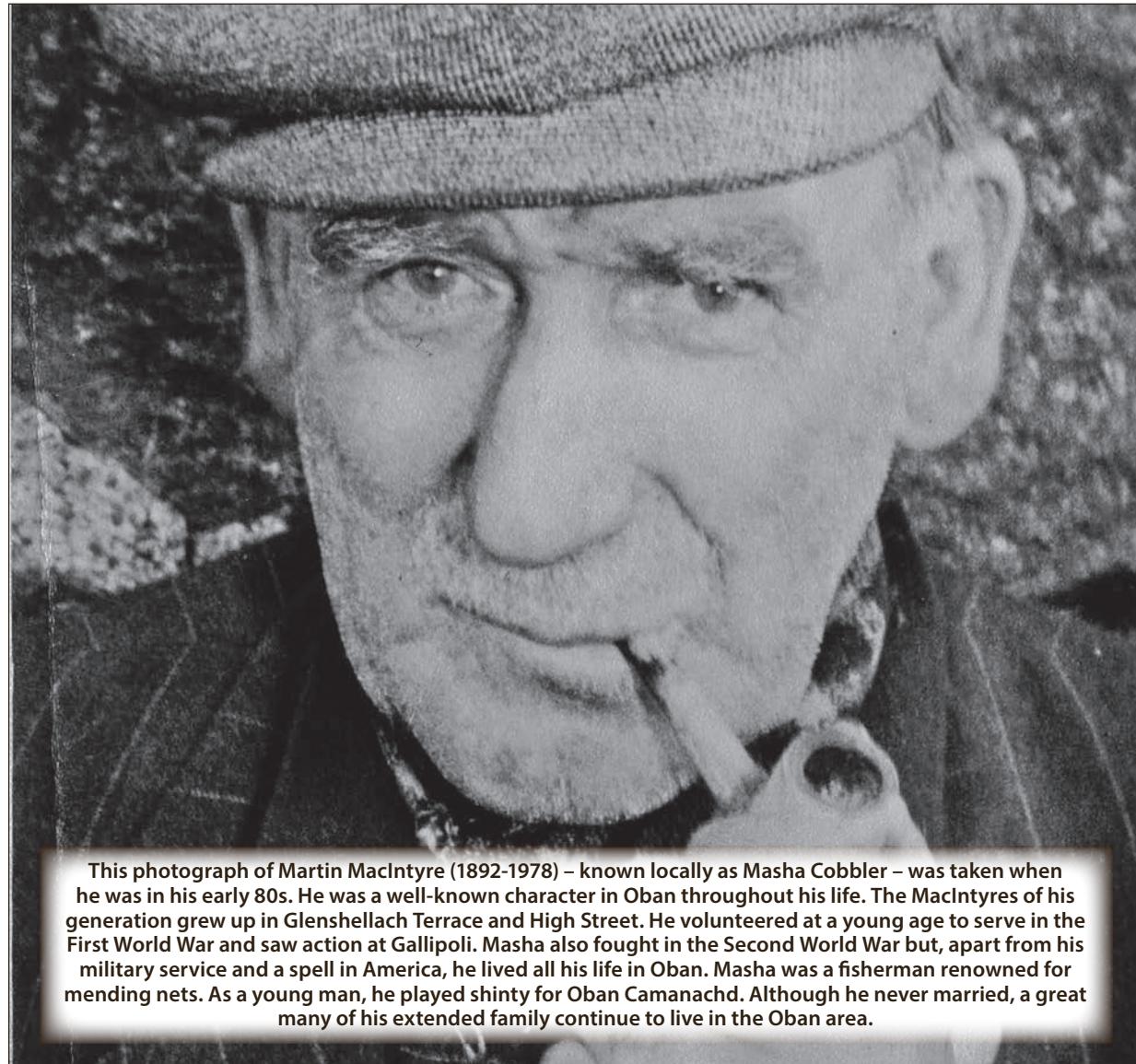
accused, lawyers and court staff in Portree and Fort William? Have they been taken into consideration? And what does this mean for the court buildings in both areas and the jobs of people working there?

The flip side is the cost, both financially and emotionally, on people having to travel to Inverness.

It is highly unlikely that public confidence in the administration of justice will be improved by such a move.

SCTS says few such cases are being heard in the town courts, but most people will see this as the thin edge of the wedge as far as local justice is concerned.

