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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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OBANLIVE Who will take to the stage? Find out inside

No permission was given for 'death trap' zebra crossing

LOUISE GLEN
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SHOCK has been voiced that a 'dangerous' zebra crossing in Oban has no official planning permission - and conversations between council officers and the applicant were never recorded.

One local councillor lives less than 20 metres from the crossing, planning officers work less than 300 metres from the location and it is on the main carriageway through the town

“Traffic volumes are very high at certain times”

—yet not one person stopped the crossing being installed.

The crossing near Lidl on the Soroba Road is now being described as a 'death trap'.

Drivers and pedestrians want to know what is going to be done about the zebra crossing before a serious accident happens.

In what appears to be a planning blunder, supermarket owner Lidl was under the impression it had permission to build the crossing. However, Argyll and Bute Council officials believed it had authorised Lidl to apply for permission but had not given consent for it to be completed.



The zebra crossing is close to the junction with Sinclair Drive, a busy filling station and a major supermarket.

It was not until a Benderloch driver brought the matter to the attention of the authorities that it came to light there had been no public consultation and no decision by the councillors to allow the crossing to go ahead.

The man who raised the issue does not want to be named, but laid out the problem. He

explained: 'Traffic volumes are very high at certain times on Soroba Road and there are a considerable number of points of entry and exit in the immediate vicinity of the crossing.'

'When road users are opting to enter or leave some of the many points at busier times, the scene could fairly be described

as demanding. Failing to take cognisance of pedestrians waiting to enter or even already on the new zebra crossing could, in such circumstances, be a possibility.'

'The prominent signs for the supermarket on one side and the filling station on the other can result in the small flashing

beacons becoming almost invisible during daylight hours.

'It may be worth examining how this additional demand is managed by vulnerable road users - they are summarised as tourists, older drivers, young or inexperienced drivers and motorcyclists.'

The man continued: 'Some of

my friends are already reporting almost daily incidents on the crossing. A few are very close shaves. It is an accident waiting to happen. It is a death trap.'

A Freedom of Information request to Argyll and Bute Council stated: 'The council officer who liaised with Lidl prior to the installation of this crossing has retired and we are unable to locate any recorded information within our records which confirms that such an assessment was carried out.'

'No skid-resistant surfacing was installed by Lidl and the council has no plans to install skid-resistant surfacing at this time. However, the number of skid-related accidents which occur will be monitored.'

A spokesman for Lidl said: 'Having spoken to our property team on the zebra crossing, they confirm that all highway works were carried out with the relevant approvals in place from the council. I can confirm that the work was carried out after we received approval from the council.'

A spokesman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Lidl was given permission to install the zebra crossing to the specifications supplied. There was no requirement for skid-resistant surfacing as this is a 30mph zone. We have no reason to believe there is an issue with the crossing.'

'However, on the basis of information we have received, we will carry out an assessment to ensure there are no unanticipated safety issues.'

Opinion: page six.

INSIDE YOUR OBAN TIMES THIS WEEK

Hitting heights

AN ARGYLL registrar went to extraordinary heights to make sure an English couple's wedding dream could be realised.

Full story - page three.

A cut above

ELEVEN kind-hearted girls have had their flowing locks chopped to provide real-hair wigs for the Little Princess Trust.

Full story - page four.

Stay Alive on A85

THE candidates for election to Argyll and Bute Council throw their weight behind the *Oban Times* campaign to improve safety on the A85.

Full story - page five.

'The best yet'

THE annual Ryan MacPhail memorial dinner was hailed as the most successful in the event's history, with £13,000 raised for good causes.

Full story and picture special - page six.

Tribute paid

A KINSMAN of Oban soldier Private Hugh MacLean has laid a wreath at his French war grave to mark the 100th anniversary of his death, aged 21, during the First World War.

Full story - page seven.

Mull Music Fest

CATCH up with everything at the Mull Music Festival as the faithful partied hard.

Full story and picture special - pages 12 and 13.



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Oban paedophile told to expect jail

A MAN found with nearly 170,000 indecent images of children, including babies, at his home in Oban has been told to expect prison.

Liam Martin, 34, of Dunggallan Terrace, Oban, pleaded guilty to possessing indecent photographs of children, between November 14, 2008, and June 21, 2016.

Oban Sheriff Court heard on Tuesday that it took two police officers nine months to count and categorise the images, but almost 600,000 went unchecked because they ran out of time.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said intelligence suggested 'an online address linked to the accused's home address had connected to the internet,



Liam Martin.

and it contained images of children'. During a search on June 21, Mr McGinty said the accused handed the police five SD storage cards. There was another SD card, which he handed separately to the police, saying: 'There is stuff on there.' When the police asked: 'What stuff?',

he replied: 'Porn of all ages.' Police also recovered a laptop and another computer.

When interviewed by officers, Mr McGinty said, 'he admitted handing items to the police, but stated he could not recall what he said.'

Mr McGinty said images of sexual activity were categorised in order of seriousness, with 'A' being the most serious. He explained the single SD card contained 10,990 still images and 12 moving images in category A; 13,845 still images and six moving images in category B; and, in category C, 123,217 still images and 22 moving images. Thousands more images were found on the computer, laptop and five SD cards.

They were 'predominantly female, some male', and, Mr McGinty added, 'some of them are babies'. Those who source images sometimes attempt to hide them. These have been categorised and named. 168,880 still images and 40 moving images is the grand total. There had been 597,000 images that had not been looked at or categorised.'

These numbers, he said, 'are certainly at the top end'.

Deferring sentence, Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC said: 'I will require a report and I want the opportunity of viewing a small selection of images you have been viewing. You can anticipate a custodial sentence.'

Martin was also placed on the sex offenders' register.

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OT

Cash backing for Gaelic project

LOUISE GLEN
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BÒRD na Gàidhlig announced funding for the Cnoc Soilleir project in Uist last week.

The project is a partnership between both Ceòlas Uibhist and Lews Castle College (part of the University of the Highlands and Islands) to establish a centre for Gaelic music,

dance and cultural heritage. It has been designed to support the growth of Ceòlas, which has been successful in using the Gaelic language naturally within a community setting and attracting national and international audiences to the Gaelic arts and culture.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig has awarded financing of £150,000 towards the £7 million project which

has already received funding from the Scottish Government.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig Cathraiche chairman Allan MacDonald said: 'Increasing the use and status of any minoritised language is important in its revitalisation, as is the economic benefit from activities connected with the language.'

'The Cnoc Soilleir project is an excellent example of the

Gaelic language's unlimited potential in generating both economic and social benefits to Scotland.

'Ceòlas has long been enjoyed by a worldwide audience, including strong connections with Nova Scotia, and has played on the linguistic and cultural strengths of South Uist in particular.'

'Cnoc Soilleir will involve the

Gaelic language, culture and community in a unique way. The use of Gaelic in the arts is vital to the future of the language in Scotland, playing an important role in encouraging its use, increasing its visibility and strengthening its appeal while maintaining loyalty to it.'

'The project will also create new large economic and social benefits to Uist, through the

creation of jobs and the generation of additional revenue streams.

'At the same time it will help increase the number of Gaelic speakers and the opportunities to use the language.'

'It is through initiatives such as this that we must look to support the Gaelic language and our rural communities going forward.'

Woman fined for assaulting love rival

A 27-YEAR-OLD woman from Tobermory has been fined £400 for assaulting another female after finding her in bed with her ex-partner.

Emma Denovan, of Riverside Court, pleaded guilty to pulling the woman out of bed and throwing her to the floor to her injury.

She also pleaded guilty to behaving in a threatening manner by shouting and swearing and throwing household items – in this case books.

The incident took place in the early hours of October 30, 2016.

Denovan appeared at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday this week.

Eoin McGinty, procurator fiscal, told the court that after Denovan had attended a party, she went to her ex-partner's parents' house uninvited.

She got there at around 2am and let herself in. It was then that she saw her ex-partner in bed with another woman.

She then seized her by the hair and threw her to the floor, resulting in the victim's face being scratched with bruising to her arms and legs.

The victim left and Denovan was asked to leave, which she refused to do. She remained in the house and proceeded to shout, swear and throw a number of books within the room.

Denovan's solicitor told the court that the relationship between the man and her had been 'on and off' and that they were still together at the time, as far as she was aware. However, they were giving each other some space.

He said that Denovan would regularly let herself into the house and she did not go there thinking that he was with another woman. He added that she regretted her actions and was remorseful.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson fined Denovan £400, which is to be paid within 28 days.

Cycling powerhouse heads for the islands

WOMEN'S cycling powerhouse The Adventure Syndicate has announced Ride the Highlands, a self-supported tour of the Scottish Highlands and Islands, with the dual purposes of promoting active travel among remote communities and launching their new race team, The Quad.

Athletes Lee Craigie, Rickie Cotter, Emily Chappell and Paula Regener will leave Glasgow on their bikes on the Wednesday May 3, and follow a 500-mile route that takes in the Caledonian Way and the Hebridean Way, visiting schools and communities in Oban, Fort William, Inverness, Stornoway, Harris and Uist.

Having ridden to Oban and carrying camping equipment for the week, the four will be hosted by Oban Cycles next Thursday May 4 for an inspiring evening of films, and a question and answer session.

The following day, they will visit Lochaber High School before arriving in Inverness on May

6. The team will then host an overnight adventure by bike for girls aged 13 to 16 in the Inverness area, in collaboration with Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland and Velocity Café and Bicycle Workshop before riding over to Ullapool and starting their journey south through the Western Isles.

Scaladale Activity Centre will co-ordinate mountain bike sessions and film showings in Stornoway (May 8), Harris (May 9) and Uist (May 10) As well as being athletes at the top of their game, The Quad are skilled communicators and are passionate about increasing awareness of the physical and emotional benefits of cycling. Their school visits will include a showing of Escape, a short film produced by Sustans and starring athlete Lee Craigie, followed by an inspirational talk and a workshop around how to travel self-supported by bike, and in some cases an accompanied ride-out and overnight camp.



Lee Craigie, Rickie Cotter, Emily Chappell and Paula Regener will arrive in Oban next week before heading to the islands.

Trust aims to extend hours of free childcare at Tobermory unit

MULL and Iona Community Trust is working in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council to offer extended childcare at Tobermory pre-fives unit during term time and school holidays.

This is part of the Scottish Government's Early Learning and Childcare Trials which will test a variety of models around the country for delivering 1,140 hours free childcare.

The Scottish Government has committed to providing 1,140 hours of free childcare for three- to five-year-olds from 2020, and the trials will inform how this provision is rolled out.

Caroline Wood, a director of the Mull and Iona Community Trust and a former teacher,

said: 'Lack of childcare on the islands has been something that the trust has been looking to address for a number of years, and we are delighted to be the only third-sector organisation taking part in these trials.'

'Taking part in the trial provides us with a real opportunity to demonstrate the demand for additional flexible childcare.'

The community trust is currently in the process of registering its childcare service 'Mini Muileachs' and is recruiting a manager and staff (see page 22).

The trials are due to commence in the 2017 summer holidays, running through to June 2018. Although first priority will be given to those registered

for pre-fives at Tobermory from August 2017, children registered at other pre-fives units on Mull will also be able to access additional hours if required.

Parents of eligible children should already have received an information leaflet explaining how the trials will operate, or further information can be found at www.mict.co.uk/projects-services/childcare.

In the longer term, the community trust is exploring the possibility of developing a community nursery facility. It is looking for interested people to join the steering group for this new development.

For more, contact Laura Percy at enquiries@mict.co.uk.

Foundation's appeal for funds leads to remarkable response

THE parents of Linda Norgrove, the Western Isles aid worker who died in a failed rescue attempt in Afghanistan in 2010, have been overwhelmed by the response to their latest appeal for funds.

John and Lorna Norgrove used their annual newsletter to explain they had decided to donate an additional £20,000 of their own savings to help fund new projects and they asked their supporters to match the funds.

As John explained: 'We have several great long-term projects that rely on our regular funds where it's impossible to stop funding without dire immediate consequences.'

'But at the same time we con-

stantly receive applications for inspirational new projects and with our dwindling funds we simply weren't able to support them.'

Including a Gift Aid element, their additional contribution amounted to £25,000. So in their Christmas newsletter, John and Lorna asked people to help match that in the hope they could raise a total of £50,000 to allow them to support some of these new projects.

As they explained: 'We have developed a commitment over the past six years and don't feel ready to stop when so many people's life chances depend on the Linda Norgrove Foundation's support – especially now that other charities have scaled

back their operations, leaving Afghans feeling abandoned.'

And they have been overwhelmed by the response to their appeal. As Lorna Norgrove said: 'Every day the postman was bringing new cheques and our funds were increasing at the rate of more than £1,000 per day. We have also doubled the amount we receive in regular donations.'

The special appeal has seen almost £55,000 more raised than in the same period the previous year. Together with John and Lorna's contribution and Gift Aid they expect to raise more than £115,000 since the appeal.

For more information, go to www.lindanorgrovefoundation.org.



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Fishing challenge for candidates

THE UK fishing industry is challenging candidates in the general election to pledge their support for its priority of restoring control of UK waters.

Fishermen's leaders insist that exiting the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the only way of ending the farcical situation under which the country is forced to give away almost two-thirds of the fish from some of the richest fishing grounds in the world.

Candidates in all 650 parliamentary constituencies will be invited to sign the pledge prior to the election on June 8.

Bertie Armstrong, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said: "We as an industry have repeatedly stated we will work with the UK and Scottish governments to achieve this, and we hope candidates will support the prospect of jobs and security for our beleaguered coastal communities by signing this pledge."

'As a candidate in the general election I pledge my support to the following declaration: Brexit offers a sea of opportunity for fishing communities as it will allow us to restore control of our waters, which are home to some of the richest fishing grounds in the world.'

'We must maximise this opportunity for the benefit of the UK fishing industry – processors, hauliers and fishmongers as well as those at sea – and for consumers. We urge the industry and government to work together to establish a sensible, practicable new fisheries management regime for the post-Brexit era.'

New owners of marina reveal plans

OBAN Marina off the Isle of Kerrera has been sold, after going up for sale in May last year.

Gary Adams and Catherine Peat, the new owners and directors of Oban Marina and Yacht Services based at Ardentrive Bay, Kerrera, said they hope to be open by the end of May.

'It is our intention to keep the marina in Oban,' their website announced. 'We also realise that there have been many promises made, and a number of false dawns. With this in mind we will be careful not to over promise, but to work hard on gradual improvement and to listen to our customers.'

Party goes to great heights for mountainside marriage

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A COUPLE marrying at the top of hill almost had to give up hope of tying the knot when poor visibility, storms, flurries of snow and cancelled ferries conspired against them.

But a council registrar went to extraordinary heights to marry the couple at their dream mountain top location on Monday this week ... with a little bit of altitude compromise.

Rob Everitt, 36, and Rebecca Holdstock, 29, from Dartmoor, got in touch with Andrew Penny, a registrar on Mull, to request their ceremony be held at the summit of Ben More – the island's highest mountain and only Munro.

Mr Penny said: 'I had recently joked in the office that it had always been an ambition of mine to carry out a wedding ceremony at the summit of the 966-metre peak when the call from Rob and Rebecca came right out of the blue.'

'As registrars in Argyll and Bute, our motto is "It's your day so we do it your way" – and we pride ourselves on making each ceremony personal and unique.'

'As well as having some of the most stunning locations where wedding and civil ceremonies can take place, we are more than happy to accommodate

couples to have their ceremony wherever they want.

'However, in Scotland, the weather can be a significant factor. We looked at the forecast and Monday's weather looked like the most favourable for the climb up Ben More.

'After a couple of hours we reached around 650 metres, but we couldn't see much of the summit and made the decision to have the ceremony on the plateau about two-thirds of the way up the mountain.

'I'm really pleased that, despite the wind, snow and a typical four-seasons-in-one-day, we were able to help Rob and Rebecca get married in the unusual and stunning location they chose.'

Rob, Rebecca and Andrew were joined by the couple's dogs, Benny and Lindy, as well as two Mull residents for the hike, and a photographer who recorded the event.

Rebecca, who is a member of Dartmoor Search and Rescue and a keen mountaineer, said she and her groom wanted something out of the ordinary, adding: 'We didn't want something like a beach wedding and when we found out that you can get married anywhere in Scotland, our thoughts turned to having the ceremony on one of the Munros.'

'We phoned a few other places but when we got in touch with



Rob and Rebecca – and their two dogs – married on Mull's only Munro.

Andrew on Mull he couldn't have been more flexible and accommodating.

'We got a really warm and friendly reception and nothing was too much bother for him with the final arrangements being confirmed on the Sunday

evening. He gave us options and was happy to shuffle things about, depending on the weather, which turned out to be the case. We're really grateful to him for all his help in making our day really memorable and touched by the kindness of

Sarah and John from Mull who gave up their day to join us.'

Having almost bagged one of Scotland's Munros, the happy couple now plan to spend the rest of the week on honeymoon enjoying the sights and hospitality of the island.

New carriage is fantastic for disabled participants

A CARRIAGE-DRIVING group for disabled participants has bought a new carriage with a grant made possible thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Argyll RDA Carriage Driving group, part of Riding for the Disabled Association, purchased the lightweight Fenix Freedom carriage to improve the overall experience for its drivers, volunteer helpers and ponies.

Argyll RDA Carriage Driving group is based near Benderloch. With its two ponies, Red and Dixie, the group provides access to the great outdoors – country lanes, quiet tracks and a beautiful beach – to around 15 disabled adults and young people in the local area. Participants also learn the skill of carriage driving, entering competitions at regional

and national levels. The impact of the new carriage has been fantastic,' said the group's co-ordinator, Jane Isaac.

'Our drivers find it much more manoeuvrable, which really helps them to develop their skills, and the ponies benefit from the lighter weight. We are so grateful to players of People's Postcode Lottery.

'Importantly, when we attend a competition, this carriage is very similar to mainstream carriages, meaning the stigma of the old-fashioned carriages designed to disguise wheelchairs is eliminated – we embrace our limitations and love to participate.'

The project has been so successful it has spurred the group to expand and fundraise for a second carriage so that even more people can benefit.

Fond farewell as council leader Dick steps down

AFTER 40 years of service to Strathclyde and then Argyll and Bute councils, it was the end of an era last Thursday when Dick Walsh stepped down as both leader of the local authority and as a councillor.

Mr Walsh was praised by Provost Len Scouler for his work on behalf of Argyll and Bute, and the skills he brought to the post.

It was for finance that Mr Walsh would be remembered most by the council – at one time even called a 'wizard' by Councillor Ellen Morton, his one-time opponent and for the past three years his deputy leader.

A small number of councillors from the opposition group did not clap or stand up to congratulate Mr Walsh.

Multi-agency emergency exercise at Oban Airport

A MAJOR multi-agency emergency exercise is taking place at Oban Airport on Saturday (April 29).

Members of the public may see activity by the emergency services at the airport and in the sea to the south.

The exercise is designed to

test emergency responses and is required by the Civil Aviation Authority and in compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act.

The public are requested to stay clear of the area, including gillies path, between 10am and noon.

Argyll and Bute is top performing Scottish council for IT

INFORMATION technology provision at Argyll and Bute Council is top of the charts in Scotland.

The council is the top per-

forming local authority for information technology in Scotland – according to the latest Socitm results.

The report found that the

council's ICT service had a low cost with excellent performance, and improving customer satisfaction level.

The council is rated first of the

11 councils who participated in the bi-annual survey and 15th in a UK league of 85.

Socitm is the society for IT professionals in the public

sector and undertakes the bi-annual benchmarking of ICT services survey – covering all aspects of operational, financial and strategic ICT matters.

Mary's Meals adds 43,000 children to feeding programme

ARGYLL-BASED charity Mary's Meals announced this week that it is now reaching 1,230,171 of the world's poorest children with a nutritious daily meal in school.

This means that, owing to the continued generosity of its supporters around the world, the charity has been able to add more than 43,000 children to its global school feeding programme since September last year.

Mary's Meals provides support to impoverished communities across four continents, setting up community-run school feeding programmes that encourage children – who may otherwise be forced to work, beg or forage for food – to come to school and receive a meal that helps them to concentrate on their studies.

The charity began by feeding just 200 children in Malawi in 2002, amid a devastating famine. And today it is providing much-needed support in the

face of another crisis in East Africa, where drought and conflict have created a humanitarian emergency spanning several countries, including two where Mary's Meals are served – South Sudan and Kenya.

Across famine-hit South Sudan – where a brutal civil war continues to rage – and drought-stricken Kenya, more than 46,000 children have the certainty of receiving one good meal every school day at this desperate time.

More than ever, Mary's Meals is not only a powerful incentive to come to the classroom, it is a vital lifeline for these vulnerable children in desperate need of nourishment.

With millions across East Africa on the brink of starvation, Mary's Meals recently launched an East Africa Emergency Appeal to help lessen the devastating impact of the crisis.

Moses Kopurot Kenyi, who works for Mary's Meals' partner

organisation in South Sudan, said: 'Most of the children here are so malnourished and they have a lot of challenges. To keep them in school, we need to provide the Mary's Meals feeding programme. Without any meals, there will definitely be a very poor future for South Sudan. We thank Mary's Meals and we thank those who are helping Mary's Meals.'

Mary's Meals is committed to keeping its running costs low, with at least 93 per cent of donations being spent on charitable activities. This is only possible because most of its work – from awareness and fundraising activities to the cooking and serving of the meals – is done by an army of dedicated volunteers, including more than 80,000 in Malawi alone.

It costs just £13.90 to feed a child with Mary's Meals for a whole school year. To find out more or to donate, please visit www.marysmeals.org.uk.

POLICE FILES with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

Arrested

ABOUT 2.30pm on Monday April 17, in Colonsay Terrace, Oban, police arrested a man aged 33 for allegedly using abusive language. The man was held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Speeding

AT 8.40pm on Tuesday April 18, on the A828 near Benderloch, a man aged 24 was stopped and charged with driving at excessive speed. A report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Charged

ON TUESDAY April 18, at the pedestrian crossing on George Street, Oban, a silver Audi car allegedly had two bald tyres and was parked within the controlled area of the crossing. Subsequently, a man aged 26 was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Disturbance

AT THE Bunkhouse on the Isle of Coll, a man allegedly assaulted two other men, shouted abuse and caused damage to property, at about 7.05pm on Wednesday April 19. Police attended and carried out inquiries and subsequently on Thursday April 20, a 38-year-old man was arrested and charged. A report has been submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Fire

ON Monday April 24, at about 10.40am, a fire occurred within a derelict property at Dalintart Drive, Oban. Police are investigating the incident and are appealing for information. Call 101 or anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Get ready for a town that be buzzing with weekend festival

THE town is going to be jumping this weekend ... or dancing, writes Oban ambassador, Kay MacDonald.

The Highland and Islands Music and Dance Festival hits town and it's going to be all go.

There's just so much going on as well as all the competitions.

There will be music in the Royal Hotel on Friday and Saturday night, a family ceilidh in Argyllshire Gathering Halls, piping and highland dancing in McCaig's Tower on Thursday night (weather permitting) and music in the Oban Inn, Olive Garden, Markie Dan's and the Chocolate Shop.

You won't be able to turn the corner without hearing pipes or accordions.

Saturday will be the highlight with entertainment in Station Square and Stafford Street, including Paddy Shaw's swing band and Campbell Cameron teaching everyone to Strip the Willow.

Programmes for all the events are widely available in the town so put your dancing shoes on and get out. It'll be worth it.

Over the five years I've been out and about meeting everyone I've always loved how everyone is drawn to the sound of the pipes. You just see heads turning and people gravitating to the music and, now that we have no obstacles this year, I'm looking forward to musicians popping

up all over the town during the summer, which hopefully will be sunny and warm.

Did you spot where last week's photo was taken? The lovely old fashioned lamps are outside the War and Peace Museum and I've been kind this week – it's much easier.

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OT



Donnie Baxter.

Oban star makes debut on TV soap

ARGYLL actor Donnie Baxter made his debut in Ozzie soap *Neighbours* on Monday.

The Oban-born 33-year-old actor and model, who travelled to Australia in 2007 and now lives in Brisbane, Queensland, is playing the character Roger Cross in his first episode of the long-running soap opera.

The daily drama, which screens on Channel 5 and is set in the fictional cul-de-sac of Ramsay Street in Erinsburgh, has given a big break to many actors in its 32-year history, including Kylie Minogue and Russell Crowe.

Donnie's friends are also expecting great things, following his many other roles across TV, film and theatre, such as *Macheth*, *The 39 Steps*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Thor: Ragnarok* and *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*.

One mate, looking forward to a 'Neighbours binge', exclaimed: 'Next stop Tinsel Town.' Others, congratulating the 'talented', 'hilarious' and 'awesome guy' on his first *Neighbours* episode, advised viewers: 'You can't miss him, he is the one with the Scottish accent.'

College aims to double in size

SANDY NEIL
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ARGYLL College's Oban campus is looking to double its size to cope with increasing numbers of students, staff and courses.

With a 20 per cent growth in the student population and 28 per cent in staff over the past four years, space in Argyll College's Oban centre is in 'great demand', stated a report presented by its financial director,

Ailsa Close, to Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee.

The college is therefore seeking extra space, estimated at 'double the 1,130 square metres' of its Oban centre at Glenshella Business Park.

Argyll College UHI, one of 13 partner institutions of the University of the Highlands and Islands, has 1,600 students throughout the region.

Oban is the largest of Argyll College's nine learning centres, the others being in Campbel-

town, Dunoon, Lochgilhead, Arran, Bute, Islay, Mull, Coll and Tiree.

Currently there are 463 students based in Oban, 30 per cent of the entire student population, with 169 full-time students, up 20 per cent over the past five years. The college's annual graduation in Oban last year was the largest, with 56 qualifications conferred on 100 students.

Similarly, the report stated, the number of staff employed in

the Oban centre has increased by 28 per cent since 2014, from 44 teaching staff and 23 support staff. Currently a quarter of Argyll College's 251 employees are based in Oban.

The college also plans to expand its curriculum, including a BSc in Nursing with practical training at Lorn and Isles District General Hospital, a BA in Rural Business Management, focused on entrepreneurship in coastal communities, and further maritime courses as part

of a planned facility near Oban. The Oban centre outgrew its original location in Dunstaffnage and relocated to Glenshella Business Park in 2010. But in 2016, 'with teaching space becoming a major issue in this centre, the college reconfigured the bottom floor of the building to provide further teaching space. As a result, 11 staff, including the principal, have been moved to temporary accommodation in WHHA [West Highland Housing Association]

offices'. But these changes will not be enough, the report continued: 'Despite recent re-allocation of space to form two additional teaching rooms, we estimate that we actually require double the 1,130 square metres that the Oban centre represents.'

'We will need to provide dedicated student accommodation. This is one of the priorities of Oban as a university town.'

The committee noted the contents of the report.



11 kind-hearted Oban girls donate their hair to Little Princess charity

A group of 11 girls from Oban donated a large section of their hair to the Little Princess Trust in order to make wigs for those suffering from hair loss.

The youngsters made their way to the Studio Hair and Beauty in Oban, where they received a free haircut.

The event was organised by Leigh Laird Macniven after her daughter, Taylor, wanted to donate her hair.

She said: 'Taylor wanted to send her hair to the Little Princess Trust and I put feelers out to see if anyone wanted to donate their hair and I got a great

response back. There's a girl who has got a wig. Taylor could see how happy and more confident she was because of that. Her friend also wanted to do it, and I thought that's two, so I put it on Facebook and what an amazing response I got. I couldn't believe it.'

Susan Simpson's two daughters, Charis and Niamh, both donated their hair. The Benderloch mum said: 'We have a friend whose daughter had neuroblastoma. It was a really aggressive cancer, so she wanted to give something back to children who have gone

through it. They were talking about this event at school all week. Their teachers have been really supportive. It's good for kids to realise what other young folk are going through - that they have these battles. It's good for them to give something back.'



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Oban meeting hears worries over Brexit

EUROPEANS in Oban raised concerns about life in the UK after Brexit at a meeting chaired by Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell in Oban Phoenix Cinema on Monday night.

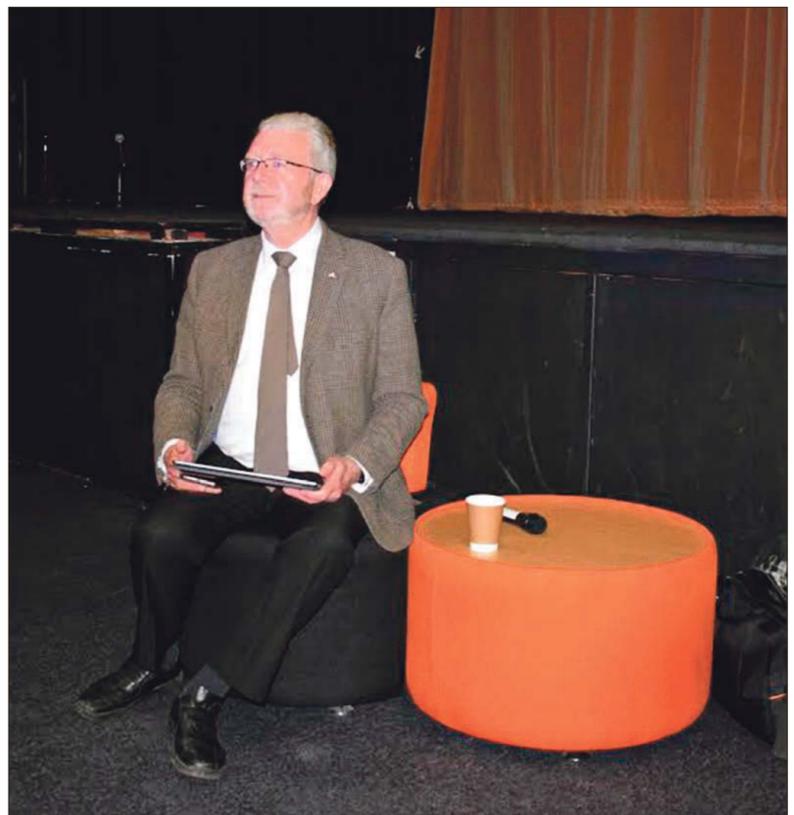
As the Scottish minister responsible for EU negotiations on Scotland's place in Europe, Mr Russell outlined the position as it stood with regards to the dialogue and negotiations to date. He expressed displeasure with the level of engagement between Prime Minister Theresa May's government and the Scottish administration.

Key areas that are cause for concern are: freedom of movement of people, goods, capital and services; agricultural funding and support; export tariffs and regulations; environmental regulation; and the protection of human rights.

Questions from the audience ranged from concerns over the Scottish NHS to the position of non-nationals.

A German resident in the audience said she was deeply worried about the uncertainty that surrounded her status. Mr Russell acknowledged that the language of a hard Brexit was damaging, as was the lack of clarity on the position of EU nationals living in the UK.

Addressing the question of protecting the NHS from tendering by American health corporations, Mr Russell said: 'We have a profound problem in that regard, as protection for the health service will be taken away by Brexit.'



Argyll MSP Michael Russell answers questions in Oban about the possible impact of Brexit.

Mr Russell said he was trying to work with 'a UK government that is very hostile to sharing power.'

'There is a powerful group

that believes that the UK parliament is absolutely sovereign, it's in control and it cannot ever be overruled... it will not be told what to do, not by the

European Court of Justice or anyone else.' He concluded: 'We are going to see a steady erosion of the powers of the Scottish Parliament.'

WHITE VAN Man

SEVERAL weeks ago I wrote about the closures of rural police stations in Argyll. Well, since then the situation has gone from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Police chiefs are hiring highly-paid officials to oversee financial cuts that will see hundreds of police officers in Scotland axed.

In the past couple of years, after some research I did on the cost-cutting farce, I discovered that former banker David Page was hired to help Chief Constable Phil Gormley make cuts.

His salary to take part in



this cost-cutting exercise will be £173,000.

This is just one of several extremely highly-paid posts to be paid by this Scottish Government.

Another 'jobs for the boys'

post is - wait for it - an interim head of strategy and innovation. The person entering this post will be paid up to £88,698.

An interim director of business integration will be on a 'competitive salary' for 12 months of £76,641. And all this is about saving money in Police Scotland.

What a farce. And at what cost? This whole saga in my mind is an outrage.

It would appear that the old story goes on, while the common five-eighths are left to get on with the job on a day-to-day salary, the fat-cat

professionals are offered obscene salaries to make life difficult for our emergency services.

Where does all this end? Are the police top dogs sending a message to the unscrupulous criminals of today's world saying: 'Come on in, there isn't a police station in this village or town. Help yourself. We can't get police officers on the scene for 20 or 30 minutes.'

You may laugh, but this could be a reality for many small villages and towns in rural Scotland. What a disgrace.

George Berry

Election hopefuls back A85 campaign

THE Stay Alive on the A85 campaign is really taking off and this week we hear what council election candidates think of the problem.

It was community councillor Sean MacIntyre who kicked off the first petition to raise the profile of the dangers of the road.

Mr MacIntyre said: 'The 30mph speed limit should be stretched as far as the cemetery. And from there to Dunbeg, double white lines and a reduction in speed from 60mph, as this section of road is used more since the cycle track was opened.'

The cycle track runs between Ganavan Sands and Dunbeg, which directs cyclists onto the main road in both directions.

Mr MacIntyre worked on the initial campaign alongside Julie McKenzie, who is committed to making the road safer.

Allan McKie, who supports The Oban Times campaign, said: 'We should be seriously considering average-speed cameras and reducing the speed limit on this stretch to 50mph. Being proactive will save lives; being reactive won't.'

William Mohieddeen, said: 'I am very happy to support The Oban Times campaign to make the journey between Connel and Oban a safer one.'

'I back the campaign demands for traffic-calming measures, and would particularly like to see commitments made to encourage active transport - walking and cycling - by installing a safe path throughout the Connel-Oban route.'

Kieron Green said: 'I have

previously raised with Transport Scotland my wish for a 40mph speed limit from Oban to beyond Pennyfuir cemetery, and highlighted the importance of buses being able to stop there.

'I also feel double white lines preventing dangerous overtaking from Oban to Dunbeg, and an off-road link completing the national cycle route between Oban and Connel would improve safety.'

Brian Burnett said: 'I would like to see the following improvements: speed limited to 50mph and enforced by average-speed cameras, double white lines to prevent overtaking, improved junction at Dunbeg and a bus lay-bys where appropriate.'

Andrew Vennard said: 'It would be useful for a report to be commissioned in relation to the whole of the road to identify the best way of reducing accidents, as well as identifying the costs.'

'Since the A85 is a trunk road, and since any works will require the approval of Transport Scotland, it would be very difficult for me to suggest my own personal choice improvements, and so the next steps would be to work with Transport Scotland to agree a suitable set of measures.'

Breege Smyth commented: 'I have pledged support for this campaign because there have been too many deaths on this stretch. Something has to be done. Bad driving contributes and speed is a factor but is there more?'

'I would like to know what effect the anti-skid surface has had. A reduction in speed would result in fewer fatalities. I would



Danger: a car overtakes an Oban Times staff member just before a blind bend coming out of Connel. To watch our video visit The Oban Times website at www.theobantimes.co.uk

welcome a speed restriction and average-speed cameras.'

David Pollard said: 'I agree that it is important to improve safety on the A85. The main problems are excessive speed and dangerous overtaking.'

I suggest installing a roundabout or traffic lights at the Dunbeg junction, speed cameras between Oban and Connel, and smoothing out some of the more dangerous bends on the road.'

Neil Mackay said: 'Stop, look, listen. We have waited long enough for these words to be put into practice. The A85 authority need to stop as soon as possible, look very carefully at the dreadful statistics of this road and listen to those who

live with the statistics, hear the sounds of emergency services

and dread what it could mean.'

Mary-Jean Devon said: 'I have

always found different times of the year to have specific issues. I also think young people should be cautious when driving on any road.

'Too many lives are lost to poor driving on roads that in some places require major investment.'

Jim Lynch said: 'The reduction in the speed limit to 40mph and the introduction of double white lines would go some way to improving the situation. However, drivers' behaviour also needs to change. I would like additional signs alerting drivers to the dangers of speeding and overtaking.'

'I have urged my campaigners to support the petition via change.org.'

Jamie McGrigor added: 'The A85 has many blackspots. More warnings are needed of the potential hazards of which many tourists may be unaware. The modern signs which flash are very effective and more

should be installed. The section between Connel and Oban has tight turns and is often too narrow. It needs to be widened and straightened with more warning signs.'

Elaine Robertson added: 'I have spoken to Transport Scotland about safety on the A85, with particular regard to the Oban/Dunbeg section. We urgently need double white lines and preferably a 40mph restriction.'

'We also need improvements to safety at the Dunbeg junction, perhaps lights and definitely a roundabout.'

All 18 candidates were contacted for a comment.

Thanks to everyone who has contacted The Oban Times campaign team to discuss the concerns about the A85.

Next week, we will have some insight into the road itself and will begin to share some of the hundreds of comments we have received.

The Oban Times petition for safety improvements on the A85.

People in North Argyll have lost far too many friends and family in accidents on the A85 between Oban and Connel.

IF YOU SUPPORT US, PLEASE SIGN BELOW:

[Empty box for name]

Name

Address Tel

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and send to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB, or sign the petition online at www.change.org/p/humza-yousaf-stay-alive-on-the-a85-oban-to-connel-and-beyond

Alister MacDougall Independent, ward four

I am not affiliated to any political groups. I have served the ward for the past five years on the ruling administration group. I am currently the policy lead for transportation (strategic, local, ferries, piers, harbours and airports).



In this time I have served on a number of committees: Oban Lorn and the Isles area committee and community planning group, the policy and resources committee, the environment, development and infrastructure committee, Argyll and Bute Harbour Board, planning, protective services and licensing committee.

I have also been the council representative on the following groups: A83 Task Force, National Network for Gaelic Research consultative committee, Argyll Ferry Users' Group and HITRANS. Prior to 2007, I was the councillor for Mull and Iona and I was chairman of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee.

I will press to continue to improve the lifeline ferry services to the islands as these also provide a lot of work in the Oban area. I will also try to ensure elderly folk always get fair treatment, and support the community in tackling substance abuse that claims so many lives.

I will support the young getting a better education and jobs to let them remain in their home areas.

I hope you vote number one against my name.

Jamie McGrigor Scottish Conservatives, ward four



I am a former MSP with a proven track record for helping constituents in the Highlands and Islands for 17 years.



Oban is my local town and I am well acquainted with island life on Mull, Coll, Tiree, Kerrera, Iona and Colonsay

I will fight for:

- ✓ Better education and more opportunities for young people.
- ✓ Safer roads for Oban (A85) and the islands, up-to-date ferries, an improving rail and air service, and more frequent rubbish collections.
- ✓ Promoting local products and helping to create new businesses by planning for the future.
- ✓ Maintaining our great local hospital and improving health and social care management.
- ✓ Promoting cultural events and festivals.
- ✓ Improve local broadband

I will oppose:

- ✗ The Scottish Government's policies of centralisation. Powers devolved to Scotland should be devolved to towns and villages and not hoarded by Holyrood.
- ✗ A tourist tax which would harm our vital local industry.
- ✗ Nicola Sturgeon's obsession with another independence referendum and I will lobby her and her ministers to govern for Scottish people rather than constitutional goals.

I will give 110 per cent effort

Neil MacKay Independent, ward five



Caring for People not Politics is my priority - Local Issues, Local Concerns- Local People, linking, communicating and working collectively for local needs is crucial.

Having experienced the life-saving skills of our hospital I have serious concerns with words like changes, review and joint integration. My concerns were echoed by almost 500 people who attended a meeting about these issues organised by Oban Community Council who have now asked me to head up an action / support group to challenge and protect all our health services at the hospital and in the community.

As the originator of Oban Live I am delighted we have now have an event that gives a major boost to the local economy, it's near 10,000 attendees and in excess of one million pounds for the region has been tremendous. This year's event is only weeks away and hopefully will exceed previous years.

Economic sustainability is the lifeblood of our area and I will continue in my work to promote, market, protect and sustain all our local businesses.

Presently, and for some years I have been a voluntary board member of some local organisations including Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) delivering quality affordable housing, also Oban & Lorn Tourism Alliance a long standing steadfast organisation dedicated to our core industry. - Tourism we all know that "Tourism is everybody's business".

I do not believe it has served the communities of Oban North & Lorn well that even after three by-elections in this term we do not have any Ward 5 Councillors on A & B's planning committee despite there being a number of vacancies.

I believe that Oban Lorn & Islands does not get its full share of the Argyll & Bute pot, we need all our local representatives to have a collective & united front at Council HQ, if elected I will work closely with all colleagues.

Having had the privilege of representing Oban North & Lorn before I understand fully commitment required and that with my proven history of getting things done combined with what I do at present shows beyond question that my passion and commitment for our part of the world is second to none.

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OT



Dinner for Ryan was 'the best yet'

DAVID MCPHEE
dmcphhee@obantimes.co.uk

THIS year's Ryan MacPhail memorial dinner has been described as the most successful to date.

The annual dinner raised a total of just over £13,000, which will go to clubs and organisations around Oban, including children's charities.

This year's event was so successful thanks to the introduction of a raffle,

as opposed to the auction that typically takes place.

The dinner is held in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls and it is followed by a series of guest speakers.

Speaking at the event this year were the former Manchester United, Rangers and Northern Ireland star Jimmy Nicholl, the former Celtic and Scotland player Tosh McKinlay and John McKelvie, a retired policeman and football referee.

Alan MacPhail said: 'It was very successful. It was a great night. I would say that's the best in regards to raising money that we've had.'

'That was the first time that we have done a raffle. Every other year we have just done an auction. We had this raffle that the girls got together and it was brilliant. It was a good idea and they did it live on Facebook.'

John MacKelvie stood in for Sandy Strang, who was originally coming to

the dinner, but he took not well and had to cancel.

'John is a retired policeman. But he is on the after-dinner circuit and he is an ex-referee.'

'The whole thing was excellent. All the speakers were really good. They spoke about their careers - it was good banter. John MacKelvie just did stories about his life between the refereeing and his career in the police. It was all good fun.'

'It was a sell-out. That was probably as busy as it has ever been. It was certainly a full house. I don't think Amanda could have fitted many more in. It was to the brim.'

'The money raised is all spent locally.'

Amanda MacPhail added: 'The money helps a mix. It goes to anything under-18 such as youth football teams, shinty, rugby, sick children, school trips - anything.'

'The night was great. One of the best, I would say. I think we've raised the most money on this one.'

'I'd like to say thanks to everyone for the continued support and hopefully they will support us every year. However, we couldn't do it without the staff.'

For more information and to stay up to date regarding next year's event, visit Ryan MacPhail Memorial Fund on Facebook.



Top: The top table at the Ryan MacPhail memorial dinner, from left, chairman John Horne, Alan MacPhail, co-founder of the charity with his wife Amanda, Jason MacPhail, Celtic legend Tosh McKinlay, former Rangers star Jimmy Nicholl and John MacKelvie.

Above left: Graham Anderson, Jack Baxter and John MacGregor from R A Clement Assoc enjoying a beer.

Below left: Innes Clark, left, and Angus MacPherson get to grips with Celtic legend Tosh McKinlay.

Above right: Time for a chat before Tosh McKinlay, Jimmy Nicholl and John MacKelvie entertain diners.

Below right: John Horne, left, and Alan MacPhail, with Roddy McCuish, centre.

Far right: Father and son Ruaridh and Mark Kain enjoying the dinner. All photographs: Kevin McGlynn



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Tribute to a fallen Oban soldier in the Great War

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

A KINSMAN of Oban soldier Private Hugh MacLean has laid a wreath at his French war grave to mark the 100th anniversary of his death, aged 21, during the First World War.

Andy MacLean, whose family came from Ardaneaskan, researched how Hugh fell in battle with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Private MacLean, the son of Duncan and Isabella who lived at Buchanan Terrace, died of his wounds in Etaples military hospital on April 14, 1917, and was buried at Etaples military cemetery in northern France.

Andy said: 'I travel past this cemetery from time to time and always stop to pay my respects to the fallen who gave their tomorrows so we could enjoy our todays in peace. I have always visited this young man's grave as a fellow West Coast MacLean.'

But the gravestone gave no details of where his regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, were fighting when he fell, and Andy hoped to fill in details of his life and untimely death.

He writes: 'On the morning of April 9, 1917, Private Hugh MacLean was with the 1st/8th Battalion the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in forward trenches at Roelincourt, east of Arras in northern France.'

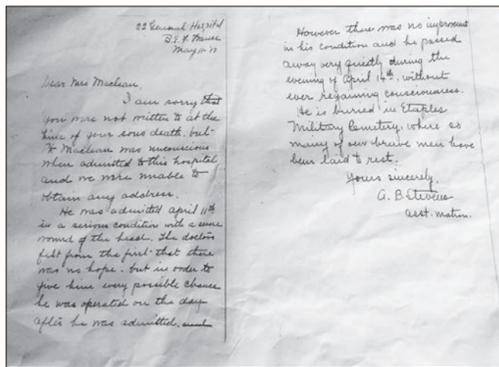
'At 5.30am the Battle of Arras began and 22 officers with 622 men left their trenches to attack the second line of German trenches at the southern end of Vimy ridge. It is almost certain that Hugh MacLean was seriously wounded in this action.'

