

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Easter Property Review



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Bonawe's Iona Campbell captured the ferocity of the blaze on Tuesday night. The fire has since swept towards the village.

Huge blaze threatens Bonawe

Village fears as hill fire rages out of control

A FIRE on a hill behind the village of Bonawe could be spreading towards homes with fire crews helpless to stop it.

Since 2.30pm on Tuesday, smoke could be seen for many miles as the blaze crept across Beinn Duirinnis near Bonawe Quarry.

Homes threatened

As *The Oban Times* went to press, villagers were preparing to take evasive action as the fire crept over the top of the hill, threatening to sweep down towards Bonawe.

There were also concerns the blaze could spread north and west to damage forestry near Sutherland's Grove, north of Beinn Duirinnis.

It is believed locally that the blaze was started deliberately by two fishermen. A full investigation is yet to take place.

Michael Wardrop, who has lived at Kenmore Cottages for 35 years, said



Video of this available online OBANTIMES.CO.UK

The spread of the fire across Beinn Duirinnis could be seen best from Taynuilt. Firefighters were unable to tackle it directly due to challenging conditions on the hill. Picture - Charlene Jagger

yesterday: 'I've never seen anything like this. It's starting to come over the hill now. It's a bit of a worry.'

Neighbour Ronnie Campbell added: 'It was mental last night. It could come back towards the village. People were worried.'

Donald MacNeil works at Bonawe Quarry and lives in the village. He was watching the

fire spread since it started and admits to having concerns for his home.

He said: 'It's spread about three miles so far, up towards Loch Creran Farm Cottage. I'm a wee bit worried now.'

Eighty-two year old Lily Wilson grew up in Bonawe and now lives at The Hedges in Taynuilt, an area that looks

across the loch to Bonawe.

'I have never seen anything like it,' she said.

A spokesperson for Strathclyde Fire and Rescue said: 'We have had trouble gaining access because of treacherous conditions underfoot.'

'We're actively assessing the situation but any action will be up to the officer in charge.'

Argyll boost for home buyers

£3 million mortgage scheme aims to help first time buyers

A £3MILLION scheme will give first time buyers in Argyll and Bute a welcome boost by providing a helping hand onto the property ladder.

Argyll and Bute Council is one of many local authorities across the UK to adopt the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, which provides assistance to potential buyers who can afford the mortgage payments but struggle to find an initial deposit for a new home.

The local authority has agreed to provide £1million a year over the next three years to fund the scheme, which could help up to 33 first time home buyers across Argyll and Bute get on the property ladder each year.

It is hoped that the scheme will help stimulate the property market as well as reverse a trend that has seen young people leave the area in search of jobs and affordable housing.

Making the announcement, the council's lead councillor for homes, George Freeman, said: 'As the economic situation becomes increasingly tough, so people find it more and more difficult to step onto the property ladder and buy their own home.'

'The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which we are adopting will help to ease this situation and will open up the possibility of home ownership for people all over the area.'

'It will also help to stimulate the local economy and bring more life to our communities if people are able to afford to live and work in Argyll and Bute.'

As with other lending schemes, people will have to be able to afford their payments and meet certain lending criteria.

In effect, the scheme means first time buyers will be able to access an indemnity of up to £30,000 towards a mortgage of no more than £150,000.

For example, on a property costing £150,000, there would be a five per cent deposit of £7,500 from the buyer for a 95 per cent mortgage of £142,500.

The council contribution of £30,000 would effectively give the buyer access to the terms of a 75 per cent mortgage.

The leader of the opposition, Dick Walsh, has backed the scheme.

He said: 'Anything that will help young people in particular securing a mortgage and get on the property ladder can only be a good thing.'

'It is something that's been talked about for a long time and we feel it will make a big difference.'



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Building of 40 new affordable homes to get underway at Oban

A £2.3MILLION loan and a grant of £890,000 will allow Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) to build 40 new homes for rent in Oban.

The finance, from Argyll and Bute Council, follows earlier confirmation from the Scottish Government that it would grant £1.78million to the project to build the homes on land at Glenshellach estate.

Work will start in April and will take around 18 months, with local company M and K MacLeod - who successfully tendered for the contract - set to deploy 50 construction workers, including five apprentices, to the job.

Alastair MacGregor, chief

executive of ACHA, said: 'We have been working for some time to pull this much needed development together.'

'Added bonus'

'I would like to thank both Argyll and Bute Council and the Scottish Government for their considerable financial contribution. Without their support we would not have been able to take this development forward on our own.'

'With 605 applicants on the housing waiting list in Oban these 40 homes will make a huge difference in meeting housing need. There is an added bonus in that the construction work will provide much needed jobs for the building industry.'

Roddy McCuish is the deputy leader of Argyll and Bute Council and new lead councillor for Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

He said: 'This is a first-class example of partnership working between local government, Scottish Government and housing associations - not only providing much needed housing but also a huge boost to the local economy.'

Michael Russell, MSP for Argyll and Bute, agreed.

He added: 'This is yet another vote of confidence by the Scottish Government in the growth and success of Oban and is tribute to the work of the key players - Argyll and Bute Council, ACHA and MacLeod's.'

Fish farm 'naughty' says Lorn councillor

AN NORTH Lorn councillor has described fish farm Dawnfresh as 'naughty' after failing to fulfil a promise to advertise a public meeting.

The company held three public meetings in North Lorn to discuss reducing its plans for a fish farm on Loch Etive - however it did not advertise the meetings to the wider public. At a meeting last week, Dawnfresh had promised local councillors it would advertise the meetings in *The Oban Times* to alert locals - but it failed to do so.

Local councillor Iain MacDonald said: 'They promised us an advert was to go in *The Oban Times* but it didn't. That was naughty and I'm not happy about it.'

A spokeswoman for Dawnfresh said: 'We distributed some flyers, told community councils and local councillors. As far as we're concerned that's enough to get the word out.'

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Lorn Lines



Winners of a recent competition between Oban Photographic Club and Hope 2 Oban were, left to right, Malcolm Alloway who had the best image submitted by H2O, competition judge Tom Robley, President of Carluke Camera Club, and Stephen Lawson, President of Oban Photographic Club, who accepted a trophy donated by club member John Douglas on behalf of the club after it won the overall competition.

A CONTROVERSIAL new product was launched at last week's LORN market in Benderloch - inciting debate among shoppers.

Iain Darling, owner at Wynne's Butchers on Oban's Combie Street, has added tomato ketchup to his breakfast packs - leading to demand from some customers for a brown sauce version!

Picky customers will have their wishes answered soon - Iain has the brown sauce on order.

The market was bustling in the sunny weather last Thursday and the new look breakfast packs sold out, despite the opposition.



Iain displays the controversial new look breakfast pack. 16_t13market01



PC Andrew Simpson and PC Charlie Mackenzie with visitors to the open day. 16_t12police02

STRATHCLYDE police recently opened its doors to let curious members of the public see behind the scenes.

Oban Police Office was one of many to hold an open day to commemorate the end of the force on April 1.

People of all ages filed in to the station to meet officers and be shown around. Highlights included getting fingerprinted, experiencing the detention cell and being shown the town's CCTV operation.

One young visitor particularly enjoyed playing with the 'tee naws' on the police car and youngsters left with the message that the police are here to help.

PC Andrew Simpson was leading the tours. He said: 'It has went really well. People of all ages have felt they have learned something and



PC Andrew Simpson fingerprints nine-year-old Chelsea MacAulay, a pupil of Dunbeg Primary School. 16_t12police01

enjoyed themselves. It is about giving people an insight into the work of the police - they know that police are here to help if ever they are in trouble.'



Hannah Jamieson and Caitlin Curran, both 10, meet the Easter Bunny during the recent fayre. 16_t12east01

HUNDREDS of pounds were raised for Oban's Congregational Church at a recent Spring Fayre.

The church's fundraising committee organised tea, coffee, cake and soup as well as stalls to raise money for the 'self-supporting church'.

Lillian Wren, chairwoman, said the fayre, held at the church, had been supported by both visitors and locals and the total of £655 raised was an 'excellent result'.

You can email your news and views from Oban and Lorn direct to epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

Highlands' population grows by 11 per cent

THE HIGHLANDS' population has grown by 23,200 between 2001 and 2011 - but at hugely differing rates within age groups, according to the latest Census figures released by the National Register of Scotland.

The 11 per cent overall rise, from 208,900 to 232,100, far outstripped the national figure of five per cent and was generally welcomed as further evidence that crippling depopulation could be a thing of the past.

But a breakdown of the statistics shows that Highland Council may wish to keep a close eye on primary school capacity - and provision for a rapidly ageing populace.

Some 12,700 children aged under five were recorded compared with 11,400 in 2001 - an 11 per cent increase - while at

the other end of the scale the number of people aged 65-79 rose 22 per cent to 32,300 - up 5,900.

For the over-80 age group the increase was even sharper - from 8,200 to 10,800 - a rise of 2,600, or 32 per cent. Across Scotland as a whole, the figure for the over 80s was 19 per cent.

The upward trend in the region was not reflected in the 5-14 group, which shrank from 26,900 to 25,800 - a fall of 1,100 or 3.8 per cent.

Numbers of those aged 15-39 rose slightly from 63,600 to 64,100 and there were far more people living in the Highlands aged 40-64 - 86,500 compared with 72,400 in 2001, an increase of almost 20 per cent.

The Census also showed 118,700 women and 113,500 men living in the

Highlands, while the region had the third-greatest increase nationally in the number of households - 14 per cent.

Highland Council welcomed the rise in under-fives as evidence that efforts to promote the area as child and family friendly were paying off. The Highland area is one of only three areas in Scotland that shows an increase in the number of 0 - 15 year olds.

Older population
The council also welcomed 'the significant contribution' the growing older population was making to local communities and was working with NHS Highland to ensure health and care services were 'well placed' to offer support when required.

Councillor Alasdair Christie, chairman of the adult and children's

services committee, said: 'When other parts of Scotland have a reducing population, we welcome the fact that Highland's towns and villages have increasing numbers of children and young people.'

'Along with the majority of other councils in Scotland we have known for some time that we have an ageing population. 'This brings many benefits and older people can be full and active contributors in the life of the Highlands.'

'Increasing numbers of local voluntary activities are being supported by our older population.'

A STEEP drop in the number of people aged between five to 40 in the Western Isles has been more than offset by increases across other age groups,

according to the latest Census figures from the National Register of Scotland. Eilean Siar's overall population rose 4.5 per cent from 26,500 to 27,700 between 2001 and 2011.

Under-fives
The Census recorded 100 more under-fives - 1,400 compared with 1,300 - living in the islands, but there were just 2,900 children aged five to 14 - 12 per cent and 400 less than 10 years previously.

And in the 15-39 age group, 7,100 people were found to be permanently resident - 500 down from 2001.

Higher up the age scale, numbers of those aged between 40 and 64 jumped 14.3 per cent from 9,000 to 10,300 while 6,000 over 65s were recorded, up 13.8 per cent from the 2001 figure of 5,200.

Mull BID says 'no'

BUSINESSES on Mull, Iona and Ulva have rejected proposals to become the first all-island Business Improvement District (BID).

The result of the ballot, which closed last Thursday, came as a 'major blow' for those who had championed the idea and worked together for over a year to bring it to fruition.

A total of 81 per cent of eligible businesses voted, 37 per cent of those voted in favour of the proposal and 63 per cent against.

Neil Hutton, chairman of the BID steering group, told *The Oban Times* it was a 'sad day' for the islands. He said: 'I am deeply disappointed that despite all the obvious benefits a BID would bring to our community, not enough of our local businesses supported it.'

'This was an opportunity to create Scotland's first island BID, its first rural BID and its first tourism-focused BID.'

'The project would have been a trailblazer in all sorts of ways and I'm certain would have proven a key contributor in promoting and developing our visitor economy over the next few years.'

But James Heggie, a trader on Tobermory's Main Street who voted no, said: 'We all worked very hard to obtain this result and it took courage for nearly

all the businesses and shops on the Main Street in Tobermory and in the other towns and villages to print, display and distribute posters and canvass the message.'

'We were all relieved and happy when we found out we were not alone and did not hold the minority view. There was a genuine coming together of a large proportion of those eligible to vote.'

'It is important to capitalise on that consensus and deliver a united and cohesive strategy on how to move forward after the dust has settled.'

Chance
Richard Nealon, vice chairman of the BID steering group, added: 'We have turned down the chance for our businesses to work together to ensure we cement our status as the best holiday destination in Scotland.'

'The steering group is obviously dismayed that some of those businesses could not see the benefits in taking a lead in ensuring a more prosperous future for our islands by working together and collectively investing in improvements.'

'What we now need to do is take the appetite for collaboration which has become evident over the last few months among a large number of our businesses and see how it can be developed.'



Lighting up Kinlochleven are from left, Jamie Donaghy, David Wilson, Pat McIlhinney and Brian Spence. 20_t13kinloch01

Village lights campaign starts early

IT MAY only be March - but an ambitious campaign has been launched to brighten up Kinlochleven this Christmas.

The newly-formed Kinlochleven Community Christmas Lights Fund committee aims to raise £5,000 for a 20-foot artificial tree and festive lights - and has already received several substantial donations.

Members include local fire and rescue personnel Pat McIlhinney and Brian Spence, who is chairman, Jamie Donaghy of local band *The Shine* and Kinlochleven Community Trust ground maintenance worker David Wilson.

Mr McIlhinney, Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service group manager for Lochaber, lived in Kinlochleven for five years before moving

to Fort William. He told *The Oban Times*: 'We want the local community to get involved. The old lights fell into disrepair and can't be used and we appealed for funding from the council.'

'We were unsuccessful so we decided to try and raise the cash ourselves. We have had a lot of support from local people so far.'

'We are going to get the lights refitted round the village and get a 20-foot, all-weather tree. 'It will make the centre of the village look really nice.'

He added: 'Fundraising has started well - somebody gave us a cheque for £40 yesterday.'

Anyone wishing to donate or get involved can contact Pat on 07767 346627 or Brian Spence on 07920 273080.

Third time Caol drink driver warned he faces jail

A CAOL man has been warned he could face jail after being caught drink driving for a third time.

Appearing from custody, Paul Haddow pled guilty to driving on North Road, the A830 at Lochybridge and B8006 at Lochside while more than three times the legal limit on March 20.

Procurator Fiscal Alison Wylie said Haddow, of 36 Glenkingie Street, was last caught drink driving in 2007, when he was disqualified for five years.

Sheriff Noel McPartlin deferred sentencing until April 24 for reports and released Haddow on bail.

The Sheriff said: 'I have to consider all options and that would include a custodial sentence.'

Housing association marks 25th anniversary with fund

LOCHABER Housing Association (LHA) will mark its 25th anniversary by launching a new community fund.

A total of £5,000 has been made available for the new fund which will provide grants of up to £200 to eligible community councils, residents' associations and clubs such as Scouts or sports groups.

LHA will also create a new annual award - The Monsignor Wynne Good Neighbour Award - which can be given to any 'good neighbour' who is nominated by someone associated with LHA. The winner does not have to be an LHA tenant.

LHA chief executive Blair Allan said: 'This is your chance to say a big thank you to a kind and caring person who has made a difference to the local community with their acts of kindness.'



The children with Kenneth Steven. 16_t13lochnell01

Author a hit at Lochnell

PRIMARY one youngsters enjoyed a day with one of Scotland's best loved children's authors last week.

Kenneth Steven visited Lochnell Primary School in Benderloch last Thursday with children from Achaleven Primary School in Connell also there.

Kenneth is well known across generations as he writes literature and poetry for very young children as well as older children and adults. He also recently won an award for the best picture book of the year in Norway.

He said: 'It is a great joy to come to work with the children. I think what's wonderful is in a school like this they have been preparing for my visit for weeks. They have been building up expectation for the children which is great. I hope to inspire every class I speak to not just with writing but with illustrating too. I wish I had an author visit my school when I was little, it would have been great.'

'I want to give the children a sense that authors are real live people and get them to enjoy their creativity more.'

The event, part funded by Creative Scotland's Live Literature programme, managed by Scottish Book Trust, left some youngsters with a wish to be authors and illustrators when they grow up.

Joy Cameron, teacher at Lochnell Primary School, said: 'Live Literature funding is a very valuable resource for our schools as it enables us to increase our pupil's ability, confidence and enjoyment in reading and writing and encourage them to extend their reading choices to include a diverse range of authors.'

Clare Rodgers, Live Literature project co-ordinator, added: 'By subsidising writers' events throughout Scotland, the Live Literature scheme encourages organisations of all kinds to include authors in their programmes.'

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Decision due on controversial windfarm plan

COUNCILLORS will visit the potential site of a controversial 83-turbine 300MW windfarm south of Fort Augustus on Monday April 8 before making a decision later the same day.

The south planning committee had wanted to go to Stronelairg on Garrogie Estate and surrounding hills in March but were prevented by snow and ice on access tracks.

Scottish and Southern Energy Renewables is seeking permission for the windfarm along with nearly 60km of new roads and a number of new buildings, such as a sub station and a control building.

The Scottish Government will make the final decision on the windfarm, has consulted Highland Council, who's planning officers recommended councillors make no objection if the number of turbines is cut to 67.

Restored shinty pavilion on display at museum

THE HIGHLAND Folk Museum at Newtonmore will open for the 2013 season today (Thursday) with an historic addition to its collection - the old Boleskine shinty pavilion.

Owners Scottish and Southern Energy had planned to demolish the pavilion at Foyers - until local shinty veteran 'Teep' MacDonald suggested it could be sited at the museum instead.

The newly restored pavilion now stands proudly on the 80-acre site - next to a small shinty pitch, complete with goals, installed by the museum.

Teep MacDonald will officially open the new exhibit and Highland Folk Museum, together with the Camanachd Association, have organised an under-14 shinty tournament between Kingussie, Newtonmore, Laggan/Kincaig and Boleskine to mark the occasion.

Bob Powell, principal museums officer for High Life Highland said: 'The away dressing room will be the permanent home of the shinty heritage project which seeks to explain 'The Place of Shinty in the Social History of Badenoch and Strathspey'. We also had a couple of interesting finds when we were deconstructing - a roof beam had been inscribed with the name of A D Macrae - one of the apprentice joiners involved in building it in 1930 - and this we have built back into the roof. It also has a dent on the roof, which we have retained, caused by shrapnel from a German bombing raid on the aluminium smelter at Foyers.'

Lottery fund boosts bid to build currachs

A GROUP which started by re-enacting St Columba's journey from Ireland to Iona in a currach in 1997 is this year growing the currach heritage.

Causeway Coast Maritime Heritage Group, crew of the Colmcille currach, is to embark on the creation of several new boats having recently won funding from the Big Lottery for the project.

The Causeway Coast Maritime Heritage Group has carried out several voyages following Saint Colmcille's journey to Iona in the 12-oar currach since 1997. They have also rowed to France and Spain and have circumnavigated Ireland.

This year they are expanding their fleet with the aim of establishing a new culture of local communities racing against other teams from along the north coast of Ireland.

They hope to build four 21ft racing currachs if funds allow, which will be rowed by teams of three with two oars each.

Flu halts model

MODEL hopeful Natalie Donnelly was unable to compete in last weekend's Miss Catsuit Live in Inverness after suffering from flu.

The 23-year-old, who is originally from North Connell but lives in Broadford, Skye, was due to compete in the final of the beauty pageant at Hush nightclub.

Council urged to address escalating costs at Oban Airport

ARGYLL and Bute Council has been urged to tackle the costs of running Oban Airport as a way to make the service more efficient.

The local authority revealed plans in *The Oban Times* to relaunch the facility this May as part of a marketing drive to attract more trade to the facility.

However, Connel resident and

retired businessman Stephen Thomas believes too much money is being spent on absolute compliance with regulation – something he believes is wasteful.

Currently, the airport alongside Coll and Colonsay airports, costs £892,000 per annum to run, of which £800,000 is covered by a Scottish Government

subsidy and £32,000 is income from the airports.

The cost of the subsidy for the public service obligation (PSO) flights to the council, meanwhile, is £332,000, bringing the council's net costs for running the airport to £392,000.

Mr Thomas believes a lot of that money could be saved.

'Whilst it was interesting

to hear that the council 'have commissioned a marketing strategy aimed at consolidating and expanding operations at Oban Airport' they appear to be satisfied with the costs of operating this airport – which is regarded as a 'gold-plated airport in aviation circles,' he said. 'Whatever was required to ensure compliance with the

Civil Aviation Authority rules has been provided or fully complied with, whereas some other Scottish airports successfully challenged many aspects so as to ensure less costly minimum and correct compliance with legal requirements and also health and safety aspects.

'It has been suggested that it would be worth reviewing

the Oban Airport operation similarly.'

Meanwhile, Paul Keegan, the largest private investor in the airport with his company Total Logistics Concepts, says he has doubts over the council's plans to re-brand the airport.

He said: 'The latest publicity surrounding the airport gives the impression of a thriving

bustling facility when in fact there are days and days when all that arrives and departs is the subsidised service.

'Our fuel business has fallen by 40 per cent in five years and this is a direct reflection of the huge fall in visiting aircraft. There needs to be a genuine attempt to reverse the decline in aircraft numbers.'

Objectors say North Connel flat plan is 'monstrous'

OBJECTORS to a proposed development of 24 flats on the site of the former Ossians Retirement Home have described the plan as 'monstrous'.

At a public hearing in North Connel Hall on Monday to discuss the planning application by Melfort Care Ltd, councillors on Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee passed a recommendation to approve outline planning permission.

Councillors had made a site visit and heard from the developer's agent and objectors during the meeting.

Committee chairman Sandy Taylor said: 'Having granted outline planning consent, the committee did ask that the detailed application come before us, which is quite unusual.

'I think that shows the interest we have in this and we want to make sure this comes to the correct conclusion.'

Objector Iain MacLean, a previous owner of the retirement home, described the block of flats as 'monstrous', claiming that the development was of a scale and size that was 'completely out of character for North Connel'.

New estate agent to open in Oban

OBAN could be set for a jobs boost after confirmation a new estate agency is to open in the town.

Dunoon business WaterSide Property will open in Argyll Square this Easter and is currently recruiting for staff to run the new business.

Director Gary Campbell said: 'Following the success of our Dunoon-based operation we are thrilled to be opening an office in Oban from where we can offer the same high level of service to our clients.'

Bookmaker takes George Street site

AN OBAN shop is to go from boots to bookmakers with William Hill set to open in the town. The national business has applied for permission to erect an illuminated sign outside the premises at 71-75 George Street, after successfully applying to change the use of the building to a betting shop when it was still occupied by Stead and Simpson in 2011.

Superfast broadband upgrade to be delivered

HIE signs fast fibre technology deal with BT

SUPERFAST broadband is finally set to be delivered to the Highlands and Islands after a long-awaited £146million contract was signed to upgrade the area's archaic infrastructure.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) confirmed on Monday it had put pen to paper with telecommunications operator BT to start work on the biggest upgrade ever seen on the region's telecommunications network.

It will mean 84 per cent of the area's homes and businesses will be able to access fibre broadband technology by the time work is completed.

Confirming the agreement, HIE chief executive Alex Paterson said it was the most complex and challenging broadband project yet undertaken.

'This ambitious project is a game changer for the Highlands and Islands. It will roll out modern, fast and reliable broadband to areas that could not have hoped to have it introduced commercially.

'Digital connectivity is essential to today's social and business activity. High-speed fibre broadband will make a real contribution to our communities' prosperity, particularly for people in remote and rural areas.'

The project comes with its own challenges. Bringing the speeds to the islands will involve laying around 400km of subsea cables over 19 crossings to the islands. It is the biggest sub-sea engineering project BT has undertaken in the UK and is the first ever with so many seabed crossings.

"Excellent news for homes and businesses."

councillor Drew Hendry

Deployment details for the first phase of this partnership will now be finalised and detailed plans for each local authority area will be announced in due course. Coverage levels in all seven local authority areas within the project area will represent a significant step for fibre broadband in the Highlands and Islands.

Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid: 'I am pleased that this contract has at last been signed, seven months behind schedule.

'Both the UK and Scottish Governments have contributed funding. High speed broadband will make a huge difference to the Highlands and Islands.'

Na h-Eileanan an Iar MP Angus MacNeil, said: 'This is fantastic news and will be warmly welcomed throughout the Highlands and Islands. This project to deliver next generation broadband will allow people in rural and remote communities to compete at international level.

Leader of the Highland Council, councillor Drew Hendry, welcomed the announcement. He said: 'This is excellent news for people at home and business throughout the Highlands and Islands.'

Michael Russell MSP for Argyll and Bute also welcomed the news.



Park Primary School pupils Amy Jones, left, and Caitlin Cooke want more variety in Fairtrade products in Oban. 15_113Fairtrade01

Not very fair on Fairtrade claim primary pupils at Park

TWO PRIMARY school children have challenged shops and supermarkets in Oban to respect its status as a Fairtrade town and provide more of the branded products.

No variety

Amy Jones, aged 12, and Caitlin Cooke, aged 11, pupils at the Fairtrade-registered Park Primary School, wrote to *The Oban Times* and the four supermarkets in Oban after two events the school organised during Fairtrade Fortnight were hampered by a perceived lack of variety on the supermarket shelves.

Caitlin said: 'We had a Fairtrade snack day but most people could only find bananas and chocolate – and chocolate isn't exactly a healthy option.

'We also tried to set up a five-a-day takeaway at the school but we couldn't get five different pieces of fruit and the only ingredients we could find for a Fairtrade cake bake were sugar and chocolate.'

Products labelled as Fairtrade have been made using resources that give farmers and workers in developing countries a fair deal for their produce.

Amy added: 'Oban became

Fairtrade in 2006, so you would think that by now there would be a whole range of Fairtrade products for sale here, not just food.'

The Oban Times also contacted the four supermarkets, although Tesco did not respond.

A spokesman for The Co-operative Food said it had supported Fairtrade since the inception of the Fairtrade mark in 1994 and was the first retailer to sell Fairtrade bananas.

He added: 'Our Oban store sells a wide range of Fairtrade items, including tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, bananas, blue-

berries and wine. Our Fairtrade range even includes Scottish choc chip shortbread, produced in Scotland using Fairtrade African cocoa and sugar.'

3,000 products

A Lidl statement read: 'During the recent 2013 Fairtrade Fortnight we placed teasers in our advertising to inform customers about the products they could purchase in our stores which support Fairtrade. Although we do not offer as many product lines as the larger supermarkets might, we do feel we offer a core range of own-label Fairtrade products.'

Aldi said it sold Fairtrade organic bananas, coffee, tea and wine. It hopes to progressively make more Fairtrade products available in its stores.

Pauline Cameron, chairwoman of Oban and Lorn Fairtrade Steering Group, said: 'It is great that the children are getting involved because they are the future consumers.

'We are pleased that the supermarkets are supplying Fairtrade produce at all but there are more than 3,000 Fairtrade products registered in the UK, so the number of items on sale here is still relatively low.'

Police warning comes after Oban man impaled on railings

A YOUNG man was impaled on railings in Soroba after trying to climb over a fence onto a railway track.

The 20-year-old Oban man was taken to Lorn and Islands Hospital after being stuck on the fence for a couple of hours, but his injuries were not found to be life threatening.

Emergency services were alerted to the man's plight after Soroba residents heard cries for help on Sunday and found the man stuck on the fence, which borders the railway line.

Emergency workers found the youngster 'impaled' and had to cut four railings to free him and take him to hospital where he was released following treatment.

Oban police are now issuing a reminder, warning youngsters of the dangers of climbing fences and attempting to access railway lines.

Inspector Julie McLeish described the man as 'really lucky' to have got through his ordeal without more serious injury. She said: 'This needs to serve as a warning to others not only about the dangers of accessing and crossing a live railway line but of climbing fences to do so.'

Fuel duty U-turn welcomed

THE CHANCELLOR'S decision to scrap the proposed fuel duty increase in this year's budget has been welcomed across the west – but there is concern that he has not gone far enough.

In his Budget speech, George Osborne referred to Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid's campaign against the fuel duty rise. Mr Reid said: 'I am delighted that the government has decided to scrap this year's fuel duty increase.'

Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor added: 'The cancellation of the three pence fuel duty rise planned for September is good news for the region's motorists and hauliers.'

But Ian Campbell of the North Connel-based haulage company D and J Campbell reckons the Chancellor had no choice but to scrap the increase.

He said: 'It is great news but it won't make a massive difference; the price of fuel is still climbing.

'There is no way it was possible for the Chancellor to increase fuel duty because that would have crippled a lot of businesses. The haulage industry is difficult enough just now, because we can't pass much more of the cost onto customers.

'We all understand the government needs to find money from somewhere but they cannot put any more tax on fuel – that would make it impossible for a lot of industries to survive.'

Trees down at Barcaldine as Benderloch work is completed

WORKERS from the Forestry Commission could be forgiven for thinking their work is never done after wind caused trees to crash down in the Barcaldine area last week.

Work to clear trees damaged by strong wind in 2011 at Beinn Lora, Benderloch, finished at the tail end of last week, with the car park extended and path improved in the wake of the damage caused by one of the strongest storms to hit the area.

However, on Friday, strong easterly winds caused fresh problems, with Sutherland's Grove just a few miles north suffering badly as trees fell all along the A828.

Stuart Findlay, Lorne beat forester, said: 'There are trees down everywhere. You wouldn't believe how much green material there is now on the ground.

'Thankfully Beinn Lora is fine. We've extended the car park and paths have been revised to make them easier to go up. The view from Eagle's Eyrie is spectacular after some of the trees were felled.'

Tobermory Marine Visitor Centre officially opened

THE OFFICIAL opening of the Tobermory Marine Visitor Centre on the Isle of Mull attracted a full house of visitors and locals as well as one celebrity guest.

Gordon Buchanan, the award-winning wildlife cameraman who hails from the island, cut the ribbon on the centre last Saturday.

Lydia Hosdell, centre manager, told *The Oban Times* the opening went 'really well'. She said: 'There was a huge attendance and we got great feedback from visitors and locals - Gordon was a star as always.

'We had lots of touch pool talks, a lot more children's displays and there were activities everywhere. It was great to see so many people.

'It was very busy, with so many people there it was hard to see the exhibitions and displays so people have said they will be back another day. That's fantastic, it is exactly what we are looking for.

'I want to say a huge thanks to everyone that came and contributed – this was a good community day.'

Gordon added: 'It is a really great facility and somewhere for people to go on a rainy day. It will enhance your time on Mull whether you're a local or a visitor.

'Every time you go in you can learn something new, even people who have lived here all their life can go into the centre



'If I'd known the Tobermory Marine Visitor Centre had a zoo licence, I'd have brought a polar bear for it,' Gordon Buchanan joked as he opened the new centre last Saturday. Picture by Nic Davies.

and learn something new about the seas around Mull.

'It is also a place where kids can go and learn in an entertaining way about the marine environment so when the rain stops they can use what they have learned to go out and explore.

'I just hope people use this great facility. People tend to think these things are only for tourists but this is for everyone.'

Attractions at the centre include knot tying displays and an educational display of Elvis the otter, transformed by Lochawe taxidermist Mark Brown.



Argyll Voluntary Action

Volunteer of the Year 2013

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Volunteer of the Year and
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Friday 31st May 2013

10.30am – 2.30pm

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(kathleen@argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk)
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Nomination forms now available in AVA offices or online!
Deadline: Friday 26th April 2013

Argyll Voluntary Action, 21 High Street Oban PA34 4BG









Morvern Lines

ONE OF the most interesting and intriguing gravestones in Kiel Cemetery, Lochaline, commemorates a mysterious missionary called Robert Harrison.

Harrison was an Englishman and a Wesleyan from Nottingham who, for unknown reasons, left his native town and journeyed to Mull before coming to Morvern.

Of a quaint and solitary nature, he wandered the countryside evangelising, often appearing in some of the remotest parts of the parish and at the most unusual times when he was least expected.

One night he turned up at Barr, on the shores of Loch Teacuis, to stay with Mr Campbell, the farm tenant there.

Surprised to find him on the doorstep long after darkness had fallen, Mrs Campbell said to him by way of excusing the state of the house: 'I am sorry I am not prepared for entertaining you Mr Harrison; but I did not expect you today.' The pious man only answered: 'Beware, my dear friend, lest death find you thus unprepared.'

Amongst many other fine attributes, the Rev Harrison had that rare quality of being unwilling to suspect anyone of insincerity or duplicity.

Although he was a teetotaler and completely against drink - which was prevalent in the parish at the time - he was highly popular, especially with the young and the old. When he was laid to rest in the south-east corner of the churchyard on February



Robert Harrison's gravestone in Kiel Cemetery is a lasting testament to the most unusual of missionaries.

In 1832, a large number of tacksmen, farmers, clergymen and many friends from all over Mull and Morvern attended the funeral service.

The inscription on his stone includes a self-penned epitaph left by him to be carved on it after his death.

It reads: 'I have sinned; I have repented; I have believed. I love, I rest and by the Grace of God [sic] I shall rise and reign with my Redeemer in glory throughout eternity.'

Dr Andrew Bonar, 1810-1892, a well-known Free Church of Scotland minister, made this epitaph the subject of a lecture at a large prayer meeting in Glasgow which was later used by Dwight L Moody, the famous American evangelist, in his book 'Notes from my Bible'.

Moody probably got the words from Dr Bonar when he and Ira D Sankey made their well-recorded evangelistic tour of Scotland in 1883.

ABOUT 20 or so years ago, before they were enveloped by a Sitka spruce forest, a number of old plane trees could be seen about 300 yards west of Kiel Church growing at the gable-ends of the remains of a large building called 'Taigh na Easbaig' - the Bishop's House - or 'The Bishop's Palace' as it was known locally.

The bishop was Hector Maclean (1605-87), the Episcopalian minister of Morvern before the introduction of Presbyterianism to the parish, tacksman of Kiel farm and later Bishop of Argyll.

He married Jean, daughter of the Rev Thomas Boyd, Eaglesham, by whom he had four sons and four daughters. But it is also said there were a further 16 daughters, most of whom were likely to have been of natural birth.

Bishop Hector lived for a time in Achadun Castle on Lismore and is buried close to the pre-Reformation church arch in Kiel and within sight of his former home.

An artesian well, called 'Tobar an Easbaig', continues to supply fresh running water for two houses in the vicinity.

ALTHOUGH it is difficult to imagine today, the boggy, rush-covered area in front of the church used to be the parade ground for the local Company of Volunteers, the equivalent of the Home Guard of the Great War.

Raised after the passing of the Militia Act of 1802, the Morvern Volunteers, under the command of James Maxwell of Aros - the Duke of Argyll's Chamberlain for Mull and Morvern - met here once a month at 8am.

Their daily wages were: captain 9/5d; lieutenant - 5/8d; ensign - 4/8d; sergeant - 1/6d; corporal - 1/2d and 1/- each for the privates.

Top marks to the anonymous and public-spirited volunteer who took the initiative and treated the two weather-worn, commemorative benches outside Kiel Church recently.

Iain Thornber.



Alana Robb, left, and Katie Dunn will skydive in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. 15, 113skydive01

Skydiving for Macmillan

A BRAINSTORMING session between two charity fundraisers that began with face painting quickly escalated to become a sponsored skydive.

Alana Robb and Katie Dunn, who work at Rembrand Timber, said they had come up with the idea for the extreme sport fundraiser 'as a joke' but quickly realised it could make a lot of money for the company's chosen charity Macmillan Cancer Support.

Alana, aged 27, who is originally from Tarbert, said: 'I had just come back from maternity leave, so we had talked about things like coming to work in our pyjamas, setting up a baking stall or face painting.'

'Then I joked we should just throw ourselves out of a plane and over a few weeks the idea didn't really go away.'

The fearless ladies will take the plunge at Strathallan Airfield in August but have already raised £1,200 in just three weeks.

Oban girl Katie, aged 23, said: 'It just got to the point when we said "Why not?"'

'Most people think we are mental and can't believe we're actually doing it but people who have done it before say we will love it.'

Online donations can be made via justgiving.com/Rembrand-Timber, texting FALL49, followed by the donation in pounds to 70070, or by visiting the company's Oban warehouse in Glengallan Industrial Estate.

New Dunbeg roundabout proposal goes to local hearing

A PLAN to build a new roundabout at Dunbeg to serve a new housing development and potential for a hotel will go to a local hearing.

West Highland Housing Association (WHHA) want to build the roundabout on the A85 just west of the Halfway Filling Station, with roads to tail off to the north and south in addition to the direction of the A85.

The development - recommended for approval subject to the local hearing - would see a new footpath and the building of a new cycle path on the redundant carriageway.

However, 62 objections have been lodged with the council about the proposal, with neighbours of the planned roundabout saying they had concern about traffic volume, light and noise pollution.

Dugald Munro, of the Halfway Filling Station, has also lodged an objection, saying not only could a reduction in passing trade affect the business, but

the removal of rock to create the roundabout could cause problems for the filling station.

The petrol station is built on an in-filled area and Mr Munro says should blasting be used to remove the rock, it could disturb foundations and the associated fuel tanks and pipe work.

Dunbeg Community Council also says it won't support the application as it has doubts over its proposed position and the possibility it will move after saying a representative of WHHA told a recent meeting it could change without consultation.

The community council also expressed concern that there was no consultation in advance of the application.

Discussed at last week's full planning meeting, councillors felt it would be beneficial to hold a hearing in Dunbeg to determine local strength of feeling before making a decision. The date of the hearing is yet to be confirmed.



Lieutenant Commander Craig Sweeney has been awarded the Air Force Cross following a rescue on Beinn Sgulaird.

Helicopter pilot honoured after dramatic North Lorn rescue

A ROYAL Navy search and rescue pilot who airlifted a climber amid atrocious conditions on a mountain near Oban two years ago has been awarded the Air Force Cross for grit, determination and courage.

In a dramatic race against time on December 18 2011, Lieutenant Commander Craig Sweeney led his search and rescue crew of three in what he would later describe as 'one of the most challenging rescues' he had undertaken on the 3,074ft Beinn Sgulaird, close to Loch Creran in North Lorn.

In blizzard conditions, plummeting temperatures and pitch darkness, the team from HMS Gannet in Prestwick flew their Sea King helicopter to the aid of climber Dr Gareth Bradley with a reported broken ankle.

Lieutenant Commander Sweeney was forced to use all his flying experience in Afghanistan and the Arctic to fly very close to the rock face while being buffeted by storm force winds to successfully complete the difficult rescue.

'I am very honoured, humbled and proud to receive this award,' said 38-year-old Lieutenant Commander Sweeney.

'It was a thorough team effort throughout and it reflects the efforts of all on board that day, not just me.'

Dr Bradley, who now lives and works as an engineering lecturer at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Perth, is delighted his rescuer has been recognised.

'I am very grateful to all those involved who risked their safety to assist me. The fact that my rescue was successful was a credit to all involved.'

'They were amazing, very professional. They reassured me and talked me through exactly what was happening. If it wasn't for these guys I might not be here today.'