Days gone by – Martin MacIntyre



This photograph of Martin MacIntyre (1892-1978) – known locally as Masha Cobbler – was taken when he was in his early 80s. He was a well-known character in Oban throughout his life. The MacIntyres of his generation grew up in Glenshealach Terrace and High Street. He volunteered at a young age to serve in the First World War and saw action at Gallipoli. Masha also fought in the Second World War but, apart from his military service and a spell in America, he lived all his life in Oban. Masha was a fisherman renowned for mending nets. As a young man, he played shinty for Oban Camanachd. Although he never married, a great many of his extended family continue to live in the Oban area.

Macphail



ANGUS MACPHAIL
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I AM not a great believer in geographical barriers representing inter-human barriers, or indeed geographical links automatically forging human bonds.

In the melting pot of the world, this is one of most complex areas of our existence and throughout history it has been one of the most common causes of both connection and conflict.

From the individual, to the family, to the village, to the island or town, to the city, to the county, to the country and to the continent there are individuals interacting with other individuals that make the potential of different outcomes at each stage exponentially numerous and therefore impossible to generalise.

However, regardless of all that, and in slight contrast to my opening sentence, there are certain very positive links, cultural connections and feelings of fellowship between some parts of the world that exist and can be enjoyed without exclusion of, or prejudice against others.

I can assure readers this is not a political piece born from the debates of last week but merely from the excitement that this weekend I am

going on a stag weekend to Donegal in Ireland. Scotland has long held strong links with Ireland, and Argyll and the Islands especially have ancient connections across the Irish Sea that although less prevalent now are still apparent in the character of the people on both sides of that sea.

With the changing nature of travel and trade away from small vessels on sea-routes to large ferries and land routes the day-to-day links of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with Ireland are more limited now than at any time in our recent history.

The upheaval and complexities of religion and politics have no doubt also affected these links but transcending these differences is the fact that the Gaels of Ireland and the Gaels of Scotland are essentially the same people.

I remember on my first trip Ireland about 15 years ago, flying to Dublin, on to Galway, then out to the rural extremities of Connemara and at all stages of the journey feeling like we were on one big Hebridean Island.

The similarities in humour, in welcome, in hospitality and character

were astounding. The links between both populations were very obvious and the sense of feeling at home was very powerful.

Although separated for many hundreds of years, the cultures still hold these strong links of foundation and have also experienced similar challenges. The cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic oppression suffered by Gaels on both sides of the Irish Sea have no doubt added to the commonalities and affinity between both populations.

Since first receiving a copy of Fergie MacDonald's tape, There's Irish in the Islands, when I was 11 years old, I have been aware of our shared musical culture.

On Friday, when a bus load of 'stag-trippers' from Tiree, Mull, Vatersay, Barra, Islay, Oban and elsewhere arrive in Donegal bearing accordions, bagpipes, tin whistles, fiddles and singing songs, we hope to do our bit to rekindle these ancient links of shared heritage.

The shared links in whisky distillation may also be a relevant to proceedings!



is why we have democracy. Definition of hypocrisy? Asking people to split a union because you're upset they chose to split a union.

Tim Leahy said: A second independence referendum is needed because the situation has changed. The first result was too close for a lifetime decision, too many promises were made, which just haven't happened. Scotland voted to stay in the EU and its position is being ignored by Westminster. For these reasons alone there should be a second referendum. It doesn't mean Scotland should automatically be independent, just that Scottish people should have their voices heard!

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

Will referendum be Sturgeon's undoing?

Sir,

Ever since Nicola Sturgeon became First Minister at Holyrood, she has been utterly obsessed with one thing only: independence.

A dreamy craving to be separated from the UK is much more important, and a greater priority, to her than the 1,001 despairing problems with Scotland's NHS, economy and education. She's not interested, and never has been, in the important 'bread and butter' issues that affect so many people in Scotland, over which they struggle with every day.

Having lost at the ballot box in 2014, she is now daring to impose yet another independence referendum on the people of Scotland. Foolishly thinking they made the wrong choice then, she just can't accept reality. Like a wee girl having uncontrollable tantrums in the school playground, the First Minister has played the part well, daily, over the past three years because she didn't get what she, and her Holyrood crew, desperately coveted.