'Recorded in despatches, two officers were killed, nine were wounded and 38 other ranks were killed, with 168 wounded plus six missing. One of the officers killed in action was 2nd Lieutenant Walter Lightowler Wilkinson, who is a recognised war poet having written *The Wayside Burial* about a month before this event.'

'Hugh, with a serious head wound, was sent by train to Etaples military hospital complex where he arrived unconscious. The doctors operated on him but he did not regain consciousness and he died on April 14. He was buried alongside many other brave lads in the military cemetery next to the estuary of the river Canche.'



Andy MacLean lays a wreath at the grave of Pte Hugh MacLean, below, on the 100th anniversary of his death, and the matron's letter notifying the family of his passing.



ery next to the estuary of the river Canche.

'His great niece, Katy Flora, sent me a copy of the letter from the assistant matron, GB Stevens, at the hospital, which read, "He was admitted April 11 in a serious condition with a severe wound to the head. The doctors felt from the first that there was no hope, but in order to give him every possible chance he was operated on the day after he was admitted."

"However, there was no improvement in his condition and he passed away very quietly without ever regaining consciousness. He is buried in Etaples military cemetery, where so many of our brave

men have been laid to rest?'

Andy writes: 'Etaples military cemetery is a site of great peace, beauty and tragedy. The tranquil spot lies beside the mouth of the river Canche and chilly sea breezes wafted across from the English Channel and through the newly leaved trees. With a backdrop of the magnificent monument to the fallen of the First World War designed by Lutyens, the sheer number of graves standing solidly in their serried ranks was indeed awe-inspiring.'

'Laying a wreath against Hugh MacLean's memorial stone, something I had vowed to do more than 20 years ago, was an

act filled with great emotion as I thought of the sacrifice made by all those young men wrenched from the bosoms of their families to face the lethal barrages on the Western Front 100 years ago.

'Some children were gaily playing up and down the avenues between the lines of memorials on what was a sunlit if somewhat windy April day. For a fleeting moment I thought their boisterous laughter somewhat irreverent but then I remembered that this was exactly what these brave lads had laid down their lives for - our freedom to enjoy peace and prosperity. Their sacrifice had not been in vain.'

The Wayside Burial
By Walter Lightowler Wilkinson

*They're bringing in their recent dead - their recent dead!
I see the shoulder badge: a 'Southern crush.'
How small he looks - (O damn that singing thrush!)
Not give foot five from boots to battered head!
Give him a kindly burial, my friends, -
So much is due, when some such loyal life ends!
'For Country!' Ay, and so our brave do die:
Comrade unknown, good rest to you! - Good-bye!*

*They're bringing their recent dead! - No pomp, no show:
A dingy khaki crowd - his friends, his own.
I, too, would like - (God, how that wind does moan!) -
To be laid down by friends: it's sweetest so!
A young life, as I take it, just a lad - (How cold it blows; and that grey sky, how sad!) -
And yet: 'For Country!' - so a man should die:
Comrade unknown, good rest to you! - Good-bye!*

*They're burying their dead! - I wonder now:
A wife? - or mother? Mother it must be -
In some trim home that fronts the English sea.
(A sea-coast country: that the badges show.)
And she? - I sense her grief, I feel her tears!
'This, then, the garnered harvest of my years!
And he? 'For Country, dear, a man must die!
Comrade unknown, good rest to you! - Good-bye!*

*It's reeded: he is buried! Comrade, sleep!
A wooden cross at your brave head will stand.
A cross of wood? A Calvary! - The Land
For whose sake you laid down sweet life, will keep
Watch, lad, and ward that none may bring to shame.
That Name for which you died!
'What's in a name?' -
England shall answer! Thou will hear Her cry:
'Well done, my own! my son - good rest: Good-bye!'*

Lisa & Mike have been to one of the Cairngorm's renowned steak nights

What a great night Mike! I think I'm in love... that beautiful German model. I couldn't stop looking. Strong and sleek, smooth to the touch...



Hang on, what?



The German kitchens silly! I was talking to a couple who'd just installed one, and they couldn't speak highly enough about the quality and finish. I think we should get one...



Looks like we're paying Cairngorm another visit



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#MeetTheCairns

MORVERN lines

The 'natives' are coming home

'ALL ROADS lead to Rome' is the modern reading of a medieval proverb meaning that many routes can lead to a given result. Later this year all roads lead to Mull.

The Macleans are coming! Between June 20 and 25, around 500 clansmen will make their way to Mull to take part in the International Gathering of the Clan Maclean Association to celebrate its 125th anniversary. This will be the seventh great gathering since 1916 when Sir Fitzroy Maclean, the 26th chief, completed the restoration of Duart Castle.

Attendees are coming from all around the world. Previously, the chiefs have welcomed people to their ancestral home from as far north as Norway and Sweden, and Tasmania in the south. This year Sir Lachlan and Lady Maclean of Duart and Morvern will also meet clansfolk from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South America and Europe, as well as others from around the United Kingdom, including Mull and Morvern.

This year particularly the association wants to highlight the costly restoration work which has been going on at Duart for the past few seasons to ensure that it remains wind and waterproof for the next 125 years. During the week-long celebrations, visitors will be able to meet the project architect and craftsmen to see and hear how this difficult work is being achieved on one of the most windswept sites in Scotland. They will also be



Drimnin House and the site of the new distillery to the left.

able to tour the castle and get up close and personal with their chief and his chieflings to help raise £500,000 needed to complete the £1.2 million restoration costs.

Other events for the week will include receptions, an evening talk and exhibition of items from the MacDougall Collection at Dunollie, Oban; visits to Iona, Glengorm Castle and Tiree; convivial whisky tasting, the chief's ceilidh, a ball, a concert, a clan congress and a gathering to which visitors and locals are encouraged to attend. A service in the Tobermory parish church will bring to a close what will be a memorable occasion.

On June 21, the date, incidentally, when the first Victoria Cross was won in the Crimean

War and when Lord Mountbatten resigned as Viceroy of India, 70 lucky Macleans are going to Morvern. They were due to sail over the Sound from Tobermory and disembark on the old stone pier at Drimnin, which was built by some of their ancestors before they were shovelled off to the colonies at the time of the Clearances.

Alas, tidal and other constraints have dictated otherwise and they are having to take the longer sea route past Killlindine and the Castle of the Dogs, another of their ancestral homes, to Loch Aline. Here they will be guaranteed a friendly reception at the popular community pontoons beside the famous silica sand mine and a short distance away from Kinlochaline Cas-

tle, home to one of their 17th century chiefs.

Passing the ancient cemetery of Kiel, where many of their forebears lie under ornamental grave slabs, the party will follow the winding coastal route to Drimnin Estate to be entertained at the end of it by Mr and Mrs Derek Lewis and their family who purchased the property in 2002.

Drimnin formed part of the ancient Maclean territory. Here, in the 17th century, they built a small castle on a knoll a few yards above the sea guarding the entrance to the Inner Hebrides. The castle was demolished in 1838 by Sir Charles Gordon to make way for St Columba's, a Roman Catholic chapel, to which the faithful on Mull and

the adjacent mainland were summoned to mass by bell and the sight of a flag flying from a staff on its tower.

At Drimnin, the visitors will have an opportunity to lay a wreath at a cairn near the old stone jetty. It was built a decade or so ago by the Clan Maclean Association in memory of Charles Maclean of Drimnin who died leading the clan at the Battle of Culloden on April 16, 1746, in the absence of their chief.

Later in the day the party will make their way to Cnoc Michael (Gaelic - Michael's Hill-ock) near Drimnin House, to remember Allan Maclean of Drimnin, an officer in the Jacobite Army who also fought at Culloden. Allan, who died in 1792, was such a popular figure that the year in which he passed away was a chronological landmark in the district. Those who came into the world in 1792 were said to have been born in the year Allan of Drimnin died.

Then it is into Drimnin House for lunch followed by a concert in the restored chapel and a tour of the recently completed family distillery. Nine new local jobs have been created here to produce 100,000 litres of single malt whisky a year using renewable energy.

The name of the Drimnin whisky has not been announced yet. I once suggested 'Satan's Chloroform', which, unsurprisingly, didn't go down too well, but I wonder if one of two old Maclean slogans - 'Another for Hector' or 'Death or Life' - might be appropriate.

Iain Thornber
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OT

Stornoway

Marking centenary of Iolaire's tragic sinking

MUSEUM nan Eilean is preparing an exhibition marking the passing of 100 years since the tragic sinking of the Iolaire on January 1, 1919.

The exhibition will run from late 2018 until early 2019 in the new museum at Lews Castle and is part of a larger series of events by a number of organisations recognising the centenary of the disaster and its impact on the people of the Outer Hebrides.

While there are several artefacts relating to the Iolaire in the museum's collection already, staff are very interested in hearing from anybody who may be in possession of objects or papers relating to the tragedy which may be suitable for inclusion in the planned exhibition.

A spokesman for the museum said: 'At the present time we plan to take

objects as loans from their owners during the exhibition period rather than as permanent additions to the museum collection.

'If you are the owner of anything relating to the Iolaire which you think may be suitable for display, please let us know by email or post.

'Please include photographs of the object and a full description as well as your contact details.'

The spokesman added: 'Please don't bring any objects or original paperwork to the museum as unfortunately our staff will not be able to accept them for consideration.'

Information and photographs relating to objects and papers may be sent by email to museum@cne-siar.gov.uk or by post to Museum nan Eilean, Lews Castle Grounds, Stornoway, HS2 0XS.

Western Isles

BALLOT papers for postal voters in the Western Isles have started arriving on doormats, ready for the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar election on Thursday May 4.

Malcolm Burr, returning officer for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'For this election, you must vote using numbers. You will need to number the candidates in order of preference using 1, 2, 3 and so on - and you can make as many or as few choices as you wish. When you receive your postal voting pack, make sure you read and follow the instructions carefully before completing your ballot paper. Postal ballot papers must be received by the returning officer by 10pm on May 4.'

ON SATURDAY April 29 between noon and 4pm, An Lannair will launch its Fèill Ceàird is Còcairachd (Craft and Cookery Festival).

This is a free festival throughout offering a fabulous tour of food and craft from the diverse island communities of the Outer Hebrides. Visitors will be able to sample world cuisines from the Minch to Mumbai in a fun-filled day of cooking demonstrations, food tasters and Hebridean craft stalls, highlighting the quality of handmade crafts to be found on a journey through the islands. Marking a season of 'craft' at An Lannair, and with the aim of supporting and celebrating craft practitioners from the Outer Hebrides, a wide range of high quality local professional artists, designers and makers have been invited to exhibit and show demonstrations. Exhibitors will include Uist Wool, Scalpay Linen, The Birlinn Yarn Company, Driftwater Weaves, Solus Studio, Shoreline Stoneware, Borgh Pottery, The Middle Room, Lewis Revival, Verisimilitude, Islewear, Salka Seaglass Jewellery, The Old Leatherworks and Hebridean Baskets. This project forms part of An Lannair's Bealach Programme for the Creative Place Awards 2015.

AN EXHIBITION will visit both Museum nan Eilean premises this year, in partnership with National Museums Scotland.

Fossil Hunters provides a glimpse of life around 360 million years ago when Scotland lay south of the equator. It showcases fossils discovered in Scotland as recently as summer 2015 which were formed from animals believed to be among the first vertebrates to live on land.

The exhibition will be open at Museum nan Eilean Lews Castle until July 26. *Fossil Hunters* has been curated by National Museums Scotland, one of the key partners in creating the new museum at Lews Castle and continues the partnership by bringing other elements of the national collection to the Outer Hebrides. After the exhibition closes at Museum nan Eilean Lews Castle, it will be shown at Museum nan Eilean Uibhist agus Barraigh from September 8 until December 2.



Left to right: Jack Fleming, RSPB; Garry MacLean, Finlaggan Trust; Lizzy Fitzpatrick, McTaggart Cyber Cafe; Steven Mithen, Islay Heritage; Georgie Crawford, Lagavulin Distillery; Florence Gray, Islay Festival Association; Peter Roberts, Islay Arts; and Diana Buller, Islay and Jura Community Enterprises.

Cheers to Lagavulin distillery's legacy

A RANGE of good causes on the famous whisky island of Islay recently raised a dram of Lagavulin to celebrate sharing in a major financial legacy from the distillery's 200th anniversary.

Islay

Representatives of the charities, including the local swimming pool, cyber cafe, arts and festival

organisations, visited the distillery to officially mark the handover of £588,395 of funds which were raised through a special Lagavulin 200th anniversary bottling. The principal beneficiary of the funding is Islay Heritage, a ground-breaking initiative established to explore, conserve and promote Islay's wealth of historical and archaeological sites.



Some of the volunteers who helped clean up St Conan's Kirk inside and out.

Volunteers out in force to clean up St Conan's

VOLUNTEERS banished dust from the vestry and cobwebs from the cloisters of St Conan's Kirk in Lochawe last Sunday, April 23.

Armed with dusters, mops and brushes, the helpers spruced up the celebrated church at a well-attended 'Clean up the Kirk' day, which saw dusting, polishing and tidying inside and

Lochawe

weeding, leaf-clearing and planting outside. Those lending a hand included church trustees and members of the Friends of St Conan's group, which organises events throughout the year and fund raises to support the building, recently voted one of the top 10 Scottish buildings from the last century. Supporters donated home-baking to help keep up energy and morale.

'People have come from near and far to help out,' said Katie Irvine, secretary of Friends of St Conan's. 'Everyone worked really hard and the place is sparkling.'

The successful spring clean means St Conan's will be looking its best ahead of the summer season, during which the kirk and its cafe will be open every day.

However, the building remains in need of repair and renovation and supporters continue to work to raise the funds to keep it open. www.stconanskirk.org.uk

Marine explorers head for Hebridean islands

FRESH back from the Easter break, local primary schools on the Isle of Skye will be taking learning outdoors next week, with pupils joining the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) on board its specialised research yacht, Silurian.

Throughout the week, Silurian will become a floating classroom, hosting primary schools from across Skye, Raasay and Kyle of Lochalsh.

Pupils will have the chance to actively explore the yacht, learn about marine mammals and discover what life is like on board as a marine scientist.

Sessions have been designed to inspire students, spark interest in the marine environment and help

inform the decision-makers of the future.

Following their visit to Skye, Silurian will return to sail the Hebrides, undertaking visual and acoustic research on whales, dolphins and porpoises.

This is part of HWDT's unique long-term citizen science project, with data collected on board informing local and national conservation efforts.

These annual surveys depend on paying volunteers, trained by the team to monitor and become marine mammal scientists for the duration of their trip.

For more information about Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, Silurian and the floating classroom, please visit www.hwdt.org.

Uist

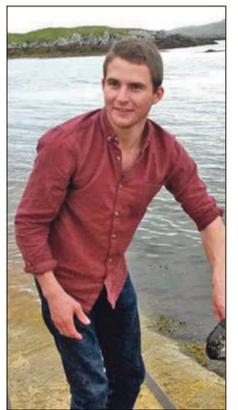
Gaelic officer arrives from Rhode Island

CEÒLAS has employed a new officer who will help to grow Gaelic in Uist. Liam Alastair Crouse, from Rhode Island, started in post at the beginning of April.

The new position, which lasts three years, will increase Ceòlas' Gaelic presence online, as well as encouraging Gaelic usage within local businesses. The post received funding from LEADER, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, HIE and CnES.

The officer will aim to take advantage of Uist's cultural and linguistic resources, broadcasting them to new audiences in a way that contributes to the local economy.

As part of the work, new services will be offered to Uist-based companies and community groups that



Liam Alastair Crouse from Rhode Island.

market the island's unique heritage.

Helensburgh

THE John Muir Way celebrated the third anniversary of the official opening of the 134-mile coast to coast route on Friday April 14.

The route - which commemorates the world-renowned conservationist - launched on Muir's birthday on April 21, 2014, and has welcomed visitors from across the globe.

Around 300,000 visits are made annually to the route, with 75 per cent of those walking, while 24 per cent cycle.

Around 6,000 visits are undertaken by end-to-end users who complete all 134 miles over consecutive days while 19 per cent (57,000)

visits are by those looking to complete the route in sections.

The John Muir birthplace in Dunbar has also seen a steady increase in the number of people visiting who have completed the whole route.

Of those who left details, 46 per cent were from the USA, 25 per cent were Scottish, 10 per cent were from the rest of the UK, eight per cent were from Europe and five per cent were from the rest of the world.

The John Muir Birthplace Trust can be found at www.jmbt.org.uk, on Facebook and Twitter.

Union members vote to end dispute

MEMBERS of the trades union Unite at the Coulport and Faslane naval bases have overwhelmingly voted to end a dispute over workers' rights.

The decision was taken last Tuesday April 18 at a

mass meeting of members, all of them civilian staff who support naval operations at the home of the UK's nuclear submarine fleet.

The members voted to accept a new accord de-

signed to repair industrial relations at the bases. It was negotiated last week between Unite general secretary Len McCluskey, Unite officers and representatives, and senior officers of employer Bab-

cock Marine. Civilian staff at Coulport and Faslane started industrial action on March 24, after allegations that Babcock Marine was undermining workers' rights as part of a campaign to outsource work.

Oban Times district newsdesk 01631 568000

At Random

Let's get rid of this dangerous crossing

WE REPORTED last week and again this week about problems in connection with the zebra crossing outside Lidl on the Soroba Road.

Regardless of the issues surrounding planning permission and whether the correct procedures were followed, this crossing should not have been installed.

There have been numerous incidents and near misses. In fact, it is a miracle there has not been a very serious accident there.

The crossing is right beside the junction with Sinclair Drive, right beside the entrance to Lidl and right beside a very busy filling station. And it is just a very short walk from a traffic lights pelican crossing that is far safer to use.

It is a dangerous crossing in the wrong place. Let's get rid of it as soon as possible.

Excitement builds for Oban Live

IT IS only just over a month now until Oban Live, the biggest music festival on the West Coast.

I am so looking forward to the big event over the weekend of June 2 and 3 as it has a great line-up of acts, headlined by Toploader but also featuring a host of well-known bands and performers.

Among the best of them are Skerryvore, Skipinnish, Manra, Tide Lines and Trail West. But there will also be music from Oban High School Pipe Band, newly returned from the Big Apple after a starring role in New York famous Tartan Day parade along Sixth Avenue.

There is a range of tickets to suit different budgets, with options for just the Friday or Saturday, or both.

Then there are different prices for VIPs, adults, concessions,

under-18s and children under eight (who are admitted for free). If we are lucky enough to have the same weather as last year, it will be a brilliant couple of days. Make sure you're there.

Gripped by the thrill of elections

I LOVE elections. I'm not especially political but I find myself gripped by the whole drama of campaigns and the way people become polarised over particular issues.

I love the cut and thrust of the arguments and debates. I'm fascinated by the passion which people of all parties display as they strive to persuade others to their points of view.

Prime Minister Theresa May has been praised and pilloried in equal measure for her decision to go to the country on June 8. I thank her for doing so.

The general election comes, of course, just five weeks after the local elections here in Scotland on May 4. I've heard some people grumbling about 'election fatigue', a phrase that has now become a cliché. I am anything but fatigued by the prospect of two polls within weeks of each other. Just the opposite, in fact. But don't worry: I'm not going to try to persuade anyone to vote for a particular party. What I would urge, though, is everyone should go out and vote for someone. Our democratic rights have been hard-earned and there are those who would deny us them if they could. Make sure you turn out to vote on May 4 and June 8 if you possibly can.

What do you think?

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

MARTIN LAING
miaing@obantimes.co.uk



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Bus ban sign row prompts Fort high street retailers into action

ELLIE FORBES
 eforbes@obantimes.co.uk

MORE than 20 Fort William High Street businesses have signed up to a new retail association after the Highland Council opposed the removal of controversial signs stopping coaches parking near the town centre.

Signs banning coach tours dropping off holiday-makers at bus stops close to Fort William High Street, as reported in the *Lochaber Times* April 13, have been in place on bus stops in Middle Street.

Plans to remove the signs after an outcry from town centre shopkeepers were opposed by a few Fort William councillors.

High street shopkeepers were angered by the move, claiming tour buses visit the town daily and bring valuable customers to the town's businesses.

Councillors held a meeting in private last week to try to resolve the issue of where tour buses can drop off visitors to the town. They have now agreed the bus stop beside the Nevis Sport shop, and at the West End of town, can be used as coach drop-off points temporarily.

It was also agreed a consultation would be carried out with interested parties with a view to improving coach arrangements.

Those due to be consulted are Lochaber Transport Forum, the Disability Access Panel, Shopmobility, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, tour bus companies and evening businesses.

But High Street shop owner Drew Purdon, who first raised the coach issue, is concerned town businesses will not have a seat at the discussion table so started the association.

With more than 20 business already signed up, Mr Purdon said

the association aims to 'protect and promote the interests of high street businesses'.

Mr Purdon told the *Lochaber Times*: 'The council is planning a consultation about coaches in the town, but don't seem to be planning to include one retailer in the high street. There is a great deal of concern about what will happen with the coaches stopping and puzzlement as to why it has taken councillors five years to come to a decision.'

'This decision about stopping coaches parking in local bus stops came from Inverness. They were changing the rules so decided to inflict the same ones on Fort William without any knowledge of the number of coaches we get and how important they are to the town.'

A retail association with 35 members was set up about 12 years ago. Mr Purdon said the group met regularly and were

consulted on High Street matters.

He said: 'We [shop owners] have been ignored in the past. We have no body which represents all of the High Street and it is one of the biggest employers in Lochaber, representing around 150 jobs.'

'Coaches bring so much business to the town and are here every day of the week, and we want to maintain that. Businesses will struggle if we can't.'

Senior ward manager Dot Ferguson said: 'We have already stated we would be consulting with Lochaber Transport Forum, Access Panel, Shopmobility, Chamber of Commerce, tour bus companies and evening businesses over the next two to three months with a view to improving arrangements. We would be content to consult with the retail association if they can get in touch with contact details.'



Fort William businessman Drew Purdon at the bus stop nearest the High Street as a tourist bus braves the ban to drop off passengers. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Football club 'optimistic' over future

A 'FIVE-YEAR plan' to bring community spirit back to a Lochaber football club in jeopardy was outlined at a crucial meeting.

Fort William Football Club's (FWFC) board of directors encouraged more people to offer physical help to safeguard the club's future and participation in the Highland League in light of the imminent retiral of board/committee members.

During the meeting on April 24 in FWFC's social club, Alan Gray who currently is involved with South Lochaber Thistle (SLT), said he and four or five others are interested in becoming a coaching and management team with FWFC. He added that depending on the outcome of Monday's meeting, he could start putting plans in motion in the next few weeks.

Mr Gray said while SLT is an amateur team, it attracts up to 30 local boys for training weekly. Youth development was emphasised throughout the meeting, as well as a desire to get more local players on the team sheet.

Mr Gray stressed the problems might not be fixed overnight but that if the team had more of a local focus, families would sign up to various jobs.

Ronnie MacLean, a FWFC director, said he feels a lot more confident about the future of the club in light of the discussions. Anyone who would like to volunteer should contact the club secretary on 07803 049571.

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Children at St Columba's nursery, Fort William, with Fiona MacLean, Highland Council countryside ranger.

Mud kitchen a recipe for outdoor nursery smiles

CHILDREN at St Columba Nursery, Fort William, got down in the mud this week as they enjoyed the outdoors.

The school and Fiona MacLean, a Highland Council Ranger, have been working together to enhance the children's outdoor learning space.

Fiona built the nursery pupils a mud kitchen and on Tuesday April 25 they all had great fun using it and learning through play.

The children have also taken part in tree planting, with trees donated by Organic Trees in Morvern, and scrambling on a climbing log, courtesy of the Nevis

Landscape Partnership. Travis Perkins transported it. Fiona told the *Lochaber Times*: 'We hope to add to the area within the nursery by developing more interactive learning activities.'

'The staff at St Columba nursery are enthusiastic about outdoor learning and we have lots of ideas.'

'As rangers we work with all the schools in Lochaber helping them deliver the curriculum. We aim to enhance their learning opportunities by using the natural environment, helping them to gain better understanding, respect and awareness of the countryside.'

Man jailed for attacking neighbour

AN OBAN man has been jailed for nine months for assaulting his new neighbour who complained about noise.

Daniel William Kelly, 26, of 41 Rhuvaal Road, Oban, pleaded guilty to assaulting a man on that street on April 16 by repeatedly seizing and punching him in the head to his injury.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty told Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday April 25: 'The accused only recently moved into a flat with his girlfriend. The residents downstairs were

concerned about the noise coming from above. One of the residents went up to ask them to turn the music down.'

'There began an argument. The accused grabbed the complainer and punched him in his face, causing him to fall to the ground. The complainer got to his feet. He was punched once again in the face.'

'He made his way back to the flat and called the police. The complainer had a chip to his front tooth and damage to dental work. The estimated cost is £300.'

'[Kelly] has had a number of custodial sentences,' his defence agent, Jane McLaren, told the court.

'Things got out of control when he decided to come off methadone. This seems to have been the catalyst for Mr Kelly coming back into the court system.'

Taking into account Kelly's previous convictions and his early plea, Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC sentenced him to nine months in prison, backdated to April 19.



The original directors of Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mor celebrate at their dinner.

Lismore celebrates decade anniversary

Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mor had much to be proud of when it celebrated 10 years since opening its museum with its exhibition room, library, shop and cafe.

The original directors, responsible for the Herculean task of erecting this building, were invited to a meal on Friday March 24 to thank them and to celebrate 10 years of keeping alive and promoting the island's Gaelic culture.

This was followed by a social evening in the museum, where many other islanders joined the party and were treated to some of the island's talented performers.

Duncan Livingstone and Laura Cook performed Gaelic song and Arthur Cross, Duncan Ferguson and Shona Wright were instrumentalists.



Duncan Livingstone entertains by singing a Gaelic song.

The meal was cooked and presented by the Lismore Community Cafe staff, led by its new chef Dan Johnstone and his assistant Pia Dellemann. The celebration cake, representing the reconstructed

cottage Taigh Iseabal, was made by Katy Crossan.

Anne Livingstone thanked everyone involved and presented Katy MacGregor with a basket of flowers in honour of her 80th birthday.

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Viewpoint



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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

There is no doubting the importance of community, and at the weekend the Oban community did its town proud as more than £13,000 was raised at this year's sell-out Ryan MacPhail memorial dinner.

According to Alan and Amanda MacPhail, who organise the annual event in memory of their son, the winning formula this year was down to the introduction of a raffle rather than the usual auction.

The speakers were no doubt a huge draw, too, with former Manchester United, Rangers and Northern Ireland star Jimmy Nicholl, the former Celtic and Scotland

player Tosh McKinlay and John McKelvie, a retired policeman and football referee, taking part.

But praise must also go to the family and to their many helpers, including staff, as it is their determination and hard work that is the foundation on which the successful event has been built.

And without this effort many organisations and activities for the under-18s would be worse off, as money is given to youth football teams, shinty and rugby clubs, and for school trips, as well as given to help sick children. So a huge thanks to everyone involved.



Days gone by – 1996

This week's trip down memory lane takes us back to the Mod competitors from Rockfield Primary School in 1996.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

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The gift of encouragement

WHAT a truly great gift it is to receive a message of encouragement at the right time from the right person.

After returning last week from a very enjoyable Easter holiday, I awoke on Thursday morning with a severe case of post-holiday heebie-jeebies. This was the occasional but nonetheless recognisable feeling of trepidation, regret, doubt, fear and negativity that can creep up on one every now and then.

'AAAAGGHHH! What was I doing taking all that time off when there's so much to be done? There is too much to do and not enough time now and it is all too difficult anyway.'

This state can escalate easily to momentarily covering the world and one's place in it with a dark shade of gloom. However, a well-timed and unexpected email immediately banished these futile feelings of blackness

back to their cage of energy-sapping irrationality where they belong.

This was a simple, short but beautifully written message from someone I hold in very high regard, complimenting me on my *Oban Times* contribution published that day and making positive reference to a few other particular pieces.

As I'm sure most people do, I often have considerable periods of self-doubt regarding my output – in song-writing and in my *Oban Times* articles. I very much enjoy the writing process itself but during the thankfully transitory moments when the dark dogs of doom and doubt are hovering, I often think: 'What a load of cack and why would anyone be interested in such dribble?'

Baring parts of the soul to the wider world brings risks of rejection and ridicule to the fore and I suppose these are some of the things that, as humans, we are most affected by.

That was how I was feeling last Thursday and the email received

instantly sent these dark dogs whimpering away to a far off kennel where they should be and I was instantly refilled with vigour.

In a wider context, it brought forth recognition of the value of giving encouragement to others when it is relevant to do so. To the giver, it can seem insignificant but to the receiver it could have a huge influence and in some cases be truly life-changing.

Like most of the best things in life there is no downside to passing on a genuine compliment, there is never a bad time to do it and the virtuously circle of goodness it creates is one that can spread exponentially.

Whether you are a joiner talking to an apprentice, a teacher to a pupil, a skipper to a young crew member, a successful builder to a young plumber or an established writer emailing a novice columnist, words of encouragement are powerful and can have a life-long lasting positive effect.

The bounty of encouragement is indeed a golden gift.



Social media

There has been widespread support for our campaign to improve road safety on the A85 between Oban and Connell.

Allan Strang Jnr posted: 'In the 2.5 mile or so between Dunbeg and town there seems to be a lot of bends, which maybe folk aren't ready for even though they should be. Straighter roads would be better as a) it gives a clear sight of what's going on ahead and b) it'd stop folk speeding only if it would give more places for speed detection to take place and also if overtaking folk wouldn't chance it if they could see ahead. Let's just put it straight. The roads of the last millennia aren't fit for today's volume of traffic and our local roads budget is being significantly dented before it reaches the outside world.'

Margaret Adams suggested: 'Drivers ignore the double white lines in the middle of the road. Speed is also a factor. It could also be that the beautiful scenery takes their eyes off the road!'

Murdo MacKenzie wrote: 'There's so many people who think they're invincible being inside a metal frame. I'm sick of being overtaken on that stretch. It's so dangerous, so many people have died on the roads around Oban. You'd think people would be wiser.'

Eachann Gillies explained: 'I think it's a bit of "fundamental attribution error" – a cognitive bias that makes

us more likely to blame others for bad driving and excuse ourselves from the same behaviour. Research has also shown that about 90% of the driving public think that their driving is "above average", which suggests we tend to drastically overestimate our own skills and ability to avoid collisions. Add to this message epidemic levels of phone use at the wheel and you can see why driving on any road can be quite harrowing. On a stretch of road that people feel they know well, and when using this stretch of road during rush hour ... then it makes for an even less pleasant experience.'

Alistair Reid said: 'Slow drivers cause lots of frustration. I was sat behind someone doing 26mph the other day between halfway house and pennifur. Passenger was taking pictures out of the window. Need more police patrols.'

Mags Johnstone recounted: 'Someone overtook me on my way into town couple of days ago double white lines, he/she didn't think me driving at 45mph was fast enough obviously.'

Staying on a roads theme, there was also considerable engagement with our story about the zebra crossing on outside Lidl on Soroba Road.

Kenny MacKenzie posted: 'Can't com-

ment about the driving aspect of it but it is between the entry and exit to the petrol station and 15 yards between the Sinclair drive junction and the turn in to the new lids. As a resident who crossed there all the time, I never had a problem just using the traffic islands. Good idea, poorly positioned.'

Gary Farlow offered: 'Think the crossing is ok, my gran stays in the flats next to it, when am tryin to get across to the garage it was a night mare before the crossing was put up, just drivers in Oban need to be more observant and stop being so ignorant to other road users and pedestrians, half the people I have come across while visitin family in Oban have no idea how a roundabout works. Nothing wrong with the crossing just people don't know the highway codes etc.'

Duncan Ferguson wrote: 'It's only an accident waiting to happen for bad drivers!!its clear to see and local drivers are the worst!!being diligent and noticing tings are being part of being a driver so it u don't see that give it up!!!'

Saskia Cheney said: 'Accident waiting to happen! Far too much going on there! Cross at the islands either side of it instead.'

Ian Fletcher said: 'Accident waiting to happen.'

Don't elect the same old dinosaurs in Argyll

Another election is looming. At least some of our Argyll and Bute councillors have had the decency to retire (some should have years ago).

Yet out of the woodwork come former councillors seeking to return to the fold. In my opinion they should stay away as they have been puppets for the retiring council leader, Dick Walsh.

You would not put these candidates, if elected, in charge of any council policies, never mind have them as guardians of the council's finances. In fact, you would not let them do car park duty.

Just look at the state of Argyll's roads, refuse collections, the infrastructure in disarray and folk living on Dickensian wages, thanks to the existing members at Kilmory.

These councillors, who are not fit for the role, get better jobs, salaries and pensions as big as their egos.

More of these elected members should retire and let in new blood as they are past their sell-by date.

I would caution voters to choose very carefully come May 4. Vote for change because, if you don't, we will be left with the same old dinosaurs and Argyll will be the new Jurassic Park.

Stephen Johnstone,
Downside Road,
Hillhead, Glasgow.

Saddened by one Christian's intolerance

I read with sadness the letter from Donald Morrison (*The Oban Times*, April 20) and can only speculate on the motivation for such an outpouring of unpleasantness from someone who purports to be a Christian.

Hopefully, other Christians of a more pleasant disposition will respond and confirm that they do not share Mr Morrison's intemperate views in the name of Christ. To add to his outrageous views is his admission that he was not even present at the funeral to which he takes such vitriolic exception, but arrogantly pleases himself by purporting to reflect the views of some who did attend.

Mr Morrison should perhaps reflect on the hurt he has caused to the loved ones of the deceased who were marking the passing of a fellow human being in the manner of their choosing, and he needs to question his right to publicly berate those who do not share his bigoted beliefs.

Presumably, he takes a similarly dim view of those Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and those of other faiths who would make no mention of his Christian beliefs in their funeral proceedings.

As an atheist, I respect the absolute right of others to have faith in their chosen beliefs. That right does not, however, extend to berating those who do not share the same views.

It is this kind of extreme intolerance of others, and the insistence of the absolute 'divine truth', as expressed by Mr Morrison, that led to the Inquisition in the past, and to the extreme views and barbarity that we witness today in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Finally, and on reading his letter

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



SAOILIDH MI GUM BHEIL miosan bho cheannaich mi siol-cura a' bhuntata agus bidh e math fhaotainn dhan talamh mu dheireadh thall. Ged a bha an aimsir cuimseach math bha an talamh fliuch agus fuar gu ruige seo, agus gu dearbha tha luchd na h-aimsire a' fàidheadaireachd tuilleadh fauchd agus theagamh reothadh an t-seachdain seo fhèin.

Ach chan urrainn gum bheil earrach fada às a' chuthag gu bhith a' gairm ann am beagan làithean 's an Cèitean gu bhith againn.

Bidh na h-oghaichean aig mo charaid Iain Uisdean còmhla rinn aig a' bhuntata agus bidh mi tric a' beachdachadh air cho buannachdail 's a bha na dh'ionnsaich sinne uile a thogadh air an tuath. Fhuair sinn eòlas air an àrainneachd agus air nàdar nach robh aig clann nam bailtean-mòra agus ged is dòcha nach do thuig sinn sin aig an àm, thug am fiosrachadh sin tuigse luachmhor dhùinn.

'S iomadh sgeul a chluinnear mu dhaoine òga agus inbhidh aig nach eil cus tuigse air cò às a tha mòran de

afresh, would Mr Morrison expect Jesus to have drafted such a letter and been the signatory to it?

Andrew Dodd,
Lochgilhead.

No need to pity or be concerned for atheists

I was somewhat surprised at the letter from Donald J Morrison last week regarding humanist funerals. Surely the clue was in the name – humanist, not church, service.

I respect the wishes of anyone of faith who wants the comfort of a religious service, but for those of us who do not believe in a God or afterlife, it would be sheer hypocrisy. It is surely better to have a tribute to the deceased through memories, words and poems.

I thank him for his pity and concern, but really it is not necessary.

Moirra Haywood,
Barcaldine.

Forestry is no threat to wildlife on Mull

I am writing to reassure residents and anyone connected with Mull that there is no threat to wildlife in the area as a result of the trees that are being planted. In fact, working with the local community and land owners to protect the local environment is central to our operations.

Our work on Mull has been extensive and positive. It has included: helping to provide solutions to exporting timber from Mull to the mainland and Ireland; helping to minimise impacts on fragile roads by designing low-impact timber trucks, and creating forest design plans that help both community and private clients achieve their objectives for their forests.

Our ecologists have guided the work to ensure minimal impact on the environment – including ensuring the floating pier does not interfere with otters. Our felling plans ensure white-tailed eagles flourish in the forests where they nest. To name just two examples.

Your article 'Chemical threat to Mull wildlife' in last week's paper mentions the use of a systemic pesticide called Gazelle.

Like many other crops, trees can suffer from damage by insects such as weevils. To help them to thrive, the young trees are treated in a controlled environment in the nursery where they are grown before being transported to site for planting. The use of Gazelle is only possible because of extensive tests and studies. It has been approved by the EU and the UK CRD (Chemical Regulation Department) and is approved by our dual Forest Sustainable Management Bodies PEFC and FSC as well as by the Forestry Commission and UK WAS (UK Woodland Assurance Scheme).

We only use pesticides when it is absolutely necessary and are striving to reduce our usage. That is why we are major players in the Hylobius (weevil) Plant Protection Group – a cross-industry group that is looking

for the elusive goal of non-pesticidal Hylobius management. We have been carrying out trials since early 2000s – firstly searching for lighter footprint pesticides and secondly for non-pesticide solutions.

It is true to say that global demand for timber is increasing and, yes, China is having a significant impact on this. 'Scotland plc' is well placed to be a major player in forestry which is why the Scottish Government is so supportive of the industry.

Forestry produces sustainable, low-carbon material for construction as well as renewable fuel. This helps reduce the use of fossil-hungry materials such as steel, concrete and coal. The forests sequester carbon helping with our climate change targets in a sustainable way while providing jobs and protecting wildlife.

Restocking the forests allows the 1970s plantations to be improved and the planting of trees with better genetics to make the timber far more resilient and useful while creating forests for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Tim Liddon,
Forestry Director, Tilhill Forestry.

Motorists drive far too quickly on the A85

On holiday in Scotland last June for a couple of weeks, I saw that Scottish roads are narrow, winding and rather bumpy. Drivers must be very careful and look both at the road ahead of them and at other cars rather than at the beautiful scenery around them.

Unfortunately, I noticed that too many people drove far too fast for the kind of roads the country has. It is true of the A85 but also of many other small roads which would badly need repairing properly.

Yves Loisel,
Brittany, France.

Pay postal workers to check the elderly

Despite the huge increase in the number of elderly people being forecast 30 years ago, politicians of all colours failed to plan and budget for a different society. Keeping people in their own homes is great but how can we ensure they are all monitored and have regular personal contact?

It costs £100 for a GP to make a home visit and £50 for a nurse. It's still £25 for a social worker, which is why in Finland and Jersey governments are paying postal workers £5 to check on elderly residents and reduce the need and expense for crisis care. A quick smile and a chat for an isolated pensioner living alone is good and cheap medicine.

In these days of declining mail volumes, £5 a visit would bring welcome new revenue to the Post Office as well as helping our communities. Helping voters and saving money are seemingly no longer important, though, as Cosla and Holyrood politicians focus on their own flatulence.

Mike Foster,
Sannox, Crannaig a Mhinister,
Oban.

Ailean Caimbeul

a' gabhail cùram mun t-saoghal mun cuairt dhaibh. Ach mar a thuir caraid dhomh uair is e an sàs ann an deasbad mun Ghàidhlig, tha fhios againn uile gum bheil daoine co-ionann ge b' e dè an dath a dh'fhaodas a bhith orra ach tha feum air laghan agus an ceartas sin a ghleidheadh. Chan eil teagamh nach eil burraidheachd nàdarra ann an gnè mhic an duine mar a tha e ann an ainmhidhean eile, agus bidh feum daonna air laghan a bheir dìon dha còraichean mion-choimhearsnachdan leithid tè na Gàidhlig!

THOSE of us raised on crofts benefited hugely from what we learned of nature and I was delighted to see technology now being used to stream live pictures from farms into schools to enhance children's understanding. It may take time to establish such links everywhere but there can be no doubt that such education will help future environmental care.

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

Press policy

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

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

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

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

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

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses

must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not

be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

Pupils' return is real test of re-worked road crossing

MONICA GIBSON
mgibson@obantimes.co.uk

A ROAD crossing near Banavie Primary School is better but is still 'not perfect', according to a councillor who has campaigned for improvements.

BEAR Scotland has been carrying out work on behalf of Transport Scotland on the A830 road at the Banavie Primary School junction.

After years of campaigning by residents, school staff and the parent council, it was agreed earlier this year a section of the road should be narrowed to limit risk to pedestrians.

Louise Pescod of Banavie Parent Council told the *Lochaber Times* the real test for the crossing will come now that children have returned to school after the Easter break. Mrs Pescod added: 'We are going to need to wait for feedback. It is difficult when you are looking at a plan to determine whether something is going to work or not so now that I have been up and looked there are a few things I think could be changed



Norman Clark and Louise Pescod at the new crossing in Banavie. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

and I will put these to Transport Scotland. Transport Scotland (TS) is going to be monitoring the crossing for a year and has said to go back with our comments. It has been helpful and we are relieved something has been done because while TS said pedestrian crossings are required in Corpach and at the swing bridge further down the road, it has also said there is no money to do so.'

Ben Thompson, councillor for Caol and Mallaig, said the crossing looks safer. He added: 'Parents would definitely have preferred to be able to stop the traffic themselves by way of a pelican crossing but BEAR Scotland deemed it was not necessary which was disappointing. 'BEAR has said the idea was to slow traffic down. Narrowing the road makes it look as though

the road is safer but what we now need to see is whether or not speeds have actually slowed. Visibility still isn't great.

'If you stand at the north side of the crossing, you still can't see very well as there are bushes and different things obscuring your way. This outcome is not perfect but is definitely better.'

A spokesperson for BEAR Scotland said: 'Trunk road safety is a priority and all routes are continuously monitored by our teams with the safety of the entire trunk road network reviewed annually with Transport Scotland to establish where further improvements are required. 'We have been also asked by Transport Scotland to carry out feasibility studies for a potential crossings at Banavie and Corpach and the results will be submitted to Transport Scotland for consideration once completed.

'Assessments for pedestrian crossings are carried out based on a series of factors including the number of people who cross the road at a concentrated point as well as the volume of traffic on the route.'



Lochaber High School teacher William Cameron with his much-loved ice axe. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

Teacher reunited with 50-year-old ice axe against all the odds

A LOCHABER High School teacher has been reunited with his 50-year-old ice axe after losing it down a 1,500ft drop in the Cairngorms.

A day out on Creag Meagaidh looked to have been spoiled for William Cameron, 43, when he discovered his much-loved ice axe was no longer attached to his rucksack on his descent down the 3,710ft munro.

A gift from a retired teacher years ago, the axe held great sentimental value for William. So he was overjoyed to learn that against all odds it had been found.

Colleague and climbing partner on the expedition, Neil Adams, messaged William a week after their climb to tell him he had seen a post on the Scottish Hills Facebook page that someone had found a distinctive ice axe halfway down the snow covered slopes of Creag Meagaidh.

William's swift response onto the site to give its full description confirmed it was

his lost axe. It had been found by a climber from London who had travelled north to stay in a holiday cottage in Lochcarron. As he was going back London, he offered to leave it in the coal bunker at the property for William to collect.

And it was just in the nick of time as the axe accompanied William in his latest climbing adventure to Iceland.

Speaking to the *Lochaber Times* on return from his trip, the technological studies teacher said: 'It just goes to show it's all about connectivity.'

'The fact someone found it in this remote part of Scotland is amazing because where we descended there wasn't a path and there was a lot of snow.'

'The man [from London] wouldn't accept any payment, so I made a donation to Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team as a thank you and a gesture of goodwill. The moral of the story is be careful where you keep your ice axe.'

Former policeman on trial

FORMER policeman Thomas Allan Kirsop is due to go on trial today (Thursday) for two charges of driving without due care and attention.

Kirsop appeared at Fort William Sheriff on Tuesday April 25 where Sheriff William Taylor ordered a part trial to be set for today (April 27).

The 76-year-old will be tried for driving slowly and swerving onto the opposite side of the road, causing the vehicle behind to drive at slow speed and stopping the driver from overtaking on March 24 and March 29, 2017, on the A82 at North Ballachulish.

Kirsop will also be sentenced for a third similar driving offence and two breaches of bail conditions relating to his ongoing trial for stalking, which he pleaded guilty to on Tuesday.

Kirsop's bail was continued until today.

Police files

POLICE in Fort William are appealing for any information in connection with the following incidents:

Sometime between 8.30pm on Tuesday April 18 and 7am on Monday April 19, a red and yellow 'Wacker Neuson' diesel rammer machine was taken from Caol Community Centre car park.

Sometime between Friday March 3 and Tuesday April 18, 14 galvanised steel walkway treads were taken from a yard in Salen, Acharacle.

Sometime between Tuesday April 18 and Saturday April 22, approximately a tonne of Tarmac and concrete was dumped on the helicopter landing pad at Carrs Corner, Fort William, preventing the landing of emergency aircraft.

Driver banned for year after high-speed crash

A 22-YEAR-OLD man has been banned from driving for a year after he overturned the car he was driving, throwing three of his four passengers out of the vehicle.