'I was extremely relieved to see that helicopter and the aircrew and mountain rescuers who were winched down to me.'

Lieutenant Commander Craig Sweeney added: 'We collected three members of Oban Mountain Rescue Team (MRT) and began a slow hover-taxi up the mountain. All around us was nothing but swirling snow and we were very close to whiteout conditions. Coupled with the snow and swirling cloud whipped up by the downwash from the rotors, it made the conditions exceptionally challenging.'

'It was a long, slow process and it paid off when we got just below the summit where we found Dr Bradley. He had had the foresight to shine a torch, which we were just able to make out, and together I and my co-pilot Lieutenant Mark



Search and rescue crews from HMS Gannet, based at Prestwick in Ayrshire, are on call 24-hours a day, 365 days of the year to help those who find themselves in danger.

Wielopolski managed to get the helicopter into a position where we could set down the three members of MRT and our aircrewman.

'Conditions underfoot for the rescuers were absolutely treacherous and it was also extremely steep at that point.'

The team transferred the MRT down to the base of the mountain before delivering the casualty to Belford Hospital in Fort William, where they arrived with a mere five minutes of fuel left.

Within minutes of starting their way back to Prestwick, they were retasked to rescue two climbers in Glen Coe on the notorious Anoch Eagach ridge. This rescue rounded off a day which had started that morning

with the crew responding to a road traffic collision near Arrochar, where a car had left the road and was in a river.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Royal Navy helicopter search and rescue. It is also Craig Sweeney's last year in the senior service; he will make his last flight at the end of April.

Speakers hold final meeting of season

AT THE final meeting of Oban Speakers Club's winter programme, John MacLean gave an interesting speech on 'Sir Richard Attenborough', Tom Clegg dealt with 'Sat nav or Atlas' by starting at the oldest sea voyages and Guido Faccenda gave a poignant speech on 'A Memorable Journey'.

Their immediate critics were Roy Wood, Frank Walton and Eamonn Arthur. The timekeeper was Jim Fraser.

At the annual general meeting which followed office bearers appointed were: President - Frank Walton; Administrative Vice President - Bill Leech; Educational Director - Roy Wood; Social Secretary - John MacLean; Secretary - Jim Fraser and Treasurer - Alex Clark.

Taynuilt SWRI
TIPS on table decorations were the order of the day at a recent meeting of Taynuilt SWRI, held in the village hall.

Group president Jessie Servant welcomed 19 members and one visitor.

Margaret Whitton was the demonstrator for the evening and members were treated to great tips on table decorations of various shapes and sizes using mainly greenery from gardens.

Mrs Whitton was very entertaining whilst she worked on the displays with amusing jokes and tales. A vote of thanks was given by Mary Livingstone and tea was provided by Jessie Servant and Marlene Stanners.

Competitions: Fingerless gloves - 1 Doreen Penswick; 2 Cathy Potter.

Truffles - Joint 1 Cathy Potter and Doreen Penswick; Joint 2 Stella Huntingford and Jean White; 3 Mary Livingstone.

Treasury chief secretary chamber guest speaker

DANNY Alexander, MP for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey and Chief Secretary to the Treasury will be the guest speaker at the third Fort William Chamber of Commerce independence debate tomorrow evening.

Mr Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury in the Tory-LibDem Westminster coalition Government, will speak for around 15 minutes before fielding questions from the floor.

The event in Ben Nevis Distillery at 7pm is primarily for the local business community but members of the public are also invited to attend and put questions to the MP on the subject of Scottish independence.

Barcaldine man denies charges

A BARCALDINE man denied assaulting a woman by striking her on the head with his arm when he appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

Steven Flanagan, 31, of Island View, Barcaldine, further denies shouting, swearing and uttering threats of violence last Thursday. He is expected to stand trial on June 10.

Community council discusses plans to brighten up Kilmallie

KILMALLIE Community Council (KCC) met recently in Kilmallie Community Hall.

Among the items discussed were the following: A group has been set up with the aim of making sure Kilmallie shines brightly this Christmas.

Highland Council usually supplies two trees and lights free of charge for the area, but has informed the community due to budget cuts the service will not continue this year.

The community council put out a call for volunteers to help save the traditional decorations in their last newsletter and five volunteers attended the meeting to say they wanted to help. Some volunteers also pledged to help but could not make the meeting.

KCC chairwoman Margaret Mackenzie told the new group they would have to raise up to £1,500. Mrs Mackenzie said the money could potentially come from community fundraising or from grants. The group agreed to meet in the near future to discuss a plan.

Fassifern Estate has previously offered to provide trees for Kilmallie, while local charity Star for Harris has also indicated they would be willing to help.

Northern Constabulary Liaison Officer Sergeant Andrew Bilton said work had started on the new Fort William Police Station at Blar Mhor and a completion date had been pencilled in for December.

The single force Police Scotland will take over from Northern Constabulary on Monday April 1, but Sergeant Bilton said despite the change it would be 'business as usual' for local officers.

He said: 'We're undergoing major changes, but the way we operate is not going to change.'

The issue of horse fouling on pavements was raised, but Sergeant Bilton said there was no legislation which allowed police to act.

Dog fouling was also raised and it was agreed to include a free litter bag with a future edition of Kilmallie Community News.

Kilmallie Community Council is keen to recruit more members after their numbers dropped to six - the least number required for the council to continue.

Former chairwoman Jillian Clark handed in her notice to leave KCC recently.

A meeting will be held to discuss a strategy for attracting new councillors.

Christine Hutchison attended a public meeting about the future management of large parts of rural Lochaber.

A number of suggestions have been made for the future of Nevis and Glencoe, including a proposal to turn the area into a national park.

Mrs Hutchison reported that an agreement had been made to move forward with a national scenic area management plan and she said most community councils in the area were supportive of the plan.

A number of community groups, including Ballachulish Community Council, had previously come out against the plan for a national park.

Island hotel worker jailed after assault

A HOTEL worker who admitted assaulting two men at a hotel on Iona has been sent to prison after an unsuccessful appeal to his family in Ireland to pay his fine.

David McVeigh, aged 25, pled guilty last Friday to assaulting the two men by repeatedly punching them last Wednesday.

McVeigh and his girlfriend had travelled to Iona to work in a hotel but following a staff dinner he attacked the two other hotel workers.

The hotel owners contacted police on hearing of the incident the following morning. Defence agent Laura McManus said her Irish client had consumed a significant amount of alcohol and had come upon the victims talking about his partner behind her back and 'an argument became a physical altercation'.

With no fixed address, McVeigh had to pay a £400 fine that day, or face the alternative of a 14-day prison sentence until the fine could be paid.

With the former option proving unsuccessful, he was taken to prison.

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New camera club on Isle of Mull proves popular

A NEWLY launched camera club on the Isle of Mull is growing in size, now up to 35 members.

The Community Camera Club meets once a month on a Thursday at the church hall in Dervaig and any photography enthusiasts are welcome.

Organiser Cheryl Callow said: 'We have had four meetings and so far we have covered subjects from aperture, depth of field, white balance stabilisers, sharp focus, light/flash to last week black and white.'

The club has just launched a website where members' photos can be viewed. The next meetings are on April 25 and May 30.

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Mull man shot deer in dangerous position

A MULL man has been found guilty of firing an unsafe shot near a house - causing such concern a member of the public went to check on the welfare of those inside.

Daniel Braid, 24, of 11 Druimfin Gardens, Tobermory, had denied the offence, which dates back to November 2010 but was found guilty following a trial at Oban Sheriff Court.

The court heard he had been shooting deer on ground next to Pennyghael Hotel in the south of the island. Braid had a not guilty verdict accepted on a separate charge of killing deer during the close season.

Sheriff Douglas Small told the court he had heard lots of evidence about the bullets Braid claimed to have been using and the properties of those bullets.

He said: 'In my opinion the central issues are not about the ammunition but rather whether the accused shot at two deer with or without a suitable background. In that regard it seems to be accepted by the accused and his father that it was the accused who fired from his van.'

He added: 'I am satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused fired at and killed both deer. The second deer was shot when a house was in the backdrop. In shooting that deer the conduct of the accused fell below the standard of a careful and competent shooter. He showed an utter indifference to the safety of others.'

Sheriff Small called for reports on Braid before sentencing on April 15, adding that he considered this a 'very serious charge'.

Careless driving lands man with points and fine

A MAN who caused a head-on collision on the A82 while trying to overtake on a blind summit has been given eight penalty points and fined £280.

Daniel Humphreys was stuck behind a slow moving vehicle before crossing the double white centre line on the approach to a hill between Laggan swing bridge and the Well of the Seven Heals on December 7.

The 27-year-old, who works on a fishing boat based in Carbost, pled guilty to careless driving.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard Humphreys, of Viewfield, Balblair, and two people from the other car were taken to Belford Hospital, Fort William, with whiplash and bruising.

Western Isles planning fees rise

WESTERN Isles Council is to put up planning fees from April 6 after the Scottish Government announced a 20 per cent increase for registering planning applications.

The fee for a new dwellinghouse rises to £382, for a house extension to £192 and the prior notification fee for agricultural buildings to £74.

Banned driver caught behind wheel on A82

A FORT William woman who previously had her licence revoked twice has been banned from driving for a year and fined £580 after being caught behind the wheel of a car on the A82.

Vanessa Baker, of 13 Grange Road, pled guilty to driving on the A82 at North Ballachulish on December 4 without a licence or insurance.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the unemployed 52-year-old had her licence taken away in 2010 after racking up 20 penalty points and again last year after failing to pay insurance. Defence lawyer Stephen Kennedy said Baker was unaware her licence had been revoked for a second time, claiming the DVLA had written to her former address in Derby.

Homeless charity is itself homeless

Oban's HOPE Kitchen fails to gain licence from its landlord, the Salvation Army

AN OBAN homeless charity is itself in need of a new home after being forced to leave its existing premises from which hot meals are provided.

HOPE Kitchen, short for Help Our People Eat, was set up three years ago to provide somewhere for homeless or other vulnerable people to go for a meal, hot drink, to dry out and get warm or simply

find a bit of companionship and support.

But the vital support the charity provides from its base in the Salvation Army premises in Stevenson Street is being wrenched away at the end of May after unworkable conditions were imposed on HOPE's licence.

The Salvation Army, which grants the licence on an annual

basis, told HOPE if it was to continue operating from the base it would be limited to 10 hours per week and lose all its storage space.

Jess MacDonald, one of the founders of HOPE, said: 'We just wouldn't be able to do what we do under the restrictions in the new licence.'

'Our experience over the past

three years has shown us that there is a huge need for our meals and a safe place where people can come when they are wet, cold, lonely or have nowhere to prepare a meal and know that we will give them food and shelter.'

Stuart Chalmers, chairman of the HOPE management committee, added: 'We had been in discussion last year with the

Salvation Army regarding the possibility of our leasing and renovating the old Captain's Table restaurant because we have outgrown the kitchen and hall in the church, but unfortunately that wasn't an option and we had been looking for somewhere more suitable.'

Stuart added that although HOPE would be moving there

was no question of the committee giving up.

He said: 'Individuals, churches, businesses from Oban and the surrounding area have recognised the work we do - as has the council - and given us their support. If anyone has any premises and could help we would be delighted to hear from them.'

Oban wrench assault man avoids jail

AN OBAN man who assaulted a teenager with a wrench has avoided jail and been ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work.

Alexander MacFarlane, 33, of Flat 8, Albany Apartments, Albany Street, Oban, denied the offence when he appeared at Oban Sheriff Court but was found guilty by Sheriff Jack Davidson following a trial.

The court heard the victim, who had been working as a removal man at the time, was in the back of a van in Gallanach Road on November 2 last year.

The victim said during evidence: 'I turned around and I thought it was one of the boys in the back of the van but it wasn't, it was him [MacFarlane].'

'He had a wrench in his hand. He eventually swung for my face and caught me on my right elbow because I raised my arm to defend myself.'

Sheriff Davidson placed MacFarlane, who lost his job as a result of the conviction, on a Community Payback Order for a year. He said: 'The offences of which you have been convicted are very serious. The court has given serious consideration on whether to impose a custodial sentence but is prepared to offer you an alternative.'

Police used CS gas to subdue teenager

A TEENAGER showed so much hostility to Oban police that officers resorted to CS gas to subdue him.

Marc Green, 17, of 9 Lossie Crescent, Renfrew, admitted assaulting three police officers during the incident in an Oban hotel. He further admitted shouting, swearing and resisting police when he appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff court last week.

Procurator Fiscal Jenny Sapiano told the court: 'Officers said the level of hostility demonstrated by the accused is rarely encountered. Police had to resort to CS gas to subdue him.'

Defence agent Laura McManus said Green was 'distracted at himself' and had 'very little recollection of his behaviour'.

Green, who is currently on bail for two separate offences, will be sentenced on April 30 after reports have been prepared.



Kay McDuff's son Mark, aged eight, presents Martin Glenesk and Moira Hartley with the cheques. 20_113wwe01

'Wee' charity shop's big boost to community

KINLOCHLEVEN'S 'wee charity shop' has handed Kinlochleven Community Trust (KCT) and local boxing club the Claymores a total of £2,400.

The voluntary enterprise, run by Kay McDuff and a band of helpers, raised the cash through selling homebaking and second-hand items. The cash gifts were part of an annual giveaway of all profits to local good causes.

Mrs McDuff, whose homemade tablet has achieved legendary status locally, told *The Oban Times*: 'We get a huge amount of support from the community and from Glencoe, Ballachulish and Oban as well. We are always looking for donations.'

KCT development officer Moira Hartley said the cash was invaluable to ongoing community projects.

'The donation of £1,500 towards our community hanging baskets has meant that between funding, sponsors and donations we have managed to once again display and maintain over 80 baskets - not bad for our small community,' she said.

'The donation of £500 towards the purchase of an interpretation panel to explain the history of the Pelton Wheel and why it was chosen as our village centrepiece, has also proved vital. Together with all donations and funding from Highland Council, we can now proceed.'

'The panel is currently being designed by All Round Signs and is the final part of the regeneration project.'

'The community was determined to create a village centre they can be proud of and retain a sense of ownership. I feel this has been achieved successfully.'

Claymores coach Martin Glenesk added: 'The £400 will help us with travel costs in taking the boys to compete in boxing shows all over the country.'

The charity shop, now in its fifth year, operates from a room in the boxing club's premises on Kinlochleven Business Park. It opens on Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 2pm.



Successful music pupils Kirsty Campbell, Ross McLeish, Merle Harbron, Chelsea McNab, Katherine Tamplin, Jamie Peden, Amy Boyce, Emma Baird, Ruaridh Litster-Campbell, Briony Kincaid and Emily Scott.

Young musicians strike right note

DELIGHTED Oban High and Rockfield Primary School pupils show off their Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music diplomas, after passing grade exams held in St John's Cathedral, Oban.

Pupils were presented for examination by music instructors Hazel Clark and Derek McLeish, with parents Mandy Peden and Fiona Kincaid helping organise the exam visit and venue.

Talented Plockton High School language student relishes French debate challenge



Plockton's Catriona Galloway in the European Parliament.

A PLOCKTON High School S6 student has returned home full of 'joie de vivre' after debating in French for 'Euroscola Day' at the European Parliament.

Catriona Galloway attended the Strasbourg Rotary-funded event along with Plockton High School French teacher Daisy Reeves.

Catriona and Madame Reeves were part of the Scottish delegation, which comprised 26 of the country's best S6 language pupils and a few teachers.

In the debate, 600 pupils from 28 countries discussed the future and development of Europe in a language other than their own.

To prepare for the challenge, the young Scots attended three days of intensive French immersion workshops so they could confidently debate European issues with other French speakers.

The excellent preparation saw the Scottish delegation publicly commended

for their superb language skills in the chamber by Mr Meilak, the parliament's director-general for communication.

Isle of Skye Rotary Club sponsored Catriona as its first Euroscola pupil.

She said: 'I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this experience to anyone with an interest in French as it provides the opportunity to learn what cannot be learned in a classroom alongside like-minded people with whom you form an almost instantaneous bond.'

'I was given the opportunity of a lifetime by the Rotary Club when they sponsored me and cannot express my gratitude to them enough.'

'The Euroscola experience was five days where I developed linguistically, gained a better understanding of a political Europe and made friends from all over the continent. The only word I can use - unforgettable.' Catriona's mum Susan is deputy head at Plockton High School.

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Winter weather wreaks havoc

Icy blast brings days of widespread road chaos and power cuts

LOCALISED parts of the national forest estate in Lochaber were devastated by hurricane force winds over Friday night.

Stands of mature timber left almost untouched by 100 mile-an-hour gales on December 8 2011 were partially levelled within a few hours.

Residents in Corran Gardens, eight miles south of Fort William, reported trees being snapped in half 'sounded like gunshots'.

Timber felling operations in Glen Righ Forest were disrupted as harvesting machines were redeployed to clear the access road from the A82. The gravel track was blocked in at least six places by uprooted pines.

Braveheart car park in Glen Nevis was closed to the public after dozens of trees came down. Other forests badly affected included Barcaldine, north of Oban, and Leanachan, near Spean Bridge.

The destruction appears to have been made worse because the trees are braced to withstand

southerly or southwesterly gales, not a violent easterly storm.

Lochaber forest district manager Kevin Peace said on Monday: 'The trees grow according to the prevailing wind. The way they put down their roots to protect themselves reflects that, so that when the wind came in from the other direction they got caught out. Most of the damage has come from the east.'

He added: 'We have not had a chance to do a full inspection yet. The guys are out just now clearing what they can [with chainsaws] but there is going to be some we will have to clear with machines.'

'The damage seems to be fairly localised - it does not look as if there are big areas of timber blown over.'

Reports that wind speeds exceeded 100 mph appear credible after one weather station at Bunree, Onich, measured a gust of 93 mph and a windchill temperature of -6°C at 7pm on

Friday evening. Several local residents reported losing ridge tiles and slates from roofs.

At Roy Bridge, a man sustained a suspected broken wrist and ankle after being blown off scaffolding while working on a house.

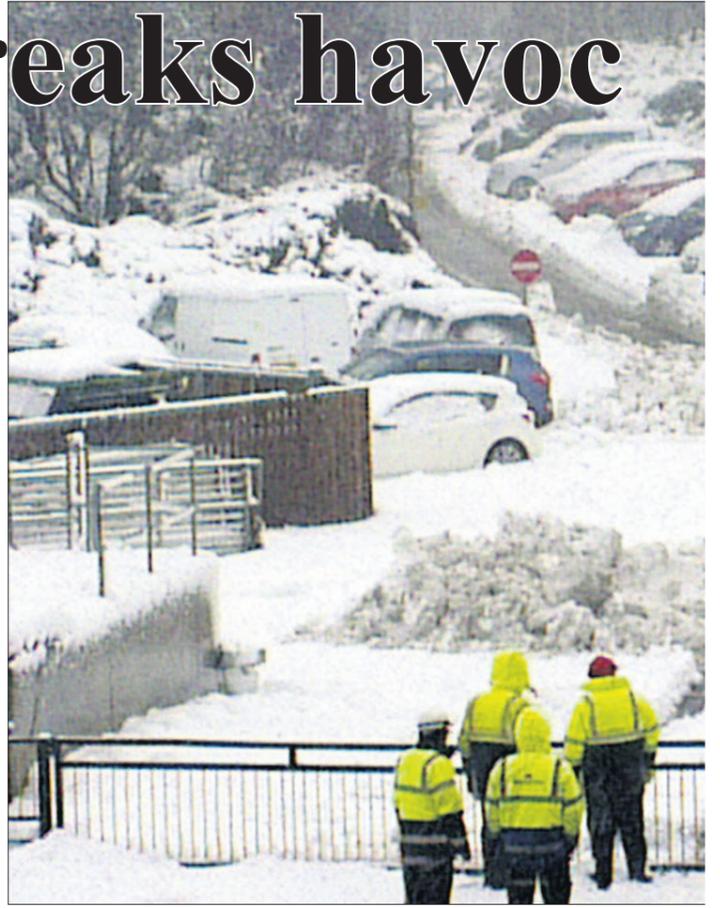
In Fort William, police closed the High Street on Friday night because flying debris posed a danger to the public. The street was re-opened early on Saturday morning, a police spokesperson said.

Glen Sanda Quarry workers gathering in the West End car park on Saturday morning noted several cars had their windscreens smashed by stones thrown over the sea wall by the storm. Corran Ferry sailings over Loch Linnhe were suspended late on Friday afternoon and resumed with a restricted service on Saturday.

And on Skye, a yacht broke its moorings at Armadale and ended up on rocks. It is understood the vessel is salvageable.



Parts of Glen Righ Forest were devastated by Friday night's storms. 10_f13trees02



Councillor's bad luck

IT WAS a case of worse luck after bad for Islay councillor Robin Currie after he suffered numerous setbacks thanks to Friday's severe snowfall.

Mr Currie had been in Oban on Friday morning for a meeting and had intended to catch the afternoon ferry from Kennacraig back home.

However, it wasn't long before he was stuck in a snowdrift - an event which signalled a luck-free few days for the councillor.

He said: 'When I left on Friday it was sunny in Oban and there was a dusting in Lochgilphead, but I hadn't expected the amount of snow. When I got to Kennacraig there was one foot of snow. I got stuck but some crew members managed to help me out. 'I went back to the West Loch Hotel in Tarbert but they didn't

have any power. They did really well and provided for everyone but it must have been frustrating for the people there from Clachan.

'It's bad enough being an islander who can't get home, but some of these guys were just four miles away from home. That must have been really annoying.'

More bad luck was to come though. 'On Saturday I tried Kennacraig and it was silly, you could only go one way so I said that was stupid and went back to Tarbert.'

'I went to Oban on Sunday ahead of a meeting in Connell on Monday but then my bank card wouldn't come out of the machine. 'Thankfully I managed to get a loan from a friend, but I'll be glad to get home!'

Lynn hitches lift on tractor to catch New York flight

NOTHING - not even a road closed by blizzard conditions and 15ft high snowdrifts - was going to stop Lynn McKay catching her flights to New York last Friday.

The 25-year-old Campbeltown woman was determined she would find a way to meet three former schoolfriends for their week's holiday in the Big Apple.

However, no-one could have guessed that would involve hitching a lift with an obliging farmer who took her, and her suitcase, 10 miles to Tarbert where she caught a bus to Glasgow.

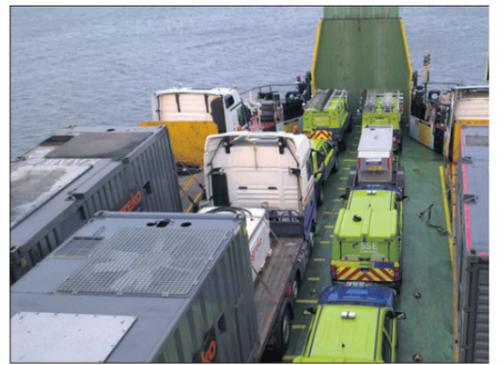
Her mum, Kate, of Craigowan Road, Campbeltown, told *The Oban Times*: 'She arrived at Clachan with her boyfriend who was taking her to Glasgow Airport.'

Tractor 'When it became clear no-one was going any further by road, she somehow got herself a lift by tractor.'

'She was determined to get to New York no matter what. She wanted to meet her friends, and she didn't want to lose the money she had spent on flights. 'She met Karen McCormack in Glasgow but their connecting flight to London was 90 minutes late.'

'They missed the connection in London where Lisa Hardy, now working in Reading, met them but they got on the next flight and made it to New York.'

There, the trio met schoolpal Katherine Ronald who has been in New Zealand for the past few years.



Several trees came down over the weekend at Ronachan, including this one on Friday which blocked the south bound carriageway of the A83. 20_c13tree01



Corran woman Margaret Laird, a community care manager with NHS Highland, found the access road into Glen Righ Forest blocked by fallen trees on Sunday afternoon. 10_f13trees01

Heroes brave treacherous conditions to clear roads

A GROUP of heroes who braved some of the worst storms to hit north Lorn to clear roads of fallen trees on Friday have been hailed by locals.

Strong easterly gales battered the area on Friday night, causing several trees to fall between Connel and Barcaldine, causing long queues of traffic and terrifying motorists.

While the wind was not as strong as the last storm to hit the area at the tail end of 2011, the direction of the wind was unusual and trees failed to cope.

One of the motorists caught in the eye of the storm was Fiona Wallace, Appin. She had just picked up her sister-in-law from Benderloch at 6pm and was returning home shortly before a group of large trees fell next to Beaver Timber on the A828.

She said: 'When we got to Beaver Timber the traffic was already queuing and you could hear the trees cracking so we decided to go along the back road at Bonawe. There was no point waiting because it was more dangerous.'

'Going back there were people swerving to avoid falling trees and doing emergency stops. It was like something out of Apocalypse Now.'

'When we got along the Bonawe road we came across a tree that had fallen but thankfully there was a few guys with chainsaws trying to clear the road.'

'The next thing the trees next to us were cracking and breaking then someone shouted 'run!' just before another tree fell next to where they were working.'

'They carried on though and eventually we managed to get back to Appin at 9.30pm. It was the scariest night of my life but the men who helped clear the road were lifesavers.'

One of those with chainsaws was Liam Gillespie, South Shian. He said it was 'a bit hairy'.

'There was five or six guys. I knew Ian Black and Steven Sloss but I didn't recognise the others. 'At the end of the day it had to be done.'

'It was a bit hairy right enough but nobody else was going to do it.'



Police closed the A828 at Beaver Timber on Friday night as strong easterly winds brought down several trees in the path of motorists. Photograph courtesy of Andrew MacKenzie, Barcaldine.

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Oban
Wednesday 3rd to Sunday 7th April

Fort William
Monday 8th April to Wednesday 10th April

The day the lights went out in Arran

HEAVY snow and high winds over Thursday night and Friday completely blacked out Arran with all power supplies cut.

At 6.45am on Friday the lights flickered a few times, then went out altogether.

This power cut heralded the start of a massive island-wide operation involving all the emergency services. Such was the scale of the blizzard that dozens of electricity poles toppled under the weight of heavily iced cables.

Over on Kintyre, where Arran's power comes from by undersea cable, two steel transmission towers collapsed under the weight of ice.

Engineers from Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) were immediately shipped to the island from all over Britain.

By Tuesday 150 engineers and six helicopters were deployed all over the west side of the island and working under the most difficult and dangerous conditions. It really has been a tale of two halves, because although the entire island's power has been out, there is barely a flake of snow on

the east side, while down the west coast road, snow drifts of up to eight feet have brought all life, both human and animal, to a standstill.

As the emergency operation swung into action, an Incident Command Centre was established at Auchranich Spa in Brodick involving police, fire, mountain rescue, roads, coastguards, lifeboat, ambulance and social services.

But the main players were the squads of SSE engineers battling through the deep snow and freezing conditions.

Cut off Villages on the west coast were completely cut off for days. The Kinloch Hotel in Blackwaterfoot became a refuge centre.

North Ayrshire Council roads department battled for three days to break through the String to householders in Blackwaterfoot and over the Boguillie to Lochranza.

In house windows on the String plaintive signs could be seen pleading 'Help - no food, no power!'

By Tuesday, the Southend road, the String and the Boguillie were passable,

single track, with massive walls of snow each side, but police insisted that they were for emergency services only - any members of the public driving on them would be charged.

Seven large catering vans were set up in village centres, and all the food was free.

Around 30 large generators are now connected to substations in the main villages and about a third of the island has limited generator power, but oil companies are struggling to cope with their massive use of 37,000 litres of diesel a day.

Meanwhile, the other 70 per cent of islanders are in the dark. Hundreds of residents have had to dump contents of freezers - there have been no refuse collections because binmen are busy elsewhere, so one council worker said a plague of rats could be the next problem.

Transport Minister Keith Brown visited the island on Monday with SSE Head of Transmission Victor Stirling who said it could be many days yet before mains power is restored to this beleaguered island.



Willie McNish in his red pick-up delivered animal feed, petrol and chocolate to a delighted Jo Earle who had been stranded at Lecamhor for three days. b13snow17



Clearing the String Road to Blackwaterfoot on Sunday. b13snow14



An ambulance attending an incident at Balmichael on the String Road on Monday. b13snow18



Several power lines were down all over the peninsula thanks to the blizzard, several of which near Skippess. 20_c13powerline01



Further north on the A83 on Friday the road was covered in snow. 20_c13roadblizz01



Unique CalMac journey helps Kintyre and Arran relief effort

Left: An emergency delivery of generators and food arrived by boat at Campbeltown on Saturday - a first for CalMac's MV Hebridean Isles.

Kennacraig Ferry Terminal was badly hit as the icy conditions took hold on Friday.

CALMAC'S MV Hebridean Isles made a unique journey between Kennacraig and Campbeltown as the ferry company helped the relief effort for Kintyre and Arran.

With the A83 closed at Clachan by 10-foot snow drifts, the special sailing from Kennacraig brought generators and emergency vehicles and personnel into the Wee Toon.

The company said forecasts and sailing conditions had been 'challenging' since the end of last week, resulting in widespread disruption to its sailings, particularly on Friday. But on Friday night the Ardrossan - Brodick ferry, MV Caledonian Isles, managed to ship emergency vehicles and three large electricity generators to Brodick.

Upon arrival contractors set to work bringing emergency power to some buildings so that

soup kitchens could be set up. The unique sailing to Campbeltown was arranged on Saturday night, and again on Sunday, when MV Hebridean Isles, with generators and emergency vehicles and personnel on board, sailed for the first time from Kennacraig to Campbeltown taking essential supplies to the blizzard hit town. On Saturday the vessel Loch Riddon performed additional sailings between Lochranza and Tarbert after the Marine Coastguard Agency granted an increase in the number of passengers she is normally permitted to carry. The ferry also carried over emergency vehicles and generator in poor conditions. A CalMac spokesman said: 'Thanks to everyone, including our own staff, who helped us help get generators and emergency vehicles to the communities affected.'



Conditions on Friday were far worse outside Campbeltown where snow was lying, such as at Tangy, just north of the town. 20_c13signs01



A soup kitchen was set up at Whiting Bay Hall, Arran, on Friday. 02_b13snow07



This unseasonal character was spotted in Kintyre at the weekend.

Kintyre rallies round to see out cold snap

DESPITE extreme conditions that isolated Kintyre and caused prolonged power cuts, the community pulled together to keep friends and family warm and see out the cold snap.

Snow and ice first gripped the peninsula on Friday, blocking many roads including the vital A83 at Clachan.

Power lines came down as the weather damaged pylons at Crossaig near Carradale as well as causing fallen wires and poles.

Conditions remained challenging over the weekend, with people left shivering in their homes as engineers fought to access the peninsula and restore lifeline services.

But with outages and problems looking likely to last, the community rallied round to help everyone affected by the conditions.

Shelagh Cameron, who lives in Carradale, said people were looking out for each other during the blackout.

She said: 'People are going to neighbours and checking up on them, while the school cook took all the food from the school for the hotel to cook it and dish it out.'

People are staying warm in the hotel's lounge where there is an open fire.

In Campbeltown, where some areas still remain without power, the Salvation Army opened its doors on Saturday offering hot water, teas and coffees.

McIlchere and Son got its generator going on Saturday and was doing a roaring trade in hot pies, soup and snacks - even opening on Sunday to continue to provide food.

Those with gas stoves helped others without, while Tesco gave its perishable food to Campbeltown Hospital and care homes rather than see it go to waste.

The local authority also hosted drop-ins at Victoria Hall to help one of the worst hit areas in the UK.

Back up generators were transported to Campbeltown from Kennacraig's ferry terminal on Saturday night and by Sunday several homes in the town regained power.

Connected

As of Tuesday, 18 large generators and 50 smaller ones have been connected in Kintyre and Arran, but some smaller villages and parts of Campbeltown are still awaiting electricity.

Carradale finally had its power restored on Tuesday morning after it initially went off at 10pm on Thursday.

As the generators run on large amounts of diesel, those lucky enough to have power have had to conserve as much as they can.

The A83 re-opened completely on Tuesday along with several smaller roads in the peninsula, however engineers believe it could be days or weeks until normal power is completely restored.

Cars off the road at Bridge of Orchy

THERE were various reports of cars leaving the road at Bridge of Orchy starting at 11am on Friday.

There were a number of accidents in this area but things began to settle down in the later part of Saturday morning despite a report of a car stuck in the snow.

A85 closed at Connel

FALLING trees caused a number of problems on roads in the Lorn area with the A85 closed at Connel for a period on Friday night. The road shut at 5.50pm and re-opened at 9pm.

Motorists trying to pass on the A828 at Barcaldine near the Sealife Sanctuary were not so fortunate. The road there closed due to falling trees at 6.35pm on Friday night but did not re-open until Saturday morning.

Inspector Julie McLeish said this area took longer to clear as more trees came down in this section of road. The Tralee road at Benderloch was also closed from 7.45pm until 9pm on Friday night.

Threat of falling snow

DESPITE the A83 now being open for vehicles to pass under convoy police were concerned about a risk to motorists from falling snow on Monday.

Inspector Julie McLeish said: 'The recovery operation continues in Kintyre with joint efforts between Argyll and Bute Council, SSE, police, social work and other partners. The A83 is now open under convoy but due to the amount of snow piled up at the sides there is a danger of snow coming down on cars and we are monitoring that.'

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 Maggie Smith, Billy Connolly, Pauline Collins, Tom Courtney are four retired opera singers planning a fundraising concert.

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LUING

MEMBERS of Luing History Group (LHG) are having a busy time this month.

On Saturday March 2 they held a family history evening at Cullipool Hall. A short presentation on 'how to get started through old photos and documents' was given by secretary Zoe Fleming.

This introduced members to the practicalities such as what sort of records are available locally, in record offices and on-line and a step-by-step guide on how to start a personal family tree. This was followed by refreshments and the chance to look at parish records held by LHG.

On Friday March 15, LHG held its AGM at Toberonochy Hall. Two committee members, Zoe Fleming and Norman Bissell, stood down and were formally re-elected. The rest of the committee remains the same.

Officers will be confirmed at the next committee meeting in April. The committee reported on the work being done for its annual exhibition from July 26 to 28, which will focus on the ferry links across Cuan Sound and the 60th anniversary of the regular vehicle service for the island.

Work is ongoing on the new heritage gallery in the Atlantic Islands Centre in preparation for next year's opening. This will provide much-needed exhibition space and storage for the group's collection.

After the conclusion of the business meeting, members were shown a selection of short films relating to the local Atlantic Islands.

'Love the Isle of Luing', introduced by its producer Norman Bissell; Richard Ashrovan's film of the inside of Fingal's Cave on Staffa and two clips from Pathe News on extracting slate from Cullipool Quarry in 1938 and life on Easdale and Seil during the war effort more than 70 years ago were enjoyed by the group.

LISMORE

THE COMANN Eachdraidh's third Archaeological walk-over for this winter took place at Balevalon on Wednesday March 13.

The combination of wonderful sunshine, beautiful views all around the island and lots of unanswered historical questions made for an enjoyable afternoon.

Though this area with its common grazing was once quite densely populated with perhaps as many as 200 people, only traces of three possible dwelling houses remain surrounded by large fields with stone dykes,

presumably built from the remains of the housing. Those remaining dwellings may have been home to the Stewarts before they built Hawthorne Cottage. A further significant and picturesque spot, Sloc an Eithir (Boat Gulley), is thought to be one of only two of Lismore's many illicit stills that is still recognisable.

The steep path down to the secluded inlet has clearly been engineered to be navigable and could certainly have been an ideal spot from which to 'export' whisky. Thanks to Barbara MacDougall for providing refreshments after the walk.

INVERGARRY

A COFFEE morning in Invergarry has raised £565 for a centre in Malawi aimed at helping ease the pain of people with life threatening illnesses.

Two locals, Kathryn and Peter Hamling, are going to the east African country next month to take up volunteer positions with the Ndi Moyo Palliative Care Centre and asked residents to donate money to the centre, which has cared for more than 600 patients with life-limiting illnesses since it opened in 2006.

The money will be added to the pair's total amount raised, which currently sits at more than £2,700.

COLONSAY

A DEBATE on whether Scotland should be an independent country will take place on Colonsay with two MSPs representing both sides of the argument.

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell will be speaking for the Yes Scotland group, while Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor will be speaking for the Better Together campaign.

The debate, organised by island newsletter the Colonsay Cornflake, will be held next Wednesday in Scalasaig Village Hall at 7.30pm.

INVERLOCHY

INVERLOCHY WRI president May Webb welcomed the ladies to the March meeting.

On completion of business and reading of minutes, she introduced demonstrator for the evening, hairdresser and florist Serena Neilson.

Serena began with tips and advice for anyone with problem hair. She then proceeded to give one of the ladies a haircut and beautiful new hairstyle.

After tea, Serena judged the competition of a hair decoration.



Close shave for Mallaig 'jannie'

Red Nose Day in Mallaig was a hair-raising experience for local school 'jannie' Peter who had his beard shaved off in aid of Comic Relief. Removing Peter's whiskers proved to be no easy matter, as Jane Eddie finds out! Mallaig, Lady Lovat and Morar primaries also came together for a 'dance off' at the harbour, led by Mallaig head teacher Morag Martin. In all, £911.05 was raised on the day.

1 Bessie Hood; 2 Irene Pinkett; 3 Maureen Dempsey. President May Webb presented Serena with a token of appreciation and thanked the tea ladies.

KILCHREHAN

THERE was more drama than anticipated at a recent table-top sale in Kilchrehan Primary School as firefighters had to be called when an emergency alarm was activated.

The event, organised by Kilchrehan Primary School in aid of Comic Relief, was packed with pupils and customers who were enjoying either a cuppa or were browsing the tables for bargains when, to their surprise, the fire alarm went off.

Approximately half-an-hour later firefighters appeared in the school, complete with ladders and firefighting equipment. A heater in the school had gathered dust and caused the alarm. No doubt the schoolchildren had something to write on their return to school.

TAYNUILT

THE FINAL whist drive of the season at Taynuilt Village Hall raised £138.50 for the North Lorn Senior Section Guides. Held on March 15, card master Leslie Servant presided over seven-and-a-half tables in the competition.

Ladies: 1 Peggy MacIntyre,

Dalavich; 2 Elaine Boyce; 3 Marilyn Henderson, Kilchrehan; 4 Cathy Reid. Consolation prize - Molly Campbell; travelling prize - Veronica Spiers, Connel.

Gents: 1 Stella Huntingford; 2 Sheena Dodman, Connel; 3 Dougie MacDougall; 4 Dave Watson, Dalavich. Consolation - Colin Campbell; travelling prize - Alison Boyce.

ARRAN

AN ISLAND brewery is to pack up its secret recipes and roam the world as 'gypsy brewers' after being turned down for a grant in Scotland.

The Arran Brewery was recently refused financial assistance from the Scottish Government to expand its production on the island.

The expansion would have seen the brewery increase production capacity ten fold and have created 76 jobs. But it has now had to change its plans and is embarking on a 'gypsy' strategy where it will make its beer in other breweries around the world rather than simply exporting from Scotland.