Stubbornly, and bitterly, refusing to accept that the UK voted to leave the EU, she now seeks revenge by loading her 'independence rifle' – with Brexit bullets – ready to fire at everyone on the other side of Hadrian's Wall. Honestly, this woman seriously needs to go and lie down in a darkened room and get quick and urgent help for the good and sake of Scotland, the nation she is supposed to govern.

There are many reasons we don't want or need independence. For the moment, I'll only make a brief reference to two. One of the fundamental reasons for Scotland to remain a part of the 300-year-old union is an important economic one, which cannot be lightly ignored by any sane person.

Even though our block grant has been cut by Westminster, it still remains a fact, to the annoyance of many English MPs, that we get more per head in public services spending than England. This is reality, whether we like it or not. To the penny, £10,536 is spent each year on people here in Scotland, which is £1,460 more than the UK average of £9,076.

If anyone is fooled into thinking that 'local oil' tax revenues will maintain this spend, they better think again. In the year 2011/12, Scotland's North Sea oil was doing

so well that the tax revenues were worth in excess of £9 billion to the economy. By the year 2015/16, the last time that the figures were assessed, that revenue had been virtually wiped out by the global fall in the price of oil. The revenue had gone from £9 billion to a mere £60 million.

Leading up to the 2014 referendum, we were told that an independent Scotland would be wholly reliant on oil revenues to resolve every foreseeable problem that goes along with governing ourselves.

Which planet are they on? It is high

time Nicola Sturgeon, and everyone who is obsessed with independence, woke up. Last time it saw the demise of the then First Minister Alex Salmond. Maybe Nicola Sturgeon has done us a great favour in calling for another referendum so that hopefully she too might disappear, forever, from Scottish politics.

Donald J Morrison
Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness.

Important questions for MSP to answer

Sir,

I am pleased to see that, after a decade of fence-sitting and mixed messages, Alasdair Allan MSP has finally decided he is in favour of an interconnector and, presumably, the scale of power generation which would justify it.

Mr Allan will be aware that this project would cost at least £600 million and that this very significant funding would come from consumers throughout the United Kingdom. Can he therefore answer two straightforward questions?

Does Mr Allan believe the interconnector is more or less likely to be built if his party calls for a second independence referendum with the aim of breaking up the United Kingdom into separate states, each with its own economic priorities? And why, in these circumstances, would it be reasonable to expect consumers in London to fund an interconnector for Lewis?

I hope Mr Allan feels competent to answer these questions in person. Failure to do so will be open to the obvious interpretation.

Ada H Campbell,
Druim Dubh, Paibesgarry,
Isle of North Uist.

Bus timetables are lacking connection

Sir,

I am writing in support of all the people you represented in your story in the paper of March 9 on bus services in Lochaber. I am sure each person can detail their own problems with their routes.

I was going to write to you regards the bus service to Raigmore Hospital so now support fully Jan MacLugash's point about Raigmore.

I recently had an appointment at Raigmore at 5pm. I eventually got this time changed. Visits to Belford Hospital informed me I could not get transport if a bus service could take me there.

I had to leave Fort William early in the morning. I watched a couple of NHS transport vehicles pass the bus - empty.

I arrived in Inverness main bus station. I was very surprised there was no bus to Raigmore and eventually, after asking people, I found a bus stop for Raigmore about half a mile away but had to walk down various streets, asking passers by as I did so.

Beachd Ailein



ALLAN CAMPBELL
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TAING MHÒR DHAN a h-uile neach a thug taic len cuid lathairachd aig An Taigh-Cèilidh, cuirm bhliadhnaill Chomann Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis, a ghabh àite aig Taigh-cluiche Eden Court Dìrhoine seo chaithd. 'S e fior thoileachas a bh' ann uimhir de mhòladh a chluinnitinn air taghadh eile de shàr sheinneadairean agus luchd-ciùil na Gàidhealtachd, agus gun teagamh rinneadh fior dheagh dheasachadh air a' choileanadh.

Tha e glè fhurasta dha Gàidheil agus luchd-taice na Gàidhlig an cuid misneachd a chall ann a saoghal a' cho bheatha a' déanamh tairéir air a' cuairt a' nochtadh ann am pàipearan-naidheachd agus iirisne tamaileachd dà-rìribh. Cha ghabh àineadh gum bheil na h-iomsaighean goirt sin a' torta baidh agus cleachadh agus follaiseachd na Gàidhlig aig àm far am bheil i a' stri airson urachadh feadh na dùthcha agus gu sönraichte anns na coimseadhachan san robh i uair na priomh meadhan conaltraidh.