Procurator fiscal Martina Eastwood told Fort William Sheriff Court Joe Watson, of Inverlochy Court, had been at McDonald's in Fort William with friends on Friday August 5, 2016.

As he left to take them home

to Caol, he turned left towards Lochyside.

A witness in the Farmfoods car park saw the car accelerate and called the police.

The court heard Watson drove at excessive speed, only slowing down past Soldier's Bridge. He picked up speed again on the downward slope before his nearside front wheel hit the kerb, causing him to lose control of the vehicle. It rotated 180 degrees before

colliding with the opposite kerb, leaving the road and crashing into a hedge.

This impact caused three of his passengers to be thrown from the car and Watson and the other passenger ran to the Co-op in Caol for help. Watson wasn't injured but two of his passengers required stitches with the other two suffering bruising and whiplash.

Solicitor Stephen Kennedy said Watson accepted full

responsibility for the crash and that he was driving too fast. He added this was the first time Watson had driven with a full car and that he had apologised to his passengers.

Sheriff William Taylor also issued a community payback order of 300 hours of unpaid work to be completed over six months and a 12-month supervision requirement.

Watson will also have to re-sit an extended driving test.



Chris Jones, front, with Harley-Davidson riders from all over the area. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Harley riders gather in Fort

HARLEY-DAVIDSON riders and enthusiasts from all over Scotland gathered at the Ben Nevis Highland Centre in Fort William on Saturday April 22 for a rally hosted by the Harley-Davidson Riders Club of Great Britain.

Chris Jones, the club's assistant representative for the North of Scotland, said the day was 'stupendous'. He told the *Lochaber Times* that around 30 riders from all over Scotland attended the event, including a husband and wife from Blairgowrie with their 'his and hers' bikes. Mr Jones said: 'Quite a few locals turned up and a couple have paid to join the group. We are on our way to having a local branch of the club in Lochaber, which was the aim of the event.'

Following the meeting, the bikers rode out to Mallaig via the Back of Keppoch before returning for their regional annual general meeting later that evening.

Call for review as bus cuts bite

AN MSP has called for an urgent review of the re-tendering of bus service contracts by Highland Council.

New timetables, many a direct result of the council's re-tendering decisions, came into force on Monday April 24. Highlighting examples right across her constituency, Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, said the 15 per cent budget reduction by the local authority had 'disproportionately decimated' timetables.

Ms Forbes explained: 'In my constituency, bus timetables have been disproportionately decimated as an outcome of these re-tendering decisions.'

'For example, on the Black Isle there is now no commuter service from Culbokie to Inverness and the 26 service to Fortrose has been effectively halved to an hourly service.'

'In Lochaber, lifeline services for Acharacle and parts of Skye have been almost entirely removed.'

Ms Forbes told the *Lochaber Times* she has written to senior officials at the Highland Council calling for the recent re-tendering exercise to be reviewed at the first available opportunity. 'It appears to me decisions have been made largely on cost, with less consideration given to the value bus services provide to rural communities. While I appreciate financial constraints require service reductions, I reiterate the 15 per cent budget cut appears to have resulted in a much greater loss of services.'

A spokesperson for North Scotland Stagecoach told the *Lochaber Times* Culbokie will still have a bus service, operated by D&E coaches, from April 24 adding: 'Changes to our service 26 in the Black Isle were as a result of a wider analysis of our business. An hourly service for this area is adequate for the demand for the bus service.'

Sleat Community Council had also raised concerns regarding the changes. A spokesperson said: 'From Monday April 24 there will be no commercial bus service operating between Armadale to Broadford and Portree. The exception to this is the 152 schools service that operates at 7.30am from Ardsvar (does not stop at the pier) and arrives Portree at 8.49am. The return school bus leaves Portree at 3.30pm and arrives Ardsvar 4.54pm. No dates yet have been given by the Highland Council and Stagecoach for the re-introduction of the 52 summer service.'

With regards to the 52 service, Stagecoach said: 'Service 52 is a seasonal service. It will start in our summer timetable from June 5 to coincide with changes to school hours throughout the Highlands.'

The Highland Council confirmed the decisions were made as part of budget savings and that it is in talks with Stagecoach in the hope of arranging an interim service.



DIOPLÒMA ANNS NA MEADHANAN GÀIDHLIG

Tha an cùrsa seo air a dhealbhadh airson luchd-trèanaidh ullachadh airson saoghal craolaidh an latha an-diugh. Tha oileanaich air a' chùrsa a' faighinn sàr eòlas is brosnachadh bho na diofar òraidichean a bhios a' tadhal orra, a tha ag obair gu proifeiseanta sa gnìomhachais.

'Se cùrsa fad dà bhliadhna a tha seo leis a chiad bhliadhna aig a cholaiste agus 10 mìosan anns a ghnìomhachais anns

"Chan eil cùrsa cho prìseil coltach ris ann an Alba, a bheir dhut am fiosrachadh agus an tuigse a' dh'fheumas thu airson dreuchd anns na meadhanan."

Airson foirm-iarrtais cuiribh fios gu:
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WWW.SMO.UHI.AC.UK



Lorry driver jailed for Ballachulish thefts

A LORRY driver has been jailed for 18 months for stealing tools, equipment and fuel from Chisholms Recovery Specialists and Chisholms Garage in Ballachulish.

Procurator fiscal Martina Eastwood told Fort William Sheriff Court that on November 10, 2014, the owners of premises in West Quarry, Ballachulish, reported they had been broken into, storage containers were opened and contents, tools and equipment worth £5,000 had been taken. Sixty litres of diesel had been siphoned from fuel tanks on the premises.

She said CCTV footage showed a white van pulling up at the yard and a man taking items, putting them in the van and

driving off, although it was not possible to identify the man from the footage.

She told the court a yellow hose was found in one fuel tank, DNA from which was analysed and matched to Sandu, 25, after he was stopped by police on a separate matter on November 26, 2016, and found with items belonging to Chisholms in his van.

Solicitor Martha Rafferty, representing Sandu, told the court she believed the fuel to be included in the £5,000 value of the stolen goods and that he had only stolen the fuel to get himself home from the yard. Ms Rafferty also asked that the sheriff take into account that Sandu had

shown remorse, reflected in his guilty plea which he had given quickly once all the details of the case were disclosed.

She added that Sandu appreciated his actions caused financial loss and could have generated fear in the community.

Sheriff William Taylor said a criminal justice social work report on Sandu showed he has a recent history of violence, failing to attend court and willingness to engage in risky, dishonest behaviour so he felt it was in the public interest to give a custodial sentence.

Sandu's 18-month sentence is backdated to April 3 as he has been in custody since then.

Arena

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

Even stalwart's absence can't mask success of music festival

SOMETIMES you have to miss your favourite music festival when your daughter is taking part in a dancing competition. But one woman, from Ballachullish, who has descended on Mull every April for the past 10 years, has virtually there despite not being present at all.

When friends of Marion Richie, who lives in Fife, found out she wouldn't be taking part in their annual outing to the Mull Music Festival, they came up with a novel idea of bringing her along anyway – by having masks made of their friend that they wore everywhere around Tobermory.

Taking in bands such as Trail West, Tide Lines, Horo, Chunks, Crooked Reel, Gunna Sound, Heron Valley, Beinn Lee Ceilidh Band, Dun Mor Ceilidh Band, Ruairidh MacLean, Allan Irvine, Davy Holt, Crooked Reel and many more in venues throughout the village, the masks became a feature of the hundreds of people attending the four-day event.

While Mrs Richie missed out as her daughter, Erin, was taking part in the

Scottish heats of the Dance Challenge UK, she said it was worth it as her daughter's team won a place in the national finals.

Many people from Oban took the ferry to the island to enjoy the festival and sat out in the nice weather enjoying some unseasonably warm sun.

Hopes of the start of a long summer were dashed by Monday when the heat turned into large lying flakes of snow.

Party-goers were undeterred, with some still seen to be wearing straw hats while sheltering under the eaves of Macgochans pub on Monday.

While the music was mainly Scottish – think folk-rock, fiddles, accordions, Gaelic singers and plenty of ceilidh – the audience was very much international with a few hen and stag parties thrown into the mix.

Joanie Mackay, who lives in the village, summed up the event, saying: 'Where in the world can you get live music from top quality musicians for four days?'

'Well done to all the businesses and hotels for bringing folk together and all having great craic.'



Enjoying a dram in the bright sun were Carolyn Buchanan, Duncan Buchanan, left, and Callum Hancock.



Liza McGouchan, Kenneth Weir, Jane Gill and Carolyn MacDonald in the Mishnish.



Argyll's finest were on hand to make sure everyone had a good time.



Obanites enjoyed Trail West.

A LOCAL - CARING - CHARITY

North Argyll

EVENTIDE HOME ASSOCIATION LTD

In 1955 The North Argyll Eventide Home was opened by the people of Oban to provide a caring environment for the elderly of the area.

Today, fully modernized, the home offers the highest standard of care covering all aspects of a residents' life and all the staff are dedicated to working together with each individual to empower them to live the life they choose.

As a local, caring, charity the Home is always grateful for any financial support, whether through donations or legacies, to continue to provide exceptional residential and respite care for our old people.

For more information please contact:
North Argyll Eventide Home Association Ltd.
 North Argyll House, Connel Rd, Oban, Argyll PA34 5TG
 01631 562168 info@northargyllhouse.org
 www.northargyllhouse.org

What's on at **The Nevis Centre**

Superbowl

open everyday from 12 noon until 10pm

Spectrum soft play area

Suitable for children of all ages. Baby area 0-2 years, toddler area 2-5 years and older children can be let loose in all the other areas.

The Nevis Centre An Aird, Fort William
 Tel: 01397 700707 www.neviscentre.co.uk

Oban Dental Clinic sdc group

Congratulations!

The winner of the SDC Group (Oban Dental Clinic) and Oban Times Competition to win an Apple iWatch is

Pauline MacIennan!

Well done Pauline for your toothy take on a classic song - we were looking for some great tunes with a dental twist and Pauline gave us 'You've Lost That Loving Filling'

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

OBAN U3A
 Thursday 2nd May 2017 at 10.30 am
 Studio Theatre and café area, Corran Halls, Oban
 Monthly meeting reminder. Do Come, Christopher Fleet, Map Curator at the National Library of Scotland, will talk about mapping the Scottish Islands.

H.I.M.D.F. Accordion & Fiddle Masters Concert
 Come and hear accomplished young musicians in St John's Cathedral, Oban on Friday 28th April at 7pm £6 or £5 concession at the door
 Sponsored by PF Charitable Trust

FORT WILLIAM ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Musical Evening on Tuesday, 2 May, 2017
 at 7.30pm
 Local artists
 Railway Club Inverlochly All Welcome
 Admission £5.00 ...
 Tea & Raffle Extra
 IN THE EVENT OF A LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION BY ANY GUEST ARTIST THE COMMITTEE WILL FIND AN ALTERNATIVE ARTIST

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A' cur 's a' Buain

Listings for Thursday 27 April - Thursday 4 May 2017

DIARDAIN 27 GIBLEAN THURSDAY 27 APRIL
 17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 19.00 **Na Droghairean** - Scottish History (rpt)
 19.25 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
 19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** - History shorts (rpt)
 20.00 **An Là** - News
 20.30 **UR | NEW: Cearcall** - Look back through 80's programme, Cearcall - Ep6
 21.00 **Mnathan-glùine** - Spàirn gu Slàinte - Midwives (rpt)
 22.00 **Rapal TBH** (rpt)
 22.30 **UR | NEW: Custer's Last Stand, Ep1**
 23.30 **Ceòl aig a' Chaisteal** (rpt)

DIHAOINE 28 GIBLEAN FRIDAY 28 APRIL
 17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 18.30 **Machair** (rpt)
 19.00 **An Là** - News
 19.25 **Rugbaidh Beò** - Pro 12 Live Rugby Edinburgh v Dragons
 21.30 **Gach Creutair Beò** - Vets in Scotland - S4, Ep10 (rpt)
 22.00 **Seirm** - Music from Celtic Connections (rpt)
 23.00 **Seòid a' Chidsin** - The Kitchen Coves - S1 Ep6 (rpt)
 23.30 **Rapal TBH** (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 29 GIBLEAN SATURDAY 29 APRIL
 16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 17.05 **Scottish Championship** - Dundee Utd. v Dumbarton
 19.20 **Piobairean Bhòirnís** (rpt)
 19.25 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)

23.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt)

19.30 Machair (rpt)
 19.55 **Ceòl aig a' Chaisteal** (rpt)
 20.20 **Binneas** - Na Trads (rpt)
 20.30 **Sàr-sgeòil** - Kidnapped (rpt)
 21.00 **Seirm** - music from Celtic Connections (rpt)
 22.00 **Scottish Premiership Highlights** - Motherwell v Dundee
 23.00 **Cridhe na Cùise** - Capercaille @ 30 (rpt)
 24.00 **Gun Sgot?** - Pub quiz (rpt)

DIDÒMHNAICH 30 GIBLEAN SUNDAY 30 APRIL
 16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 18.30 **Seachd Là** - News Review
 19.30 **Alleluia!** - Spiritual music and verse (rpt)
 20.00 **Chi mi 'n Tìr** - From Harris with Love (rpt)
 20.30 **Cearcall** - Look back through 80's programme, Cearcall - Ep6 (rpt)
 21.00 **Farpaisean Chon-chaorach** (rpt)
 22.00 **Scottish Premiership Highlights** - Aberdeen v St. Johnstone

22.55 Custer's Last Stand - Ep1 (rpt)

DILUAIN 01 CÈITEAN MONDAY 01 MAY
 17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 19.00 **An Gearradh Chruaidh** - The Castle Grounds (rpt)
 19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
 19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** - History Shorts (rpt)
 20.00 **An Là** - News
 20.30 **Sàr-sgeòil** - The Silver Darlings (rpt)
 21.00 **Farpaisean chon-chaorach** (rpt)
 22.00 **Trusadh - Eist ris a' Chlann** - Children's Panel (rpt)
 23.00 **Na Caibidealan Dearga** (rpt)
 23.25 **Alleluia!** - Spiritual music and verse (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 02 CÈITEAN TUESDAY 03 MAY
 17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 19.00 **Na Droghairean** - Scottish History (rpt)
 19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
 19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** - History Shorts (rpt)
 20.00 **An Là** - News
 20.30 **Sàr-sgeòil** - The Silver Darlings (rpt)
 21.00 **Farpaisean chon-chaorach** (rpt)
 22.00 **Trusadh - Eist ris a' Chlann** - Children's Panel (rpt)
 23.00 **Na Caibidealan Dearga** (rpt)
 23.25 **Alleluia!** - Spiritual music and verse (rpt)

DIARDAIN 03 CÈITEAN WEDNESDAY 04 MAY
 17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 19.00 **An Gearradh Chruaidh** - The Castle Grounds (rpt)
 19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
 19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** (rpt)
 20.00 **An Là** - News
 20.30 **UR | NEW: Fuine** - Cooking to impress, Ep1
 21.00 **A' Ghàidhealtachd** - Scotland's wild heart - The Highlands (rpt)
 22.00 **Fonn Fonn Fonn** - Music quiz panel show (rpt)
 22.30 **Taghadh bho Na Trads** (rpt)
 23.00 **Mnathan-glùine** - Spàirn gu Slàinte - Midwives (rpt)

DIARDAIN 04 CÈITEAN THURSDAY 04 MAY
 17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
 19.00 **Na Droghairean** - Scottish History (rpt)
 19.25 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
 19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** - history shorts (rpt)
 20.00 **An Là** - News
 20.30 **UR | NEW: Cearcall** - Look back through 80's programme, Cearcall - Ep7
 21.00 **Le Sunnd a' Seòlaidh** - The sailor's world in the 1950s
 21.45 **Binneas** - Na Trads (rpt)
 22.00 **Rapal TBH** (rpt)
 22.30 **UR | NEW: Custer's Last Stand, Ep2**
 23.30 **Ceòl aig a' Chaisteal** (rpt)
 23.50 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)



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Friday 28 April – Thursday 4 May

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST | PG | 150 MIN

Sat: 15:30, Mon: 13:45

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

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 | 12A | 157 MIN

Fri: 18:15, 19:30, Sat: 14:00, 20:00, Sun: 11:30, Mon: 11:00, 13:45, 19:30, Tue: 16:30, 18:15, Wed: 18:15, 19:30, Thu: 16:30, 18:15

3D: Fri: 16:30, Sat: 11:00, 17:00, Sun, Mon: 16:30, Tue: 19:30, Wed: 16:30, Thu: 19:30

Parent and baby screening: Tue: 11:30

Set to the backdrop of 'Awesome Mixtape #2', Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 continues the team's adventures as they traverse the outer reaches of the cosmos. The Guardians must fight to keep their newfound family as they unravel the mysteries of Peter Quill's true parentage. Old foes become new allies and fan-favourite characters from the classic comics will come to our heroes' aid as the Marvel cinematic universe continues to expand.

PEPPA PIG: MY FIRST CINEMA EXPERIENCE | U | 93 MIN

Sat: 11:30

Join Peppa for 1 hour of fun in an exciting cinema experience for Peppa fans. Featuring 9 Brand New Episodes including a visit to London, an Australian Holiday and a trip to the Zoo.

LIFE | 15 | 124 MIN

Sat: 18:15

LIFE tells the story of the six-member crew of the International Space Station that is on the cutting edge of one of the most important discoveries in human history: the first evidence of extraterrestrial life on Mars.

AKONG: A REMARKABLE LIFE | U | 96 MIN

Silver screening: Sun: 14:30

AKONG: A REMARKABLE LIFE is a documentary about Chöje Akong Tulku Rinpoche, a pioneer of Tibetan Buddhism in the West.

THE BOSS BABY | U | 120 MIN

Fri: 16:00, Sat: 13:15, Sun: 16:15, Mon: 11:30, Tue, Wed, Thu: 16:00

DreamWorks Animation and the director of Madagascar invite you to meet a most unusual baby. He wears a suit, speaks with the voice and wit of Alec Baldwin, and stars in the animated comedy, DreamWorks' The Boss Baby. The Boss Baby is a hilariously universal story about how a new baby's arrival impacts a family, told from the point of view of a delightfully unreliable narrator, a wildly imaginative 7 year old named Tim. With a sly, heart-filled message about the importance of family, DreamWorks' The Boss Baby is an authentic and broadly appealing original comedy for all ages.

THE SENSE OF AN ENDING | 15 | 128 MIN

Fri: 21:30, Sat: 20:30, Sun: 18:30, Mon: 19:00, Tue, Wed, Thu: 21:30

A man becomes haunted by his past and is presented with a mysterious legacy that causes him to re-think his current situation in life.



Marion Richie was virtually present ... thanks to her masked friends.



Tobermory High School Pipe Band warm up for their performance.



Diane MacDonald and Mary Strathern were all smiles when posing for the camera.



William Peter Craig and Rita Gartner were clearly enjoying themselves in the sun.



Mull residents partied in the sun but the unpredictable weather was not to last the whole four days.



There was a cheery thumbs up from accordion player Ian Smith.

Prepare to be dazzled by Poozies



THE ever-adventurous Poozies have toured worldwide in their 26 years, attracting recognition and appreciation for their eclectic choice of material, unusual and exciting arrangements, and heart-tugging vocal harmonies.

Founding member Mary Macmaster from Glasgow is at the core of the group, playing a gloriously fat, bassy electro-harp, while long-term member Eilidh Shaw from Taynuilt is a beautifully hypnotic and emotive West Coast fiddler. A recent line-up change has seen the addition of Sarah McFadyen from Orkney, who has a laidback fiddle and five-string banjo style akin to the North American old-timers, and Tia Files from Oban, who is a phenomenal guitar player and percussionist, and can be powerful and driving or empathetic and soulful as needed.

They play a dazzling, joyfully eclectic mix of contemporary and traditional tunes with beefy, powerful accompaniment, while their perfectly executed songs vary dramatically from Gaelic waulking songs to old-time American, country and pop.

On Wednesday May 17, The Poozies will play their first concert in Oban, in the Studio Suite of the Corran Halls. The evening will kick off with a small group of students from Oban High School Traditional Music School, led by Sileas Sinclair.

Tia said: 'From first hearing the Poozies at Colonsay Festival and being blown away, to then being asked to join such a well-established, respected band was extremely exciting. I used to play in Oban regularly as a child and to come back so many years later as part of the Poozies is a night I look forward to immensely.'

Eilidh added: 'It's a long time since my Oban High School days but I'm hoping to see a few familiar faces. Hoping to get a wee pint in the Oban Inn too – the scene of many fine sessions back in the day.'

The Poozies are also playing in Tobermory, Muck and Inverie in May, along with other festivals and tour dates throughout the summer. For more info and to buy tickets visit www.poozies.co.uk.

Four out of five adults use their local paper to find out what's on

Source: Consumers' Choice V, The Newspaper Society

★★★★ "your local paper - a must-see"

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Your local radio listings

OBAN Community Radio - your local radio station
Tune in to 103.3 or listen live at www.obanfm.com

For requests, competitions or questions please email: studio@obanfm.org.uk or call us on 01631 570057

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

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

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

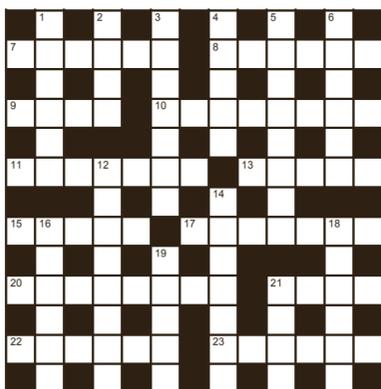
THURSDAY: 08:00 Breakfast with Laura, 10:00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13:00 Elaine's Time Capsule, 15:00 Gordon Covey, 17:00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19:00 Christine's Collection, 21:00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22:00 Margo till midnight, midnight Clyde 2.

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

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

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

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



Across

- 7 Of the parsley family (6)
- 8 Maximum (6)
- 9 Used on stage (4)
- 10 Turn upside down (8)
- 11 Idealist (7)
- 13 Trifling (5)
- 15 Turn out (5)
- 17 Address (7)
- 20 Movement in the water (8)
- 21 Word said just before opening the eyes (4)
- 22 You can dig it (6)
- 23 Nothing (6)

Down

- 1 Government council before the revolution (6)
- 2 Secure box (4)
- 3 New production of an old play (7)
- 4 Urbane (5)
- 5 On the way out (8)
- 6 Agreement (6)
- 12 Walking surface (8)
- 14 Descendants (7)
- 16 Replace electric cables (6)
- 18 Sorcery beliefs (6)
- 19 Octet (5)
- 21 Graduate (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



Arena

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

K9 Kev and Rory O'B to rock the crowd at Oban Live

Oban Unsigned

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE O'BAN TIMES AND O'BAN LIVE

The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES
OBANLIVE



K9 Kev is congratulated by Oban Times editor Susan Windram, right, and Pauline Clifford.

THE winner has been announced of the Oban Unsigned public vote, which will give a local act the chance to perform at the Oban Live music festival on Saturday June 3 – and the contest was close with 873 votes to 849.

But in the end rappers K9 Kev and Rory O'B just beat dance and country band Craikin' Craic by only 24 votes to win the 30-minute slot to showcase their talents, and share the stage with an impressive list of artists from trad stars Skerryvore and Skipinnish to 1980s legends Hue And Cry. The third shortlisted band, Angus Smith and North 56, which fuses rock, trad, folk and Americana, secured 258 votes.

Congratulating K9 Kev, Pauline Clifford, marketing and promotions executive for *The Oban Times*, which ran the competition, said there had been 'an overwhelming response' of 1,980 votes. K9 Kev, aka 29-year-old Kevin Irvine of Glencruitten, said: 'I am blown away. I did not know I had so many people who liked my music.'

'We did not think we had a chance. Angus Smith and Craikin' Craic have huge and well-deserved followings. They are two great bands that would have been amazing. It will not sink in

until tomorrow when I am eating a sandwich.'

K9 Kev and Rory O'B, solo artists in their own right, have been making music together as a duo for more than six years, bringing their own mix of rap, hip-hop and folk, with anything else in between. Using their own accents, they have strayed away from the typical rap clichés and stay true to their local roots. Their recent live show at Cuan Mor was sold out.

'I want to thank everybody who voted,' he said. 'Without their help we would not have got it. We look forward to putting on a show. It goes to show some wee guy making music in his bedroom can play a crowd of that size if he wants to. I want to thank *The Oban Times* for giving us the opportunity, and to Oban Live for taking a chance on local music.'

Rory O'Byrne, a 25-year-old also from Oban but now living in Glasgow, added: 'I'm completely over the moon. The amount of support people have shown us in the past couple of weeks has been incredible. I honestly never thought we would win against two other great bands. I'm looking forward to giving people from Oban the performance they deserve.'

Kevin said: 'We chose to enter the

competition because it would allow us promotion for the album launch the weekend before [on May 27]. The ticket and raffle sales for the launch of their album, *Vocal Heroes*, will be donated to three causes: the Oban Youth Café, Soroba Young Families and the Scottish Autism Saturday Club.

On stage at Oban Live, Kevin and Rory will play a mix of their new album tracks and older songs. 'I know I will get heckled if I do not play *Live For The Weekend*,' Kevin said. 'I know a guy who will fight to the death if he does not hear it.'

Kevin, who is a youth worker for Oban Youth Café and a support worker for Oban's Lorne Resource Centre, said: 'We thought we were too different.' He hoped hip-hop culture could help others as much as it helped him. 'I used to have a speech impediment,' he explained. 'The whole culture has helped me be a better person. It teaches positivity and passes on skills. It helps them become better people.'

Kevin's fiancée, Claire McAllister, said: 'When he said they'd won, I thought he was joking. I am so happy. What he does is so amazing. Some of the local lads have come on so much because of Kevin and Rory's help.'

Glasgow Letter

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



LAST week, I was driving along Dumbarton Road and had to pull over to listen to a track that moved me significantly.

The track was Donald Black's stunning arrangement of MacCrimmon's Lament (featuring Donald's own passionate harmonica playing alongside the unmistakable genius of Runrig's Malcolm Jones on guitar) and is from Donald's new album.

The tune has always been one of my favourites, and the sound of the track reminded me of Malcolm and Donald's *Close to Home* album released in 2000.

It soon became clear that the whole album is better enjoyed away from the car stereo - at least the first time round. Such is the vast array of musicians involved that I find myself constantly referring to the booklet

to identify the player responsible for a particular sound at a particular point - something that can become quite dangerous while driving.

The huge cast on the album makes for a rich and diverse musical timbre and also encapsulates lasting friendships made by Donald throughout the world. Donald told me himself that he is delighted to have included in the project dear friends and musicians for whom he has huge respect.

He has done this because his intention was for the album to be personal and heartfelt - hence the title *Bho m' Chridhe*, meaning *From My Heart*.

Donald's heart and mind are immersed in the musical traditions of his native Argyllshire and this is beautifully evident

throughout the CD. He collaborates with multi-instrumentalist Màrtainn Skene from Lochaber for a number of sets (including a cracking set of 2/4s with only box and harmonica) and with the Ness Melodians for a fine set of Gaelic waltzes. Those arrangements, as Donald writes himself in the sleeve notes, are 'deliberately in the old style'.

While such tracks are steadfastly traditional, others are quite the opposite - displaying Donald's remarkable musical versatility. A real highlight of the album is Donald's duet on Blair Douglas's beautiful *New Island Waltz* with Nashville's Charlie McCoy, the most recorded mouth-organ player in history.

The moothie duo are backed on this track by the superb coun-

try western-style electric guitar playing of Skerryvore's Alec Dalglish. There is also a Canadian influence on many of the tracks from the piano playing of Mario Collosimo from Cape Breton.

While Donald's heart is undoubtedly filled with the traditional music of the Highlands, this album (which will be launched next month) is a reminder that he also holds a special place for international music and friendship. It is well worth getting a hold of.

What's on

Friday April 28: The Glasgow Uist and Barra Association ceilidh dance in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street.

Friday April 28: An evening with Stirling Gaelic Choir in

the Victoria Hall, Dunblane, 7.30pm-10pm.

Saturday April 29: The Glasgow Skye Association annual spring concert (Wee Skye), in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street.

Thursday May 11: Comunn-an-Taobh-an-Iar annual general meeting in the Ellangowan Social Club, Milngavie.

Thursday May 18: Donald Black album launch in the College of Piping, Otago Street.

Friday May 26: The Uist and Barra Association annual general meeting in Lourdes Secondary School.

Wednesday June 7: The Glasgow Skye Association annual general meeting in Partick Burgh Hall.

Friday June 9: The Glasgow Skye Association end of session social in the Redhurst Hotel, Giffnock.



Donald Black.

A sneaky peek inside Scotland's Gardens



Kames Bay.



Knock Cottage.

FROM grand country houses to rural village back gardens and the rich diversity in between, Scotland's Gardens gives us a window into a private world - a glimpse into a precious and very personal pursuit. It is a unique opportunity and it is fascinating.

Every year, more garden owners are cultivating, creating and opening their gates for charity. The gardens don't have to be grand - what's important is that they have some

horticultural interest and are of a certain aesthetic standard.

What draws you into a garden? The wild beauty of the Highland bog garden, woodland paths, colourful drifts of wild flowers, features in stone, water and metal? Or rare plant species, blousey shrubs and symmetry, eco initiatives or a magnificent view? Are you mostly curious about how it might reflect the personality of its keeper and crea-

tor? Whatever inspires you, it is all there to see and enjoy.

Whether you want a sneaky peek or a languid look, there are gardens which will charm the knowledgeable, the spiritual and the humble enthusiast. Planning your visit couldn't be easier. Look out for Scotland's Gardens' Yellow book with photos, directions and all the details you need about garden openings. For the computer savvy - try www.scotlandsgardens.org. Some gardens are open continuously, others by arrangement. If teas and home-baking are provided, they are usually divine. So don your sturdy shoes, make a day of it and visit a few. Whether you need 'you time' or fun for all the family, it's a great day out.

On Sat/Sun, May 6/7, from 1.30-5pm you can visit Kames Bay, Kilmelford PA34 4XA, nearby Arduaine and Ardmaddy Castle

Gardens are also open. Wild flowers and woodland, azaleas, rhodies and stunning views.

Sat/Sun, May 13/14, 1pm-6pm Dalnashean, Port Appin PA38 4DE. Camellias, rhodies and magnolias, views to Lismore and Loch Linnhe, ponds and azaleas. Travel on to nearby Druimneil and Kinlochlaich.

Sat/Sun, May 13/14, 1.30-5pm Knock Cottage, Lochgair PA31 8RZ. Specimen, rhodies and shrubs,

woodland, waterfall and lochan. Crarae and Inveraray Gardens are also close by.

We're on the lookout for more garden openings in Scotland. If you have a secret paradise which you'd enjoy sharing with other garden enthusiasts, or know someone who does, please contact us: info@scotlandsgardens.org (head office) or minette@ardmaddy.com (local). It's fun, it's appreciated and it is free.

Top trio bring a Gaelic treat for music-lovers



MUSICIANS Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn, Laoise Kelly and Kathleen MacInnes begin a Highland and Islands spring tour of Gaelic song, uilleann pipes and Irish harp this weekend.

Monaghan-born Tiarnán, described as being one of the

most influential pipers of his generation, has played Ireland's national bagpipe, the uilleann pipes, since he was around nine years of age in the Armagh Pipers Club, so he has served his 21-year apprenticeship.

Harpist Laoise, from Westport, County Mayo, has three

solo albums under her belt. *Just Harp* (1999), *Ceis* (2010), *Fáilte Uí Cheallaigh* (2015) and *The Wishing Well* (2010), and has recorded on more than 60 albums with many of Ireland's foremost artists.

The Scots Trad Music Awards' Gaidhlig Singer of the Year,

Kathleen MacInnes of South Uist, joins this duo with her 'robust, sassy and soulful' voice like 'peat smoke and good whisky'.

All three have toured and performed in all corners of the globe, and are coming to Skye at the Sabhal Mór Ostaig

at 8pm on May 3, followed by Mallaig's West Highland Hotel on May 4 at 8.30pm, then Uig Community Centre on Lewis on May 5 at 8pm, Carinish Hall on North Uist on May 6 at 7.30pm and, lastly, at Caol Community Centre, Fort William, on May 12 at 8pm.

Cafe is starting to make waves

AN ISLAND cafe is making waves in the food industry after receiving three nominations for awards at one ceremony.

Mull's Cafe Fish, based upstairs in the former MacBrayne's building, is where a small staff team deliver exceptionally prepared food with flavours from all over the world. And they have been nominated at the Scottish Food Awards and Academy on May 7.

Owners Jane Gill (one of the renowned MacDonald sisters from Tarbert) and food curator and head chef Liz MacGoughin invited *The Oban Times* to Mull and take part in a busy shift.

I was duly presented with a bright pink Cafe Fish T-shirt (XL – not XXL) and I was quickly let loose on an unsuspecting public. There were lots of codes to use on my little set of order pads. So I ignored those codes

completely and wrote out every single order in longhand.

I'd like to paint you a little picture of the scene of the size of space available. I am a robust woman and Liz the chef is a robust woman. Together we would be a good advert for healthy living. The kitchen is basically no bigger than a large letter's postage stamp. So it was a tight squeeze every time we wanted to move past each other.

Yet something amazing happens in that little space. Liz seems to be amazing with her culinary art.

This fresh and locally sourced foods draws people from all over the world to eat freshly caught fish and shellfish cooked in amazing ways.

If I said it was relaxed, I would be over-emphasising the urgency in which these women run their business.

Everything is perfect. I suppose

when you are working in a small preparation space, it has to be.

But so are the customers. One man asks me to recommend a dish from the menu and I instantly talk through the many delicious meals I have had in the past.

He wants something that is a bit different and freshly caught.

He settles on a skate wing with lemon and caper butter. His partner, who is feeling way more adventurous, goes for the roasted fish platter.

It is a privilege to carry the plates to the table some 30 minutes later – freshly cooked, looking amazing and tasting, as they said, 'wonderful'.

It is at this point that I see Kenneth Weir, a lovely man who has so much energy and vitality, take a pair of binoculars and step out onto the balcony to look for the fishing boat coming in. It is so cute it looks contrived – but it isn't: he is waiting for

lobster to be brought in. Kenneth has customers waiting.

And here is something I didn't know: lobsters are blue when they come out the sea and pink when they are cooked. That is the last time I trust Disney for my seafood information.

Friend of the business and singer Robert Crumlisk (who works at the biscuit factory by day) explains the shellfish fridge to me. There are velvet crabs, little sweet fresh queenies, langoustine (or big prawns as I had previously called them) and oysters.

Three Londoners have come to Mull on a whim to visit the cafe. By the second day of their trip, their livers are poorly.

I see them quaffing champagne and eating oysters in the window seat, table number four for anyone interested, and it looks idyllic.

Where Cafe Fish excels is at being

relaxed and hugely generous with food, but also seeing their customers as friends and learning to thriving on them.

By the end of my five-hour shift, I was frankly exhausted but Kenneth was still on the merry(ish) go around – sorting things, talking to the stragglers at the tail end of remains of the busy service.

But he still had time for some front-of-house wisdom. 'It is a well-oiled machine at Cafe Fish. If you miss anything, everything else will fall out of place.'

'We have built up a reputation by being who we are – not by pretending to be something we are not. And people seem to like it.'

After serving 89 people for lunch, he is right.

PS: I've kept my Cafe Fish T-shirt, and I am determined to get a space at the Christmas night out.



Rita Gartner samples the culinary delights.

Candlelit cabaret entertains on Seil

FANCY a short break on a desert island?

That's the setting for Seil Entertains: an evening of drama and music tonight (Thursday April 27) in Seil Island Community Hall, which will be transformed into a candlelit cabaret venue for the occasion.

Seil Drama Group kick off the evening with their latest show,

All By Myself. It's a fast-moving comedy set somewhere quite unlike Seil, and reveals life on a desert island isn't always what you might expect.

This is a chance for local folk to see the show which won an award at the recent Lorn Drama Festival.

Continuing the maritime theme, locally-based amateur

choir Seil Sound will perform *Desert Island Discs*, a selection of their personal favourites.

The organisers tell us to 'expect a mix of the funny, the familiar and the unexpected'.

The evening starts at 7.30pm and tickets are £2 at the door.

All By Myself.



Vote for your top 30!

All votes must be in by midnight, Friday April 28, 2017

bonnie babies competition 2017

VOTING COUPON

LOCHABER TIMES & Oban Times The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

I would like to vote for:

Baby number*:

Baby's name:

Please post to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies VOTE, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

*Baby number must be supplied. This can be found at the top left of each baby photograph.

Photocopied voting coupons will not be accepted and will not count as one vote.

You may send in multiple voting coupons in one envelope.

bonnie babies competition 2017

OUTDOORS

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

Trio of hotels recognised for fundraising initiative

KATIE CARABINE

karabine@obantimes.co.uk

THREE family-owned hotels around Loch Lomond have been recognised for their tireless fundraising work after collecting £42,000 between them over the past six years.

The project was carried out as part of the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs charity initiative OUR park visitor giving scheme.

The Lodge on Loch Lomond Hotel at Luss has raised £18,300 in contributions from visitors, while the nearby Inn on Loch Lomond at Inverbeg has collected £9,700, and the Oak Tree Inn at Balmaha has raised £14,000.

These sums have been collected through opt-in donations by guests staying overnight and restaurant customers, with the funds raised going towards supporting a range of heritage, conservation, access and public safety projects throughout the national park for the benefit of visitors' and residents' enjoyment of the park.

Recent projects supported with grants from the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme include improvements to paths around the loch, the production of paths leaflets, roll out of public defibrillators, Tom Weir's rest and viewpoint at Balmaha, and children's play areas at Balloch and Luss.

There have also been hundreds of disadvantaged youngsters sponsored on activity days out and short breaks in the Park as a result of the scheme.

Friends chairman James Fraser recently presented commendation certificates for display at each hotel to Niall Colquhoun, owner of the Lodge and Inn on Loch Lomond, and Oak Tree Inn proprietor Sandy Fraser, and a smaller version will be included in welcome packs



Above, Sandy Fraser, Oak Tree Inn proprietor, second from the right, accepts the certificate from James Fraser, right, with staff Nida Kaladyte and Damian Auguscik. Below, Lodge and Inn on Loch Lomond owner Niall Colquhoun, left, and staff members Johnny Aitken and Sandra Cunningham are pictured receiving a commendation certificate from James Fraser, second from right.



in each hotel's rooms to make guests aware of how much has been raised and the projects that have been supported.

Mr James Fraser said: 'The amounts these hotels have raised as part of the Friends of OUR park visitor giving scheme have been nothing short of remarkable and it simply would not be possible to support so many worthwhile projects in the national park without the commitment of these hoteliers and their staff.'

'We rely heavily on this sort of support from around 100 businesses in and around the national park and they all deserve our sincere thanks, as do their many thousands of visitors who are helping us to make a real difference to make the national park a better place for people and nature with the delivery on many practical projects on the ground working with local communities.'

Mr Colquhoun said: 'We are only too glad to try to help locally-based projects in the national park which are in need of financial support, and the Friends of OUR park scheme has been an excellent way for us to do this. We wish to thank all customers and guests who have made contributions to our fundraising while we have been part of this great initiative led by the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.'

Mr Sandy Fraser added: 'We are extremely honoured to be recognised by the Friends in this way and only too glad to support their efforts to make a difference in the national park. It would not have been possible to raise these funds without the support of our customers over the years, who have given willingly to ensure that many local projects can be supported. Thanks to every guest and restaurant customer who has donated – you can see from the range of projects supported by the Friends just how important your generosity is.'

Thousands descend on Highland cycle event

THOUSANDS of cyclists descended upon the Highlands as Etape Loch Ness returned to the roads around the iconic loch on Sunday April 23.

The sportive sold out 5,200 places in 50 hours, with cycling fans travelling from far and wide for the opportunity to ride through some of the country's most stunning scenery on traffic-free roads.

The fastest male rider around the 66-mile course was Andy Cunningham of All Terrain Cycling in a time of two hours, 48 minutes and 20 seconds. The fastest female cyclist was Carol Hinchcliffe from Stonehaven CC in two hours, 55 minutes and six seconds.

A red polka dot jersey was also awarded to the fastest male and female participants to reach the top of the Glendoe summit near Fort Augustus. Andy and Carol were also crowned King and Queen of the Mountain for their efforts on the monstrous 4.8-mile climb.

Event director Malcolm Sutherland said: 'The fourth

Etape Loch Ness has been the biggest yet, bringing thousands of keen cyclists to the Highlands to ride through our glorious countryside.

'Months of planning and many volunteers go into organising an event on this scale, and to see so many participants – many raising an incredible amount of money for charity – instils a great sense of pride in everyone involved.'

'We would like to offer a huge thank you to all of our partner agencies, communities along the route and the public, without whose support Etape Loch Ness would not happen.'

Many participants have used the opportunity to raise much-needed funds for good causes across the country. Official charity Macmillan Cancer Support has received a welcome boost from charitable riders, who have raised around £200,000.

Local businesses – including hotels, restaurants and shops – have also enjoyed an off-season rise in trade.

NEVIS NEWS

HELLO from Nevis Landscape HQ!

We're getting ready to kick off another jam-packed spring/summer season of events and volunteer opportunities.

We also would like to welcome Rob, Eve, Sarah and Louise, our new trainee volunteer rangers, who will be training with us for the next 12 weeks.

Come along to our events to meet the team, meet the rangers and soak up spring in Glen Nevis.

Dates for your diary
Path Party 03/05/17
Upland Bird Survey 08/05/17
Highland Herb Walk 13/05/17
Gaelic in the



Landscape 20/05/17.

Lochaber Butterflies 22/05/17.

Lochaber Moths 23/05/17.

To find out more about these events head to the website, drop us a line or call us: www.nevis-landscape.co.uk, 01397 701088.

TAKE MY ADVICE ... SIMON PITMAN

WHERE to buy ski equipment is a question you get asked a lot in a ski shop.

Many customers have heard of tempting deals and bargains to be found in small resorts, and the idea that if your boots are uncomfortable you can go back to the shop the very same evening and have them adjusted is often too good to refuse.

Naturally, managing Ellis Brigham, I would want customers to buy at home, but I do believe there are some key points for why it is better.

First, aftercare. Aftercare is very important in a product you are going to use year on year.

When buying boots on holiday you may get that support for the

week you are there, but unless you return to the same resort you will not have it on consecutive trips.

Fitting boots here, we know that if they didn't feel good first time, you will come back until they are right. Also, living in Lochaber, where even if the snow is not falling, you can still use indoor or dry slopes, you can test your new boots out before going abroad.

And, finally, seeing as a good boot fitting should also take around two hours. I'd rather spend my holiday time on holiday, not in a shop.

Simon Pitman is manager of the Ellis Brigham shop in Fort William.

THIS WEEK'S WALKS

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

The walk leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet up and start times.

Car sharing usually possible and you can try before you buy. You can walk three times with the club before joining.

Further information at www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk.
Saturday April 29

Sanna to Glendrian Cave, Ardnarmurchan.

A coastal walk with fine views to the Small Isles, sandy beaches, a dun and a deep cave. Bring a torch.

A leisurely graded walk covers a distance of 9km and a height of 295m.

Meet at Corran Ferry slip for 8.50am sailing.

The walk leader is Dave Kime on 01972 500272.

Thursday May 4
Corrour to Kinlochleven by Meanannach Bothy.

A journey in wild country among the more remote peaks and glens of Lochaber.

Come prepared to ford a river. Bring concessionary passes or money for travel by train and bus.

This moderate grade walk covers a distance of 23km and a height of 200m.

Meet at Fort William station for 7.44am departure.

The walk leader is Andrew Gilbert on 07808 924722.

Ospreys are flourishing across Lochaber

OSPREYS are a major tourist draw and many people make special trips to see and photograph these magnificent fish-eating raptors.

Osprey migrations to and from West Africa are followed online using data captured from satellite-tagged individuals and the breeding progress of star pairs is followed via nest cameras.

This year a webcam has been placed on the nest of one of our local pairs located in a remote location on the banks of Loch Arkaig, by the Woodland Trust Scotland (WTS), with support from players of People's Postcode Lottery, and it is hoped that they will also soon achieve internet stardom.

To date the male has been busy sprucing up his long-established nest, but is still awaiting the return of his mate.

Wonderful images of the osprey nest can be seen on the WTS website <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/support-an-appeal/arkaig-pine-woods/wildlife/osprey-cam>.

The positioning of the camera on Loch Arkaig is highly appropriate, as it is thought that this was the last site for breeding ospreys before they were finally



An osprey that nests near Spean Bridge has been performing a lonely vigil for his partner.

Louis arrived back from Africa on April 10. His heartbreaking habits were noticed from live video feed by Woodland Trust Scotland staff who have now nicknamed the bird 'Lonesome Louis' as he waits patiently for his mate of more than 10 years.

Louis' nest is at Loch Arkaig Forest, recently purchased by Woodland Trust Scotland in partnership with local group Arkaig Community Forest. The nest cam, supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery is solar-powered

and will beam out live footage throughout the summer.

WTS spokesman George Anderson explained: 'There are other osprey pairs in the district and they are all back and settling in to mate. Birds further south have laid eggs already, but poor Louis is still on his lonesome. It's heartbreaking. He's made a start putting some moss and grass in the nest and fought off some crows, but most of the time he is just looking out for his mate. It is getting really quite late now. I don't know who is more worried – him or us.' Watch the nest live at woodlandtrust.org.uk.

driven to temporary extinction in Britain in 1916.