Paul McCluskey, Arran Brewery training supervisor, said: 'We can make a very good likeness to Arran Ales by adding natural salts to local waters to impersonate Arran water, by using the same whole hops and other natural ingredients, type of equipment, yeast and, of course, the most important ingredient - an Arran Brewer. However, if tasted side by side with Arran made beer the differences may be noticeable.'

Managing director Gerald Michaluk added: 'The entire production from Arran will only be enough to satisfy demand in Scotland for our beers, where Arran Blonde is the best selling craft beer and the tenth best selling ale. Without the grant funds to expand on Arran we will take Arran to other markets by becoming 'Gypsy' brewers and making and distributing our beer in the country we would have been exporting to.'

'It is a strategy not without risk but it is greener than simply exporting beer. It is a parody of Scotland's history where our own country won't support its native industry and the people are forced to seek opportunities overseas.'

The Arran Brewery

BREAKNISH

SKYE, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson has written to Transport Scotland and Transport Minister Keith Brown over the lack of a pavement along the A87 through Breaknish on Skye.

A quarter of the local population, along with Mr Thompson, attended a recent public meeting in Breaknish on the issue. The MSP said: 'The section of the A87 at Breaknish does not have a pavement and is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists and also causes difficulties for motorists. Improvements were started many years ago but the final phases were not followed through.'

It is now time to complete these improvements and build a pavement to ensure the safety of all who use this dangerous road.'

PORTREE

YOUNG people in Portree are to have a new drop-in centre after north planning committee councillors approved an application by youth group Ok Skate to re-develop a hairdressing salon in Somerled Square.

The centre will cater for eight to 24-year-olds and will feature IT-based activities, advice on sexual health and substance abuse, finding employment and education workshops delivered in a fun way. Anyone wishing to join the bank of 12 volunteers signed up so far can contact lesley.hellon@hotmail.co.uk.

SLEAT

RODNEY Bewes, best known to millions as Bob Ferris in 'The Likely Lads', is coming to Skye on Sunday to perform his one-man show 'A Boy Growing Up'.

The actor will read from nine stories from the celebrated works of Dylan Thomas, delivered as a radio broadcast.

The event in the Talla Mhor at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic college in Sleat, begins at 3pm.

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SEALL directors launch the 2013 programme at the recent AGM. Looking forward to a busy year are new appointees Susie Southall and Fiona Duncan, centre, with directors, from left, Frances Macdonald, Chris Pendlebury, Eileen Armstrong and Duncan MacInnes. Photograph by Rob Ware.

SEALL events group seals grant investment

SEALL, the Sleat-based touring events group, has received major investment from Creative Scotland to attract more visitors to the area.

The £28,500 Creative Scotland grant means the group can progress plans to make the place Sleat on the map as a national and international cultural tourism destination.

Since its inception in 1991, SEALL has been recognised as 'Scotland's liveliest rural arts promoter', staging more than 1,000 traditional music, jazz, world, theatre and children's events and selling more than 80,000 tickets - half to visitors.

So far, SEALL's voluntary board and supporters have carried the load - but the cash injection has allowed the organisation to appoint a cultural tourism project

coordinator. Fiona Duncan, previously head of marketing at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, will lead SEALL in developing a comprehensive marketing and profile-raising strategy.

Duncan MacInnes, Seall founder and company secretary said: 'We are delighted to welcome Fiona. This funding is a huge step-forward in what SEALL provides.'

In addition, SEALL has been able to contract out some of its administration previously handled by Mr MacInnes. Susie Southall will support the directors in the day-to-day paperwork.

Seall will present 50 events over the next year, supported by Clan Donald and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO), both of which lend their premises as venues.

Hillwalking Club tackles dual peaks

NEVIS Hillwalking Club tackled Stob an Cul Choir and Anach Mor on Saturday, March 2.

Fort William was misty and damp, but as we left the Nevis Range car park, it looked as if the weather might clear.

After climbing up to the forest track, it was about a three km walk-in before the intake. Then we started the climb on to the ridge, the first part being beside the wonderful waterfalls of the Allt Coire Choille-ras.

Before too long, we came across the first of the snow and ice patches. The ice was avoidable and the snow was soft, so there was no need for crampons.

Unfortunately, we also climbed into the cloud, and so lost any views, except down into a snow-filled An Cul Choir.

At the col between Stob an Cul Choir and Anach Mor, we separated into two groups of six and five.

The five decided to exit via the coire, bum-sliding some of the way, while six of us ventured up the very steep snow slope to gain the summit of Anach Mor. Ice axe and crampons were much in evidence on this 200m plus ascent, with several stops being made.

On reaching the summit plateau, the cloud was right down. There were no skirts and the ground cover was a mixture of rutted snow and ice.

Using map and compass, we negotiated our way past the tops of ski tows, where there were quite a few skiers, on to the Anach an Nid ridge and down to the top of the gondola station and bottom of the ski tows.

Then it was down or along the mountain bike track to the cafe at the car park, where we were joined by the other group for refreshments.

For more, visit www.nevishillwalkers.org.uk.

KILMORE



Fiona Dickie with her fondant ducks.

TWENTY members of Kilmore and District SWRI attended the latest meeting on the evening of March 13.

The theme for the evening was 'corners' where four volunteers demonstrated different crafts and the members then had a chance to try their hand.

Fiona Dickie demonstrated how to make ducklings out of fondant icing. Luckily there was no-one there from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to point out the anatomical mistakes of some of the attempts. Rhoda Thomas ran a session on crochet, teaching the basic stitches and showing how they could be used to make elaborate looking Christmas decorations - it's never too early to start thinking of Christmas.

Anne Tully introduced the members to the delights of folded patchwork, including needles that are impossible to thread, thread that knots itself when it shouldn't but refuses to stay fastened when it should and pricked fingers.

Last, but definitely not least, Jennifer Shaw gave a class on paper aeroplane making, the results of which were then pitched against each other to see which could fly the furthest.

Much fun was had by all. The competitions for the evening were 'Townscape in any medium' - 1 Anne Tully; 2 Sonja Campbell and 'Five gypsy creams' - 1 Anne Tully; 2 Jane Darby.

The ladies were planning to hold an open evening and beetle drive on Friday March 22 in Kilmore Hall.

Tea, coffee, sandwiches and cakes were served and there was a sales table laden with home baking and preserves.



Barcaldine pupils dressed up as superheroes to raise money for Sustrans.

Busy Barcaldine fundraisers enjoy events

BARCALDINE Primary School pupils have been enjoying raising funds for two different charities, as well as incorporating Big Pedal competition cycling activities.

On Friday pupils and staff dressed in yellow to raise money for Cancer Research. They also

raised money as part of the Superhero Day fundraiser through the Big Pedal. Children were asked to come to school as a superhero and raise money for Sustrans to help them enable thousands of children to make safer, healthier and more sustainable journeys to school.



Strath of Appin pupils get on their bikes

Pupils from Strath of Appin Primary School have been cycling from their school to the recently upgraded access paths at the Jubilee Bridge as part of a national cycling competition. The Big Pedal, run by Sustrans, is an inter school cycling competition and was held from February 28 to March 20 to encourage children to cycle to school. The upgrade to the Jubilee path was funded by LEADER, Sustrans and Argyll and Bute Council.



Sleat primary pupils at the end of their fundraising sponsored jog around the school.

Primary school jog raises £1,800

SLEAT Primary pupils and staff raised more than £1,800 for Comic Relief with a number of fundraising events at the school.

The youngsters paid £1 to dress in their pyjamas on Red Nose Day and held a sponsored jog around the playground.

Other money raising ideas included selling red noses, a bake sale and a bring and buy sale.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig student Innes Grant raised £150 by cycling from his Camuscross home to the school wearing his pyjamas.

Head teacher Gwen Culbertson said: 'We are very grateful to everyone in the community who helped support the children and Innes in their fundraising efforts to raise such a huge amount from a small school.'

Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council March meeting

SPEAN Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council held its March meeting recently, where the following issues were discussed:

- The secretary received a reply from Donald MacKinnon of Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) concerning Upper Glenfintaig Micro Hydro Scheme and Mumuir Power Station. SSE confirmed the procedure they would adopt for community benefit if Coire Glas received planning consent.
- No reply yet on the tariffs although the secretary had discovered from another source that SSE will likely claim increased transportation costs, and the only avenue to progress this matter is a referral to OFGEM.
- It was agreed that all reasonable avenues

had been exhausted and the matter should be discharged, although the secretary will contact the original complainant if he gets any additional information from SSE.

- The wards discretionary funds had recently made two awards to the community council of £250 for a play park opening ceremony and to the Spean Bridge Play Park and Amenity Group of £1,500 for additional costs following essential design change.
- Spean Bridge Notice Board - A discretionary funds award of £1,000 had been made.
- The secretary wrote to the Great Glen Way manager after receiving a complaint about littering and fouling. A site meeting with councillors and residents was proposed and will be accepted.

- Liz Fotheringham and Tracey O'Donnell of Lochaber Women's Aid gave a talk about the history and service provided by LWA to women, children, and young people suffering domestic abuse. Following the talk they answered a number of questions and handed out publicity material.
- The secretary was asked to contact Vodaphone about continuing problems with signal in Roy Bridge.
- A drainage problem between the terraces in Roy Bridge appears to be impacting on the village garden. A direct attempt to resolve the situation with TEC Services had so far proved unsuccessful, but the Criminal Justice System had offered to do any necessary work if TEC Services agreed. The secretary to investigate.

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Islay Letter

Choir presentation

One of the undoubted highlights of this year's Fèis, Ìle, the island's annual festival of music and song which runs from May 2nd to 1st June, will be an ambitious project by Còisir Ghaidhlig Ìle, directed by Iseabail MacTaggart, which will give a new interpretation of one of the outstanding Gaelic poems penned by local bard William Livingstone.

Livingstone was born at Gartmain on the outskirts of Bowmore in 1808, and sections of the poem, widely regarded as the definite poetic tribute to the battle of Loch Gruinart fought between the MacDonalds of Islay and the MacLeans of Mull in 1598, have been set to music for the first time by singer/composer Clare Jordan.

The battle presentation by the choir will be entitled BLAR and will feature over 140 community musicians. These will include instrumentalists, choral singers and traditional musicians taught under the umbrella of Fèis Oigridh Ìle's Dhùra.

BLAR will also include appropriate readings from the battle poem along with a visual element exhibited simultaneously. This is being overseen by local artist and writer Dr Raymond Lafferty who working on the project in conjunction with Islay and Jura school pupils and Iomairt Ghaidhlig Ìle is Dhùra.

This special event will be held at Bowmore on May 30 and such is the interest engendered that the organisers are planning to play to two houses on the same evening.

This is one of the most ambitious music projects undertaken on the island and is also a fitting tribute to a largely forgotten poet who died in Glasgow in 1870.

Easter services

A number of special services in local churches will mark the Easter celebrations and provide worship opportunities for both locals and visitors to the island.

First off today, Maundy Thursday, is an Ecumenical Eucharist at 7:30pm at the St Columba Scottish Episcopal Church at Bridgend.

Tomorrow, Good Friday, sees a 'Walk of Witness' from the Round Church at 2pm followed by open air worship at Bowmore's Morrison Square. Good Friday worship continues with a short Easter meditation at St John's Church, Port Ellen at 6:30pm.

A 'Son Rising' service is being held at Port Ellen's community gardens at 8am on Easter Day, followed by breakfast in the local Baptist premises. The Port Ellen Baptists hold their regular service on Sunday at 10am followed by worship at St John's at 11:30am.

Round Church worshippers will meet at 10am, a Roman Catholic Mass takes place at the Episcopal church at 4pm, and a further act of worship will take place at the same time at the Gortanvogie Eventide Home. The Resurrection theme will continue at the Bowmore Baptist Church at 6:30pm.

A warm welcome awaits all at these special services.

Daffodil Tea

Members of Bowmore's Round Church are holding a daffodil tea tomorrow evening, Friday 29th March, in the Bowmore Buffet Hall, at 7:30pm.

The high home baking standards will be maintained, there will be lots of sidelines to part you from your money and youthful entertainment will be provided by a group of multi talented pupils from local schools. Admission is £4 and all proceeds will go to the church's Fabric Fund.

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810 658



Auction Me Out: The brave men and women who were auctioned off on the night, with some of the event organisers and volunteers.

'Human auction' boosts charity fund by £3,500

A 'HUMAN auction' of topless men and glamorous women in Fort William has raised more than £3,500 for charity.

Around 400 people packed out the raucous 'Auction Me Out' in the Nevis Centre on Saturday night to see nine men and four women sell services including a date, personal training sessions and carpetlaying. Accordion-playing shinty star Gary Innes even offered the chance to name a new tune.

The event was organised by Caol woman Dawn Harper and friends in aid of Goldenhar Family Support Group UK.

Dawn's six year-old daughter Lola was born with Goldenhar syndrome - a condition affecting the development of the face and internal organs.

Co-organiser Nicola MacPhee said the night had been 'fantastic'.

She told The Oban Times: 'We want to thank everyone for coming along and for their generous donations. Everyone got really involved which was great. We'd like to thank all the local businesses who donated prizes, the Nevis Centre, all the volunteers who helped out, Lola's dad Graeme Platt who provided the music and her brother Jamie who controlled the lighting.'

She added: 'It's great we raised so much, but we also really wanted to raise awareness of Goldenhar syndrome.' Skipinnish later donated all the money raised on the door to the charity.

Fort court staff locked out by cleaners

FORT William Sheriff Court workers had a quieter day than usual last Wednesday - after cleaners mistakenly locked the front door of the building on their way out.

Confused
The error was not noticed until lunchtime, leaving office staff inside confused as to why no one had come in all morning.

There were no cases heard in the court on the day, but the office is open from 9am-4.30pm for general enquires and to accept fine payments.

Mallaig widow sued by undertaker

A MALLAIG widow has been ordered to pay £617 of an unpaid funeral bill after being sued by an undertaker.

Maureen Tarn had refused to pay £1,087 to local man Robert Corson, claiming he charged her for services she did not want after her husband Gerald died in June 2011.

Mrs Tarn told Fort William Sheriff Court she asked for a cardboard coffin as her husband 'didn't believe in funerals'.

Mr Corson, 81, told her a wooden coffin was required as her 20-stone husband was too heavy for a cardboard version, but Mrs Tarn claimed she later found a company that makes oversized cardboard coffins.

The 60-year-old said she had not paid the full bill because she felt Mr Corson had lied to make more money.

Sheriff Noel McPartlin said: 'In my view both parties acted in good faith. I do not think Mr Corson lied to obtain this work.'

He ordered Mrs Tarn to pay part of the outstanding amount, plus £61 in expenses.

Hurricane force winds leave roads blocked by fallen trees

HURRICANE force winds tore through Lochaber on Friday night leaving forest roads and public paths blocked by fallen trees.

A gust of 93 mph was recorded by a weather station at Bunree, Omich.

Police were forced to close Fort William High Street until early Saturday morning because of flying debris.

And felling operations in Glen Righ Forest were disrupted on Monday as work began to clear access from the A82 at Corran.

See storm round-up, pages six and seven.

Cyclist's relief at guilty verdict

Badly injured man looks to move on with life

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

Road on March 7 2011. Mr MacLeod, an adventure tourism management undergraduate at West Highland College, was thrown nearly 60 metres along the road with the lower part of his right leg ripped off almost instantly.

The 21-year-old also suffered brain injuries and told the court he had no memory of the event or the following month and that the crash had changed his life.

The jury was shown photos of the Subaru after the crash, showing extensive damage to the bonnet, windscreen and roof. Police crash investigator Scott Lemmon analysed skid marks and gouges left on the road after the crash and said they showed the Subaru was doing 'an absolute minimum speed of 67mph'.

Douglas, of 12 Linnhe Road, could now face a maximum of two years in jail. Sheriff Noel McPartlin deferred sentencing the 29-year-old until April 11 for social work reports to be prepared.

Douglas, who was remanded in custody, had denied driving over the speed limit claiming Mr MacLeod had emerged from the junction directly into his path, making the collision unavoidable.



Handcuffed: Graham Douglas was found guilty of hitting the cyclist while driving at 67 mph.

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sure the meat is cut just the way you want it, to farmhouse cheese, handmade chocolates and the freshest of seafood.

Argyll offers up fresh oysters courtesy of Loch Fyne Oysters, meat that has been reared, butchered and stored all on Barbreck Farm, near Lochgilphead, and artisan cheese from Inverloch Cheese company in Campbeltown or Isle of Mull Cheese just outside Tobermory.

You can even get your hands on jam like your granny used to make courtesy of Fyne Preserves. Sheila Whyte makes her products using ingredients from very close to home - often out of her very own garden in Strachur.

If it is a sweet tooth you've got there is delicious handmade chocolate on offer from the Oban Chocolate Company or Tobermory Hand-

made Chocolate. Argyll is also home to craft ales, Fyne Ales, near Cairndow, combine the best malted barley and hops from around the world with the soft Highland water from the hills surrounding the brewery.

You could even combine an interest in local food with a day out, Inverawe Smokehouses, near Taynuilt, is nestled in the tranquillity of nature.

There are walks,

nature trails, picnic areas and a wildlife sanctuary - and they're all free. After a wander down to Loch Etive, spotting deer along the way, you can enjoy feeding the fish in the stock pond.

A map of the walks and child's eye-spy leaflet are available at the shop or tearoom, which serves traditional Scottish food including Inverawe's own range of smoked fish and home baking.

Seasonal recipe - Roast pork with crackling

INGREDIENTS

2.25kg/5lb loin of pork, bottom bone removed, top bone left in
1 small, onion peeled
1 tsp plain flour

275ml/10fl oz dry cider
275ml/10fl oz vegetable stock (or potato water)
sea salt and freshly milled black pepper

Preparation method

Pre-heat the oven to 240C/475F/Gas 9. While the oven is preheating, score the skin of the pork. It will be scored already, but it's always best to add a few more lines. To do this you can use the point of a very sharp paring knife, or Stanley knife, or you can now even buy a special scalpel from a good quality kitchen shop! What you need to do is score the skin all over into thin strips, bringing the blade of the knife about halfway

through the fat beneath the skin.

Now place the pork in a tin, skin-side up, halve the onion and wedge the two pieces in slightly underneath the meat. Now take about 1 tbsp of crushed salt crystals and sprinkle it evenly over the skin, pressing it in as much as you can.

Place the pork on a high shelf in the oven and roast it for 25 minutes. Turn the heat down to 190C/375F/Gas 5, and calculate the total cooking time allowing 35 minutes to the pound.



In this case it would be a further 2½ hours.

There's no need to baste pork as there is enough fat to keep the meat moist. The way to tell if the meat is cooked is to insert a skewer in the thickest part and the juices that run

out should be absolutely clear without any trace of pinkness.

When the pork is cooked remove it from the oven and give it at least 30 minutes resting time before carving. While that is happening, tilt the tin and spoon all the fat off, leaving only the juices. The onion will probably be black and charred, which gives the gravy a lovely rich colour. Leave the onion in, then place the roasting tin over direct heat, turned to low, sprinkle in the flour

and quickly work it into the juices with a wooden spoon.

Now turn the heat up to medium and gradually add the cider and the stock, this time using a balloon whisk until it comes up to simmering point and you have a smooth rich gravy. Taste and season with salt and pepper, then discard the onion and pour the gravy into a warmed serving jug. Serve the pork carved in slices, giving everyone some crackling.

Seasonal recipe - Hot cross buns



INGREDIENTS

For the buns
625g/1.3lb strong white flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tsp salt
2 tsp ground mixed spice

45g/1.5 oz unsalted butter, cut into cubes, plus extra for greasing
85g/3oz sugar
1 lemon, zest only

1½ tsp fast-action yeast
1 free-range egg
275ml/10fl oz tepid milk
125g/4oz mixed dried fruit

For the topping
2 tbsp plain flour
vegetable oil, for greasing
1 tsp golden syrup, gently heated, for glazing

PREPARATION METHOD

For the buns, sieve the flour, salt and ground mixed spice into a large mixing bowl, then rub in the butter using your fingertips. Make a well in the centre of the mixture, then add the sugar and lemon zest and yeast.

Beat the egg and add to the flour with the tepid milk. Mix together to form a soft, pliable dough. Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Carefully work the mixed dried fruit into the dough until well combined. Knead lightly for 5 minutes, or until smooth and elastic.

Grease a large, warm mixing bowl with butter. Shape the dough into a ball and place it into the prepared bowl, then cover with a clean tea towel and set aside in a warm place for one hour to prove.

Turn out the proved dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knock back the dough. Shape it into a ball again and return it to the bowl, then cover again with the tea towel and set aside for a further 30 minutes to rise.

Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and divide it into 12 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball, then flatten slightly into a bun shape using the palms of your hands. Cover the buns again with the tea towel and set aside to rest for 5-10 minutes.

Grease a baking tray with butter and transfer the buns to the tray. Wrap the tray with the buns on it loosely in greaseproof paper, then place inside a large polythene bag. Tie the end of the bag tightly so that no air can get in and set aside in a warm place for a further 40 minutes to rise.

Preheat the oven to 240C/475F/Gas 8.

Meanwhile, for the topping, mix the plain flour to a smooth paste with 2 tablespoons of cold water.

When the buns have risen, remove the polythene bag and the greaseproof paper. Spoon the flour mixture into a piping bag and pipe a cross on each bun.

Transfer the buns to the oven and bake for 8-12 minutes, or until pale golden-brown. As soon as you remove the buns from the oven, brush them with the hot golden syrup, then set aside to cool on a wire rack.

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Portree, Lochaber and Mallaig competitors after the presentation of prizes at An Clachan. 20_f13lean01

Lochaber High School pips Portree to challenge title

LOCHABER High School pipped Portree and Mallaig to win the fourth schools Leannachan Challenge at Torlundy on Friday. In bitterly cold conditions, 31 pupils from all year groups tackled set courses hoping to win individual and team trophies. S1-2 runners ran 3.5-kilometres, S3-4 5.5 kilometres and S5-6 eight kilometres on forest trails round the An Clachan headquarters of organisers Lochaber Rural Education Trust. Lochaber High School support for learning teacher Alan Ross

was delighted with his team's durability in the freezing weather. 'I didn't hear anybody complaining about the cold,' said Mr Ross, who also takes the after school running club. 'They build themselves tough here - they were all in shorts. But it must have been wild on parts of the course.' Portree head of PE Wilma McRuarty and Active Schools rep Jeremy Rossiter brought the young Isle of Skye athletes to Fort William in the school's yellow minibus. Ms McRuarty told *The Oban Times*: 'This is our second time

here and it's been a great day. We have a full team here and the kids ran really well. It's super that we can come and take part. Everyone is so friendly and welcoming - and the soup was great.' Mallaig High School PE teacher Alan Cargill was equally enthusiastic about the event. He said: 'We had five lads here and one first in the juniors. It has been cold with a few flurries of snow but once they got running they were fine. We have been coming for the four years since it started and we would not miss it.'

Lochaber Educational Trust trustee Isabel Campbell thanked Forestry Commission Scotland's Ruairidh Watt and the Active Schools co-ordinators for helping run the event. She added: 'It's brilliant that Portree came all this way.' Results: S1-2 girls - 1 Robyn Blackhall (Lochaber); 2 Isla Campbell (Portree); 3 Abby Blackhall (Lochaber). Boys - 1, Kyle Ingram (Mallaig); 2 Andrew Grieve (Portree); 3 Kenneth Nicolson (Portree). S3-4 girls - 1 Ruth Gordon (Portree); 2 Eilidh Moynihan (Lochaber); 3 Rachel

MacPherson (Lochaber). Boys - 1 Innes Blackhall; 2 Bruce MacLean; 3 Lee Kennedy (all Lochaber). S5-6 girls - 1 Isla MacKay (Lochaber); 2 Carey Ross (Portree); 3 Molly Danter (Portree). Boys - 1 Calum Fraser; 2 Joseph Tangney; 3 Craig MacLean (all Lochaber). Fastest girl - Isla MacKay. Fastest boy - Calum Fraser. Team event winners - Lochaber. All competitors received a medal struck in memory of LRET trustee Peter English, who inspired the inaugural challenge. He told *The Oban Times*:

Skye sports plan backed

THE GROUP behind a bold bid for a sports and recreation centre near Dunvegan has received strong public support for its plans. At North West Skye Recreational Association's AGM in Dunvegan Castle on Saturday, around 40 people backed proposals for the development on a bare field site at Lommore, two miles south of the village. The envisaged hub and sports pitches, costed in a feasibility study at between £1.6m and £1.8m, would potentially save local residents from Edinbane to Glendale from travelling up to 25 miles to Portree to access sports and leisure facilities. NWSRA chair John Hermse told *The Oban Times* the 'modular' project was 'fairly adaptable' - and could be built in phases as funding became available. He said: 'We were delighted with the meeting

and the reaction from the local community. Today has been a really important step on the path to developing a sports and wellness centre for all the people of North West Skye. 'We now have an enthusiastic board of 14 trustees who are tasked with completing a business plan that will enable us to both raise sufficient capital funding to make the plans a reality - but also identify and receive commitments for revenue funding to demonstrate the long-term sustainability of the plans.' Highlife Highland chief executive Ian Murray, who has assisted in working up the concept and addressed Saturday's meeting, said he was 'impressed' with the group's professionalism. He told *The Oban Times*:

'They know what they want to do and are realistic about what it might cost in capital, but more importantly also in revenue terms. They are taking it step by step, taking aboard comments from the community and very importantly not displacing any other community facilities. They want to fill the gaps - not displace anything.' Prior to the meeting, Mr Hermse presented prizes to Jessica Jackson from Orbst, who won a competition to design the group's new logo. Jessica received £100 together with another £100 for her nominated local organisation, Duirinish Youth Club. Mr Hermse also thanked architect Mark Kilkenny and Malcolm Clapperton of the Scottish Agricultural College for their work on the project. He said: 'They have gone above and beyond what was required of them.'



First class: the new Sir E Scott School at Tarbert is looking to broaden its ties.

Re-vamped Sir E Scott School forms new 'friends' group

A RECENTLY refurbished school on Harris is extending the hand of friendship to former pupils, staff and associates through a new group. The Friends of Sir E Scott School (FSESS) is open to everyone with an interest in the Isle of Harris and will encourage members to re-

connect with old friends and make new acquaintances. It is hoped FSESS will provide practical support to both school and pupils, as well as providing financial assistance. Membership will be free. Headteacher Aileen MacSween said: 'We are proud of Sir E Scott, which now has first class

facilities and will help us push the boundaries of achievement. We want to share that success with old and new friends. Those who join the group will be playing an active role in helping the local community.' For further details and membership forms email sirescottschool@gnes.net.



Jessica Jackson, with her mum Rachael, shows her winning design for which she received £100 together with £100 for Duirinish Youth Club from NWSRA chair John Hermse, right.

Sheriff rejects 'no case to answer' request

A SHERIFF has rejected a request to throw out the case against a Caol man accused of drunkenly attacking his then-girlfriend. Representing Alexander Williamson, lawyer Gerry Sweeney told Fort William Sheriff Court the Crown had failed to provide enough evidence an assault had taken place, or that Williamson, aged 23, had been involved. After Procurator fiscal Alison Wylie concluded the prosecution evidence, Mr Sweeney said there was 'no case to answer'. Mr Sweeney claimed the charge rested entirely on the alleged victim's story and her injuries could have been self-inflicted or the result of an accident. He said: 'It is the defence position that there is no cor-

roborative evidence that the complainant's injuries are related to an assault.' Ms Wylie said there was plenty to suggest the 17-year-old woman had been attacked in Williamson's home and said her injuries were consistent with an assault. Ms Wylie also said the teenager had been seen shortly afterwards in a state of 'distress'. Sheriff Noel McPartlin agreed and said the trial would likely come down to reliability of the witnesses. The defence will put forward its case when the trial resumes on April 22, with Williamson expected to give evidence. Williamson, of 4 Glenmallie Terrace, denies assaulting the woman to her injury in his home in the early hours of June 23 last year.

Former Rangers football stars to attend charity dinner

FORMER Glasgow Rangers stars John Brown and Mark Hateley are to attend a charity dinner in Fort William on Saturday, May 11. The event in the BA Club, coined the 'Blue Do 13', will feature the ex-players recounting tales from their playing careers, a question and answer session, a raffle and auction of football memorabilia. All proceeds are going to the British Heart Foundation, The Beatson Cancer Research Centre and the Rangers Fans' Erskine Appeal. Anyone wishing tickets can contact 07821440169. No tickets will be available on the door on the evening.

Guest speaker's return visit to Lochaber Local History Society

TEARLACH MacFarlane from Glenfinnan will return as guest speaker at Lochaber Local History Society's last regular meeting of the season in the Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William on Thursday April 4 at 8pm. His subject will be 'In the Braes of Loch Shiel', with tales of Eilean Fhionain, the Green Isle and its vicinity. Everyone welcome. The talk is a curtain-raiser for the society's annual outing on April 20 which will include a visit to the island and a cruise up Loch Shiel, accompanied by Tearlach.

Recycling centre opening hours

FORT William recycling centre will be open as normal over the Easter weekend. From April 1, summer opening hours of 10am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday, will operate.

Skye felling to resume in June

FELLING operations in a community-owned woodland on Skye will resume in June once a new access has been built for heavy plant. Around 25,000 tonnes of timber has been harvested so far from the 440-hectare Tormore Forest, which Sleat Community Trust acquired from Forestry Commission Scotland for £330,000 in July 2011. Community forester Chris Marsh told *The Oban Times*: 'We have to build a new forest road to get to next year's timber.'

Climber's family pay tribute to emergency services

THE FAMILY of a man who died on Streap near Glenfinnan has paid tribute to all involved in the search operation. The body of Airdrie man James Jack, a 57-year-old apprentice manager with Virgin Media, was recovered from the 2,988-foot mountain on Saturday. He had been missing since Friday night in conditions described by Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team as 'unbelievable'. Team leader John Stevenson said one of his men was 'blown off his feet' by hurricane-force winds. In total, 29 rescuers were involved including 11 from RAF Leuchars. In a statement issued through police, Mr Jack's family said: 'The family wish to thank both the Lochaber and RAF Mountain Rescue and emergency services for their efforts. We also are extremely grateful to Northern Constabulary for their help and support at this difficult time.' Mr Jack was the eighth person to die in Lochaber's mountains this winter.

House plan refused

A BANAVIE woman's application to knock down an old crofting shed and build a house has been refused by councillors after concerns it would result in 'piecemeal' development of the area. Planners advised the south planning applications committee to reject Miss M Campbell's plans for a house on Wilson Way, Tomonie. Planning officer Susan Poole told the committee a wider development plan for the area was required before any new houses could be built. The councillors voted 7-6 to refuse the plans, with local councillors Eddie Hunter and Allan Henderson both arguing for the application to be granted permission.



James Jack: loved climbing in west Lochaber. He is pictured here on Sgurr na Ciche in Knoydart, with Rum in the background.

'Missing' fisherman shouted and swore at officers

A FISHERMAN found drunk and asleep on a boat in Mallaig harbour after being reported as missing has been fined £160 after shouting and swearing at the police officers who found him. A full scale search for Sean MacDonald involving the coastguard and local lifeboat was launched after his bag was found floating in the village harbour on March 20.

The 21-year-old had just returned from 10 days at sea and had been drinking in the village with crewmates from the Carbst-based vessel *Aquarius*, Fort William Sheriff Court heard. Concerns for his safety were raised when a holdall containing his belongings was spotted in the water later that night with MacDonald nowhere to be seen. MacDonald, of 61 Garrabost Point, Isle of Lewis, was then located on a second boat and starting abusing officers when they woke him up, fiscal Alison Wylie said. She continued: 'He was shouting and swearing at anyone who could hear him, basically.' His anger continued when he was put in a police car, where he pulled off a door handle in an attempt to get out. Appearing from custody, MacDonald pled guilty to behaving in a threatening or abusive manner.

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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Remember to say 'thank you'

THEY SAY that 'necessity is the mother of invention' – perhaps the past week's freak snow storms that struck small pockets of the west coast will require the words 'effort and endeavour' to be accommodated in the old adage.

As homes and businesses in south Argyll and the isles of Ar-ran and Islay come to terms with the after effects of last week's combination of heavy snow and high winds it is hard to come to terms with the massive scale of the task required in restoring power and transport links.

After what has been heralded as the worst blizzard to hit the area in 40 years, the main road network between Campbeltown and Tarbert became blocked by some of the deepest snow drifts in living memory. As an army of council staff and contractors battled to clear tonnes of snow from the road, the galeforce wind nullified their efforts by filling in the drifts as fast as they could be removed.

To add to an already incredibly difficult situation, power supplies were cut off as the sheer weight of snow and ice brought two huge electricity pylons crashing to the ground near Carradale. The immediate affect was to halt power supplies to all points south and west of the fault.

With the obvious prospect of thousands of homes and businesses being without power and towns plus scattered rural communities being cut-off for several days - quick-thinking, sensible cooperation, and sheer hard work averted what could have been a very dangerous and life-threatening situation for many people.

The use of Caledonian MacBrayne vessels to reach Campbeltown by sea from Kennacraig and additional sailings to carry essential equipment, food and fuel to affected islands was a common sense and practical solution that could so easily have been dismissed or worse, ignored.

While we have come to 'expect' utility companies and local authorities to come up with instant solutions to all of our problems regardless of the complexity of the task, we should not forget that behind every such organisation are people who are willing and able to put thought, muscle and willpower into action on our behalf.

Yes, lessons may be learned from every situation and these lessons may avert a similar problem being so serious in the future - however, when nature takes a hand in creating a situation it makes us realise just how vulnerable to nature's power we are.

It should also make us a little more humble and appreciate the people who roll up their sleeves, pick up their tools, and go out in horrendous conditions to ensure that the light in our homes stays lit and the road networks remain usable.

GLASGOW LETTER

Fèis Glaschu

FÈIS Glaschu, the week-long programme of musical and sports classes, is now a cornerstone of activities organised for youngsters in Glasgow.

As in the past few years, this year's fèis will take place in Hutcheson's Grammar Junior School, 44 Kingarth Street, G42 7RN, from Tuesday April 2 through to the end of the week.

For children between the ages of three and 14, the fèis is run through the medium of Gaelic but children without Gaelic are welcome to participate.

Like most other fèis events, there will be the old favourite activities such as fiddle, accordion, clarsach, Gaelic song and shinty but there will also be the chance to take part in drumming, drama, football, step-dancing and Taekwondo. Quite a variety of activities, I am sure you will agree, and with so many talented tutors available in the Glasgow area this is an event well worth attending.

For further information telephone 0141 946 0601 or 01397 704132 or email feisgg@live.co.uk or Vicky@feisean.org.

Cancellation

THE YOUTH concert organised by Glasgow Sky Association and scheduled to take place on Friday March 22 was cancelled as a result of inclement weather.

Eastwood Parish Church Concert

IN 2012, Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir took part in the 150th celebrations of the Glasgow Islay Association and in 2013 they played the same role in the celebrations of Eastwood Parish Church.

The concert on Thursday March 21 was part of a series of events planned by the church over the year and introduced many of those in attendance to Gaelic music for the first time.

As well as choral items on the programme there

was plenty of variety with solo singing, duets, piping, accordion and clarsach selections.

Comunn an Taobh-an-Iar

THE RECENT Buffet Ceilidh Dance held in Ellangown Social Club, Milngavie, was a successful evening with an attendance of more than 60 thoroughly enjoying an excellent buffet and dancing to the Charlie Kirkpatrick Trio.

Change of date

THE GLASGOW Uist and Barra Association has asked me to inform readers that the ceilidh dance which I advertised last week for Friday March 29 will not take place on that date since that will be Good Friday.

Instead the function will take place the following Friday, April 5, in Crawford Hall, Partick, at 9pm. This means there will be two functions in April, the other being on Friday April 26.

Diary dates

Saturday March 30: Scottish Piper's Association Veteran and Solo Piping Competition, College of Piping, Otago Street, 10am.

Monday April 1: Easter Tour Concert, Year 2 students from Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, National Piping Centre, 7.30pm.

Tuesday April 2: Live at the Star, Admiralty Bar, 72 Waterloo Street, 8pm, Wendy Arrowsmith. From Tuesday April 2 to Saturday April 6, Fèis Glaschu - see above.

Friday April 5: Scottish Piper's Association Club Night, College of Piping, 7.30pm.

Pub scene

ROBERT Robertson will be playing in the Park Bar on both Saturday and Sunday with Monach Isles there on Friday. In the Islay Inn it will be Parting Glass on Friday and Diago on Saturday.

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



Crew of Pole Star ship in Oban

This week our flashback photograph features the crew of the Oban-based lighthouse ship the Pole Star in days gone by. Please send prints to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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

www.obantimes.co.uk

Telephone: 01631 568000
Fax: 01631 568001

Save Smarties Playgroup

Sir,
Our wee lad is a happy, bright boy of two years old.

He has found a wonderful outlet for his imagination every Monday and Friday at his pre-nursery Tweenies class in Oban's Atlantis Leisure Centre.

The staff are fantastic, he gives hugs when he arrives and we have been looking forward to him continuing to Smarties Nursery classes. But this is not to be.

Tweenies and Smarties are to close this June. There have not been enough applicants and there is now a large shortfall in funding.

We have been unable to find an alternative pre-three group nearby that we can afford and feel he will not understand why his class is to be taken away from him. Sadly his little sister is also now going to miss out.

I see many parents with children around the town and wonder if they know about the nursery.

Would the loss of the nursery adversely affect the town's community sports centre?

I do not know if it is too late for Smarties and Tweenies but if the applications do not come, and soon, then this great opportunity to help all our youngsters get ahead will be lost.

I am told that only a year or two ago the nursery was over subscribed and was having to turn applicants away.

I look around town and see advertising of many other nurseries and yet Smarties is not even mentioned on the Atlantis Leisure website.

We have heard, although this is purely rumour, that it may suit some parties that Smarties was no longer there.

We have been informed that the shortfall of funds at Smarties Nursery is around £7,500 and have since learned that a nursery receives £1,800 per annum, per child.

So, as far as we can calculate, only five more children would need to take places for the nursery to be saved.

If Smarties is lost due to the opening of Park Primary School's Nursery, as we suspect is part of the reason, then Tweenies will be lost completely and there will be no net gain in nursery places, as this would merely be swapping one nursery for another.

Simon and Kimberly Thomas, 5 Branksome Park, Longsdale Road, Oban.

'Monstrous' block of flats

Sir,
At a public hearing before Argyll and Bute Council's Planning Protective Services and Licensing Committee held in North Connel Hall on Monday March 25, outline planning permission was granted for a single 'monstrous' block of 24 flats.

A development of this scale and size is obviously completely out of character for North Connel and was unanimously accepted by 10 councillors based upon a misaligned policy for this area.

A policy which appears to be in the process of adjusting in the present round of structural/local plan review, which is out for public consultation at present.