Nach math mar sin gum bheil cothroman den t-seòrsa seo a bha eanachd a' choileanadh.

Tha sinn da-rìribh fortanach gum bheil Rèidio nan Gàidheal agus BBC Alba againn gus coimhearsnachdan na Gàidhlig a dhùthachadh ri chèile, agus tha gach Mòd is fèis a' cèilidh a' neartachadh agus a' misneachadh na h-obrach sin.

Le miltean a' cruinneachadh thuige far feadh na dùthcha seo agus bho thall-thairis gach bliadhna e am Mòd Nàiseanta an cruinneachadh bliadhnaidh as mothach a' th' aig na Gàidheil, agus tha e

an Eden Court aig Gàidheil a bhith a' gabhail tlachd nan cuid dualchas agus a' faotainn misneachadh àsùr ag èisteachd ri sàr luchd-liubhairt agus a' mhòr-chuid dhiubh sin gu math òg! 'S fhiaich cuimheachadh daonna gum bheil mòran a bhios ag èisteachd aig nach eil Gàidhlig ach a' taiceadh dhì, agus tha an taic sin eudromach san iomairt phoiliteach airson leasachadh a' chànan. 'S e mo bheachd fhin gum bheil a h-uile tachartas sam bheil a chànan ri chluinnitinn agus ri fhacinn na phàirt air leth eudromach den bhosnachadh a' dh'fheumar a chumail a' dol guasachadh dhan Gàidhlig a' choileanadh.

Feasgar an-earran (Disathairne) fao daidh sibh taic a chur ri Mòd Nàiseanta 2017 ann an Loch Abar le tighinn gu Cèilidh nan Sgitheanach aig Taigh-òsta a' Chinn an Iar (West End) anns a' Ghearsasan far am bheithar a' togail airgead dhan Mhòd. Chun 17 den Chèitean fao daidh sibh beachd a thoir air dreach den treas Plana-Nàiseanta Gàidhlig agus cui ridh Bòrd na Gàidhlig meas air uidh nàidh obreach, agus luach air bhuir cùid bheachdan.

ALL OF us involved in Inverness Gaelic Society's annual showcase Ceilidh House concert at Eden Court Theatre last Saturday have been hugely pleased by audience appreciation. You can hear some of the musicians performing at the Skye Ceilidh in Fort William's West End Hotel on Saturday with proceeds going to National Mòd Locaber 2017.

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

Social media

With Harbour Bowl in the middle of Shore Street being demolished to make way for a new hotel, people had plenty to say about the expected traffic disruptions...

Tom Hayward said: Get used to it. Once the hotel starts operating that's another 80 plus cars emptying into the roundabout, sometimes at the same time as a ferry.

While Ken Johnston added: It's been an eyesore for too long. Yeah, a bit of short term pain but this is a welcome addition. Bottom line is existing hoteliers will have to up their standards at a more affordable price to compete.

Press policy

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

And Andrew Sandilands had a few things to say about our deputy editor and columnist!: I wish that Martin Laing (whoever he is) would stop broadcasting his opinions as they can be rather irritating.

As expected our question 'Is a second independence referendum the right thing for Scotland?' had people commenting...

Tony Garvey said: It's not. Scotland voted against independence and as part of Great Britain voted for Brexit. Now that a minority did not get the results they wanted they are sulking. Suck it up, that's what I think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times,

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

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk.

IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines. We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

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.

I'm quite surprised there is no joining bus to Raigmore from the main bus station as this is where most people end up from places like Fort William and Golspie. These people [who are making decisions about bus timetables] who don't realise the problems we have should try it sometime. They should travel all these routes themselves - not sit in an office jotting down routes and times.

Ken Johnson
Serendipity
Banavie
Fort William

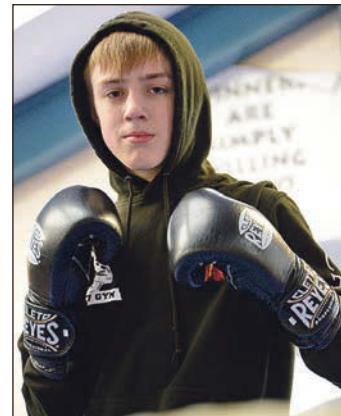
Crowdfunding appeal to save Mull machair

Sir, Everyone loves visiting Calgary Bay. We appreciate the white sand and turquoise sea, but most don't realise the walk from the car park down to the shore crosses one of Europe's rarest habitats, found only in North West Scotland and Ireland; nowhere else in the world.