Birds naturally started to

re-colonise Scotland in the 1950s and, protected by the

RSPB, made a major comeback,

to the extent that there could well be more than 200 pairs

nesting in Scotland now.

Glenloy Wildlife
www.glenloywildlife.co.uk

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BUSINESS NEWS

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Crown Estate may bring £1.5m annually to council

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

THE devolution of the Crown Estate could bring an extra £1.5 million per year to Argyll and Bute Council, but councillors have warned this 'cash cow' could also come with costly liabilities.

Councillors on the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee met to discuss, and amend, Argyll and Bute Council's response to a Scottish Government consultation on the long-term management of the Crown Estate in Scotland, which closed on March 29.

The Crown Estate owns around £272 million of property across Scotland, including the seabed, much of its foreshore and 370,000 hectares of rural estates. It also deals with rights for salmon fishing, shooting, energy, gas storage, internal



Councillors Dick Walsh and Ellen Morton warned of liabilities.

waters and mineral rights, which allow people to quarry, mine or otherwise extract materials from underground, for rural estates, as well as the rights to naturally-occurring gold and silver.

The net surplus revenue from the assets currently go to the Treasury, but the money will transfer to the Scottish Government following control

being devolved this earlier this month. SNP ministers want to sell off parts or let communities use its assets as part of their land reform agenda, with a target of a million acres of land in community ownership by 2020.

Argyll and Bute Council's report stated: 'The devolution of the management and revenue of the Crown Estate in Scotland

provides an opportunity to use capital assets and the net revenue generated.'

Councillor Richard Trail told the meeting: 'It looks like the Crown Estate will come under Argyll and Bute management and there will be income streams.'

The council did not have a comprehensive list of Crown Estate assets, revenues and liabilities in Argyll and Bute, but the report broke down the number and type of agreements it had, including 500 moorings, 136 coastal, commercial and private leases, 130 outfalls, 37 cables and pipelines, 112 in aquaculture (finfish and shellfish) and 36 mooring associations.

The report continued: 'Revenues in Scotland for 2015-16 were £14 million, with the value of the total asset portfolio within Scotland estimated at £271.08 million.'

'Revenue from salmon farm-

ing was around £650,000 in 2013 within Argyll and Bute, so annual aquaculture revenue will be approximately £660,000 at present. A very rough estimate would be that annual lease revenue within Argyll and Bute could be between £1 million and £1.5 million gross. If an optimistic level of 40 per cent was retained for investment, which could be £400,000-£600,000 annually. However, until exact figures are given, accurate assessment can't be made.'

Councillor Dick Walsh said: 'We need to be at one and get this devolved to councils.'

But he cautioned: 'It has always been looked at this is a cash cow - there are liabilities too.'

To illustrate the point, committee chair Ellen Morton added: 'The roads are an asset for Argyll and Bute, but they do not make any money. They are a liability.'

Building firms are booming, says FMB

SMALL and medium Scottish construction workloads rose faster than at any time since the 2007 financial crisis, the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) Scotland has said.

Key results from the FMB's State of Trade Survey for the first quarter of 2017, which is the largest quarterly assessment of the UK-wide SME construction sector, include:

■ Scottish construction SME workloads rose faster than at any time since Q4 2007;

■ One in two construction SMEs predict rising workloads in the coming months, with just five per cent predicting a decrease in activity;

■ However, 85 per cent of builders believe that material prices will rise in the next three months;

■ 58 per cent of firms are struggling to hire carpenters, the highest reported level since the financial crisis.

Gordon Nelson, director of FMB Scotland, said: 'Scottish construction SME workloads have now risen for five consecutive quarters and, rather than tapering off in advance of Article 50 being served, that growth

seems to have accelerated in the first quarter of this year. At a time of growing concern about the strength of the Scottish economy, the robustness of the construction SME sector is a definite good news story. Even more encouragingly, the number of inquiries for future work has risen solidly and one in two firms are now predicting that their workloads will continue to rise in the coming months.'

Mr Nelson continued: 'This is not to say that the past three months have been without their challenges. Builders have experienced sharp rises in material prices since the depreciation of sterling in June last year and the subsequent spike in the cost of imported materials and products.'

'Added to this is the rising cost of skilled labour which continues to be exacerbated by the ever-worsening skills shortage. The overwhelming majority of builders expect these trends to continue, resulting in further increases in output prices in the next quarter - in layman's terms, this means that builders will have to pass on these costs to the consumer.'

Social media is now crucial for business

THE team from Business Gateway Argyll and Bute is here to offer practical advice and support to new and growing businesses. Adviser Donald Melville shares some top tips on how to use social media to boost your company's profile.

Social media is now an essential part of communication in today's society and is the digital equivalent to word-of-mouth referrals.

It provides a platform to create and distribute information and opens an interactive dialogue with your prospective and existing customers using various platforms.

However, many businesses don't utilise social media in the best way and are missing out on its benefits.

Let's start with the basics: what do you want to achieve with your social media? Do you want to broadcast information, be conversational or more customer service-based?

This will determine how to use your social media account, what content you put up, how much you listen and how you react to online engagement.

It can be used for customer service, feedback, attracting new customers and increasing sales but remember that selling is always a by-product of successful engagement.

Facebook

Facebook is a popular, mainly business to consumer platform that is easy to use and free. A vital part of Facebook is engagement. Try to post regularly to keep your account looking active and up-to-date.

Write content that will get people to engage with it - for example, if you post a picture, ask people to comment with their opinions.

Twitter

Twitter is another great medium, which is mainly business to business, and is known as an information sharing network making it fantastic for businesses to get the word out.

Key concepts of Twitter are: favourites, lists, trends and discover. Take part in popular Twitter initiatives such as Follow Friday (#FF) and, remember, it's nice to be nice so thank all who have retweeted/#FF'd you in a reply tweet.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking site for professionals to showcase their skills and network with others.

When inviting people to connect on LinkedIn, make sure to state how you know them as a more personal yet professional message is more likely to result in a connection than the standard message.

Make sure to keep your skills up-to-date with a professional profile picture that is easy to see for anyone viewing your profile.

Some key points to keep in mind:

■ Choosing the right platform is vital. Make sure you use a social media platform that you know your customers use.

■ You don't need a presence on every platform.

■ It's about engagement, not selling.

■ Don't forget about your profile and keep it as up-to-date as possible.

Business Gateway runs regular workshops on social media and provide a range of guides to using social media on our website. Visit www.bgateway.com to see what's on offer.



Vikki MacDonald and her son, Dylan, who helped to inspire her to set up her business during a family holiday.

Setting up company was child's play

A MUM-OF-TWO who was looking for fun activities for her children has set up her own portable soft play business aimed at rural areas.

Vikki MacDonald, from Easdale, was on maternity leave with her youngest daughter when she came up with the idea for Rosie Cheeks, a soft play and bouncy castle hire business.

Rosie Cheeks now has an extensive range of equipment perfect for children's birthday parties or community events, with Vikki now working with Business Gateway Argyll and Bute to look at ways to grow the company.

Vikki said: 'There is a lack of services on offer for youngsters in rural areas

and we saw how much fun our children, Dylan and Rosie, had at a soft play centre while we were on a family holiday.'

'This gave me the idea of setting up a portable soft play area which we can take to villages so the children can have fun without having to travel to bigger cities or towns.'

'The response so far has been very positive. We have invested a lot of time, money and resources into setting up Rosie Cheeks, so it's fantastic to get feedback and read the positive reviews left on our Facebook page.'

Rosie Cheeks was launched in August last year and Vikki, who previously worked as a stock controller for Tesco

in Oban, is now investing in steadily increasing her fleet of apparatus, most recently buying an inflatable slide to add to her range.

She added: 'I plan to invest where possible and grow the company to cater for a broader clientele.'

'At the moment, we provide equipment that is suitable for children up to six years old, while our bouncy castles are aimed at toddlers up to teenagers, but we can expand on this yet.'

'As the business grows, I'll work closely with my Business Gateway adviser to ensure that the steps I take are the right ones and will benefit Rosie Cheeks the most.'

Donald Melville, an adviser with Business Gateway Argyll and Bute, added: 'Using her own experience as a mother in a rural area, Vikki has successfully launched a business to plug a gap and offer something different for children in Oban and surrounding areas.'

'We will continue to offer support to Vikki as she focuses on growing the business.'

Go to www.rosiecheeksoban.co.uk. To find out more about how Business Gateway can help you set up and develop your own business, call 01546 808363 or visit www.bgateway.com/argyll-and-bute.

Build your network and your skills at Business Gateway's workshops.

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FARMING NEWS

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NFUS urges members to fight to save weedkiller

AS THE date looms for the EU's decision on whether or not to re-authorise the controversial weedkiller glyphosate, the NFUS Scotland has called for farmers to get the message out on how important it is.

The NFUS argued the world's most widely used herbicide 'must be re-authorised for a full 15 years, including for use pre-harvest' at the launch of its #GlyphosateVital campaign.

The vast majority of arable and livestock farms across Scotland, it says, relies heavily

on glyphosate to control weeds, manage harvests and reduce grain-drying costs. But glyphosate has been the subject of a re-licensing battle which split governments, regulators and scientists.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer, an arm of the World Health Organisation, in 2015 classified glyphosate as 'probably carcinogenic to humans', and said there was 'limited evidence' that it was carcinogenic in humans for non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

However, another arm, the European Chemical Agency (ECHA), judged glyphosate safe for public use in March, deciding that 'the available scientific evidence did not meet the criteria to classify glyphosate as a carcinogen, as a mutagen or for reproductive toxicity'.

ECHA was asked to assess its toxicity after EU countries failed to agree on a re-authorisation for the best-selling herbicide last summer.

In 2016, glyphosate was re-authorised for 18 months rather

than the 15 years UK farming unions, including NFUS, had called for.

The NFUS stated at its campaign launch in Coldstream: 'Given that glyphosate has now been given as much of a clean bill of health as any plant protection product is likely to get, and given its fundamental importance to farmers across Scotland, the NFUS is calling on its members to get involved in the effort to ensure that it is re-authorised for a full 15-year period when it is considered

again by EU member states and institutions later this year.'

President Andrew McCornick said: 'Let your MEPs and the European Commission know how important glyphosate is for you, and don't assume someone else will be doing it so you need not bother. As a farming community, we need to speak up for glyphosate, so please do your bit. The NFUS will be making its case on social media, using the hashtag #GlyphosateVital, and I encourage others to do the same.'

Around the markets

STIRLING – Caledonian Marts report for sale on Tuesday April 18. Caledonian Marts sold 1797 Prime Hoggets, Ewes and Tups. Top price of the day went to DS and RC Taylor, Easter Ochtermuthill, at £109 and to 234ppkg also from Easter Ochtermuthill. Spring Lambs sold to £87 or 218ppkg Three Views. Overall sale average for 1477 Hoggets 175.95ppkg (+9.35ppkg on the week). SQO average 182.6ppkg (+6.7ppkg on the week).
Leading Prices pounds per head:-
Beltex: Er Ochtermuthill £107, £106 and £105 Newton of Craithie £104
Texel: Er Ochtermuthill £104 Nethermyres £98 North Bank £98 Birch Avenue £98 Nethermyres £90
Cheviot: Nether Strathkinness £89 Burnshot £88.50
Mule: Raecruick £81.50 Inchgall £80 Meikle Seggie £80
Blackface: Avoncrook £79 East Bracklinn £78.50 Redburn £75
Leading Prices pence per kilo:-
Beltex: Easter Ochtermuthill 228ppkg and 220ppkg Meikle Seggie 215ppkg
Texel: Easter Ochtermuthill 219ppkg East Bracklinn 214ppkg Meikle Seggie 212ppkg
Cheviot: Northbank 208ppkg Nethermyres 206ppkg Anvilsdale 200ppkg
Mule: Meikle Seggie 176ppkg Raecruick 173ppkg Graystale 172ppkg
Blackface: Auchencarroch 176ppkg East Bracklinn 174ppkg & 173ppkg Redburn 174ppkg
Also forward were 320 Cast Ewes and Tups.
155 heavy ewes averaged £75.46 selling to £126 for a Suffolk from Ferguson Bros, Gillandersland, Linlithgow. 135 export ewes averaged £61.47
Other Leading Prices:-
Texel: £105 Chalmerston 100 Three Views, Gillandersland and Kinnaird £98 Inchgall £96 Whitleys
BF: £68 Harviesmailing and Hillend £66 Culcreuch £59 Hillhead £57 Kinnaird Suffolk: £103, £100 and £97 Newton £86 Inchgall and Blairer £80 Harviesmailing Cheviot: £60 Kinnaird £58 Weels Cross: £87 Kinnaird £85 Redburn £79 Greigston £77 Harviesmailing, Bouprie and Graystale £76 Gartfinnan Zwar: £100 Three Views
Tups sold to £134 for a pen of 6
Texels from A W Nicholson and Son, Kinclaven, Stanley.
Other Leading Prices:-
Texel: £127, £106 and £104 Kinclaven £103 Blaircressnoek £100 Kinclaven £85 Newton Suffolk: £88 Kinnaird

£1643 for a Luing from J Watson, Pitoy, Stonehaven.
Prime Heifers to 245ppkg for a Limousin from W Pettigrew, Faskine, Airdrie to D Campbell and Son, Butchers, Callander, and to £1580 from A S Hay, Mains of Culmalundie, Tibbermore to H A Black and Sons, Butcher, Lanark and Armadale. Bulls sold to 210ppkg for a Limousin from South Hourat Farms, Giffordland, Dalry and to £1150 from the same farm.
Leading Prices:-
Bullocks ppkg
238p West Mains, Pitoy, Mains of Culmalundie and Brockwoodlees 235p West Mains, Learielaw and Brockwoodlees 230p Spittal (Gardner) 228p Brockwoodlees 225p Faskine, Dullomuir, Easterton & Brockwoodlees 222p Meikle Seggie 220p Pitoy Heifers ppkg
242p and 240p Learielaw 238p Pitoy and Mains of Culmalundie 232p Blairhall 230p (twice) Spittal (Gardner) 230p Mains of Culmalundie, Blairhall and Brockwoodlees 228p Lammerview, Blairhall, Brockwoodlees and Faskine 225p Wester Gartshore 222p Pitoy 220p Wester Gartshore and Annfield (Johnston)
Bullocks per Head
£1596 Gillandersland £1580 Pitoy £1564 Arns £1556 and £1547 Pitoy £1532 Learielaw and Mains of Culmalundie £1530 Arns £1521 Learielaw £1512 Seggarsdean £1504 West Mains £1501 Arns Heifers per Head
£1573 Mains of Culmalundie and Brockwoodlees £1512 Learielaw £1500 Pitoy £1480 Wester Gartshore £1416 Brockwoodlees £1395 & £1385 Greencraig
Also forward were 50 Cast Cows and Bulls
Beef cows sold to 171ppkg for a Charolais from A F Thomson and Son, Lammerview, Athelstaneford, and to £1180 for a Charolais from G Russell, Leslie Park, Denny.
Dairy cows sold to 129ppkg from R H Steel and Sons, Wester Mye, Buchlyvie and to £970 from R Denholm and Son, Wester Lochdrum, Dykebrae.
All classes of cows met a dearer trade than that of last week.
Other Leading Prices:-
Beef Cows per Head
£1130 Overton £1110 Seggarsdean £1060 Poltalloch Farms and Gilmour Farms £1010 Easter Barne Trust £1000 Easterton (Graham) and Lammerview Beef Cows ppkg
161p Gilmour Farms 157p Leslie Park 149p Leslie Park 149p Poltalloch Farm 146p Harviestoun 145p Easter Barne Trust and Gilmour Farms 142p Easterton (Graham)
Dairy Cows per Head
£920 and £910 North Mains £900 Carskerdo £880, £870 and £840 North Mains £840 Carskerdo and Howfold Dairy Cows ppkg
125p North Mains and Howfold 123p and 122p North Mains 120p Drumalea 118p Wester Lochdrum
A good show of 22 beef and dairy calves of all ages.
Top price of the day was £320 for a Limousin x Heifer from G Paterson, Barbeth.
Leading prices:-
Black and Whites:
£250 and £240 Arns £50 Nyadd £50 Plean Ayrshires:-
£52, £46 and £38 Badenheath
Beef Bulls:
£300 and £270 Barbeth
Next sale of calves will be May 4.
Stirling - United Auctions on Thursday April 20 sold 3892 prime sheep including 40 new season lambs to an average of £109.95 and 3465 hogs selling to an average of 176.25ppkg and 387 ewes and rams
Spring lambs (40) Harpercroft (Suff) £124; Whitehouse (X) £120; Langside (Char) £119; Ardachearmhor (Tex) £108. Spring Lambs (40) Meinteith (Suff) 250p; Langside (Char) 243p; Ardachearmhor (Tex) 240p; Whitehouse (X) 231p. Hogs (3465) - Longfauld (BTex) £118.00; Clochnahill (Tex) £106; Southpark (Chev) £96.00; Marvingston (Suff) £93.00; Muirside of Kinnead (BF) £85.50; Kerpuloch (BFL) £82.00; Old Faskally (Char) £77.50; Easter Buckleyvie (Mule) £77.50.
Hogs (3465) - Longfauld (BTex) 252p; Southpark (Chev) 222p; Pitsundry (Tex) 220p; Croftgarry (BF) 190p; Parkhead (Suff) 187p; Easter Buckleyvie (Mule) 171p.
Ewes (387) - Langside (Tex) £149.00; Marvingston (Suff) £118.00; Wester Balgair (BTex) £110.00; Broadleys (BFL) £100.00; Whitburgh Mains (X) £100.00; Birch Lane (mule) £99.00; Marvingston (Chev) £90; Head of Moulin (BF) £66.00 Tups - Marvingston (Suff) £100.00; Kilmundie (BF) £75.

Emojis put a smile on hay

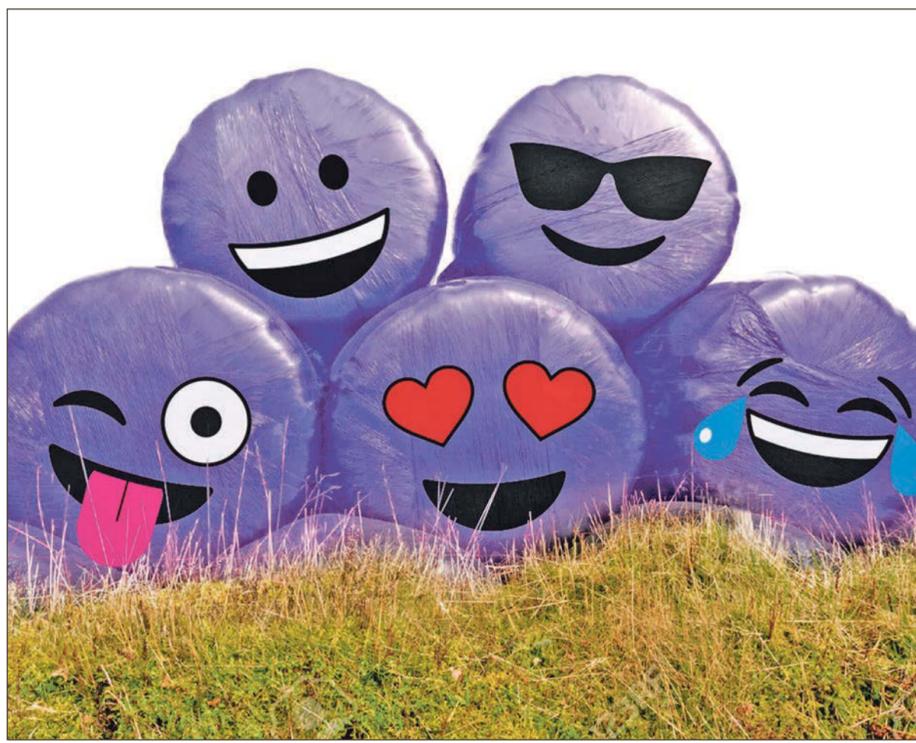
GIANT smiley-face 'emojis', used in texts or on-line to convey emotions, may be popping up on hay bales in fields across Scotland this year in a competition supporting a charity for seriously-ill children, WellChild.

Farmers will be challenged to create their emoji-inspired displays from silage bales wrapped in WellChild's colour purple. They can customise their bales with special emoji packs provided by agricultural suppliers, Carrs Billington.

Anyone can take part in the competition, and the company asks anyone who spots an emoji bale to take a picture on their phone, tag the location and post it on social media, including @CarrsBillington and the hashtag #spottedpurple. Each time a person does this with a photo of different bales they will be entered into a draw to win £200 of its shop vouchers.

It will also be donating at least £10,000 this year to support the charity, and encouraging farmers and contractors to show their support by choosing to buy purple silage wrap and netwrap from Zeus Packaging Group.

WellChild chief executive Colin Dyer said: 'The hay bale emojis will be a fantastic sight in fields all across the country and the money which is raised by the farming community will go to support children with serious and complex health conditions to live a better, happier life.'



NFUS says farmers 'in dark' over Brexit

SCOTTISH farmers and crofters who are still 'in the dark' about the UK's post-Brexit agricultural policy need to be heard in negotiations, as well as 'continued' and 'fair' funding for a 'smooth transition', their union argued at Westminster.

The day after the general election was called, the NFUS Scotland pressed ministers to recognise Scotland's 'unique requirements'.

NFUS president Andrew McCornick said: 'We continue to press the UK government on the importance of committing to longer term funding and its fair allocation across the UK. That will be key to winning the confidence of Scottish farmers and crofters, and a clear indication that their needs are being heard in the Brexit negotiations.'

'We are looking to both Westminster and Holyrood to restore confidence and certainty to all Scotland's farmers and crofters through agreeing a necessary and meaningful transition.'

'Any successor policy should be funded on a UK-wide common financial framework, but with policy development and delivery kept within the mainstay of the devolved administrations.'

'It is concerning that, nearly one month in to the two-year Article 50 process, Scottish farmers and crofters still remain in the dark about how a future agricultural policy will be both delivered and funded. What we need urgently is genuine discussion on the policy instruments and funding mechanisms that will lead to a well-funded, refreshed agricultural policy that delivers for all.'

Benderloch farmer puts up three Highlanders at bull sale

STIRLING this week welcomes pedigree beef breeders as United Auctions hosts a May multi-breed show and sale.

The annual bull sale will see its largest line-up for a second consecutive year at Stirling Agricultural Centre.

Last year's expanded format has been extended to three days to accommodate the show and sale of 304 pedigree bulls and females from Saturday April 29 to Monday May 1, and it is sponsored by Agricar.

Bull inspections take place on Saturday while Sunday will see an extravaganza of judging with the pre-sale shows of Charolais, Simmental, Limousin, Salers and Highland cattle. The judging of Aberdeen Angus and beef shorthorn bulls will take place from 9am on Monday before the sales of all nine breeds kick off at 10.30am.

The boost in entries is due to a record number of pedigree Limousin bulls (75) and Aberdeen Angus bulls (59) forward this year with Salers entries nearly doubled to 13.

Among those taking part, according to the catalogue, Michael Poland, (Mottistone) Wester Ferlochan, Benderloch, who has entered three Highlanders.

John Roberts, United Auctions' group sales director, said: 'This back-to-back boost in entries is down to the continued support of Scottish breeders and consignors south of the border for what is now firmly recognised as a significant pedigree cattle event in the farming calendar.'

'The May bull sale has grown steadily year-on-year from 40 cattle in the early days to more than 300 forward this year. Buyers can be sure of a tremendous show of top quality bulls from some of the finest herds showcasing excellent genetics.'

'It's also great to see a bustling, national event bringing a positive impact to the city with existing tenants, neighbouring Stirling vendors and local businesses all seeing the economic benefit of an uplift in commerce.'

United Auctions is also holding a commercial show and sale of Simmental breeding cattle on Monday May 1.

That sale and show is taking place in sheep ring, and is sponsored by Stirling Agricultural Centre tenant Carrs Billington.

DINGWALL – Dingwall and Highland Marts on April 20 sold 429 sheep of all classes.
Lambs (331) averaged £42.75 and sold to £73 gross for Blackfaces from Bogburn Farm, Duncanston.
Ewes (67) sold to £80 gross for a Texel from Wester Moy, Urray.
Rams and feeding sheep (31) sold to £47 gross a Blackface from Tigh N'Ulaidh, Tomatin.
Other leading prices per head:
Lambs: TexX – Bogburn Farm, £61, 26 Balvraid, Muir of Ord, £52, 3 Camusnagaul, Dundonnell & 26
Balvraid, £51; Cross – Bogburn Farm, £61; BF – Mullingaroch Steading, Boat of Garten, £57; Chev – 9
Mellon Udrigle, Laide, £55, Broomhill House, Helmsdale, £52, Dundreggan Croft, Glenmoriston, £50;
SuffX – Balmacaan, Drumadrochit, £49.
Ewes: Suff – Marian, Evanton, £70; SuffX – Wester Moy, £64; Chev – Clamhan Lodge, Bonar Bridge, £61; TexX – 26 Balvraid, £60, 5C Balmabeen, Conon Bridge, £55; BeltX – Marian, £59; Mule – Wester Moy, £51.
Rams and feeding sheep: Tex – 26 Balvraid, £40; SuffX – Balmacaan, £40.
STIRLING – Caledonian Marts report for sale on Thursday April 20. Caledonian Marts sold 162 cattle comprising 107 prime bullocks, heifers and young bulls, five OTM cattle, 50 cast cows and bulls.
A better entry for numbers forward would once again be considerably dearer on the week.
Prime Bullocks Averaged – 211p
Prime Heifers Averaged – 217p
Young Bulls Averaged – 187p
Beef Cows Averaged – 132p
Dairy Cows Averaged – 114p
Prime Bullocks sold to 240ppkg for a Limousin from W Dandie and Sons, Learielaw, Broxburn, purchased by T Johnston, Butcher, Falkirk and to £1645 gross from A and J Muir, Arns, Clackmannan, to C M Kirkpatrick, Lockerbie which was closely followed at

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Stirling Agricultural Centre
Sunday 30th April - Monday 1st May
Multi Breed Show and Sale of 304 Pedigree Bulls and Females
Show and Sale Programme

Sunday 30th April
11am Show of Charolais bulls, 12.15pm Show of Simmental bulls
1.30pm Show of Limousin bulls, 3pm Show of Salers bulls
3.15pm Show of Highland cattle

Monday 1st May
9am Show of Aberdeen-Angus bulls, 10.30am Show of Beef Shorthorn bulls
10.30am Sale of Highland (15 & 20 females), 11.15am Sale of Salers (13),
British Blue (1) and Hereford (1), 11.30am Sale of Charolais (47 & 1 female),
Simmental (49), Limousin (75 & 10 females), Aberdeen-Angus (59)
and Beef Shorthorn (12 & 1 female)

Catalogue available to download on website: www.uagroup.co.uk
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West Coast PROPERTY GUIDE

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Home owners in Scotland accelerate home improvement plans as Brexit fails to dampen confidence

SIX in 10 (60 per cent) homeowners in Scotland are planning to carry out home improvements with an average spend of £4,160.15 over the next six months – contradicting recent reports of weakened consumer confidence, according to new research by leading roof window manufacturer VELUX®.

The VELUX® 2017 Home Improvement survey, released to coincide with Home Improvement Month in April, revealed that 14 per cent of home owners in Scotland carry out improvements once every two to five months, with a further 24 per cent doing it every six to 11 months.

Contrary to many recent reports suggesting a weakening of consumer confidence in the shadow of Brexit, Scottish home improvers are willing to invest to create their dream home.

Almost two-fifths of home improvers in Scotland (39 per cent) are planning to spend up to £5,000, with 12 per cent expecting to spend up to £10,000 on their proposed projects.

According to the findings, the rationale for home improvement can be more emotional than rational. A quarter of home owners (26 per cent) who are planning to improve their property over the next six months are doing so because they love their home and the area they live in and

don't want to move. This is closely followed by 25 per cent of homeowners who are doing it to add value to their home.

This 'home sweet home' philosophy is also front of mind for almost a third of home improvers (29 per cent), whose main reason for home improvement is one of self-satisfaction, simply to make them feel good about themselves. As a key reason for home improvement, it is ahead of adding value. And 10 per cent of home improvers are looking to bring more daylight into the house.

The main focus of home improvement plans is cosmetic, with 67 per cent planning to paint and decorate. However, almost a third (27 per cent) are planning a new kitchen or bathroom, followed by flooring and lighting (21 per cent) and replacement windows (14 per cent).

Adding more space through a garage conversion was cited by five per cent of homeowners and a further four per cent said they'd add more space through a loft conversion.

Grant Sneddon, product manager for VELUX®, said: 'Despite widespread reports of weakened consumer and business confidence, our comprehensive research underlines a clear intention from homeowners in Scotland to continue investing in their homes.'

'What's perhaps more interesting is that homeowners are spending out of a personal preference of creating their dream homes, just as much as those who are spending to invest in the future value of their property.'

'Whether it's by creating an extra room, converting a loft, building an extension or replacing a kitchen or bathroom, it appears that home owners up and down the country are realising the potential of their homes and choosing to improve or to add to the space they have, instead of moving to a different property.'

UK-based interior design blogger and stylist, Hege Morris of Hege in France, said: 'The internet has helped to inspire millions of people to realise the potential of their house and have the courage to create their own dream homes.'

'Many homeowners now look beyond the functional use of their home to create spaces which mean more to them. For some, this means creating a personal sanctuary where they can escape from the rigours of everyday life, manage a home-run business or pursue a hobby.'

'For others, particularly those with families, we're seeing the continued growth of large, light and bright, open living spaces, where they can spend more quality time together.'



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Fantastically situated property with stunning views over the Sound of Mull. Knockalla is a well-designed modern detached family home set within a secluded semi-rural location with far reaching views over the Sound of Mull. The property is practically configured with accommodation comprising kitchen, dining room, sitting room, office, conservatory, shower room, family bathroom and 4 bedrooms (2 ensuite).

- Outstanding views over the Sound of Mull
- Well laid out accommodation
- Off road parking and garage
- Finished throughout to a high standard
- Manageable garden
- EPC C77

24 BARRMOR VIEW, KILMARTIN
GUIDE PRICE £170,000 EPC C69

24 Barrmor View stands within a development of similar properties in the picturesque village of Kilmartin. The village is located within Kilmartin Glen, on the main road between Oban and Lochgilphead. Beautifully presented, detached home situated in a popular and picturesque village location. The property comprises kitchen, living room, dining room, 3 bedrooms (1 ensuite) and family bathroom.

- Lovely Rural Location
- 3 Bedrooms
- Well maintained garden grounds
- Close to Lochgilphead and all amenities
- Available Now
- EPC C69

HELP TO BUY SCHEME FOR SCOTLAND HIGHER PRICE CAP RETAINED FOR 2018/19

people get on or up the housing ladder and Scotland's Help to Buy scheme gives a helping hand to thousands of people. 'We want to make home ownership as accessible as possible – with a particular focus on helping people to buy affordable new-build homes. 'We know, however, that prices of property – and what constitutes affordable – can fluctuate massively across different parts of the country. 'That is why I have decided to retain the price cap on homes eligible for the scheme at £200,000 over the next two financial years. This will be important in helping people own their own home across urban, rural and small towns in Scotland.'

This is great news for those in the market for a new house on the West Coast, providing for greater confidence and choice of property. If you would like advice on buying your first home, feel free to call a member of our team on 01631 569 466.

The Scottish Government has announced that the price cap on properties eligible for the scheme will remain at £200,000 in 2018/19. The Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme helps eligible householders buy a new build home from a participating builder by contributing up to a maximum 15% equity stake in the property. The maximum property value eligible for the scheme is £200,000 from April 1, 2017 and will remain at this level until March 2019 – rather than a planned reduction to £175,000, which was to be introduced on April 1, 2018. According to housing minister Kevin Stewart, the changes will keep the scheme open to as many people across as many geographic locations as possible and will help more families onto the housing ladder. Mr Stewart said: 'We want to help

West

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OIRO £75,000

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BETTS FIELD, ARDNACROSS

- Large plot with views of the Sound of Mull
- In excess of 1 Acre
- Private shore access
- Planning permission in principle

OIEO £90,000

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DUNOLLIE ROAD, OBAN

- Delightful detached bungalow
- 3 bedrooms/1 bathroom
- Convenient location
- Garden to front and rear
- Excellent Family Home
- EPC rating D61

OIRO £195,000

Griaran - A unique opportunity to purchase a sizable family home within in easy walking distance of Oban's local amenities. The property comprises a cosy lounge with wood burning stove and patio doors out onto a large covered to the front of the house, ideal for sitting and enjoying the view or even drying washing on those showery days! Adjacent to the lounge is a bright and generous dining room, perfect for family meals and entertaining guests. Book your viewing today!

KILMORE, OBAN

- Unique loch side location
- Rural glen only short drive from Oban
- Planning Permission in Principle
- Services available for connection nearby
- Approx. 0.15 acres

OIRO £90,000

Occupying a desirable position on the shores of Loch Nell in a secluded glen south of Oban. This plot offers a unique development opportunity, extending to approx. 0.15 acre the plot has planning permission in principle (October 2016) for a single dwelling house. The plans and planning permission documents are available from West Property or via the Argyll and Bute website using reference number 16/00779/PPP.

STEVENSON STREET APARTMENT

- One bedroom
- Unfurnished
- Central Location

£470 PCM

One bedroom flat located centrally in Oban. Open plan living room and modern kitchen with spacious double bedroom and shower bathroom. The property comes unfurnished with fridge and built-in cooker. Rent excludes Council Tax B and A and utilities. Deposit and references required. Landlord Registration: 342259/130/31461. EPC B84. AVAILABLE NOW!

ALBANY APARTMENTS, OBAN

- Unfurnished
- Ground Floor Flat
- Double Glazing
- Town Centre

£560 PCM

Ground floor flat in Albany Apartments in Oban town centre. The accommodation comprises of 2 double bedrooms (with integrated storage), family bathroom, lounge & kitchen. The kitchen includes a built in hob & oven, washing machine and fridge freezer. The flat is otherwise unfurnished. Rent excludes Council Tax B and D & Utilities. References and Deposit required. EPC C70 Landlord Reg. No. 414627 / 130/26301 - AVAILABLE JUNE

TOP FLAT, 21 BREADALBANE ST

- Centrally located
- Double glazing
- Unfurnished

£425 PCM

Centrally located unfurnished two bedroom flat in Tobernory, Isle of Mull. The accommodation comprises of 2 double bedrooms, lounge, bathroom (with separate shower cubicle & bath) & kitchen (including cooker, fridge freezer & washing machine). Council Tax B and B. Rent is excluding council tax and utilities. Deposit & References required, seeking long term tenants. Landlord Reg: 80784/130/05330, EPC Rating: D 58. AVAILABLE MAY 2017

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THE FIVE MOST CURIOUS PROFESSIONS IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY

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- **The tasks of sculptors, sommeliers and tailors combine with robotics and high technology**

Making a new car is usually associated with professionals such as designers, engineers or assembly line workers. However, vehicle manufacturing also involves several curious professions that require a high degree of craftsmanship, creativity and precision. The following five are a few examples of these:

The first driver: two million kilometres per year. This



is the distance covered by the team of expert drivers to test all the cars that leave the SEAT factory in Martorell in a single year.

These professionals closely study the performance of the vehicles as soon as they come off the assembly line, testing them at different speeds on six different types of pavement, including cobblestones and uneven surfaces to ensure they do not make any unpleasant noise.

During the process they also test that horns, lights and brakes function correctly.

The clay sculptor: these sculptors handcraft clay into life-sized cars that even weigh the same as a real vehicle.



This requires 2,500 kilos of clay and up to 10,000 hours of patient scraping to elaborate a single clay model, which will fully display a car's silhouette before locking in its design.

The car tailor: they hand-sew the vehicle upholstery patterns, coming up with the best combination of colours and fabrics and hides to suit the personality of each car. These expert tailors need more than 30 metres of seams to fully upholster an entire car, and their creations are crafted two years in advance.

The seat tester: this profession consists in shaping the ideal seat. Testers and their teams also have to perform up to 20,000



folding operations for each different type of seat. The study is exhaustive: they have to find the right foams, fabrics, structure or stitching that will adapt to different body types and external conditions. They also ensure the correct design of headrests to prevent possible neck injuries.

Car sommeliers: their most important work instrument is their nose to achieve the ultimate goal: the famous 'new car smell'. This team of chemists performs more than 400 smell tests every year, exposing cars to temperatures of 60°C. This profession also places some curious demands on them: they cannot smoke or wear perfume so as not to alter the outcome of test results.



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Before you use a vehicle that's been in storage, carry out THOROUGH TYRE CHECKS

AS THE warmer weather approaches, caravans, classic cars, horseboxes, motorhomes and many other vehicles will be coming out of winter storage for the first time this year.

TyreSafe, the UK's tyre safety charity, is appealing to all owners to take time to carry out tyre checks before hitting the road for the 2017 season.

As the only point of contact with the road, tyres are crucial for vehicle safety. Whether the vehicle has been stored in a garage or outside, all tyres should be checked for correct pressure, general condition and tread depth, TyreSafe advises.

Stuart Jackson, chairman of TyreSafe, said: 'There are a number of factors that can affect tyres stored on vehicles for several months, even if they are in a garage over winter.'

'Tyres deteriorate with age as well as with mileage, and uneven weight distribution in use and during storage can lead to uneven

tyre wear. Tyres will deteriorate faster if they're stored outdoors, especially in direct sunlight.

'All of these circumstances can lead to unsafe tyres, which is why checks are so important at the start of the season and monthly throughout it.'

ESSENTIAL PRE-SEASON TYRE CHECKS:

- **OVERALL CONDITION** – Give all tyres a thorough visual inspection. Remove visible stones and other objects from the tread. Cracks in the sidewall may mean the tyres are beginning to deteriorate and should be checked by a professional along with any cuts, cracks or bulges which could signify internal damage.
- **AIR PRESSURES** – specific vehicle



pressures can be found in the owner's manual or use TyreSafe's unique car and caravan tyre pressure calculators on www.tyresafe.org.

- **TREAD DEPTH** – this should be above the legal minimum of 1.6mm across the central ¾ of each tyre's width and its entire circumference. Use the outer rim of a 20p as a guide to how close a vehicle's tyres are to this limit.

TyreSafe has created an animation to help people perform these checks, viewable on YouTube.

Have a safe trip.

2017 HONDA CIVIC TYPE R SETS NEW FRONT-WHEEL-DRIVE LAP RECORD AT NÜRBURGRING

FOLLOWING the production model's debut at the 2017 Geneva Motor Show, the all-new Honda Civic Type R has set a new benchmark lap time for front-wheel-drive cars at the Nürburgring Nordschleife. On April 3, 2017, a development car lapped the world-famous circuit in seven minutes and 43.8 seconds.

The lap time was achieved during the final phase of the model's testing regime, on a dry track with an optimum ambient temperature for the best tyre and powertrain performance. The new time represents an improvement of nearly seven seconds compared to the model's predecessor.

The new Civic Type R was part of the all-new tenth-generation Civic's development programme – the largest in Honda's history – and was engineered to deliver the most rewarding drive in the hot hatch segment, both on road and on the race track.

Several factors contributed to the new Civic Type R's new benchmark time at the Nordschleife. At its heart is the optimised and refined 2.0-litre VTEC TURBO engine, producing 320 PS and 400Nm of torque.

New lower gear ratios in the six-speed manual transmission further improve the car's acceleration, while the new Type R's comprehensive aerodynamic package delivers outstanding high-speed stability, with a best-in-class balance between lift and drag.

The high-rigidity body frame of the all-new Civic Type R is 16kg lighter than the previous model's, with a torsional stiffness improvement of 38 per cent, which provides significant benefits to steering response and cornering stability.

New multi-link rear suspension enhances stability under braking and reduces the total roll movement of the car, enabling later braking into corners and helping

to achieve higher cornering speeds during the lap.

Ryuichi Kijima is the lead chassis engineer for the Honda Civic Type R. He explains where the all-new model shows the most significant improvements around the Nürburgring compared to the previous generation car.

'The cornering speed achieved in the new Type R is higher because the car features a wider track and tyres, a longer wheelbase, new multi-link suspension in the rear and optimised aerodynamics that improves stability,' said Kijima. 'For example, drivers typically enter the corner after Metzgesfeld at around 150km/h. Even at this medium-speed corner, the speed is around 10km/h higher due to the new Type R's excellent stability. So, with improved cornering performance, we can increase the speed throughout the lap, helping the new Type R to achieve a much quicker lap time.'

The development car that achieved the lap time was technically representative of production specification.

A full floating roll cage was installed for safety reasons, but its presence did not provide any additional rigidity to the body frame.

The extra weight of the cage was compensated for by the temporary removal of the infotainment system and rear seats. The car was using road legal track-focused tyres. Production of the new Civic Type R will begin in summer 2017 at Honda of the UK Manufacturing (HUM) in Swindon – the global manufacturing hub for the tenth generation Civic hatchback.

The Type R will be exported across Europe and to other markets around the world, including Japan and the US. Its arrival in North America will mark the first time that any Honda-badged Type R has been officially sold there.

- Time-attack attempt at Nürburgring sets time of 7min 43.8sec
- All-new Civic Type R's engine produces 320 PS and 400Nm of torque
- Advanced aerodynamics deliver best-in-class balance between lift and drag
- New Civic Type R to be built in Swindon, UK; European sales start in summer 2017
- Lap time achieved in development car with technical specifications representative of the final production car



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We are looking for a part time administrative assistant to ensure the day-to-day smooth running of the advertising sales office here in Oban.

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Please send your CV and a letter of application to Alison Arden, Wyvex Media, Crannog Lane, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB or email: ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk



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The successful applicant would ideally have fish farming experience with formal boat training, operational qualifications and licences. They will be enthusiastic, self-motivated and able to demonstrate experience of working within a small team. Duties include fish welfare, sampling, grading, treating, moving and harvesting fish and other general fish farm tasks.

Applicants should also have a full driving licence.

Salary dependent on experience, skills and knowledge.

Closing date 11th May 2017

Please send your CV with qualifications and accompanying letter to:-

Jean Haslam

Kames Fish Farming Limited
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fish@kames.co.uk
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Oban Communities Trust are seeking a self-starting, dynamic individual to co-ordinate and manage an exciting new social heritage project 'Journeys to the little bay - An t-Oban'. This short term employed or freelance contract is offered on a part-time basis (18 hours per week) over a period of 35 weeks.

Rate of pay £9.50 per hour.

Deadline for application: 10th May 2017

Job description and application process can be accessed on our website

www.obancommunitiestrust.org.uk/heritageofficer

Email eleonor@therockfieldcentre.org.uk

This project is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund

Oban Communities Trust - SC483489; Charity No. SC045503
Registered address - Lindhu House, 19 Stevenson St, Oban PA34 3NA



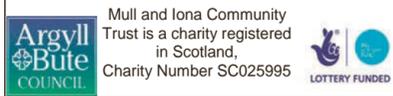
Mini Muileachs Job Vacancies

Mull and Iona Community Trust are excited to be working with Argyll and Bute Council on a trial project to offer extended childcare at Tobarroy Pre 5 Unit from July 2017 to June 2018.

We currently have vacancies for an
Early Learning and Childcare Manager
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Childcare and Education Workers

For further details and an application pack please contact Laura Percy (enquiries@mict.co.uk).
Closing date: Monday 15th May

For more information about Mini Muileachs please visit www.mict.co.uk/projects-services/childcare



Mull and Iona Community Trust is a charity registered in Scotland,
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01631 562087 or
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Based in Fort William area

20 hrs/week

Salary: £20,370 - £24,223 pa pro-rata.

Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland is determined to deliver stronger, longer lives to people in Scotland affected by chest and heart illness and by stroke.

The main purpose of this post is to carry a caseload for rehabilitation support services in the designated area.

Demonstration of a positive attitude towards people with disabilities, the ability to recruit, manage and motivate a team of volunteers, excellent communication and interpersonal skills will be required to fulfil this role.

For further details and an application pack please visit our website: www.CHSS.org.uk or contact the HR Department on 0131 225 6963 or recruitment@chss.org.uk.

Closing date: 14 May 2017

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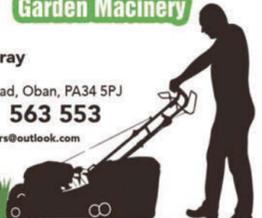
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£30 Telephone 01546 6000452

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DEATHS

GLASGOW - (née Macintyre). Suddenly at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on Wednesday April 19, 2017, Margaret, aged 72, widow of Robert, mother to Gary and Lesley, daughter of the late Hugh and Mary, sister to the late Billy and Ian, formerly of Lismore Crescent, Oban. The family wish to express their gratitude to all those in Oban who have provided support and friendship over the years.

MACLEAN - Iain. Suddenly and sadly at Dublin airport on April 23, Iain beloved son of the late Eoghann and Ina MacLean Tobermory, a dear father, brother, brother-in-law, uncle and great-uncle. Much loved and sorely missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

KELLY - The family of the late Pauline Kelly would like to express their sincere thanks and gratitude for the many kind expressions of sympathy and support in their recent bereavement. Sincere thanks to all, for cards, flowers and home baking and to all the professional bodies involved in Mum's care. Special thanks to Rev. Rosemary Power for her comforting service and to Catriona from Hamish Hoey and Son for her kindness and professional handling of the arrangements. Thanks also to the Falls of Lora for their excellent catering and to all who paid their last respects at church and graveside. Donations for Alzheimers and Lyside raised £418.00.