It seems to those of us present that the committee had predetermined the outcome and paid no regard whatsoever to

representations put to them. Few of the councillors asked any relevant questions, most looked bored and uninterested and all fell in line with an apparent 'handed down' decision.

Where is democracy when the views of many local people are ignored and they are the ones who will be left to live with the consequences of a very weak decision from a disconnected council?

Iain S MacLean, 4 Falls View Apartment, North Connel.

Who do our elected councillors work for?

Sir,
At the recent meeting regarding the outline development of Ossians in North Connel, there are some issues I think we all need to consider.

Who do the councillors actually work for? Is it themselves or the council for they certainly do not work for the electorate.

During this meeting at least three of the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee - councillors - didn't ask a question, let alone make a comment, other than to agree to the recommendation to pass the application.

Only two of our elected councillors, Councillor Hall, Oban, and Councillor Currie, Islay, understand the ethos of the area and said openly that a block of 24 flats - the proposal - was totally out of keeping with the established housing. I applaud them.

Much was made of 'affordable' housing, 25 per cent, but no-one mentioned lack of facilities including few buses, no shop and no easily accessed social activities locally.

I am a supporter of 'affordable' housing, but a bigger supporter of 'sheltered' housing, but no-one thought to discuss this option, not even a mention.

The present building was called a 'monstrosity' by the applicants agent, an eyesore yes, but monstrosity? Emotive words indeed.

Despite many objections, including from the community council, these objections were ignored at all levels. So I ask again, who do our elected councillors actually work for?

Margaret Leplar, North Connel.

The inconvenient truth about Oban Airport

Sir,
Oban Airport and its air routes to the isles are costing hard pressed tax payers £1.8 million a year to sustain.

Oban Airport is a mill stone round the neck of the town and is paid for at the expense of lost public and private sector jobs, and the loss and reduction of council services to the wider community.

Our council and councillors, past and present, should be thoroughly ashamed of this continuing white elephant that has been one of the worst development decisions in the history of development decision.

The other inconvenient truth is our CHORD development proposals which have cost us more than £600,000 and delivered nothing.

They are going the same way as Oban Airport. development

proposals that will not deliver tangible and sustainable economic benefit must not be allowed to progress.

Whatever the growth plan may be that delivers jobs and provides for the general wellbeing of the community as a whole, one thing is for sure, sitting about wasting time and money on old compromised CHORD projects will produce nothing.

Exploring the possibilities of what may or may not be possible from a larger growth project and allowing the creation of a private sector development plan that will guarantee private sector investment and also be seen as worthy of public funding seems a better use of everyone's time and resources.

I have been saying it to our local councillors for years yet they still don't get it. If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got. We really need it to work this time.

I don't have all the answers, but some of the stuff being put forward has to be challenged if you think it's just way off.

Who would have thought our councillors would have voted through millions of pounds worth of spending to improve a two to three minute walk, for two or three people, from the station to the ferry?

Who would have thought an HIE business park in Oban would not attract a single commercial tenant over the last 10-15 years including all through the boom years?

Who would have thought we would be spending £1.8m every year on Oban Airport for no return to the wider community?

And who would have thought a prime retail/commercial location, the White Building, would be earmarked as a shower block?

Ian Dougall, Oban.

Police staff play vital role

Sir,
I was dismayed to read Mr McDermott's letter in the March 14 edition in which he questioned the abilities of more than 6,000 police staff throughout Scotland.

The basis of his complaint seemed to stem from one telephone call to an unnamed police station.

For his information 'civilian worker' is not a recognised term within the police service of Scotland, the term used should be 'police staff'.

He says the new Chief Constable in his wisdom has decided to dispense with the majority of these staff.

In fact, as recently as March 14 in Stirling, Mr House is on record as saying that he would much rather employ police staff who are trained and expert in the job that they do than a police officer doing these jobs who is not so trained and who costs over twice as much.

Throughout Scotland we have a 37-year low in recorded crime. Much of this is attributable to police staff in forensics, scenes of crime, crime analysis, the list goes on.

The one constant in any police station are the police staff who guide the officers who come and go on a regular basis. Many towns and events would come to a standstill except for the traffic wardens who are police staff. In his own area, he has members of police staff who have served their community for nearly 30 years.

They say that behind every good man is a good woman, I would say that behind every police officer are thousands of police staff ensuring that they can carry out what they are trained for - safeguarding the community and catching criminals.

I would suggest that if Mr McDermott is unhappy with the service he got then he contact the senior officer of that station directly for I suspect that he or she would be happy to discuss the matter.

Frank K Winston, UNISON Lead Steward, Highland Resource Centre, Inverness.

Oban the ideal port for Majestic Line vessels

Sir,
Thank you for your article in last week's edition intimating that both our vessels, *MV Glen Massan* and *MV Glen Tarsan*, will be based in Oban this summer.

Oban is an ideal home port for our vessels. It has good transport links, good shops and supplies and good engineering support.

We are looking forward to the day when the proposed Oban Bay Marina is constructed so that we can make use of its facilities to embark and disembark our passengers without having to ferry them out to our moorings by tender.

We must point out, however, that contrary to your article's story, we have not yet entertained Royalty aboard our vessels.

A W Thomas, Director, The Majestic Line (Scotland) Ltd.

Park Primary School's Fairtrade appeal to Oban

Sir,
As pupils of Park Primary School, the first Fairtrade School in Oban, we are writing to you to express our concern about the lack of provision of Fairtrade products available in supermarkets and shops in Oban.

We are a Fairtrade town so believe that our stores should be introducing more items that are Fairtrade.

During the recent 'Fairtrade Fortnight', pupils in our school were asked to bring Fairtrade snacks, however, we were disappointed to find that there was very little Fairtrade fruit on sale in Oban and we strongly feel that as a Fairtrade town, there should be more to offer.

The only Fairtrade fruit on sale in our town, at the moment, is bananas and we would like to see this change.

We are appealing to our shop owners to make this happen and make a difference to workers and producers all around the world.

We want our town to become a better place and as we are customers ourselves, we believe we will be happier to know that the producers of our products are being well paid for their work.

We hope as a community that we are making a difference to people with our own Fairtrade efforts in school and that this letter will encourage others to join us.

Caitlin Cooke and Amy Jones P7 on behalf of Park Primary School, Oban.

Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

THA CÀNAN na mhòdh-labhairt air dearbhaithne sluaigh agus na fhear de na h-eileamaidean bunaitheach aig cridhe ionannachd buidheann sam bith. Sin beachd Rita Izak, Eòlaiche Neo-eisimeileach dha na Dùthchannan Aonaichte, ann an aithisg a libhrig i gu Comhairle Chòraichean Daonna na Dùthchannan Aonaichte bho chionn ghoirid ann an Geniobha.

Bho àm gu àm bidh na Dùthchannan Aonaichte a' toirt cuireadh dha eòlaichean neo-eisimeileach beachdachadh, gun phàigheadh, air cuspair àraid agus aithisg a thoirt a dh'ionnsaigh na Comhairle seo.

Tha an aithisg aig Izak cuideachd a' daingneachadh cho deatamach 's a tha cànán ann a bhith a' gleidheadh cultar agus fèin-spèis choimhearsnachdan mion-chànain air feadh an t-saoghail. Gu bheatha, tha na mion-chànain sin air mùchadh agus air an geur-leamhainn mar chultaran sheann-fhasanta gun luach san latha 'n-diugh agus a tha a' cur bacadh air adhartas sòisealta agus eaconamach. Glè thrìc cuideachd, tha na poileasaidhean aig riaghaltsan gun a bhith a' toirt inbhe oifigeil ach dha aon chànán stàite a' cruthachadh freumhan toiseach gràin-cinnidh. Bheir aineolas agus olc nàdarra mòr-shluaigh fàs air an sgùirs!

An aghaidh lethidh de dhùbhlain, cha bheag an t-iongnadh ged a bhiodh daoine a' sgar a chleachdadh mion-chànain agus ann am beachd Izak theid trì mìle cànán, leth nam bheil san t-saoghal, a bhith ro dheireadh na linne seo. Tha i ag argamaid gum bheil dleastanas air riaghaltsan fo chòraichean dhaoine na mion-chànain is an cuid cultair a dhìon agus gum biodh lethidh sin ionchaidh ann an deagh rianachd agus mar dhòigh air strì agus aithisg a sheachnadh agus sòisealtes cothrom, co-ionann a stèidheachadh. Anns a' Ghearran, mhòl UNESCO leabhraichean agus goireasan teagaisg fhòilleachadh ann am mion-chànain, agus a-nise tha an aithisg seo a' moladh na cànain sin a chleachdadh ann am foghlam, craoladh agus seirbheisean poblach de gach seòrsa. Chan eil na h-argamaidean seo ir sam bith dha luchd-strì nam mion-chànain agus ged nach eil uallach air na Dùthchannan Aonaichte gabhail ris na molaidhean, tha am foillseachadh a' cur taic ri lethidh iomairt na Gàidhlig.

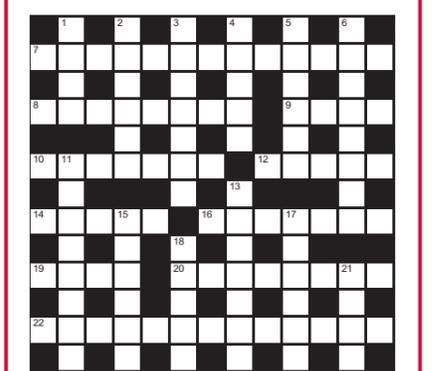
Gu mì-fhortanach, tha seo a' nochdadh aig àm far am bheil suidheachadh eaconamach an t-saoghail leasichte ann an cruaidh-chàs agus theagamh mar sin nach robh leigeil cion ionmhais leasachaidh dha lethidh mion-chànain riaghachd furasta. Ach air an làimh eile, tha beachdan oifigeil bho lethidh nan Dùthchannan Aonaichte dol a chur taic nach beag ris an t-srì leantainneach an aghaidh nam feadhachan a dh'farradh leigeil le eòlas is gliccas mhltean bliadhna seargadh a bhith!

'PROTECTION of linguistic minority rights is a human rights obligation and an essential component of good governance, efforts to prevent tensions and conflict, and the construction of equal and politically and socially stable societies'. So argues an independent expert report to the UN Committee on Human Rights last week.

In February UNESCO recommended the use of minority languages to 'support education in mother tongues as part of a foundation for all social, economic and cultural life'. Is a new age of enlightenment dawning?

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

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Across | Down |
| 7 Domineering (13) | 1 Gigantic (4) |
| 8 Scold (8) | 2 Egyptian lighthouse (6) |
| 9 Influence (4) | 3 Without chemicals (7) |
| 10 Buccaneer (7) | 4 Irritating (5) |
| 12 Fold (5) | 5 Move forward (6) |
| 14 Rent (5) | 6 Played with a sphere (4,4) |
| 16 Snake in the grass (7) | 11 Can be treated by surgery (8) |
| 19 Similar to an alpaca (4) | 13 A newspaper (7) |
| 20 What you type to enter (8) | 15 Seafood dish (6) |
| 22 Cattle (8,5) | 17 Plains (6) |
| | 18 Relating to one of our planets (5) |
| | 21 Atomiser output (4) |

Last week's solution

V	A	M	P	E	R	S	C	R	A	N	E
I	A	P	E	O	R	D	N				
L	I	L	A	C	C	O	U	P	L	E	T
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A	C	R	O	B	A	T					
C	N	L	A								
Y	O	U	R	E							

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YOUR LETTERS

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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.

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

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

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

Colmcille

Tracing the early footsteps of St Columba

THE ISLE of Iona is busily preparing for the 1,450th anniversary of the arrival of Saint Columba to the shores of Scotland.

Historic Scotland are organising the reassembly and delivery of St Oran's Cross, the world's first Celtic High Cross, back to the island in time for the celebrations. They are also upgrading visitor facilities at the abbey.

With things coming together in time for dignitaries arriving to mark the special occasion *The Oban Times* looks back at Columba's own legendary steps to Iona...



Iona Abbey. t13columba1no

RIGHT at the end of a peninsula on Ireland's west coast, jutting out in the hostile Atlantic and battered by wind and rain, lies a village.

Nestled in a steep valley, the small houses spread out across the hillside as rural settlements in Donegal tend to.

The area is known as the Highlands of Ireland and it is a place of pilgrimage. On June 9 each year, barefoot pilgrims walk around 15 stations, spread over several kilometres of rocky hillside, to standing stones with Christian markings in fields and churchyards, as they have been doing for centuries.

The Turas Colmcille commemorates a holy man, a scribe, a monk and a sharp political mind, with perhaps a stronger claim to the title of patron saint of Ireland than St Patrick. Patrick roamed Ireland a century before St Columba, but he was not born on the island. Columba is rightly associated with the monastery he founded on the Isle of Iona, the foundation for much of his life's work and where he died.

But it was in that northwest corner of Ireland that he was born and brought up, where he got an early taste for mission and from where he left in exile to establish his new base in Scotland.

On the shores of Lough Gartan in County Donegal on December 7, 521, Colum was born to royal parents. His father was a great grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages and his mother is said to have been a daughter of the King of Leinster.

Social status mattered and it opened doors.

But when he gave up any claim to the High King of Ireland's throne at Tara by entering the church, he did not leave his interest in the worldly matters of power and politics behind.

Later, his name was latinised to Columba, but around Gartan and other places where he walked, he is known as Colmcille - Colum of the cell or the church.

A high cross marks his birthplace on a spur of land stretching out into the small loch and still visible are stepping stones out into the water, a shortcut from his home to the other side, which he undoubtedly trod.

Alice Doherty worked as a guide at the Colmcille Heritage Centre on the loch shore and she says the area is steeped in myths about his still-lingering power.

One local legend reveals something of Colmcille's stubborn character. He was walking by a man fishing for salmon in a nearby lake and he asked the man for a fish he had caught.

The man said no, but he promised the next one. But when he hooked another salmon, he refused to hand it over. Alice recounts: 'That went on for a bit, and every time the guy had an excuse to give.'

Eventually Colmcille became fed up and declared that would be the last salmon ever caught in the lough. Local fishermen confirm that is the case, though salmon are found very close by in similar waters.

There is another curious local tale of the Gartan Clay, a white clay found in the hills and believed to have protective powers - but it can only be found by men of the

O'Friel family - direct descendants of a man who once helped Colmcille's mother Eithne.

Alice says the myths are enduring: 'It was so long ago. They are great stories and on what grounds would you discount them?'

Colmcille was fostered by a priest at Temple Douglas, where his education began and a stone marks the site of his baptism there.

Later, he was sent to the prominent monastic school of St Finian at Movilla near Strangford, on the other side of the north part of Ireland.

Through his learning here and at Clonard, Glasnevin and under the bard Gemman, Colmcille became a literary man. He developed a love of the written word, of music and poetry, which was to define his future and his legacy.

Colmcille established his first monastery on an island in the River Foyle, near the city of Derry around 546.

The land may have been given by his cousin and the wooden building was in a grove of oaks. Colmcille expressed his love of Derry in poetry: 'Derry mine, my small oak grove, little cell, my home, my love!'

From here, over 60 Columban monasteries spread throughout Ireland, in Kells, Swords and Tory Island, and the monastery made Derry important.

It was from Derry also that he left his beloved Ireland with 12 followers. The circumstances are hotly debated, but they are thought to be tied up with the Battle of Cúl Dreimhne near Sligo in 561.

Colmcille left Ireland in 563 aboard a coracle or curragh. This stained glass window showing his departure is in the Colmcille Heritage Centre at Gartan. C mire021



What is certain is that on a visit to St Finian in Movilla, Colmcille illicitly copied a rare manuscript of the psalms.

The dispute was taken to the High King Diarmait, who ruled against Colmcille in what can be considered the first legal pronouncement on copyright with the statement to every cow its calf and to every book its copy.

The crafty and well-connected Colmcille was unlikely to leave it at that and organised a rebellion of his clansmen. The great battle resulted in the death of thousands.

Some believe he was wracked with guilt and sailed away to save as many souls as he had caused to perish. Others argue popular opinion turned against him and left him with no choice but to go.

His followers, including his earliest biographer and Abbot of Iona, Adomnan, presented his departure as a form of pilgrimage and penance to bring him closer to God.

Whatever his motivation, he shook the dust of Ireland from his feet and left in a coracle (what the Irish call a curragh), landing on Iona on Pentecost in 563.

A replica of the boat which made the same crossing in 1963 - the 1,400th anniversary

of Colmcille's great trip - sits in the Harbour Museum in Derry.

Though he turned his back on Ireland, there was to be one more significant encounter with this part of the world.

Some years after his departure, the great Convention of Drumceatt was called by King Aed Mac Ainmreoch close to what is today the town of Limavady in County Londonderry.

On Mullagh Hill, chiefs and clergy gathered to settle a power struggle between the Scottish and Irish parts of the kingdom of Dalriada - the Scots no longer wishing to be subservient to the Irish.

Colmcille came as an arbitrator and no doubt swayed the assembly by his desired outcome. The local legend goes that the saint

had sworn on his departure years before never again to see or set foot on Irish soil.

To fulfil that promise and yet return for the convention, he is believed to have put on a blindfold and tied sods of Scottish turf to his feet before getting out of his boat on the River Roe.

Mullagh Hill is now to be found near the tenth hole of the Roe Park Resort's golf course on the outskirts of Limavady.

But just like Gartan, the countryside around is alive with tales of Colmcille, of churches he founded and miracles performed.

The impact of this Irish-born saint on the growth of the early church in Scotland and Europe is well-known, but the towering character and his mythic status are well remembered in his own country too.



The Meeting Stone - the ninth station on the Turas Colmcille. If you walk three times around the stone, praying constantly, and renounce Satan, a glimpse through the stone's hole will reveal paradise. Engaged couples also used to link fingers through it in the presence of friends. C mire057

Following in the footsteps of Colmcille

Glen Colum Cille

A place of pilgrimage to the saint, who brought Christianity to this rugged and remote part of Ireland. Locals also believe Bonny Prince Charlie hid here for a month on his way to France. The three mile Turas route is marked by occasional signs and a map is also available from the Folk Village.

Gartan

The Colmcille Heritage Centre at Gartan near Letterkenny is a good place to start exploring the area where Colmcille was born and raised. Close by are the sites of his birth, marked by a high cross, and baptism and other signs of his miracles.

Derry

The Tower Museum puts Colmcille's first monastery and the 15 years he spent there in the context of the city's development. Close by, the Harbour museum includes a replica of the boat in which he travelled to Iona. St Columba's cathedral, dedicated to the saint, also has a small museum open Monday to Saturday.

Limavady

One way to see the site of the Convention of Drumceatt, where Colmcille's influence held sway, is to play a round of golf at the Roe Park Resort. The site, which is marked by a tower, is also accessible by path from the hotel and the Roe Valley Country



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Ceilidh night success at North Connel



Pals ready to party are, from left: Mary Laird, Diane MacDonald, Mary Strathearn, Carolyn Buchanan, Fiona Sweeney and Susan MacDonald. 15_t13lorncellidh07

A FAMILY ceilidh in North Connel Hall has made more than £2,000 for the Lorn Agricultural Show committee. A large turnout danced all night to the music of Gunna Sound, while a raffle and games to get a coin nearest the whisky bottle – or the

Easter egg for the children – helped to make up the sum of money, described by show secretary Fiona Dickie as 'very pleasing'. Fiona added: 'We make the ceilidh a family affair, which brings more people out and makes for a great atmosphere. It is usually a busy night

but this one was the best yet. 'We want to get Gunna Sound booked up for next year as soon as we can.' Fiona thanked everyone who helped at the event and the businesses who donated raffle prizes.



Dancers line up for a Strip the Willow. 15_t13lorncellidh03



Craig Cameron and Lisa Dunn. 15_t13lorncellidh02



Johnny Scouler, Lochaline, and Campbell Brown, Tiree, of Gunna Sound. 15_t13lorncellidh09



Duncan Buchanan, left, and Angus Dickie worked behind the bar. 15_t13lorncellidh04



Staff from Breedon Aggregates and Dawn Fresh enjoy a wee refreshment before returning to the dancefloor. 15_t13lorncellidh01



From left: Kenny, Hannah and Fiona Ferguson with Christine and Emma Hill. 15_t13lorncellidh06



Music from Gunna Sound made sure the dancefloor was packed for most of the dances. 15_t13lorncellidh08



The Robb family and friends enjoyed their night. 15_t13lorncellidh05



Members of the Campbell, MacDonald and MacKechnie families from North Connel and Benderloch enjoyed the family-friendly atmosphere. 15_t13lorncellidh10

Mull author's debut is 'brave, funny, poignant and beautifully written' say critics

A MULL woman's first book about the trials and tribulations of island life will be published today (Thursday).

Judy Fairbairns has written *Island Wife: Living on the edge of the wild*, described by critics as 'brave, funny, poignant and beautifully written'.

Published by Two Roads Books, it is a tale of a 'cosseted girl' who abandons all for love of a man who offers a life in which nothing is certain.

Judy was 19 when she first met her husband Alex, an arable farmer in Norfolk. In 1978, soon after they were married he decided to move to the Tapsalteerie Estate on a Hebridean island.

She said: 'My childhood socks were always white, my frocks ironed. Each day predictable, safe. I escaped. Aged 19, I was swept off my feet by a wild adventurer and married within months.'

'Two small children later (with three more to come) complete with Labradors, cats, a heavy horse and hearts full of dreams, we arrived on a remote Hebridean island to begin our life on the Tapsalteerie Estate.'

'Nothing was ever predictable again.'

As well as raising their five children, Judy had to learn how to run a hill farm, a hotel, a recording studio and how to launch the first whale watching business in the UK – while struggling to make ends meet.

When her children start to leave home things fall apart and there is sadness and joy in how she puts things back together. Told in a clear and unique voice, *Island Wife* is funny, unforgettable and intensely moving.



Above - Inverloch youngster Laura Robertson, aged 7, took home three trophies – 10 and under chanter, youngest competitor and highest aggregate score over three events – 20_f13ppimg03



The Original Buttons and Bows were a big hit at Kilmallie Community Centre on Saturday night f13buttons1no

Buttons and Bows go down a storm at fundraiser in Kilmallie hall

GLENROTHES band The Original Buttons and Bows went down a storm at Kilmallie Community Centre on Saturday in a concert in aid of hall funds.

Local singers

Local singers Colin MacDonald from Blarmafalach and Christina Bowns from Lochside joined the Fife-based group on stage during the highly enjoyable evening.

Hall committee member John MacDonald said the highlight of the night came when Christina Bowns began her rendition of the 'Red River Valley'.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'She pulled out a cowboy hat for a prop, but unbeknown to her the 23 musicians behind her did the same - and the whole place erupted.'

'She wondered why everybody was

laughing and when she turned round they all had different hats on.'

Around 130 people enjoyed the show while £1,100 was raised through entry receipts and the raffle, Mr MacDonald said.

Fellow committee member Jessie Henderson said: 'We would like to thank all those who gave a hand in the kitchen and helped with the teas.'

Kerrie's garage Ladies Day is so successful another is now planned

MECHANIC Kerrie MacPhail says her Ladies' Day last Saturday, which gave women instruction on car maintenance, was so successful she is already planning one for later this year.

Kerrie's Tyres opened its doors to women only on Saturday, demonstrating how to change a tyre and maintain a car under the bonnet.

A turnout of 25 women was more than expected and helped to raise £186 for the Ryan MacPhail Memorial Fund.

Kerrie said: 'All the women who came along were very enthusiastic and they were all pretty good at the basics by the time they left.'

'I am planning to do another ladies' day later in the year, in line with winter checks.'

Sisters Karma MacLean and Maria Campbell were two of the ladies who attended.

Karma said: 'We came along because we don't have a clue about looking after the car or how to change a tyre.'

'Before today we would have probably just waited at the side of the road for our dad to come and help!'



Kerrie MacPhail, left, shows sisters Karma MacLean and Maria Campbell how to change a tyre. 15_t13kerries01

Craignish Boat Jumble defies the weather

A BITTERLY cold wind and transport chaos meant this year's Craignish Boat Jumble and Car Boot Sale had fewer visitors, but organisers still managed to make nearly £1,000 on the day.

While the hardy folk at the car boot sale braved the elements outside Craignish Village Hall last Saturday, the majority of more than 200 visitors browsed the jumble sale indoors.

Organiser Jan Brown said: 'I am pleased with the turnout today considering the weather and the fact that some people just couldn't get here.'

'We have visitors and exhibitors coming from all over the country but the people who usually come from Northern Ireland, Iona and Kintyre could not get here. My phone has been ringing all week with people asking if it was still on.'

'We hold the event at the same time every year but last year it was hot and sunny and everyone was in short sleeves!'

After expenses the event will make around £700 for Craignish Community Company (C3). Jan started the popular boat jumble and car boot sale 14 years ago in her role as a member of Craignish Boat Club and it is now the main annual fundraiser for C3.



Roy Bridge brothers Finlay (left) and Sandy Cameron were amongst the winners in the junior piping competition - 20_f13piping01

Lochaber's junior piping standard is 'absolutely fantastic'

YOUNG pipers from across the Highland gathered in Fort William for the Lochaber Piping Society's annual competition on Saturday.

Roy Bridge youngster Sandy Cameron was the star of the show, taking home the Donald MacLeod Piobaireachd Prize amongst his trophies. The 16-year-old finished first in a number of categories, including 18 and under jig, ground Piobaireachd and march.

His younger brother Finlay was also among the trophies, winning the 15 and under ground Piobaireachd.

Youngsters from Plockton, Skye, Mallaig and Oban came for the annual competition event at Lochaber High School.

Kyle was well represented, with Brighde

Chaimbeul coming first in three 15 and under competitions - the march, Piobaireachd and jig.

Fellow Kyle local Connor Kellet won the 15 and under Strathspey and reel, while James Roxburgh came first in the 18 and under category. Joseph Campbell won the 14 and under chanter.

Fort William youngsters also picked up trophies, with seven-year-old Laura Robertson winning the 10 and under chanter. Joseph Curie taking home the prize for 11-13 chanter and Martin MacKinnon winning two trophies.

Lochaber Piping Society secretary Morag Melville said the standards across the day had been 'absolutely fantastic'.



Martin MacKinnon, aged 12, won the novice bagpipes and novice slow air awards - 20_f13piping02

Plenty of talent on display at Lorn Drama Festival

Benderloch and North Connel Drama Club take overall award

'DOWNRIGHT talent' was on display over the three evenings of this year's Lorn Drama Festival, according to its adjudicator.

Michael Emans, artistic director of Rapture theatre - Scotland's leading contemporary touring theatre company, told the festival's Friday night audience he had been impressed by the performances on offer.

He said: 'I think what's very encouraging is the diverse range of work that's been on in the festival and the diverse age range - young acts are the future of your drama festival.'

'I think it's great the drama festival has such a richness to it and I have had a great time, well done to everyone.'

First place at the festival went to Benderloch and North Connel Drama Club for Strictly Sex Factor (On Ice), which also took Highest Marks for Dramatic Production.

Second place was taken by Dalmally and Lochawe Drama Society for their performance of Mother Figure, which also took Highest Marks for Stage Set.

Third placed Lochgilphead Drama Club put on a

show with The Witching Hour and took home the Stage Management Cup too.

Graham MacQueen, who acted as chairman on Friday night, thanked Mr Emans for his 'tactful and critical encouragement'.

Mr Emans handed the Adjudicator's Award of Spotlight Musical Theatre Group for the George and Bertie Trilogy while The Leftovers picked up A Moment in Theatre for That'll Do Nicely.

Despite this being the first festival since Linda Robb stood down as chairwoman of the committee she was doing as much as ever on Friday night.

Pauline Cameron, Lorn Drama Festival Committee member, said: 'We would like to thank Linda for her years of promoting and supporting the development of drama, particularly for young people, in the Lorn area - and for keeping the drama festival going over the years.'

The Moment in Comedy award was picked up by Taynult and District Dramatic Society juniors for The Tin Cup, which also saw them take first place in the junior section.

Second place went to Barcaldine Primary School for Bonding.



Graham MacQueen, Friday's chairman, (back left) and adjudicator Michael Emans (front centre) with the drama festival prize winners. 16_113dram01



ABCD quiz night raises £300

ALMOST £300 was raised at this year's quiz night for the charity Argyll Beats Cardiovascular Disease (ABCD).

The annual event, held last Friday night in The Royal Hotel, brought in £299 for the charity despite being quieter than usual due to weather conditions.

Quizmaster Tony Cave (pictured sitting) bamboozled competitors on the night while ABCD committee members (left to right) Alfie MacKenzie, Ian MacInnes and John Barbour helped keep the funds rolling in.

The quiz night is just one of many fundraising activities carried out by the ABCD committee throughout the year. They also organise a 10k run, taking place on May 5.

what's on

THURSDAY

March 28, 11am-4pm, Art and craft produce market, Bunnessan Hall, Bunnessan, Mull.
 March 28, Oban and Lorn Riding for the Disabled quiz night, Oyster Inn, Connel.
 March 28, 7.30pm, Netherlorn Piping Society Recital, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban.
 March 28, 8pm, Sound of Mull Radio AGM, An Roth, Craignure, Mull.

FRIDAY

March 29, 9.30am, Children's Good Friday Service at St John's Cathedral, Oban.
 March 29, Kerrera Tea Room and Bunkhouse official opening, Kerrera.
 March 29, 10am, Cake bake in aid of Oban Gaelic Choir, Co-operative, Oban.
 March 29, 12pm, Ecumenical Good Friday Vigil at St John's Cathedral, Oban.
 March 29, BCU 3* Sea Kayak Assessment, Seafreedom Kayak, Connel.
 March 29 - March 30, Live music with Eclipse, The Creel, Oban.
 March 29 - April 1, 12.30pm - 4.30pm, Arduaine Garden Easter Egg Hunt, Arduaine.
 March 29, 8pm, Rodney Bewes as a Boy Growing Up, Mull Theatre, Mull.
 March 29, 9pm, Quiz with Stevo, Coasters, Oban.
 March 29, 9.30pm - 1am, Live Music with Trail West, Markie Dan's, Oban.

SATURDAY

March 30, 12pm, Open shoot, Fasnacloch Gun Club.
 March 30, 12.30pm, Royal British Legion Scotland easter fayre, Royal Hotel, Oban.
 March 30, 3pm, Oban Lorne v Broughton RFC, Oban.
 March 30, 7pm, Fun Night, Pennyghael Hall, Pennyghael, Mull.
 March 30, 7.30pm, Easter Market, Bunnessan Hall, Bunnessan.
 March 30, 8pm, Scottish Show Night, Mull Theatre, Mull.
 March 30, 9pm, Ceol an Aire, Coasters, Oban.
 March 30, 9.30pm, Signal Fires, O'Donnell's, Oban.
 March 30, 9.30pm - 1am, Live music with Amy Belle, Markie Dan's, Oban.

SUNDAY

March 31, 5.45am, Sunrise Service, Pulpit Hill Viewpoint, Oban.
 March 31, Easter fun run, Bunnessan, Mull.
 March 31, 12.30pm - 2.30pm, Easter Sunday Lunch, The Pierhouse Hotel, Port Appin.
 March 31, 2pm - 4pm, Producers Market and Easter Egg Hunt, Craignure Hall, Craignure, Mull.
 March 31, 7.30pm, Easter quiz, Markie Dan's, Oban.
 March 31, 9.30pm - 1am, Live music with Kenny Pearson, Markie Dan's, Oban.
 March 31 - April 1, 10am opening, Easter Eggstravaganza, Sea Life Sanctuary, Barcaldine.

MONDAY

April 1, The Boathouse Restaurant opens for the season. Isle of Ulva.
 April 1, 10.30am - 12.30pm, Coffee Morning, Congregational Church Hall, Oban.
 April 1, 1.30pm to 3.30pm, Car boot sale, Old Byre Car Park, Dervaig, Mull.
 April 1, 2.30pm, Daffodil Tea and Jumble Sale, Craignure Hall, Craignure, Mull.
 April 1, 3pm, Starbird, Bunnessan Hall, Bunnessan, Mull.
 April 1, 3pm, Willie the wicked wolf, Easdale Island Community Hall, Easdale.
 April 1, 30th anniversary party, Aulay's Bar, Oban.

TUESDAY

April 2 - April 5, BCU 2* Training, Seafreedom Kayak, Connel.
 April 2, 10.30am, Oban USA, Regent Hotel, Oban.
 April 2, 12.30pm, Launch of Loch Awe safety boat campaign, Loch Awe Hotel, Lochawe.
 April 2, 3pm, Each Peach Pear Plum, Mull Theatre, Mull.
 April 2, 3pm, Starbird, Iona Hall, Iona.

WEDNESDAY

April 3, 2pm, Making Superhero Animations, Mallaig and Morar Community Centre, Mallaig.
 April 3, 3pm, Starbird, Mull Theatre, Mull.

THURSDAY

April 4, 1.30pm, Mull Musical Minds, An Roth, Craignure, Mull.
 April 4, 7.30pm, Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban.

FRIDAY

April 5, 9.30am - 4pm, RYA Radar Course, Oban.
 April 5, 3pm, When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw, Mull Theatre, Mull.
 April 5, 7.30pm, How's Moving Castle, Mallaig and Morar Community Centre, Mallaig.
 April 5 - April 6, 7.30pm, Argyll Youth Theatre Fiddler on the Roof, Corran Halls, Oban.
 Saturday
 April 6 - April 7, Introduction to Sea Kayak, Seafreedom Kayak, Connel.
 April 6, 3pm, A Cat in Paris, Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern.
 April 6, 8pm, Oban Lorne RFC Quiz Night, Oban.
 Sunday
 April 7, 11am - 2pm, Easter sale and egg hunt, Seil Island Hall.
 April 7, Looking and Feeling Good, Bunnessan Bakehouse, Bunnessan, Mull.

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Cloud Atlas
 Thurs 28th, 20.00

Song for Marion
 Thurs 28th, 18.00

Wreck It Ralph
 Fri 29th, 13.00 • Sat 30th, 13.00 • Sun 31st, 13.00
 Mon 1st, 12.00 • Tue 2nd, 18.00 • Wed 3rd, 15.00
 Thur 4th, 15.00 • Fri 5th, 15.30, 18.00 • Sat 6th, 15.00
 Sun 7th, 15.00

Oz: The Great and Powerful
 Fri 29th, 15.30 • Sat 30th, 15.30 • Sun 31st, 15.30
 Mon 1st, 14.30 • Tue 2nd, 14.00 • Wed 3rd, 17.30
 Thur 4th, 17.30 • Fri 5th, 20.30 • Sat 6th, 17.30, 20.30
 Sun 7th, 17.30, 20.30

The Incredible Burt Wonderstone
 Fri 29th, 18.30 • Sat 30th, 18.30 • Sun 31st, 18.30
 Tue 2nd, 20.30 • Wed 3rd, 20.30 • Thur 4th, 20.30
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Cloud Atlas (15)
 Cloud Atlas explores how the actions and consequences of individual lives impact on one another throughout the past, the present and the future. Consisting of six loosely interconnected stories, Cloud Atlas is based on the 2004 multi-award winning novel by David Mitchell.

Song for Marion (PG)
 London-set comedic drama about shy, grumpy pensioner Arthur who is reluctantly inspired by his beloved wife Marion to join a highly unconventional local choir.

Wreck It Ralph (PG)
 Ralph is tired of being overshadowed by Fix-It Felix, the "good guy" star of their game who always gets to save the day. But after decades doing the same thing and seeing all the glory go to Felix, Ralph decides he's tired of playing the role of a bad guy.

Oz: The Great and Powerful (PG)
 When Oscar Diggs, a small-time circus magician with dubious ethics, is hurled away from dusty Kansas to the vibrant Land of Oz, he thinks he's hit the jackpot-fame and fortune are his for the taking-that is until he meets three witches, Theodora, Evanaora and Glinda, who are not convinced he is the great wizard everyone's been expecting.

The Incredible Burt Wonderstone (15)
 Superstar magicians Burt Wonderstone and Anton Marvelton have ruled the Las Vegas Strip for years, raking in millions with illusions as big as Burt's growing ego. But lately the duo's greatest deception is their public friendship, while secretly they've grown to loathe each other. But there's still a chance Burt and Anton can save the act-both onstage and off-if only Burt can get back in touch with what made him love magic in the first place.

Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters (15)
 15 years after their traumatic gingerbread-house incident, siblings Hansel and Gretel have become a formidable team of bounty hunters who track and kill witches all over the world. This film is a grown up parody of the adult lives of two of Grimm's most beloved fairy-tale characters.

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 O'donnells Bar

Saturday 30 March > CEOL AN AIRE
 Coasters from 9pm til alte

Saturday 30 March > AMY BELLE
 Markie Duns

Sunday 31 March > KENNY PEARSON
 Markie Duns

Sunday 31 March > EASTER QUIZ
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 Easter Sunrise Service
 Pulpit Viewpoint 08:00 Sunday

Fasnacloch Gun Club
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Meur Lochabair UIST CEILIDH
 West End Hotel, Fort William
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 Gillebrighde MacMillan,
 Shineag MacIntyre,
 Kathleen MacInnes, Murdo MacDonald
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 Ceilidh Band
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 on Tuesday, 2 April, 2013 at 8pm
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EASTER weekend marks the official start of the 2013 tourist season when Mid Argyll offers a warm welcome to visitors arriving in the 'heart of the county'. The first tourist season since Disney Pixar movie Brave put the spotlight on the ancient kingdom of Dalriada, it is hoped 2013 will see fans of the film travel to the area and experience the magic of Mid Argyll.

The director of the animation, released in August last year, confirmed the inspiration for the film was in fact Mid Argyll's glens, standing stones and ancient woodlands. A special DVD edition of the movie saw the filmmakers on a research visit to Argyll, confirming Dunadd Fort, where the ancient kings of Dalriada were crowned, provided great inspiration for the movie.

Now as the tourist season gets into full swing businesses and tourist attractions based in the Heart of Argyll are preparing to showcase the area's hidden gems, from great places to visit to the area's renowned food and drink.