Known by its Gaelic name machair,

Cameron prepares for Junior GB Championships

Boxing



Cameron Whyte has been selected to represent Scotland at the Junior GB Championships.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club, especially their young boxer Cameron Whyte, received great news on Sunday when they were informed by Boxing Scotland that Cameron had been selected to represent Scotland at the Junior GB Championships in Rotherham next month.

Cameron, who turned 15 this week, had an incredibly successful time last season when he annexed the Scottish and GB schoolboy championships and became the first Scottish schoolboy boxer to reach the final of the European championships.

This season he has again won the Scottish title which has meant he has travelled to Boxing Scotland's High Performance Centre in Glasgow to take part in the Scotland squad's training sessions. This culminated last weekend in a behind closed doors test match sparring to decide which boxer in each weight category would be selected for next month's squad.

What makes Cameron's selection even more impressive is that he is the youngest in his age category, with this being his first year as a junior boxer.

The Spean Bridge youngster's already heavy training workload has been cranked up even more. He will spend Saturday and Sunday in Glasgow training with the Scotland squad, taking part in five training sessions. During the week, he will have one day's rest and take part in six training sessions on the other four days. It's not unusual to see Cameron running around the outside of the Lochaber Camanachd shinty pitch before seven in the morning during the week as he does his sprint sessions.

All these training sessions involve a lot of travelling and training gear and obviously takes its toll on Cameron's bank balance.

Last season SW Welding, DMD Construction, Boyd Bros and the Rotary Club all helped Cameron with sponsorship and Lochaber Phoenix is again looking for sponsors to help out this special talent.

The boxing club is busy on other fronts too with three boxers scheduled to appear in Aberdeen at the end of March and early preparations for the home show at the Nevis Centre on Saturday May 13 under way.

Enduro takes to the slopes

Mountain biking

WHERE better for the Scottish Enduro Series (SES) to kick off in 2017 than Nevis Range, a stone's throw from the UK's highest peak Ben Nevis.

Steeped in racing heritage, the venue has become a permanent instalment in the Mountain Bike World Cup calendar and in the SES too, with the diverse trail network the perfect playground for racers.

Spread across five stages, there was a mix of fresh and familiar faces at an excited and busy registration on Saturday March 11. The weather looked changeable all weekend with sections of trails, particularly the bottom of Stage three (Blue Crane/Ridge Run) and the deep ruts of Stage four (Alt a'Mhullin), looking tricky even before adding in extra moisture and the passing of more than 600 wheels.

Times were tight throughout the field on most stages, however, the steep and now very slick ruts of the fourth stage over at Alt a'Mhullin were where racers could find or lose substantial chunks of time to their fellow competitors.

That was where the victors in the both the men and women stretched their advantages; eventual winners Lewis Buchanan sneaking two seconds and Eilidh Wells a whopping half minute advantage over their nearest rivals.

In the men's trek, new signing Lewis Buchanan would look to get his season off to winning ways against a strong field, including reigning champ Chris Hutchens, Sam Flockhart, Gary

Forrest, Ben Cathro and local 'baeys' Liam Moynihan and Lachlan Blair. The stakes were high with a risky 50p three way bet between Cathro, Blair and Moynihan.

Waking up on Sunday morning, the puddles on the ground had been topped up and the weather forecast suggested another band of rain was working its way in for noon, perfect time to add a little extra zest for the racers.

After a timing mishap on the opening stage, the first competitive stage would be the World Champs XC, the longest stage of the day at more than six minutes.

Times were tight throughout the field on most stages, however, the steep and now very slick ruts of the fourth stage over at Alt a'Mhullin were where racers could find or lose substantial chunks of time to their fellow competitors.

That was where the victors in the both the men and women stretched their advantages; eventual winners Lewis Buchanan sneaking two seconds and Eilidh Wells a whopping half minute advantage over their nearest rivals.

Both junior men and women victors Corey Watson and Elena Melton nearly took a clean sweep of stages, only missing the top spot on one stage. Corey was followed by Ben Balfour



The Scottish Enduro Series began at Nevis Range. Photograph: Ross Bell.

and Gregor Nixon who were separated by a meagre four seconds at the line.

Elena consistently put time into her competitors, ending up with a winning margin just over a minute over local shredder Mikayla Parton and Niamh Doherty.

There were some great rides throughout the field. Credible mentions go to Roz Newman for holding her own against the guys in the hardtail category and for Nukeproof racer Kelan Grant who made the trip over

the Irish Sea to finish sixth. Lewis Buchanan was followed home, very, very closely by Liam Moynihan just four seconds back (also taking the 50p bet out of Blair and Cathro). In behind him was Lachlan Blair in third with Gary Forrest and Ben Cathro both within touching distance of the podium. Taking

back to back Fort William victories was Eilidh Wells, a minute ahead of Janey Kennedy and Kirstin Moynihan. With a few others waiting in the wings it will be very interesting to

watch how this battle develops throughout the season.

From a now classic SES venue to an all-new location. Next up on the six round calendar is Pitlochrie on April 15 and 16, when the series heads north-east to fresh territory of open hill tops, punchy pedals and technical downhill sections.

There's nothing quite like an all-new venue with racers heading into the unknown, with a blank canvas to draw on. You can be sure the SES organisers will produce yet another classic.



Swimmers set off through the Corran Narrows on Sunday. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Brave swimmers take the plunge in Corran Narrows to raise funds for cancer charity

Swimming

A GROUP of brave swimmers took to the Corran Narrows on Sunday to raise money for charity Children with Cancer UK.

Forty-seven people took part in the latest Highland Open Water Swim, the brainchild of outdoor enthusiast Jeff Forrest, and raised £1,500.

Jeff set up the challenges to raise money for the children's charity and to inspire people to enjoy the great outdoors and start a new sport.

Last year Jeff put on six events

to 'bring together a group of like minded people to raise money for children with cancer.' Around £3,000 was made for the charity in 2016.

But because of social media the swims 'grew arms and legs' and people began asking him to plan more.

This year four events will be held and on Sunday March 19 47 brave swimmers took to the open water at Corran with four even making the swim back too.

And now Jeff said he thinks the events will start being an annual thing, but with its popularity growing he said more planning will be involved.

Jeff said: 'The swim takes about 25 minutes and although it's not a huge distance, about 420 metres, the tide can catch people out because when you are swimming the water can whip you back out.'

And now Jeff said he thinks the events will start being an annual thing, but with its popularity growing he said more planning will be involved.

Doghouse Thistle are indoor league champions

Indoor Football

THE INDOOR football finals have come to a close with the champions of the league crowned last Sunday.

Sunday nights (March 19) final between Doghouse Thistle

and Fiorantina Turner saw the Doghouse take home the trophy after winning 1-0.



Indoor League sponsor Sammy Cameron, left, presents the winners trophy to Dave Forbes, captain of the unbeaten Doghouse Thistle. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Alleycats are crowned scratch division champions

THE LOCHABER Building Supplies 10 pin bowling league has finished at the Nevis Centre, but a new single league has begun.

The bowling league finished at the beginning of March with a prize presentation held at the Nevis Centre.

The Alleycats were the champions of the scratch division with 65 points followed by Don't Give A Split with 50 points.

Captain of the winning team, Tony Whitelocke, was presented the trophy by league organiser

John Weller. Last Monday (March 13) a new singles league started.

After week one Tony Whitelocke leads the scratch league with 15 points, followed by Pam Weller with 14 points with Brian Johnstone in third with 13 points.

The handicap league is also led by Tony Whitelocke with 15 points followed by Alma Sorley on 14 points with Pam Weller in third place on 13 points.

Tony Whitelocke leads the chase for the Nevis Radio High

Ten pin bowling

Pin Trophy with 533 pins followed by Pam Weller in second with 485 and Brian Johnstone in third with 396 pins.

The top individual scratch game this week came from Pam Weller with a 193 whilst Tony Whitelocke rolled three good games of 181, 179 and 173. Tony Whitelocke had the best three game scratch series with 533 and the best three game handicap series with 641.



Members of Lochaber Athletic Club held their final race of the winter season at Nevis Range last Sunday, followed by their annual awards ceremony in the Pine Martin Cafe.

Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.