MEMORIAMS

BLACK - Precious memories of my dear husband Donnie who passed away on April 26, 2016. Loving dad of Carol and Andrew, dear grandfather and great-grandfather. We think about you every day.
- Inserted by his loving wife Jean

BROWN - Precious memories of a dear wife and mother Rena, who died April 26, 2013.
No longer in our lives to share
But in our hearts you're always there.
- Donald, Colin, Donna and families.

CLARK - Remembering Alex Clark who died April 28, 2016.
Suddenly you were taken
I could not say goodbye
Now I only have memories
That will never die.
- Liz x

DEMPSTER - In everlasting memory of a much loved husband, father and pappy Donald John, who passed away April 30, 2011, also

remembering with love Robert Dempster, who passed away on May 23, 2010 and John Ignatious who died February 1, 2017.
Your love is always with us
Your place no-one can fill
In life we loved you dearly
In death we love you still.

- Jessie, John, Marie, Cathy and Donald John and all the Dempster family.

GILLIES - In loving memory of Ronnie, a dear dad, papa and great grandfather, who passed away April 26, 2003.
Deep are the memories
Precious they will stay
No passing of time
Shall take them away.
- Love Theresa, Anne, Angela and families.

KERR - Precious memories of our darling son, brother and uncle, Jamie who died April 30, 2015, aged 25.
Our lives will never be the same again.
- Lots of love Mum and Dad, John, Danielle and Jack, Amanda and David and Jordan, Ashleigh xxx

ROBERTSON - Remembering my cousin John (Lochaline) who died April 28, 2008, aged 48.
In my thoughts.
- Catherine, Stonehaven

MACKECHNIE - Cherished memories of our dear parents Catherine MacCallum who died on March 6, 1953 at Ardslnish and John who died on April 29, 1972 at Kilmalieu, Ardgour.

To your resting place we go and place your flowers with care but no-one knows our heartache as we turn and leave you there.

- Inserted by their loving family.

RUSSELL - Martin Donald Russell passed away May 1, 2012
Grateful for the time we had
Your lovely nature nurtured our souls
Also remembering his great uncle Martin MacArthur, Luig, died April 25, 1947 aged 18.
- Mum, Dad and extended family.

- Mum, Dad and extended family.

Kirk report on human sexuality published



If you think this is a coincidence...



A HAPPY spring service in the church on Ulva last Sunday had one particularly solemn note – brought to bear by a rather poignant coincidence.

Children from Tobermory Sunday club enjoyed worshippers from Mull and beyond in an Easter service in the beautiful Telford building.

After the fun of worshipping together the congregation gathered at the small war memorial near the front door.

Thoughtful moments were spent laying flowers in memory of Private Alexander McGregor of the 1/7 Black Watch (Scottish

Horse) who died at the battle of Arras in First World War – and his three comrades in arms. He was only 22.

The flowers were from the garden of Iain Campbell of Tobermory who had discovered that Alexander was not only related to him but also that he died on April 23, 1917, 100 years to the very day of the service on Ulva.

After the act of remembrance the children enjoyed an Easter egg hunt in the kirkyard. It was said that it was appropriate that the very kirkyard that Alexander could have played in as a child was now filled with the sound of children again.

He who had given his life for his country would surely be smiling at the thought of these young islanders celebrating new life.

Johnny Paton

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THE latest report from the Theological Forum on human sexuality to come before the General Assembly has been published.

The comprehensive document will be considered by commissioners in Edinburgh next month.

The document has found its way into the public domain ahead of schedule, before all the General Assembly reports are published in the Blue Book on Thursday.

In light of the report appearing in the national press, the principal clerk has authorised its immediate publication to allow commissioners, members of the church and members of the public to understand fully the content and context.

The General Assembly is being asked to consider two key issues: authorise the Legal Questions Committee to undertake a further study on the legal implications of conducting same-sex marriages and report back to the General Assembly in 2018, and to invite the Church to take stock of its history of discrimination at different levels and in different ways against gay people and to apologise individually and corporately and seek to do better.

In releasing the report the Convener of the Theological Forum, the Very Rev Professor Iain Torrance, said: 'The Report addresses what has been a

long-running argument in all the churches.

'In years past there has been an idea that in time one side in this argument would emerge as the sole victor.

'We don't think like that now.

'That is why we are arguing for what, last year, the Forum called 'constrained difference'.

'This is saying that within limits we can make space for more than one approach.

'It is closely similar to what the Archbishop of Canterbury calls 'mutual flourishing'.

'This is a centrist report, aimed at encouraging mutual flourishing.'

The Principal Clerk, the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, said: 'It is unfortunate that this report has found its way into the public domain before this year's volume of Assembly Reports has been published.

'However, it is important that people are now able to access the full report.

'It will now be for the Assembly to decide whether it wants to ask the Legal Questions Committee to pursue further research on the matters which would require to be addressed in any new legislation permitting Ministers and Deacons to officiate at same-sex marriage ceremonies.

'If the General Assembly does move in this direction a further report will be heard in 2018.'

The Oban Times
& West Highland Times
THE REGIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR THE WEST HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS AND ARGYLL

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Thought for the week

Mathew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God.

We are all children of God but when we are faced with a difficult choice, when we meet with hostility it is tempting to fight back and to meet hostility with hostility, thereby making a bad situation worse, perhaps passing the problem down to another generation.

Short-term solutions can often lead to long-term consequences, putting peace beyond our reach.

Peacemaking triumphs if we can convert an enemy to a friend - this may be impossible without divine help and guidance.

If we can behave like true sons of God, reflecting His love, patience and authority all things are possible.

Geoff and Janet Fairbairn

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WEDDING

MACDONALD - EATON
Laura MacDonald and Craig Eaton were married at the Oban Registrars on April 7, 2017. The intimate gathering of family and friends celebrated with the happy couple, while having their photographs taken up at the McCaigs Tower.
Photograph by Perfect Images of Oban.

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Comfortable win sees Saints reach their second semi-final of the season

Oban Saints 4
Port Glasgow 1
Marshall Cup - quarter final

OBAN Saints recovered from the disappointment of missing out on a trip to Hampden Park in the Scottish Amateur Cup final to book their fifth consecutive Jimmy Marshall Trophy semi-final appearance last Saturday at Glencruitten.

Visitors Port Glasgow had only just narrowly missed out on promotion from Premier Division 2B and were desperate to upset the cup holders and clinch a semi-final tie against 2013 winners Hillington.

Saints made a bright start, attacking the railway end with Port Glasgow keeper Stuart Burns tipping over a third-minute Donald Campbell shot for the first corner kick of the match.

Last season's League Division One winners Port Glasgow looked dangerous from set-pieces and made good use of right fullback Ryan McCabe's long throws.

Saints moved swiftly up the park with Port skipper Paul Stanton getting in a vital block to deny Donald Campbell after some excellent build-up play from Craig MacEwan and Scott Maitland on the left.

A 16th-minute foul on Craig MacEwan by Christopher Hughes gave Saints a free-kick 30 yards from goal and left of centre. Willie Gemmell opted not to shoot and was slightly too heavy with his attempted pass for Craig MacEwan running in at the back post, giving Stuart Burns an easy take.

Two minutes later Saints carefully picked their way through the Port back four on the left. Scott Maitland won a throw-in which he took himself, finding Ross Maitland in the box. Ross held off the challenge of Paul Stanton and laid the ball back to Donald Campbell who threaded a delightful ball through for Scott Maitland. Scott drove into the box and looked to square the ball for Craig MacEwan but sent his pass too close to Stuart Burns who made a crucial interception on his six-yard line.

Port Glasgow threatened twice in quick succession on the left with Sean McLaughlin pouncing on a slack pass from Brian Mackay and drawing a

good save from Thomas McCulloch low down to his right. McLaughlin then chased down a long ball, beating Marc Maccallum near the bye-line before, from a tight angle, sending in another low shot which McCulloch again held well to his right. In a bitter 24th-minute blow the visitors were denied the further services of the dangerous looking McLaughlin when he was carried off with an ankle injury, to be replaced by Kerrin Dow.

The home side opened the scoring just before the half-hour mark after a good passing move on the right. Brian Mackay fed Ross Maitland and, with the Port defence appealing in vain for offside, Ross clipped a cross onto the six-yard line in the middle of the Port goalmouth. Craig MacEwan made an excellent run to get in front of Ryan McCabe and direct a stooping header low into the net past the left hand of Stuart Burns.

Saints survived a penalty appeal in the 34th minute when referee John Stobo, who had a good game, deemed a risky Dene Cassells challenge on Kerrin Dow to be shoulder to shoulder.

The woodwork came to the visitors' rescue in the 38th minute. Willie Gemmell found Donald Campbell who held the ball up well and sent Craig MacEwan off on a run on the right wing. Craig's deep cross was pulled down by Brian Mackay on the corner of the six-yard box and, in Dennis Bergkamp style, flicked over the head of Ryan McCabe and rattled left-footed off the keeper's right hand upright.

With five first half minutes remaining, Ross Maitland beat the Port Glasgow offside trap once again but was beaten by the quick reactions of Stuart Burns who slid out to gather at the wee man's feet.

Saints doubled their lead in the 41st minute, again capitalising on their aerial threat. Craig MacEwan won a corner kick on the left, with Paul Stanton making a good interception to take the ball off Craig's toe as he threatened to break in behind the Port defence. Ross Maitland's in-swing from the left was met by an unstoppable Dene Cassells header five yards out who had made a de-



Dene Cassells celebrates scoring Saints' second goal.

Photos and match report: Derek Black

termined run from deep to win the ball ahead of Port keeper Stuart Burns to make the half time score 2-0.

The Port Glasgow defence had been unhappy with some of referee John Stobo's first-half offside verdicts but looked to be very fortunate to be given the benefit of a very tight decision when a well-weighted diagonal pass from Willie Gemmell picked out Craig MacEwan cutting in from the left.

Saints successfully broke the Port offside trap in the 49th minute with Brian Mackay sending Donald Campbell through and Stuart Burns producing another excellent save throwing up a strong right hand to deny Donald.

Donald was not to be denied, however, and five minutes later got the goal his all round play deserved. With Port Glasgow appealing for a throw-in, Marc Maccallum kept alive a ball on the Saints right and sent Matthew Kelly on a run up the wing. Matthew picked out Donald Campbell in the box who made no mistake, wrong-footing Stuart Burns from 12 yards and rolling the ball into the bottom corner for Saints' third.

The visitors countered almost immediately from a free-kick cheaply conceded by Marc Maccallum 28 yards from the Saints goal. Robert Caldwell made a clever run to draw Matthew Kelly from the end of a five-man Saints wall, opening up the target for Andrew Hannah. The former Greenock Morton half-time replacement exploited the gap by curling the ball into the bottom corner of the net past Thomas McCulloch's despairing right hand giving the visitors renewed hope.

Willie Gemmell continued his excellent run of form in midfield, rolling back the years with a dancing spin and turn away from two opponents to put Craig MacEwan through. Unfortunately, Craig was crowded out by the combined efforts of Paul Stanton and Christopher Hughes.

Ross Maitland won a free-kick 30 yards out giving Saints deadball expert Willie Gemmell a chance to emulate Andrew Hannah's earlier effort. Willie, however, elected to go short to Ross Maitland who gave a return pass to Willie who in turn tried to pick out Craig

Football

MacEwan's run to the back post. Willie's ball was over-hit but Stuart Burns still had to watch it carefully as it drifted just over his crossbar.

Port Glasgow made another change in the 67th minute, replacing Ryan McCabe with Stephen Blaney and, with their overall control of the match slipping slightly, Saints made a positional change, dropping Donald Campbell back into midfield and pushing Brian Mackay forward. Coming from his new deeper position Donald scooped a 22-yard effort from a Myles McAuley cut-back well over the crossbar in the 71st minute.

With 15 minutes remaining, the visitors brought on more fresh legs, replacing Christopher Hughes with Kevin Thompson. In an advanced role, Thompson showed perseverance to force Dene Cassells into conceding a throw-in level with Saints six-yard line wide on the right. Saints dealt with the long throw comfortably and cleared the danger.

Saints manager Alex Craik introduced Jamie Graham and Fraser MacFarlane to replace Brian Mackay and Ross Maitland. The change also brought about a tactical reshuffle to three at the back with Jamie Graham slotting in alongside Marc Maccallum and Dene Cassells.

The Saints substitutes combined almost immediately with Fraser laying off to Jamie breaking forward on the right after Thomas McCulloch had come through a ruck of players to punch clear a Connor Dow free-kick. Unfortunately, Jamie's low cross on the run looking for Fraser in the middle was too close to keeper Stuart Burns who slid out to collect.

Jamie Graham was involved on the right once again linking up with Donald Campbell in the 84th minute to force a corner kick. Taking over corner kick duties from the departed Ross Maitland, Fraser MacFarlane went deep to the back post with the ball breaking back across to the right of the box where Marc Maccallum hooked the ball left footed on target but straight at Stuart Burns.

After successfully weathering



Port Glasgow goalkeeper Stuart Burns saves from Ross Maitland.

Port Glasgow's spirited attempt at a comeback, Saints were now looking the more likely to add to the scoring.

Willie Gemmell linked up on the left with Fraser MacFarlane to create an opening for Donald Campbell, who was denied from an acute angle by another fine Stuart Burns save.

Saints kept the pressure on, building again on the right wing in the 87th minute through Jamie Graham and Matthew Kelly. Jamie fed Craig MacEwan who jinked his way into the box and threaded a pass between Paul Stanton and Connor Dow for Fraser MacFarlane who poked the ball past the advancing Stuart Burns and into the bottom corner to round off the scoring.

With the tie now safe, gaffer Alex Craik made his final change, replacing Craig MacEwan with Martin Bonar. With the visitors, who had worked hard all day, now completely out of steam Saints saw out the closing minutes comfortably to clinch a semi-final trip to face Hillington on Saturday May 13.

Next up for Saints is a return to league business when they travel to Lochinch to face Shawlands who currently sit level with Saints on 19 points but with three more games played.



Matty Kelly and Donald Campbell congratulate Fraser MacFarlane on his goal.



Jamie Graham clears the ball from Kerrin Dow.



The winners from Oban's St Columba's Primary pose for the photograph. In the background, Oban High School's acrobatic gymnastics squad, which has been training since September. Gymnastics coach Bronwen Davies said: 'They are fearless!'

'Fearless' display by primary pupils at gymnastic festival

ARGYLL primary school pupils were hailed as 'amazing' by organisers of Active Schools' gymnastics festival at Oban High School, where young acrobats also put on a 'fearless' display.

Active Schools aim to help school pupils enjoy a more active and healthy lifestyle in Argyll and Bute, both at and beyond school, with planned activities in classes and the community.

The organisation has around 600 volunteers, including parents, teachers, community coaches and senior pupils,

giving up their time to support a range of sports.

'It encourages the children to take exercise,' explained Active Schools co-ordinator Gillian Walker. 'Each school has been running a gymnastics club.' Their training culminated in a gymnastics festival at Oban High School, where pupils from Park, Rockfield, St Columba's, Tainuilt, Dunbeg and Arinagour primary schools competed.

The day's winners were team one from St Columba's Primary School, followed by team one and team four from Park, who

Gymnastics

took second and third prizes respectively.

Natalie Lopez of St Columba's Primary School team one picked up the award for best girl gymnast, while Connor Wells of Park Primary team four was named the best boy gymnast.

Gym coach Kirsty Kennedy, who has been running gym classes for the primary school children, said: 'The standard is amazing. All the kids have done brilliantly, exceeding expectations.'

Open water swims raise £2,600



Swimmers set off on the Loch Sunart event. Photo: Simon Willis

TWO Highland open water swims have raised more than £2,000 for charity.

A group of brave swimmers took to Loch Sunart last weekend, swimming 1.64km to raise money for charity Children with Cancer UK.

Twenty-nine swimmers took part in the latest Highland open water swim, the brainchild of outdoor enthusiast Jeff Forrester.

Jeff set up the challenges to raise money for the children's charity and to inspire people to enjoy the great

outdoors and start a new sport. The swimmers were alongside three rib safety boat crews and nine kayaks. Nick Ray paddled from Tobermory to support the event and then paddled all the way back to Tobermory, a round trip of 34 miles setting off at 5am.

The Loch Sunart event, and the swim at Corran Narrows earlier this year, raised a total of £2,600 for the charity.

Speaking after the event, Jeff told the *Lochaber Times*: 'The Loch Sunart was a great success and if the demand is there, this may be considered again.'

Swimming

We believe the events are going very well with nearly £2,600 raised so far inclusive of gift aid for Children with Cancer UK.'



Glencruitten

LEADING qualifiers for the Britannia Cup at Glencruitten on Saturday were Robert MacIntyre 58 + 4 = 62; Aidan McCuish 69 - 6 = 63; Scott Jordan 72 - 9 = 63 and Malcolm MacKillop 71 - 6 = 65. This Saturday the Stokes Qualifier and Lifeboat Trophy take place.

Taynuilt

TAYNUILT ladies held a two clubs and a putter competition over nine holes last weekend - 1 Hazel Robertson 14pts; 2 Carol MacDougall 13pts; 3 Fiona McGlynn 12pts.

Gents: Captain's Prize played on Sunday April 23 - 1 Richard Bergant 72-12=60 2 Alex Needham 79-18=61 3 Robert MacLarty 74-12=62. Captain's Prize overall results 1 Richard Bergant 66+60=126; 2 Alex Needham 68+61=129; 3 Alan Wilson 64+65=129; 4 Mark Cringean 59+70=129.

Islay

RESULTS: Hunter Trophy played Wednesday April 19 - 1 I Farrell 41 pts; 2 K MacDonald 40 pts 3 D Muir 38 pts. C.S. 70

Higginbotham Trophy played Sunday April 23 - 1 C Holyoake 45 pts 2 D Muir 40 pts; 3 S Johnston 37 pts.

Dalmally

MEDAL qualifier - 1 A MacGillivray 64 (11); 2 M O'Keefe 67 (15); 3 J Livingstone 69 (15).

Easter Stableford - 1 J Livingstone 35pts, winner on countback; 2 W Dougal 35pts; 3 G MacKechnie 33pts.

The ladies held a hotly contested captain v vice-captain match on April 10 with vice-captain Sheila Tollan and her team of Jean Twort, Janet Buchanan, June Sutherland, Ann Hay, Isobel Sutherland and Colleen Brown stealing the day from the team led by captain Ann Colthart.

The Easter Cup was played on April 17 on a chilly but sunny day that saw a nine-hole Stableford match won by Janet Buchanan with 17 pts (won on last three holes). Second with 17 pts was June Sutherland and third was Ann Colthart with 16pts. Prizes were donated and presented by Ann Munro.

Thistle put title party on hold

South Lochaber Thistle	1
Newshot	0
West of Scotland League	

LEAGUE leaders Newshot missed out on taking home the title after suffering a defeat

from closest competitors South Lochaber Thistle.

The visitors to Kinlochleven at the weekend had the opportunity to win the West of Scotland Amateur Football League championship away from home,

but the title party was put on hold as the Jags came away with the three points.

South Lochaber had the better of the play throughout the match, out-muscling their opponents.



Andy Maclean in midfield action as Newshot players try to keep him from reaching their goalmouth.

Still smarting from losing 3-0 in the semi-final of the League Cup to Newshot, the Jags had the bit between their teeth and battled hard throughout the game.

Thistle always looked dangerous in attack and were unlucky not to take the lead earlier than they did with Lewis Morrison heading over from an Andrew Maclean cross.

And the Jags did take the lead after a ball forward from Danny Mackintosh was topped on by Lewis Morrison deceiving the centre half for Martin Munro to run through on goal before finishing coolly past the visiting keeper.

The second half led to more goal scoring opportunities, but Thistle were unable to take advantage of their dominance.

It was almost to their cost with a Newshot substit-

tion causing problems in the South Lochaber backline with his long throws.

Luckily, the home defence stood strong and saw out the game to become the first team this season to take points off of their opponents.

Man of the match went to Danny Mackintosh, who was industrious in middle of the park.

Speaking about the Jags home win, manager Alan Gray said: 'A win like this goes to show how far the team have come this season. The boys deserved their win and we were glad to not have our opponents celebrating a league title on our patch.'

Next week sees South Lochaber Thistle head to Cardross with a win guaranteeing them second place in the league.



Martin Munro streaks up the wing to score the only goal of the match.



Lewis Morrison in the thick of the action against Newshot. Photos: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image



Dalmally golf club's Ann Colthart, ladies captain, Ann Munro, Janet Buchanan and June Sutherland.

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Marine Harvest Media Award winners 2016

Macaulay and Sutherland cup ties take centre stage this weekend

KYLES Athletic are the new Marine Harvest Premiership leaders, ahead of Kinlochshiel and Kingussie on goal difference, and seven of the eight Balliemore Cup quarter finalists are known following the shinty action on Saturday April 22.

Balliemore Cup - second round

Fort William 2 Aberdour 1

Fort William beat Aberdour 2-1 in their 3pm throw-up at An Aird.

All the goals came in the final third of the match.

Fort William took the lead on 66 minutes. A chipped ball into the goal area was stopped by Aberdour goalie Tom Bowerman but he wasn't able to get any distance on his clearance and Lewis Clark was quickly in to score.

The home side extended their lead four minutes later. Calum Shepard saw an initial shot blocked but the rebound fell on his left side and he lashed the ball high into the net to make it 2-0.

Fort William were reduced to 11 players when Bryan Simpson was red carded following a challenge on Craig Grant.

Aberdour pulled a goal back on 80 minutes. David McDougall sent a good ball forward and Paul MacKay made a good save from Roddy MacColl but Angus Thorburn, back in the side, was first to the rebound to score.

Fort William will now travel to face Skye Camanachd in the quarter finals on Saturday May 20.

Kilmory 0 Oban Celtic 3

Oban Celtic recorded their first competitive win of the season when they beat Kilmory 3-0 in their 2pm throw-up at MacRae Park.

Oban Celtic defender Ross MacMillan served a one-game ban following his sending off against Fort William the previous week whilst keeper Stephen Davidson was also absent.

Oban Celtic took the lead following a fine set-piece involving Andy Hunt, Iain MacKechnie and a surging run from winger Kieran Carnie who coolly slotted the ball home.

The Oban side's second was a good finish from Daniel Madej who collected a loose ball from edge of the 'D' and rifled it into the roof of the net.

Daniel Madej got his second and Oban Celtic's third following a Kenny Wotherspoon through ball. Madej rode a challenge from the full back before poking

the ball past the advancing goal keeper to make it 3-0.

Next up for Oban Celtic in the Balliemore is a trip to play whoever comes out on top in the tie between Inveraray and Bute. That tie will be played later as Inveraray had their designated 'free Saturday' last weekend when their players attended the wedding of team mate Grant Griffin.

After the match, Oban Celtic player/manager Kenny Wotherspoon said: 'I'm delighted we are finally up and running and hopefully the boys can carry the momentum forward to this week against Inveraray. The hard-core of the team will be back and available for selection and that's something we haven't had over the last three weeks so it's a game we are looking forward to.'

Skye Camanachd 3 Strathglass 1

Skye Camanachd are through to the next round after they came from a goal down to beat Strathglass 3-1 at Paire nan Laoch, Portree.

Jordan Murchison and Neil MacVicar were both back for Skye, but they both started on the bench.

Strathglass travelled without George Phimister, Ross Balharry and Hamish Myers.

A clever run from Josh Fraser saw him latch on to a forward ball to score after 33 minutes.

Skye were level a couple of minutes later though when Will Cowie burst through the centre of the visiting defence to calmly slot the ball home.

Will Cowie got his second from the penalty spot on 48 minutes after Stewart Grant was brought down inside the 'D' by Strathglass goalie Ally MacAdams.

Will Cowie completed his hat-trick on 56 minutes with another good finish.

Skye keeper Iain MacLeod made a fantastic save from a well-struck Scott Douglas penalty to maintain the islanders' two-goal advantage.

Aberdeen University 0 Caberfeidh 11

Caberfeidh, flying high in the Marine Harvest National Division, thumped Aberdeen University, third in Marine Harvest North Division 1, 11-0 at Balgownie.

Kevin Bartlett got Caberfeidh off to a great start with a goal after two minutes.

Craig Morrison on eight minutes and Liam Symonds on 15 minutes made it 3-0 before Kevin Bartlett got his second a minute later.

Kevin Bartlett completed his hat-trick on 41 minutes and got his fourth a couple of minutes



Kinlochshiel's John Macrae gets set to pull the trigger and score the second goal against Kingussie. Photograph: Neil Paterson.

later as Caberfeidh took a 6-0 lead into the break.

Scottish international Kevin Bartlett got his fifth on 51 minutes, whilst Craig Morrison completed his hat-trick with goals on 56 and 60 minutes to make it 9-0.

Martin MacDonald took Caberfeidh to double figures on 62 minutes and Craig Morrison got his fourth on 78 minutes.

Beaully 6 Glenorchy 0

Beaully were too strong for Glenorchy, winning 6-0 in their 3pm throw up at Braeview Park.

With Liam Girvan, Sandy Elrick and Ryan Tillman unavailable, Beaully boss Alan MacRae called up Sean Stewart, Rory Campbell and Daniel Lamont.

Glenorchy also had their selection difficulties. Alex MacPherson was amongst their absentees and they travelled with just 12 players.

Beaully got off to a great start when Conor Ross gathered possession and played the ball to Sean Stewart who crossed for Jack MacDonald who sent a low strike into the net from 12 yards out.

Connor Ross picked up an early injury and was replaced by Daniel Lamont and Lamont set up an unmarked Jack MacDonald to make it 2-0 with a good strike on 22 minutes.

Ross Forbes got on the end of a Sean Stewart shy from the left and sent a waist-high shot past keeper Andrew Smith to make it 3-0 with 34 minutes played.

Beaully ended the game as a contest with the goal of the game on 39 minutes. Daniel Lamont released Ross Forbes down the wing and he cut back from the by-line before sending a great strike into the roof of the net from a tight angle.

There was still time for Angus Renwick to hit the post before referee John Angus Gillies blew for half time.

There was no let up from the home side and Sean Stewart made it 5-0 a minute after the re-start. Stewart gathered an Angus Renwick shy and his sweetly struck low shot bounced into the net.

Glenorchy dug in and it was five minutes from time before Jack MacDonald completed his hat-trick with a snap-shot for

what was the final goal of this sporting encounter.

Taynuilt 5 Ballachulish 2

A Willie Lafferty inspired Taynuilt beat Ballachulish 5-2 in their all-Marine Harvest South Division 1 tie at the Taynuilt Sports Field.

Lafferty scored on two and six minutes to give Taynuilt an early advantage and although Lorne Brown pulled a goal back on 20 minutes, Duncan Campbell restored the home side's two goal cushion with a 29th minute goal.

Willie Lafferty completed his hat-trick on 56 minutes but Lorne Brown got his second on 65 minutes to make it 4-2.

Willie Lafferty got his fourth goal of the game with just a couple of minutes remaining to make it 5-2.

Taynuilt will have home advantage against Beaully in the next round.

Tayforth 1 Inverness 5

Inverness are through to the next round after they beat Tayforth 5-1 at Levenhall Links.

Inverness travelled without a number of players including Ian Munro, Arran MacMaster, Davie Glass, Charlie MacDonald and William MacKinnon.

First half goals from James Cameron on 14 minutes and Andy Reid on 27 minutes made it 2-0 at the break.

James Cameron got another a minute into the second half and late goals from Somhairle MacDonald on 86 minutes and Padraig McNeil a minute later put gloss on the win.

Inverness will be away to fellow National Division side Caberfeidh in the last eight of the competition.

Strathdearn Cup – first round

Beaully 0 Glengarry 8

Glengarry continued their good start to the season with a resounding 8-0 win over Beaully's second team in their noon throw-up at Braeview Park.

Raymond Rennie made it 1-0 after 11 minutes and Ruairaidh MacDonald added a second five

minutes later. Raymond Robertson completed his hat-trick with goals on 21 and 38 minutes to make it 4-0 at the break.

Nick Dalgety struck twice on 63 and 67 minutes to make it 6-0.

Robertson got his fourth goal of the afternoon on 74 minutes before Scott Bremner made it 8-0 on 78 minutes.

Glengarry can now look forward to a home tie against the Glenurquhart second team in the second round of the all-North competition on Saturday May 13.

Marine Harvest Premiership

Kinlochshiel 2 Kingussie 0

Match of the day in the Marine Harvest Premiership was the 3pm throw up between fourth-placed Kinlochshiel and league leaders Kingussie.

And it is 'Shiel who maintain their 100 per cent record with a 2-0 win which lifts them to second in the table. Kinlochshiel were along usual lines.

Kingussie travelled without Martin Dallas, although Savio Genini and Ryan Borthwick were back.

The latter had to be withdrawn early in the game however with the recurrence of an injury problem.

There were no goals in a keenly contested first half but it was the home side who took the lead on 53 minutes. Kingussie had been attacking but a long ball forward from 'Shiel came in to Jordan Fraser who flicked the ball on to John MacRae who scored from a tight angle.

Kingussie keeper Craig Dawson got his stick to the ball but couldn't keep it out.

It was to get better for the home support just a couple of minutes later. A brilliant run from Keith MacRae caused problems in the visiting defence and led to a goal line scramble.

The ball was flicked out to John MacRae who tapped the ball home for his second goal of the game.

Next up for 'Shiel is a home Artemis Macaulay Cup meeting with Lovat, whilst Kingussie host Lochaber in the same competition.

Lovat 2 Oban Camanachd 1

Lovat halted a run of three games without a win when they came from a goal down to beat Oban Camanachd 2-1 in their 12.30pm throw-up at Balgate.

Callum Cruden was back in the Lovat line-up and Martin Mainland had recovered from a hand injury sustained in the previous week's defeat to Glenurquhart.

Willie Neilson was passed fit to play for Oban Camanachd but Connor Howe was working.

This was a high-intensity match with plenty of endeavour from both sides.

Oban Camanachd almost went in front on five minutes when a cross into the danger area was deflected over his bar by Callum Cruden.

Visiting keeper Gavin Stobbart made a superb save under his crossbar to deny Lorne MacKay a minute later.

Oban Camanachd were starting to dominate the centre line and they took the lead on 15 minutes when Matt Rippon ran in on goal before confidently slotting the ball home.

Lovat lost Baily MacKay through injury on 35 minutes with Scott MacKenzie coming on in his place.

Lovat switched Danny Kelly to full centre at the break and he

went on to win more of the ball in midfield with Scott MacKenzie also playing well, staking a claim for a starting slot against Kinlochshiel this coming Saturday.

Lovat levelled on 74 minutes. Scott MacKenzie won a tackle and ran up the right before playing a pass to Greg Matheson's feet. Matheson made enough space to send a great shot high into the net from around 18 yards out.

Lovat took the lead a minute later.

Their forward line had moved deep and Greg Matheson showed great anticipation to run onto a ball over the top. Gavin Stobbart came out to clear but he slipped as he tried to get the ball away, leaving Matheson to take the ball and knock it into the empty net.

This was a feisty encounter which threatened to boil over on a couple of occasions following incidents involving Greg Matheson and Scott MacMillan with both players booked by referee Archie Ritchie.

Glenurquhart 1 Kyles Athletic 4

Kyles Athletic made it four league wins out of four when they beat Glenurquhart 4-1 in their 3pm throw-up at Balgate.



Skye's Iain MacLellan holds off Glenurquhart's Jamie MacLennan during their North Division One match. Photograph: Donald Cameron.



Taynuilt's Willie Lafferty scored four goals in his team's 5-2 win over Ballachulish. 15_117taynuilt02

Camanachd Cup Macaulay Cup MacTavish Cup Celtic Society Cup

Sutherland Cup Balliemore Cup Strathdearn Cup Bullough Cup



Kyles suffered a blow after five minutes when Callum Miller had to go off with a hamstring problem so Donald Irvine went to full back.

Glenurquhart were on top during the early stages but Kyles went in front on 17 minutes. Andrew King sent a free-hit down the right to Robbie MacLeod. His cross to the back post was missed by everyone so Martin MacFadyen ran back to stop the ball going out for a shy. MacFadyen sent a swerving ball into the goal area and it deceived Glenurquhart goalie Garry MacKintosh, dropping into the corner of the net.

A minute later, Michael Fraser came on in attack for an injured Fraser Heath, with Connor Golabeck dropping into the back four to replace Heath.

Kyles' goalie John Whyte did well to keep out a deflected Ally MacKintosh shot from distance on 39 minutes.

Glenurquhart had also lost Neale Reid through injury in the first half but they drew level five minutes from half time. John Whyte did well to save a Daniel MacKintosh shot which came through a ruck of players but James MacPherson was quickly onto the rebound to score.

Both keepers were called into action a minute into the second half. First John Whyte threw himself to his right to protect his goal. Then play immediately switched to the other end where Garry MacKintosh used his body to stop Kyles regaining the lead.

Kyles Athletic were the stronger side during the final half hour of the contest and they went on to score three more times to win the game. Sandy MacKenzie put them back in front on 61 minutes. Roddy MacDonald shot goalwards following a Gordon Whyte free-hit. Garry MacKintosh made the save but MacKenzie followed up to score.

Gordon Whyte made it 3-1 five minutes later. Glenurquhart failed to clear a Kyles attack and Robbie MacLeod drifted the ball to the back post where Innes MacDonald knocked it down to Gordon Whyte who swept the ball into the net.

The visitors were awarded a penalty by referee Innes Wood on 88 minutes when Connor Golabeck seemed to be penalised. However, Garry MacKintosh saved Gordon Whyte's spot-hit with his feet. As the ball broke, Kyles were awarded a free-hit just outside the 'D' which Gordon Whyte played to Roddy MacDonald who ran in at the back post to score.

There was still time for brothers Roddy MacDonald and Innes MacDonald to exchange passes forward from midfield. Again referee Wood pointed to the penalty spot, this time penalising keeper MacKintosh for throwing his stick. The goalie redeemed himself, however, stretching high to turn away Innes MacDonald's effort from the spot which was heading in just under the bar. Kyles now top the table on goal difference.

Newtonmore 3 Lochaber 0
Newtonmore go fourth in shinty's top flight after they beat Lochaber 3-0 at The Eilan.

Newtonmore took the lead on 29 minutes when Rory Kennedy justified his selection in the forward line with the game's opening goal. Glen MacKintosh added a second on 34 minutes and it stayed that way until the interval.

Iain Robinson got in on the act with a goal on 34 minutes to round off the 3-0 win.

Glasgow Mid Argyll 1 Kilmallie 0
Glasgow Mid Argyll and Kilmallie met in the league for the second time this season. GMA were 2-1 winners at Canal Parks at the end of March and they secured what could yet prove to be a crucial 1-0 victory in this one at Yoker.

GMA were along usual lines with boss George Hay having a full squad to choose from. Kilmallie's suspension woes



Glenurquhart's Arran MacDonald and Innes MacDonald from Kyles fight for the ball during last Saturday's Marine Harvest Premiership match. Photograph: Donald Cameron.

continued and manager Mark MacPherson was without Duncan Rodger who served a one game ban following his red card against Inverness, whilst Michael Rodger started a two-game ban for passing through the disciplinary points threshold.

The only goal of the game came early in the match. There were only six minutes played when Craig Anderson sent the ball into the 'D' and Garry Luke ran in to produce a good finish from a tight angle.

Kilmallie's cause wasn't helped by two red cards. First Aaron Sandison picked up a yellow card for a wild swing and then received a second yellow for something said to referee Robert Baxter.

Liam Cameron was sent off following a challenge on Garry Luke. Both will miss this weekend's Artemis Macaulay Cup tie against Kyles Athletic at Tighnabruaich.

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Kingussie 2 Newtonmore 2
Newtonmore came from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Kingussie in the Badenoch reserve team derby in front of a large crowd at The Dell on Friday April 21.

Kingussie resisted the temptation to field their more experienced players such as Ronald Ross, John Gibson or Garry Munro, whilst Rory Fraser was an unused substitute.

Newtonmore's Danny Macrae made a welcome return to shinty following an absence of over two years but having taken a knock in training during the week, he started the 6.30pm throw-up on the bench.

With Kenny Ross full centre and Scott Campbell wing centre, Newtonmore had the better of the first half but they fell behind to a Bradley Harvey goal on 10 minutes. Kingussie had a shy on the left which found Kevin Thain and his strike was well saved by Newtonmore goalkeeper Calum Grover. But the rebound came out to Bradley Harvey and his well-struck shot from edge of box gave the keeper no chance.

The second half was a fairly even affair.

On 59 minutes, Danny MacRae came off the bench in place of Orsten Gardiner, with Macrae going into full forward.

Kingussie looked to have won the game when Bradley Harvey got his and his side's second goal of the evening on 70 minutes. Kevin Thain fed the ball to Harvey on the right and he had time

to steady himself before sending a rocket shot high into the net, suffering a knock in the process.

The game had now sprung to life and, just a minute later, Calum Stewart halved the deficit. From the throw-up, Newtonmore pressed the home defence and they worked the ball to Callum Stewart who found space on the right and, after his initial effort had been blocked, he shot across the Kingussie keeper Robert Shiells to make it 2-1.

With 12 minutes remaining, the stage was set for Danny Macrae to make an impact and he did just that when he ran in on goal to get on the end of a 'More shy by the corner flag on the left. Macrae took a touch before cleverly flicking the ball into the net to make it 2-2.

Kingussie keeper Robert Shiells was the man of the match, making a number of excellent saves.

Kingussie stay top of the table on goal difference, although they have played a game more than second-placed Newtonmore.

Fort William 2 Kinlochshiel 3
The Kinlochshiel and Fort William second teams met for the second successive Saturday.

This was to be a noon league encounter at Kirkton but the match was switched to An Aird on Friday morning when it was ruled 'Shiel's pitch couldn't host two matches.

A Donnie Walker goal gave Fort William victory in their Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup tie a week earlier, but this time a Scott MacLean goal a couple of minutes from time gave 'Shiel a 3-2 win.

Victor Smith fired Fort William into a 16 minute lead, but Duncan Matheson made it 1-1 at the break with a goal on 39 minutes.

Neil Fraser put 'Shiel 2-1 ahead on 62 minutes but Victor Smith got his second on 69 minutes.

The winning goal came with just two minutes remaining when Scot MacLean scored to give 'Shiel both points.

Glenurquhart 2 Skye Camanachd 3

The Skye seconds beat Glenurquhart's second team by the odd goal in five in their noon throw up at Blairbeg.

Skye raced into a 2-0 lead with goals from Connor Gilpin on six minutes and Ross Gordon on 20 minutes.

However, a Calum Miller goal on 35 minutes cut Skye's lead at the break.

A David MacLennan penalty on 55 minutes restored parity but the winner came on 65 minutes when Ross Gordon got

his second, volleying the ball into the corner of the net to give Skye their first league win of the season.

Marine Harvest South Division 1

Kyles Athletic 0 Lochside Rovers 3
Lochside Rovers go second in the table on goal difference after they beat the Kyles Athletic second team 3-0 at Tighnabruaich.

Craig MacDougall gave Lochside the lead on 22 minutes with the only goal of the first half.

Iain MacMillan made it 2-0 on 53 minutes and Craig MacDougall got his second to make it 3-1 with 15 minutes remaining.

A special mention must go to Lochside's Daniel Sloss, only 14, but looks a great prospect for the future.

The sides are also scheduled to meet at the same venue in the Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup second round this coming Saturday, throw-up noon.

Col Glen 0 Bute 0
Bute and Col Glen shared the points in a goal-less draw at Glendaruel.

The match doubled up for the Hamish Carmichael Memorial Trophy. With the game ending in a draw, the sides went straight to a penalty shoot-out to determine the destination of the trophy which Bute won 3-1.

Marine Harvest North Division 2

Caberfeidh 2 Strathspey Camanachd 1

With table toppers Glengarry in cup action, the Caberfeidh colts took the opportunity to draw level on points at the top of the table with a 2-1 win over third placed Strathspey Camanachd at Castle Leod.

Ruaraidh McCreadie put Caberfeidh ahead on 28 minutes and they took that lead into the break.

Conor Aubrey levelled a minute after the re-start but Caberfeidh's John Ritchie grabbed the winner on 65 minutes.

Caberfeidh now only trail Glengarry on goal difference, but they have played a game more.

Lochaber 10 Strathglass 1

The Lochaber reserves overcame the Strathglass reserves 10-1 at Spean Bridge.

Keith Neville on three minutes and Sam Lees on six minutes had Lochaber 2-0 ahead.

Lachlan Campbell on 12 minutes and Stuart Matheson a couple of minutes later doubled

the home side's advantage. A second from Keith Neville on 36 minutes made it 5-0 at half time. Neil MacDonald added a sixth a minute after the re-start and although Barry John Phimister pulled a goal back on 66 minutes, a second from Lachlan Campbell a couple of minutes later followed by Neil MacDonald's second on 70 minutes made it 8-1.

Lachlan Campbell completed his hat-trick on 77 minutes and Stuart Matheson got his second to make it 10-1 with six minutes remaining.

The win means Lochaber climb to fourth in the division.

Inverness 0 Lovat 10

The Lovat reserves were too strong for an under-strength Inverness reserve side, winning 10-0 at The Bught Park.

A number of first team absences and some player unavailability left Inverness boss Allan Macleod short.

Lovat's Duncan Collings served the second game of a two match suspension.

The goals were shared between just two players; youngster Cameron MacMillan and the more experienced Raymond Rennie.

Raymond Rennie broke the deadlock on 28 minutes and Cameron MacMillan made it 2-0 on 38 minutes. Rennie got his second a couple of minutes later to make it 3-0 at the break.

Raymond Rennie took his tally to six goals with efforts on 50, 60, 65 and 75 minutes.

Rennie then turned provider as Cameron MacMillan netted a seven minute hat-trick as goals on 79, 84 and 86 minutes took his total for the day to four.

Boleskine P Lochcarron P

The match between Boleskine and Lochcarron at Smith Park was postponed as a mark of respect and to allow the Boleskine players attended the funeral of Pat MacDonald.

The match will be re-scheduled for a later date.

Kilmallie P Lewis Camanachd P

The match between the Kilmallie reserves and Lewis Camanachd at The Canal Parks will be re-arranged for a later date.

Marine Harvest South Division 2

Inveraray 6 Strachur 0
League leaders Inveraray reserves and second-placed Strachur met at The Winterton with the home side running out 6-0 winners.

Inveraray veteran defender Andrew McMurdo began a two-match suspension for passing through the disciplinary points threshold.

Veterans David Robertson and Euan McMurdo had Inveraray 2-0 ahead with goals on seven and 19 minutes.

Young Ruaridh Graham added a third on 36 minutes.

Euan McMurdo showed he still remembers where the goals are, taking his tally to four goals with efforts on 65, 70 and 87 minutes.

Oban Lorn 3 Aberdour 0

Oban Lorn notched their first win of the season when they beat the Aberdour second team 3-0 at Ganavan.

Euan MacCorquodale gave the home side the lead on 31 minutes and scored his second double in successive matches on 58 minutes.

Drew Walker made it 3-0 five minutes from time.

Dunoon Camanachd 1 Glasgow Mid Argyll 2

A late Luke Thornton goal gave the Glasgow Mid Argyll second team a 2-1 win over Dunoon Camanachd at The Dunoon Stadium.

Euan MacLeod gave GMA the lead after 15 minutes.

This was Dunoon's first home match of the season and they drew level on 35 minutes when Iain Grant scored.

The winner came seven minutes from time when Luke Thornton's goal gave GMA the points, lifting them to fourth in the table.

WCA round-up

The Marine Harvest Valerie Fraser Cup semi-finalists are known following the Women's Camanachd Association fixtures at the weekend.

Marine Harvest Valerie Fraser Cup - quarter finals

Badenoch & Strathspey 1 Lochaber 2

Valerie Fraser Cup holders Lochaber are through to the semi-finals after they beat Badenoch & Strathspey 2-1 in their 1.30pm throw-up at The Dell.

Alison MacVicar and Missy Cameron got the goals with Zoe Reid replying for Badenoch & Strathspey.

Lovat 1 Fort William 0

Lovat notched their first win of the season, beating Fort William 1-0 in their 2.30pm throw-up at Balgate.

Nikki Grant got the all-important goal. Fort William's Zoe Smith was close to a leveller, with her effort ruled out for offside.

Cowal & Bute 0 Aberdour 21

The more established Aberdour side proved too much for Cowal & Bute, winning 21-0 in their 12.30pm throw-up at Strachurmore.

Dawn Ryan scored six times, Annie Butterworth netted four, Katie Booth claimed a hat-trick, both Niamh Donnelly and Megan McFarlane bagged doubles whilst Kirsty Fraser, Easnaidh Reddington, Katy Smith and Rosie Mulligan got the others.

Skye Camanachd W/O v Glasgow Mid Argyll

2016 Valerie Fraser Cup runners up Skye Camanachd are through to the semi-finals after Glasgow Mid Argyll were unable to field a team for their tie at Pairc nan Laoch, Portree, on Saturday April 22.