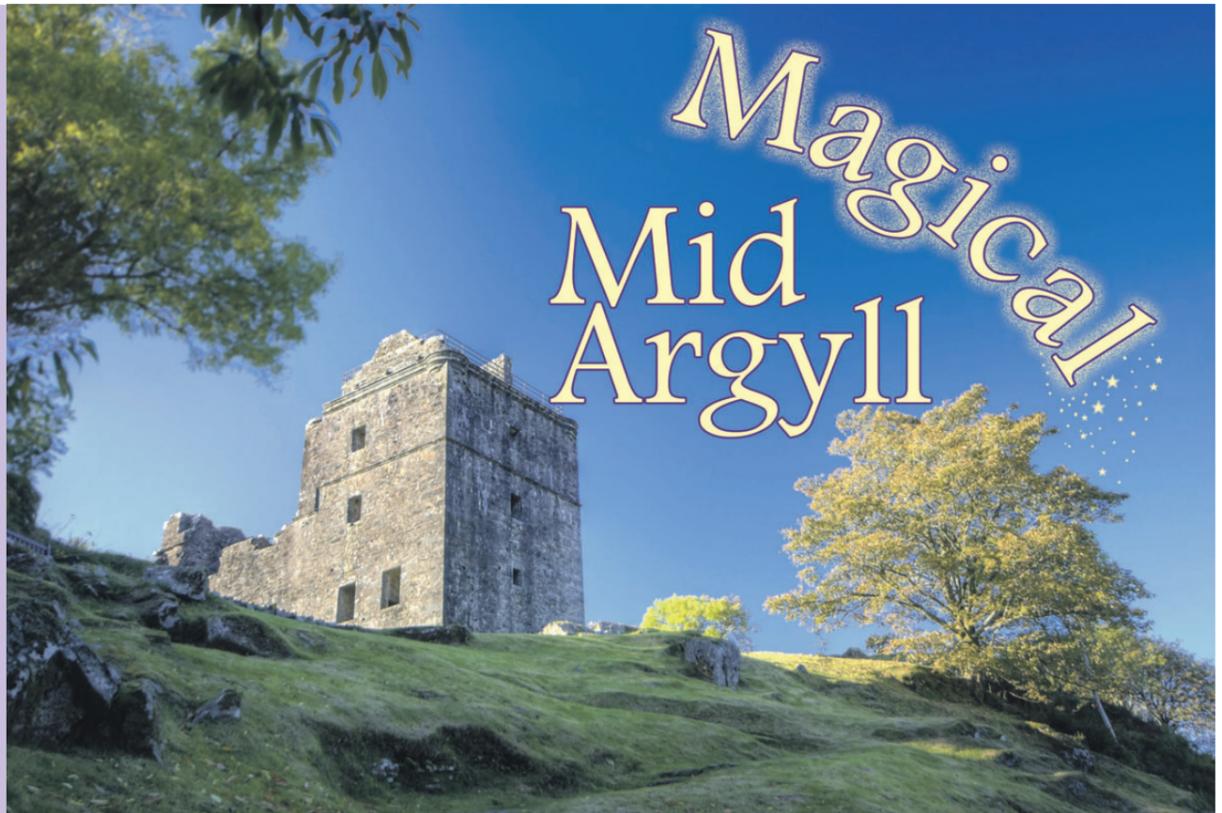
The Dalriada Project, set up a few years ago, has seen a range of paths and trails installed around Mid Argyll, allowing visitors safe and easy access to some of the area's hidden gems.

Trails connecting the Crinan Canal to Carnassarie Castle take visitors through ancient woodlands, across Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve, to Dunadd Fort and Kilmartin Glen.

The Crinan Canal, described as the most beautiful sailing shortcut in the world, runs from Ardrishaig through Lochgilphead and Cairnbaan to Crinan, allowing visitors access to a range of amenities on their trip.

The magic of Mid Argyll lies not only in its landscape but its plant life, wildlife and gardens. A trail of spectacular sights await tourists from Arduaine Gardens in the north to Achnabreac Forest, Tainish and Moine Mhoir nature reserves in the centre, to Crarae Gardens on west Loch Fyne.

Surrounding this array of tourist attractions is a host of Mid Argyll businesses that offer a warm welcome and a wealth of locally sourced, good quality food and drink. From local ales to Argyll venison, beef, milk, cheeses and whisky, tourists will get a taste of Argyll wherever they go.



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Cadbury Easter Egg Trails

The National Trust for Scotland has teamed up with Cadbury again to bring Easter Trails to 45 places across Scotland from Good Friday to Easter Monday!

Follow the trail, collect the clues, solve the puzzle and win a Cadbury Egghead! There'll be extra fun at some trails with children's entertainers too!

Each of the trails is different - a great excuse to try your hand at more than one!

Crarae Garden Glencoe Visitor Centre Arduaine Garden

For dates, times and info on each trail visit
www.nts.org.uk/Easter

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Easter Property Review

WHETHER buying, selling or even renting, when it comes to dealing with property, your first essential stop should be to your local estate agency.

As the focal point for residential and commercial property, the estate agency will be able to guide you through what can be a complicated market, helping get the best deal for you whatever your circumstances.

One of the more obvious roles played by an estate agent is to advertise properties currently for sale through their books. Easy to peruse, they give you the ideal opportunity to find a property that best suits you from what's currently available.

However, an estate agent can also help you find properties not currently on the market and can even alert you to deals just about to come onto their books, ensuring you get first dibs at the ideal home or premises.

From a seller's point of view, the role of the estate agent is near priceless. Not only can they provide an unrivalled shop window for your property, but they can advise you on methods and ways in which to improve or redesign your home in order to make it more attractive to a buyer.

This can range from simple steps such as re-painting the walls to redesigning the bathroom – all from an objective point of view that understands the buyers likely to look at your home or building.

Such is the property market now that many estate agencies also cater for rental properties too, so you don't need to be in the market to buy or sell to make best use of the estate agency's skills.

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If you are thinking of putting your house on the market, or are already on and feel like having a fresh and determined approach, then call us on 01631 570829.

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Barmore Road, Tarbert Offers Over £149,995
Torrisdale is a charming semi detached cottage. Comprising of 3 bedrooms; lounge; open plan kitchen/dining room; bathroom and utility room with WC.



Mossbank Cottage, Tarbert Offers Over £229,995
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Ornumville is a spacious traditional stone built cottage enjoying uninterrupted views of Loch Fyne. Consisting of a lounge, kitchen diner, two double bedrooms, bathroom and utility room.



La Rocca, Connel, Oban SOLD SOLD
La Rocca is a fantastic 4 bedroom stone built family home, dating back to approximately 1880. Located on the water front of the ever popular village of Connel.

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MOVING CHECKLIST

- Some say that moving is one of the most stressful events of all, so be prepared for the whole process long before you begin.
- Decide on a moving date (usually the completion date) as soon as contracts have been exchanged. Try to avoid Fridays and bank holidays when removal firms are in high demand and may be stretched. For a less stressful move, opt for off-peak times such as mid-week. It's more likely your chosen removal firm will be available for that day.
 - Call in the professionals. Ask friends or relatives who have moved recently to recommend removal firms.
 - Get at least three estimates from different firms and don't automatically accept the cheapest.
 - Establish a written timetable with the removal firm and check the foreman has all the necessary details.
 - Make sure the removal firm has a clear map showing how to find your new home.
 - Ensure your possessions are insured for transit. Most removal firms provide such insurance. Check what it covers and whether there are exclusions. Remember that anything you pack yourself may not be covered by the removal firm's insurance. If you are planning to transport any precious items yourself, check that these are covered when in transit by your contents insurance.
 - Hire professional cleaners to give your new place a thorough going over before you move in. Some removal firms will arrange to do this. This will make the whole move a more comfortable process.
 - Before the big day, have a clear out. Valuable items that are no longer needed can be auctioned or sold to a dealer in second-hand furniture. Other items can be donated to charity shops or recycled.
 - Get someone to look after the children for the day. The same goes for pets – or book them into kennels or a cattery. Make sure they have identity tags with their new address.
 - Compile a fact file for the people who are moving into your property, such as instruction leaflets and service information for the heating system and appliances you're leaving, together with details of rubbish collection etc.
 - Round up all the keys to your home, including those left with neighbours, nannies and relatives, and give them to your solicitor or estate agent.
 - If the move is going to be spread over a couple of days, arrange accommodation and pack a bag for an overnight stop.
 - Make a scale plan of each room in your new home to give to the removal team so, in theory, they know exactly where everything is to go. Colour-code packing cases and furniture in the hope that this will mean it ends up in the right rooms.
 - Make a complete inventory of everything to be moved.
 - Advise the post office to redirect your post.
 - Cancel milk and newspapers.
 - If you are moving to a different area, register with a new GP.
 - Get change of address cards printed
 - Notify Utilities: water, gas and electricity providers; Telephone and Internet service providers; Contact TV licensing in order to transfer your licence to your new address; Bank, building society, pension provider and company you have loans or investments with; Credit card and store card companies; Local council regarding council tax; Subscriptions to magazines, charities, etc; Employers; The schools your children attend, DVLA. It is a legal requirement to notify DVLA. You will need to renew your driving licence and vehicle registration document; Friends, family and colleagues.
 - Upon arrival, read the meters and check that the phone, security alarm, electricity, gas, central heating and water work.
- Even if everything is in order and has run smoothly, the chances are by the end of the day you'll be too shattered to move, so collapse on the sofa, order a takeaway and crack open a bottle of champagne.

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Residential Lettings

Contact: Jackie Moore 01631 567798

Satisfied clients are at the heart of everything we do, which is why we have invested heavily in training our staff in all of the current and future legislative changes and requirements. Our team act for over 100 retained landlords providing a pro active and imaginative letting and management service. The department is happy to provide a bespoke service to clients whether it be a pure marketing function or a simple management service, or a combination of both.

The steady demand for properties continues as do legislative changes and our professionals would be delighted to discuss landlords individual questions or requirements on a no obligation basis.



The Cottage, Dunstaffnage, Connel

Newly completed modern detached un-furnished bungalow. Accommodation comprises: Kitchen, lounge with multi fuel stove, two bedrooms and bathroom. Rent £600.00 per month plus Council Tax. One month's rent required as a deposit. Available on a six month's short assured tenancy with option to extend. References essential. Strictly no pets. Would ideally suit a professional couple. Available April 2013. EPC rating C72.



1 Brenva Cottages, Taynuilt

Un-furnished semi detached property. Accommodation comprises: hallway, good sized kitchen, lounge with multi fuel stove, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom and an additional room for storage. Outhouse with power. Rent £500p.m. plus Council Tax. One month's rent required as a deposit. Available on a 6 month's short assured tenancy with option to extend. References essential. Available now. EPC Rating E46.



The Boathouse, Lochnell Estate, Ledaig

Three storey converted steading with sea frontage. Un-furnished. Accommodation comprises: Open plan kitchen/dining/living area, 3 bedrooms (1 en-suite), bathroom, utility room and WC. Rent £500.00 per month plus Council Tax. One month's rent required as a deposit. Available on a six month's short assured tenancy with option to extend. References essential. Available April 2013. EPC rating D68.

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Contact: Paul Nicoll MRICS 01631 567793

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Our professional department is able to provide advice to Land Owners and Asset Managers on all aspects of rural and urban property and our extensive local and regional knowledge enables us to assist with specialist property valuations as well as providing planning and development advice

10th National Estate and Letting Agent Awards

Contact: Press Office 01631 567799

Due to our commitment to client service, the Oban office has been shortlisted again in the Lettings and Agency categories of the 10th Estate and Letting Agent Awards (ESTAS) which is the only national awards programme specifically for estate agents which is voted for by clients.

This is the fourth year we have been nominated. Previous years have seen the office finish in the top 3 across the whole country

To be nominated in the ESTAS is an honour and humbling due to it being voted for by our clients and reinforces our determination to put customer service at the forefront of our business ethos.

The ESTAS ceremony will take place on 19th April at the Park Lane Hilton, London and will be presented by property expert Phil Spencer.

Commercial

Contact: Gregor King MRICS 01631 566215

If you own or occupy commercial property as part of your business, or for investment purposes, whether personally, through a corporate structure or pension, independent advice is essential.

Our specialist commercial property division is able to provide advice on all classes of commercial property including rating, leases, planning, development and valuations for a variety of purposes. In addition our growing commercial agency is able to tailor a solution whether it be the sale of a lease, occupational premises or investment. We pride ourselves on our close links with national retailers and occupiers, as well as other purchasing and acquisition agents which ensures we cover the entire market for our clients.

Market Comment

Depicting the property market as being in decline sells newspapers and often hides the reality. The recently announced government initiatives and historically low interest rates can make buying cheaper than renting and give significantly higher yields on buy to let properties than leaving capital languishing in a bank.

Over the last 12 months we have seen significant demand for farms and estates, as well as country cottages of character and well priced family homes, with of course the perennial demand for houses with water frontage.

As usual market presentation is key to ensuring the quickest sale and our staff are able to advise on how best to present your home to the market and also their up to the minute assessment of the current market.

Whilst property will generally be an individuals largest ever purchase and investment, it should not be seen purely as that and viewed as what it is – a home. We feel that this reality has now been recognised and a certain confidence is beginning to return to the market. As households evolve and government schemes kick in we anticipate demand increasing and prices stabilising.

Property is a generic term for a diverse product and as such our up to the minute free advice should always be sought before making any decisions, whether that be buying, selling or investing.

Construction

Contact: Hugh Nicol MRICS 01631 567794

Bell Ingram's knowledge and experience allow us to support and advise from conception through to completion and our breadth of knowledge enables us to advise on both commercial and domestic contracts.

We pride ourselves on our attention to detail and skills of accuracy and accountability in cost management, cost control, project management and delivery, in order to deliver projects which meet the aspirations of our clients.

Residential Estate Agency

Contact: Steven Hornby 01631 567790

Our professionals have over 50 years experience between them which helps to provide clients with measured and balanced advice. We have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of both the local, regional, national and international markets which allows us to accurately target our marketing strategies to ensure the most cost effective and value added service to our clients.

Seamless quality is of paramount importance in presenting properties to purchasers and investors: our high quality brochures and marketing material help to reinforce the work of our dedicated marketing team and strategic PR consultants.

Our highly trained professionals provide informed and considered feedback to our clients, whilst providing insightful and relevant information to purchasers, constantly monitoring the market to ensure we match buyers to sellers from our extensive database.

Our national network and presence often allows us to match buyers and sellers off market if confidentiality is required.



2 Clifton Cottages, Tyndrum, Crianlarich

Well presented mid terraced traditional stone cottages. Close to local facilities and amenities. Accommodation comprises: Vestibule, lounge, kitchen, dining room, sitting room, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, shower room and rear hall. Part double glazed. Electric heating & wood burning stove. Large rear garden laid to grass. Off street parking for two cars. EPC Rating: E40

Offers in the region of £135,000



Lochnell Lodge, Taynuilt, Argyll

Substantial detached Edwardian house. Views of Ben Cruachan and Loch Etive. Accommodation comprises: Porch, vestibule, hall, drawing room, sitting room, kitchen, sun room, dining room, 5 bedrooms (2 en-suite), family bathroom, boiler room, WC and under stair cloakroom. Oil fired central heating. Grounds extending to approximately 1 acre. Large workshop/garage. EPC Rating: F37

Offers over £395,000



Levenside, South Ballachulish, Ballachulish

Extremely well presented two and a half storey detached house (left of picture) for sale in an elevated position and enjoying superb views across Loch Leven towards Bishops bay and the Mamore Hills. Accommodation comprises: Porch, hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, conservatory, 2 bedrooms (both en-suite and master with dressing room), 3rd bedroom/study, shower room, utility room and large basement games room with separate additional storage. Double glazing. LPG central heating. Off street parking. Mature, well established fenced gardens. Shed. Development potential (subject to all necessary local authority consents). EPC Rating: F22

Offers in the region of £350,000



Rionnaig na Mara, Tobermory, Isle of Mull

Extremely well presented one and a half storey modern detached house in Upper Tobermory. Accommodation comprises: Hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 4 bedrooms (master with walk-in dressing room), bathroom and shower room. Double glazed. Oil fired central heating. Private access. Off street parking. Easily maintained gardens to front. EPC Rating: C76

Offers over £260,000



The Old Steading, Gott, Isle of Tiree

Beautifully presented detached stone dwelling. Panoramic views over Gott Bay and within walking distance of Scarinish. Accommodation comprises: Porch, hall, open plan lounge/kitchen/diner, 4 bedrooms (Master with en suite bathroom), study, family bathroom and utility room. Double glazing. Electric heating system. Sizeable, easily maintained garden. Lean-to store. EPC Rating: E48

Offers in the region of £395,000



44 McKelvie Road, Glenshellach, Oban, Argyll

Last remaining affordable cottage specifically designed for the elderly retired market, with tailored amenities. Within easy reach of the town centre and local facilities. Accommodation comprises: Living/dining room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms and shower room. Double glazing. Dimplex Duo heat electric panel heating. Benefits from solar panel water heating. Managed gardens to the front and rear, with patios to the rear. Dedicated off street parking for each property. Bus service close by.

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IN A world of legal jargon and more finance options that you can fit into a four-storey mansion, embarking on the first bold steps onto the property ladder can be a daunting prospect.

But those who have already successfully achieved their self-build ambitions will confirm that there is a fine line between completion of a dream - or the arrival of a costly nightmare - but it is worth the warm glow of self-satisfaction if your dream home becomes reality.

As well as embarking on a steep learning curve into the complex world of budgeting and the planning process, determined self-builders may find that they learn as much about themselves and their own character as they do about construction.

Along with the land, bricks and mortar, you will need large volumes of dedication, commitment and patience throughout the entire project. It will take longer than you thought. It will probably extend both deadlines and budgets so make a list in large lettering of the top three reasons of why you are constructing your own home - read it regularly, and put it in a prominent position that keeps you focused, especially when the going gets tough.

Remember that undertaking this self-build is to achieve the home of your dreams.

You will need to inspire others to have the level of enthusiasm for your project as you have. Having the right attitude will fundamentally affect your self-build plan in a positive way.

There are many ways in which you will locate your ideal plot of land. Estate agents, advertisements in newspapers and word of mouth are probably the most common.

Land may also become available via auctions or on-line auction sites. These may appear as a cheap option. And they can be. But they come with their own complications.

Plots being auctioned are often the result of bankruptcy or other problems that make a quick sale desirable for the seller. They are traded on a 'sold as seen' basis. It is up to the bidder to ensure that the details being presented are accurate, suitable to the intended purpose and not without 'hidden' dangers.

If possible, visit any site for sale via an auction and make your own assessment - or better still pay an expert to survey the property or plot on your behalf. It may cost a little, but could save you a lot.

Whatever your chosen route to a piece of land, there are four basic areas to consider before embarking on a plot purchase - ground conditions, planning permission, utilities and services, and any legal considerations.

It would also be advisable at this stage to come back from the site and, if possible, view it from a distance - get the 'bigger picture'. This will give you a better feel for the surroundings or the neighbourhood.

PLANNING

Planning is often the biggest single obstacle that a self-builder has to negotiate.

Don't be put off by the multitude of nightmare scenarios that others will willingly relate to you. Learn from their errors and experiences, do the homework, and seek help from experts who do these often complex communications with local authorities on a daily basis.

Planning restrictions and interpretations may differ slightly from area to area so gain expert local knowledge whenever possible.

Plots with outline planning permission already granted will cost in the region of 500% more than land without. Obtaining planning from scratch may be time consuming and is not without its pitfalls, but it can also be rewarding if approached correctly.

There are also areas that come under the category of 'designated' - these are subject to complex planning and are probably best avoided by the inexperienced. Designated areas include Green Belts, which are not as the term suggests open green field sites, they will most likely have strict restrictions on sizes and styles of house building. National Parks, which are exactly what the name suggests, have few permitted developments and have rules regarding not only style of building but also materials used. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) or National Scientific Areas (NSAs) which have rules relating to traditional architecture, plus Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), which are aimed specifically to protect wildlife and/or geological features.

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GROUND CONDITIONS

Ground conditions are important as it forms the foundations of your dream home. It may be necessary to employ a specialist to ensure that the plot of land is ideally suited for your project. Simple things like a high water table, while not insurmountable, need to be identified, as do more serious issues with potential flooding, industrial or agricultural pollution and, if the site has been subject to infill, what was it in-filled with? Building land may have been built on previously and what lies beneath the surface in terms of drains, pipe work, foundations, etc may have cost implications that are not immediately obvious.

Something as simple as the incline of the proposed plot should also be noted as this may add extensively to the cost of groundwork prior to the first stages of construction.

When viewing a plot, bear in mind that the overall dimensions should not only be capable of containing the house but that planning authorities may also want evidence of sufficient space for parking or garages, turning vehicles, space for safe central heating fuel storage, if applicable, and other amenities in relation to the size of said home.

Don't take the sellers word as to the size of the plot.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the dimensions of the land for sale is as stated.

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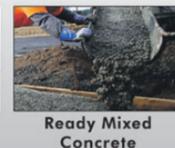
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UTILITIES AND SERVICES

All plots will require utilities and services at some stage. Plots adjacent to other houses or existing buildings are often easier to get through the planning maze simply because water and power supplies may already be on-hand. Rural and isolated locations are a very different proposal, with the cost of installing utilities becoming a major cost factor in negotiating the original purchase price of the land. Considerable consideration should be given to the proximity of schools, shops and public transport. These may not be priorities in your dream location – but should you opt to move in the future, they may affect the resale value of your house – what you view as a positive asset could be a potential buyers idea of a real turn-off.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before agreeing to buy building land ask your solicitor to a pre-purchase check for any title issues, the legality of the boundaries, rights of access through, or indeed, on and off the site – there is little point in buying a site that you cannot then gain entry to. This is particularly relevant if the plot is in a rural or remote location where access is via neighbouring land. Old or verbal agreements between previous landowners/ friends/ neighbours mean nothing and must not be regarded as automatically transferable. This is also true of shared access which can sometimes be a very grey area shrouded amid myth, lies and well-intentioned assumptions – an area that needs to be clearly defined in writing and map before money changes hands.

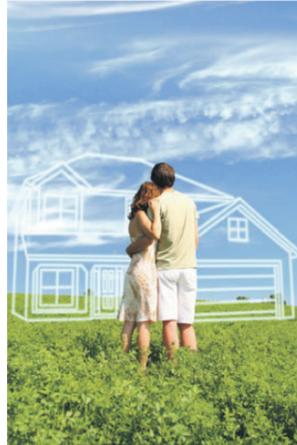
Shared access normally also means shared liability in relation to maintenance costs and shared liability for incidents or accidents that happen on that piece of shared land - ie trees falling onto neighbours' property, broken or damaged fences, injury to residents or visitors as a result of neglect to said shared access.

Sometimes, in order to get planning permission, you will be asked to sign a legal obligation, also known as a planning agreement and in Scotland commonly called a Section 50 Agreement. This can restrict how land is used or make the applicant bear the cost of off-site works before building work can go ahead.

You will also have to find out if there are any such agreements relating to the plot that may have already been signed. As the purchaser, you are legally bound by any agreement that comes with the purchase. It's up to you to find it if it exists.

Also, there may be verbal agreements made with the vendor with regard to building or reinstating walls, fences, drains or even to the extent of getting the vendor's permission before extending, altering or even selling your property – these ancient feus are legally binding and should be discussed at length with a solicitor before entered into.

Building your own house can be one of the most stressful times of your life – but it can also be the most rewarding. Don't enter into it lightly – it may be one of the largest purchases you are ever likely to make and worth every penny.



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Whirlwind year for Commission with plenty of challenges ahead

ON MONDAY the Crofting Commission will mark its first anniversary since formally taking over from the Crofters Commission on April 1 2012.

It has been whirlwind 12 months of activity for the nine commissioners, six of whom were elected by crofters last March and three appointed by the Scottish Government.

When she was appointed as convener back in September, Susan Walker, an active crofter from Camuscross on Skye, was under no illusions that the task ahead would be a challenging one.

Recent decades have seen a huge drop in livestock production in the crofting counties, good land has fallen into disuse and the average age of crofters has risen to almost 60.

At the same time, neglect, absenteeism and decrofting has

grown apace, while speculation in croft land and house plots, more often than not, means young people – without whom the industry has no future – find the costs of entering the industry are beyond them.

However, as the ethics and desirability of importing food from distant countries thousands of miles away come under increasing scrutiny – witness the horsemeat scandal – local, sustainable food production is suddenly back in vogue.

So now, through the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Government has charged the Crofting Commission with reviving the industry through better regulation, higher occupancy of crofts, active land use and shared management by crofters.

As a regulator of croft land first and foremost, the commission

must bear in mind one guiding principle when making decisions – the role crofting can play in sustaining rural communities.

And in its draft plan for the next four years, the commission places particular emphasis on encouraging population retention and promoting active crofting.

Susan Walker believes the document, which drew detailed responses from a wide range of individuals and agencies, lays the conditions for crofters themselves to help ensure the industry has a viable future.

She told *The Oban Times*: ‘Once the plan is confirmed, it will be our blueprint for action throughout our term of office. Everyone with an interest in crofting would like to see more young people involved, getting a start in crofting and a foothold in their communities.’

‘That’s why, when it comes to



Borne on Berneray: a typical crofting landscape.



Crofting Commission convener Susan Walker says young people are the key to crofting’s survival.

issues such as croft succession, we want to encourage crofters to think about the future. What do crofters today want to become of their crofts? Are they concerned that there are fewer active shareholders in the common grazings?’

‘There are many reasons why some crofters are no longer active and we would encourage folk in this situation to make arrangements now and pass their crofts on to young people.’

Bringing more crofts into active use was top of the agenda at Ms Walker’s recent meeting in Stornoway with the convener of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) and members of the council’s crofting joint consultative committee.

The gathering, the first in a series planned with local authorities in crofting areas, discussed the commission’s occupancy initiative, which aims to resolve long-standing absentee cases, encourage the active use of crofts and address the tricky problem of prices for croft tenancies being outside the reach of many young local people.

Such local ‘crofting summits’, believes Ms Walker, are of immense value in promoting

closer working relationships for the mutual benefit of crofting. She said: ‘The commission is very aware of the importance of crofting in some of our most remote communities and of its potential to contribute significantly to the long-term development of those crofting communities.’

‘We need to use effective regulation along with support and advice if crofting is to be strengthened – so working with other local agencies is essential if we’re going to make a real impact.’

Common grazings
However, the commission’s first year has not all been plain sailing. One of the provisions of the Act that has caused a fair degree of concern is the new statutory duty placed on grazing committees to report on the state of their common grazings.

At their recent annual conference in Inverness, assessors considered a draft form governing that work. Their suggested improvements led a redraft of the form, which is ready to go out to assessors and grazing committees for comment.

Ms Walker said: ‘We are aware this issue has generated disquiet

in crofting communities, so it is important to get the message across that we have consulted with assessors, grazing committees and others to find a way to implement this requirement, which everyone feels comfortable with.’

‘We want to make the reporting process as light touch as possible and not a burden on committees. There is an opportunity to use the process to address issues that are causing concern locally, enabling more self-regulation at a local level.’

Also causing ructions is the current problem regarding decrofting applications made by owner-occupier crofters. Legal advice obtained by the commission has clarified that there appears to be no provision in the Act for the organisation to approve such applications.

Landlords of vacant crofts and tenants, however, are not affected and can still apply to the commission to decroft.

‘Since the issue was first highlighted, we’ve been working very hard with Scottish Government colleagues to explore whether there is any other possible interpretation of the legislation,’ said Ms Walker.

‘At our board meeting on March

6, we received further legal advice, confirming that, as the law stands, there is no provision in the 2010 Act to allow an owner-occupier crofter to decroft any part of their croft.’

‘This is being treated as a matter of urgency and we are working with Scottish Government to find a solution.’

Meanwhile, work continues on drawing up the Crofting Register – another innovation wrought by the 2010 Act.

Though administered by Registers of Scotland, the Crofting Commission has been busy aiding preparations for the new register, which seeks to offer definitive croft boundaries for the first time.

The register opened for voluntary registrations on November 30, but from the same date this year applications for entries will become mandatory whenever a change takes place on the croft.

a record of defined and agreed boundaries, the commission is leading on a project to map common grazings.

Draft maps and registration packs have been issued to 120 grazings so far in parishes across the crofting counties – with an expectation that formal registrations will begin shortly.

Ms Walker said: ‘The Crofting Register represents a significant investment of money by the Scottish Government in ensuring that croft land can at last be properly mapped and registered, reducing uncertainty and disputes and giving crofters certainty about the land they hold.’

‘This investment by the Scottish Government indicates their commitment to the system of crofting and its relevance for the future.’

The draft plan and the responses to it can be seen on the commission’s website www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk.



Leurbost on the Isle of Lewis: a typical crofting landscape. 20_131leurbost01

350,000 trees planted in Glen Orchy scheme

A PROJECT to help restore 114 hectares of rough grazing and hill ground to native forest in Glen Orchy saw more than 350,000 trees planted last year with the remaining 60,000 planned for planting in 2013.

The Glen Orchy woodland creation project, part of which was a Diamond Jubilee Woodland Scheme, is being carried out on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland by UPM Tihhill.

The native broadleaf trees have been planted more closely together than usual, aiming for a minimum of 3,500 trees per hectare.

Primary school pupils from Crianlarich, Dalmally, Inveraray and Taynuilt planted some trees at the Diamond Wood site over a week-long period. Forestry Commission Scotland and Woodland Trust staff also provided on site educational activities to all the pupils.

Crofting federation launches legal helpline

THE SCOTTISH Crofting Federation (SCF) has launched a legal helpline in partnership with a crofting law firm.

SCF members will be able to phone a single Highland number – 01599 230 300 – to be put through to a lawyer with crofting expertise.

Initial advice from Inksters solicitors will be free for around 15 minutes – sufficient time to solve many problems.

The move comes ahead of impending changes to crofting law following previous amendments to the Crofting (Scotland) Act 1993 in 2007 and 2010.

The new legislation, which strengthens crofting regulation, is expected to increase the demand for lawyers who know the legislation well.

SCF vice-chair Fiona Mandeville said: ‘Crofting law, as everyone knows, is complicated – and crofters needing legal advice really have to go to a specialist solicitor.’

‘Not only does this mean that many legal queries can be answered for free, and that big savings can be gained on more protracted issues, but that this is with a leading crofting law team with outlets in Glasgow, Inverness, Wick and soon Portree – and all through one number.’

Chairwoman of National Sheep Association urges public to help by eating more lamb

‘Sheep production really underpins rural fabric’ says Dalmally-based new chairwoman

THE NEW chairwoman of the National Sheep Association (NSA) is calling on people to eat more lamb to help support rural industry.

Sybil MacPherson, of Brackley Farm, Dalmally, took over the role from Jimmy Sinclair on March 2, she had previously been his deputy four years, a joint role with Ian Hepburn.

She said: ‘I’m extremely honoured to have this role and hope that I can continue in the work that has been done.’

‘Up until very recently the sheep industry has been at a low ebb, things have picked

up considerably in the last few weeks and I’m hoping the optimism will be back in time for the first sales.’

‘There are lots of things going on at the moment, CAP will have a major impact on farmers in the whole of Scotland but particularly in this part of the world – NSA has a big role there in building lines to government and attending stakeholder meetings to discuss it.’

The NSA is involved with the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) and Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), and have recently secured a promise from

Richard Lochead, minister for rural affairs and the environment, for financial support and advertising for lamb.

Sybil added: ‘I would like to see people eating more sheep meat – in Scotland we eat 2.2kg each which is half the UK consumption. We need to promote it.’

‘If you go to a restaurant lamb is very rarely available on the menu, I don’t know why people don’t eat more lamb, it is such a quality product and difficult to adulterate.’

‘It is fully traceable and with the recent horsemeat scandal I

would have thought the public would be more interested in eating lamb if we can get the price right.’

The NSA is also looking at the healthy option of grass fed lamb which contains high levels of omega three to encourage consumers to buy the product.

‘People are turning to oily fish which is high in omega three so if grass fed lamb has high omega three it might help,’ said Sybil.

‘In all cases lamb is produced naturally which surely should give customers confidence. There is also the environmental

benefits – important flora and fauna have developed because of how sheep have been managed over the years.’

One of Sybil’s greatest concerns is the future of rural areas if sheep producers continue to abandon land.

‘I think it has a bearing on the whole rural infrastructure, schools, post offices, the whole village is based on people living there – many around sheep. Without them you have got abandoned hills or forestry. Sheep production really underpins the rural fabric,’ added Sybil.

But things aren’t all doom and gloom. There is a new major biennial sheep event in the planning. Highland Sheep will take place at Dingwall on May 30.

Sybil said: ‘NSA has a biennial Scots sheep event – last year held at Dumfries House – but it is very difficult, particularly over the last few years, to get Scots sheep to move up North.’

‘This will be a new event running opposite years to Scots sheep to try and deliver for people in the north and western isles, and Orkney and Shetland, as they tend to get neglected.’

Yearlings in demand at Dingwall sale

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd., sold 683 store cattle, breeding cattle and 36 OTM cattle at Dingwall last Wednesday when yearlings met the same fast selling trade of the last sale with strong cattle dealer.

Bullocks averaged 235.4p and sold to 278.3p per kg for a pen of 327kg Limousin crosses from Kennachy, Fors, and £1,420 for a pair of 645kg Simmental crosses from Glenaldie, Tain.

Heifers averaged 224.5p and sold to 255.9p per kg for a pen of 297kg Romagnola crosses from Calrossie Mains, Nigg, and £1,310 for a pen of 534kg Simmental crosses from Glenaldie.

Young bulls averaged 201.6p and sold to 208p per kg and £780 for a Simmental cross from Drum Temple Croft, Gortblack.

Bulls sold to £2,500 for a Limousin from 4 Bunalrub, Aultbea.

John MacCormick sweeps the boards at annual Lorn ploughing match

THE WINNER of this year’s North Lorn Ploughing Match at Ardachy, North Connel, revealed a special family link to the host venue.

John MacCormick picked up *The Oban Times* Trophy for the best rig as he swept the board at the annual ploughing match, which took place last Saturday at Ardachy for the first time since 1960.

The win was extra special for John, a native of Appin, as his grandfather, also named John, of Baligarbh, Lismore, was the judge the last time Ardachy Farm hosted the event.

There was good competition throughout the day, despite the adverse weather, which meant no horses attended the competition and competitors from Bute, Campbelltown and Kinross were absent.

Native breeds sell well at Stirling

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd held a sale of native bred cattle at Stirling on Monday with 626 sold.

Aberdeen Angus bullocks averaged 237.5p per kg selling to 285p per kg for seven at 265kgs from A G Simpson, Port of Menteith and to £1350 for three at 630kgs from G Mailer, Ladylands, Kippen.

Highland bullocks averaged 195p per kg selling to 232p per kg for five at 315kgs from RSPB Kinnabus, Isle of Islay and to £900 for two at 435kg from R Tylden-Wright, Uvie, Lagganbridge.



John MacCormick with the overall winner’s trophy and The Oban Times trophy. 15_113plough02

Below - The ploughing match gets underway at Ardachy. Picture - Bob McCulloch



North Lorn Ploughing Match winner John MacCormick’s grandfather and namesake judged the competition the last time it was at Ardachy.



Stirling prime sale

UNITED Auctions sold 7884 prime sheep including 6433 hogs avg 190.5p (-16.50p/wk) and 1451 cast ewes and rams at Stirling last Thursday.

Beltex cross hogs from Collavoulin sold to £118 and 262p per kilo with Blackfaces from Cadogan selling to £93 and 195p per kilo.

Suffolk cross ewes from Stanley sold to £107.50, with Texel crosses from Kerry Cottage to £100 and Thornton selling Cheviot crosses to £78.50 and Half-breeds to £70. Cadogan sold Blackfaces to £61.50 with Camquhart selling Beltex crosses to £70.50.

Monzie Farms sold Beltex rams to £77, with Blackfaces from Brennanlea to £62.50.

Business

Fish farm company donates more than £82,000 to local charities

Funds for education, schools' projects and emergency medical kits

A FISH farming company donated tens of thousands of pounds last year to good causes which benefit local communities on Scotland's west coast.

The Scottish Salmon Company (SSC) donated more than £82,000 to local charities last year, according to its annual report out next month.

In total, £82,500 was handed out to a variety of good causes including MacPool at Lochgilphead, the George Kerr Judo School on Stornoway, the River Carron Project and the Marine Education Centre on Mull.

In addition, many local community groups were given a helping hand, some chosen by SSC's regional staff committees. In 2012, the company also participated in a number of schools' careers events, including a science festival, to promote the different careers within the industry. Rosanna Pile, of SSC, said: 'We have around 400 staff working in the west coast of Scotland. Many have families and all are passionate about their local communities. It's therefore a pleasure to help where we can to support sports groups and local charities.'

Some of the other charities receiving support include Stornoway Running and Athletics Club, Lewis and Harris Youth Clubs Association, Lochcarron Shinty Club, Mid Argyll Cultural Society, Strachur Youth Club, Family Centre and Nursery in Innellan and the Mull Rally.

Rosanna added: 'This year we have an important focus. Firstly, we aim to do more to support education and schools' projects. Secondly, we are delighted to partner with The Sandpiper Trust to help raise money for their vital emergency medical kits.'

Be on your guard against bogus callers

Spring attracts conmen offering cheap repairs

ELDERLY people throughout the west coast are being warned to be on their guard against bogus callers and rogue traders over the spring period.

Vulnerable householders, in particular those over 60, are increasingly becoming the favoured targets of criminals who use the change of the seasons into spring to execute doorstep scams.

Discounted repairs
The criminals turn up to offer homeowners the attractive prospect of having discounted repairs and improvement work carried out on their properties to spruce them up as the weather starts to improve.

But the work can be shoddy or grossly overpriced—and in some cases the callers gain entry to the properties to steal cash and valuables.

The warning comes from the Scottish Business Crime Centre (SBCC), as part of a new campaign it is fronting to raise awareness of various issues that can place older people at risk of financial harm.

As victims are often embarrassed to report the crimes, authoritative statistics are hard to establish but a recent

study by Citizens Advice Scotland found that its Consumer Helpline dealt with 421 cases between April and November 2012 of people reporting a cold caller looking to carry out work on their homes.

Nearly 400 of these cases involved home maintenance/improvement, double glazing and insulation, with 40 per cent of them involving complaints of substandard services totalling around £700,000 in charges to householders.

Seasonal ploy
Gary Ritchie, assistant director of SBCC, said: 'We know that adults at risk are often targeted by criminals who see them as an easy option and use a variety of methods to obtain large sums of cash.'

'While we have long been plagued by bogus callers trying to get entry into houses, many criminals are now using the change of seasons from winter to spring as a ploy for their scams.'

'Older people in particular are easily influenced by suggestions that their property has been damaged by winter weather, or simply fall for smooth-



You do not have to let any stranger into your home. Consider putting up a 'no cold callers' sign.

talking scammers who sell them the concept of sprucing up their house in spring by having unnecessary repairs or refurbishment work carried out.'

Shoddy or sub-standard work
'Sadly these people are frequently conned out of huge sums of money for shoddy or sub-standard work.'

'Older people who try to complain or refuse to pay are threatened with violence or treated with abuse. In some cases, they have been made to walk to cash machines to make withdrawals.'

'Crimes against people who perhaps don't have the same capabilities or support to protect themselves as others is appalling and has no place in Scotland.'

'We are working with a number of partner agencies to raise awareness and we want older people and their families to be on alert at all times to know what to do when they receive an unsolicited call at their home.'

While the changing weather makes older people prone to approaches from rogue traders at the start of spring, homeowners should always be on their guard against bogus call-

ers who try to gain access to homes by imitating council officials, utilities representatives such as gas, electricity or water companies while others may even claim to be police officers.