Fixtures

Saturday April 29

Artemis Macaulay Cup First Round

Aberdour v Glasgow MA
David Mitchell - 3pm
Fort William v Glenurquhart
Archie Ritchie - 3pm
Inveraray v Oban Celtic
Willie MacDonald
Kingussie v Lochaber
Graham Cameron
Kinlochshiel v Lovat
John Angus Gillies
Oban Cam v Ballachulish
Deek Cameron
This game is being played at Ballachulish
Skye v Newtonmore
Neil Ferguson

Aberdein Considine Sutherland Cup Second Round

Aberdour v Kingussie
Neil MacDonald - noon
Fort William v Oban Lorn
Brian MacKay - noon
Glenurquhart v Boleskine
John Matheson
Lochaber v Glengarry
Iain Kennedy
Kyles Ath v Lochside Rovers
Scott McNeil - noon
Newtonmore v Lochcarron
Martin MacLean
Caberfeidh v Inverness
Steven MacLachlan
Bute v Calthness
Ross Brown

Marine Harvest Premiership

Kyles Athletic v Kilmallie
Lachie Wood

Marine Harvest National Division

Caberfeidh v Beaulie
Innes Wood

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Aberdeen Uni v Beaulie
Andy MacLean

Marine Harvest South Division 1

Col Glen v Taynuilt
Des McNulty
Glenorchy v Kilmory
Robert Baxter
All throw-ups 2.30pm unless stated.

Results

Friday April 21

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Kingussie 2 v 2 Newtonmore

Saturday April 22

Balliemore Cup 2nd round

Beaulie 6 v 0 Glenorchy
Aberdeen Uni 0 v 11 Caberfeidh
Fort William 2 v 1 Aberdour
Kilmory 0 v 3 Oban Celtic
Skye 3 v 1 Strathglass
Tayforth 1 v 5 Inverness
Taynuilt 5 v 2 Ballachulish

Strathdearn Cup 1st round

Beaulie 0 v 8 Glengarry

Marine Harvest Premiership

Glasgow MA 1 v 0 Kilmallie
Glenurquhart 1 v 4 Kyles Ath
Kinlochshiel 2 v 0 Kingussie
Lovat 2 v 1 Oban Camanachd
Newtonmore 3 v 0 Lochaber

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Glenurquhart 2 v 3 Skye
Fort William 2 v 3 Kinlochshiel

Marine Harvest South Division 1

Col Glen 0 v 0 Bute
Kyles Ath 0 v 3 Lochside Rovers

Marine Harvest North Division 2

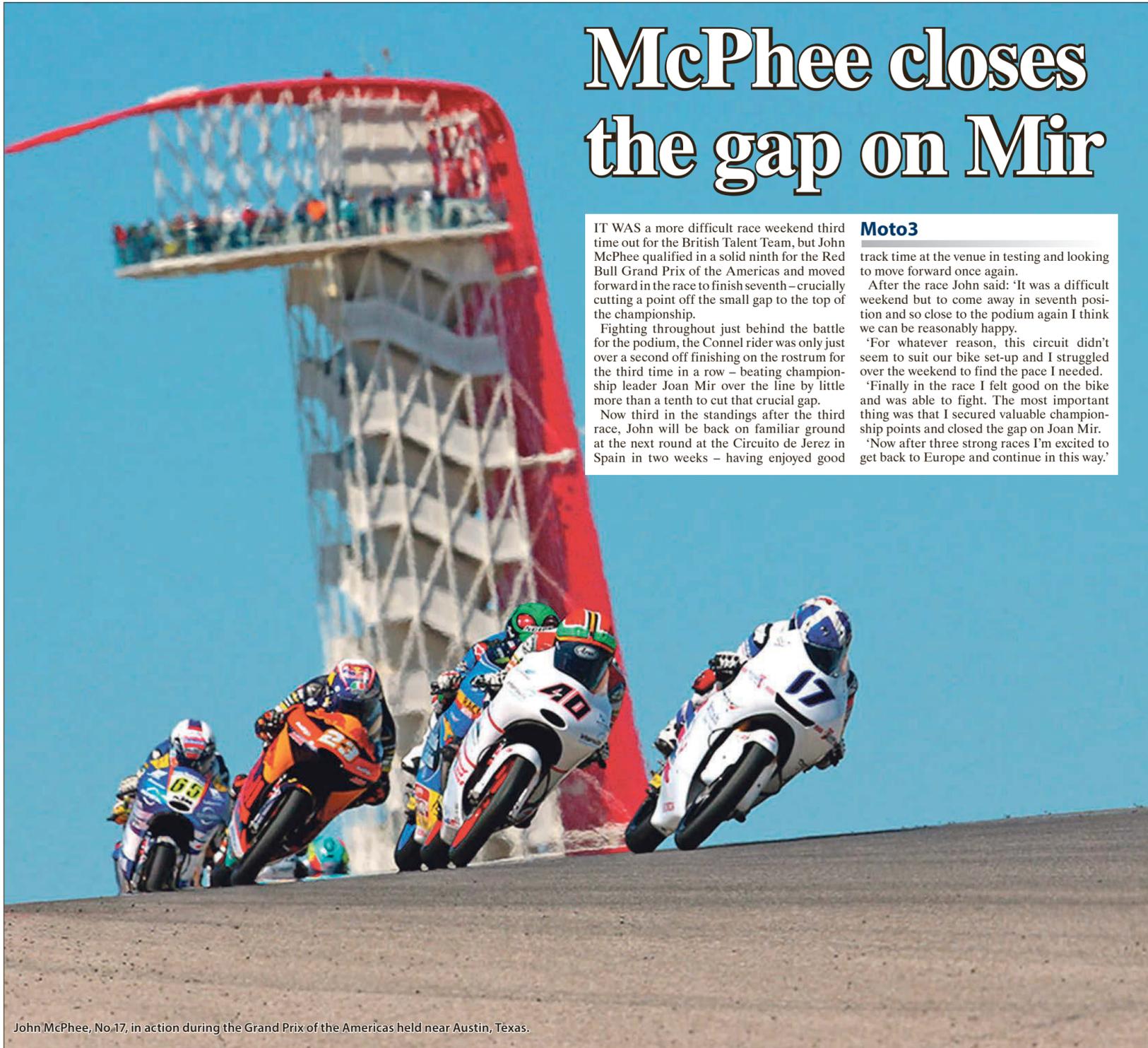
Boleskine P - P Lochcarron
Due to bereavement
Caberfeidh 2 v 1 Strathspey
Inverness 0 v 10 Lovat
Kilmallie P v P Lewis
Tie to be rescheduled
Lochaber 10 v 1 Strathglass

Marine Harvest South Division 2

Dunoon 1 v 2 Glasgow MA
Inveraray 6 v 0 Strachur
Oban Lorn 3 v 0 Aberdour



Inveraray's David Robertson and Strachur's Ian MacLennan during last weekend's South Division 2 match. Photograph: Stephen Lawson.



John McPhee, No.17, in action during the Grand Prix of the Americas held near Austin, Texas.

McPhee closes the gap on Mir

IT WAS a more difficult race weekend third time out for the British Talent Team, but John McPhee qualified in a solid ninth for the Red Bull Grand Prix of the Americas and moved forward in the race to finish seventh – crucially cutting a point off the small gap to the top of the championship.

Fighting throughout just behind the battle for the podium, the Connell rider was only just over a second off finishing on the rostrum for the third time in a row – beating championship leader Joan Mir over the line by little more than a tenth to cut that crucial gap.

Now third in the standings after the third race, John will be back on familiar ground at the next round at the Circuito de Jerez in Spain in two weeks – having enjoyed good

Moto3

track time at the venue in testing and looking to move forward once again.

After the race John said: 'It was a difficult weekend but to come away in seventh position and so close to the podium again I think we can be reasonably happy.'

'For whatever reason, this circuit didn't seem to suit our bike set-up and I struggled over the weekend to find the pace I needed.'

'Finally in the race I felt good on the bike and was able to fight. The most important thing was that I secured valuable championship points and closed the gap on Joan Mir.'

'Now after three strong races I'm excited to get back to Europe and continue in this way.'

Primary football festival in Oban

Primary football

OBAN Primary Football League are holding their annual football festival on Saturday at Mossfield Stadium and both rugby pitches. The competition gets under way at noon.

2005s, 2006s, 2007s and 2008s will play seven-a-side games; 2009s play Super 5s and the 2010s play Fun 4s.

More than 500 children will be attending so if you are free on Saturday this festival is well worth a visit.

Scottish AFL results and fixtures

Football

LAST weekend's results: Jimmy Marshall Cup quarter-final Oban Saints 4, Port Glasgow 1. Saints now play Hillington in the semi-final on Saturday May 13. Premier Division One – Dunoon 2, Hillington 2; Tarbert 0, FC Argyle.

This Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division – Shawlands FP v Oban Saints; St Joseph's FP v Campbeltown Pupils.

Oban Saints youths results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Renton 15, Under 13s 0; Under 14s 0, Tass Thistle 4; Giffnock 3, Under 15s 8. On target for Saints were Lennon Campbell (3), Aidan MacPhee (2), Jordan Norman, Aaron McKay and Andrew Law.

This weekend's fixtures – Under 13s v Lochgilphead Red Star; KSC Thistle v Under 14s; Under 15s v Kilpatrick; Under 16s, no game; Under 17s, no game.

Double up for Abi at Murrayfield

Women's rugby

OBAN girl Abi Evans played at the BT Cup finals day at Murrayfield last Saturday.

Her team, Hillhead Jordanhill, played Murrayfield Wanderers in the Sarah Beany Cup Final. Hillhead won 26-23 and Abi scored two of their four tries.

She now goes into training next weekend with the Scotland Women's sevens squad in preparation for the upcoming sevens season.



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Mull nurse revs up for rally



Mull nurse Louise Thomas with her Marie Curie Mini.

AN ICONIC 'Marie Curie Mini' driven by Mull's Louise Thomas and 16-year-old co-driver Emily Easton-Page will be taking on the competition at the Dixies Challenge Rally in south Wales on Sunday May 30.

The rally will be the girls' first of many outings this year as they are competing in the Historic Rally Car Register Championship (HRCR) 2017, incorporating the Mini Sport Mini Cup.

Louise, a Marie Curie nurse, said: 'We aim to take on the boys in the championship and raise vital awareness and funds for Marie Curie.'

The car, a red and white 1993 Rover Mini, has been completely rebuilt to make it competition ready and is decorated with several Marie Curie logos. The event is part of the HRCR Old Stager Championship, incorporating

the Mini Sport Mini Cup, and is the first event that the girls will compete in.

Louise works on Mull, where she provides hands-on care and vital emotional support to people living with a terminal illness and their families.

Louise was inspired to become a Marie Curie nurse in 2011 following the care her mum received prior to her death from breast cancer. She said: 'It is an honour and a privilege to look after people at that particular time in life. You go through so many emotions. I can remember crying but also laughing because we were reliving memories – just to have someone say that it was alright to laugh or cry was so important, someone who understood what we were going through.'

Louise added: 'We are very excited. It's a long way to travel

Rallying

for our first event – 500 miles. Emily is from Aberdeenshire and it's roughly the same distance to south Wales. We cannot believe the support we have and would like to thank all of our sponsors.'

Sponsors are Mini Sport Ltd, Macgochans Tobermory, Mini Cooper Register, Alsop Transport Services, TSL Ltd, Skyhook Helicopters, Beatsons Building Supplies, Den Motor Sport, Tunlocks, Bruce McCombie Builders, Deeside Classic Campers Ltd, Turus Mara, Isle of Mull Campervans. All links to sponsors of Mini Girls Rally Team can be found on the teams Facebook page www.facebook.com/minigirlsrallyteam. To donate, text HRCR52 or go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/minigirlsrallyteam.

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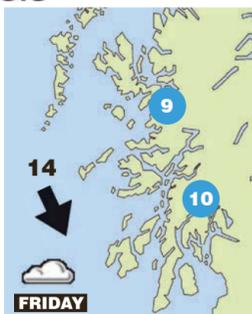
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WEATHER

Thursday Cloudy
Winds moderate north north westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 10°C.

Friday Cloudy
Winds light westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 10°C.

Weekend Outlook Cloudy on Saturday
Cloudy on Sunday
Winds strong south south easterly
Temperatures 6°C to 11°C.



Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday April 27, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm		
Thur	00.00 0.3 06.07 4.2 12.22 0.3 18.14 4.0	Ardrihaig -5.35 Mallaig +0.25		
Fri	00.45 0.2 06.46 4.1 13.04 0.3 18.54 4.0	Campbeltown -5.30 Portree +0.55		
Sat	01.31 0.3 07.27 3.9 13.48 0.4 19.36 3.9	Crinan -0.47 Tobermory +0.16		
Sun	02.20 0.5 08.12 3.7 14.36 0.6 20.22 3.7	Islay Port Ellen 2.00 Dover +5.30		
Mon	03.13 0.8 09.02 3.4 15.27 0.8 21.13 3.5	Lochboisdale +0.30		
Tues	04.13 1.1 10.03 3.0 16.26 1.1 22.16 3.1	Ferry Crossings/Sea States		
Wed	05.23 1.3 11.46 2.8 17.31 1.3 23.48 3.0	Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate		
Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)			Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate	
			Kennacraig to Islay Moderate	

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Bus ban sign row prompts Fort high street retailers into action

ELLIE FORBES
eforb@obantimes.co.uk

MORE than 20 Fort William High Street businesses have signed up to a new retail association after the Highland Council opposed the removal of controversial signs stopping coaches parking near the town centre.

Signs banning coach tours dropping off holiday-makers at bus stops close to Fort William High Street, as reported in the *Lochaber Times* April 13, have been in place on bus stops in Middle Street.

Plans to remove the signs after an outcry from town centre shopkeepers were opposed by a few Fort William councillors.

High street shopkeepers were angered by the move, claiming tour buses visit the town daily and bring valuable customers to the town's businesses.

Councillors held a meeting in private last week to try to resolve the issue of where tour buses can drop off visitors to the town. They have now agreed the bus stop beside the Nevis Sport shop, and at the West End of town, can be used as coach drop-off points temporarily.

It was also agreed a consultation would be carried out with interested parties with a view to improving coach arrangements.

Those due to be consulted are Lochaber Transport Forum, the Disability Access Panel, Shopmobility, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, tour bus companies and evening businesses.

But High Street shop owner Drew Purdon, who first raised the coach issue, is concerned town businesses will not have a seat at the discussion table so started the association.

With more than 20 business already signed up, Mr Purdon said

the association aims to 'protect and promote the interests of high street businesses'.

Mr Purdon told the *Lochaber Times*: 'The council is planning a consultation about coaches in the town, but don't seem to be planning to include one retailer in the high street. There is a great deal of concern about what will happen with the coaches stopping and puzzlement as to why it has taken councillors five years to come to a decision. 'This decision about stopping coaches parking in local bus stops came from Inverness. They were changing the rules so decided to inflict the same ones on Fort William without any knowledge of the number of coaches we get and how important they are to the town.'

A retail association with 35 members was set up about 12 years ago. Mr Purdon said the group met regularly and were

consulted on High Street matters.

He said: 'We [shop owners] have been ignored in the past. We have no body which represents all of the High Street and it is one of the biggest employers in Lochaber, representing around 150 jobs.'

'Coaches bring so much business to the town and are here every day of the week, and we want to maintain that. Businesses will struggle if we can't.'

Senior ward manager Dot Ferguson said: 'We have already stated we would be consulting with Lochaber Transport Forum, Access Panel, Shopmobility, Chamber of Commerce, tour bus companies and evening businesses over the next two to three months with a view to improving arrangements. We would be content to consult with the retail association if they can get in touch with contact details.'



Fort William businessman Drew Purdon at the bus stop nearest the High Street as a tourist bus braves the ban to drop off passengers. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Football club 'optimistic' over future

A 'FIVE-YEAR plan' to bring community spirit back to a Lochaber football club in jeopardy was outlined at a crucial meeting.

Fort William Football Club's (FWFC) board of directors encouraged more people to offer physical help to safeguard the club's future and participation in the Highland League in light of the imminent retiral of board/committee members.

During the meeting on April 24 in FWFC's social club, Alan Gray who currently is involved with South Lochaber Thistle (SLT), said he and four or five others are interested in becoming a coaching and management team with FWFC. He added that depending on the outcome of Monday's meeting, he could start putting plans in motion in the next few weeks.

Mr Gray said while SLT is an amateur team, it attracts up to 30 local boys for training weekly. Youth development was emphasised throughout the meeting, as well as a desire to get more local players on the team sheet.

Mr Gray stressed the problems might not be fixed overnight but that if the team had more of a local focus, families would sign up to various jobs.

Ronnie MacLean, a FWFC director, said he feels a lot more confident about the future of the club in light of the discussions. Anyone who would like to volunteer should contact the club secretary on 07803 049571.



Children at St Columba's nursery, Fort William, with Fiona MacLean, Highland Council countryside ranger. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

Mud kitchen a recipe for outdoor nursery smiles

CHILDREN at St Columba Nursery, Fort William, got down in the mud this week as they enjoyed the outdoors.

The school and Fiona MacLean, a Highland Council Ranger, have been working together to enhance the children's outdoor learning space.

Fiona built the nursery pupils a mud kitchen and on Tuesday April 25 they all had great fun using it and learning through play.

The children have also taken part in tree planting, with trees donated by Organic Trees in Morvern, and scrambling on a climbing log, courtesy of the Nevis

Landscape Partnership. Travis Perkins transported it. Fiona told the *Lochaber Times*: 'We hope to add to the area within the nursery by developing more interactive learning activities.'

'The staff at St Columba nursery are enthusiastic about outdoor learning and we have lots of ideas.'

'As rangers we work with all the schools in Lochaber helping them deliver the curriculum. We aim to enhance their learning opportunities by using the natural environment, helping them to gain better understanding, respect and awareness of the countryside.'



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call 01397 704836
for information

Nevis Range visitors to pay for parking

VISITORS to Nevis Range in Fort William will have to pay to park, unless they are local.

Five meters were installed in the private, 500-space parking area at the foot of Aonach Mor last week. Charges will come into force from the beginning of May until October each year.

Heather Negus, marketing manager with Nevis Range, told the *Lochaber Times* the price will be £3 per day, but people who live in Lochaber are eligible for a free parking pass.

Ms Negus added: 'We get people using the car park who don't intend on using the range. They just want to use the loo or are going walking or cycling. One hundred thousand plus people use the car park each year and currently we are not making any revenue from it so this is really just a way of growing our business. Most places you go these days will charge and Nevis Range has perhaps been behind that trend. At £3, the charge has been set reasonably. We don't want to discourage people from parking here but we do need to cover costs and this will help.'

Holders of current Nevis Range season tickets - including Snowsports, Gondola, Mountain Bike or Tree Adventure - no matter where they live can also park for free.

Ms Negus continued: 'There will be two sites where people can pick up passes, at the main Nevis Range ticket office or the Pinemarten cafe bar at Nevis Range. All they have to do is bring with them proof of local address and we'll issue them with a free pass.'

One of Nevis Range's biggest events is the Mountain Bike World Cup. The two-day event takes place this year from June 3.

Ms Negus told the *Lochaber Times*, Nevis Range usually offers a 'late room' service for fans or teams planning to travel to the event who have not booked accommodation. However, the late rooms are being snapped up earlier and earlier.

She said: 'Accommodation is already getting tight. So, if you are an accommodation provider - or can provide accommodation - with availability that includes the Saturday, please get in touch. We have had a specific request for a team of six and if they cannot find a place to stay, they will not be able to participate, which would be a real shame.'

Please contact Ms Negus on marketing@nevisrange.co.uk or 01397 705825.

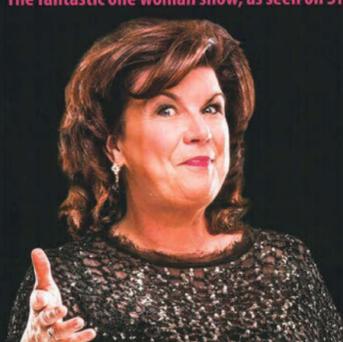
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Concern over lack of public toilets

RESIDENTS on Skye have raised concerns about a lack of public toilets on the island as tourists begin to arrive.

Morag MacLeod, who works at the petrol station in Uig, reported to the *Lochaber Times* that the toilets in the village are closed, saying: 'The public toilets are closed over the winter, but now there are barriers up and a sign that says no entry so you can't get in to use them.'

'The barrier is just awful and it doesn't cast a good impression of the island for visitors if there aren't any toilets for them to use.'

Morag said this had led to an increase in the number of people coming into the petrol station, which is located next to the public toilets, asking to use the toilet.

'This is an ongoing concern for residents in the village and something has to be done. Every second person in the station asks to use the toilet and I often feel quite embarrassed by it. It is a basic human right to be able to use the toilet so I allow people coming into the petrol station and asking to use them to do so.'

When asked about the situation the Highland Council said that the toilets on Uig are closed for repairs and will be open to the public as soon as possible.

CalMac, next door to the filling station in Uig, is currently allowing members of the public to use its toilet, with discussion ongoing between the ferry operator and the Highland Council about setting up a short-term 'comfort scheme' to reimburse CalMac for consumables used in the provision of the toilets.

With toilets in Kilmuir, 30 miles away, also closed there are growing concerns about what tourists will do during the busy summer months.

The Highland Council said it does not own the toilets in Kilmuir and could not comment on their opening times.

Ambitious plans launched for tourist spot car park

ELLIE FORBES

reporter@obantimes.co.uk

A SKYE community has launched ambitious plans to buy and improve the car park of a popular tourist spot.

Thousands of visitors descend on the Fairy Pools in Skye each year. But with a car park with just 35 spaces, members of the Minginish Community Hall have now taken the decision to buy the land and create 135 parking spaces.

A Fairy Pools Community Fund has been created and the community hopes to buy the existing car park and some of the surrounding land from owners Forestry Enterprise Scotland (FES).

Richard Powell from the Minginish Community Hall said more than 108,000 people visited the fairy pools last year, but with just 35 spaces problems arose.

He told the *Lochaber Times*: 'We end up with 100 or more



Parking problems near the Fairy Pools in Skye.

cars parked along the verges and in passing places.'

And the issue is creating significant problems for residents who stay in the nearby village, Glen Brittle.

Mr Powell said: 'Most of the

year people can't even get home. People have had to leave their cars on the road and walk miles back to their houses because they can't get through the road because there are that many cars parked along it.'

He continued: 'I have even seen pictures of the fire brigade stuck because the width of the road has been reduced so much by parked cars and the fire engine can't get through.'

'Delivery people have even started saying they won't deliver to the village because they can't get access, and even if they could get through they won't come because they are scared they can't get back.'

'We have asked the Highland Council to help us but they have said it's not their problem because it's not on the road. It's now come down to the community to raise the money to make the car park bigger.'

FES has agreed to sell the 13 acres of land to the community for around £3,500. But Richard said construction work to the car park will cost roughly £250,000.

The group received £15,000 from the Scottish Land Fund earlier this year, and hopes that grant funding, such as LEADER, will help cover the costs.

Mr Powell said: 'We wanted to put toilets in, too, because people are just going into the woods and doing it there which isn't very nice, but that would cost another £40,000.'

'We are hoping to get funding from LEADER, but it's match funding so we would need to raise at least £125,000 first.'

Mr Powell said the fairy pools have been very busy already this year, with visitors on site since February. He also predicted a record-breaking year for tourism on the island with many B&B's and guest houses already fully booked for the season.

He said: 'We would have liked to have had something done for the start of this year's season but in reality we just can't. We couldn't get construction vehicles down there now anyway because it's so busy, so we will be looking to start the work October/November time.'

To donate to the fairy pool fund go to <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/fairypools>

TIMESLINE

Skye Events for All spring line-up

SKYE Events for All (SEALL) is bringing a trio of top Scottish and Irish performers to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig for an evening of traditional Gaelic music.

Kathleen MacInnes, Laoise Kelly and Tiarnan O'Duinnchinn will perform at An Talla Mòr on Wednesday May 3 at 8pm.

Following sold-out concerts this year, New Focus will play at An Talla Mòr on Saturday May 20 at 8pm.

The 45-piece Kelvin Chamber Orchestra will be playing in Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's main hall on Thursday June 1 at 8pm.

And on Wednesday June 21, multi-award winning Scots harpist Ailie Robertson will perform.

Chance to study TV fiction writing

MG ALBA is offering talented Gaelic writers the chance to apply for its coveted scholarship to study television fiction writing at Glasgow Caledonian University.

The MA Television Fiction Writing course is the only dedicated one year post-graduate programme of its type in the UK. The scholarship will be awarded to one person, fluent in Gaelic, who will join the programme in September 2017. Applications need to be submitted before Friday May 5. For more information visit www.tvfictionwriting.com

Road to the Isles half marathon

MORE than 400 runners from all over the world will take part in the Road to the Isles Half Marathon.

The race will be held on Saturday April 29, with all the money raised being donated to Mallaig Pool and Leisure Centre refurbishment fund.

In addition to the half marathon, people can take part in a 10k and 5k run and a 'Walk on the Wild Side' with participants are coming from as far afield as Devon and Cornwall, Paris and Missouri in America.

Mallaig Pool and Leisure Centre is hoping to raise £1.1m and is currently sitting at more than £309,000.

Walk on the Wild Side starts at 10am, the half marathon at noon at Arisaigh House, the 10k at Traigh Beach at 1pm and the 5k at Loch Morar from 1.30pm.

Investment vital to improve ferry route

FURTHER investment and ongoing communication are being sought by stakeholders to improve a ferry route near Skye.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) is currently holding public meetings regarding the design and build of the new dual fuel vessel for the Uig triangle route and to discuss Uig, Tarbert and Lochmaddy harbours.

According to Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan and Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Kate Forbes, concerns over investment and communication were raised by community groups and businesses at the meetings. In past years, significant service disruption on the Uig triangle has been attributed to the pier's

alignment, prompting the pair to write jointly to CMAL to urge increased investment in Uig pier.

Alasdair Allan said: 'It was clear to me from meeting people who attended the recent meeting held by CMAL in Lochmaddy, that there are concerns about the ability to bring vessels alongside in Uig, particularly in a south-westerly wind. This can obviously be disruptive to passengers coming from Uist and Harris.'

'With £97 million being spent by the Scottish Government on two new dual ferries - one of which is earmarked for the Uig triangle - it makes sense changes are made to Uig to make it more accessible. I would urge CMAL to continue to engage with the

communities about plans for improvements at Uig.'

A CMAL spokesperson thanked the communities for their time and feedback at the meetings and said the alignment of the pier at Uig is being further investigated.

She added: 'We know harbour improvements are needed - the arrival of the new vessel is accelerating the process. However, we do not know what work will be required or costs until investigations have been completed at each harbour. We expect to have the investigation work completed by June or July 2017.'

'We are committed to keeping communities informed and further public meetings are planned for September and updates will be available on our

website. The harbour at Uig is owned by Highland Council and the cost of any future work will be covered by the council as the owner.'

'Likewise, at Lochmaddy, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar will cover the cost. CMAL owns the harbour at Tarbert and we will pay for any work required there. The cost of harbour upgrade work is covered by harbour dues.'

Highland Council told the *Lochaber Times* it anticipates the scope of works and the delivery programme will be established by June/July.

It will be consulting further to show the development of the proposals and mitigation works and seek further stakeholder and public comments.

Kishorn jobs boost after 23 years

AFTER lying unused for 23 years, Kishorn dry dock is to be used as a construction site for the world's largest floating wind farm.

Two hundred jobs will be created after an agreement was signed between Kishorn Port Ltd and Kincardine Offshore to build eight floating turbines. Work will start at Kishorn in August. Project director Carlos Barat said: 'This is a significant development which will create up to 200 much-needed jobs.'

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has invested £158,932 in the £450,000 costs of upgrading the dry dock for the development.

Robert Muir, HIE's area manager for Skye, Lochaber and Wester Ross, said: 'It's great to see Kishorn coming to life again. The site will provide valuable rural jobs and contribute to economic and community growth, and wider competitiveness of the region. We very much welcome this milestone.'

The dry-dock is one of the largest in Western Europe and was last used to build supports for the Skye Bridge in 1994.

Museum prepares exhibition to mark Iolaire sinking

MUSEUM nan Eilean is preparing an exhibition to mark the 100th anniversary of the sinking of Iolaire, an Admiralty yacht.

The Iolaire sank in the Minch, a mile from Stornoway on January 1 1919, while carrying First World War soldiers back home to Lewis. At least 205 out of the 280 people on board perished.

The exhibition will run from late 2018 until early 2019 in the new museum at Lews Castle and is part of a series of events recognising the centenary of the disaster. While there are several artefacts relating to the Iolaire in the museum's collection, staff would like to hear from anyone who has objects or paperwork relating to the tragedy.

Those who have suitable items and who are willing to temporarily loan their object or paperwork to the museum should contact the museum by emailing museum@cne-siar.gov.uk or by post to Museum nan Eilean, Lews Castle Grounds, Stornoway, HS2 0XS, with a full description and photographs of the item, as well as their contact details.

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Kate with sideline reporter Calum MacAulay and player analyst Lee Jones.

FilmG winner joins broadcasting team

AN ARDNAMURCHAN High School pupil who won the FilmG 2017 Best Sports Commentary award joined the broadcasting team at a recent Glasgow Warriors home game, writes *Katie Carabine*.

Kate Bradley, 16, joined the voice of PRO12 rugby Hugh Dan MacLennan and Warriors' player analyst Lee Jones in the commentary box at the sold-out match against Zebre at Scotstoun stadium on Friday April 14.

Fifth year pupil Kate beat off competition from nearly 20 other entries from Scottish schools to win the prize for her commentary on the Valerie Fraser shinty cup final.

Kate said: 'I had such a great time at the game, the ground was buzzing. It was just amazing to see the whole production team in action - I had never realised the amount of work that goes into a live sports broadcast. My personal highlight was getting to see how everything was brought together - from the careful preparations beforehand to watching the game broadcast live on TV. It was very impressive - and the result was an added bonus!'

Margot McCuaig of mneTV was in charge of the broadcast on the day, and was hugely impressed with Kate's enthusiasm, encouraging others to give the competition a go in 2018.

Ms McCuaig said: 'It was great to meet Kate and I hope she continues to show such a keen interest in commentary.'

'I would encourage anyone with an interest in playing or watching sport to enter the competition this year and it may lead to a whole host of new and exciting opportunities.'

The Warriors beat the Italian side 45 to 10.

Pupils' return is real test of re-worked road crossing

MONICA GIBSON
mgibson@obantimes.co.uk

A ROAD crossing near Banavie Primary School is better but is still 'not perfect', according to a councillor who has campaigned for improvements.

BEAR Scotland has been carrying out work on behalf of Transport Scotland on the A830 road at the Banavie Primary School junction.

After years of campaigning by residents, school staff and the parent council, it was agreed earlier this year a section of the road should be narrowed to limit risk to pedestrians.

Louise Pescod of Banavie Parent Council told the *Lochaber Times* the real test for the crossing will come now that children have returned to school after the Easter break. Mrs Pescod added: 'We are going to need to wait for feedback. It is difficult when you are looking at a plan to determine whether something is going to work or not so now that I have been up and looked there are a few things I think could be changed



Norman Clark and Louise Pescod at the new crossing in Banavie. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

and I will put these to Transport Scotland. Transport Scotland (TS) is going to be monitoring the crossing for a year and has said to go back with our comments. It has been helpful and we are relieved something has been done because while TS said pedestrian crossings are required in Corpach and at the swing bridge further down the road, it has also said there is no money to do so.'

Ben Thompson, councillor for Caol and Mallaig, said the crossing looks safer. He added: 'Parents would definitely have preferred to be able to stop the traffic themselves by way of a pelican crossing but BEAR Scotland deemed it was not necessary which was disappointing. 'BEAR has said the idea was to slow traffic down. Narrowing the road makes it look as though

the road is safer but what we now need to see is whether or not speeds have actually slowed. Visibility still isn't great.

'If you stand at the north side of the crossing, you still can't see very well as there are bushes and different things obscuring your way. This outcome is not perfect but is definitely better.'

A spokesperson for BEAR Scotland said: 'Trunk road safety is a priority and all routes are continuously monitored by our teams with the safety of the entire trunk road network reviewed annually with Transport Scotland to establish where further improvements are required. 'We have been also asked by Transport Scotland to carry out feasibility studies for a potential crossings at Banavie and Corpach and the results will be submitted to Transport Scotland for consideration once completed.

'Assessments for pedestrian crossings are carried out based on a series of factors including the number of people who cross the road at a concentrated point as well as the volume of traffic on the route.'



Lochaber High School teacher William Cameron with his much-loved ice axe. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

Teacher reunited with 50-year-old ice axe against all the odds

A LOCHABER High School teacher has been reunited with his 50-year-old ice axe after losing it down a 1,500ft drop in the Cairngorms.

A day out on Creag Meagaidh looked to have been spoiled for William Cameron, 43, when he discovered his much-loved ice axe was no longer attached to his rucksack on his descent down the 3,710ft munro.

A gift from a retired teacher years ago, the axe held great sentimental value for William. So he was overjoyed to learn that against all odds it had been found.

Colleague and climbing partner on the expedition, Neil Adams, messaged William a week after their climb to tell him he had seen a post on the Scottish Hills Facebook page that someone had found a distinctive ice axe halfway down the snow covered slopes of Creag Meagaidh.

William's swift response onto the site to give its full description confirmed it was

his lost axe. It had been found by a climber from London who had travelled north to stay in a holiday cottage in Lochcarron. As he was going back London, he offered to leave it in the coal bunker at the property for William to collect.

And it was just in the nick of time as the axe accompanied William in his latest climbing adventure to Iceland.

Speaking to the *Lochaber Times* on return from his trip, the technological studies teacher said: 'It just goes to show it's all about connectivity.'

'The fact someone found it in this remote part of Scotland is amazing because where we descended there wasn't a path and there was a lot of snow.'

'The man [from London] wouldn't accept any payment, so I made a donation to Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team as a thank you and a gesture of goodwill. The moral of the story is be careful where you keep your ice axe.'

Former policeman on trial

FORMER policeman Thomas Allan Kirsop is due to go on trial today (Thursday) for two charges of driving without due care and attention.

Kirsop appeared at Fort William Sheriff on Tuesday April 25 where Sheriff William Taylor ordered a part trial to be set for today (April 27).

The 76-year-old will be tried for driving slowly and swerving onto the opposite side of the road, causing the vehicle behind to drive at slow speed and stopping the driver from overtaking on March 24 and March 29, 2017, on the A82 at North Ballachulish.

Kirsop will also be sentenced for a third similar driving offence and two breaches of bail conditions relating to his ongoing trial for stalking, which he pleaded guilty to on Tuesday.

Kirsop's bail was continued until today.

Police files

POLICE in Fort William are appealing for any information in connection with the following incidents:

Sometime between 8.30pm on Tuesday April 18 and 7am on Monday April 19, a red and yellow 'Wacker Neuson' diesel rammer machine was taken from Caol Community Centre car park.

Sometime between Friday March 3 and Tuesday April 18, 14 galvanised steel walkway treads were taken from a yard in Salen, Acharacle.

Sometime between Tuesday April 18 and Saturday April 22, approximately a tonne of Tarmac and concrete was dumped on the helicopter landing pad at Carrs Corner, Fort William, preventing the landing of emergency aircraft.

Driver banned for year after high-speed crash

A 22-YEAR-OLD man has been banned from driving for a year after he overturned the car he was driving, throwing three of his four passengers out of the vehicle.

Procurator fiscal Martina Eastwood told Fort William Sheriff Court Joe Watson, of Inverlochy Court, had been at McDonald's in Fort William with friends on Friday August 5, 2016.

As he left to take them home

to Caol, he turned left towards Lochyside.

A witness in the Farmfoods car park saw the car accelerate and called the police.

The court heard Watson drove at excessive speed, only slowing down past Soldier's Bridge. He picked up speed again on the downward slope before his nearside front wheel hit the kerb, causing him to lose control of the vehicle. It rotated 180 degrees before

colliding with the opposite kerb, leaving the road and crashing into a hedge.

This impact caused three of his passengers to be thrown from the car and Watson and the other passenger ran to the Co-op in Caol for help. Watson wasn't injured but two of his passengers required stitches with the other two suffering bruising and whiplash.

Solicitor Stephen Kennedy said Watson accepted full

responsibility for the crash and that he was driving too fast. He added this was the first time Watson had driven with a full car and that he had apologised to his passengers.

Sheriff William Taylor also issued a community payback order of 300 hours of unpaid work to be completed over six months and a 12-month supervision requirement.

Watson will also have to re-sit an extended driving test.



Chris Jones, front, with Harley-Davidson riders from all over the area. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Harley riders gather in Fort

HARLEY-DAVIDSON riders and enthusiasts from all over Scotland gathered at the Ben Nevis Highland Centre in Fort William on Saturday April 22 for a rally hosted by the Harley-Davidson Riders Club of Great Britain.

Chris Jones, the club's assistant representative for the North of Scotland, said the day was 'stupendous'. He told the *Lochaber Times* that around 30 riders from all over Scotland attended the event, including a husband and wife from Blairgowrie with their 'his and hers' bikes. Mr Jones said: 'Quite a few locals turned up and a couple have paid to join the group. We are on our way to having a local branch of the club in Lochaber, which was the aim of the event.'

Following the meeting, the bikers rode out to Mallaig via the Back of Keppoch before returning for their regional annual general meeting later that evening.

Call for review as bus cuts bite

AN MSP has called for an urgent review of the re-tendering of bus service contracts by Highland Council.

New timetables, many a direct result of the council's re-tendering decisions, came into force on Monday April 24. Highlighting examples right across her constituency, Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, said the 15 per cent budget reduction by the local authority had 'disproportionately decimated' timetables.

Ms Forbes explained: 'In my constituency, bus timetables have been disproportionately decimated as an outcome of these re-tendering decisions.'

'For example, on the Black Isle there is now no commuter service from Culbokie to Inverness and the 26 service to Fortrose has been effectively halved to an hourly service.'

'In Lochaber, lifeline services for Acharacle and parts of Skye have been almost entirely removed.'

Ms Forbes told the *Lochaber Times* she has written to senior officials at the Highland Council calling for the recent re-tendering exercise to be reviewed at the first available opportunity. 'It appears to me decisions have been made largely on cost, with less consideration given to the value bus services provide to rural communities. While I appreciate financial constraints require service reductions, I reiterate the 15 per cent budget cut appears to have resulted in a much greater loss of services.'

A spokesperson for North Scotland Stagecoach told the *Lochaber Times* Culbokie will still have a bus service, operated by D&E coaches, from April 24 adding: 'Changes to our service 26 in the Black Isle were as a result of a wider analysis of our business. An hourly service for this area is adequate for the demand for the bus service.'

Sleat Community Council had also raised concerns regarding the changes. A spokesperson said: 'From Monday April 24 there will be no commercial bus service operating between Armadale to Broadford and Portree. The exception to this is the 152 schools service that operates at 7.30am from Ardsvar (does not stop at the pier) and arrives Portree at 8.49am. The return school bus leaves Portree at 3.30pm and arrives Ardsvar 4.54pm. No dates yet have been given by the Highland Council and Stagecoach for the re-introduction of the 52 summer service.'

With regards to the 52 service, Stagecoach said: 'Service 52 is a seasonal service. It will start in our summer timetable from June 5 to coincide with changes to school hours throughout the Highlands.'

The Highland Council confirmed the decisions were made as part of budget savings and that it is in talks with Stagecoach in the hope of arranging an interim service.

Lorry driver jailed for Ballachulish thefts

A LORRY driver has been jailed for 18 months for stealing tools, equipment and fuel from Chisholms Recovery Specialists and Chisholms Garage in Ballachulish.

Procurator fiscal Martina Eastwood told Fort William Sheriff Court that on November 10, 2014, the owners of premises in West Quarry, Ballachulish, reported they had been broken into, storage containers were opened and contents, tools and equipment worth £5,000 had been taken. Sixty litres of diesel had been siphoned from fuel tanks on the premises.

She said CCTV footage showed a white van pulling up at the yard and a man taking items, putting them in the van and

driving off, although it was not possible to identify the man from the footage.

She told the court a yellow hose was found in one fuel tank, DNA from which was analysed and matched to Sandu, 25, after he was stopped by police on a separate matter on November 26, 2016, and found with items belonging to Chisholms in his van.

Solicitor Martha Rafferty, representing Sandu, told the court she believed the fuel to be included in the £5,000 value of the stolen goods and that he had only stolen the fuel to get himself home from the yard. Ms Rafferty also asked that the sheriff take into account that Sandu had

shown remorse, reflected in his guilty plea which he had given quickly once all the details of the case were disclosed.

She added that Sandu appreciated his actions caused financial loss and could have generated fear in the community.

Sheriff William Taylor said a criminal justice social work report on Sandu showed he has a recent history of violence, failing to attend court and willingness to engage in risky, dishonest behaviour so he felt it was in the public interest to give a custodial sentence.

Sandu's 18-month sentence is backdated to April 3 as he has been in custody since then.

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Charities' Co-op cash boost

ELLIE FORBES
eforb@obantimes.co.uk

FIVE Lochaber Co-op stores have donated thousands of pounds to charities this month. One per cent of what customers spend on own-brand products and services goes to the Co-op Local Community Fund, which is used to support community projects.

In Lochaber, around 15 charities received a cash boost.

Staff at stores in Ballachulish, Caol, Corpach, Kinlochleven and Mallaig – and Co-op branches on Skye – have been celebrating the pay-outs.

In Caol, manager Neil Macleod told the *Lochaber Times* the total raised was £5,102. Care Lochaber received £1,693, Lochaber Hope £1,727 and Lochaber Action on Disability £1,682. Kinlochleven charities also benefited from the scheme. Loch Leven community minibus was awarded £812, Kinlochlovin' received £889 and the Loch Leven sports centre was given £823.

The Co-op in Corpach held a celebration day on April 19 where the Star for Harris charity was given £892, Lochaber Rural Complex received £825, and £933 was awarded to Lochaber Mountain Rescue.

In Ballachulish, £4,095 was raised by the project. The money was split between Ballachulish Sports and Playpark Association, which was awarded £1,395, the 4th Lochaber Scouts group

received £1,365, and Ballachulish Community Association was given £1,335.

Store manager Neil Cameron said: 'The Co-op giving money to more than 15 charity groups in Lochaber is a massive boost to these groups and will help other groups realise there is a chance to get help.'

Mallaig Co-op made three payments after raising £6,540. Mallaig Pool and Leisure was given £2,312, Mallaig and Morar Community Centre received £2,120, and £2,108 was given to Mallaig Heritage Centre.

Staff at the Woodpark Road, Portree, branch were also celebrating. Three charities have benefited from the efforts of Skye and Lochaber's local branches.

Over the past six months, £41,694 was raised.

Skye and Lochalsh Association for Disability was awarded £13,396, Skye and Lochalsh Community Care Forum received £14,163, while the Skye and Lochalsh branch of Crossroads Care benefited to the tune of £14,135.

Team member Yvonne Ross said: 'We've only just started the initiative and the Co-op has raised more than £9 million nationwide for charity.'

'We're delighted three worthy causes in our community will share more than £41,000.'

The next phase of funding has started and customers can choose which charity to donate their one per cent to now.



Top from left: Co-op staff at the Woodpark Road, Portree, branch had good cause for celebration. Photograph: Sara Bain; Brian O'Rourke from the Mallaig Pool and Leisure, and Co-op staff member Zander Matheson. Second line, from left: Maureen Macdonald, Sharon Wells, store manager Corpach, Tanya and Alan Ross (Star for Harris), Terry Confield (Lochaber Mountain Rescue) and Moira Mitchell (Rural Complex); Care Lochaber received £1,693 from the team at Corpach Co-op.

Third line from left: Loch Leven community minibus celebrates receiving £812; beneficiaries at the Caol Co-op receiving their funding.

Below from left: representatives from the three charities which received funding from the Ballachulish Co-op; Members of the various groups to be awarded funding in Kinlochleven.

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Lochaber clubs together to launch new Parkrun

A LOCHABER club is encouraging others to help bring an event to the area which could help boost mental and physical wellbeing, writes *Monica Gibson*.

Helen Smith has started a crowdfunding page to launch Parkrun at Leannachan Forrest near Nevis Range in Fort William. Parkrun organises free, weekly 5km timed runs around the world.

Ms Smith is the chairperson of Lochaber Athletics Club (LAC), which spends a lot of time promoting grassroots athletics, helping with school programmes and organising a Jog Scotland group. LAC, together with newly-formed Fort William Parkrun, is fundraising to get the project 'up and running' and to help out with events thereafter.

Ms Smith told the *Lochaber Times*: 'Originally, we were trying to raise £4,500 to cover the cost of a defibrillator that Parkrun says we must have, but a local business has kindly agreed to give us that, so now we are hoping to raise £3,300 for operational costs – to get us into the Parkrun infrastructure, timers, and all set up with the central database.'

'It really is a great set-up. Initially, you register online and are given a barcode. Then you just turn up and run – there is no faffing.'

Ms Smith continued: 'Whether or not people have run at all before, want to lose weight or test themselves, Parkruns are a great idea.'

'Obviously people can just go and run outside whenever they want but for those who don't already run, tackling one of the trails can be a daunting



Iain Adams, Jon Gay and Helen Smith aim to set up a Parkrun in Lochaber. Photograph: Abridgeside Photography

thought. With the Parkruns, there are marshalls and it is very secure.

'Currently the nearest Parkrun is in Oban. We travel down there and around a third of the people there are not from the local area. These people have decided to get up and go out for a run perhaps or people actually travel for the event, stay over and use the local amenities. We could have that too.'

Ms Smith, a former police officer, went on to say that running is 'her thing', that running in Lochaber provides a wonderful opportunity for mental and physical health, and the discipline has helped her battle through some tough times.

She said: 'I particularly love Leannachan Forest. I just want people to enjoy what I enjoy.'

The mum of two explained that she got into running in 2011, adding: 'At that time I couldn't run a bath, let alone any sort of distance.'

'I lost my eldest daughter at birth and I wanted to mark her 16th birthday. I started running and I ran four marathons and an ultra-marathon that year. I had to retire early through injury.'

Ms Smith has recently become a coach in running distance and holds 'tech sessions' which encourage runners to have better posture and provides various different tips to minimise impact on the body and reduce injuries. She believes the fact that people can participate in Parkrun for free is leading them to donate to the crowdfunding page.

She said: 'People have been very generous so far. We have also had a good response from local businesses which say they will donate but just need to decide how much. Nevis Range has said we can also use its car park, which is great.'

'Events like these are really sociable and are a great way to get people out the house and feeling better in themselves.'

WHAT'S ON

■ West Highland Museum AGM will take place on Thursday May 25 at 5pm in the museum on Cameron Square, Fort William. All welcome.

■ Talk Lochaber is holding its AGM on Tuesday May 16 at 7pm at An Drochaid, Claggan. Talk Lochaber is the weekly talking newspaper for blind or visually impaired people. If you know someone who might benefit from the service or wish to volunteer, get in touch with Patrizia.

■ Nether Lochaber craft fair will take place this Saturday April 29, from 10am to 4pm, with cakes and jams, handmade cards, knitted crafts and jewellery, among other items for sale. The fairs take place on the last Saturday of every month. Call Berit for more information on 01397 705539.

■ Arisaig WI will hold its AGM on May 4. The institute held its penultimate meeting of the season on April 20, when the speaker Helen Lamb gave a talk on the Amish, which was well received.

■ An Lanntair in Stornoway will launch its Féill Ceáird is Còcairach: Craft and Cookery Festival this Saturday April 29. The free festival will take place from noon-4pm, offering a tour of food and craft from the Outer Hebrides.

■ Nevis Canoe Club has organised a series of paddle sessions for adult beginners or those with basic experience.

They start with a pool session at the leisure centre tomorrow (Friday April 28) from 8pm-9pm. There will also be four Monday sessions (6pm-8.30pm), based at Lochail Outward Bound on May 8, 15, 22 and 29. All equipment is provided.

The sessions are subsidised by Nevis Canoe Club but there will be a charge of £40 which includes £15 membership.

More detail can be obtained by emailing the club at neviscc@hotmail.co.uk.

Cash backing for museums project

A PROJECT to help secure the future of museums throughout the Highlands has received £50,000.

'Our Collective Future', being led by The Highland Museums Forum, received £54,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

It is hoped the 18-month project will help 19 independent museums which have suffered from drastic funding cuts by Highland Council.

The money will help pay for a range of training opportunities for museum staff and volunteers. Museums will work together, sharing skills and knowledge and creating even better experiences for visitors and more opportunities for local people to become involved.

Mallaig Museum, West Highland Museum (Fort William) Glenfinnan Station Museum and Glencoe Museum are involved in the partnership and will benefit from an individual business review and fundraising advice.

Hege Hernes from Glenfinnan Station Museum told the *Lochaber Times*: 'I see the project as a coming together to find ways of coping with a new and adverse financial situation for the independent museums in the Highlands. Without funding from the council many will be unable to provide job security for staff which, in turn, may have devastating consequences for the way we look after our heritage in this part of the world.'

'The forum will now be able to commission a business consultant who will scrutinise each museum's operation and identify potential savings as well as potential revenue sources.'

The project, which has also received money from Museums Galleries Scotland, is due to finish in October 2018.

Commenting on the award, Alison Boyle, chairwoman of Highland Museums Forum, said: 'We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and are confident the project will secure an exciting and resilient future for independent museums in the Highlands.'

Panel voices concern over access in Lochyside homes

ELLIE FORBES
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LOCHABER Disability Access Panel has voiced 'major concerns' that homes planned for the site of the former Lochyside Primary School will not be accessible for wheelchair users.

While some of the 60 homes are wheelchair friendly and there are ground floor flats, concern remains about their accessibility for people with disabilities.

The access panel has formally objected to the application and has emphasised its disappointment that no representatives from the agents, Bracewell

Stirling, have come to meet with members of the panel.

The planning application is still under consideration and is due to be discussed at the next Highland Council south planning applications committee.

Tony Dobson, a member of the access panel, told the *Lochaber Times*: 'We have major concerns about this development. We have a planning protocol with the Highland Council which means we should receive pre-planning advice on major developments, but the first we heard about this one was when we received the council's weekly planning application submission list.'

'The panel, and the Highland

Council's planning officers, have asked to meet with representatives of the applicants but no meeting has been forthcoming. We have a close relationship with the planning officers, but all they can do is ask for a representative to meet with us.'

Mr Dobson added: 'According to the planning drawing, there would be no way a wheelchair could navigate the corridors of the homes and wheelchairs are getting bigger as technology progresses. We should be building houses that are fit for purpose in 30 years.'

In its objection to the council, the panel stated: 'In the design statement regarding access and

movement within the site there are no dimensions showing the width of pavements or the placement of drop kerbs.'

'The accessible homes, it is to be presumed, will be habitable for decades, yet there appears to be little thought given to the increase in wheelchair sizes over the last few years.'

'The panel is disappointed that there appears to have been little consideration given to the long term future.'

'Panel members who are wheelchair users say they would not be able to negotiate the corridor widths shown in the drawings.'

Mr Dobson said: 'We really

need to sit down with the architects and look at what's going on. They should have been speaking to us long before now. We want to support more houses in the area, and we are not objecting for objecting sake, but we need a meeting with the applicants to discuss and resolve the numerous concerns regarding the accessibility aspects of the proposal.'

The matter was discussed at the panel election hustings last Wednesday (April 19) where candidates for the upcoming council election gathered to answer questions and address concerns from elderly and disabled people and their carers.

Drink drive mother banned for four months

A MOTHER of three has been banned for driving for four months after she was caught driving at almost three times the legal alcohol limit on Kilmallie Road, Caol.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard on Monday April 24 that Emma Norval, 35, had been driving to a friend's house after being locked out of her then home in Caol by her then partner when she was arrested on October 30 last year for driving on Kilmallie Road with a blood alcohol level of 58micrograms, while the legal limit is 22.

Norval had been living with her then partner, the father of her youngest child, for almost a year at this point and she told the court he was 'very possessive and controlling'.

On October 29, Norval said there was an 'awful atmosphere' in the house and her ex-partner had become verbally abusive after she had cooked him a meal he didn't want.

She said she had 'a couple of glasses of wine' early in the evening and went for a walk to clear her head at around 7.30pm after failing to get her partner to talk things through.

When she returned after around 20 minutes she found he had bolted the front door from the inside, locking her out.

Unable to get in, she sat in the car for around five hours and, after trying one more time to gain access, she decided she needed to get help and attempted to drive to Upper Achintore, but her partner called the police and she was stopped not far from the house and arrested.

Solicitor Hamish Melrose told the court the defence position was that Norval had the defence of necessity because of the situation and her desperation to get to her children in the house.

Prosecutor Fiscal Martina Eastwood said this defence could not be used as Norval had other options including asking to use a neighbour's phone to get help or walking and because she had waited five hours before deciding it was necessary to drive away.

She added there was no immediate danger of bodily harm to Norval or anyone else.

Mr Melrose argued there was danger to her mental state and that she had not expected to have been locked out for five hours.

Sheriff William Taylor agreed with the procurator fiscal and said: 'The facts of the case are that she sat doing nothing for five hours. Her mothering instincts should have taken her into a neighbour's house.'

As well as the four-month driving ban, the sheriff fined Norval £200.



Kat, in purple, with some of her friends and family at the fundraising event. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

Kat celebrates milestone with fundraising party

A 'BRAVE and inspirational' Kinlochleven woman has celebrated being 10 years free from cancer by raising more than £5,000 for hospital staff who helped save her life.

Kathleen, or Kat as she is known, was a pupil at Kinlochleven High School in 2004 when she was diagnosed with leukaemia, aged 13.

After a bone marrow transplant from her brother failed, an anonymous donor came forward which was successful.

To give something back to the Glasgow Children's Hospital, the 26-year-old

organised a fundraising party in Chilliers at the Ice Factory, Kinlochleven, last weekend, with a raffle and auction.

Top prizes included in a stay in an holiday cottage in Onich, which went for £225, and signed Celtic and Rangers football tops which sold for £120 each.

The night ended with a show stopper as Kat was surrounded by friends and family to get her head shaved.

Through various other fundraising efforts and her charity night, Kat has raised £5,538 with more still to be counted.

She told the *Lochaber Times*: 'I wasn't

nervous about getting my head shaved, but I got nervous when I saw everyone around me with their phones out taking pictures.'

'It was good to party with all my friends and family.'

'There was one friend from Glasgow who I haven't seen since I was in the hospital who came which was so nice.'

'I am so happy with how much I have raised. I really didn't think I would get past the £2,000 mark. I want to keep going and see what else I can do and how much I can raise.'

Smelter to lead the way on 'green' metal strategy, claim owners

THE SMELTER in Fort William is to become the flagship of 'green metal strategy' according to new owners.

Since acquiring the aluminium smelter formerly owned by Rio Tinto along with the neighbouring Kinlochleven hydro plant in December 2016, GFG Alliance company SIMEC has already invested £10 million to install 18MW of bio-diesel generation capacity to reduce the reliance of the smelter on imported power from the national grid.

Last week, plans to further

invest tens of millions of pounds to boost the output of existing hydro-electric plants and introducing new hydro generators, as well as extending the use of bio diesel and exploring other renewable energy sources such as wind, biomass and waste-to-energy, were revealed by SIMEC and Liberty (also of GFG Alliance) to MSP Paul Wheelhouse.

GFG Alliance executive chairman Sanjeev Gupta, who hosted Mr Wheelhouse's visit, said: 'We see the Highlands as the flagship of our GREENS-

METAL strategy. There is huge potential here to optimise the use of natural resources and other locally available materials to produce the renewable power that will underpin many hundreds of new industrial jobs in the area.'

During the visit, the companies explained a plan to make the site even more self-sufficient by carrying out major engineering works to improve water flow through the 24 kilometre-long Treig Tunnel which will in turn substantially boost the capacity of the Lochaber

hydro station. Mr Wheelhouse, minister for business, innovation and energy, learned the alliance's follow-up plans include the creation of a network of smaller-scale hydro plants to maximise the economic benefit to the local economy of the area's natural water resource.

This may include opportunities for community ownership of local generating capacity.

Following the visit the Minister said: 'I am pleased to be here today to see first-hand how SIMEC is using its existing hydro-electric schemes and to

learn how its sister company Liberty House plans to harness green energy to boost manufacturing in the Highlands.'

'As well as its exciting plans to develop its existing and new hydro schemes, biomass, waste-to-energy and other forms of renewable energy all feature in the company's vision for further development of the site. This is a great example of how green renewable power can support innovation in industry as well as helping us to meet our renewables targets and climate change obligations.'



Nether Lochaber Community Association restored benches at their official launch event on March 5. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

Neil ahead of the game when it comes to litter

AN ANNUAL event to spruce up a Lochaber beach did not go ahead this year – as the place was already clean.

Sunday April 23 was the date scheduled for Nether Lochaber Community Council (NLCC)'s annual beach clean at North Ballachulish. But thanks to the ongoing efforts of an Old Town resident, Neil Macritchie, the event was 'down-sized' from the original plans as he has been collecting litter since last year and the beach has rarely been as clean.

NLCC thanked Neil for his efforts and instead scheduled a smaller effort to bag up the litter Neil had stockpiled by Gordon MacIntyre's boat on the foreshore and tidy the area around the bottle banks where Nether Lochaber Community Association is working towards creating a new picnic site in collaboration with Gleaner & SUSTRANS.

The barbecue scheduled for after the beach clean has been postponed until Sunday May 7 for the association garden event based at Nether Lochaber Village Hall.

Man spared criminal record over smoke grenade prank

A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD man who set off a smoke grenade in a Fort William pub was spared a criminal record after Sheriff William Taylor put his actions down to 'high spirits'.

Alasdair Callum Greens, Kennedy Road, was given an absolute discharge at Fort William Sheriff court on Monday April 24 when the sheriff ruled that because he has been put on pubwatch,

meaning he is banned from almost all the pubs in the town for two years, was already 'quite a punishment' for a man of his age.

Procurator Fiscal Martina Eastwood told the court Greens had acquired the smoke grenade when he went paintballing on September 11 and had told friends he was planning to set it off in a High Street pub. The court heard Greens was

seen on CCTV at 1.39am the following morning diffusing the device on the dance floor of the pub, which then filled with smoke, before the pub was evacuated to allow staff to remove the device.

Defence solicitor Hamish Melrose told the court the CCTV clearly showed the pub was evacuated in an orderly fashion within 10 or 11 minutes of the device being set off.

It was removed within four minutes after that and the pub-goers returned. He argued there was no danger caused in the incident, although there was potential for it, and said his client fully agreed how 'stupid' his actions were.

The sheriff concluded: 'High spirits seem much more the cause rather than criminal intent and there is no public interest in giving you a criminal record.'

View from the Chamber

MEMBERSHIP of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce has now grown to more than 220 full members.

It is fantastic that so many local businesses want to be part of the organisation that represents the interests of the local businesses based in the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

Membership of Lochaber Chamber also provides businesses with affiliate membership of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC).

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So by becoming a member of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, your business not only has a local voice, but

a national voice on key issues that affect your business.

There are regular networking events and training seminars that are free of charge for members to attend, and these give an ideal opportunity to keep in touch with the Lochaber business community. But members can get in touch at any time with issues that concern them!

To find out more about how becoming a member of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce can benefit your business, please get in touch with Membership & Events Officer, Fiona McCormick on (01397) 706765 or membership@lochaberchamber.co.uk



FW

MORVERN lines

The 'natives' are coming home

'ALL ROADS lead to Rome' is the modern reading of a medieval proverb meaning that many routes can lead to a given result. Later this year all roads lead to Mull.

The Macleans are coming! Between June 20 and 25, around 500 clansmen will make their way to Mull to take part in the International Gathering of the Clan Maclean Association to celebrate its 125th anniversary. This will be the seventh great gathering since 1916 when Sir Fitzroy Maclean, the 26th chief, completed the restoration of Duart Castle.

Attendees are coming from all around the world. Previously, the chiefs have welcomed people to their ancestral home from as far north as Norway and Sweden, and Tasmania in the south.

This year Sir Lachlan and Lady Maclean of Duart and Morvern will also meet clansfolk from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South America and Europe, as well as others from around the United Kingdom, including Mull and Morvern.

This year particularly the association wants to highlight the costly restoration work which has been going on at Duart for the past few seasons to ensure that it remains wind and waterproof for the next 125 years.

During the week-long celebrations, visitors will be able to meet the project architect and craftsmen to see and hear how this difficult work is being achieved on one of the most windswept sites in Scotland. They will also be able to tour the castle and get up close and personal with their chief and his chieflings to help raise £500,000 needed to complete the £1.2 million restoration costs.

Other events for the week will include receptions, an evening

talk and exhibition of items from the MacDougall Collection at Dunollie, Oban; visits to Iona, Glengorm Castle and Tiree; convivial whisky tasting, the chief's ceilidh, a ball, a concert, a clan congress and a gathering to which visitors and locals are encouraged to attend. A service in the Tobermory parish church will bring to a close what will be a memorable occasion.

On June 21, the date, incidentally, when the first Victoria Cross was won in the Crimean War and when Lord Mountbatten resigned as Viceroy of India, 70 lucky Macleans are going to Morvern.

They were due to sail over the Sound from Tobermory and disembark on the old stone pier at Drimnin, which was built by some of their ancestors before they were shovelled off to the colonies at the time of the Clearances.

Alas, tidal and other constraints have dictated otherwise and they are having to take the longer sea route past Killundine and the Castle of the Dogs, another of their ancestral homes, to Loch Aline. Here they will be guaranteed a friendly reception at the popular community pontoons beside the famous silica sand mine and a short distance away from Kinlochaline Castle, home to one of their 17th century chiefs.

Passing the ancient cemetery of Kiel, where many of their forebears lie under ornamental grave slabs, the party will follow the winding coastal route to Drimnin Estate to be entertained at the end of it by Mr and Mrs Derek Lewis and their family who purchased the property in 2002.

Drimnin formed part of the ancient Maclean territory. Here, in the 17th century, they built a small castle on a knoll a few yards above the sea guarding the entrance to the Inner Hebrides. The castle was demol-

ished in 1838 by Sir Charles Gordon to make way for St Columba's, a Roman Catholic chapel, to which the faithful on Mull and the adjacent mainland were summoned to mass by bell and the sight of a flag flying from a staff on its tower.

At Drimnin, the visitors will have an opportunity to lay a wreath at a cairn near the old stone jetty. It was built a decade or so ago by the Clan Maclean Association in memory of Charles Maclean of Drimnin who died leading the clan at the Battle of Culloden on April 16, 1746, in the absence of their chief.

Later in the day the party will make their way to Cnoc Michael (Gaelic - Michael's Hillock) near Drimnin House, to remember Allan Maclean of Drimnin, an officer in the Jacobite Army who also fought at Culloden. Allan, who died in 1792, was such a popular figure that the year in which he passed away was a chronological landmark in the district. Those who came into the world in 1792 were said to have been born in the year Allan of Drimnin died.

Then it is into Drimnin House for lunch followed by a concert in the restored chapel and a tour of the recently completed family distillery. Nine new local jobs have been created here to produce 100,000 litres of single malt whisky a year using renewable energy.

The name of the Drimnin whisky has not been announced yet. I once suggested 'Satan's Chloroform', which, unsurprisingly, didn't go down too well, but I wonder if one of two old Maclean slogans - 'Another for Hector' or 'Death or Life' - might be appropriate.

Iain Thornber
iain.thornber@btinternet.com



Drimnin House and the site of the new distillery to the left.

Tribute to a fallen soldier

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

A KINSMAN of Oban soldier Private Hugh MacLean has laid a wreath at his French war grave to mark the 100th anniversary of his death, aged 21, during the First World War.

Andy MacLean, whose family came from Ardaneaskan, researched how Hugh fell in battle with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Private MacLean, the son of Duncan and Isabella who lived at Buchanan Terrace, died of his wounds in Etaples military hospital on April 14, 1917, and was buried at Etaples military cemetery in northern France.

Andy said: 'I travel past this cemetery from time to time and always stop to pay my respects to the fallen who gave their tomorrows so we could enjoy our todays in peace. I have always visited this young man's grave as a fellow West Coast MacLean.'

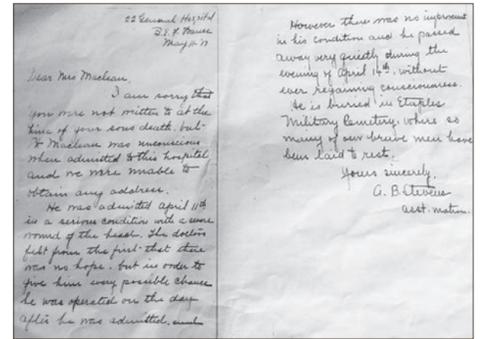
But the gravestone gave no details of where his regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, were fighting when he fell, and Andy hoped to fill in details of his life and untimely death.

He writes: 'On the morning of April 9, 1917, Private Hugh MacLean was with the 1st/8th Battalion the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in forward trenches at Rocquincourt, east of Arras in northern France. At 5.30am the Battle of Arras began and 22 officers with 622 men left their trenches to attack the second line of German trenches at the southern end of Vimy ridge. It is almost certain Hugh MacLean was seriously wounded in this action. Recorded in despatches, two officers were killed, nine were wounded and 38 other ranks were killed, with 168 wounded plus six missing. One of the officers killed in action was 2nd Lieutenant Walter Lightowler Wilkinson, who is a recognised war poet having written *The Wayside Burial* about a month before this event.'

'Hugh, with a serious head wound, was sent by train to Etaples military hospital complex where he arrived unconscious. The doctors operated on him but he did not regain consciousness and he died on April 14. He was buried alongside many other brave lads in the military cemetery next to the estuary of the river Canche. His great niece, Katy Flora, sent me a copy of the letter from the assistant matron, GB Stevens, at the hospital, which read, "He was admitted April 11 in a serious condition with a severe wound to the head. The doctors felt from the



Andy MacLean lays a wreath at the grave of Pte Hugh MacLean, below, on the 100th anniversary of his death, and the matron's letter notifying the family of his passing.



first that there was no hope, but in order to give him every possible chance he was operated on the day after he was admitted. However, there was no improvement in his condition and he passed away very quietly without ever regaining consciousness. He is buried in Etaples military cemetery, where so many of our brave men have been laid to rest.'

Andy writes: 'Etaples military cemetery is a site of great peace, beauty and tragedy. The tranquil spot lies beside the mouth of the river Canche and chilly sea breezes wafted across from the English Channel and through the newly leaved trees. With a backdrop of the magnificent monument to the fallen of the First World War designed by Lutyens, the sheer number of graves standing solidly in their serried ranks was indeed awe-inspiring. Laying a wreath against Hugh MacLean's memorial stone, something I had vowed to do more than 20 years ago, was an act filled with great emotion as I thought of the sacrifice made by all those young men wrenched from the bosoms of their families to face the lethal barrages on the Western Front 100 years ago. Some children were gaily playing up and down the

avenues between the lines of memorials on what was a sunlit if somewhat windy April day. For a fleeting moment I thought their boisterous laughter somewhat irreverent but then I remembered that this was exactly what these brave lads had laid down their lives for - our freedom to enjoy peace and prosperity. Their sacrifice had not been in vain.'

The Wayside Burial
By Walter Lightowler Wilkinson

*They're bringing in their recent dead - their recent dead!
I see the shoulder badge: a 'Southern cross.'
How small he looks - (O damn that singing thrush!)
Not give foot five from boots to battered head!
Give him a kindly burial, my friends, -
So much is due, when some such loyal life ends!
'For Country!' Ay, and so our brave do die:
Comrade unknown, good rest to you! - Good-bye!*

*They're bringing their recent dead! - No pomp, no show:
A dingy khaki crowd - his friends, his own.
I, too, would like - (God, how that wind does moan!) -
To be laid down by friends: it's sweetest so!*

*A young life, as I take it, just a lad -
(How cold it blows; and that grey sky, how sad!) -
And yet: 'For Country' - so a man should die:
Comrade unknown, good rest to you! - Good-bye!*

*They're burying their dead! - I wonder now:
A wife? - or mother? Mother it must be -
In some trim home that fronts the English sea.
(A sea-coast country: that the badges show.)
And she? - I sense her grief, I feel her tears!
'This, then, the garnered harvest of my years!
And he? 'For Country, dear, a man must die!
Comrade unknown, good rest to you! - Good-bye!*

*It's reeded: he is buried!
Comrade, sleep!
A wooden cross at your brave head will stand.
A cross of wood? A Calvary! -
The Land
For whose sake you laid down sweet life, will keep
Watch, lad, and ward that none may bring to shame.
That Name for which you died!
'What's in a name?' -
England shall answer! Thou will hear Her cry:
'Well done, my own! My son - good rest: Good-bye!'*

SCOTTISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

THEY'RE HAPPENING ON YOUR DOORSTEP

How to vote on 4 May

1	Use numbers on your ballot paper.	2	Rank the candidates in order of your choice using 1,2,3 etc.	3	Make as many or few choices as you like.
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yourvotematters.co.uk
0800 3 280 280

YOUR VOTE MATTERS
DON'T LOSE IT

The Electoral Commission, Lothian Chambers, 59-63 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1RN

Meet the candidates hoping for your vote in next month's council election

Susan Carstairs

Scottish Labour, ward 11

I grew up in Edinburgh and worked for 20 years in London with refugees from Chile and other countries.



I've been in the Highland since 1992, working at the Arisaig Hotel from 1994 to 1997, and for the last 18 years on environmental issues in Lochaber and across the Highlands with Lochaber Environmental Group and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. Over the last 35 years, wealth has shifted from the public sector to the private and a shift from public control to free market control. Both these changes have damaged society and left us without funds to run our hospitals, transport, education and social care.

Scotland has partially resisted the trend for privatisation but local government is starved of funds to provide essential services. Highland Council has made strenuous efforts to do more with less but a new arrangement is needed to provide the resources needed.

The environment is a priority for me. We should develop a programme for sustainable land use across Lochaber involving farmers, landowners, businesses and residents. Protect our valuable peatland carbon, increase local food production, make maximum use of our renewable energy generation potential, raise recycling rates and the take up of composting, improve public transport and ensure our deer and other wildlife are managed sustainably.

Allan Henderson

Independent, ward 11

Having had the pleasure of serving the Caol and Mallaig ward in Highland Council for the past 10 years, firstly as Provost of Lochaber and for the last two years as chairman of community services, I realise how important it is to be an experienced councillor.



As I go round canvassing and seeing the delights of Lochaber, it is also gratifying to be told at the door, you can keep the leaflet, I have already voted for you.

I am proud to claim I have been able to secure more funding for council controlled roads against a background of falling budgets.

I will continue to press for an A82 upgrade, not just on Loch Lomond side but all the way to Inverness.

Working closely with industry to fully achieve all the ambitious possibilities for Lochaber is a prime goal. Ferries, trains and buses, as well as roads infrastructure all play a big part in linking Lochaber.

There are wonderful opportunities to be grasped and, provided I am re-elected, I intend to continue to work selflessly along with my colleagues, to put Lochaber first and foremost.

If re-elected I intend to continue with a public presence and be available seven days.

William MacLachlan

SNP, ward 11

Born at Torlundy, I am passionate about Lochaber, its people, history and culture. My mother was born at Lochailort, with historic ties to Arisaig, Mallaig and Caol.



I will strongly support efforts to retain the CAP payments and future government subsidies to farming and crofting communities.

I have 11 years' experience as a clerk/constable to a large common grazing.

Exciting times for Lochaber. I will be extremely supportive of present and future developments to bring both economic and social benefits to all people in the area.

I will promote further in-depth discussions on the planned link road between Caol and Fort William.

The fishing industry, going through a worrying time, will have my support, regardless of Brexit, to gain a fair and equitable future.

Past experiences cover: six years as Highland Regional councillor, regular military service - Germany and Middle East, 12 years' management posts in the hotel and catering trade, first responder service and several years a member of Lochaber's community car scheme.

Liam Simmonds

Independent, ward 11

I am 22 years old and I am a local person who is standing for the Caol and Mallaig ward.



As an Independent I have the experience of previously being elected twice as a community councillor for Caol. During my time as a community councillor, I have sat in on many meetings to listen to your local concerns. These include the new Gaelic school and Lochside Development Plan and Caol Gala.

I come from a working-class background; not from wealth or privilege. My first job was working in a kitchen at Morrisons for £7.20 an hour.

I am an ardent Euro sceptic and I campaigned for the UK to leave the EU.

If elected my main priorities are:

- Putting communities first
- Abolish Brown Tax
- Abolish councillors expenses saving £300,000 pa
- 30 per cent pay cut to all councillors saving £300,000 pa
- More disabled parking spaces
- More funding for affordable and accessible housing that suits everyone in our community
- Saving our bus service from future cuts
- Better funding for mental health, disability support and dementia care.

Denis Rixon

Liberal Democrat, ward 11

I have lived in Mallaig for more than 40 years where I was a school teacher and owned a small bookshop.



I am running as a Liberal Democrat because our party has always championed 'localism'. We want to keep power close and accountable. We don't favour centralisation or overmighty government. Priorities: Business - all politicians want to maximize social benefits. But to do this we need a strong local economy. Supporting small business is critical whether in fishing, crofting, retail, tourism or a service industry.

Housing - too many young people can't even reach the bottom rung of the housing ladder. Old people, and those with special needs, may find their houses need to be adapted.

Our requirements change as we go through life. We could be much more proactive in searching out new architectural ideas and new design concepts - try googling 'tiny house' to see what I mean. I don't want to push people into shoeboxes but can't we provide more flexible solutions?

Transport and digital connectivity - in a rural area communications are critical for people, freight and digital data. Whether it's bus connections, potholes, broadband or the ongoing ferry fiasco in Mallaig, this issue demands constant attention and investment.

Ben Thompson

Independent, ward 11

Lochaber is being let down by local government in Scotland. Our concerns and priorities are not listened to. Our community councils feel ignored.



Since first becoming a councillor two-and-a-half-years ago, it has become ever more clear to me that we need control of Lochaber issues here - where local folk are heard and listened to by local decision makers. I believe political and financial control locally will lead to better public services and a proper engagement with community demands. My top priorities are:

- 1 The return of budgets and decision making from Inverness councillors to Lochaber communities.
- 2 Protect our education and social care services against government cutbacks.
- 3 Safer, improved streets and roads, including wider, faster adoption of 20mph limits in residential areas.
- 4 Establish Common Good Fund(s) for Lochaber so we can start to enjoy the same sort of amenities as Inverness.
- 5 Build quality housing determined by local needs, not what government targets tell us to build, so our young families can rent or buy decent homes.

If elected I will be a full-time councillor, readily available to anyone across my ward.

As a true independent, the needs of my constituents will always be my first priority.

Andrew Baxter

Independent, ward 21

Since before my election in 2012, I've been a determined community campaigner willing to stand up for our area.



As an independent councillor, I am accountable to residents, not to a political party. This means giving Lochaber a stronger voice in Inverness, where so many matters affecting our everyday lives are decided.

On numerous occasions in Inverness, I've made other out-of-touch politicians sit up and take notice of our needs on the West Coast. I was at the forefront of highlighting the unfair fares on the Corran Ferry, possibly the most expensive water crossing in the UK. Now the council recognises a long-term solution is needed.

Years of perseverance forced the council to rethink its winter gritting policy, meaning our roads can be gritted earlier than before. I've taken up the concerns of council tenants faced with escalating electricity bills, because of outdated and inefficient storage heaters, forcing the council to reassess houses and install new systems.

My main pledge is to continue this record of action; fighting our corner and getting the best deal for Lochaber residents.

Lochaber still needs a strong voice fighting our corner and that's my priority if re-elected on May 4.

Blair Allan

SNP, ward 21

If elected, I will do my utmost to help make Fort William and Ardnamurchan an even better area in which to live and work.



I have spent all my working life in social housing and have been chief executive of Lochaber Housing Association since 2004, so you would expect me to have a keen interest in ensuring we prioritise affordable housing opportunities. I have also developed an understanding and passion about the wider issues that confront rural communities. I know, too, what impact austerity has had on many people, including our most vulnerable. So, I understand the importance of local services in helping to support communities to confront these hard times and to thrive. I am also proud to stand for election as a representative of the Scottish National Party, which has achieved so much nationally and locally through policies including free prescriptions, free student tuition, the council tax freeze and alleviating the financial burden imposed by the bedroom tax. I want to help address the issues local people care about, such as improving the A82, the funding of Fort William's secondary link road and the availability of quality residential and nursing care.

I hope the people of Fort William and Ardnamurchan will continue to support a party that cares about people and is committed to minimising social injustice.

Sally Semple

Scottish Labour, ward 21

I've lived and worked across the world but Morvern has been my home since the 1960s.



I went to school in Lochaline and Glasgow, and trained in architecture and engineering. I have worked on the design and construction of housing, care homes and schools across the Highlands and Islands. I'm currently researching a PhD on residential energy use and am based in my family home on Loch Drumbuie.

It was an honour to be selected as the Scottish Labour candidate for Fort William and Ardnamurchan and I'm hoping to represent the people of Lochaber at Highland Council.

The Scottish Government's cuts to Highland Council mean that savings of £20 million have to be found in the year ahead and this threatens our infrastructure and services - from schools and bus services to road repairs and new housing - across Lochaber.

The investment plans for the Fort William smelter, the development of the Belford Hospital and the expansion of West Highland College are all great news for Lochaber but these developments - and all of us - need reliable transport, better roads and decent affordable housing.

I want to ensure Lochaber's services are protected from these cuts so our communities can flourish and grow.

Joanne Matheson

Independent, ward 21

I hope to persuade people to put their party political opinions to one side and select the candidates they believe will achieve the most for our area.



I chose to stand as an Independent to have the freedom to represent the views and concerns of our area without being told how to vote. Remote rural communities attract visitors and thereby support our economy through tourism. Suitable, sympathetic and sustainable development should be undertaken to create jobs, protect the landscape and improve the lives of residents. Highland Council delivers services according to its own priorities, largely decided behind closed doors. We need to increase open and honest two-way dialogue and ensure decision makers are held to account. We understand budgets are shrinking but we demand greater understanding of how finances are assigned and greater involvement in decision making. We need to work towards ensuring everyone is enabled to fully participate in the life they wish for themselves. I've lived in Acharacle for 13 years, since moving here with my Scottish husband and eight-year-old daughter, with twins on the way. Our youngest two daughters now attend Lochaber High School. I'm a community councillor and treasurer of Three Lochs Book and Arts Festival and I was instrumental in re-launching Made in Lochaber.

got the most votes. Duh! In STV, the quota (sometimes referred to as the droop quota) is worked out as follows.
Valid votes cast/ (number of seats available+1)+1 = quota. So for our example 1,000/(4+1)+1 = 201. This means that any candidate who achieves 201 votes or more is duly elected.
So the next job is to count the ballot papers and see how many first choice votes each candidate got, for example
Candidate 1 = 100; Candidate 2 = 50; Candidate 3 = 150; Candidate 4 = 250; Candidate 5 = 30; Candidate 6 = 199; Candidate 7 = 201; Candidate 8 = 20. This means that candidates four and seven are duly elected. So as the quota is 201, none of number seven's votes are re-allocated. However, 49 of number four's votes have to be redistributed.

Niall McLean

SNP, ward 21

I was born in Fort William in 1978 and attended school in the Highlands before going to college in Glasgow at 16.



After college I travelled round the world then returned to Ballachulish where I started a business providing Geotechnical and rope access services around the UK and Ireland. I have subsequently started other businesses in many fields. I have grown my businesses to be multi-national, steering them to success in a financially troubling time. I realise the importance of small and medium-sized business operating in our area and I would fight for maximum support for business. I have an understanding of our community and improvements needed to support the developing situation in our stunning and potentially very prosperous part of the world. I understand the importance of retaining young people in our community and looking out for the elderly. I consider business and the conservation of our natural and cultural environment key to our ongoing success. I strongly believe in the policies of the Scottish National Party. I strongly believe in community and respect.

If elected I plan to use problem solving and management skills built through my business experience to fight for the people of our ward. I will always put the community in our ward above all else.

Trevor Escott

Liberal Democrat, ward 21

It won't be a surprise to anyone that the challenges posed by Brexit and the division of opinion caused by a second independence referendum will be at the top of the agenda.



Liberal Democrats are crystal clear in our answer. We say no to a hard-brexit and no to independence.

We are the only party committed to Scotland's place in the UK, and the UK's place in Europe.

However, Liberal Democrats will not lose sight of local issues.

As a former GP and former chairman of Men's Health Highland, I know how important it is that Highland Council integrates health and social care and supports our doctors and nurses to provide the best possible care.

That can only be provided with proper central funding. Liberal Democrats will therefore continue to fight to end SNP Government underfunding of NHS Highland.

A vote for the Liberal Democrats is also a vote to improve local transport and fix our roads, to increase broadband speeds and mobile phone coverage, for a transformational investment in education and much needed action to tackle shocking levels of fuel poverty faced by over half of Highland homes.

This is our consistent offer at this election and beyond.

Derek Connery explains the complicated single transferable vote system that sees the electorate rank those standing by numerical preference

This election will see the single transferable vote (STV, not the TV channel) system being used again as it has been in Scotland for all local council elections since 2007.

Now the \$64,000 question: how does it work? I thought I knew roughly but, in truth, I was clueless. It is quite a complicated system all told but it is thought to be fairer than the traditional first past the post (FPTP) methods and ensures that no vote is wasted.

This seems great in theory, but surely if you use a system that people struggle to understand then there is a problem and a lack of comprehension of the methodology is counter-productive to what you are trying to achieve in the first place.

So I am going to try to add some clarity to the proceedings.

The first rule of STV is the cross is out the window - we're using numbers. Let's imagine

that a ward will have four members and on polling day eight candidates are standing. You would begin with a number one for your preferred candidate, two for your second choice and so on.

Okay, stop! You are not required to rank all the candidates. In fact, if you choose just only one, that is fine.

However, if you rank all of them you potentially 'assist' a candidate that you wouldn't vote for in a month of Sundays.

Right, so now everyone has voted, the polls are closed and we are ready to start the count.

In this case, let's say that 1,000 votes have been cast. Ah, but before the counting starts the returning officer has some homework to do. They have to work the 'quota'. This is the number of votes required to win the seat. In FPTP, this was easy as it was who

got the most votes. Duh! In STV, the quota (sometimes referred to as the droop quota) is worked out as follows.

Valid votes cast/ (number of seats available+1)+1 = quota. So for our example 1,000/(4+1)+1 = 201. This means that any candidate who achieves 201 votes or more is duly elected.

So the next job is to count the ballot papers and see how many first choice votes each candidate got, for example

Candidate 1 = 100; Candidate 2 = 50; Candidate 3 = 150; Candidate 4 = 250; Candidate 5 = 30; Candidate 6 = 199; Candidate 7 = 201; Candidate 8 = 20. This means that candidates four and seven are duly elected. So as the quota is 201, none of number seven's votes are re-allocated. However, 49 of number four's votes have to be redistributed.

This is done by now looking at second preference on all the papers that had number four as first choice and excluding number seven as they are already elected. Candidate 1 = 20; Candidate 2 = 30; Candidate 3 = 150; Candidate 5 = 20; Candidate 6 = 25; Candidate 8 = 25.

Now the next step: clearly number four is only transferring 49 votes and not the whole 250. Therefore it is necessary to work out how many actual votes based on the ratio of 49 to 250 approximately 0.2. This translates to the following 'transfer' of votes. Candidate 1 = 20 * 0.2 = 4 so this means four votes pass to candidate one giving them a new total of 104, following this through for the others means the new count is as follows: Candidate 1 = 104; Candidate 2 = 65; Candidate 3 = 180; Candidate 5 = 34; Candidate 6 = 204; Candidate 8 = 25

So now candidate six is elected, and at this stage candidate eight is excluded as they have the least number of votes and the redistribution of their votes begins. This process continues until the right number of candidates is elected or the returning officer loses the will to live, whichever comes first. The Electoral Commission has a much easier explanation and it is, as said at the beginning, not necessary to rank every candidate. Only rank those who you would be happy to see your vote transferred to.

Derek Connery is chief executive of BID4Oban.

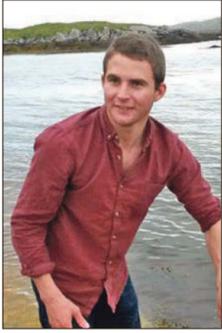
The Lochaber Times contacted Liz Sagger (Ward 11, Caol and Mallaig), and Ian Ramon (Ward 21, Fort William and Ardnamurchan) who are running for election but they did not respond before our deadline.

FW

Uist

Gaelic officer arrives from Rhode Island

CEÒLAS has employed a new officer who will help to grow Gaelic in Uist. Liam Alastair Crouse, from Rhode Island, started in post at the beginning of April.



Liam Alastair Crouse from Rhode Island.

The new position, which lasts three years, will increase Ceòlas' Gaelic presence online, as well as encouraging Gaelic usage within local businesses. The post received funding from LEADER, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, HIE and CnES. The officer will aim to take advantage of Uist's cultural and linguistic resources, broadcasting them to new audiences in a way that contributes to the local economy. As part of the work, new services will be offered to

Uist-based companies and community groups that market the island's unique heritage.

Marine explorers head for Hebridean islands

FRESH back from the Easter break, local primary schools on the Isle of Skye will be taking learning outdoors next week, with pupils joining the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) on board its specialised research yacht, Silurian.

inform the decision-makers of the future.

Following their visit to Skye, Silurian will return to sail the Hebrides, undertaking visual and acoustic research on whales, dolphins and porpoises.

Throughout the week, Silurian will become a floating classroom, hosting primary schools from across Skye, Raasay and Kyle of Lochalsh.

This is part of HWDT's unique long-term citizen science project, with data collected on board informing local and national conservation efforts.

Pupils will have the chance to actively explore the yacht, learn about marine mammals and discover what life is like on board as a marine scientist.

These annual surveys depend on paying volunteers, trained by the team to monitor and become marine mammal scientists for the duration of their trip.

Sessions have been designed to inspire students, spark interest in the marine environment and help

For more information about Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, Silurian and the floating classroom, please visit www.hwdt.org.

High school spotlight on career choices

NEW EFFORTS are being made to educate Kinlochleven pupils on 'in demand' career choices in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Workforce (DYW) West Highland. The students took part in a careers event focusing on potential future challenges, how they could be solved and the STEM careers which can help build a better world.

Rebecca Machin, head teacher at Kinlochleven High School, said: 'It is not just about promoting STEM careers, but about opening our eyes to what is possible and the wide range of opportunities many of us are unaware of.'

The school has also formed a school/business partnership with local STEM company Green Highland Renewables.

Every pupil in S1 and S2 attended the Edinburgh International Science festival, with the support of Developing the Young

Mr Morrison, PT Sciences and Physics teacher, said having such a business partnership is a great way to enrich pupils' learning.

Green Highland Renewables also visited the school to give a careers talk.

Community company builds for the future

Acharacle

COMMUNITY members in Acharachle have been busy lately, sprucing up the village buildings and giving new businesses a helping hand.

Acharacle Community Company is a small non-profit-making organisation, whose aims including managing assets for the community.

The company held a produce and craft market at Shielbridge Hall last Thursday April 20.

On sale were freshly-baked bread and cakes. Refreshments were available with money going towards fundraising for local groups. And local crafts were on offer providing the opportunity to find unique gifts.

The company is hoping this will be the first of many markets which it wishes to hold throughout the summer months in a bid to support the local communi-



The former Acharacle post office gets a make-over.

ty and give a warm welcome to visitors.

People power also prevailed with the company's efforts to give the village's old post office a makeover.

On April 2, families and friends painted the buildings as a new business

was set to open on Easter weekend. A spokesperson for the community company said: 'Thanks to our wonderful band of helpers at the post office buildings yesterday we managed to get the whole of the gable end of the building painted

and lots of rhodies cut back, the fence tidied and all sorts of rubbish taken away. Also big thanks to Heather for great refreshments to keep the workers going and to the sun for shining. All great to get Na'vi Organics off to a good start when it opens.'



Jamie and his mum Lesley on their bikes.

Jamie's pedal power raises lifeboat cash

A 12-YEAR-OLD boy has raised more than £800 for Portree RNLI by cycling 22 miles on Skye.

Jamie Budge completed the Dunvegan to Portree challenge in two hours and six minutes over the Easter weekend.

Jamie's father Donald is a lifeboat crew member and his mother Lesley, who cycled with her son, helps raise funds for the charity. Jamie has raised £843.50 to date.

An RNLI Portree spokesperson told the *Lochaber Times*: 'In 2016, the RNLI rescued, on average, 23 people per day, saved 558 lives, trained and equipped 6,100 lifesavers, with lifeboats being launched 8,851 times.'

'To do all this cost the RNLI £385,000 a day to run its 238 stations around the UK.'

'This comes solely from legacies, volunteers shaking tins and people like Jamie.' The RNLI team added: 'Thanks go to everyone who supported the challenge. A special thank you to Island Cycles for lending Lesley one of its amazing hybrid bikes.'

Glencoe Lochan car park extension complete



The new-look car park.

GLENCOE Lochan car park has been expanded and improved in a £21,000 revamp.

Providing access to popular walking tracks, including the Lochan trail, the car park is just a few minutes' stroll from Glencoe village.

Glencoe Heritage Trust alerted its followers on Facebook that the work, led by Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland, had been finished just before the Easter holidays.

An FES spokesperson said: 'Glencoe Lochan is one of the most popular sites we manage. Visitor numbers have been increasing steadily but many visitors said they did not visit in peak times because it was difficult to park. We are committed to doing what we can to improve the site.'

'To try to accommodate all visitor traffic, we expanded the car park. We also carried out resurfacing and repaired the stone wall. The work, carried out by local Lochaber contractors, was completed in five weeks.'

Fort William

Fort chosen as first port of call for Hebridean Princess mystery tour

FORT William played host to guests on a magical mystery tour recently.

On April 19, the Hebridean Princess sailed into Loch Linnhe but, in an unusual twist, most of the people on board had no idea where they were going until they arrived.

Sarah Kennedy, from the Fort William Marina and Shoreline Company, told *Lochaber Times* the Hebridean Princess organises two 'surprise tours' a year - one in the spring and one in the autumn. During these tours, it is basically up to the captain where he wants to go and the guests and crew don't have any idea where they are headed for the eight or nine days.

Sarah explained: 'We were contacted by the senior purser on Saturday (April 15) requesting to use the Fort William pontoons and I had to keep quiet about it on social media until the actual day of the visit. They did authorise me to take the posters around the shops on Monday and to notify other users of the pontoons that they will be closed so the Hebridean Princess passengers and crew have sole access for the time she was in port.'