The SBCC advises taking the following steps before answering the door to an unknown caller:

Ensure you lock all other outside doors and windows before answering the front door. Some criminals work together—one keeps you chatting at the doorstep while another gets in through the back entrance.

Think, are you expecting any callers or visitors?
For doors that have chains make sure to put this on before answering. Make sure this is not on all the time as it will prevent anyone with a key from entering such as home help. Look through the peep-hole or window to check who's there.

Ask for an identification card and carefully examine it. If you are still unsure, contact the company they represent to check if they are legitimate. Be careful to get the number from a reliable source such as a bill or phone book, rather than calling a number

they give you as it may be a false number and they could be putting you through to an accomplice.

Do not keep large amounts of money in the house, it is safer in a bank account. Do not leave any valuable items in view or where they can be easily found. It may be worth while getting a small safe for your home.

You can always ask the caller to come back at another time when you will have company or ask them to write to you to arrange an appointment. Genuine callers won't mind you taking these precautions. If you are doubtful, it is also worth conducting research. Checking company information online should give you a good indication if the cold caller is from a genuine, reputable organisation or not.

You do not have to let any stranger into your home, consider putting up a 'no cold callers' sign.

If you are suspicious or the caller will not leave, dial 999 and speak with the police. Alternatively if you are not in immediate danger but wish to report the incident, call the police on the non-emergency number 101.

Make or amend your will for a donation

FORT William legal firm MacPhee and Partners is offering to draw up or amend wills during April in return for a donation to its nominated charities.

The 'will month' initiative last year raised more than £1,000 each for Lochaber Hope and Lochaber Friendship Group for the visually impaired. The beneficiaries in April 2013 will be Care Lochaber and the Community Car Scheme.

Care Lochaber enables residents who are older, experiencing ill health, have mobility difficulties or who are isolated to maintain their independence, safety, health and wellbeing. Particular help is given to those without extended family support.

The Community Car Scheme uses volunteer drivers to provide 300 clients with access to appointments and to social and community events.

The firm makes no financial gain from the scheme. Donations would be expected to be around £70 for a will and £35 for an amendment to a will.

RECRUITMENT



Seawater Operations Manager Loch Etive, nr Taynuilt

Dawnfresh Farming Ltd, part of the Dawnfresh Seafoods Group, is the largest Trout Farming Company operating in the UK. Our Marine and Freshwater farms are located throughout Scotland, England and Ireland.

We are currently looking to identify a suitably qualified and highly motivated individual to undertake the role of Seawater Operations Manager for our five seawater farms on Loch Etive, nr Taynuilt.

Our farms in Etive have a combined annual production of 1,500t sea-grown rainbow trout @ 4.8kg. This tonnage is expected to increase over the next 2-3 years with the development of existing sites within Etive and the opening of new production in a separate geographic region.

As Operations Manager you will be responsible for the day to day planning, running and reporting of the five farms. Reporting to and working closely with the Seawater Manager, the successful candidate will ideally already be a Site Manager within the aquaculture industry, or an experienced Assistant Manager that is keen to progress into management, with proven ability for developing site infrastructure and establishing best farming practice. Essential skills will include the ability to manage and motivate personnel, first class planning and organisation abilities and a high degree of computer literacy. In addition, applicants should have a full driving license and be prepared to undertake travel as required.

Depending on experience, we offer a salary package in the range £33k-£39k, along with the opportunity to develop your management career within company at the forefront of UK trout farming. Assistance with housing may be available.

If you are interested in applying for this position please send your CV, by Monday 18th April 2013, to:

Lindsey Elder, HR Assistant, Dawnfresh Seafoods Ltd, Bothwellpark Industrial Estate, Uddingston, G71 6LS. Office 01698 810008, E-mail: lindsey.elder@dawnfresh.co.uk

Informal enquires can be made to Sean Lydon, Seawater Manager, Office 01866 822549, E-mail sean.lydon@dawnfresh.co.uk



TEMPORARY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Tarbert Harbour Authority is looking for a full time temporary Administrative Assistant for approximately 1 year to cover maternity leave. We are looking for an experienced person to provide a wide range of office and administrative services within a busy office environment. The successful applicant will have the ability to communicate effectively at all levels, liaising with trustees, customers, colleagues and external bodies. A working knowledge of MS Office, Sage Accounting and Payroll knowledge would be advantageous. The position offers a competitive salary commensurate with experience.

Please apply in writing with CV and mark the envelope 'Vacancy' to, The Port Manager, Tarbert (Loch Fyne) Harbour Authority, Garval Road, Tarbert, PA29 6TR by 8th April 2013.



Mid Argyll, Kintyre & Islay Locality Hospital Services, Lochgilphead Hospitals

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Based at Lochgilphead Hospitals, Lochgilphead, you will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the wards, departments, residential and office accommodation.

You will be reliable and able to work with minimum supervision as part of a busy team. You will be required to be neat and tidy and produce high standards.

Experience is not essential as training will be given. Informal enquiries are welcomed by Mary Green, Assistant Hotel Services Manager, tel: 01546 604 951.

Application packs are available from HR Department, NHS Highland, Argyll & Bute CHP, Aros, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8LB - Tel 01546 606788 (24 hour answering service) or e-mail - recruitment.lab@nhs.net

Please quote job reference number 13bk/048. Closing date for receipt of applications: 12th April 2013.

www.nhs.uk
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The Oban Times

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For more information contact Jasmine on 01631 569915 or admin@bid4oban.co.uk

Closing date for applications: 8th April 2013



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For an application pack and more details, email recruitment@stramash.org.uk or call 01631 566080. Stramash is a registered Scottish Charity SC040538

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Local rider ready for Scottish Six Days Trial 2013

A FORT William valet company owner will be among the 275 riders lining up for the Scottish Six Days Trial (SSDT) in May.

Gary MacLennan will be competing in his 10th SSDT alongside the likes of seven-time winner Dougie Lampkin.

The event, from May 6 to 11, sees riders from all over Europe each day take on a series of rocky stages in testing terrain and often brutal weather conditions.

Competitors attempt to keep their balance and complete each stage 'clean' - each time they put a foot down they are penalised a point.

Mr MacLennan, 40, the brother of local Highland councillor Thomas,

finished 193rd last year - and is aiming for a top 200 finish again in an event which has captivated his imagination since he was a child.

He said: 'I grew up in Fort William and used to watch the SSDT each year when it came to town.'

'Right from being a six-year-old kid I wanted to be a part of it, although mainly due to girlfriends and other things in my younger years, I had to wait until much later in life to make that come true.'

'My first Scottish was in 2004, and thankfully it was not as bad as the stories I had heard over the years. That said it was still tough, but I loved every minute of it and still do.'

'This year will be my 10th SSDT and it feels as special as the first. For me it's all about the challenge and having the craic with the other riders.'

He added: 'I am never going to win the SSDT, although we still have our own battles within our group of riders and if I can finish in front of them and in the top 200 again this year, I will be happy with that.'

In his spare time MacLennan, who is married with three daughters aged eight to 17, helps to organise smaller events for his local trials club, Lochaber MCC - and appreciates the huge efforts that go on behind the scenes to make the SSDT such a great week for all the riders and followers.

He said: 'Edinburgh and District Motor Club and the army have done an incredible job over the years of bringing people from all over the world and from all walks of life to enjoy and experience the Scottish Highlands at their absolute best.'



Gary MacLennan is to compete in his 10th SSDT.



Aulay Dunn in his familiar surroundings behind the bar. 15_113auly01

Oban publican celebrates 30 years behind his bar

HE HAS a long family association with Oban's public bar trade but Aulay Dunn, who next week celebrates 30 years in charge at Aulay's Bar, didn't always plan to go into the family trade.

As he finalised plans for a 30th anniversary party at the pub next Monday, Aulay recalled how he was clueless during his first week in the job.

'My first few days were a disaster,' he admits. 'I struggled for change in the till and I just didn't know what I was doing.'

'But the licensed trade was in my family on both sides and I remember my father saying to me, "You just get

on the bull, hold its horns and away you go. You just have to live and learn.'

Aulay's family has previously run the Lochavullin, The Commercial, the Argyll Hotel and the Waverley Hotel.

But at 16 he joined the army and served for 10 years before working as a supervisor at a steelworks company in Coatbridge.

However, with a young family in tow, he moved back to Oban, investing every penny he had in the new pub.

'I had actually looked at buying the Oban Inn but I was too late in raising the capital,' said Aulay. 'On the open-

ing day I got John 'Lofty' MacIntyre to pour the first pint. That was really important for me because he had worked for my grandfather and my father and he was more like a member of the family. By doing that it meant he had worked for three generations of landlords.'

'I just got busier and busier and I was putting in long hours. It was tough but it became a way of life and I enjoy it even now.'

Aulay's highlights from the traditional Scottish bar mainly revolve around his passion for sport and include the nights of Oban Saints' first league win, Aulay's Bar's win over The Lochavullin to secure its

first darts league title and Scotland's enthralling, but ultimately unsuccessful, qualifying campaigns for the 2006 World Cup and the 2008 European Championships. With a resident piper and the pub packed to the rafters with supporters, Aulay's Bar would be decorated with Scotland flags for televised matches.

This commitment caught the attention of national team sponsor Tennents which invited Aulay to meet the squad at Cameron House.

But the landlord is probably more proud of his collection of pictures depicting ships that have sailed in Oban waters that adorn every wall of his pub.

Helicopter search and rescue goes private

A PRIVATE US-based group will take over the UK's helicopter search and rescue operations from 2105.

This week the Department for Transport announced that the Bristow Group had won a 10-year contract to run the service. The £1.6bn deal ends 70 years of search and rescue from the RAF and Royal Navy.

Bristow will replace the RAF and Royal Navy Sea King helicopters with Sikorsky S-92s and AgustaWestland 189s and 22 helicopters will operate from 10 locations around the UK.

Ten Sikorsky S-92s will be based, two per site, at Stornoway and Sumburgh, and at new bases at Newquay, Caernarfon and Humberside airports.

Ten AgustaWestland 189s will operate, two per site, from a new hangar at Prestwick airport, Lee-on-the-Solent, and new bases which will be established at Inverness, St Athan and Manston airports.

The new deal will also see Bristow take over some of the civilian search and rescue (SAR) bases currently run by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Operations from RAF Lossiemouth will move to Inverness while the Prestwick centre will move to new premises within the airport complex.

Bristow Helicopters is an Aberdeen-based company, although the corporate headquarters of the Bristow Group is in Texas.

The firm has already been preparing crews for coastguard duties at Sumburgh in Shetland and Stornoway in the Western Isles.

Bob Crow, general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union has voiced doubts over the effectiveness of the new service. He said he was 'deeply concerned' that the privatisation may cost lives and risk workers' lives.

Bristow's says its helicopters and pilots have already rescued more than 7,000 people in the UK. It also operates in the Netherlands, Norway, Trinidad and Tobago, Australia, Russia, Brazil and Canada.

It said its 'technologically advanced' helicopters would be operated by experienced crews with 'world-class' skills. It expects to create about 350 jobs to support the contract.

Hospitals to become no smoking areas

HOSPITAL grounds in Scotland are to become no smoking areas after NHS announced this week that grounds are to be completely smoke-free by 2015.

In a move to promote smoke-free environments and healthier lifestyles, patients, visitors and staff will no longer be able to smoke on NHS sites. NHS boards will be required to implement and enforce

smoke-free policies across their grounds by March 2015. In 2005 the Scottish Government issued guidance on smoking policies for the NHS, local authorities and care providers which gave NHS boards the power to ban smoking on their premises. The new measures will not apply to mental health facilities, which have an exemption to allow for designated smoking rooms.

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Please supply a full CV with covering letter to: ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk

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Kilmartin Museum is seeking to appoint a Development Project Manager to take our major re-development project to the next stage. The Manager will work in the key areas of capital fund raising and business development. This is a one year full time project funded contract with the possibility of further extension subject to funding. The salary is in the region of £29,000 per annum.

For more information and an application pack please email admin@kilmartin.org or phone Claire on 01546 510 278.

Closing date 02.04.13, interviews will be held on 09.04.13.

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Closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Friday 5 April 2013

As the post holder will be carrying out regulated work with protected adults they will be required to become a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme as established by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

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Please provide a CV and relevant details to admin@inverlussa.com

dawson energy

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£18,000 depending on experience

Dawson Energy Limited (part of the 3sun Group), is one of the UK's leading suppliers of skilled manpower to the renewable energy industry. We are involved with projects throughout the UK and Europe with offices located in Great Yarmouth, Oban, Aberdeen, Norway & Denmark. We are currently seeking a Finance Assistant to work alongside our Finance team at our Oban office. This position will include general finance administration tasks and inputting data in line with the Company's current systems as well as other administration duties as required. The successful candidate will have previous experience of payroll and will be confident in using Sage, Excel, and other Microsoft packages including Word and Outlook, will hold a Business Administration NVQ preferable at level 3, or equivalent qualification, and will be experienced in working to deadlines.

A full job description is available on request. Applicants should apply in writing including their CV, preferably online to Julie.Lockhart@dawson-energy.co.uk or by post to J.Lockhart at the address below. Closing date for applications is 5th April 2013.

Dawson Energy Limited, Glenshellach House, 7e Glengallan Road, Oban, PA34 4HG

Bell Ingram bellinfram.co.uk

Coastal Argyll Estate with established high quality family shoot is seeking competent gamekeeper with gardening/woodland/grounds maintenance skills for full time residential position. Potential part time employment for partner.

Interested parties should contact Caroline Isaac in the first instance for a job description and application form either by email caroline.isaac@bellinfram.co.uk or by telephone 01631 567795

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Oban Times RECRUITMENT

Business

Business reporter:

Steven Flanagan
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01631 568021



Professor Andrew Hammett, left, handed over his presidency to Professor Geoffrey Boulton, right.

SAMS presidency changes hands

AFTER three years at the helm of the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), Professor Andrew Hammett has handed over his presidency to Professor Geoffrey Boulton.

Under Professor Hammett's leadership, the Dunstaffnage-based SAMS has developed its governance structure, education and business development.

Professor Boulton OBE, former vice principal of the University of Edinburgh, was until recently a member of the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology.

SAMS thanked Professor Hammett for his dedication to the association over the years and welcomed Professor Boulton to his new role.

Beauty of the Hebrides showcased in special previews

A NEW BBC series showcasing the beauty of the Hebrides will be shown during special previews across the area next month.

Starting with a special showcase at The Pier, in Castlebay, Barra, on April 13, the series will be screened across the Uists, Benbecula, Harris and Skye, with a special screening also to take place in Oban's Phoenix Cinema.

The series, already described by narrator Ewan McGregor as 'one of the most beautiful films I've seen', is due to be broadcast on BBC One Scotland in May.

As part of a special tour, the Screen Machine will show an episode to be screened as part of the series on the isles between April 13-25.



Oban will host a special question and answer session with some of the world-renowned film makers behind

the series, Nigel Pope of Big Cat Diary fame, and Doug Anderson, whose work on the Frozen Planet series gained him international recognition.

Susie Miller, BBC Scotland's event co-ordinator: 'We anticipate there will be great local interest in the series so we thought it would be good to recognise not only that interest but also recognise the help and co-operation of the local communities by giving them an advance preview ahead of the rest of the country.'

Tickets are available free of charge, but will be dispersed on a first-come first served basis.

Susie is expecting healthy demand and has urged anyone interested to act fast.

Screenings will be held at The Pier, Castlebay, on April 13, Borrudale Hotel, Daliburgh, South Uist on April 16, Lochmaddy's Community Hall on North Uist on April 18, Benbecula's Dark Island Hotel on April 21, East Tarbet on Harris on April 23 and Kyleakin's Main Car Park on Skye on April 25.

Oban Phoenix Cinema will host its preview screening on April 18.

To book, email scotland.events@bbc.co.uk or phone 0141 422 6211 stating which location you are requesting, the number of tickets you require and your name, email address and daytime telephone number.

There is a maximum of four tickets per application and under 16s must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

West coast property market showing signs of recovery?

'Plenty of positives for people to take comfort and confidence in.' - Steven Hornby, Bell Ingram

ARGYLL and Bute's property market is showing signs of recovery, although the position for 2013 remains uncertain according to a leading local property firm.

Property and land management specialists Bell Ingram revealed healthy sales figures for properties and estates in 2012 coupled with a buoyant rental sector, despite market challenges.

It has warned though that more needs to be done by sellers to keep the momentum going for the next 12 months.

Steven Hornby of the firm's Oban office said factors including employment uncertainty, a poor economic climate, lack of finance and

a high number of properties for sale in Argyll and Bute will all have an impact in various ways in 2013.

He said: 'It is encouraging that the market has started to move again and generally the start of the year is busy in the build up to Easter which typically kick-starts the real selling season for the property market.'

Homes
'However, the fact remains that if people aren't in a position where they absolutely have to move, they are simply choosing to stay in their current homes.'

'That's all the more reason to ensure buyers and sellers are securing the best advice possible on the property market.'

'House prices are for the most part similar or lower than their values from 12 months ago.'

'One of the main reasons for this is the ratio of buyers to sellers being almost the opposite of 2006 and 2007.'

'Despite this, we are still seeing sales being completed and new buyers coming into the area, so there are plenty of positives for people to take comfort and confidence in.'

The rental market continues to prosper and with new developments being proposed which are primarily targeting private and local authority tenants it may be that the focus of the market switches from sales to lettings, at least for the short term.

Argyll and Isles website looks 'local'

A NEW website aimed at driving tourism to Argyll and the Isles is encouraging tourists to 'explore like a local'.

Argyll and the Isles Tourism (AIT) launched the new exploreargyll.co.uk page at the this month's tourism summit on Bute. Designed by Dunoon firm Samteq, it is hoped the innovative new feature encouraging people to visit areas frequented by locals will help present one of Scotland's most spectacular regions in a new light.

Unveiling the website at Mount Stuart, Sam Coley, the 20-year-old director of Samteq, said: 'The idea is to get people to discover new parts of the area.'

'People who are interested can look at the profile of people who live here and discover their personal experiences of Argyll and the Isles.'

'It makes the website a bit different and hopefully helps highlight some of the areas that tourists may not otherwise see.'

The launch of exploreargyll.co.uk coincided with the launch of explorekintyre.co.uk website.

PUBLIC NOTICES

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

PLANNING
These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

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

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/00322/PP	Erection of extension to dwellinghouse	Achinreir Barn Barcaldine Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1SF	Sub Post Office Ledaig
13/00414/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage, formation of vehicular access and installation of septic tank	Land West Of Killemore, Killechrochan Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
13/00530/PP	Erection of extension to dwellinghouse	Burnside Kilmiver Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4UX	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
13/00546/PP	Installation of heat source pump	Ardchattan Parsonage Bonawe Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1RG	Sub Post Office Ledaig

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

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

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/00456/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage	Plot 5 Livingstone Way Port Ellen Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
13/00544/PP	Replace existing window with new french doors	Dail Farm Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA44 7PG	Sub Post Office Bridgend

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
13/00545/LIB	Replace existing window with new french doors	Dail Farm Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA44 7PG	Sub Post Office Bridgend
13/00552/PP	Demolition of outhouse and shed and erection of garage and boundary wall	15 Crom Street Port Wemyss Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA47 7SS	Sub Post Office Portnahaven

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Whitegates Office Whitegates Road Lochgilphead PA31 8SY.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.

Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

COUNCILLORS SURGERIES
Councillor Roddy McCuish (E.W.4 Oban South and the Isles)
Councillor Roddy McCuish will be holding a council surgery in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban on Friday 5th April 2013 from 3.00pm - 5.00pm.
Councillor McCuish can also be contacted by email rodderick.mcuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee (E.W.5 Oban North and Lorn)
Councillor Glen-Lee will be holding a surgery on Monday 8th April in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 4.00pm - 5.00pm.
To make an appointment to see Councillor Glen Lee at her surgery, please telephone Karen Rodger on 01546 604209 or email karen.rodger@argyll-bute.gov.uk Councillor Glen-Lee can also be contacted by phone Tel: 01631 567 955 or by email louise.glen-lee@argyll-bute.gov.uk

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
THE ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (SOROBA ROAD, OBAN) (TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2013

Argyll and Bute Council proposes to make an Order introducing additional waiting restrictions on Soroba Road, Oban between the Fire Station and Drumore Road. The purpose of the proposed restrictions is to eliminate traffic congestion and allow the free flow of traffic.

Full details of these proposals together with a Plan, and a Statement of Reasons for proposing to make this Traffic Regulation Order, are available for inspection during normal office hours Monday to Friday inclusive at the offices of:

(i) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban;

(ii) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Any person wishing to object to the proposals should send details of the grounds for objection in writing to the Head of Governance and Law, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT, by 19th April 2013.

Sandy MacTaggart, Executive Director, 1A Manse Barch, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD

WATER ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003

WATER ENVIRONMENT (CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2011 APPLICATION FOR AUTHORISATION CONONISH GOLD MINE, CONONISH GLEN, TYNDRUM

An application has been made to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) by Scotgold Resources Limited for authorisation to carry on controlled activities at, near or in connection with Cononish Gold Mine, Cononish Glen, Tyndrum, FK20 8RX, namely: Bridging culvert and channel realignment on Allt Eas Anie.

Description of controlled activity	Waters affected	National grid reference
Bridging Culvert	Allt Eas Anie	NN29142846
Realignment	Allt Eas Anie	Between NGRNN 29302848 and NN 29542862

SEPA considers that the above controlled activities may have an impact on the water environment and on the interests of other users of the water environment.

A copy of the application and any accompanying information may be inspected free of charge, at the SEPA Registry below, between 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (except local and national holidays). Alternatively, the application may be viewed on SEPA's website at: www.sepa.org.uk/water/water_regulation/advertised_applications.aspx

Any person affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the application may make representations to SEPA in writing within 28 days beginning with the date of this advertisement, at the following address, quoting reference number: CAR/L/1109413

Registry Department, SEPA, 5 Redwood Crescent, Peel Park, East Kilbride, G74 5PP

Written representations received by SEPA within 28 days of this advertisement will be taken into consideration in determining whether or not to grant the application.

Before determining the application, SEPA will:

- Assess the risk to the water environment posed by the carrying on of the activity or activities;
- Assess the indirect effects of that impact on any other aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected;
- Consider any likely adverse social and economic effects of that impact and of any indirect environmental effects that have been identified;
- Consider the likely environmental, social and economic benefits of the activity;
- Assess the impact of the controlled activity or activities on the interests of other users of the water environment;
- Assess what steps may be taken to ensure efficient and sustainable water use; and
- Apply and have regard to relevant legislation.

SEPA will then either grant or refuse to grant the application.

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 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
13/00858/FUL	Craigewan, Old Banavie Road, Banavie Fort William	Permanent retention of chalet for holiday letting use (retrospective)
13/00900/FUL	Taighe Ur, Duror Appin	Erection of new porch and extension
13/00905/FUL	The Smyth, The Square Glenuig	Extensions to house
13/00908/LBC	The Smyth, The Square Glenuig	Alterations and extension to house and erection of porch
13/00963/FUL	Cherry Cottage West Laroeh, Ballachulish	Alterations to provide self contained annex
13/00989/FUL	Ardochy Cottages Ardochy House Invergarry	Conversion of attached barn to holiday dwelling. Erection of porch, alterations to roof, doors and windows on main house.
13/00991/FUL	Land 80m NE of Ivy Cottage, Inverie Knoydart, Mallaig	Erection of house
13/01008/FUL	Lochaber Yacht Club Achintore Road Fort William	Erection of storage shed

Time period for comments is 14 days. Application 13/00908/LBC is 21 days.
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 MARINE CONSTRUCTION: BONNAVOULIN BAY, DRIMMIN, SOUND OF MULL

Notice is hereby given that Mr M F Gale has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of the installation of a private mooring at:

Description Location	Latitude Co-ordinates	Longitude Co-ordinates
Bonnavaulin Bay, Drimmin, Sound of Mull	56° 36.559' N	05° 58.853' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at An Dobhran, Drimmin, Morvern, PA80 5XZ. Objections relating to safety of navigation or environmental issues in respect of the application should be made in writing to: Licensing Operations Team, Marine Scotland, Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DB within 28 days of the date of this notice or by email: MS.MarineLicensing@scotland.gsi.gov.uk, quoting reference: **FKB/J220**

Bohuntin Sheep Stock Club AGM
5th April 2013
8pm
Taigh na Sgoile Roy Bridge
Signed: A MacKinnon Township Clerk.

Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Friday 19th April 2013
New members welcome
For further details contact: (01389) 726543

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3rd April 2013

Michael Russell MSP
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10 MITSUBISHI L200 WARRIOR Double Cab Pickup, Manual, Leather, Cruise, Epack, Mir Silver	£13,450
10 MITSUBISHI L200 RACING BULL Double cab pickup, Auto, Canopy, Leather, Alloy, Mir Grey 45k miles	£13,450
09 MITSUBISHI L200 Warrior Double cab pickup, Auto, Leather, Cruise Control, Alloy, Mir Blue, 20k miles	£12,750
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06 ISUZU NVR 3 LITRE, SWB, R/FAT BED, Twin Wheels, 3500 kg, 4.0M long, Epack, White, 50k miles	£7,950
07 VW TRANSPORTER, 4 Motor, LWB, Panel van, 130hp, Semi high top, Twin side doors, 6 speed, White	£7,950
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PERSONALS

ASHLEIGH Love from Mum, Dad, Gemma, Nanny & Papa.

CATHY and LIZ

Would like to thank family and friends for all the birthday gifts and also a great night had by all.

CATHIE REID

I would like to thank all my friends for lovely cards, flowers and presents. Thanks also to Mairead, and "The Girls" for the lovely afternoon tea and also to the bowlers for the surprise celebration. Thanks also to my family for a lovely lunch. All your kindness is very much appreciated.

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BIRTHS

CRUICKSHANK - Alasdair and Laura (née MacColl) are delighted to announce the birth of their son, Alexander Duncan MacColl, on March 22, 2013 in Oban. A wee brother for Fiona, Dugie and Morven and grandson for Gordon and the late Anne Cruickshank, and Margaret and the late Dugald MacColl, Bendorloch. A special thanks to all at Oban Maternity Unit.

ENGAGEMENTS

THORNTON - MACLEOD - Seonaid and Edward Thornton of North Connel, by Oban, are delighted to announce the engagement of their daughter Helen Isabella to Kenneth James MacLeod, eldest son of Grace and Kenneth MacLeod of Castleton, Lochgilphead.

RUBY WEDDING

MACMILLAN - MACGILLIVRAY - Archie and Anne, married on March 23, 1973 at St Modan's Church, Bendorloch. Present address: Shian, Balvaire, Muir of Ord.

GOLDEN WEDDING



GELDARD - PERRY - Kenny to Morag married on March 30, 1963, at Princes Street Church, Port Glasgow by the Rev Sidney Smith. Current address 10 Iona Drive, Oban.

MACLEOD - CAMERON - Campbell and Margaret married on March 26, 1963 at Oban Parish Church. Congratulations to a wonderful mum and dad. Love from Mhairi, Sandy and all the family.

To our Granny and Seanair on their golden wedding anniversary, with lots of love Kimberley, Kaitlynn, Ferne and Fergus xxxx

McGILLIVRAY - CAMPBELL - Don to Sheena. Married at the MacIntosh Memorial Church, Fort William on March 30, 1963 by the late Rev James Duncan.

DEATHS

CAMPBELL - Peacefully, at home, on March 24, 2013, aged 72 years, John 'Iain' Scapa, 12 Eive Road, Dunbeg, leaves behind partner Pauline, beloved dad of Hugh, Kelley, Corrine, Iain and Erin, dear father-in-law of David - Oban, also beloved dad of Callum, Iona and Claire, dear father-in-law of Josie, Mickey and Neil, brother, grandad and great grandad, loving friend to many. Funeral will take place from The Church of Scotland, Glenclruitten Road, Oban, on Thursday, March 28, 2013 at 1.30 p.m. thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only, a retiring collection/donations will be taken for Alzheimer's Scotland - Action on Dementia.

CHRISTIE - Catherine Cameron (née Faulds), formerly of Tobermory, at Westerfield Care Home, Paisley on March 20, 2013, aged 91 years, much loved wife of the late John Cairns Christie and widow of William Wright Murray, a loving mother, grandmother and great grandmother. Funeral service at Glasgow City Free Church, St Vincent Street on Thursday, April 4 at 10am, thereafter to Acharacle Cemetery, Ardnarnachan for 3pm.

DOUGALL - Jessie Rankin aged 98, daughter of the late Donald Alexander Rankin MacKay and Elizabeth Scott formerly Barriemore Hotel Oban, formerly Taynuilt. Sister of the late Rena Spence and the late Donald MacKay. Died peacefully in Gullane, East Lothian on March 15, 2013.

FAIRWEATHER - Unexpectedly on March 16, 2013, Sarah (Sally) Fairweather (née Campbell) formerly of Taynuilt, beloved wife of the late James Hunter Fairweather, loving mother of Colin, Neil and Sally; dear mother-in-law of Ana, Frances and Dave and much loved grandmother to Andrew, Bruce, Kenneth and Hannah. Will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.

MACKINNON - Peacefully at the Lorn & Islands Hospital, Oban on Sunday March 24, 2013, in his 84th year, Angus Joseph MacKinnon "Dui", beloved husband of the late Katie, dear dad to Kathleen, Duncan and the late Angus and Donald, a much loved father-in-law, grandad, pops, brother and uncle. R.I.P.

O'HARE - On Saturday, March 16, 2013 peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital Oban. Gladys Mowat aged 94 years, Glen Iosal, Tobermory, beloved wife to Henry (deceased), much loved mother to William and Catherine, loving mother in-law to Karen and Tony, granny of Ranald, Roy, Glynis, Kirsty, Jason, Kim, Michelle and special great granny to her fourteen great grand children. Loving friend and neighbour. Private cremation was held at Cardross Crematorium on March 26. A memorial service will be held in Tobermory, time and place to be announced. "When we remember your smile it brightens our day."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

JORDAN - The family of the late Joseph Jordan wish to thank most sincerely relatives, friends and neighbours for kind expressions of sympathy by way of cards, telephone calls, visits and many other ways during their recent sad bereavement. Thanks also to the many staff of various departments in Lorn and Islands Hospital, Drs and nurses at Lorn Medical Centre, to the Rev Jeff McCormick for a lovely service. Neil and Sheila Sinclair for favourite music played, Catriona of Hamish Hoey & Son for very efficient funeral arrangements. Falls of Lora Hotel and to all who paid their last respects at the church and graveside. The sum of £733.91 was raised for Lorn and Islands Hospital.

MACBEAN - Janet, would like to thank everyone for the many kind expressions of sympathy received in the sad loss of Sheena. Special thanks to Rev Jeff McCormick, for a comforting and appropriate service, Stan Lupton Funeral Directors for professional services, Lochnell Arms Hotel, for an excellent purvey and to all who paid their last respects at church and graveside.

MACINTYRE - Allan and family would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many expressions of sympathy received and kindness shown to them in their recent sad loss of Jim. Special thanks to Rev. Robert Brookes for his comforting words and uplifting service; to Donald MacDonald Funeral Directors for efficient and professional services; also to the ladies who provided the refreshments in Kilchrenan Hall - their kindness was greatly appreciated. Also, our thanks to everyone who paid their respects at Church and Graveside, and to everyone who contributed to the retail collection, which raised £365 for the British Heart Foundation.

MACKINNON - The family of the late Norman (Norrie) MacKinnon of Eriskay would like to thank most sincerely everyone for their kind expressions of sympathy - especially the Eriskay Community. Thanks to Fr Donald MacKay for the requiem mass, to Fr James MacNeil and the nursing staff at ward 1, Lorn & Islands Hospital for their devoted care and support to Norrie and his family. Also Hamish Hoey and Neil MacIntyre Funeral Directors, to Am Politician for providing refreshments, many thanks for donations which raised £400 for Ward 1, Lorn & Islands Hospital, Oban.

MACNEILL - Hugh, Morag, Lachie, Joan and Megan wish to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy, cards and telephone calls following Hughie's death.

MEMORIALS

CAMERON - Precious memories of Hugh, devoted husband, dad, father-in-law and grandpa, passed away March 31, 2002.

Always in our thoughts. - Bella and family.

CLARK - In loving memory of my precious aunt Effie, who died at Kilninian, Isle of Mull on March 26, 2009. Loved, missed and remembered every day. Until we meet again. - From Mary and Bobby.

DEMPSTER - In loving memory of our dear mother Morag Scouler, who died March 24, 1986, also her husband Kenny, who died December 1, 1989. Fondly remembered - by Hugh, Annabel and her grandchildren.

MACDONALD - In memory of our mum and nana Morag who died March 31, 2005. Always thinking of you. - All the family, Buinessan Mull and Oban.

MACKINNON - In loving memory of my dear wife Isabella, who passed away on March 29, 2010. Your memory is my keepsake With which I will never part God has you in his keeping I have you in my heart. Also remembering loved ones gone before and after. - Your loving husband Donald.

McCAMLEY - In fond remembrance of Joan (née Matheson), a loving and loved wife, mother and gran who died at Edinburgh April 1 2004. A smile for all, a heart of gold. Among the best this world could hold. Silent thoughts of times together. Hold memories that will last forever. - Bill and all the family.

McCLOUNNAN - Treasured memories of my dear brother Calum who sadly passed away on March 27, 2007. Quietly today your memory I treasure. Missing you always. Forgetting you never. - Christine, Lachie and family.

McNICOL - Loving memories of dear parents and grandparents, Janet, died March 24, 1986, and Duncan, died November 29, 1987. Forever in our thoughts. - Nellie, Tommy and family.

MOYES - In loving memory of Flora who died March 30, 1990. Fondly remembered - by Ted and family at Inverness, Maryburgh, Selkirk, and Shetland.

PROSSER - In loving memory of Mary, our dear mum, gran and great gran who died on March 26, 1997. Never more than a thought away. Loved and remembered every day. Forever missed. - Betty, and all the family xx

WALKER - In loving memory of our father and grandfather Archie, who passed away March 29, 1996. Always in our thoughts. - Allan and family, Islay, Gartmore and Blanehead.

WALKER - In loving memory of our dear father Archibald, who died March 29, 1996. Forever in our thoughts - Inserted by Donald and Morag, Airport Cottage, Islay

CHURCH NOTICES

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Thursday 28 March 2013
Maundy Thursday
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Morning Prayer and Eucharist 09:30
Sung Eucharist 19:30
with Washing of Feet, and Watch
St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Eucharist 19:00

St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Maundy Thursday Service. 17:00

Friday 29 March 2013
Good Friday
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Children's Service 10:00
Three-hour vigil with reflections and Eucharist 12:00

St Columba, Gruline, Mull
"An Hour by the Cross" 14:00

St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist 08:00
Compline 20:15

Saturday 30 March 2013
Easter Eve
St John's Cathedral, Oban
The Easter Vigil 20:00

St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist 08:00
Compline 20:15

Sunday 31 March 2013
Easter Day
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion 08:00
Family Sung Eucharist 10:15
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Nicki McNeilly, Provost. (01631) 562323

St James, Ardbrecknish, Cladich
Holy Eucharist 11:00

St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Eucharist 11:00

St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist 08:00
Evensong 20:15
Holy Eucharist Wed 3 April 14:30



Claire MacCuish hands over the cheque for £903 to Margaret Smith (right) while Hazel Hamilton (second from left), a specialist stroke nurse, and group members look on. 16_1131stroke01

Runner goes the extra mile for Oban stroke group

AN OBAN teenager handed over hundreds of pounds to the town's stroke support group this week in memory of her late uncle.

Half marathon - Claire MacCuish, 18, ran a half marathon in Inverness on March 17, raising £903 for North Argyll Stroke Association, based in Oban's Dunmar Court. She said: 'I didn't stop, I did it in two hours and seven minutes

but I didn't care what time I did it in, I just wanted to do it without stopping. 'My legs were on fire. I did this just to raise money for the group because I know how good the work is that they do.

Memory - 'I ran in memory of my uncle, Bobby MacCuish. He suffered several strokes before passing away a number of years ago. 'He was bedridden and got support from the group.

'I want to thank everyone that sponsored me, I'm going to try and do this every year to raise money for the group.'

Margaret Smith, chairwoman of the association, told *The Oban Times* the money will be used for outings and activities for members of the support group throughout the year, including a Christmas lunch. She said: 'I think it is fantastic for such a young girl to do something for people less fortunate than herself.

'To do a half marathon and raise that amount of money for people she doesn't really know is just amazing. We're very, very grateful.'

Anyone in Oban or the surrounding area that has suffered a stroke can make use of the group. It meets on the last Tuesday of every month in Dunmar Court and new members are always welcome.



Children on the Isle of Iona performed an Easter play in the local parish church on Palm Sunday. The youngsters gave each member of the congregation a twig of pussy willow, which was an old tradition in areas where no palm trees grew, in place of a palm cross. Everyone was then invited back to the school afterwards for a bowl of hot soup and the money raised was sent to Comic Relief. 15_1131easter01



Two-year-old Isla Muir, left, and Freya Grant, aged three, show off Isla's bonnet which she made for the Rockfield Primary School Daffodil Tea on Saturday. The event, organised by the school's Parent Teachers Association, is one of the biggest in the school year and a fundraiser for equipment and trips. The day included an egg hunt, face painting, home baking and competitions. 15_1131easter01



Church brings Easter message to Spean Bridge Primary School. Kilmallie Free Church came to Spean Bridge Primary School last Thursday to do Easter workshops with pupils. The 'Easter Cracked' day included activities linked to the telling of the Easter story, art and craft, music and storytelling. Pictured above is the nursery and primary three enjoying one of the workshops.

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Oban Times
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

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BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

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Saints come up short in extra time as they crash out of the West Cup

'Shortlees wanted to win more than we did which makes it very hard to take'

**West of Scotland Amateur Cup
4th Round
Shortlees 2
Oban Saints 2
(Shortlees won 4-2
after extra time)**

SAINTS made the long journey to Kilmarnock to take on Shortlees in the fourth round of the West of Scotland Cup last Saturday.

After a hazardous and hair-raising trip through gale force winds and heavy snow the Oban contingent, who stopped to help a car that had gone off the road near Tyndrum, probably wished they had stayed at home as they turned in one of their worst performances for a long time.

The pitch at Shortlees wasn't the best, a pronounced slope running from one end of the park to the other. It was very heavy in places and a gale-force wind blowing from end to end made things difficult for the players. But this should not be used as an excuse for such a lack-lustre performance from the Oban side with very few players getting pass marks in what was a poor performance.

Saints were without Craig MacEwan, Mattie Rippon and Eddie Swift, who were all working and Alan Miller had flu, but they welcomed back Bulgarian striker Asen Gaydardzhiev into the squad along with their three new Japanese signings, Sommin, Sonin and Soyon Kurishita.

The visitors were shooting up the slope in the first half against a strong blustery wind and started the game well, taking the game to Shortlees and there was no sign at this stage that they might

struggle against their Ayrshire opponents.

The manager had instructed his squad to take no chances while playing up the slope and against the wind. He wanted to get the ball forward as quickly as possible, but for some reason the players decided to play short intricate passes on a pitch not conducive to that type of football.

The home side took the lead in the 15th minute when Saints lost the ball in midfield. It was swung into the box then headed clear, but it fell to Ryan McRoberts who thumped an unstoppable 25 yarder past Daniel Cassells and into the net - a great goal.

However, Saints drew level two minutes later when Donald Campbell was brought down in the box with referee Stephen Martin pointing to the spot. This seemed a rather soft decision but Donald wasn't hanging about to discuss matters as he blasted the ball past Shortlees netminder Steffan Lyndsay.

The home side took the lead in the 37th minute when a harmless looking ball was flighted into the Saints penalty area where Ross McLaughland got in front of the Saints defence to head the ball home.

This goal seemed to spur the home side on and Saints have Daniel Cassells to thank for a couple of excellent saves. Half time arrived with Shortlees 2-1 in front.

Saints had the advantage of the wind in the second half and it was a confident looking squad that took the field, but any thoughts they had that the goals

needed to see them through to the fifth round would come easily were quickly dispelled as the home side defended as though their lives depended on it.

The Oban team had most of the territorial advantage, but lacked a cutting edge, although Myles McAuley and Dene Cassells had shots that went just wide of the upright.

The visitors finally drew level in the 68th minute when Asen Gaydardzhiev rose unmarked in the box to head home to make the score 2-2.

Credit

Saints had plenty of time to get a winner, but credit should go to the Shortlees defence, well marshalled by Jim Kirkwood. They were defending well and the Ayrshire side always looked dangerous on the break against a very nervous looking Saints defence.

The Oban side huffed and puffed their way through the second half, but they were getting little change out of a home team who had three former Hurlford players in their line-up. Hurlford won the Scottish Amateur Cup last year.

Donald Campbell was unlucky when he got on the end of a Willie Gemmill corner and the Saints striker had a great chance to win the game in the final minute when he was put through, but he shot over the bar.

Extra time saw Saints defending against the wind in the first period and it was the home team that looked the more likely to score and this they did when Jim Caldwell got on the end of a loose ball in the Saints box to

FOOTBALL

force the ball home in the 99th minute.

The visitors were lacking spark and it was the determination and tenacious tackling of the home side that was beginning to tell. Saints have Daniel Cassells to thank for another two good saves in extra time.

The visitors introduced Japanese brothers Sommin and Sonin Kurishita in the extra time period and they certainly added a bit of life to the Saints attacking options.

The visitors had the wind in the second period of extra time, but again the home defence were in top form and with three minutes left on the clock Shortlees killed the game off when the Saints defence got into a terrible tangle and Robbie McFarlane thumped a low shot past Daniel Cassells to make the final score 4-2.

Manager Iain Jackson was not a happy man after the game. He said: 'Totally gutted, we were terrible today. No complaints, Shortlees wanted to win more than we did which makes it very hard to take. We didn't seem interested and that's not good enough. I can't remember when we lost four goals last. That's the worst performance I've seen from a Saints team for a long time.'

It's back to league duty for Saints this Saturday when they face a tough away trip to take on league leaders Postal United.

The game will be played on the 3G pitch at Crownpoint Sports Centre with a 2pm kick-off.



Donald Campbell was on target from the penalty spot against Shortlees in the West of Scotland Cup but the Oban side slumped to a 4-2 defeat, after extra time, to the Kilmarnock side. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Cellar close in on league title

POOL

THE CELLAR need only a point tonight to secure their maiden league championship after coming through a titanic tussle against Markie Dans 'B'. A combination of nerves and a dogged performance from Markie's added to the drama forcing the league leaders to draw on all their experience to pull off the win.

Markie Dans 'A' eased to victory over the Lochavullin to make sure the title race will go down to the wire for the first time in several years, although last week's opponents Lochavullin will need to vastly improve their performance if they are to challenge the Cellar on their own table.

The Lancaster 'A' got back to winning ways against the Kelvin to end their win drought and secure fourth spot, for most teams this would be considered a relatively successful season but after finishing no worse than second for the last four years the victory was tinged with disappointment.

The Lochnell's defeat to the Lancaster 'B' in a close encounter ended their hopes of climbing further up the table and consolidated third spot for the Lancaster 'B', after overturning a deficit in the singles with three doubles victories the Lancaster 'B's' resilience once again came to the fore.

The concluding fixture saw the Claredon condemn the Gluepot to bottom place and pick up their first victory of the calendar year.

Results: Lancaster 'B' 6, Lochnell 4; Gluepot 3, Claredon 7; Lochavullin 2 Markie Dans 'A' 8; Kelvin 4, Lancaster 'A' 6; Markie Dans 'B' 4, Cellar 6
Fixtures: Lancaster 'A' v Gluepot; Lochnell v Kelvin; Markie Dans 'A' v Lancaster 'B'; Claredon v Markie Dans 'B'; Cellar v Lochavullin.

Lochaber bowmen do well in indoor event at Strontian

LOCHABER archers faced off against some of the finest in the country and found great success at the inaugural Indoor Archery Championships in Strontian on Saturday.

Locals winning

A total of 63 archers from all over Scotland travelling for the Scottish Target And Field Archery Association event, which

saw locals winning nine of the 16 events.

Lochaber clubs Garrison Bowmen, Loch Sunart Bowmen and South Lochaber Bowmen all took part at Ardnamurchan High School.

Ewan Gibb of Garrison Bowmen took home the Ardgour Bowl after winning the adult male bow hunter (recurve) and

Sunart youngster Connor Mclean was named best improver.

Locals dominated the adult female bare bow (recurve), with Agnes McCloumnan of South Lochaber Bowmen coming first ahead of clubmate Andrea Koster. Garrison Bowmen's Lesley Elder took third.

First and second

Heather Haining of Loch Sunart Bowmen managed second place in the adult female freestyle (recurve), while David Mealand of Loch Sunart Bowmen and South Lochaber Bowmen's Allan Thomson were first and second in the adult male bare bow (recurve).

Garrison Bowmen's Alan Colyer won the adult male longbow, with Katherine McMillan scoring well in the adult female historical bow.

The local youngsters impressed as well, with Caitlin McGilivray, Kyle Hutchison and Tom Irbhinn all picking up wins.

Extremely well

Shoot Director Dubh Irbhinn of South Lochaber Bowmen said: 'All our clubs did extremely well considering the talent of some very experienced archers. Loch

ARCHERY



Local youngster Connor Mclean was named 'best improver' at the event.

Sunart did an excellent job of hosting this event.

'The local community gave a warm welcome to all competitors who battled through freezing conditions and snow drifts to attend the tournament.'

Mr Irbhinn thanked sponsors Scottish Sea Farms and everyone who helped organise the event.



James Standen of Fort William shows great concentration as he lines up a shot (picture Iain Ferguson, Photos: The Write Image).

Trialists win 10th league title

OVER 35s LEAGUE

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Trialists	8	8	0	0	42	10	24
WC Massive	8	6	0	2	48	24	18
Emergency	8	5	1	2	30	18	16
Taynuilt	8	4	1	3	48	32	13
Clements	8	3	1	4	29	33	10
Teachers	8	2	2	4	31	35	8
STC	8	2	0	6	18	48	6
Hydro	8	2	0	6	20	44	6
Spartak	8	1	1	6	10	32	4

Scores: Spartak v West Coast Massive - game awarded to West Coast 3-0. Taynuilt v Trialists - game awarded to Trialists 3-0. Hydro v Spartak - game awarded to Hydro 3-0.
Final result of the season: Trialists 5, West Coast Massive 1. Trialists crowned champions.



All you have to do

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

WIN £1600

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

B MacDonald
Clerk Drive, Fort William

D Cruickshank
Kames, Tighnabruich

Spot the SHINTY BALL COMPETITION

I enclose £1 for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

Name

Address

..... Tel No.

Please tape your £1 coin here

New full-sized netball court hosts first tournament

YOUNG netball players from Lochaber and beyond took part in the first tournament held in Fort William since a full-sized court was installed in Lochaber High School.

Six teams took part in the round robin event, with Lochside coming through the day undefeated to lift the trophy.

The other teams competing were Inverlochty, two teams from Dingwall, Fyrisch Flyers and Caol - who finished third overall.

The newly laid-out court was painted in the school hall earlier this year after funding was granted, bringing to an end three years of training being complicated by markings for basketball, football, and badminton.

Active school co-ordinator Lia Hunter told The Oban Times the new court had

made a big difference to the sport locally already. She said: 'It was great to have the new court.

It's given us the opportunity to host events like this. It's had a big impact having the lines.

Ms Hunter said the clubs and schools involved had given 'really positive feedback' about the competition, which is planned to become an annual event.

Later in the day, the senior side Fort William Falcons took on the Fyrisch Flyers in the Highland Netball League.

Despite leading for much of the match, a late surge from the Dingwall side saw them take a narrow 37-36 victory.

NETBALL

Local sides Lochside, Caol and Inverlochty line up for The Oban Times during Saturday's round robin event. 20. f13netball01

Weather causes havoc with shinty fixtures

MacTavish and Celtic Cup ties take centre stage this weekend

LOVAT take on Inverness in a Co-operative MacTavish Cup first round derby with four draws in four games under their belts in the Orion Group Premiership.

Forward Jamie Mathieson remains out of contention after suffering knee damage in the season's opener against Lochaber, while midfielder Duncan Davidson remains a doubt with a niggling back problem.

Forward Owen Ferguson, who caught a shinty stick in the mouth against Kinlochshiel on Saturday and needed stitches, is also doubtful.

Coach Allan MacRae has been juggling with formations after losing key players to injury – and has yet to find a blend to allow his team to fire on all cylinders. He told *The Oban Times*: 'At the moment I would be delighted if we got one more goal than Inverness. We will be hot favourites I would think, but it's a one off and we were caught out last year when Beaulieu put us out of the MacTavish.'

In Saturday's 1-1 draw with Kinlochshiel, Lewis Tawse scored for Lovat in an even game. MacRae said: 'We are getting sick of these draws, that's for sure. It's nice to be unbeaten but we need to get a couple of wins.'

KINLOCHSHIEL will be strong favourites to overcome Caberfeidh in the Co-operative MacTavish Cup first round at Strathpeffer after a solid start to their league season.

'Shiel will once again have to do without the services of talented young forward Duncan 'Ach' MacRae because of injury, but should still have too much firepower for Cabers.

However, coach Johnston Gill was sounding a note of caution as he prepares for Saturday's tie. He told *The Oban Times*: 'Caberfeidh have been a bit of a bogey team in the past. In our last encounter two seasons ago they beat us 3-2 in the Balliemore Cup when we were unbeaten in the league.'

'They have always been a very difficult side to beat but having said that I would be disappointed if we did not go up there and win. We will give them all the respect they are due.'

In 'Shiel's draw at Lovat on Saturday, Keith's MacRae's 50th minute equaliser raised hopes of a win, but the Kiltarity men's defence held firm.

Gill said: '1-1 away from home is not too bad. Donald Nixon got his first start at wing centre coming in for Graham Morrison and played very well so I have a big decision to make for Saturday.'

KINGUSSIE face a tough trip to Portree to take on Skye Camanachd in the first round of the Co-operative MacTavish Cup this weekend.

Despite a league separating the two sides, playing at Paic nan Laoch Skye will present a challenge to most teams – something Kings manager Russell Jones is well aware of.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'We'll have a tough game up at Skye. They knocked Glenurquhart out of the Camanachd last season and they recovered to go and win the Macaulay so that shows the calibre of side they have.'

'Historically we've always enjoyed going there, you always get a good welcome on Skye.'

They've got a cracking pitch with good wide spaces so it should be a good game.'

Jones added: 'We'll always go out to win every game we play whether it's the league or cup, but we're under no illusions, especially with our squad just now. We've had a lot of changes recently.'

Kings' game against Inveraray was called off last weekend due to the weather. Snow left The Dell unplayable, but after hard work to prepare the nearby pitch at Kincaig, Inveraray phoned to say they couldn't make it to Badenoch due to the conditions of roads further south.

FORT WILLIAM take on Newtonmore at the Eilan in the pick of the Co-operative MacTavish Cup first round ties.

After a sluggish start to the season, the Fort banked a morale-boosting 2-1 win over Oban Camanachd on Saturday thanks to a Gary Innes second half double, one a last-gasp penalty.

With Bryan Simpson and Duncan Rodger now back in the first team, along with Ewan Campbell after his move from Kyles, there are flickering signs of Fort returning to form – but whether that will be enough to account for the mighty 'More is another matter.'

Co-manager Adi Robertson told *The Oban Times*: 'Away to Newtonmore is going to be extremely hard but we will go up there with every confidence and a game plan to try to win the game.'

'We now have a full squad so hopefully we will be up to speed and this game has not come too quick for us – another couple of games before this one would have been nice.'

He added: 'Against Oban, I thought in the second half against the wind we played better and had a lot more possession.'

Cup holders NEWTONMORE will begin their defence of the Co-operative MacTavish Cup with a potentially tricky home tie against Fort William this Saturday.

Manager PJ MacKintosh said holding onto the trophy they won against Lochaber last summer rates just as highly as the Camanachd Cup or winning the league.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'All the competitions are important, we want to do well in all of them. It's much better to have a home tie in these kinds of games.'

'We had two or three who would have missed last weekend but fingers crossed we'll have a couple of them fit for Saturday.'

'More's clash with fellow title hopefuls Kyles Athletic was postponed last weekend after snow left the road to Tighnabruich difficult to pass. MacKintosh took the chance to see this weekend's opponents in action at An Air.

He said: 'We were told the pitch was playable but there was no way we would get down there. I went to watch Fort William on Saturday against Oban and I thought they were pretty good.'

'They've got lots of dangerous players – Duncan Rodger at full forward and Gary Innes are very dangerous.'

SKYE CAMANACHD welcome Kingussie to Paic nan Laoch in the Co-operative MacTavish Cup determined

SHINTY

to claim another Orion Group Premiership scalp.

The Islanders beat Glenurquhart 3-2 in the Camanachd Cup last season and are in fine fettle after a 3-1 win over Caberfeidh last weekend.

Chris Rose is still struggling with a bad finger injury sustained last season but could still play a part as manager Willie Macrae seeks to plot Kings' downfall.

He said: 'Chris may come back in for this week but we are not going to rush him – it's a matter of whether he feels confident enough to use the hand properly.'

'I have not seen the Kilmallie formation but we will play to our own abilities and let them worry about us. There should be a good crowd and it should make a bit of a difference having the home tie.'

'It should be an interesting and entertaining game. If our defence can stop their forward line we have a great chance. We are not going into the game scared of them – especially on our own pitch.'

A Neil MacVicar hat-trick secured the win over Caberfeidh which keeps Skye in the third promotion spot in Marine Harvest North Division 1.

GLENURQUHART will look to steal a march on the rest of the Orion Group Premiership by getting their first win of the season when they welcome Oban Camanachd to Drumnadrochit this Saturday.

With only one other league game this weekend, the two points would lift Glen off the bottom.

On league leaders Newtonmore was postponed due to The Eilan pitch being unplayable due to the weather. The match will be rearranged for later in the season.

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No way through for this Glasgow Mid Argyll player as Oban Celtic's Gary McKerracher blocks him off. Photo: Kevin McGlynn



THIS week Teamtalk takes a look inside the Oban Celtic dressing room, as captain John Hill dishes the dirt on his shinty teammates. Visit The Oban Times website at www.obantimes.co.uk to find out what he said. The first Teamtalk with Glenorchy Camanachd captain Duncan Smith is also still available.



Results

Results 23rd March

Orion Group Premiership
Fort William 2 - 1 Oban Camanachd
Kingussie P - P Inveraray
Due to Travel Difficulties
Kyles Ath P - P Newtonmore
Due to Travel Difficulties
Lochaber 0 - 0 Glenurquhart
Lovat 1 - 1 Kinlochshiel

Marine Harvest North Division 1
Beaulieu 2 - 1 Strathglass
Kilmallie 6 - 0 Inverness
Skye 3 - 1 Caberfeidh

Marine Harvest South Division 1
Lochside Rov 3 - 1 Glenorchy
Oban Celtic 1 - 1 Glasgow MA
Strachur P - P Bute
Unplayable Field
Taynuilt P - P Kilmory
Due to Travel Difficulties

Marine Harvest North Division 2
Ab'deen Uni P - P Fort William
Unplayable Field
Beaulieu 3 - 1 Kingussie
Glenurquhart 0 - 0 Skye
Kinlochshiel 3 - 6 Lovat
Newtonmore P - P Glengarry
Unplayable Field

Marine Harvest South Division 2
Aberdour P - P Ballachulish
Due to Travel Difficulties
Bute P - P Glasgow Mid Argyll
Unplayable Field
Col Glen P - P Kyles Athletic
Unplayable Field
Inveraray 2 - 1 Tayforth

Marine Harvest North Division 3
Caberfeidh 5 - 1 Strathglass
Inverness 1 - 4 Boleskine
Lochaber 4 - 5 Lochcarron
Lochbroom 3 - 4 Kilmallie
Strathpey P - P Lewis
Ferry Cancellation

Saturday 23rd March Marine Harvest North Division 2
Skye 3 - 1 Glengarry

Fixtures

Saturday 30 March

Co-operative MacTavish Cup 1st Round
Beaulieu v Strathglass
Innes Wood - 3pm
Caberfeidh v Kinlochshiel
John Matheson
Inverness v Lovat
John Angus Gillies
Newtonmore v Fort William
Evan MacRae
Skye v Kingussie
Graham Cameron

AJG Parcels Celtic Society Cup 1st Round
Aberdour v Strachur
David Mitchell
Glenorchy v Oban Celtic
Ted McDonald
Glenorchy P v Argyll v Kilmory
Billy Wotherspoon

Orion Group Premiership
Glenurquhart v Oban Camanachd
Deek Cameron
Inveraray v Kyles Athletic
Colin MacDonald - 3pm

Marine Harvest South Division 1
Lochside Rovers v Bute
Dunkie Kerr

Marine Harvest North Division 2
Aberdeen Uni v Newtonmore
Ronnie Campbell
Beaulieu v Skye
Donald MacRae - 3pm
Fort William v Glenurquhart
Lachie Wood
Glengarry v Kinlochshiel
Dougie Cameron
Lovat v Kingussie
Neil Ferguson

Marine Harvest South Division 2
Ballachulish v Tayforth
Euan Pearson
Col Glen v Glasgow Mid Argyll
Jim Innes
Inveraray v Bute
Rab Douglas - 12 noon
Kyles Athletic v Aberdour
John MacGregor

Marine Harvest North Division 3
Kilmallie v Lewis
Archie Ritchie - 1.30pm
Lochaber v Inverness
Willie MacRae
Lochbroom v Caberfeidh
John Sloggie
Lochcarron v Strathglass
Daniel MacRae
Strathpey v Boleskine
Calum Girvan

(All throw ups 2.30 unless stated)

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Fort forward Gary Innes and Craig McMillan of Oban clash while going for the ball during the first half of the match. 20_13for104

given a free hit, so I was gutted to concede a penalty. 'Let's be clear, the referee did not lose us the game; we did. We didn't do enough when we were in control of the match.'

'But I was surprised by some of the refereeing decisions in the final 20 minutes, not just the penalty, but also by the amount of injury time.'

Campbell says his team will use their frustration from last weekend's 2-1 defeat in a positive way on Saturday.

He said: 'Last Saturday was a real kick in the teeth but it will spur the boys on. This group of players are determined to stay in this league and will fight for every point, regardless of who we are playing.'

'It is up to the boys to have the right mental attitude going into Saturday and forget the Macaulay Cup final. For me, that game was last season and does not matter now.'

The Argyll derby between INVERARAY and Kyles Athletic is usually a showcase for south shinty, a fast-paced and entertaining spectacle – unlikely this weekend, says Argyll player-manager Garry MacPherson.

MacPherson believes that while Winterton Park will be playable on Saturday, it is not in the best condition.

'We will of course set out to win the game on Saturday,' said MacPherson. 'But it could end up a bit of a scrap because the pitch is not in good condition.'

'I don't see either team playing shinty that will be easy on the eye but it should be a close and exciting game.'

'If we play like we did at the start of the season, there is no reason we cannot get something out of the game.'

Inveraray's Stuart Robertson continues to struggle with injuries and Allan MacDonald will serve his one-game suspension this weekend after last week's tie against Kingussie was abandoned because weather conditions meant Inveraray could not travel.

KYLES ATHLETIC, remain the only team in the Orion Group Premiership with a 100 per cent record but their match last weekend – a crunch tie with champions Newtonmore – was also cancelled because of the weather.

The Tighnabruich men have continuing injury concerns but will still be able to field a strong team this Saturday.

GLENORCHY coach John Smith has told his players to believe in their abilities after a surprise 3-1 defeat to Lochside Rovers at Ganavan last weekend.

Despite looking comfortable at 1-0 thanks to a Kieran McKay goal, Glenorchy lost three goals within 10 minutes in the second half and never recovered.

But the Dalmally men feel aggrieved at the equalising goal, as Malcolm Clark's strike seemed to be heading goalwards after the referee's whistle went.

Smith said: 'The free hit was taken and Malcolm hit the ball but as he shot the referee blew his whistle. Everyone stopped as the ball went in the net but then the referee said 'goal' and everyone remained confused.'

'After that we went through a crazy 10 minutes because the boys were just shell-shocked.'

'Take nothing away from Lochside, they took their goals well.'

Glenorchy play Oban Celtic in the first round of the AJG Celtic Society Cup this Saturday.

Smith said: 'We could do with a good cup run because we haven't reached the final of this competition for four years.'

'We have got to remain confident and believe in ourselves. The players have the ability to do well this season.'

OBAN CELTIC president David Hamilton says the club is building a young team that is 'hard to beat'.

Celtic travel to Dalmally this weekend for a Celtic Cup tie against Glenorchy.

And speaking after the Oban side's 1-1 draw with free-scoring Glasgow Mid Argyll at Mossfield, Hamilton said team spirit was good.

'Dalmally has never been a happy hunting ground for us,' said Hamilton 'but all the boys are happy with the performance on Saturday and we have everyone, apart from Scott Burnett, confirmed as available.'

'I thought GMA would be a hard game but the boys acquitted themselves well and we nearly sneaked it at the end.'

Alan MacInnes equalised for the home side before half time and a dogged performance from Celtic almost saw them score a winner at the death when Neil Carmichael was clean through.

Hamilton said: 'We told the boys before the game to mark their men tightly because GMA are a free-scoring side and they did what we asked. Everyone played their part.'

LOCHSIDE ROVERS boss Andrew Pearson has challenged

his players to maintain the standard of play set last Saturday when they beat title-chasing Glenorchy.

Responding to a heavy defeat at the hands of GMA two weeks earlier, Lochside upset the odds to record a vital win.

The result has allowed Pearson to believe that two points this weekend against another top team in South Division One are very possible.

'We play Bute at home this weekend and they have always given us a hard game,' Pearson said.

'But they have a different team from last season and if we can play like we did last week we will get something out of the game.'

Goals from Malcolm Clark (2) and substitute Brian MacCallum ensured an impressive comeback for Lochside.

Pearson has fresh injury worries ahead of this Saturday, as Michael MacQueen came off last Saturday with a broken finger and Josh Rippon is doubtful with a knee injury.

BUTE manager Graham Fisher says his players are itching to play this Saturday against Lochside Rovers, particularly because of the prospect of playing on Mossfield.

Fisher said: 'We could be playing on Mossfield, which is an excellent pitch and should suit us.'

'If you can't play on a surface like that, you can't play anywhere. I don't know what to mark about Lochside Rovers, because the team can change so much, but any team that beats Glenorchy 3-1 must be strong.'

Having only played two matches this season, Bute have a full squad ready to go.



Glenurquhart ran out 5-2 winners against Ardnamurchan in the secondary girls sixes event.

Glens win Crawford Cup

GLENURQUHART High School made up for last year's disappointment in the Donnella Crawford Cup by beating Ardnamurchan in the final to lift the trophy for the first time.

Secondary age girls teams from across the country visited Stron-tian for the annual sixes event.

The Glen raced into a two goal lead and dominated the midfield early on. They stretched their lead to four goals by half time and seemed set for a comfortable win.

But the home side came out fighting and pulled two goals back before the Drumnadrochit side settled the game with a fifth goal.

Oban Lorne to play their biggest game in 50 years

League standings will take a back seat to cup fever this weekend

GLENCRUITTEN will play host to the biggest game in the 50-year history of Oban Lorne Rugby Football Club this weekend as Broughton travel to play in National Bowl semi-final.

The winner of this tie will play in the national final at Murrayfield and Oban Lorne president Dee Bradbury said there was much excitement around the club at the prospect.

She said: "We are all very excited, very proud and very much looking forward to the match, with a view to competing at the home of Scottish rugby."

"We have never played Broughton before but we know they will be a huge challenge."

Perfect way
"Our players know this is the biggest game in the club's history and a trip to play at Murrayfield would be the perfect way to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary season."

A sponsors lunch will start at noon on the day of the match and the club has been attempting to attract as many supporters as possible to the match, which kicks off at 3pm. There will also be a matchday programme, a

raffle and pipers during the day.

Oban Lorne warmed up for their National Bowl semi-final with a one-sided 54-0 home win against Lanark last Saturday.

Just four minutes into the first half Corrie Louw crashed over the line to put Oban's first points on the board. Craig Wright's boot extended the lead and ensured he surpassed his season-best points tally.

Lanark, who won promotion from West Division 4 last season, were constantly on the back foot as the Lorne scrum, anchored by captain Robin MacQueen, marched their opponents backwards, leaving Corrie Louw with a simple job of touching the ball down for his second try of the game.

Soon, it was the turn of the more youthful elements of the squad to shine, as fly-half Ruaridh Aitken dodged and darted his way between the tackles to slide in under the posts to give Oban their third try of the afternoon.

The former Mid Argyll player showed composure beyond his years and outstanding agility to add to his new team's points

RUGBY

tally. Into the second half and it was more of the same from the home pack and Robin MacQueen was next to take advantage with a try.

Lanark frustrations began to show and the visiting number eight was sin-binned but soon after Oban Lorne's Andy MacDougall also had an "enforced rest" following a high tackle.

Quick ball from scrum-half Fergus Matheson paved the way for Corrie Louw to seal a hat trick of tries and Cammy Smith, playing at centre, soon made his own contribution to the scoring, bursting down the left wing and running the ball in beneath the posts.

There was still time for The Green Machine to add yet another try from Corrie Louw but kicking machine Craig Wright had the final say by running in a try of his own, before converting.

The win has sent Oban Lorne to the top of the league once more, but league standings will take a back seat to cup fever this weekend.



A Lanark tackler can only piggy-back Oban Lorne's Corrie Louw, as the South African scores one of his four tries. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Captain's Scramble at Glencruitten

GOLF

SATURDAY saw the start of the golf season with the first competition being the Captain's Scramble.

The winners were George Currie, Charles MacIntyre, Kenny MacLean and Malcolm MacKillop with a score of 55 - 4.6 = 50.4. In second place were David Fraser, Sonny Galbraith, John MacCallum and William McDougall Snr with a score of 54 - 3 = 51. In third place were Peter Dunn, Michael Kelly, Keith MacCallum and Finlay O'Rourke with a score of 56 - 40.9 = 51.1.

This Saturday the competition is a three-man Stableford. On Saturdays throughout the winter the weekly Stableford proved very popular and it has been decided that a competition will now be played on Sundays. There is also to be a Stableford on Tuesday, April 2.

Oban Saints youths results and fixtures

YOUTH FOOTBALL

WEEKEND results: Under 13s no game; Under 14s 5, Antonine 1. Scoring for Saints were Jay Cooper (3), Patrick MacIntyre and Ben Coates. Under 15s v Dalmuir Park and Under 16s v Ardencaple games postponed.

The teams will now take an Easter break.

Winter League at the Isle of Seil GC

GOLF

THE Isle of Seil Golf Club Winter League, a competition played over 11 weeks throughout the winter as a nine-hole Stableford was won by David Nathan.

John Taylor was a close second, one point behind, using the best eight scores from the 11 weeks.

Alasdair gears up!

RALLYING

MULL'S youngest ever rally driver is gearing up for the season ahead after dominating the tests and securing support from a rally ace.

Alasdair Currie, who is not even old enough to hold a driving licence, joined the Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge at the age of 14 last year and will begin this season's championship on March 30 at Charterhall.

The 15 year old bought a Citroen AX in July last year and has rally ace Mark Runciman sitting alongside him.

Currie has secured sponsorship from The Western Isles Hotel, Craignure Inn, John Macdonald Transport, Forge Construction Ltd and Bad-Darrah Self Catering.

Golf at Tobermory

GOLF

NEW Season Opening 4s Competition. 1 Ewan MacCrone and Scott Paterson 88-18-70; 2 John Wilshire and Lewis Wilshire 87-15-72; 3 Ian McNaughton and Ross MacCrone 90-15.5-74.5

Hairy Legs Competition: 1 Richard Inglis and John Weir 81-10-71; 2 Gordon Chalmers and Ross Laurie 95-16.5-78.5; 3 Mike Campbell and Iain Wilshire 99-18-81.

Laurance awarded Roger Barnes Memorial Trophy

ANGLING

OBAN and Lorn Angling Club presented the Roger Barnes Memorial Trophy, awarded by the Institute of Fisheries Management, to club secretary Laurance Larmour.

The award was for gaining the top marks in Scotland in the training course and examination for Bailiffing and Keeping (Scotland), which means Laurance is a certified warrant card-carrying water bailiff, with the same powers and privileges as a police constable in relation to enforcing fisheries legislation, with powers of entry, search, seizure and arrest.

The award was made at a club meeting prior to the commencement of the new brown trout season. Matters arising included club finances, membership and club information guides including the new web-based guides, new leases, boat repairs and work parties required in the launching of the club's 10 boats at some of the 20 lochs available to members and visitors.

Oban and Lorn Angling Club is always encouraging new and younger members.

Harry travels to Belgium with the Scottish youth squad

BADMINTON

BADMINTON prospect Harry Mobey will travel with the Scottish youth squad to compete in Belgium this weekend, in the same week he has risen in the Scottish rankings.

The Victor Junior OLVE Tournament attracts some of the world's best young badminton players from 16 countries.

And Harry will go into the tournament with confidence after the latest Scottish under-13 rankings placed him at number five.

It has been a quick progression in his first year at Glasgow School of Sport.

Harry has a few other opportunities to improve his ranking before his season ends on May 13.

After his Belgian adventure, Harry will line up at the Rising Stars tournament in Warwick on April 27 and an international tournament at the National Badminton Academy, Scotstoun, Glasgow on May 25.

In a successful first year at Bellahouston, Harry has won tournaments in Scotland and England.

He has also had the opportunity along the way to meet Jessica Ennis, Susan Egelstaff, Imogen Bankier and more recently Colin Jackson and Jonathan Edwards.



Badminton player Harry Mobey is up to fifth in the Scottish rankings for his age group. t13harry01



New fly-half Ruaridh Aitken dives over the line to score the Green Machine's third try of the afternoon. Photo: Stephen Lawson

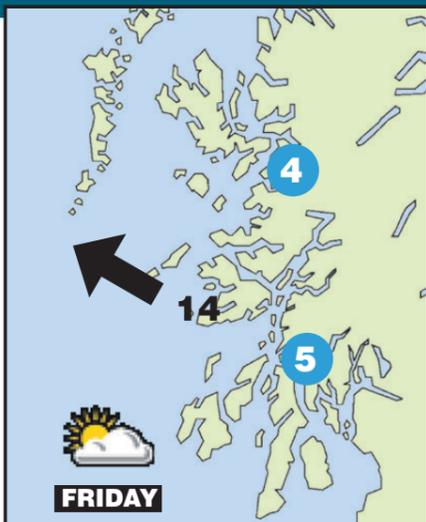
Weather

Thursday Sunny
Winds moderate, east south easterly
Temperatures -3C to 5°C

Friday Sunny intervals
Winds strong, east south easterly
Temperatures -2°C to 5°C.

Weekend Cloudy
Outlook Winds moderate easterly
Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, March 28, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	00.00 0.4 06.07 4.1 12.33 0.6 18.25 4.0	
Fri	00.39 0.3 06.39 4.0 13.06 0.5 18.58 3.9	
Sat	01.20 0.4 07.14 3.9 13.43 0.6 19.35 3.9	
Sun	02.03 0.5 07.53 3.7 14.25 0.7 20.17 3.7	
Mon	02.51 0.7 08.37 3.5 15.14 1.0 21.06 3.4	
Tues	03.48 1.0 09.28 3.1 16.14 1.2 22.07 3.2	
Wed	04.55 1.2 10.40 2.8 17.28 1.4 23.39 3.0	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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The following pages are from the Fort William (Northern) Edition of The Oban Times.

The Oban Times prints two editions of the paper. There is the main edition as well as the Fort William (Northern) Edition.

Sometimes pages that appear in the Fort William edition do not appear in the main edition (and vice versa).

As an electronic subscriber you get the main edition plus the pages that appear in the Northern edition.

The Oban Times

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

INCLUDING NEW PLOT NEW HOME



Easter Property Review



Inside this week

Lochaber junior piping
SUCCESS pages 14 & 15



Primary school jog
raises £1,800 page 8



Also inside

- Food glorious food
- Magical Mid Argyll
- Tracing the early footsteps of St Columba

plus all the latest job vacancies and sports news

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Auction Me Out: The brave men and women who were auctioned off on the night, with some of the event organisers and volunteers.

'Human auction' boosts charity fund by £3,500

A 'HUMAN auction' of topless men and glamorous women in aid of Goldenhar Family Support Group UK. Dawn Harper and friends in aid of Goldenhar Family Support Group UK. Dawn's six year-old daughter Lola was born with Goldenhar syndrome - a condition affecting the development of the face and internal organs.

'Fantastic'

Co-organiser Nicola MacPhee said the night had been 'fantastic'. She told The Oban Times: 'We want to thank everyone for coming along and for

their generous donations. Everyone got really involved which was great. We'd like to thank all the local businesses who donated prizes, the Nevis Centre, all the volunteers who helped out, Lola's dad Graeme Platt who provided the music and her brother Jamie who controlled the lighting.'

She added: 'It's great we raised so much, but we also really wanted to raise awareness of Goldenhar syndrome.' Skipinnish later donated all the money raised on the door to the charity.

Fort court staff locked out by cleaners

FORT William Sheriff Court workers had a quieter day than usual last Wednesday - after cleaners mistakenly locked the front door of the building on their way out.

Confused

The error was not noticed until lunchtime, leaving office staff inside confused as to why no one had come in all morning.

There were no cases heard in the court on the day, but the office is open from 9am-4.30pm for general enquires and to accept fine payments.

Mallaig widow sued by undertaker

A MALLAIG widow has been ordered to pay £617 of an unpaid funeral bill after being sued by an undertaker.

Maureen Tarn had refused to pay £1,087 to local man Robert Corson, claiming he charged her for services she did not want after her husband Gerald died in June 2011.

Mrs Tarn told Fort William

Sheriff Court she asked for a cardboard coffin as her husband 'didn't believe in funerals'.

Mr Corson, 81, told her a wooden coffin was required as her 20-stone husband was too heavy for a cardboard version, but Mrs Tarn claimed she later found a company that makes oversized cardboard coffins.

The 60-year-old said she had

not paid the full bill because she felt Mr Corson had lied to make more money.

Sheriff Noel McPartlin said: 'In my view both parties acted in good faith.'

'I do not think Mr Corson lied to obtain this work.'

He ordered Mrs Tarn to pay part of the outstanding amount, plus £61 in expenses.

Hurricane force winds leave roads blocked by fallen trees

HURRICANE force winds tore through Lochaber on Friday night leaving forest roads and public paths blocked by fallen trees.

A gust of 93 mph was recorded by a weather station at Bunree, Onich.

Police were forced to close Fort William High

Street until early Saturday morning because of flying debris.

And felling operations in Glen Righ Forest were disrupted on Monday as work began to clear access from the A82 at Corran.

See storm round-up, pages six and seven.

Cyclist's relief at guilty verdict

Badly injured man looks to move on with life

A FORT William cyclist who lost part of his leg after being hit by a speeding car more than two years ago has said he is looking to move on with his life after a six-day trial at Fort William Sheriff Court concluded.

Andy MacLeod was in court with his parents to hear the foreman of a 15-person jury read out a guilty verdict on a charge of dangerous driving for Graham Douglas.

The jury took less than an hour to come to a majority decision.

After the verdict was read out, Mr MacLeod told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm just glad it's all over.'

Douglas was driving his Subaru Impreza at up to 67 mph on Lundavra Road when he collided with Mr MacLeod near the junction with Connachie

By RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

Road on March 7 2011. Mr MacLeod, an adventure tourism management undergraduate at West Highland College, was thrown nearly 60 metres along the road with the lower part of his right leg ripped off almost instantly.

The 21-year-old also suffered brain injuries and told the court he had no memory of the event or the following month and that the crash had changed his life.

The jury was shown photos of the Subaru after the crash, showing extensive damage to the bonnet, windscreen and roof.

Police crash investigator Scott Lemmon analysed skid marks and gouges left on the road after the crash and said they showed the Subaru was doing 'an absolute minimum speed of 67mph'.

Douglas, of 12 Linnhe Road, could now face a maximum of two years in jail. Sheriff Noel McPartlin deferred sentencing the 29-year-old until April 11 for social work reports to be prepared.

Douglas, who was remanded in custody, had denied driving over the speed limit claiming Mr MacLeod had emerged from the junction directly into his path, making the collision unavoidable.



Handcuffed: Graham Douglas was found guilty of hitting the cyclist while driving at 67 mph.



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Lochaber fire chief's blaze danger warning

A FIRE chief is warning of a critical fire danger across the West Highlands ahead of the Easter weekend.

And Lochaber group manager Pat McElhinney is concerned that the arrival of thousands of holidaymakers could up the chances of someone unwittingly sparking a major incident.

The prolonged dry spell has led to tinderbox conditions with layers of dead grass and bracken providing ready fuel for a blaze.

And because so many sheep and cattle have been removed from the hills there is far more combustible material because grasses and heather have grown unchecked for years.

Lochaber has already seen two major wildfires in recent days, at Achnabobane near Spean Bridge last Thursday and on the Knoydart peninsula on Sunday night.

Now Mr McElhinney is reminding both Lochaber residents and people coming for holidays to take extra care when enjoying the great outdoors. He told *The Oban Times*: 'We

want everybody to have a good time but I would advise anybody to be careful with sources of ignition such as campfires and cigarettes, because the vegetation is tinder dry at the moment.'

'Please be vigilant about what you do and when and where you do it, as even a small fire can quickly grow into a very serious situation that can impact people's homes, property and lives.'

He added: 'A moment's carelessness can place serious pressure on fire services and those local businesses who release retained firefighters to deal with these incidents.'

Arisaig amateur weatherman Randal Coyne said 2013 had been the driest year since his records began in 2000.

Mr Coyne reports that only 121mms of rain has fallen so far against the average of 345mms, with a mere 32mms recorded since February 20. No rain or snow has been measured since March 15.

Mr Coyne said: 'There's an awful lot of mairburning started already - and that could be unwise.'

Meanwhile, Knoydart community firefighters put out Sunday's wildfire despite their unit, along with Eigg's, having been shut down on cost grounds.

Eigg Heritage Trust secretary Maggie Fyffe told *The Oban Times*: 'There should be a place for a team of locally trained people here.'

'In one incident on Muck a shed went on fire and if the local team had not been able to respond it could have spread to a house.'

Wildfires devastated the West Highlands in May 2011 and in one incident a family canoeing and wild camping at Loch Shiel inadvertently started a blaze when an ember of burning toilet paper ignited dry grass.

Around 1,000 acres of heather and young trees were destroyed on Glenaladale Estate near Glenfinnan.

After the story appeared in *The Oban Times*, the Scottish Canoe Association changed its advice and now advises burning toilet paper is 'not recommended'.

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Portree, Lochaber and Mallaig competitors after the presentation of prizes at An Clachan. 20_f13lean01

Lochaber High School pips Portree to challenge title

LOCHABER High School pipped Portree and Mallaig to win the fourth schools Leachan Challenge at Torlundy on Friday. In bitterly cold conditions, 31 pupils from all year groups tackled set courses hoping to win individual and team trophies. S1-2 runners ran 3.5-kilometres, S3-4 5.5 kilometres and S5-6 eight kilometres on forest trails round the An Clachan headquarters of organisers Lochaber Rural Education Trust. Lochaber High School support for learning teacher Alan Ross

was delighted with his team's durability in the freezing weather. 'I didn't hear anybody complaining about the cold,' said Mr Ross, who also takes the after school running club. 'They build themselves tough here - they were all in shorts. But it must have been wild on parts of the course.' Portree head of PE Wilma McRuarty and Active Schools rep Jeremy Rossiter brought the young Isle of Skye athletes to Fort William in the school's yellow minibus. Ms McRuarty told *The Oban Times*: 'This is our second time

here and it's been a great day. We have a full team here and the kids ran really well. It's super that we can come and take part. Everyone is so friendly and welcoming - and the soup was great.' Mallaig High School PE teacher Alan Cargill was equally enthusiastic about the event. He said: 'We had five lads here and one first in the juniors. It has been cold with a few flurries of snow but once they got running they were fine. We have been coming for the four years since it started and we would not miss it.'

Lochaber Educational Trust trustee Isabel Campbell thanked Forestry Commission Scotland's Ruairidh Watt and the Active Schools co-ordinators for helping run the event. She added: 'It's brilliant that Portree came all this way.'

Results: S1-2 girls - 1 Robyn Blackhall (Lochaber); 2 Isla Campbell (Portree); 3 Abby Blackhall (Lochaber). Boys - 1, Kyle Ingram (Mallaig); 2 Andrew Grieve (Portree); 3 Kenneth Nicolson (Portree). S3-4 girls - 1 Ruth Gordon (Portree); 2 Eilidh Moynihan (Lochaber); 3 Rachel

MacPherson (Lochaber). Boys - 1 Innes Blackhall; 2 Bruce MacLean; 3 Lee Kennedy (all Lochaber). S5-6 girls - 1 Isla MacKay (Lochaber); 2 Carey Ross (Portree); 3 Molly Danter (Portree). Boys - 1 Calum Fraser; 2 Joseph Tangney; 3 Craig MacLean (all Lochaber). Fastest girl - Isla MacKay. Fastest boy - Calum Fraser. Team event winners - Lochaber. All competitors received a medal struck in memory of LRET trustee Peter English, who inspired the inaugural challenge.

Skye sports plan backed

THE GROUP behind a bold bid for a sports and recreation centre near Dunvegan has received strong public support for its plans. At North West Skye Recreational Association's AGM in Dunvegan Castle on Saturday, around 40 people backed proposals for the development on a bare field site at Lommore, two miles south of the village. The envisaged hub and sports pitches, costed in a feasibility study at between £1.6m and £1.8m, would potentially save local residents from Edinbane to Glendale from travelling up to 25 miles to Portree to access sports and leisure facilities. NWSRA chair John Hermse told *The Oban Times* the 'modular' project was 'fairly adaptable' - and could be built in phases as funding became available. He said: 'We were delighted with the meeting

By STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

and the reaction from the local community. Today has been a really important step on the path to developing a sports and wellness centre for all the people of North West Skye. 'We now have an enthusiastic board of 14 trustees who are tasked with completing a business plan that will enable us to both raise sufficient capital funding to make the plans a reality - but also identify and receive commitments for revenue funding to demonstrate the long-term sustainability of the plans.' Highlife Highland chief executive Ian Murray, who has assisted in working up the concept and addressed Saturday's meeting, said he was 'impressed' with the group's professionalism. He told *The Oban Times*:

'They know what they want to do and are realistic about what it might cost in capital, but more importantly also in revenue terms. They are taking it step by step, taking aboard comments from the community and very importantly not displacing any other community facilities. They want to fill the gaps - not displace anything.' Prior to the meeting, Mr Hermse presented prizes to Jessica Jackson from Orbst, who won a competition to design the group's new logo. Jessica received £100 together with another £100 for her nominated local organisation, Duirinish Youth Club. Mr Hermse also thanked architect Mark Kilkenny and Malcolm Clapperton of the Scottish Agricultural College for their work on the project. He said: 'They have gone above and beyond what was required of them.'



Jessica Jackson, with her mum Rachael, shows her winning design for which she received £100 together with £100 for Duirinish Youth Club from NWSRA chair John Hermse, right.



First class: the new Sir E Scott School at Tarbert is looking to broaden its ties.

Re-vamped Sir E Scott School forms new 'friends' group

A RECENTLY refurbished school on Harris is extending the hand of friendship to former pupils, staff and associates through a new group. The Friends of Sir E Scott School (FSESS) is open to everyone with an interest in the Isle of Harris and will encourage members to re-

connect with old friends and make new acquaintances. It is hoped FSESS will provide practical support to both school and pupils, as well as providing financial assistance. Membership will be free. Headteacher Aileen MacSween said: 'We are proud of Sir E Scott, which now has first class

facilities and will help us push the boundaries of achievement. We want to share that success with old and new friends. Those who join the group will be playing an active role in helping the local community.' For further details and membership forms email srescottschool@gnes.net.

Sheriff rejects 'no case to answer' request

A SHERIFF has rejected a request to throw out the case against a Caol man accused of drunkenly attacking his then-girlfriend. Representing Alexander Williamson, lawyer Gerry Sweeney told Fort William Sheriff Court the Crown had failed to provide enough evidence an assault had taken place, or that Williamson, aged 23, had been involved. After Procurator fiscal Alison Wylie concluded the prosecution evidence, Mr Sweeney said there was 'no case to answer'. Mr Sweeney claimed the charge rested entirely on the alleged victim's story and her injuries could have been self-inflicted or the result of an accident. He said: 'It is the defence position that there is no cor-

roborative evidence that the complainant's injuries are related to an assault.' Ms Wylie said there was plenty to suggest the 17-year-old woman had been attacked in Williamson's home and said her injuries were consistent with an assault. Ms Wylie also said the teenager had been seen shortly afterwards in a state of 'distress'. Sheriff Noel McPartlin agreed and said the trial would likely come down to reliability of the witnesses. The defence will put forward its case when the trial resumes on April 22, with Williamson expected to give evidence. Williamson, of 4 Glenmallie Terrace, denies assaulting the woman to her injury in his home in the early hours of June 23 last year.

Former Rangers football stars to attend charity dinner

FORMER Glasgow Rangers stars John Brown and Mark Hateley are to attend a charity dinner in Fort William on Saturday, May 11. The event in the BA Club, coined the 'Blue Do 13', will feature the ex-players recounting tales from their playing careers, a question and answer session, a raffle and auction of football memorabilia. All proceeds are going to the British Heart Foundation, The Beatson Cancer Research Centre and the Rangers Fans' Erskine Appeal. Anyone wishing tickets can contact 07821440169. No tickets will be available on the door on the evening.

Guest speaker's return visit to Lochaber Local History Society

TEARLACH MacFarlane from Glenfinnan will return as guest speaker at Lochaber Local History Society's last regular meeting of the season in the Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William on Thursday April 4 at 8pm. His subject will be 'In the Braes of Loch Shiel', with tales of Eilean Fhionain, the Green Isle and its vicinity. Everyone welcome. The talk is a curtain-raiser for the society's annual outing on April 20 which will include a visit to the island and a cruise up Loch Shiel, accompanied by Tearlach.

Recycling centre opening hours

FORT William recycling centre will be open as normal over the Easter weekend. From April 1, summer opening hours of 10am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday, will operate.

Skye felling to resume in June

FELLING operations in a community-owned woodland on Skye will resume in June once a new access has been built for heavy plant. Around 25,000 tonnes of timber has been harvested so far from the 440-hectare Tormore Forest, which Sleat Community Trust acquired from Forestry Commission Scotland for £330,000 in July 2011. Community forester Chris Marsh told *The Oban Times*: 'We have to build a new forest road to get to next year's timber.'

Climber's family pay tribute to emergency services

THE FAMILY of a man who died on Streap near Glenfinnan has paid tribute to all involved in the search operation. The body of Airdrie man James Jack, a 57-year-old apprentice manager with Virgin Media, was recovered from the 2,988-foot mountain on Saturday. He had been missing since Friday night in conditions described by Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team as 'unbelievable'. Team leader John Stevenson said one of his men was 'blown off his feet' by hurricane-force winds. In total, 29 rescuers were involved including 11 from RAF Leuchars. In a statement issued through police, Mr Jack's family said: 'The family wish to thank both the Lochaber and RAF Mountain Rescue and emergency services for their efforts. We also are extremely grateful to Northern Constabulary for their help and support at this difficult time.' Mr Jack was the eighth person to die in Lochaber's mountains this winter.

House plan refused

A BANAVIE woman's application to knock down an old crofting shed and build a house has been refused by councillors after concerns it would result in 'piecemeal' development of the area. Planners advised the south planning applications committee to reject Miss M Campbell's plans for a house on Wilson Way, Tomonie. Planning officer Susan Poole told the committee a wider development plan for the area was required before any new houses could be built. The councillors voted 7-6 to refuse the plans, with local councillors Eddie Hunter and Allan Henderson both arguing for the application to be granted permission.



James Jack: loved climbing in west Lochaber. He is pictured here on Sgurr na Ciche in Knoydart, with Rum in the background.

'Missing' fisherman shouted and swore at officers

A FISHERMAN found drunk and asleep on a boat in Mallaig harbour after being reported as missing has been fined £160 after shouting and swearing at the police officers who found him. A full scale search for Sean MacDonald involving the coastguard and local lifeboat was launched after his bag was found floating in the village harbour on March 20.

The 21-year-old had just returned from 10 days at sea and had been drinking in the village with crewmates from the Carboist-based vessel *Aquarius*, Fort William Sheriff Court heard. Concerns for his safety were raised when a holdall containing his belongings was spotted in the water later that night with MacDonald nowhere to be seen. MacDonald, of 61 Garrabost, Point, Isle of Lewis, was then located on a second boat and starting abusing officers when they woke him up, fiscal Alison Wylie said. She continued: 'He was shouting and swearing at anyone who could hear him, basically.' His anger continued when he was put in a police car, where he pulled off a door handle in an attempt to get out. Appearing from custody, MacDonald pled guilty to behaving in a threatening or abusive manner.

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 (kathleen@argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk)
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Nomination forms now available in AVA offices or online!
 Deadline: Friday 26th April 2013

Argyll Voluntary Action, 21 High Street Oban PA34 4BG

Islay Letter

Choir presentation

One of the undoubted highlights of this year's Fèis, Ìle, the island's annual festival of malt and music which runs from May 2th to 1st June, will be an ambitious project by Còisir Ghaidhlig Ìle, directed by Iseabail Mactaggart, which will give a new interpretation of one of the outstanding Gaelic poems penned by local bard William Livingston.

Livingston was born at Gartmain on the outskirts of Bowmore in 1808, and sections of the poem, widely regarded as the definite poetic tribute to the battle of Loch Gruinart fought between the MacDonalds of Islay and the MacLeans of Mull in 1598, have been set to music for the first time by singer/composer Clare Jordan.

The battle presentation by the choir will be entitled BLAR and will feature over 140 community musicians. These will include instrumentalist, choral singers and traditional musicians taught under the umbrella of Fèis Oigridh Ìle 's Dhiùra.

BLAR will also include appropriate readings from the battle poem along with a visual element exhibited simultaneously. This is being overseen by local artist and writer Dr Raymond Lafferty who working on the project in conjunction with Islay and Jura school pupils and Iomairt Ghaidhlig Ìle is Dhiùra.

This special event will be held at Bowmore on May 30 and such is the interest engendered that the organisers are planning to play to two houses on the same evening.

This is one of the most ambitious music projects undertaken on the island and is also a fitting tribute to a largely forgotten poet who died in Glasgow in 1870.

Easter services

A number of special services in local churches will mark the Easter celebrations and provide worship opportunities for both locals and visitors to the island.

First off today, Maundy Thursday, is an Ecumenical Eucharist at 7:30pm at the St Columba Scottish Episcopal Church at Bridgend.

Tomorrow, Good Friday, sees a 'Walk of Witness' from the Round Church at 2pm followed by open air worship at Bowmore's Morrison Square. Good Friday worship continues with a short Easter meditation at St John's Church, Port Ellen at 6:30pm.

A 'Son Rising' service is being held at Port Ellen's community gardens at 8am on Easter Day, followed by breakfast in the local Baptist premises. The Port Ellen Baptists hold their regular service on Sunday at 10am followed by worship at St John's at 11:30am.

Round Church worshippers will meet at 10am, a Roman Catholic Mass takes place at the Episcopal church at 4pm, and a further act of worship will take place at the same time at the Gortanvogie Eventide Home. The Resurrection theme will continue at the Bowmore Baptist Church at 6:30pm.

A warm welcome awaits all at these special services.

Daffodil Tea

Members of Bowmore's Round Church are holding a daffodil tea tomorrow evening, Friday 29th March, in the Bowmore Buffet Hall, at 7:30pm.

The high home baking standards will be maintained, there will be lots of sidelines to part you from your money and youthful entertainment will be provided by a group of multi talented pupils from local schools. Admission is £4 and all proceeds will go to the church's Fabric Fund.

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810 658



Bonawe's Iona Campbell captured the ferocity of the blaze on Tuesday night. The fire has since swept towards the village.

Huge blaze threatens Bonawe

Village fears as hill fire rages out of control

A FIRE on a hill behind the village of Bonawe could be spreading towards homes with fire crews helpless to stop it.

Since 2.30pm on Tuesday, smoke could be seen for many miles as the blaze crept across Beinn Duirinnis near Bonawe Quarry.

Homes threatened

As *The Oban Times* went to press, villagers were preparing to take evasive action as the fire crept over the top of the hill, threatening to sweep down towards Bonawe.

There were also concerns the blaze could spread north and west to damage forestry near Sutherland's Grove, north of Beinn Duirinnis.

It is believed locally that the blaze was started deliberately by two fishermen. A full investigation is yet to take place.

Michael Wardrop, who has lived at Kenmore Cottages for 35 years, said



Video of this available online OBANTIMES.CO.UK

The spread of the fire across Beinn Duirinnis could be seen best from Taynuilt. Firefighters were unable to tackle it directly due to challenging conditions on the hill. Picture - Charlene Jagger

yesterday: 'I've never seen anything like this. It's starting to come over the hill now. It's a bit of a worry.'

Neighbour Ronnie Campbell added: 'It was mental last night. It could come back towards the village. People were worried.'

Donald MacNeil works at Bonawe Quarry and lives in the village. He was watching the

fire spread since it started and admits to having concerns for his home.

He said: 'It's spread about three miles so far, up towards Loch Creran Farm Cottage. I'm a wee bit worried now.'

Eighty-two year old Lily Wilson grew up in Bonawe and now lives at The Hedges in Taynuilt, an area that looks

across the loch to Bonawe. 'I have never seen anything like it,' she said.

A spokesperson for Strathclyde Fire and Rescue said: 'We have had trouble gaining access because of treacherous conditions underfoot.'

'We're actively assessing the situation but any action will be up to the officer in charge.'

Argyll boost for home buyers

£3 million mortgage scheme aims to help first time buyers

A £3MILLION scheme will give first time buyers in Argyll and Bute a welcome boost by providing a helping hand onto the property ladder.

Argyll and Bute Council is one of many local authorities across the UK to adopt the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, which provides assistance to potential buyers who can afford the mortgage payments but struggle to find an initial deposit for a new home.

The local authority has agreed to provide £1million a year over the next three years to fund the scheme, which could help up to 33 first time home buyers across Argyll and Bute get on the property ladder each year.

It is hoped that the scheme will help stimulate the property market as well as reverse a trend that has seen young people leave the area in search of jobs and affordable housing.

Making the announcement, the council's lead councillor for homes, George Freeman, said: 'As the economic situation becomes increasingly tough, so people find it more and more difficult to step onto the property ladder and buy their own home.'

'The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which we are adopting will help to ease this situation and will open up the possibility of home ownership for people all over the area.'

'It will also help to stimulate the local economy and bring more life to our communities if people are able to afford to live and work in Argyll and Bute.'

As with other lending schemes, people will have to be able to afford their payments and meet certain lending criteria.

In effect, the scheme means first time buyers will be able to access an indemnity of up to £30,000 towards a mortgage of no more than £150,000.

For example, on a property costing £150,000, there would be a five per cent deposit of £7,500 from the buyer for a 95 per cent mortgage of £142,500.

The council contribution of £30,000 would effectively give the buyer access to the terms of a 75 per cent mortgage.

The leader of the opposition, Dick Walsh, has backed the scheme.

He said: 'Anything that will help young people in particular securing a mortgage and get on the property ladder can only be a good thing.'

'It is something that's been talked about for a long time and we feel it will make a big difference.'

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Council urged to address escalating costs at Oban Airport

ARGYLL and Bute Council has been urged to tackle the costs of running Oban Airport as a way to make the service more efficient.

The local authority revealed plans in *The Oban Times* to relaunch the facility this May as part of a marketing drive to attract more trade to the facility.

However, Connel resident and

retired businessman Stephen Thomas believes too much money is being spent on absolute compliance with regulation – something he believes is wasteful.

Currently, the airport alongside Coll and Colonsay airports, costs £892,000 per annum to run, of which £800,000 is covered by a Scottish Government

subsidy and £32,000 is income from the airports.

The cost of the subsidy for the public service obligation (PSO) flights to the council, meanwhile, is £332,000, bringing the council's net costs for running the airport to £392,000.

Mr Thomas believes a lot of that money could be saved.

'Whilst it was interesting

to hear that the council 'have commissioned a marketing strategy aimed at consolidating and expanding operations at Oban Airport' they appear to be satisfied with the costs of operating this airport – which is regarded as a 'gold-plated airport in aviation circles,' he said. 'Whatever was required to ensure compliance with the

Civil Aviation Authority rules has been provided or fully complied with, whereas some other Scottish airports successfully challenged many aspects so as to ensure less costly minimum and correct compliance with legal requirements and also health and safety aspects.

'It has been suggested that it would be worth reviewing

the Oban Airport operation similarly.'

Meanwhile, Paul Keegan, the largest private investor in the airport with his company Total Logistics Concepts, says he has doubts over the council's plans to re-brand the airport.

He said: 'The latest publicity surrounding the airport gives the impression of a thriving

bustling facility when in fact there are days and days when all that arrives and departs is the subsidised service.

'Our fuel business has fallen by 40 per cent in five years and this is a direct reflection of the huge fall in visiting aircraft. There needs to be a genuine attempt to reverse the decline in aircraft numbers.'

Objectors say North Connel flat plan is 'monstrous'

OBJECTORS to a proposed development of 24 flats on the site of the former Ossians Retirement Home have described the plan as 'monstrous'.

At a public hearing in North Connel Hall on Monday to discuss the planning application by Melfort Care Ltd, councillors on Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee passed a recommendation to approve outline planning permission.

Councillors had made a site visit and heard from the developer's agent and objectors during the meeting.

Committee chairman Sandy Taylor said: 'Having granted outline planning consent, the committee did ask that the detailed application come before us, which is quite unusual.'

'I think that shows the interest we have in this and we want to make sure this comes to the correct conclusion.'

Objector Iain MacLean, a previous owner of the retirement home, described the block of flats as 'monstrous', claiming that the development was of a scale and size that was 'completely out of character for North Connel'.

New estate agent to open in Oban

OBAN could be set for a jobs boost after confirmation a new estate agency is to open in the town.

Dunoon business WaterSide Property will open in Argyll Square this Easter and is currently recruiting for staff to run the new business.

Director Gary Campbell said: 'Following the success of our Dunoon-based operation we are thrilled to be opening an office in Oban from where we can offer the same high level of service to our clients.'

Bookmaker takes George Street site

AN OBAN shop is to go from boots to bookmakers with William Hill set to open in the town. The national business has applied for permission to erect an illuminated sign outside the premises at 71-75 George Street, after successfully applying to change the use of the building to a betting shop when it was still occupied by Stead and Simpson in 2011.

Superfast broadband upgrade to be delivered

HIE signs fast fibre technology deal with BT

SUPERFAST broadband is finally set to be delivered to the Highlands and Islands after a long-awaited £146million contract was signed to upgrade the area's archaic infrastructure.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) confirmed on Monday it had put pen to paper with telecommunications operator BT to start work on the biggest upgrade ever seen on the region's telecommunications network.

It will mean 84 per cent of the area's homes and businesses will be able to access fibre broadband technology by the time work is completed.

Confirming the agreement, HIE chief executive Alex Paterson said it was the most complex and challenging broadband project yet undertaken.

'This ambitious project is a game changer for the Highlands and Islands. It will roll out modern, fast and reliable broadband to areas that could not have hoped to have it introduced commercially.'

'Digital connectivity is essential to today's social and business activity. High-speed fibre broadband will make a real contribution to our communities' prosperity, particularly for people in remote and rural areas.'

The project comes with its own challenges. Bringing the speeds to the islands will involve laying around 400km of subsea cables over 19 crossings to the islands. It is the biggest sub-sea engineering project BT has undertaken in the UK and is the first ever with so many seabed crossings.

"Excellent news for homes and businesses."
councillor Drew Hendry

Deployment details for the first phase of this partnership will now be finalised and detailed plans for each local authority area will be announced in due course. Coverage levels in all seven local authority areas within the project area will represent a significant step for fibre broadband in the Highlands and Islands.

Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid: 'I am pleased that this contract has at last been signed, seven months behind schedule.'

'Both the UK and Scottish Governments have contributed funding. High speed broadband will make a huge difference to the Highlands and Islands.'

Na h-Eileanan an Iar MP Angus MacNeil, said: 'This is fantastic news and will be warmly welcomed throughout the Highlands and Islands. This project to deliver next generation broadband will allow people in rural and remote communities to compete at international level.'

Leader of the Highland Council, councillor Drew Hendry, welcomed the announcement. He said: 'This is excellent news for people at home and business throughout the Highlands and Islands.'

Michael Russell MSP for Argyll and Bute also welcomed the news.



Park Primary School pupils Amy Jones, left, and Caitlin Cooke want more variety in Fairtrade products in Oban. 15_113Fairtrade01

Not very fair on Fairtrade claim primary pupils at Park

TWO PRIMARY school children have challenged shops and supermarkets in Oban to respect its status as a Fairtrade town and provide more of the branded products.

Amy Jones, aged 12, and Caitlin Cooke, aged 11, pupils at the Fairtrade-registered Park Primary School, wrote to *The Oban Times* and the four supermarkets in Oban after two events the school organised during Fairtrade Fortnight were hampered by a perceived lack of variety on the supermarket shelves.

Caitlin said: 'We had a Fairtrade snack day but most people could only find bananas and chocolate – and chocolate isn't exactly a healthy option.'

'We also tried to set up a five-a-day takeaway at the school but we couldn't get five different pieces of fruit and the only ingredients we could find for a Fairtrade cake bake were sugar and chocolate.'

Products labelled as Fairtrade have been made using resources that give farmers and workers in developing countries a fair deal for their produce.

Amy added: 'Oban became

Fairtrade in 2006, so you would think that by now there would be a whole range of Fairtrade products for sale here, not just food.'

The ObanTimes also contacted the four supermarkets, although Tesco did not respond.

A spokesman for The Co-operative Food said it had supported Fairtrade since the inception of the Fairtrade mark in 1994 and was the first retailer to sell Fairtrade bananas.

He added: 'Our Oban store sells a wide range of Fairtrade items, including tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, bananas, blue-

berries and wine. Our Fairtrade range even includes Scottish choc chip shortbread, produced in Scotland using Fairtrade African cocoa and sugar.'

A Lidl statement read: 'During the recent 2013 Fairtrade Fortnight we placed testers in our advertising to inform customers about the products they could purchase in our stores which support Fairtrade. Although we do not offer as many product lines as the larger supermarkets might, we do feel we offer a core range of own-label Fairtrade products.'

Pauline Cameron, chairwoman of Oban and Lorn Fairtrade Steering Group, said: 'It is great that the children are getting involved because they are the future consumers.'

'We are pleased that the supermarkets are supplying Fairtrade produce at all but there are more than 3,000 Fairtrade products registered in the UK, so the number of items on sale here is still relatively low.'

Aldi said it sold Fairtrade organic bananas, coffee, tea and wine. It hopes to progressively make more Fairtrade products available in its stores.

'We are pleased that the supermarkets are supplying Fairtrade produce at all but there are more than 3,000 Fairtrade products registered in the UK, so the number of items on sale here is still relatively low.'

Police warning comes after Oban man impaled on railings

A YOUNG man was impaled on railings in Soroba after trying to climb over a fence onto a railway track.

The 20-year-old Oban man was taken to Lorn and Islands Hospital after being stuck on the fence for a couple of hours, but his injuries were not found to be life threatening.

Emergency services were alerted to the man's plight after Soroba residents heard cries for help on Sunday and found the man stuck on the fence, which borders the railway line.

Emergency workers found the youngster 'impaled' and had to cut four railings to free him and take him to hospital where he was released following treatment.

Oban police are now issuing a reminder, warning youngsters of the dangers of climbing fences and attempting to access railway lines.

Inspector Julie McLeish described the man as 'really lucky' to have got through his ordeal without more serious injury. She said: 'This needs to serve as a warning to others not only about the dangers of accessing and crossing a live railway line but of climbing fences to do so.'

Fuel duty U-turn welcomed

THE CHANCELLOR'S decision to scrap the proposed fuel duty increase in this year's budget has been welcomed across the west – but there is concern that he has not gone far enough.

In his Budget speech, George Osborne referred to Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid's campaign against the fuel duty rise. Mr Reid said: 'I am delighted that the government has decided to scrap this year's fuel duty increase.'

Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor added: 'The cancellation of the three pence fuel duty rise planned for September is good news for the region's motorists and hauliers.'

But Ian Campbell of the North Connel-based haulage company D and J Campbell reckons the Chancellor had no choice but to scrap the increase. He said: 'It is great news but it won't make a massive difference; the price of fuel is still climbing.'

'There is no way it was possible for the Chancellor to increase fuel duty because that would have crippled a lot of businesses. The haulage industry is difficult enough just now, because we can't pass much more of the cost onto customers.'

'We all understand the government needs to find money from somewhere but they cannot put any more tax on fuel – that would make it impossible for a lot of industries to survive.'

Trees down at Barcaldine as Benderloch work is completed

WORKERS from the Forestry Commission could be forgiven for thinking their work is never done after wind caused trees to crash down in the Barcaldine area last week.

Work to clear trees damaged by strong wind in 2011 at Beinn Lora, Benderloch, finished at the tail end of last week, with the car park extended and path improved in the wake of the damage caused by one of the strongest storms to hit the area.

However, on Friday, strong easterly winds caused fresh problems, with Sutherland's Grove just a few miles north suffering badly as trees fell all along the A828.

Stuart Findlay, Lorne beat forester, said: 'There are trees down everywhere. You wouldn't believe how much green material there is now on the ground.' 'Thankfully Beinn Lora is fine. We've extended the car park and paths have been revised to make them easier to go up. The view from Eagle's Eyrie is spectacular after some of the trees were felled.'

Tobermory Marine Visitor Centre officially opened

THE OFFICIAL opening of the Tobermory Marine Visitor Centre on the Isle of Mull attracted a full house of visitors and locals as well as one celebrity guest.

Gordon Buchanan, the award-winning wildlife cameraman who hails from the island, cut the ribbon on the centre last Saturday.

Lydia Hosdell, centre manager, told *The Oban Times* the opening went 'really well'. She said: 'There was a huge attendance and we got great feedback from visitors and locals - Gordon was a star as always.'

'We had lots of touch pool talks, a lot more children's displays and there were activities everywhere. It was great to see so many people.'

'It was very busy, with so many people there it was hard to see the exhibitions and displays so people have said they will be back another day. That's fantastic, it is exactly what we are looking for.'

'I want to say a huge thanks to everyone that came and contributed - this was a good community day.'

Gordon added: 'It is a really great facility and somewhere for people to go on a rainy day. It will enhance your time on Mull whether you're a local or a visitor.'

'Every time you go in you can learn something new, even people who have lived here all their life can go into the centre



'If I'd known the Tobermory Marine Visitor Centre had a zoo licence, I'd have brought a polar bear for it,' Gordon Buchanan joked as he opened the new centre last Saturday. Picture by Nic Davies.

and learn something new about the seas around Mull.

'It is also a place where kids can go and learn in an entertaining way about the marine environment so when the rain stops they can use what they have learned to go out and explore.'

'I just hope people use this great facility. People tend to think these things are only for tourists but this is for everyone.'

Attractions at the centre include knot tying displays and an educational display of Elvis the otter, transformed by Lochawe taxidermist Mark Brown.

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Late penalty gives Fort both points

'The keeper fell on the ball. It's a shame for him, but it is a penalty, even their coach admitted it'

REPORT BY

RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

FORT William left it late to nick a narrow 2-1 against Oban Camanachd at a wind swept An Aird on Saturday.

Gary Innes was the hero, netting a penalty deep into second half injury time to secure the home side's first win of the season.

Oban controlled much of the first half despite playing into an icy wind, and took the lead after Iain MacMillan got on the end of a long ball from Garry Lord to knock the ball past Fort keeper Paul MacKay.

Both sides had chances to score before half time, but it took until three minutes into the second half for Fort to equalise through Innes.

Fort began to dominate the match but just as it looked destined to end all square referee Graham Cameron pointed to the spot to little complaint after Camanachd keeper Robert Dunning fell on the ball. Innes stepped up to fire his side into a 2-1 lead and seconds later the full time whistle was blown.

Happy
Fort manager Adie Robertson told The Oban Times he was happy with how his side performed after the break, and said the win was a fair result.

He said: 'We played much better in the second half even with the wind against us. It was all one way possession and we had lots of pressure on them. Overall I think we deserved to win but it was close.'

'We had a few boys back playing for the first time in a while

SHINTY

and there was a bit of rustiness out there. But the more the game went on the more it looked like we were going to win it.

'The keeper fell on the ball. It's a shame for him, but it is a penalty, even their coach admitted it.'

Duncan Rodger and Bryan Simpson both made their first appearance for the first team in 2013 after making themselves available, depending on work commitments.

Robertson said it was a boost to have the two experienced players back in the squad.

He said: 'Hopefully they'll be available as much as they can be. It means we can start picking a team and it means we've got lots of options.'



Fort's Gordy MacKinnon and Oban's Daniel Cameron tussle for the ball during Saturday's match at An Aird. 20_f13for03

Fort William at home to the Jags

FOOTBALL

FORT William will take on mid table Buckie Thistle on Saturday hoping to improve on a 3-3 draw between the sides earlier this season.

Danny Conlon's side have faced a tough run of games, playing most of the title challengers in the space of a month. But this weekend's game at Claggan Park offers a chance to close the gap between themselves and Lossiemouth at the bottom of the Highland League.

Conlon said: 'It's been a really hard, difficult month for us, we've faced a lot of the top sides. We got a reasonable result up there, a 3-3 draw, earlier in the season so hopefully if we get a reasonable squad out there we could get a result.'

Striker Davie Forbes is expected to return to the squad for this weekend after injury.

Conlon picked out Cove Rangers as his title favourites after the Aberdeen side beat Fort 6-0 last weekend, saying: 'That's the best I've seen a side play against us this season.'

He continued: 'We were never in the game, anyone watching would have seen the gulf between the top and bottom of the league.'

'If it wasn't for the young goal keeper [on loan Kyle Robertson] it could have been a heavier defeat.'

Freeriders take part in Coe Cup

SKIING

SOME of Europe's finest freeriders came to Lochaber to compete in the Coe Cup at Glencoe Mountain Resort recently.

Around 40 competitors from as far as Spain and Croatia, as well as some of the UK's finest freeriders had plenty of snow but less than perfect weather for the event.

The men competed on the flypaper area of the mountain on Saturday morning with Dave Biggins taking the win.

Viasability on the mountain worsened, meaning the ladies event was postponed until Sunday morning, with Ailsa Clark taking first place.

Calum Macintyre won the snowboard category, with Biggins taking top spot overall.

Final round of the winter league

CYCLING

THE FINAL round of the Nevis Cycles West Highland Wheelers winter league was held despite stormy weather forcing a late rethink of the route.

A short multi-lap format gave an interesting, testing but enjoyable event for those who braved the keen easterly wind.

Lachlan Blair took his first ever Wheelers win with Ben Miller and Stephen Burns in second and third place respectively. Emma Holgate showed that her downhill rig was the best choice of bike with a strong overall position and first lady overall.

Thanks to Steve Bradley and Brian Barbour for setting the course, Alastair MacLennan for marshalling, Colleen Foggo for timing and all those who helped with the end of season BBQ.



Fort William under 17s continued their good form with a battling 2-2 draw at home to Clachnacuddin at Claggan Park on Sunday. A freeing day with a strong breeze made conditions difficult for both sides, with Fort goals coming from Aellen MacLellan and Jordan MacPhee. MacLellan is pictured firing in a shot on the Clach goal. 20_f13for01

Alleycats lead scratch division from Council

AFTER 14 weeks of play in the Lochaber Building Supplies 10 pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre Alleycats are top of the scratch division.

The leaders have 64 points, with Council 10 points back in second place and Splitheds third place on 43 points.

Leaders
Council are the leaders in the handicap division with 48 points. Alleycats are in second place on 44 points and Ardtoe/Nevis

Radio are in third place with also on 43 points.

The top individual scratch game this week came from Tim Attack (Ardtoe/Nevis Radio) with 174. Colin Pinkett (Council) chipped in with a 172.

The top handicap game was 223 from both Derek Fraser (British Legion Scotland) and Tim Attack. The highest two game scratch series went to Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 316 and the top two game handicap series

TEN PIN BOWLING

went to Derek Fraser with 420. Alleycats had this week's best team scratch game of 617, handicap game of 794 and two game scratch series of 1,146.

Individual
The top individual scratch averages are held by Tony White Locke (Alleycats) with 160, followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 150 and Colin Pinkett (Council) on 148.

Spean Bridge youngster wins Scottish title

LOCHABER has another national boxing champion to celebrate - after Spean Bridge youngster Cameron Whyte won the 30kg final in Motherwell on Saturday.

Hot on the heels of Igor Sliwinski's national success last week, the unbeaten 11 year-old secured a comfortable 13-7 win against John MacDonald of Denbeath ABC.

MacDonald came out full of confidence, but Whyte showed a calm head and when forced to the ropes cleverly turned MacDonald and launched his own offensive. Both boxers stayed in range for the remainder of the round.

In the second MacDonald again started fast and Whyte decided to meet fire with fire and began to launch his own combinations. The consensus of opinion was that at the end of the round Whyte has just edged ahead.

Whyte somehow found it in himself to get on his toes in the third and move in and out with straight punches and he racked up the points to secure the win.

BOXING

Whyte's Lochaber Phoenix clubmate James Aitchison was also in action, and started well by beating Jack Thorburn of Kier Hardie ABC.

But in the semi final he found himself drawn against defending champion Paul Greenhorn of Hillpark ABC and quickly found himself down on points after two rounds.

A series of huge right and left blows from Aitchison drew him level and left his opponent visibly shaken, but a late combination saw Greenhorn through 14-12. Greenhorn went on to comfortably win the final.

British and two-time Scottish champion Chris Bradley moved up a weight class this season and took on British champion David Dalziel in the semi.

A poor opener left Bradley chasing points, leaving himself open for Dalziel to steal points and move further ahead.

Although the Lochaber fighter kept going till the end, the decision went to Dalziel.



North West Skye girls lift Dewar Shield

NORTH West Skye girls fought off competition from five teams from across Skye and Lochalsh to lift the Dewar Shield in Kyleakin on Friday.

Primary age shinty teams from Kinlochshiel, Lochcarron, North West Skye, Portree and South Skye took part, with North West Skye defeating Portree in the semi final.

South Skye made it to the final by beating Lochcarron but could not stop North West Skye from running out 2-0 winners.

Players of the tournament were Abby Maclean of Portree and South Skye's Catherine Dibble.

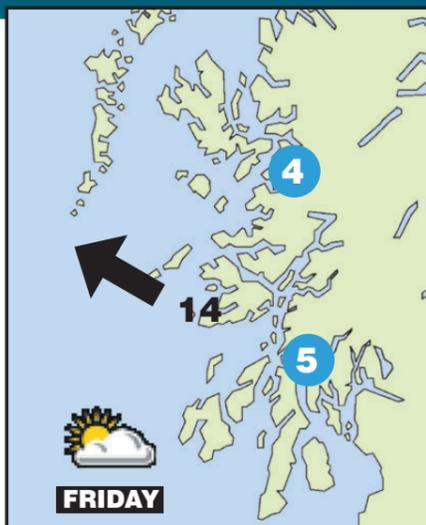
Weather

Thursday Sunny
Winds moderate, east south easterly
Temperatures -3C to 5°C

Friday Sunny intervals
Winds strong, east south easterly
Temperatures -2°C to 5°C.

Weekend Cloudy
Outlook Winds moderate easterly
Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, March 28, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 00.00	0.4 06.07 4.1 12.33 0.6 18.25 4.0	
Fri 00.39	0.3 06.39 4.0 13.06 0.5 18.58 3.9	
Sat 01.20	0.4 07.14 3.9 13.43 0.6 19.35 3.9	
Sun 02.03	0.5 07.53 3.7 14.25 0.7 20.17 3.7	
Mon 02.51	0.7 08.37 3.5 15.14 1.0 21.06 3.4	
Tues 03.48	1.0 09.28 3.1 16.14 1.2 22.07 3.2	
Wed 04.55	1.2 10.40 2.8 17.28 1.4 23.39 3.0	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrihaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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