Sarah Kennedy with Captain Trevor Bailey on board the Hebridean Princess.

was delighted to be invited on board to meet Captain Trevor Bailey again and was able to give him his gifts of a special collection Ben Nevis whisky donated by Ben Nevis Distilleries, a beeswax candle and a jar of local heather honey. I then

took the Captain to Fort William Station to see off on her trip along to Mallaig.

'His brother used to work on the steam train a number of years ago and the captain himself is a bit of a steam train enthusiast as well.'

RETRO Roamer

THE ROAMER column was the highlight of a Thursday for many Lochaber readers, so it returns this week with a look back at the events and people that made it into Roamer columns between 1985 to 2016...

■ There was the big Black Five letting off steam at the precise moment that 'The Man in the White Suit' was having his photo taken beside the engine before sending it on its way to Mallaig. The result, as the train departed, was 'The Man in the Black and White Soot Suit'! In fact clothing seemed to play a big part in the inaugural steam excursion. For a semaphore-style message on, shall we say, undergarments, was spelled out along a lineside building as the steam train passed by. 'Slainte Mhath' it read!

■ The Pipe Band marched through the High Street last Saturday. Outside the Argyll the drum major's mace, having been despatched into the air, came to rest across the High Street telegraph wires, and that caused a bit of a blackout for a while! However the drummers didn't beat a retreat, and the pipers just gied their bags a squeeze and played another key.

■ Has anyone seen Ginger Wilson's new bunnet? £7 it cost him a couple of weeks ago. But then he left it, along with his walking stick, on a peg 'somewhere'. When he retraced his steps it was gone! Ginger thought it might have been lifted by mistake. But I reckon if it has been half-inched I'm sure Ginger would like to administer a dose of the Ballachulish Bagpipes to the culprit!

■ 'Notiss'! 'Notiss'!, as Fort William Bellman, Donald MacDougall, used to shout. Well, the BA Club notiss board, sorry, notice board which reads, 'The club will not be responsible for loss or damage to vehicles parked on club property' is itself, at present parked on someone else's property. If the committee want it back they'll find it lying round the back of St Mary's Hall, where it has been frequently 'notissed' over the past week.

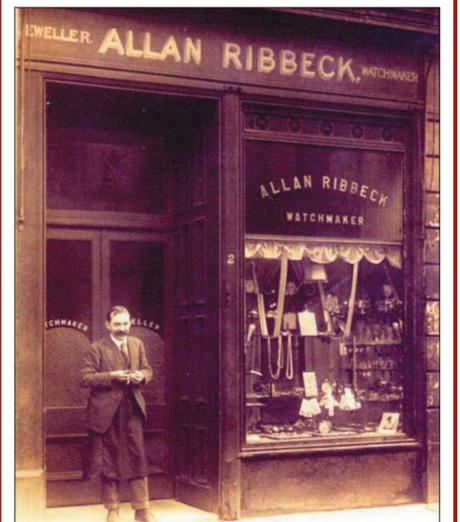
■ I liked the decision at the council's environmental health committee meeting where it was agreed that 'action will be implemented' following complaints by the Plantation Tenants' Association about dogs fouling the pavements. It was minuted that 'the fog warden is to make spot checks'.

■ Meanwhile, further down the hill, Mal, a very annoyed long-time resident of Alma Road went on record as saying: 'If the council doesn't do something about this dog dirt I'm going to take it into my own hands'.

■ John rolled home from the Volley at 8.30pm on Friday. His dinner had been ready, and cooling, since half six. 'What's this?' John queried, observing that he was receiving the cold shoulder. Came the reply: 'That's your after eight mince.'

■ Then there were the two well-made-up local lassies who went to the model exhibition in the Fort last week. Apparently they were somewhat miffed to discover it was all about trains and boats and planes. They had expected a fashion show and mannequin parade.

■ Conversation overheard in the High Street this week. Local, having given directions to overseas visitor, asked: 'Where do you come from?' Tourist: 'From Luxembourg.' Local: 'You don't see many of you over here as a rule.' Tourist: 'Oh, there is a party of 20 of us.' Local: 'As many as that? I hope one of you put the lights out before you left'.



Down Fort William's memory lane.

■ Youngish-looking Lochaber couple going their holidays. They took the Glasgow bus on the first stage. Having paid their fare they realised they'd been given too much change. So, totally honest, they pointed this out to the driver. 'Oh! Thank you,' said he. I took you for senior citizens, and charged you accordingly.

■ Did you know you are not having Hogmanay this year? According to a locally-produced calendar the date of December 31 doesn't figure in 1985. Apparently the year ends on December 30. Mind you, for many of us, December 31 has often been a lost day anyway!

■ It must have come as something of a surprise for a local member of the legal profession to find himself being referred to in Fort William Sheriff Court as 'Learned Adversary', rather than 'Learned Friend'.

■ Pity the local businessman who was searching the High Street at the weekend for a - knitting needle. So he could give his broken arm in plaster a wee scratch.

■ Crossword competition winner was Mrs Jean Bayliff, Glenpane Street, Caol.

■ As it is nearly Scottish Six Day Trials time, Malky reckons some enterprising outfit could start up a business manufacturing motor bikes. He has even come up with a few trade names - in Gaelic and English - to compete with Yamaha. Like Seo ma tha (phonetically Shawmaha), Ciamaar a tha (Kimmeraha), agus De an uair a tha e (Chaynooraha). Oidche Mhath!

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No permission was given for 'death trap' zebra crossing

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

SHOCK has been voiced that a 'dangerous' zebra crossing in Oban has no official planning permission - and conversations between council officers and the applicant were never recorded.

One local councillor lives less than 20 metres from the crossing, planning officers work less than 300 metres from the location and it is on the main carriageway through the town



Traffic volumes are very high at certain times

— yet not one person stopped the crossing being installed.

The crossing near Lidl on the Soroba Road is now being described as a 'death trap'.

Drivers and pedestrians want to know what is going to be done about the zebra crossing before a serious accident happens.

In what appears to be a planning blunder, supermarket owner Lidl was under the impression it had permission to build the crossing. However, Argyll and Bute Council officials believed it had authorised Lidl to apply for permission but had not given consent for it to be completed.



The zebra crossing is close to the junction with Sinclair Drive, a busy filling station and a major supermarket.

It was not until a Benderloch driver brought the matter to the attention of the authorities that it came to light there had been no public consultation and no decision by the councillors to allow the crossing to go ahead.

The man who raised the issue does not want to be named, but laid out the problem. He

explained: 'Traffic volumes are very high at certain times on Soroba Road and there are a considerable number of points of entry and exit in the immediate vicinity of the crossing.'

'When road users are opting to enter or leave some of the many points at busier times, the scene could fairly be described

as demanding. Failing to take cognisance of pedestrians waiting to enter or even already on the new zebra crossing could, in such circumstances, be a possibility.'

'The prominent signs for the supermarket on one side and the filling station on the other can result in the small flashing

beacons becoming almost invisible during daylight hours.

'It may be worth examining how this additional demand is managed by vulnerable road users - they are summarised as tourists, older drivers, young or inexperienced drivers and motorcyclists.'

The man continued: 'Some of

my friends are already reporting almost daily incidents on the crossing. A few are very close shaves. It is an accident waiting to happen. It is a death trap.'

A Freedom of Information request to Argyll and Bute Council stated: 'The council officer who liaised with Lidl prior to the installation of this crossing has retired and we are unable to locate any recorded information within our records which confirms that such an assessment was carried out.'

'No skid-resistant surfacing was installed by Lidl and the council has no plans to install skid-resistant surfacing at this time. However, the number of skid-related accidents which occur will be monitored.'

A spokesman for Lidl said: 'Having spoken to our property team on the zebra crossing, they confirm that all highway works were carried out with the relevant approvals in place from the council. I can confirm that the work was carried out after we received approval from the council.'

A spokesman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'Lidl was given permission to install the zebra crossing to the specifications supplied. There was no requirement for skid-resistant surfacing as this is a 30mph zone. We have no reason to believe there is an issue with the crossing.'

'However, on the basis of information we have received, we will carry out an assessment to ensure there are no unanticipated safety issues.'

Opinion: page six.

Tributes paid to Argyll paraglider

TRIBUTES have been paid after a former Lochgilphead man died in a paragliding accident in New Zealand.

Ben Letham, 26, had a love for the outdoors sparked in Argyll. He learned to surf on waves at Westport and Tangy beaches near Campbeltown and it is to these Kintyre winds some of Ben's ashes will be returned.

He moved to New Zealand to pursue his outdoor dreams and had been a pilot with GForce Paragliding near Queenstown on South Island for three years.

Ben was on a solo recreational flight when he crashed last Saturday.

As the sad news broke, a Justgiving page was set up with a target of £7,000 'to give all those he has touched a chance to help give Ben the send-off he deserves and to lighten the load for all his loved ones'. By Wednesday the total raised exceeded £10,000.

GForce Paragliding suspended operations for a period as a mark of respect and company co-director Gavin Taylor said: 'Our whole team is absolutely devastated by his death. He was a really nice guy, a talented pilot and we're stunned to lose one of the youngest members of our team with his whole life ahead of him.'

Ben took off on Saturday from Skyline Gondola and landed in the grounds of Queenstown Primary School. Mr Taylor said conditions at the time of the incident had been calm and could not comment on what may have gone wrong.

As messages of condolence poured in, Ben's sister Vicky Zoers said: 'We will have a ceremony to which everyone will be welcome where we can give him back to the wind he so loved.'

Man jailed for attacking neighbour

AN OBAN man has been jailed for nine months for assaulting his new neighbour who complained about noise.

Daniel William Kelly, 26, of 41 Rhuvaal Road, Oban, pleaded guilty to assaulting a man on that street on April 16 by repeatedly seizing and punching him in the head to his injury.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty told Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday April 25: 'The accused only recently moved into a flat with his girlfriend. The residents downstairs were

concerned about the noise coming from above. One of the residents went up to ask them to turn the music down.'

'There began an argument. The accused grabbed the complainant and punched him in his face, causing him to fall to the ground. The complainant got to his feet. He was punched once again in the face.'

'He made his way back to the flat and called the police. The complainant had a chip to his front tooth and damage to dental work. The estimated cost is £300.'

'[Kelly] has had a number of custodial sentences,' his defence agent, Jane McLaren, told the court.

'Things got out of control when he decided to come off methadone. This seems to have been the catalyst for Mr Kelly coming back into the court system.'

Taking into account Kelly's previous convictions and his early plea, Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC sentenced him to nine months in prison, backdated to April 19.



The original directors of Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mor celebrate at their dinner.

Lismore celebrates decade anniversary

Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mor had much to be proud of when it celebrated 10 years since opening its museum with its exhibition room, library, shop and cafe.

The original directors, responsible for the Herculean task of erecting this building, were invited to a meal on Friday March 24 to thank them and to celebrate 10 years of keeping alive and promoting the island's Gaelic culture.

This was followed by a social evening in the museum, where many other islanders joined the party and were treated to some of the island's talented performers.

Duncan Livingstone and Laura Cook performed Gaelic song and Arthur Cross, Duncan Ferguson and Shona Wright were instrumentalists.



Duncan Livingstone entertains by singing a Gaelic song.

The meal was cooked and presented by the Lismore Community Cafe staff, led by its new chef Dan Johnstone and his assistant Pia Dellemann. The celebration cake, representing the reconstructed

cottage Taigh Iseabal, was made by Katy Crossan. Anne Livingstone thanked everyone involved and presented Katy MacGregor with a basket of flowers in honour of her 80th birthday.

Lisa & Mike have been to one of the Cairngorm's renowned steak nights

What a great night Mike! I think I'm in love...

Me too, that steak was amazing!

Hang on, what?

You and your belly... no I mean that beautiful German model. I couldn't stop looking. Strong and sleek, smooth to the touch...

The German kitchens silly! I was talking to a couple who'd just installed one, and they couldn't speak highly enough about the quality and finish. I think we should get one...

Looks like we're paying Cairngorm another visit

[f](#) [t](#) #MeetTheCairns

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Viewpoint



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

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

There is no doubting the importance of public transport across Lochaber, especially given the rural nature of so much of the region.

Indeed, the crucial links provided by our public transport providers are given even sharper relief as a result of ever-increasing awareness of climate change and the need to protect the environment.

So it should come as little surprise that public transport is a subject that arouses very strong emotions for a large number of people.

As a result, Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Kate

Forbes is quite right to raise concerns about the Highland Council's re-tendering decisions, which came into force on Monday. Ms Forbes has said that the 15 per cent budget reduction imposed by the local authority had 'disproportionately decimated' timetables.

This is a very serious matter. Public transport is vital for our remote and rural communities, where people – often representing an ageing demographic – rely absolutely on buses for lifeline services.

Yes, the council has to find savings but removing essential services is going too far.



Days gone by – 1996

This week's trip down memory lane takes us back to the Mod competitors from Rockfield Primary School in 1996.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



The gift of encouragement

WHAT a truly great gift it is to receive a message of encouragement at the right time from the right person.

After returning last week from a very enjoyable Easter holiday, I awoke on Thursday morning with a severe case of post-holiday heebie-jeebies. This was the occasional but nonetheless recognisable feeling of trepidation, regret, doubt, fear and negativity that can creep up on one every now and then.

'AAAAGGHHH! What was I doing taking all that time off when there's so much to be done? There is too much to do and not enough time now and it is all too difficult anyway.'

This state can escalate easily to momentarily covering the world and one's place in it with a dark shade of gloom. However, a well-timed and unexpected email immediately banished these futile feelings of blackness

back to their cage of energy-sapping irrationality where they belong.

This was a simple, short but beautifully written message from someone I hold in very high regard, complimenting me on my *Oban Times* contribution published that day and making positive reference to a few other particular pieces.

As I'm sure most people do, I often have considerable periods of self-doubt regarding my output – in song-writing and in my *Oban Times* articles. I very much enjoy the writing process itself but during the thankfully transitory moments when the dark dogs of doom and doubt are hovering, I often think: 'What a load of cack and why would anyone be interested in such drabble?'

Baring parts of the soul to the wider world brings risks of rejection and ridicule to the fore and I suppose these are some of the things that, as humans, we are most affected by.

That was how I was feeling last Thursday and the email received

instantly sent these dark dogs whimpering away to a far off kennel where they should be and I was instantly refilled with vigour.

In a wider context, it brought forth recognition of the value of giving encouragement to others when it is relevant to do so. To the giver, it can seem insignificant but to the receiver it could have a huge influence and in some cases be truly life-changing.

Like most of the best things in life there is no downside to passing on a genuine compliment, there is never a bad time to do it and the virtuous circle of goodness it creates is one that can spread exponentially.

Whether you are a joiner talking to an apprentice, a teacher to a pupil, a skipper to a young crew member, a successful builder to a young plumber or an established writer emailing a novice columnist, words of encouragement are powerful and can have a life-long lasting positive effect.

The bounty of encouragement is indeed a golden gift.



Social media

There has been widespread support for our campaign to improve road safety on the A85 between Oban and Connell.

Allan Strang Jnr posted: 'In the 2.5 mile or so between Dunbeg and town there seems to be a lot of bends, which maybe folk aren't ready for even though they should be. Straighter roads would be better as a) it gives a clear sight of what's going on ahead and b) it'd stop folk speeding only if it would give more places for speed detection to take place and also if overtaking folk wouldn't chance it if they could see ahead. Let's just put it straight. The roads of the last millennia aren't fit for today's volume of traffic and our local roads budget is being significantly dented before it reaches the outside world.'

Margaret Adams suggested: 'Drivers ignore the double white lines in the middle of the road. Speed is also a factor. It could also be that the beautiful scenery takes their eyes off the road!'

Murdo MacKenzie wrote: 'There's so many people who think they're invincible being inside a metal frame. I'm sick of being overtaken on that stretch. It's so dangerous, so many people have died on the roads around Oban. You'd think people would be wiser.'

Eachann Gillies explained: 'I think it's a bit of "fundamental attribution error" – a cognitive bias that makes

us more likely to blame others for bad driving and excuse ourselves from the same behaviour. Research has also shown that about 90% of the driving public think that their driving is "above average", which suggests we tend to drastically overestimate our own skills and ability to avoid collisions. Add to this message epidemic levels of phone use at the wheel and you can see why driving on any road can be quite harrowing. On a stretch of road that people feel they know well, and when using this stretch of road during rush hour ... then it makes for an even less pleasant experience.'

Alistair Reid said: 'Slow drivers cause lots of frustration. I was sat behind someone doing 26mph the other day between halfway house and pennifur. Passenger was taking pictures out of the window. Need more police patrols.'

Mags Johnstone recounted: 'Someone overtook me on my way into town couple of days ago double white lines, he/she didn't think me driving at 45mph was fast enough obviously.'

Staying on a roads theme, there was also considerable engagement with our story about the zebra crossing on outside Lidl on Soroba Road.

Kenny MacKenzie posted: 'Can't com-

ment about the driving aspect of it but it is between the entry and exit to the petrol station and 15 yards between the Sinclair drive junction and the turn in to the new lids. As a resident who crossed there all the time, I never had a problem just using the traffic islands. Good idea, poorly positioned.'

Gary Farlow offered: 'Think the crossing is ok, my gran stays in the flats next to it, when am tryin to get across to the garage it was a night mare before the crossing was put up, just drivers in Oban need to be more observant and stop being so ignorant to other road users and pedestrians, half the people I have come across while visitin family in Oban have no idea how a roundabout works. Nothing wrong with the crossing just people don't know the highway codes etc.'

Duncan Ferguson wrote: 'It's only an accident waiting to happen for bad drivers!!its clear to see and local drivers are the worst!!being diligent and noticing tings are being part of being a driver so it u don't see that give it up!!!'

Saskia Cheney said: 'Accident waiting to happen! Far too much going on there! Cross at the islands either side of it instead.'

Ian Fletcher said: 'Accident waiting to happen.'

Don't elect the same old dinosaurs in Argyll

Sir,
Another election is looming. At least some of our Argyll and Bute councillors have had the decency to retire (some should have years ago).

Yet out of the woodwork come former councillors seeking to return to the fold. In my opinion they should stay away as they have been puppets for the retiring council leader, Dick Walsh.

You would not put these candidates, if elected, in charge of any council policies, never mind have them as guardians of the council's finances. In fact, you would not let them do car park duty.

Just look at the state of Argyll's roads, refuse collections, the infrastructure in disarray and folk living on Dickensian wages, thanks to the existing members at Kilmory.

These councillors, who are not fit for the role, get better jobs, salaries and pensions as big as their egos.

More of these elected members should retire and let in new blood as they are past their sell-by date.

I would caution voters to choose very carefully come May 4. Vote for change because, if you don't, we will be left with the same old dinosaurs and Argyll will be the new Jurassic Park.

Stephen Johnstone,
Downside Road,
Hillhead, Glasgow.

Saddened by one Christian's intolerance

Sir,
I read with sadness the letter from Donald Morrison (*The Oban Times*, April 20) and can only speculate on the motivation for such an outpouring of unpleasantness from someone who purports to be a Christian.

Hopefully, other Christians of a more pleasant disposition will respond and confirm that they do not share Mr Morrison's intemperate views in the name of Christ. To add to his outrageous views is his admission that he was not even present at the funeral to which he takes such vitriolic exception, but arrogantly pleases himself by purporting to reflect the views of someone who did attend.

Mr Morrison should perhaps reflect on the hurt he has caused to the loved ones of the deceased who were marking the passing of a fellow human being in the manner of their choosing, and he needs to question his right to publicly berate those who do not share his bigoted beliefs.

Presumably, he takes a similarly dim view of those Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and those of other faiths who would make no mention of his Christian beliefs in their funeral proceedings.

As an atheist, I respect the absolute right of others to have faith in their chosen beliefs. That right does not, however, extend to berating those who do not share the same views.

It is this kind of extreme intolerance of others, and the insistence of the absolute 'divine truth', as expressed by Mr Morrison, that led to the Inquisition in the past, and to the extreme views and barbarity that we witness today in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Finally, and on reading his letter

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



SAOILIDH MI GUM BHEIL miosan bho cheannaich mi siol-cura a' bhuntata agus bidh e math fhaotainn dhan talamh mu dheireadh thall. Ged a bha an aimsir cuimseach math bha an talamh fliuch agus fuar gu ruige seo, agus gu dearbha tha luchd na h-aimsire a' fàidheadaireachd tuilleadh fauchd agus theagamh reothadh an t-seachdain seo fhèin.

Ach chan urrainn gum bheil earrach fada às a' chuthag gu bhith a' gairm ann am beagan làithean 's an Cèitean gu bhith againn.

Bidh na h-oghaichean aig mo charaid Iain Uisdaich còmhla rinn aig a' bhuntata agus bidh mi tric a' beachdachadh air cho buannachdail 's a bha na dh'ionnsaich sinne uile a thogadh air an tuath. Fhuair sinn eòlas air an àrainneachd agus air nàdar nach robh aig clann nam bailtean-mòra agus ged is dòcha nach do thuig sinn sin aig an àm, thug am fiosrachadh sin tuigse luachmhor dhùinn.

'S iomadh sgeul a chluinnear mu dhaoine òga agus inbhidh aig nach eil cus tuigse air cò às a tha mòran de

afresh, would Mr Morrison expect Jesus to have drafted such a letter and been the signatory to it?

Andrew Dodd,
Lochgilhead.

No need to pity or be concerned for atheists

Sir,
I was somewhat surprised at the letter from Donald J Morrison last week regarding humanist funerals. Surely the clue was in the name – humanist, not church, service.

I respect the wishes of anyone of faith who wants the comfort of a religious service, but for those of us who do not believe in a God or afterlife, it would be sheer hypocrisy. It is surely better to have a tribute to the deceased through memories, words and poems.

I thank him for his pity and concern, but really it is not necessary.

Moirra Haywood,
Barcaldine.

Forestry is no threat to wildlife on Mull

Sir,
I am writing to reassure residents and anyone connected with Mull that there is no threat to wildlife in the area as a result of the trees that are being planted. In fact, working with the local community and land owners to protect the local environment is central to our operations.

Our work on Mull has been extensive and positive. It has included: helping to provide solutions to exporting timber from Mull to the mainland and Ireland; helping to minimise impacts on fragile roads by designing low-impact timber trucks, and creating forest design plans that help both community and private clients achieve their objectives for their forests.

Our ecologists have guided the work to ensure minimal impact on the environment – including ensuring the floating pier does not interfere with otters. Our felling plans ensure white-tailed eagles flourish in the forests where they nest. To name just two examples.

Your article 'Chemical threat to Mull wildlife' in last week's paper mentions the use of a systemic pesticide called Gazelle.

Like many other crops, trees can suffer from damage by insects such as weevils. To help them to thrive, the young trees are treated in a controlled environment in the nursery where they are grown before being transported to site for planting. The use of Gazelle is only possible because of extensive tests and studies. It has been approved by the EU and the UK CRD (Chemical Regulation Department) and is approved by our dual Forest Sustainable Management Bodies PEFC and FSC as well as by the Forestry Commission and UK WAS (UK Woodland Assurance Scheme).

We only use pesticides when it is absolutely necessary and are striving to reduce our usage. That is why we are major players in the Hylobius (weevil) Plant Protection Group – a cross-industry group that is looking

for the elusive goal of non-pesticidal Hylobius management. We have been carrying out trials since early 2000s – firstly searching for lighter footprint pesticides and secondly for non-pesticide solutions.

It is true to say that global demand for timber is increasing and, yes, China is having a significant impact on this. 'Scotland plc' is well placed to be a major player in forestry which is why the Scottish Government is so supportive of the industry.

Forestry produces sustainable, low-carbon material for construction as well as renewable fuel. This helps reduce the use of fossil-hungry materials such as steel, concrete and coal. The forests sequester carbon helping with our climate change targets in a sustainable way while providing jobs and protecting wildlife.

Restocking the forests allows the 1970s plantations to be improved and the planting of trees with better genetics to make the timber far more resilient and useful while creating forests for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Tim Liddon,
Forestry Director, Tilhill Forestry.

Motorists drive far too quickly on the A85

Sir,
On holiday in Scotland last June for a couple of weeks, I saw that Scottish roads are narrow, winding and rather bumpy. Drivers must be very careful and look both at the road ahead of them and at other cars rather than at the beautiful scenery around them.

Unfortunately, I noticed that too many people drove far too fast for the kind of roads the country has. It is true of the A85 but also of many other small roads which would badly need repairing properly.

Yves Loisel,
Brittany, France.

Pay postal workers to check the elderly

Sir,
Despite the huge increase in the number of elderly people being forecast 30 years ago, politicians of all colours failed to plan and budget for a different society. Keeping people in their own homes is great but how can we ensure they are all monitored and have regular personal contact?

It costs £100 for a GP to make a home visit and £50 for a nurse. It's still £25 for a social worker, which is why in Finland and Jersey governments are paying postal workers £5 to check on elderly residents and reduce the need and expense for crisis care. A quick smile and a chat for an isolated pensioner living alone is good and cheap medicine.

In these days of declining mail volumes, £5 a visit would bring welcome new revenue to the Post Office as well as helping our communities. Helping voters and saving money are seemingly no longer important, though, as Cosla and Holyrood politicians focus on their own flatulence.

Mike Foster,
Sannox, Crannaig a Mhinister,
Oban.

Ailean Caimbeul

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We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses

must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not

be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

Party goes to great heights for mountainside marriage

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A COUPLE marrying at the top of hill almost had to give up hope of tying the knot when poor visibility, storms, flurries of snow and cancelled ferries conspired against them.

But a council registrar went to extraordinary heights to marry the couple at their dream mountain top location on Monday this week ... with a little bit of altitude compromise.

Rob Everitt, 36, and Rebecca Holdstock, 29, from Dartmoor, got in touch with Andrew Penny, a registrar on Mull, to request their ceremony be held at the summit of Ben More – the island's highest mountain and only Munro.

Mr Penny said: 'I had recently joked in the office that it had always been an ambition of mine to carry out a wedding ceremony at the summit of the 966-metre peak when the call from Rob and Rebecca came right out of the blue.'

'As registrars in Argyll and Bute, our motto is "It's your day so we do it your way" – and we pride ourselves on making each ceremony personal and unique.'

'As well as having some of the most stunning locations where wedding and civil ceremonies can take place, we are more than happy to accommodate

couples to have their ceremony wherever they want.

'However, in Scotland, the weather can be a significant factor. We looked at the forecast and Monday's weather looked like the most favourable for the climb up Ben More.

'After a couple of hours we reached around 650 metres, but we couldn't see much of the summit and made the decision to have the ceremony on the plateau about two-thirds of the way up the mountain.

'I'm really pleased that, despite the wind, snow and a typical four-seasons-in-one-day, we were able to help Rob and Rebecca get married in the unusual and stunning location they chose.'

Rob, Rebecca and Andrew were joined by the couple's dogs, Benny and Lindy, as well as two Mull residents for the hike, and a photographer who recorded the event.

Rebecca, who is a member of Dartmoor Search and Rescue and a keen mountaineer, said she and her groom wanted something out of the ordinary, adding: 'We didn't want something like a beach wedding and when we found out that you can get married anywhere in Scotland, our thoughts turned to having the ceremony on one of the Munros.'

'We phoned a few other places but when we got in touch with



Rob and Rebecca – and their two dogs – married on Mull's only Munro.

Andrew on Mull he couldn't have been more flexible and accommodating.

'We got a really warm and friendly reception and nothing was too much bother for him with the final arrangements being confirmed on the Sunday

evening. He gave us options and was happy to shuffle things about, depending on the weather, which turned out to be the case. We're really grateful to him for all his help in making our day really memorable and touched by the kindness of

Sarah and John from Mull who gave up their day to join us.'

Having almost bagged one of Scotland's Munros, the happy couple now plan to spend the rest of the week on honeymoon enjoying the sights and hospitality of the island.

New carriage is fantastic for disabled participants

A CARRIAGE-DRIVING group for disabled participants has bought a new carriage with a grant made possible thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Argyll RDA Carriage Driving group, part of Riding for the Disabled Association, purchased the lightweight Fenix Freedom carriage to improve the overall experience for its drivers, volunteer helpers and ponies.

Argyll RDA Carriage Driving group is based near Benderloch. With its two ponies, Red and Dixie, the group provides access to the great outdoors – country lanes, quiet tracks and a beautiful beach – to around 15 disabled adults and young people in the local area. Participants also learn the skill of carriage driving, entering competitions at regional

and national levels. The impact of the new carriage has been fantastic,' said the group's co-ordinator, Jane Isaac.

'Our drivers find it much more manoeuvrable, which really helps them to develop their skills, and the ponies benefit from the lighter weight. We are so grateful to players of People's Postcode Lottery.

'Importantly, when we attend a competition, this carriage is very similar to mainstream carriages, meaning the stigma of the old-fashioned carriages designed to disguise wheelchairs is eliminated – we embrace our limitations and love to participate.'

The project has been so successful it has spurred the group to expand and fundraise for a second carriage so that even more people can benefit.

Fond farewell as council leader Dick steps down

AFTER 40 years of service to Strathclyde and then Argyll and Bute councils, it was the end of an era last Thursday when Dick Walsh stepped down as both leader of the local authority and as a councillor.

Mr Walsh was praised by Provost Len Scouler for his work on behalf of Argyll and Bute, and the skills he brought to the post.

It was for finance that Mr Walsh would be remembered most by the council – at one time even called a 'wizard' by Councillor Ellen Morton, his one-time opponent and for the past three years his deputy leader.

A small number of councillors from the opposition group did not clap or stand up to congratulate Mr Walsh.

Multi-agency emergency exercise at Oban Airport

A MAJOR multi-agency emergency exercise is taking place at Oban Airport on Saturday (April 29).

Members of the public may see activity by the emergency services at the airport and in the sea to the south.

The exercise is designed to

test emergency responses and is required by the Civil Aviation Authority and in compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act.

The public are requested to stay clear of the area, including gillies path, between 10am and noon.

Argyll and Bute is top performing Scottish council for IT

INFORMATION technology provision at Argyll and Bute Council is top of the charts in Scotland.

The council is the top per-

forming local authority for information technology in Scotland – according to the latest Socitm results.

The report found that the

council's ICT service had a low cost with excellent performance, and improving customer satisfaction level.

The council is rated first of the

11 councils who participated in the bi-annual survey and 15th in a UK league of 85.

Socitm is the society for IT professionals in the public

sector and undertakes the bi-annual benchmarking of ICT services survey – covering all aspects of operational, financial and strategic ICT matters.

Mary's Meals adds 43,000 children to feeding programme

ARGYLL-BASED charity Mary's Meals announced this week that it is now reaching 1,230,171 of the world's poorest children with a nutritious daily meal in school.

This means that, owing to the continued generosity of its supporters around the world, the charity has been able to add more than 43,000 children to its global school feeding programme since September last year.

Mary's Meals provides support to impoverished communities across four continents, setting up community-run school feeding programmes that encourage children – who may otherwise be forced to work, beg or forage for food – to come to school and receive a meal that helps them to concentrate on their studies.

The charity began by feeding just 200 children in Malawi in 2002, amid a devastating famine. And today it is providing much-needed support in the

face of another crisis in East Africa, where drought and conflict have created a humanitarian emergency spanning several countries, including two where Mary's Meals are served – South Sudan and Kenya.

Across famine-hit South Sudan – where a brutal civil war continues to rage – and drought-stricken Kenya, more than 46,000 children have the certainty of receiving one good meal every school day at this desperate time.

More than ever, Mary's Meals is not only a powerful incentive to come to the classroom, it is a vital lifeline for these vulnerable children in desperate need of nourishment.

With millions across East Africa on the brink of starvation, Mary's Meals recently launched an East Africa Emergency Appeal to help lessen the devastating impact of the crisis.

Moses Kopurot Kenyi, who works for Mary's Meals' partner

organisation in South Sudan, said: 'Most of the children here are so malnourished and they have a lot of challenges. To keep them in school, we need to provide the Mary's Meals feeding programme. Without any meals, there will definitely be a very poor future for South Sudan. We thank Mary's Meals and we thank those who are helping Mary's Meals.'

Mary's Meals is committed to keeping its running costs low, with at least 93 per cent of donations being spent on charitable activities. This is only possible because most of its work – from awareness and fundraising activities to the cooking and serving of the meals – is done by an army of dedicated volunteers, including more than 80,000 in Malawi alone.

It costs just £13.90 to feed a child with Mary's Meals for a whole school year. To find out more or to donate, please visit www.marysmeals.org.uk.

POLICE FILES with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

Arrested

ABOUT 2.30pm on Monday April 17, in Colonsay Terrace, Oban, police arrested a man aged 33 for allegedly using abusive language. The man was held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Speeding

AT 8.40pm on Tuesday April 18, on the A828 near Benderloch, a man aged 24 was stopped and charged with driving at excessive speed. A report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Charged

ON TUESDAY April 18, at the pedestrian crossing on George Street, Oban, a silver Audi car allegedly had two bald tyres and was parked within the controlled area of the crossing. Subsequently, a man aged 26 was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Disturbance

AT THE Bunkhouse on the Isle of Coll, a man allegedly assaulted two other men, shouted abuse and caused damage to property, at about 7.05pm on Wednesday April 19. Police attended and carried out inquiries and subsequently on Thursday April 20, a 38-year-old man was arrested and charged. A report has been submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Fire

ON Monday April 24, at about 10.40am, a fire occurred within a derelict property at Dalintart Drive, Oban. Police are investigating the incident and are appealing for information. Call 101 or anonymously on 0800 555 111.



DIOPLÒMA ANNS NA MEADHANAN GÀIDHLIG

Tha an cùrsa seo air a dhealbhadh airson luchd-trèanaidh ullachadh airson saoghal craolaidh an latha an-diugh. Tha oileanaich air a' chùrsa a' faighinn sàr eòlas is brosnachadh bho na diofar òraidichean a bhios a' tadhal orra, a tha ag obair gu proifeiseanta sa gnìomhachais.

'Se cùrsa fad dà bhliadhna a tha seo leis a chiad bhliadhna aig a cholaiste agus 10 mìosan anns a ghnìomhachais anns

“Chan eil cùrsa cho prìseil coltach ris ann an Alba, a bheir dhut am fiosrachadh agus an tuigse a' dh'fheumas thu airson dreuchd anns na meadhanan.”

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WWW.SMO.UHI.AC.UK



Get ready for a town that be buzzing with weekend festival

THE town is going to be jumping this weekend ... or dancing, writes Oban ambassador, Kay MacDonald.

The Highland and Islands Music and Dance Festival hits town and it's going to be all go.

There's just so much going on as well as all the competitions.

There will be music in the Royal Hotel on Friday and Saturday night, a family ceilidh in Argyllshire Gathering Halls, piping and highland dancing in McCaig's Tower on Thursday night (weather permitting) and music in the Oban Inn, Olive Garden, Markie Dan's and the Chocolate Shop.

You won't be able to turn the corner without hearing pipes or accordions.

Saturday will be the highlight with entertainment in Station Square and Stafford Street, including Paddy Shaw's swing band and Campbell Cameron teaching everyone to Strip the Willow.

Programmes for all the events are widely available in the town so put your dancing shoes on and get out. It'll be worth it.

Over the five years I've been out and about meeting everyone I've always loved how everyone is drawn to the sound of the pipes. You just see heads turning and people gravitating to the music and, now that we have no obstacles this year, I'm looking forward to musicians popping

up all over the town during the summer, which hopefully will be sunny and warm.

Did you spot where last week's photo was taken? The lovely old fashioned lamps are outside the War and Peace Museum and I've been kind this week – it's much easier.

WHERE IS THIS?



Recent results from Fort William Golf Club

Golf

ON SATURDAY April 1 a 12-hole stableford was played at Fort William Golf Club with the following result: Men - 1 David MacGillivray 30 points; 2 James Duncan 28 points; 3 Ian Robertson 27 points.

On Saturday April 8 a two-person Texas scramble was played: 1 Brian O'Neill and Ian Robertson net 60 (67-7); 2 Eric Wallace and Jason Wallace net 62 (68-6) BIH; 3 Steven Jamieson and Willie McCann net 62 (67-5).

On Saturday April 9 a singles stableford was played: 1 David MacDonald 40 points; 2 Kevin Hickman 38 points; Stewart Duncan 37 points.

On Saturday April 15 the Wolverton Trophy was played: 1 Lorne Ross net 63 (65-2) 2 Scott Lawrie net 65 (73-8); 3 Jason Wallace net 66 (82-16).

On Saturday April 1 a 12-hole stableford was played: Ladies - 1 Rosemary Macintyre 21 points; 2 Liz Merry 10 points.

On Tuesday April 4 a 12-hole hidden holes competition was played - 1 Iona Cameron net 58 (71-13); 2 Kathleen Leitch net 60 (71-11).

On Saturday April 8 the first round of the Cameron Stableford Trophy took place - 1 Ann Lovatt 33 points; 2 Rosemary Macintyre 32 points; 3 Iona Cameron 31 points.

On Tuesday April 11 a 12-hole par competition was played - 1 Iona Cameron five down; 2 Helen Brian seven down; 3 Liz Merry 10 down.

On Sunday April 9 a Junior Masters was played with the following result: 1 David Wilson net 61 (89-28); 2 Lorne Ross net 66 (67-1); 3 Scott Lawrie net 67 (75-8)

World champion boxer pays a visit to Lochaber

WORLD featherweight boxing champion Lee Selby visited the Lochaber Phoenix boxing gym last Friday night to train and meet the local fighters and friends.

There was a huge bonus for the local club as Lee, who holds the IBF version of the title, brought with him his brother Andrew, who was formerly recognised as the number one amateur flyweight in the world before he turned professional and is now the British champion with a world title eliminator scheduled for the summer.

Organised by Alec McPherson of Speed Entertainment, the event proved to be an outstanding success with both boxers not only showing how accomplished they are in the ring but also how pleasant and what fantastic

role models they are for young aspiring sportsmen and women.

The two boxers entered the packed gym in full training gear with Lee's IBF world title belt on display and, after making introductions, entered the gym's main training ring and proceeded to go through a gentle warm-up of skipping and shadow boxing after which they took each other for a couple of rounds of boxing pad work. This was only to whet the appetite as the two brothers then proceeded to engage in a few rounds of sparring, displaying all the abilities and skills that have taken them to the very pinnacle of their sport.

Unlike some successful sportsmen, these two Welsh stars have stayed very humble and were eager to pass on as much advice as possible to the younger



Three champions in one ring, as Cameron Whyte spars with British flyweight champion Andrew Selby, while his brother IBF featherweight world champion Lee Selby watches and gives advice.

Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image



Young Lochaber boxer Max Derbenovs puts in maximum effort in sparring with British flyweight champion, Andrew Selby. Photos: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

members of the gym, including engaging in sparring, pad work and technical advice within the confines of the ropes.

Understandably, the local boxers were thrilled to share a ring with the visitors as not many boxers can experience the thrill of sparring with world champions.

As if this was not enough, both boxers then engaged in a lengthy signing session where everyone present received either an auto-

graphed photograph or some official Selby merchandise during which the brothers answered any and every question directed to them.

The visit was such a success that both boxers have stressed that they would love to visit the area again later this year.

This visit was great preparation for the younger members of the club as they prepare for the club's home show at the Nevis Centre on Saturday May 13

Boxing

where, for the first time in quite a few years, the senior boxers will outnumber the juniors with no fewer than six local seniors scheduled to appear alongside five junior and schoolboy boxers against opponents from all over Scotland.

Tickets for this event can be purchased from the venue or contacting anyone at the club.

First win of the season for Lochaber

Lochaber	64
Shetland	10
BT Caledonia 2NW	

LOCHABER hosted Shetland in their final game of the season last weekend.

The game never seemed destined to happen after originally being postponed due to Up Helly Aa then postponed again. And last Friday Lochaber were still not 100 per cent sure Shetland were coming.



Lochaber's Callum Boyd tussles with the Shetland opposition. Photos: Abridgeside Photography.

Lochaber were looking to finally get their first win of the league this season after only beating Mull in a friendly.

Lochaber started well from the kick-off and it wasn't long until they opened the scoring, spreading the Shetland defence to score out wide. This was a marker of things to come.

The first scrum saw Lochaber take control of the set piece yet again but it wasn't long until one of the Shetland props picked up a knee injury and, with no replacement props, the scrums became uncontested nullifying any advantage Lochaber might have had in that area.

With lineouts going well and Lochaber being able to steal a lot of Shetland's ball, they were able to get a lot of possession. With all this possession the Lochaber backs were finally able to show what they could do with ball in hand, finding holes in the Shetland defence time and time again to keep the scoreboard ticking over.

Shetland did manage to get some points on the board with a penalty in off one of the posts in the first half. From the resulting

kick-off, Lochaber winger and man of the match John Jones caught the ball and proceeded to run straight through the Shetland defence to give Lochaber another try which was converted by Jonathan McCook.

Shetland's only other points came with a try when their tighthead prop managed to force his way over the line from close range. Shetland were starting to lose players through injury and Lochaber agreed to end the game with around 10 minutes left on the clock.



Callum Boyd crashes his way over the line for a try.

Rugby

The final score was Lochaber 64-10 Shetland.

Lochaber try scorers were as follows: John Jones (2), Findlay Ireland (2), Jack Ringland (2), John MacKerlich, Euan Larter, Callum Boyd and Callum MacDonald. Conversions: Jonathan McCook (7).

Lochaber will now wait to see where they will be playing next season as they have applied to move to the west leagues.



Runners set off on the 5k uphill race. Abridgeside Photography.

Stephen wins uphill race

A GREAT afternoon of racing brought fine results to the spring version of the Aonach Mor Uphill Race last weekend at Nevis Range.

Lochaber's Stephen Trail had another great result, finishing first overall in a time of 29 minutes and 59 seconds. Second was Steve MacDonald and third was over-50 Tim Brand.

Highland Hill Runners had several representatives including the first-placed lady, Diana MacDonald, finishing well clear

Athletics

of any other females in sixth place overall in a time of 32 minutes and 43 seconds. Other notable performances include: first male veteran, Allan Macleod; third lady Lisa Conlon, running her first race since having her baby; first female over 50, Linda Johnson; first female over 60, Gill Barnes.

For race results go to www.offbeatbikes.co.uk.

Brian Johnstone leads handicap bowling league

10-pin bowling

AFTER week six of the 10-pin bowling singles leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Pam Weller leads the scratch league with 80 points.

Pam is closely followed by Brian Johnstone on 79 points and Gary Cowan on 75 points.

Brian Johnstone leads of the handicap league with 78 points followed by Wendy Brooke on 73 points and Tommy McKnight on 69 points.

Pam Weller still leads the chase for the Nevis Radio High Pin Trophy with 2,680 scratch points followed by Brian Johnstone in second with 2,553 and Nick Brooke in third with 2,379.

There was a lack of high scoring this week with the top individual scratch game being 167 from Ben Weller.

The top three-game scratch series of the week were bowled by Ben Weller with 467 followed by Gary Cowan with 442 and John Weller with 397. Ben Weller also rolled the top three-game handicap series with 584 followed by Wendy Brooke with 569 and Gary Cowan with 565.

Cricket club get off to a flying start

Cricket

FORT William Cricket Club started the season explosively with a seven-wicket win at Ross County.

Batting first, Ross County were bowled out for 100 exactly with Ross Lavin taking 4-23 and Ash Anjum 3-8. In reply, Charlie Luxton and Ross Lavin both hit 30 while Ash Anjum raced to 24 not out including three sixes in one over.

Captain David Duncan was pleased. After the game he said: 'What a great start to the season. Now we're really looking forward to our first home game with Fochabers on Saturday. As current champions they will be a great test for us.'

If you're interested in trying cricket, check the club's Facebook page for details of practice nights.

Lottery numbers

Lottery

THE WINNING lotto numbers for Fort William Golf Club draw on Thursday April 20 were 1, 12 and 14. There were no winners so the draw goes to £200 for today's draw.

The £600 Caol Regeneration lotto jackpot was won by Mrs I Henshaw last week. The winning numbers were 6, 9 and 15. The draw goes back to £100 for today's lotto.

Winning lotto numbers for Ballachulish shinty draw on April 23 were 5, 13 and 16. G Whyte of Ballachulish won the £1,200 jackpot. The draw will return to £200 for this week.

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WEATHER

Thursday	Cloudy Winds moderate north north westerly Temperatures 6°C to 10°C.
Friday	Cloudy Winds light westerly Temperatures 6°C to 10°C.
Weekend Outlook	Cloudy on Saturday Cloudy on Sunday Winds strong south south easterly Temperatures 6°C to 11°C.



Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday April 27, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm			
Thur	00.00 0.3 06.07 4.2 12.22 0.3 18.14 4.0	Ardrishaig -5.35	Mallaig	+0.25	
Fri	00.45 0.2 06.46 4.1 13.04 0.3 18.54 4.0	Campbeltown -5.30	Portree	+0.55	
Sat	01.31 0.3 07.27 3.9 13.48 0.4 19.36 3.9	Crinan -0.47	Tobermory	+0.16	
Sun	02.20 0.5 08.12 3.7 14.36 0.6 20.22 3.7	Islay Port Ellen 2.00	Dover	+5.30	
Mon	03.13 0.8 09.02 3.4 15.27 0.8 21.13 3.5	Lochboisdale +0.30			
Tues	04.13 1.1 10.03 3.0 16.26 1.1 22.16 3.1				
Wed	05.23 1.3 11.46 2.8 17.31 1.3 23.48 3.0				

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate