

The Oban Times

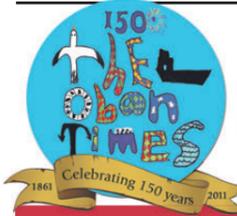
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Great Christmas Gift ideas
See our feature on page 25

Argyll Hotel to be down by Christmas

Eilidh is a triple gold winner



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Fuel rise delay is welcome news

MOTORISTS and politicians have welcomed the postponement of a rise in fuel duty planned for January until August 2012.

Chancellor George Osborne announced the move in Tuesday's Autumn Statement and said a second rise planned for August would now be cancelled, resulting in a total increase of 3p per litre.

Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid said: 'The postponement of the January fuel duty increase and the cancellation of the August one is great news for a rural constituency like Argyll and Bute.'

It follows last week's announcement that remote islands would benefit from a 5p per litre discount in fuel duty.

No walking over Connel Bridge

ANYONE hoping to get around next week's closures by walking across the Connel Bridge will be disappointed. There will be access for neither pedestrians nor vehicles from 10pm to 6am between Sunday, December 4 and Friday, December 9.

The closures are to allow the replacement of cross beams damaged when a lorry hit the bridge in September and repairs to the support structure.

Access for emergency services will be maintained.

Countdown to 'Angel of the Year' nominations

THERE are just five days left to nominate an unsung hero or heroine for the first Angel of the Year Award.

The Oban Times has been flooded with inspirational stories of charity workers, full-time carers, nurses, neighbours and volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty to help people and make their local communities a better place.

Nominations close at 10am on December 5 and will be considered by an expert panel.

See the form on page two of this week's paper and more details online at www.obantimes.co.uk/angel.



Video of this available online OBANTIMES.CO.UK

A stunning fireworks display brought the curtain down the town's Winter Festival Picture - Tony Hardley www.scotphoto.com

'Obang' Bay fireworks spectacular sets new mark

WITH a crowd lining Oban Bay and photographers and television cameras from around the country positioned at vantage points around the town, Pyrol delivered a stunning fireworks display to end the town's Winter Festival.

The Edinburgh-based fireworks company became the most famous in the world after an Oban Times video of their botched fireworks display at Mossfield, Oban on November

4 went viral on YouTube and is approaching 900,000 views.

'Obang' The one-minute 'Obang', as it has become known, saw all £6,000-worth of fireworks go off at once and the resulting video footage made international news.

As a gesture to the town Pyrol produced a free-of-charge and faultless five-minute display on Sunday over Oban Bay. Martin Allen of Pyrol said

the company would be keen to come back for next year's display, adding that they hope to name a new firework 'Obang' when they visit China next February to see the latest fireworks available.

The much-anticipated event on Sunday brought people from all over the country, filling local hotels. Cafes stayed open late to welcome in customers from the busy streets. Oban Fireworks Committee chairman, Council-

lor Roddy McCuish, told The Oban Times: 'The feedback I got from Sunday was that it was so impressive people want it over the bay every year. For that to work we would have to devise a way of getting the money in before the event.'

'I would like to thank everyone who helped to make it happen, especially the Northern Lighthouse Board, who moved their ship so we could set off fireworks from their pier.'

RET boost for more islands

Mull and Arran need better infrastructure claims SNP

REPORT

by Euan Paterson
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk



Transport Minister Keith Brown

MORE Hebridean islands are to benefit from reduced ferry fares after the Scottish Government announced an expansion to its Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) scheme.

But islands that currently suffer from problems with infrastructure, such as Arran and Mull, will have to wait at least three years for cheaper travel.

On Tuesday Transport Minister Keith Brown announced that RET would become a permanent feature on the Western Isles, Coll and Tiree, following a four-year pilot scheme on these islands, due to finish in spring 2012. Commercial vehicles longer than five metres will no longer benefit from the RET scheme but will instead receive a 25 per cent discount on fares.

An RET pilot scheme will be introduced to the islands of Islay, Colonsay and Gigha from October 2012, and to Arran from October 2014.

No date has been given for the introduction of the scheme to other islands, although Mr Brown stated they would be included 'within the term of this Parliament'. They include: Mull, Iona, Lismore, Raasay, Skye, Small Isles and the Sounds of Barra and Harris.

Mr Brown said RET, which prices ferry journeys at the equivalent journey by road, had boosted car journeys to the islands taking part in the pilot scheme by an average of 31 per cent.

He told The Oban Times: 'RET has been an SNP policy for decades and was included in our manifesto, so we didn't have to

through the scheme. 'Mull currently has a huge tourism demand and we have found that RET can increase demand by about 40 per cent. Mull also has infrastructure problems and it would be counter-productive to immediately put RET into a place that didn't have the required infrastructure.'

Mull-based SNP councillor Mary Jean Devon welcomed the news that RET would be coming to Mull but expressed disappointment it wouldn't come sooner.

'It's a bit like someone saying, 'I'll buy you a drink, but the pubs are shut just now', she added.

Islay community councillor Roberta MacNeill said the announcement was well timed, as islands are in need of a financial boost.

'This is excellent news for Islay because it will drive down the cost of living. We have also seen the Machrie Hotel taken over and the new Islay Hotel built so we can cope with extra visitors. 'When the original pilots scheme was announced there was uproar that we were not included, so today's announcement will be widely welcomed.'

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell said the news would make a huge difference to Argyll's island communities, adding: 'Larger companies already enjoy discounts not available to anyone else but for the first time the regular van of messages and orders going, for example, to Colonsay, will be able to reduce prices for something as basic as bringing the shopping.'

"Excellent news for Islay because it will drive down the cost of living."

community councillor Roberta MacNeill

One-day strike bites in Argyll

SCHOOLS, street cleaning, libraries and day care centres were all facing disruption yesterday as The Oban Times went to press, as a result of strike action by 30 unions.

Argyll and Bute Council said it was taking action to minimise the impact of strikes, though most services were reduced or closed.

Working parents were faced with child care problems as more than 70 schools were closed to pupils. Children in school hostels at Dunoon and Oban were sent home on Tuesday night and asked to return to school this morning.

NHS Highland said contingency plans would ensure core services, like cancer treatment and maternity, would be provided and emergency cover would be unaffected.

Council must be bolder on 'local homes for local families'

CASH for rural social housing should be quadrupled in a bold move to tackle Argyll's chronic shortage of affordable homes.

As Argyll and Bute Council passed its housing strategy and set up a rural housing fund of £750,000, Councillor Roddy McCuish called for dramatic action to cut a waiting list of almost 4,000 people.

'It's a dire situation - 90 per cent of the representations I get are about housing,' he said. 'I welcome the release of these funds, but for £3m they could build 60 homes instead of 15.'

'If you build three or four houses on the Isle of Coll, it has the same

economic impact as 20 houses in Helensburgh.'

He added the allocation system and homelessness policies need to be looked at, if necessary in the courts, so they are fit for Argyll's needs. He said: 'What's the point in bringing four houses to Coll and having to give two of them to homeless families, when you have local families living in caravans? You need local connection points, local homes for local families. I know the council's hands are tied by legislation - but sometimes you have to challenge the legislation.'

The council's new rural housing fund will initially target Tiree, Iona, Ardfern, Strachur, Port El-

len and Succoth. The executive also agreed £1.1m grants towards housing in Dunbeg, Dalmally and Helensburgh and to ban the right to buy for most of Lorn, Mid Argyll and a number of islands.

Councillor Robin Currie, housing spokesman, acknowledged the 'acute shortage of affordable housing'. He said: 'We have a responsibility to look at all options to try and increase the supply of affordable homes. In setting up this new fund, the council has proved it is willing to take a lead in encouraging the development of new affordable homes to sustain some of our most remote and fragile rural communities.'



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New Lochaber Housing Association (LHA) tenants at Claggan, Margaret Turner, left, and Emma Sangster with daughter Lacey, right, receive their hampers from LHA housing officers Irene Christie and David MacLaren.

Tenants get keys to new Fort William homes

RESIDENTS in two recently built housing developments in Fort William are settling in after being handed the keys to their brand new homes.

Lochaber Housing Association allocated the affordable social rented properties to applicants of the Highland Housing Register last month.

The schemes at Achariach and Dun Deardail in Claggan were built on land

formerly occupied by Fort William Fire Brigade and NEWCO, a local manufacturing company.

The developments comprise 24 units for rent and six shared equity low cost properties, which combine rent with mortgage payments to provide an affordable path to home ownership.

Local architect David Mee designed the visually impressive project, which was built

by UBC. The Scottish Government and the association provided over £4million to finance the much-needed properties.

To mark the occasion, all residents' names went into a prize draw for two festive hampers. Emma Sangster and retired couple Reginald and Margaret Turner were the winning recipients and thanked the association for providing them with new homes.

Islanders hold meeting on care cover

Community project aims to protect elderly care provision on Tiree

A COMMUNITY project to prevent the privatisation of elderly care provision on Tiree will hold a public meeting this week to consult on the way forward.

By STEVEN FLANAGAN
 sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk



Dr John Holliday.

Argyll and Bute Council will in February put the island's Eventide Care Home out to tender, but Cùram Thiriodh hope to avert the possibility of a private company running the business by taking it into community ownership.

As part of that proposal, they propose to implement an 'integrated care plan' that will bring together nurses, home staff and the 'Care at Home', while a new building will be looked at for the coming years.

But success will depend on the support of locals, they say, and a meeting will be held at An Talla next week to hear what islanders have to say about the project.

Dr John Holliday, who has been driving the project, said: 'We think the way forward is to bring together the nurses, the Home staff and the 'Care at Home' staff into one team - what we call an integrated care service.'

'We also think we are going to need a new building in the next few years. But for Cùram to succeed, we need the backing of the community.'

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Baby unit parents better catered for

BETTER arrangements for parents of babies who are patients in Raigmore Hospital's Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) have been put in place.

Mums and dads can now stay in a two-bedroomed house on the Inverness hospital site, allowing them to be close by whilst their newborn baby is in the unit.

Previously mothers were kept in a hospital bed and often the father could not be accommodated.

SCBU clinical lead Kay Yeldham said the move meant for the first time dads could be accommodated free of charge as well as the mother.

The refurbishment was paid for out of SCBU's endowments fund, which relies on donations made to the unit.

£12,000 boost to promote Gaelic

ARGYLL and Bute Council together with Ionad Chalum Chille Ile have been awarded £12,808 from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to continue their work in promoting the Gaelic language.

The money, which came from the Gaelic Language Implementation Fund will be used to increase Gaelic in Argyll and Bute through a series of projects.

Tutors will be trained using the Ulpan learning method through classes in Kintyre, Mid Argyll and Cowal and Gaelic conversation classes will be held at Ionad Chalum Chille Ile (Islay).

There will also be a pilot drama club run in Islay's primary schools to encourage Gaelic learners aged three to 12.

Disabled blue badge fees to rise

THE FEE for a blue badge disabled parking permit is to increase from £2.50 to £20 on January 1 2012.

New fraud-proof badges are being introduced across Scotland and will cost Argyll and Bute Council significantly more to provide to the 4,500 people entitled. The increased price for a three-year pass was approved at last week's council executive. Anyone who applies before the end of 2011 will get their permit at the lower price.

MP's power cash cut concern

ROSS, Skye and Lochaber MP Charles Kennedy MP has voiced concerns over reductions in the feed-in tariff available for solar power.

The new rules, which come into effect this week, mean anyone who installs solar panels will receive less cash - even if they signed up for the scheme beforehand. Mr Kennedy said: 'We can't let people slip through the cracks on this issue.'

'There's a real risk that people who've signed up for installation, expecting the higher rate, will now have the rug swept out from under their feet.'

Easdale playpark safe say owners

A COMMUNITY playpark with a small wind generator and solar panel is safe, despite the concerns of a parent, say its owners.

Eilean Eisdeal worked with parents and children to install the eco equipment as part of its Green Streets project. However, a small wind turbine was damaged when stones were thrown at it and its blades had to be removed. One worried parent, who did not want to be named, contacted *The Oban Times* to say she feared youngsters could be injured if parts of the turbine flew off. She said: 'Should the turbine be re-instated, I fear there is a terrible accident waiting to happen.'

Keren Cafferty, chairwoman of the community group, acknowledged a parent raised objections to the playpark plans. She added: 'All of these concerns were addressed. Other parents and children enjoy and make use of the playpark and we have received many positive comments.'

Proposal to move Duror Post Office to Kentallen

Closure of village shop forces move

THE POST Office Ltd is proposing to move its service from the closed Duror Post Office to Kentallen - but the community will ultimately decide what happens next.

Following the closure of the Duror shop on Tuesday this week, Post Office Ltd is moving ahead with plans to move the post office to Kentallen and Duror Community Centre, 1,760 yards along the A828.

In the meantime, it is encouraging customers in the area to give their views on the service and its new location. Post Office Ltd says its proposed relocation presents the best solution to safeguard Post Office services in the area in the longer term. Customers will still be able to access the same range of products and services as the current service.

Galson trust secures renewable energy loan

URRAS Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (The Galson Estate Trust) on northwest Lewis has secured a £150,000 loan towards an ambitious renewable energy project.

The Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) finance will make up a £2million package for a three-turbine 2.7megawatt development on moorland at Upper Barvas.

Big Lottery funding is already in place and the trust is working towards securing bank finance for the remainder by the end of this year.

The project at Baile an Trusail will be phased, with one 900kW turbine constructed in the first instance. A grid connection is scheduled for late 2012.



Second Green Flag for Caol

Caol Primary School has received its second Green Flag for its high standards of environmental awareness. P4 pupil and eco committee member Nathan Johnston told *The Oban Times*: 'We've been picking up litter in the playground and we've planted something in the garden.' The school's garden has been tidied up with each class given its own section to look after. Both flags have been framed and will be hung in the school canteen. 26_1488lag01

Islay patients given written assurances over GP cover

PATIENTS of Islay's Bowmore, Port Ellen and Isle of Jura medical practices have been reassured their General Practitioner (GP) posts will be filled after January 31 2012.

Dr Jean Knowles recently announced she would retire at the end of January next year and would pull out of a proposed takeover of Bowmore and Jura surgeries.

However, in a letter to the patients concerned, Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP) said it would employ locum doctors from February 1, 2012 while the posts are being advertised and that the CHP would 'assume responsibility for the provision of health services until such time as these vacancies are filled.'

'This will ensure ongoing professional support for all GPs and a safe and sustainable model for out-of-hours and community hospital care provision.'

Mr Leslie also told patients the CHP would keep islanders informed and involved in the process of finding replacements.

Public meeting
 He was due to attend a public meeting on the issue, along with locality manager Christina West, on Monday this week in the Gaelic college, Bowmore.

Breach of the peace man admonished by sheriff

A FORMER Glenfinnan man who angrily threatened members of staff in the Fort William Job Centre after being told he was no longer eligible for benefits has been admonished.

James Reade, now of 29 Scarrel Terrace, Castlemlisk, Glasgow pled guilty to conducting himself in a disorderly manner by shouting, swearing and threatening staff and committing a breach of the peace on July 14, 2010.

The 29-year-old also admitted breaching the peace outside Ossian's on High Street on August 8 last year when he shouted, swore, attempted to fight with and struggled with two men, Fort William Sheriff Court heard.

Sentence was deferred for good behaviour in January, and after seeing a social work report and reading a letter from Reade's partner, Sheriff Kenneth Hogg said: 'It seems you have sorted yourself out. I don't want to see you in court again.'

Teenager denies fighting two men at BA Club

A CAOL teenager accused of fighting with two other men at the BA Club is due to stand trial at Fort William Sheriff Court on December 19.

Rhys Donnelly, of Tigh A Chladaich, Glenmallie Road, pled not guilty to repeatedly punching a man on the head, knocking him to the ground and kicking him on the head to his injury.

The 17-year-old also denies fighting and struggling with a second man, refusing to desist and causing a breach of the peace. The alleged incidents happened on Friday October 28.

Campbeltown drunk blames pub

IT WAS the pub's fault, not mine, a man told Campbeltown Sheriff Court last week.

Stephen Blackstock, aged 39, of 24E Davaar Avenue, Campbeltown, pleaded guilty to assaulting an employee of a town centre bar on September 16. Blackstock claimed: 'There should have been a doorman and I wouldn't have been allowed in the premises.'

'So you are saying it's their fault?' asked Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC before fining Blackstock £300.

Bute artist named as ambassador

AN ARTIST from Bute has been named as a new arts ambassador for the county.

Nicola Jones, who is also a tutor with Argyll College, has taken on the voluntary post, as part of the Voluntary Arts Network.

The 37-year-old said: 'With so many layers of bureaucracy lying between ordinary people and the decision makers, we all need somebody to speak up for us. Now those participating in the arts and crafts in Argyll and Bute have a designated person they can talk to about their hopes and concerns for the area, who will then feedback those concerns to people in a position to do something about it.'

Argyll and Bute parking amnesty

ARGYLL and Bute Council has announced a 'parking amnesty' to boost local Christmas shopping.

Between December 20 and 24, off-street car parking charges will be lifted in all the county's towns.

Council leader Dick Walsh said it was the third year the scheme had been put in place to boost traders in a difficult financial climate.

Loch Fyne complex adds electric car charge point

THE WEST coast will be within reach of electric car drivers thanks to a new charging point on a major route.

Loch Fyne Oyster Bar, in Cairndow on A83, has put in the plug, allowing diners to charge up for free while they enjoy a meal. John Meaney, facilities manager, said it was an extension of the firm's commitment to the environment and sustainability. It is believed to be only the second charging point in Argyll, after one was installed in Ford, Mid Argyll, earlier this year.

Cleaner water ahead for Dalmally

A PROJECT to upgrade the disinfection system at the Dalmally Water Treatment Works (WTW) will give around 300 residents cleaner and fresher drinking water, says Scottish Water.

The £200,000 project will ensure the water meets the requirements of the Drinking Water Quality Regulator.

Scottish Water expects to have the work completed by spring/summer of 2012.

Construction manager David Kitching said: 'There will be no disruption to the supply to customers in the area and we do not expect any road traffic management will be required because the work will be contained at the WTW.'

LAST CHANCE TO NOMINATE
 Entries must be in by Monday 5th December



Angel OF THE YEAR
 150TH ANNIVERSARY 1861 - 2011

If you know someone who really makes a difference in their community or to someone's life then fill in the nomination form provided below or online at www.obantimes.co.uk/angel and let us know.

All nominations will be assessed by an independent panel and the winner announced in *The Oban Times* this Christmas.

As well as winning a trophy and the title of **ANGEL OF THE YEAR**, the winner will also receive £500. Two runners up will each win £100.

All nominations must be received by 10am MONDAY DECEMBER 5 2011. Full terms and conditions are available online at www.obantimes.co.uk/angel.

NOMINATION FORM

Nominee's name.....
 Nominee's address.....
 My nominee should win because.....
 (please submit up to 200 words on a separate sheet and attach to this form).
 Your name.....
 Your address.....
 Daytime telephone number.....
 Email address.....
 Send to: Pauline Clifford, The Oban Times, Angel of the Year, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB.

Lorn Lines



A YOUTH group from Oban is preparing to show Argyll in its best light next year with an exhibition of photos from around the county. The Zoom! group, run by H2O youth worker Ewen Munro, held a photo exhibition, sale of work and a coffee morning at The Well last Saturday to raise funds for the exhibition.

AN OBAN store is looking for a local charity partner to support during 2012.

Each year the Original Factory Shop picks a good cause and staff help to raise funds throughout the year.

Any club or charity would like to be considered should fill in a nomination form, available in store, before December 5.

A POKER competition has been held in memory of a regular player at Oban's Aulay's Bar who died earlier this year.

The inaugural Matt Watson Cockroach Championship was held on November 14. Matt was a regular at poker nights every Monday in Aulay's Bar and was affectionately known as 'Cockroach' because of his ability to stay in the game against the odds.

Twenty-five players entered the tournament last week with the £300 pot going to charity. The winner, David MacPhee, chose to donate the prize to Yorkhill Children's Hospital.

IT HAS been a busy week for the young Highland dancers of the Eilidh MacInnes School of Dance.

The dancers entertained the crowd at Oban Distillery at the close of the Winter Festival on Sunday.

The weekend before, the youngsters braved the damp weather conditions to perform at the Christmas Lights Switch-on in Station Square.

The dancers were: Charlie Nathen, Ragen Kelly, Lucy Croarkin, Bronwen Davies, Amy Gibb, Karina Black, Jenna MacInnes, Kirsty MacInnes, Abbie MacKenzie and Aisling McGuire.

ST COLUMBA'S Primary School, Oban will be holding an open evening for prospective pupils and their parents.

Next Tuesday, December 6, children eligible to start school in August can come along for a tour, the chance to meet teachers and pupils, games and refreshments.

MEMBERS of the Oban and District Classic Vehicle Club held their monthly meeting in the Lochnell Arms Hotel, North Connel. A Bring and Buy Sale took place at this meeting with a range of items from car magazines to aircraft parts being sold to raise a total of £142.00 for club funds.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, December 15 at 19.30 at the Lochnell Arms, North Connel, and anyone interested is invited to attend.

THERE was a large turnout of members and visitors to Oban Photographic Club's weekly meeting in the Regent Hotel Oban on Monday, November 21.

Douglas May, FRPS, a past president of Edinburgh Photographic Society and current chairman of one of the Royal Photographic Society's panels of judges, came along to give the results of the 'Abstract' competition.

As well as judging the entries, Douglas gave an extremely helpful and constructive commentary on what an abstract should be and where the entries could have been bettered.

Results
Projected Images: 1st Stephen Lawson who also received the John Douglas Trophy for the best overall image; 2nd Jim Kirkpatrick; 3rd Ronnie McKillop

Prints: 1st & 2nd John Douglas; 3rd Ronnie McKillop
The next meeting on December 5 is Alex Farquar from Fort William showing and talking about his photography.



TO MARK the 200th anniversary year of Oban's Royal Burgh status, the town's speakers club invited Oban historian Bob McCulloch to speak at its annual dinner last Thursday at Soroba House Hotel. Bob is pictured third from right with the club's office bearers, from left: Secretary Jim Fraser, vice-president Frank Walton, president John MacLean, social secretary Cameron Fletcher and educational director Eamonn Arthur.

Police files

A MOTORIST who tried to drive off with an over-laden trailer was stopped by police close to the Corran Esplanade in Oban.

The 44-year-old man has been charged with reckless driving.

A MOTORIST has been charged with driving aggressively and recklessly following an incident in Lora View, North Connel last Wednesday, November 23 at 2.30pm.

The 32-year-old man is the subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal.

AN 80-YEAR-old woman was assaulted in Lorn Road, Dunbeg on Sunday, November 27. A 46-year old man was charged in connection with the incident.

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after a handbag was stolen from an unlocked house in Longdale Road, Oban, between November 21 and 22.

The bag's contents included personal papers and a purse with a sum of money. Anyone with any information can contact Constable Danks at Oban Police.

A WOMAN aged 28 was charged with conducting herself in a disorderly manner towards a 58-year-old woman in Miller Road, Oban.

A report has been made to the Procurator Fiscal after the incident, at 2.30pm on November 22.

Oban's Argyll Hotel to be down by Christmas

THE ARGYLL Hotel will come down before Christmas - but a new hotel to be built in its place may not be ready until 2014.

Developers Alan and Callum MacLeod of Ee-Usk had previously been granted permission to demolish the crumbling Oban property, pending the granting of a method statement from the council, with a view to building a new hotel in its place.

But the father and son team claimed a condition, that stated a contractor for a new build had to be in place before demolition, was stalling their plans.

Last Wednesday, faced with a damning engineer's report,

which stated the structure may not survive a harsh winter, Argyll and Bute Council's planning, protective services and licensing (PPSL) committee threw out a recommendation by council officers to retain the condition. Work has begun this week to remove internal furniture and fixings from the derelict hotel.

The MacLeods, who say they have already spent around £500,000 on the acquisition of the building and administration costs, admitted they feel more relief, than excitement, at the news.

Callum MacLeod told *The*

Oban Times: 'The PPSL's decision is absolutely fantastic and we are keen to crack on with this long-awaited next stage of development. The hotel will be demolished by Christmas.

"We are keen to crack on with this long-awaited next stage."

Callum MacLeod

'I think the most recent engineer's report was the turning point and I welcome the unanimous decision by councillors to overturn the council officer's decision.

'The new hotel will be a 16-month build and we can't afford to be opening out of season. If I can't get the foundations in the ground in January or February next year then there is little chance of us starting the build in 2012. Timing is of the essence.'

The developers are planning to build a 64-bedroom hotel, believed to be the first new hotel built in the town for 100 years.

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee, whose ward covers the Argyll Hotel site, said: 'I am glad the PPSL saw sense and gave permission for this dangerous building to come down.'

'Having seen the plans for the new hotel, I am excited about the development and believe it will give Oban an extra edge over other coastal towns in Scotland.'

At hearing news of the pending demolition, Oban Community Council has called for improvements to be made to Charles Street, believed to be the town's oldest street, which lies in behind the Argyll Hotel.

Police find cannabis garden

POLICE searching a house at Corran Brae, Oban under warrant discovered a cannabis cultivation and hydroponics system. A 29-year-old man will appear at Oban Sheriff Court in connection with the find next week.

Xmas toy appeal



The Oban branch of the Salvation Army is pleased with the response so far to its Christmas Toy Appeal but is keen to collect even more contributions for under-privileged children.

People doing their Christmas shopping are being asked to buy an extra gift and hand it into the Superdrug store in the town.

Pictured with some of the already donated presents are Salvation Army majors John and Joan Swan and Superdrug assistant manager Dawn Walker.

Oban driver has car seized by police

A 24-YEAR-old man had his car seized by police after they stopped him on Oban's Corran Esplanade and discovered he was driving the vehicle with no insurance. He has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal following the incident, on Tuesday, November 22.

The updated plan would allow 54 finger berths and a minimum of seven berths on the inside of the breakwater.

OBM also plans to move the proposed access for pedestrians from the North Pier to the South Pier.

Meanwhile, the group has identified two preferred contractors for the works but is in the process of meeting potential funders.

OBM has claimed that its costs so far are 53 per cent less than the figures engineers AECOM presented to Argyll and Bute Council.

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Guesthouse gains four-star gold

AN OBAN guesthouse has become the first in the town to achieve a four star gold award from VisitScotland.

After they impressed at their latest inspection, Alt na Craig House in Glenmore Road joins a select group of only 29 guesthouses in Scotland to reach this standard.

Tickets are available from Oban Police Office on Albany Street. The winners will be drawn by chief inspector Brian Auld on December 12 at noon.



The festival culminated on Sunday with a lantern parade from the Corran Halls to a festive market at Oban Distillery

10-day winter festival proves success

CHRISTMAS came early in Oban with the success of the inaugural 10-day Winter Festival.

Like the Oban 200 celebrations in the summer, the event highlighted Oban's community spirit, with most events being well attended. It also provided a financial boost to businesses in an otherwise quiet time of year for visitors.

The festival culminated on Sunday in a lantern parade with wax candles from the Corran Halls to Oban Distillery, where a festive market attracted hundreds of locals and visitors. The parade was led by Oban High School Pipe Band and provided a spectacle for the hundreds taking part.

From there, crowds gathered in the town centre and along the Esplanade to watch the spectacular Pyrol fireworks display.

Earlier in the week the

much-heralded synthetic ice-skating rink was fully booked for the four days it was open at Atlantis Leisure, the newly opened Dunollie House hosted well-attended guided walks and an Elves' Treasure Hunt run by Stramash. Evening events such as the Wine Call My Bluff, proved popular.

Pamela Lockhart, one of the eight festival committee members, said: 'The shop window



Fireworks from McCaig's Tower signalled the start of the parade

displays were better than we could have hoped for and we could not pick out the best one. In the end we declared Mary's Meals, Purdie's and The Pancake Place, as joint winners.

'The Lantern Parade was fabulous and the youth market at the Corran Halls, where primary school children formed a choir, was a joy to see. It was so busy.'

'The whole festival was very much a community event and it was great to see everyone out around the town.'

As a reward for the business's window display, The Pancake Place's Paula May was selected to start the short fireworks display at McCaig's Tower, which signalled the beginning of the Lantern Parade on Sunday.

Afterwards, Oban Community Council's Catherine Gillies said: 'To have that number of people going through the town at this time of year is amazing.'

But most pleasing of all for organisers was the willingness of town centre businesses to decorate their shop fronts and design window displays to help everyone get into the festive spirit.

'The whole festival was very much a community event and it was great to see everyone out around the town.'

As a reward for the business's window display, The Pancake Place's Paula May was selected to start the short fireworks display at McCaig's Tower, which signalled the beginning of the Lantern Parade on Sunday.

Afterwards, Oban Community Council's Catherine Gillies said: 'To have that number of people going through the town at this time of year is amazing.'

Warning follows Mull eagle nest fines

THE ROYAL Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland has issued a warning to those attempting to disturb the nesting white-tailed eagles on Mull after two photographers were fined for the offence.

Yuli Panayotov, aged 32, from London and Ivaylo Takev, aged 36, from Norwich were found guilty at

Oban Sheriff Court last week of disturbing the nest site at Killiechraon on May 1, 2010 by setting up a tent less than 100 metres from the site and photographing the birds.

The men, who were fined a combined total of £1,100, had disregarded warnings from RSPB Mull Officer Dave Sexton not to approach the site.

The eagles are a significant tourist attraction on Mull, bringing £5m to the local economy every year.

Following the verdict, Mr Sexton said: 'Unacceptable behaviour from people who think they are above the law and choose to disturb protected wildlife like the eagles will not be tolerated - wildlife photographers in particular need to take note.'

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TAYNUILT

DANCERS from the Eilidh MacInnes School of Dance made a triumphant return to Argyll at a recent Taynuilt winter ceilidh.

Jenna and Kirsty MacInnes gave impressive displays of Highland dancing at Taynuilt Village Hall, having just returned from performing at EuroDisney in Paris.

Young Benderloch piper Angus John MacColl gave a polished performance while another young local musical talent, Beccy Hill, played her clarsach beautifully.

Alasdair MacDonald from Connel delighted the audience with a series of well-known toe-tapping tunes on the accordion.

Singers for the evening were Morag Smith, Riona Whyte, Mod gold medallist, and Stuart Jackson, Mod silver medallist, who performed a wonderful array of Gaelic songs.

Fear an taighe for the evening was Cameron Fletcher.

ARDCHATTAN

PLANS to erect a covered cycle shed in the centre of an Argyll village have received a lukewarm response from the community.

Ardochattan Community Council is keen to encourage cyclists using stretches of the National Cycle Route 78 to stop off in the village of Benderloch and use its shops and café. But community councillors felt the design and scale of a bike shed proposed by Sustrans was inappropriate and over the top.

Lewis Morrison said: 'It strikes me as an inappropriate development - it's more for attaching to the side of a building.'

Jimmy Hanlon, who owns the



Youngsters from Bunesan Primary School were the first to benefit from the Balamory Bus, now in community ownership.

Primary pupils back on board the Balamory Bus

THE FORMER Balamory Bus has made its first journey since it was transferred to community ownership earlier this year.

The colourful minibus transported Bunesan Primary School's team to the Isle of Mull Rugby Club Tag Rugby Festival at Garmony, a total round trip of 69 miles. Mull and Iona Community Trust took over the bus from the BBC children's programme.

SPEAN BRIDGE

THE COMMANDING Officer of Lochaber sea cadets TS St Christopher has welcomed a new instructor to the unit.

Derrick Warner, from Letterfinlay, Spean Bridge, said he was 'particularly delighted' at the return of ex-cadet Trisha Mathieson.

Mr Warner said: 'Initially Trisha has offered to help with looking after the stores - uniforms and all the other general equipment that we own. She brings with her a new set of skills which we hope to be making use of in the not too distant future.'

Meanwhile, the unit elected a new management team at its AGM on November 3. Tina Calder, chairman, Janice Moye, treasurer, and Maryrose Hall, secretary, were all re-elected to their posts, having done so well in the past year. They are joined by Sara Munro and Raymond Groundwater.

PLOCKTON

DURING October there was 8.25 inches of rain with only seven dry days.

This followed nine inches in September, making it one of the wettest spells of weather for some years.

The warmest day was 17°C and coldest 3.2°C.

A sale of work in the Lighthouse Centre, Kyle, on November 4 raised £1,209 for the Laklinadon Christian Hospital in central India.

An Christmas parcel demonstration, organised by Johanna MacLean in Plockton Hall on November 12, raised £260 for Marie Curie funds.

In the latest round of Lottery funding Fergaigh Community Trust, which covers the communities of Stromeferry,

ISLAY

THE COMMUNITY-owned charitable Islay Energy Trust (IET) held its annual meeting in Bowmore on November 21.

Members heard a presentation by Andy Macdonald, Tidal Project Development Officer on the Sound of Islay Tidal Energy Project in which IET is partnering ScottishPower Renewables.

The Tidal Energy Project received Scottish Government consent in March 2011. A one megawatt device is being installed at the European Marine Energy Centre in the Orkney Islands for testing and, if all goes well, the plan is for 10 of these devices to be placed on the seabed in the Sound of Islay in 2013. Lindy MacLellan, Community Renewables Development Officer, briefed members on the Loch Allan Hydro Scheme and the Castlehill wind turbine project, both of which will become important components in IET's objective of establishing a portfolio of revenue-generating renewable energy projects for the benefit of the community.

George Dean outlined IET's current feasibility study, with a view to establishing a co-operative investment fund in which Islay people could invest and make a modest return from these and other energy projects, with payments also going to the community. Chairman Philip Maxwell told the meeting that the Argyll Renewable Communities (ARC) study into the socio-economic impacts of the Tires and Islay offshore wind farms would be published next week. Last Wednesday Mr Maxwell gave evidence to the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Select Committee, which is investigating the operations of the Crown Estate in Scotland. SC

MOIDART AND ACHARACLE

THE FIRMS of George Leslie and local contractor Bobby Ross have just completed the arduous task of restoring one of the local landmarks, the Shiel Bridge, back to safety levels required to protect public road users.

The main problem was centred around the base and foundations of the bridge and if left to deteriorate further would present a major safety problem. Although built in 1901, the main bridge structure is in perfect condition. So here's to another 100 years of happy motoring across the Shiel Bridge.

Meanwhile, still focused on the River Shiel, head keeper Gordon Shankland fly-fished more than 30 salmon in the last week, but not for the pot!

This is high profile fishing by any standards. However, there's a 'catch' to it. These salmon are classified as brood fish and destined for Gordon's Dorlin hatchery. After hatching and release into the River Shiel, they will one day return from Arctic waters as silvery salmon - the anglers dream. Because of the decline of wild salmon, this is an important and worthwhile operation. - Fergie Donnhallach



Pupils from Iona Primary School, who have just started their own project about Japan, make their contribution to the Boat of Blessings.

Iona 'Boat of Blessings' raises £600 for Japan

AN OLD wooden dingy, in which visitors were encouraged to place folded paper boats, has generated more than £600 for the Red Cross Japan Tsunami Appeal.

The 'Boat of Blessings' was originally conceived by Iona artist Mhairi Killin as part of her exhibition 'Absent Voices', which toured Scotland in 2010.

During the exhibition, visitors were encouraged to make paper boats, write messages on them and place them in the wooden boat.

'After the exhibition finished, I thought it'd be nice to find a permanent home for the piece in the gallery,' explained Mhairi.

'Shortly afterwards, the Japanese people had to face up to the devastating consequences of the March earthquake and tsunami.'

'I decided to ask our customers to fold more paper boats, this time making a small donation to the Red Cross at the same time.'

'Origami is something we all associate with Japan, and visitors, especially children, have enjoyed learning to make the simple paper boats.'

One of the first boats was made by a couple from Christchurch, New Zealand, who wanted to send a message of hope to the Japanese survivors having themselves survived the Christchurch earthquake just weeks before.

If you would like to contribute to the Boat of Blessings project, please contact Mhairi on 01681 700121.

Down Your Way

This week - Gigha

NEXT year the community of Gigha will mark the tenth anniversary of residents taking over the island.

The day earmarked for the celebrations is March 12 2012 and a committee has been put together to start planning the big day. It is hoped various events will be held over the winter to raise funds for the celebration.

The committee would like to hear ideas from everyone on how to officially mark the day and want everyone to get involved to help them make the occasion one to remember.

A COMMUNITY garden is up and running on Gigha.

The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust's Remi Wasserman initiated the project and, with the help of a local farmer and trust employees Jim and Raymond, a field has been transformed.

The area, which was full of weeds and rushes, allows the islanders to grow fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers and herbs. Argyll and the Isles LEADER, the Scottish Government and the European Agricultural Fund have funded it.

Several events have already taken place at the garden including an open day which saw islanders coming together to complete work on a shed and polytunnel.

A 'preparing your plot' workshop outlined how to best deal with weeds, site planning and crop rotation.

The Gigha Hotel played host to a very popular seed swap event, where a wide variety of vegetable and flower seeds were available. All events were open to the public.

There are still a small number of plots available, and there is room for more. Children are being encouraged to get involved and a children's area is to be created to entertain and educate both local and visiting children.

Initial thoughts include a pond and wildlife area and willow house.

Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust is kindly supplying a variety of apple, pear, plum, cherry and damson trees, enabling an orchard to be created.

The community garden members are looking forward to future events and a successful growing season.

TO MARK the end of 'Ancient Rome', a topic being studied by primary five, six and seven at Gigha Primary School, the children took part in a play called *Rome's Got Talent*.

The play was in the format of the popular Britain's Got Talent TV show and the children dressed up as famous Roman and Celtic characters and auditioned to get in to the next round. The play featured Amanda who played the Roman Goddess Diana, John as Emperor Nero, Caitie as Queen Boudicca, Bryce as St Alban, Ben as a Roman boy and Tristan as a Celtic warrior.

The other children advertised in between the show; Cara advertised a Roman woman's makeup range, Finn advertised a gladiator show, Archie a druids centre and George advertised joining the Roman army.

The show was a great success and managed to encompass the knowledge that the children had gathered about the Romans and the Celts over the last few weeks and was enjoyed by everyone who took part and observed.

Parents came along to see the play and enjoyed a Roman-themed buffet.

YOUNGER children at Gigha Primary School raised more than £500 by taking part in a pyjama party.

Primary one to four ended their topic 'Day and Night' with the fundraiser in aid of Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) by being sponsored to take part.

Parents went along and dressed in night time attire to hear bedtime stories read by the children and enjoyed chocolate and cookies.

The children raised £527.80 for CHAS.

NORTH CONNELL AND GLENDARUEL

TWO Argyll Girl Guide units have been honoured for their community service.

First North Connell Guides and First Glendaruel Units were presented with the Trefoil Guild Quach as joint winners of the guides' community challenge.

Glendaruel Rainbows, Brownies and Guides worked with the community to install a defibrillator in the village's phone box and organise training in how to use it for volunteers.

Meanwhile the North Connell group packed school bags for Dalmally-based charity Mary's Meals to distribute in developing countries.

The winners were announced at the recent annual Girlguiding Leader Training weekend, held at Ardmay House, Arrochar.

The quach was presented to the Argyll Trefoil Guild in 2010 by Argyll and but Council to mark the centenary of Girlguiding.

Next week DOWN YOUR WAY visits Nether Lochaber with reporter Richard Haddock.

You can contact him on 01397 703003 or email rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk.

APPIN

THE NOVEMBER meeting of Appin SWRI was the annual open night and after business had been completed, the president, Doreen Evans, welcomed visitors from Benderloch, Connel and Oban to Appin Village Hall.

The speaker for the evening was Robert MacPherson, chef at Airds Hotel, who was assisted by Katie Lawrie. Robert demonstrated a scallop dish followed by a venison dish. As he likes to use locally gathered food, such as mushrooms, seaweed and berries to complement his dishes, Robert explained and demonstrated how these could be used. Katie, meanwhile, was preparing the sweet and provided everyone with a delicious chocolate and bramble dessert and a selection of homemade chocolates.

Robert and Katie were thanked by Catriona MacKenzie for an excellent evening. After tea and the drawing of the raffle, the competition results were announced.

Border Tart: Gold - Margaret Massey; silver - Chrissie Malone; red - Marjory Gifford; blue - Myra MacDougal; green - Ellen MacCorquodale.

Margaret Massey goes forward to the Ann Wallace Competition.

CONNEL

A CONNELL man is doing his bit for the village this winter by collecting benches, drying them out and repainting them ready for the spring.

John Twort said he warned the police that he would be collecting the benches to perform this valuable service to the community - in case he was spotted loading them onto his trailer and taking them away and a 'theft' was reported by concerned residents.

PORTNAHAVEN

A FORMER water pumping station has been officially recognised as a bothy.

The concrete hut sits in a field in Portnahaven, but hasn't been used by former owners Scottish Water since 2008. Retrospective planning permission was given to the use the building, 3.5 square metres inside, as a bothy, provided it is not used for permanent accommodation.



On the Sconser to Raasay ferry: seated from left, Carolyn Kimmel, Pauline Smith and Nicola Rust with senior ranger John Phillips and access officer Donald Kennedy.

Disabled ramblers take ferry trip to Raasay

A GROUP of disabled ramblers helping assess the suitability of local paths went to the Isle of Raasay for their latest assignment on November 16.

Skye and Lochalsh Disabled Ramblers group members Carolyn Kimmel, Pauline Smith and Nicola Rust boarded the ferry from Sconser to Raasay as part of a project to audit trails in the area for accessibility by mobility scooter.

The trio were accompanied by Highland Council's Skye and Lochalsh access officer Donald Kennedy and senior countryside ranger John Phillips.

Since 2009, the group has audited 27kms of paths in Skye and Lochalsh and found 14.5kms to be suitable for mobility scooter use.

On some occasions minor alterations - such as modifications to a gate at the start of a walk - have been necessary to open up wider networks of path.

Forestry Commission Scotland has also helped, opening up 8.3kms of paths at Kinloch and Broadford forest for motorised disabled users.

Ms Rust said: 'We had a great day out and welcome anyone who would like to join us. We have mobility scooters and warm waterproof clothing available.

'For more information give me a ring. It's the first step to getting out into the Skye countryside.'

Mr Kennedy said: 'When assessing a path for disabled access there is no substitute to trying it out with the potential users themselves.'

'In the audits we have undertaken so far we have learned an invaluable amount as to what is suitable in terms of gradient, type of path surface and gate width.'

'There are many more routes to look at throughout Skye and Lochalsh and I look forward to continuing our partnership with the group.'

Anyone wishing more information about Skye and Lochalsh Disabled Ramblers can contact Ms Rust on 01478 611056.

GLENFINNAN

THE ANNUAL village Christmas party will be held in the Glenfinnan House Hotel from 6pm on Saturday December 10.

ARDNAMURCHAN

ARDNAMURCHAN Tourist Association will hold a drop-in session tonight (Thursday) for anyone looking for information or wishing to join.

The hour-long meeting in Kilchoan Community Centre starts at 6.30pm.

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Plockton and District Community Council

PLOCKTON and District Community Council held its final meeting before elections for the new council in Plockton Hall.

Roads - the community council was pleased resurfacing work was to start in Duirinish. Planning permission has been awarded for its new car park.

Play area - the National Trust has still not replied to a request for a play area at Rhu.

Housing at Burnside - Councillor Biz Campbell said there would be money available from the 'safer roads to school fund' until April. She would ask Plockton High School board to apply so access from Burnside housing could be improved.

Car park toilets - Plockton Harbours CIC had bought the toilets and are seeking funding for the major repairs required.

Plockton library - the council was delighted the library would stay at the village hall until at least 2014.

Skips - as the council is no longer providing community skips, the community council hope to organise two village clean-ups next year.

New water pipe from Plockton to Achmore - Scottish water says an extension of 10 weeks after New Year of the road closures will be required.

Possible sale of Plockton Church of Scotland - the community council is to write to the church expressing its disappointment if the church was put on the open market.

Camper vans - a sign is now in place stopping campervans from going along Harbour Street and parking.

Dunraig Castle - the owners have submitted a planning application for the demolition of the block alongside the castle and replacing it with a courtyard-style development comprising garages and a single apartment. The community council was unanimous in its support of the proposal.

Loch Luidie - Scottish Water hopes work to reduce the loch will begin this month.

Car park - disappointment was expressed that Plockton Harbours CIC plans to extend the village car park had been put on hold.

The first meeting of the new council is on December 13.

The meeting closed with thanks to the chairman and secretary for their years of work. The chairman thanked members and councillors Biz Campbell and Audrey Sinclair for their assistance.

Finally, a small presentation was made to 81-year-old Geoff Webster who decided not to seek election to the new community council. Geoff joined when the community council started in 1975 and was chairman for several years, never missing a meeting in 36 years. Chairman Charlie M MacRae, also a community council stalwart since 1975, said Geoff would be much missed on the new council.

CM MacRae.

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Argyll community looks to the future with grassroots planning

AN ARGYLL community has drawn up a vision for its local area in a bid to influence decisions about housing, land and services.

Craignish Community Council is hopeful its grassroots plan will

be adopted by Argyll and Bute Council after it was handed in to officials last week.

After holding an open day and carrying out a survey of residents, housing came out as a top concern. Community

council secretary Mary Smyth explained: 'The need to resolve the lack of affordable housing remains a key priority and innovative ideas such as self-build, local letting initiatives, community ownership and forest

crofts need to be explored.' Other priorities include protecting existing services, such as the village school, bus service and shops; establishing a permanent population in the holiday village of Craobh Haven; protecting the

shoreline and providing more of the community's energy needs from local, renewable sources.

Community councillors have been working with Argyll and Bute's development policy manager Fergus Murray to

produce the document. Mary added: 'Everybody involved in producing the plan appreciates that this is just the beginning, and it is important that the plan is not put on a shelf to gather dust.' The community is now waiting

for a formal response from the council and hopes its work will underpin any future plans and decisions for their area.

The full plan is available on www.craignishcommunitycouncil.org.uk.

Skyman flying high in balloon

A SKYE man will be flying high next year after winning *The Oban Times* competition to take a Virgin balloon ride.

In last week's Christmas supplement we asked: 'Who is the entrepreneur and adventurer behind the Virgin brand?' The answer was, of course, Richard Branson.

Douglas Strachan of Breakish, Isle of Skye, was one of many to come up with the correct answer and has won an hour's flight, followed by a champagne toast on landing.

Police assaulted after pub incident

A 30-YEAR-old man has been charged with assaulting police officers in Oban, threatening them and refusing to leave a licensed premises.

Police also arrested a 32-year-old woman and a 19-year-old man for obstruction when they were called to an incident, in Craighard Road, Oban, on Friday November 25.

The woman, who will appear at Oban Sheriff Court on an undertaking, was also charged with drug-related offences.

Inveraray hotel wins ale award

THE GEORGE Hotel in Inveraray has again won the Argyll awards in the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Pub of the Year awards.

The Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch of CAMRA has chosen its favourite pubs in the four areas that it covers, including Argyll.

At a future meeting the branch will decide which one will go forward as its candidate for Scottish Pub of the Year and British Pub of the Year.

Kinlochleven man ignored drive ban

A KINLOCHLEVEN student has been banned from driving for 18 months and fined £533 after ignoring a previous driving ban.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard David Evans missed his bus to college on November 22 and decided to drive to Fort William, but was stopped by police officers who recognised him. The 22-year-old was banned from driving last month after being caught drunk behind the wheel of his car. Appearing from custody, Evans, of flat 4, Lynwood House, pled guilty to driving on the A82 between Onich and Inchree.

Lochaber enviro group plan campaign

Increased attendance at AGM proves encouraging

PLOTTING a path towards more sustainable, independent and energy conscious communities was the focus of Lochaber Environmental Group's AGM in Fort William last Wednesday night.

At a better-attended meeting than recent years, around 30 members and supporters broke into groups for a 'brainstorming' session to produce campaign ideas for 2012.

Suggestions included: a Lochaber barter scheme for goods and services; small-scale community heating schemes to cut householders' energy bills; online information comparing effectiveness and suitability of different renewable technologies; a directory of 'green' accommodation providers; lobbying British Waterways to put the Caledonian Canal back on the transport map; setting up social enterprises to tackle food

REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

waste in small communities; composting classes in schools and more community composting sites; developing community woodlands as a supply of local sustainable wood fuel; improving community transport for young people in rural areas; extending the Mallaig car sharing project and making Fort William Europe's latest 'plastic free' town.

Speaking after the election of office bearers, LEG director Scott McCombie judged the meeting as 'very successful'.

Mr McCombie, who is also National Trust for Scotland property manager at Glencoe, told *The Oban Times*: 'There were more here than we have

had at the last couple of AGMs. People want to get involved, and have come up with a lot of good ideas for Anna to take forward in her role as strategy worker.'

'For example, it would be good to extend the Mallaig car sharing scheme to other parts of Lochaber. We should also be trying to reduce the amount of waste we create, rather than trying to find ways to get rid of it.'

'Our 'Love Food, Hate Waste' project encourages more local food and buying only what you need so you are not chucking out food to rot in the waste bin - and saving money at the same time. It saves us all because the council has less landfill and it costs them less to clear up.'

Directors Bill Barber, Alison Munro and Benny MacDonal were re-elected as chairperson, secretary and treasurer, respectively, by acclaim.



The Dunbeg nursery and primary school pupils who took part in the Blythwood Care Shoebox Appeal. 16_148shoebox01

Dunbeg fills shoebox gifts for the world

PUPILS at Dunbeg Primary School have yet again answered Blythwood Care's call for shoeboxes of gifts for poverty-stricken children throughout the

world. The schoolchildren have collected 43 boxes that will go to children in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Among the items collected and

boxed up are toiletries, clothes, stationery, sweets and make-up.

The Blythwood lorry called at Dunbeg last week to pick up

the completed shoeboxes and the children gathered to wish all their donations a speedy journey to their destinations across the world.

Caol benefit cheat avoids jail

A CAOL man who claimed more than £6,700 in disability benefits while he was working at a Fort William hotel has narrowly avoided a jail sentence.

Robert Price, of 17 Rowan Drive, started claiming the disability living allowance in 2006, listing paralysis of his right arm and leg, pain in his left leg, asthma and colitis amongst his afflictions.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard he took up a job as a night receptionist at a hotel in March 2008, but did not inform the department of work and pensions about the change in his

circumstances. During his time of employment, Price, aged 50, falsely claimed £6,743.15.

Department of Work and Pensions were informed about his employment and stopped paying his benefits in October 2010.

Sentencing Price to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work in the community, Sheriff Kenneth Hogg said: 'This is a direct alternative to putting you in custody.'

Price was also told if he gains employment or claims benefits in the future, measures would be put in place for him to repay the money.

Public meeting to focus on north health and care services

LOCHABER residents are to have their say on plans to integrate health, education and social care services provided locally by NHS Highland and Highland Council.

At a public meeting in Fort William next Wednesday, transitions director Jan Baird will explain how the process will operate. From April 1, 2012, staff will join integrated teams to work with children and families and with people who use community care services.

The meeting will aim to inform those using the services how the new integrated NHS/council teams will be able to make decisions more quickly to provide a more responsive

service. Ms Baird said: 'So far the development of plans for integration have been carried out in association with service users, carers, families as well as NHS Highland and Highland Council employees delivering services throughout the area.'

'But we would like to hear the views of people who have not been involved in the process, especially if they use, or look after someone who uses children and families or community care services.'

For information in advance of the meeting call 01463 706751, email p4i@highlandlife.net or visit www.highlandlife.net/p4i. The meeting, in the Ben Nevis Hotel, starts at 7pm.

Sleat sustainable community hub project attracts 80 to consultation

MORE than 80 south Skye residents contributed their ideas for a new sustainable community hub at Camuscross in Sleat at a consultation event in Isle Ornsay on Saturday.

Local community company Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative (CDI) is leading the ambitious bid after securing £50,000 Big Lottery funding to progress the project.

Director Graeme MacKenzie was delighted with the turnout to the consultation.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'The vast majority of people were from Camuscross and Duisdale, with a few from outside the area.'

The proposed building is being billed as a much-needed social and economic centre for Camuscross and Duisdale townships.

Camuscross common grazings above the A851, 800ms south of the Isle Ornsay turn-off, has already been earmarked as the preferred site.

The roadside location was chosen to ensure the hub's community shop and café would pick up business from visitors travelling to and from the Armadale ferry.

'We were told it would be best to have it next to the main road to maximise the economic benefits,' said Mr MacKenzie.

Further community consultation events are planned for January and March 2012 on the hub's interior layout, he added.

CDI is currently advertising for a part-time community resource worker for six months to move the project forward.

The business plan will be developed by local man Andrew Prendergast and Faye MacLeod, of Portree chartered accountants Campbell, Stewart, MacLennan.

After the local shop in Isle Ornsay closed 11 years ago, locals faced a 20-mile round trip to buy groceries.

It is hoped a community-run hydro scheme will power the new centre.

Manran play Sunart Centre

HIGHLAND trad music combo Manran, featuring Lochaber's Gary Innes and Ewen Henderson will kick off their latest tour at the Sunart Centre in Strontian tomorrow night.

The band's debut album has made the final four in the 'Album of the Year' category at this year's Trad Awards, while singer Norrie Maciver has been nominated for 'Gaelic Singer of the Year'.

HIE turn spotlight on community run enterprise

HIGHLANDS and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is investigating the role of community run businesses in a bid to see how the wider Scottish economy might benefit from their experiences.

Social purpose Social enterprises function to generate profits like any other business but, in addition, they have social purpose which is at the very heart of what they do, and the profits they make are all

reinvested towards achieving that purpose.

HIE's Fiona Robb said: 'The study we have commissioned will provide a comprehensive database containing up to date information on the scale and nature of the social enterprise sector in the HIE area.'

'Our hope is that by sharing what is happening we will highlight new opportunities and ways to maximise income generation.'

Roy Bridge driver banned

A ROY Bridge man who admitted drink-driving on the A82 west of Spean Bridge has been banned from driving for a year and fined £333.

Richard Snowdon, 61, of The Lodge, Bunroy, was nearly twice the legal limit when he was pulled over by police on November 16.

Thieves steal stainless steel

STAINLESS steel worth more than £2,000 was stolen from waste ground at Glengallan Road, Oban, last week.

The metal was taken between November 18 and 23 and police are appealing for witnesses to contact Constable MacBrayne at Oban Police Office on 01631 510500.

Diesel leak leads to charges

FOLLOWING police enquiries into a vehicle leaking diesel over a lengthy stretch of road in the Oban area, a 65-year-old man was questioned by officers.

He was charged on November 20 with driving recklessly, by placing other road users in danger, and a report has been made to the Procurator Fiscal.

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Caol lunch club appeal

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
RICHARD HADDOCK

CAOL Community Centre's (CCC) senior citizens lunch club is to be opened up to people of all ages in an attempt to break even.

At a public meeting on Monday night, the steering group set up to pilot a transfer of control from Highland Council to local people told the 60-strong audience that without more business the club would struggle to remain self-supporting and prices could rise. Press secretary George Kerr said the success of the takeover depended on getting the entire community involved. He said: 'It's a centre that should be for all - for young people, for old people and for people in between. It's not just about the lunch club though, it's about the centre and it's about the community of Caol.'

Mr Kerr suggested a sub-committee to represent the views of people under the age of 25 be set up.

Group member Linda Campbell said local people needed to start using the centre more to ensure it remains financially viable. She said: 'We need functions, we need parties - the doors are open. We've got to keep the place open and we've got to keep the cash flowing.'

Chairman Donnie Corbett announced a funding application to Highland LEADER had been made. 'We are going to set up a company,' he said. 'We are going to employ a development officer, hopefully, if we can get the grant. If you want to be part of a new era for Caol Community Centre, the steering group would be pleased to hear from you.'

The group has launched a new website, www.caolcommunitycentre.co.uk, to give updates on latest news and events, as well as providing a booking service.

Leven Festival fun

THE ICE Factor in Kinlochleven will host the 2011 Christmas Leven Festival on Saturday at 11am. Organiser Kay McDuff said: 'It promises to be a great family day out.'

NEWSDESK
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Dr Gregor Muir, right, and practice manager Jillian Bruce, centre, with other members of the surgery team and the two awards. 20_148dentist01

Town dentist best in the country

A FORT William dental surgery has been named the top NHS practice in the country after scooping two honours at the Dentistry Awards 2011 at Gleneagles Hotel last Friday.

M&S Dental Care on Glen Nevis Place was also named as the top overall dental practice in the north of Scotland.

Dental surgeon Dr Gregor Muir told *The Oban Times* he was 'over the moon' after receiving the

award. He said: 'Our calibre was good enough to know that we could win, but to get the best in the entire north was fantastic. For a general practice to compete at the same level as the large private practices is fantastic.'

'Everybody has worked so hard to achieve this, and it's great to have your hard work recognised.'

Dr Muir said the plaques would hang in the surgery reception.

Fort William volunteer awarded Poppyscotland's highest award

FORT William volunteer Audrey Dennison has been honoured for her contributions to Remembrance Day services in the town over the past 20 years.

Ms Dennison was given Poppyscotland's President's Award, its highest accolade, at the Railway Social Club, Inverloch, on Sunday afternoon.

The charity's president, Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin, presented Ms Dennison with a plaque and a golden poppy to mark her time and efforts.

During her time helping out with the charity, Ms Dennison, a bank worker, has counted the contents of more than 3,000 collecting cans single-handedly,

as well as sorting and banking more than £87,000 for the poppy collection.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm really pleased with the award.'

'But what I do is nothing compared to the people who go out there and give their lives. I enjoy it really.'

Scottish Poppy Appeal area organiser Mark McCann nominated Ms Dennison for the award.

He said: 'By making separate counts of each tin, Audrey has enabled us to give individual thanks to those who contributed to the appeal in the area. It is an honour for us all to celebrate with Audrey.'



Audrey receiving the plaque and a golden poppy from Poppyscotland president Sir Alistair Irwin. 10_148poppy01

Police pledge to open new station within two years

'Blue light' centre to be shared with ambulance service

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

THE WEST Highlands will have a new police operations centre at Fort William within two years, the area's new police chief has pledged.

And Area Commander for Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh David Bushell says sharing the building on the Blar Mhor with Scottish Ambulance service staff will deliver big benefits.

The combined 'blue light' centre forms part of Miller Developments' £50million phased scheme for a 70,000sqft Tesco superstore, other retail outlets and leisure facilities. A new Gaelic school, a relocated Belford Hospital and '3G' sports pitch are also planned for the 105-acre site.

AC Bushell said: 'I am absolutely confident we are going to get the new station within the next two years. It will definitely go ahead and the funding is there.'

'We are now starting to have meetings to decide what sort of things to have inside and how

it will work. We are about to appoint architects, but it will be into the New Year before the Northern Joint Police Board will be able to announce that.'

He added: 'The building will have the ambulance station at one side and ourselves at the other, with a shared social area.'

'It can only be a good thing if you can sit down in a rest room for half an hour with colleagues from another service - because half an hour later the same people could be attending an emergency situation, a car accident for example, trying to save life and limb.'

'Control rooms and all the other bits are separate because



Pledge: AC David Bushell. 20_148police01

but there's still a question mark how all that comes together. We will have to see how that pans out in the next few months.'

Local councillor Donald Cameron said: 'It's good to see joined up working to produce a first class facility. Both the existing police and ambulance stations are past their sell-by date.'

Upgrading the A830/A82 Lochybridge roundabout is scheduled to start in late January, funded through a community benefit deal agreed with Miller Developments.

Work on a new roundabout at the Blar Mhor Industrial Estate junction to handle traffic from the A830, the industrial estate and the new development will follow.

A fifth spur will extend towards Lochyside in anticipation of the Fort William link road being built some time in the future.

Highland Council granted the project outline approval in June. Miller expects a decision on detailed applications shortly.

Kinlochleven woman's delight at industrial tribunal ruling

A KINLOCHLEVEN woman has expressed delight after an employment tribunal ruled she was unfairly sacked by a Skye laird.

Maureen Byers was fired as Dunvegan Castle curator in March by Clan MacLeod chief Hugh MacLeod, who gave her 10 minutes to pack her bags after falsely accusing her of stealing a mahogany bureau and desk found in her lodgings in the castle grounds.

Mrs Byers told the Glasgow tribunal the furniture been gifted to her by the previous curator, Donald Stewart, when she

took up the post in 1997. Judge Alan Strain agreed, ruling the accusation of theft was simply a 'smokescreen' to sack Mrs Byers, who could now receive up to £20,000 compensation.

The 57-year-old, now working at the Glencoe Hotel, told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm really delighted after such a long and harrowing ordeal.'

'It's been going on for nine months.'

'I feel sad it's ended this way, but I don't feel anger. I just think back to the good times I had with Donald Stewart and all the other members of staff there.'

A spokesperson for the MacLeod Estate said: 'Asking Mrs Byers to handover her keys and to leave the curator's flat at such short notice was a very difficult decision for Mr MacLeod to take, but once he had lost confidence in Mrs Byers he felt he had to act immediately to ensure the integrity of the collection.'

'The MacLeod Estate is naturally disappointed by the employment tribunal's decision. However we are pleased that the hearing is now over and we wish Mrs Byers all the best for the future.'

Argyll Holistic Therapy can help you look good and feel fantastic

HAPPINESS is as much about looking good as feeling fantastic, which is why Argyll Holistic Therapy has welcomed beauty therapist Magdalena Sadlik to the company.

Magdalena's Beauty Care has joined Argyll Beauty Therapy as part of Argyll Holistic Therapy at Old Crofters, Soroba Road, bringing into one location everything you need to make you feel good.

Holistic therapist, Tracy Gilmour, said: 'I think what we offer is unique but a natural fit. Feeling good is as much about spirit as it is in body.'

'We offer a genuine way to improve your life.' Magdalena says the working partnership has proved very fruitful.

'This works well for both of us, but especially for the clients because from one place they can get everything they need to leave feeling really good about themselves,' she said.

Magdalena comes into the business with over seven years' experience as a qualified beauty therapist. Having first qualified in Poland, Magdalena trained with Dermalogica on moving to Scotland, then working as a consultant for Clarins.

You can be sure, then, that she will be able to listen, advise and inform on the best treatments for you, offering a full range of beauty therapies and Magdalena's trademark Eyebrow Artistry.

This amazing treatment lifts the eye and frames the face, giving you the eyebrows you've always dreamed about.

Tracy, meanwhile, embodies the benefits of good holistic therapy, having experienced the benefits first hand.

She said: 'Having continued to train in holistic therapy techniques throughout the last four years, I'm committed to broadening my knowledge for the benefit of the clients that come here.'



Tracy's therapies include Rainbow Reiki, Hopi ear candling, Indian head massage, eastern face massage, crystal therapy and face threading.

Her techniques can help relief stress, boost relaxation and concentration, something that appeals to a broad spectrum of her client base.

'People find reiki and Indian head massage particularly helpful for relieving stress. We get a lot of school pupils coming in for therapies ahead of their exams and they feel it helps their performance.'

For more information and special offers, check Argyll Holistic Therapy's Facebook page, or phone 07787125579 for an appointment. Argyll Holistic Therapy also has space available for use by other groups, speak to Tracy for details.

Mixed reaction to search and rescue switch

A DECISION to switch helicopter search and rescue operations from the military to civilian contractors has met with a mixed response.

Ageing Sea King helicopters, including those flying from RAF Lossiemouth in Moray and HMS Gannet in Prestwick, are to be retired by 2016.

The UK government wants the armed forces to focus on front-line operations.

Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team Leader John Stevenson said: 'We don't yet know what kind of service we will get with the new helicopters and what rules they can fly to. But rescue co-ordination centre manager at Stornoway coastguard Jamie Ralston said the move would mean 'a better service with better aircraft'.

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Probe launched after Canna house is destroyed by fire

A JOINT police and fire service investigation is underway after a house on Canna was destroyed in a blaze overnight on Sunday into Monday morning.

Police in Fort William received a call around 9.50pm on Sunday evening to say the New House, on the southeast shoreline close to the bridge to Sanday, was on fire.

Because of the response time involved and as no lives were at risk, it was decided not to deploy the Mallaig lifeboat to ferry the local fire crew to the island. Sea conditions were also extremely rough at time.

It is understood a woman got out safely from the burning building. Local sources said her partner was

stormbound in Mallaig over Sunday and Monday.

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service area manager Scott Hay said the fire was 'well developed' when reported and burnt out overnight. The island has no retained firemen or trained community response unit.

He said: 'I can't recall an incident like this on Canna. This is the first of its kind in quite a number of years. A request for a full investigation to be performed has been made. It will be carried out by police and the fire and rescue service and will look into the cause.'

'The trust is working with the tenants to provide support, including temporary accommodation, at this time.'

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Woman dies after car lands in loch

A STORNOWAY woman has died after her car slid off the road into a loch near Horsaeclach Lodge on the Isle of Harris.

Speech therapist Lorna MacDonald, aged 26, of Cross Street, was taken to Western Isles Hospital after the accident last Thursday afternoon, where she was pronounced dead.

Police are asking for any witnesses to this incident to contact police at Stornoway on 01851 702222.

Teenage piper hits the high notes

ROY BRIDGE teenage piper Sandy Cameron made a clean sweep of awards at two recent national piping competitions.

Sandy, currently in his third year at Dollar Academy, won three events at the Scottish Piping Society of London's Solo Piping Championship, which attracts some of the world's top solo pipers. The competition was held in the Kensington Conference Centre.

The 14-year-old won first place in every one of the categories in the under 18 age group - march, strathspey and reel; piobaireachd and slow air and jig. For his achievements, Sandy was awarded the Jim Cauton Memorial Quaich by the Scottish Piping Society.

Skye youngster Brighde Chambeul also took part in the event and scored second place finishes behind Sandy in the piobaireachd and march and strathspey and reel competitions.

The pair then both competed at the Scots Guard Association junior piping competition in Edinburgh. Sandy, who is tutored by Kyle of Lochalsh man Iain MacFadyen, won the under 15s, strathspey and reel, piobaireachd and the march, as well as the overall award. Brighde came second in the under 15 piobaireachd.

Craig Stewart, who is responsible for the pipe band at Sandy's school, praised the youngster's performances.

He said: 'Sandy's performances were first-class. He is an outstanding pupil and the whole school is delighted for his talents to be recognised at a national level.'



Champion piper: Sandy Cameron with his trophy haul from London.

Voluntary Action Lochaber to receive award

LOCHABER provost Allan Henderson will present Voluntary Action Lochaber with a European-standard award in Fort William tomorrow.

The afternoon 'celebration of quality' event in the Alexandra Hotel will see Councillor Henderson hand over the EFQM Committed to Excellence award to VAL staff.

Guest speakers will be Dave Bradley from Quality Scotland and Paul White of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.



High school boosts Macmillan coffers

Lochaber High School pupils have raised more than £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support Lochaber through school activities over the past year. The money was raised from a portion of the donations to the school's annual 'High School Hike' plus the proceeds of tea and coffee sales at the school's recent production of 'Mary - A Musical Play'. Pictured are the school's top fundraisers Matthew Catnach, 53, and Katie Hay, 51, presenting a cheque to Margaret Reid and May Dempster from the charity. Head Teacher Jim Sutherland said: 'Our annual hike raises a lot of money to support extra-curricular activities in the school but it's good to make a donation to charity too and Macmillan Cancer Support is certainly a worthy cause.'

Local views sought on future of rail services

TRANSPORT Scotland (TS) gathered the views of the Fort William public last week as it considers the future of the town's sleeper train service.

Possible cutbacks to the Caledonian Sleeper are among topics TS is looking at in its recently launched Rail 2014 consultation. TS officials were at Fort William Train Station last week inviting comments from rail users on how services could be improved.

Lochaber councillor Brian Murphy took part in the discussions. He said rail services were vital for the town but a number of improvements could be made, such as more frequent services, more carriages for the services which are provided and a simplified booking system.

Councillor Murphy said: 'I hope people will respond to the consultation. If people are concerned or interested they should get involved.'

A TS official told *The Oban Times*: 'We're not ruling anything in and we're not ruling anything out.'

'We want to increase patronage and we want ideas from the public. It's very much a consultation and we welcome any ideas people may have.'

The consultation booklet says TS is considering 'removing or increasing financial support' for



Councillor Brian Murphy looks over the consultation with two officials from Transport Scotland.

the sleeper. It says: 'We are also carrying out additional research and financial modelling and are looking at a number of options including letting the sleeper services as a separate franchise.' Local councillor Michael Foxley said he hoped as many people as possible got involved with the discussions. He said: 'The more information we can get, the better we can represent the views of local people. We have an opportunity to build a better service.'

People who want to give their views on the future of Lochaber's rail services can find information at www.transportscotland.gov.uk/rail2014 or by phoning 0141 272 7540. The consultation will run until February 20 2012. People can also contact Councillor Murphy or Foxley directly with their views. Meanwhile, Highland Council's SNP group has backed calls for more investment in the sleeper. Highland MSP John Finnie raised the issue with transport minister Keith Brown in parliament last week.

Glass smashed

A GLASS panel on an exterior door leading to flats in Shaw Place, Fort William, was smashed on Sunday November 20. Elsewhere, a grey inflatable boat was removed from a compound at Glencoe sometime between 3pm on Friday November 18 and 11am on Sunday November 20. Anyone with knowledge of these incidents should contact Fort William Police on 01397 702361 or confidentially on 01397 702000.

Cash stolen

A QUANTITY of cash was stolen from a property in Portree sometime between 2pm and 5pm on Thursday.

The two-figure sum was taken from 4 Cruachan Place, the home of an elderly gentleman, police said. Meanwhile, a vehicle parked outside a residential property at Carboist, Skye, was extensively damaged between 6pm on Friday and 9am on Sunday. Anyone with information or who saw anyone acting suspiciously at the time of these incidents can contact Portree Police on 01478 612888 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Old slides on show

LOCHABER Historical Society welcomes well-kept postie and crofter Neil MacBride from Muirshearlich to its monthly meeting in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, at 8pm tonight (Thursday). Neil will give a slide show on Old Lochaber.

Driver left biker badly injured

Lecturer escapes losing licence

A FORMER Fort William woman has narrowly escaped losing her driving licence after hitting and badly injuring a motorcyclist on the A830 Road to the Isles.

Pauline Goodridge, who ran J&M Florists on the town's High Street, was on a week-long visit to see her parents and was heading to the Caledonian Canal car park at Banavie to walk her dog when the accident occurred on July 26.

The 49-year-old was driving west when she attempted a right turn into Banavie, but as she pulled across the carriageway a motorbike travelling in the opposite direction crashed into the side of her Ford Ka,

EXCLUSIVE

REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

throwing the biker onto the road. The motorcyclist suffered severe injuries as a result of the accident - a double break in her left leg, a broken right leg, a broken pelvis, a shattered wrist and a lacerated spleen.

The woman was taken to Raigmore Hospital and Fort William Sheriff Court heard she will take 12-18 months to fully recover from her injuries.

Goodridge cried in the dock as the injuries were read out. Defending, Hamish Melrose said the bright setting sun meant

Goodridge was unable to see the yellow and silver motorbike. He said: 'At that time of day, when the sun is setting, it is quite dazzling.'

Sheriff Kenneth Hogg said the college lecturer had suffered a 'momentary lapse of concentration'.

He fined Goodridge £200 and gave her four penalty points, bringing her to within a point of losing her licence.

Goodridge, now of 80 Bullscope Lane, Waterlooville, Hampshire, pled guilty to driving without due care and attention by turning right into the face of an oncoming motorbike, colliding with it and severely injuring the rider.

Warning over excessive festive period spending

LOCHABER Citizens Advice Bureau is urging local people to be 'savvy shoppers' this Christmas to avoid stacking up debt problems in 2012.

The festive campaign comes as CABs across Scotland warn of the dangers of over-spending unnecessarily and falling into a financial black hole.

Despite a historically low Bank of England interest rate of just 0.5 per cent, loan rates on many credit cards stand at 20 per cent or more.

That means someone owing £10,000 must pay £2,000 per year, or £40 a week, simply to repay the interest - without touching the original debt.

Meanwhile, payday loan companies currently advertising on TV charge up to 1,734 per cent interest over a year.

One firm, through its website, offers a £50 loan over 30 days for £64.75, or 359 per cent APR. If the borrower paid back nothing for 12 months, the debt would

grow to £866 under the annual repayment rate.

Lochaber CAB manager Stephen Marshall said against this backdrop Christmas shopping presented 'a particular challenge' for many families.

He said: 'Spending a few pence extra here and there might not seem like much, but it all adds up. Sadly, we have also found over the years that shoppers can be caught out if they don't know their consumer rights - and mounting costs can mean some people start the New Year in debt.'

'All in all, we want to make sure that people in Lochaber have a great Christmas and New Year - unspoiled by the worry that you've spent too much.'

The campaign follows a CAB Scotland presentation on debt to the Scottish Parliament last week. Policy officer Matt Lancashire

told MSPs Scotland's 81 CAB had dealt with 143,566 new debt issues over the past year, or 400 per day.

He said: 'When we last analysed the debts of these clients, we found their average debt was now over £20,000. But one in 10 of them owed more than £50,000.'

'Yet they had an average net income of just £935 per month, and one in five of them had a monthly average of less than £400. Half were completely dependent on their pension or benefits.'

'All of this means that, for every £1 of income, they had on average £28 worth of debt. In these circumstances, it's no surprise at all that debt stress is a huge issue. MSPs need to understand the crisis that faces many families. We need measures that will help those who are facing debt and prevent others from falling into the same trap.'

Nurse fight moves to Scottish Parliament

A REMOTE west Lochaber community's fight to retain its out-of-hours emergency nursing cover moved to the Scottish Parliament this week.

Highland MSPs Mike Mackenzie, Rhoda Grant and Mary Scanlon asked questions of Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon about the situation in west Ardnamurchan during a debate at Holyrood last Thursday.

Ms Sturgeon said she would 'continue to look carefully' at the situation. She said: 'I have made it clear to both NHS Highland and SAS that I expect

them to work closely together, and with Highland Council and the local community, to come up collaboratively with a system that provides resilience and high-quality health services in the area.'

She continued: 'It is crucial that the health board, the ambulance service, the council and the community come together to come up with a model of service provision that is deliverable and which satisfies the community's concerns about safety and sustainability.'

Major Moidart road work contract awarded to Irish firm

MAJOR upgrades to a Moidart road are due to start in the New Year after a £900,000 contract was awarded to Irish firm Wills Bros Ltd to carry out the work.

The work will widen the narrow single track A861 at Drynie Hill between Kinlochmoidart and Archaracle to two track carriageway, as well as improving the surface of the road.

The work starts on January 9 and will be carried out Monday-Friday until April 4. The road will be closed between 10am and 12.25pm, and

1.10pm and 3.30pm. Local councillor Michael Foxley said he was pleased the European Regional Development Fund had responded to repeated requests to help fund the lifeline project.

He said: 'Drynie Hill presents a severe challenge and bottleneck for all motorists and visitors to Acharacle and the Ardnamurchan peninsula and this will improve access and make their journey a safer and more pleasant experience.'

Ardnamurchan Community Council chairman Hugh MacPherson also welcomed the work,

saying: 'This upgrade will provide a major boost for the community in the area who have had to negotiate this notorious sub-standard section of road for many long years.'

A row of Western Red Cedars trees planted during Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee celebrations will be felled during the works and replaced with 60 new trees to mark Queen Elizabeth's 60 years on the throne. A plaque will be placed in the new lay-by at the top of the hill with details of the trees.



Lochaber Shinty Club honoured its top performers of 2011 at its annual awards night at the Ben Nevis Hotel on Saturday night. Left to right: Jack Dignan, second team player of the year, Ryan Johnson, under 14 player of the year, Zands Ferguson, player of the year, Patrick Toal, under 17 player of the year, Christina MacIntyre, ladies player of the year and Shanna MacDonald, most improved ladies player. Photo courtesy of The Write Image.

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Persons interested in sharing cost of private pleasure flying, or learning to fly the newly built iconic 12.4 Litre radial engine open cockpit 3 seat Waco biplane (Harrison Ford's favourite aircraft) through taking a share in ownership are invited.

Investors sought for TV adventure travel documentary
Flying Waco biplane from London to Cape Town.
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Interest in participation with all persons, tourists and charities welcome, for uplifting flight experiences, aiding the disabled, disaffected youth, the ill and the terminally ill. Persons with free time to help in any aspect of admin. welcome, including book keeping, aircraft cleaning, maintenance & building a web site.

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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Commercial discounts as important as RET

WHILE the tourism industry based on at least some of the islands of the west this week celebrate an opportunity to increase trade thanks to reduced ferry fares for cars that come with road equivalent tariffs or RET, perhaps of greater impact to the overall economy of all west coast islands will be the announced increase in commercial traffic discounts.

Islanders as individuals, groups, organisations, small businesses, and the aforementioned tourism outlets, all depend heavily on haulage for their everyday needs. Anything that brings down the cost of living on an island deserves a warm welcome.



Following last week's Leader concerning rising fuel costs, the MP for Argyll and Bute, Alan Reid, has pointed out that we failed to publish a press release relating to the subject that he issued on November 15. Our Leader of course referred to the high fuel costs affecting the whole of the West Highlands and Islands. We are happy to make clear Mr Reid's efforts to reduce the burden of fuel tax.

GLASGOW LETTER

Ceol's Craic at Celtic Connections

THE PROGRAMME for Celtic Connections 2012 has been published and, as in past years, Ceol's Craic will play a significant part.

From Thursday January 26 to Saturday January 28 in the CCA there will be music, film screenings, workshops, tea-time lectures and conversation cafés, from 5pm.

In addition, there will be Gaelic events, films, lectures, workshops and late night music at the CCA throughout the time of Celtic Connections from Friday January 19 to Saturday February 4.

Gaels Ri Cheile

LINKS with Irish Gaelic were further enhanced at last Saturday's event with classes in both languages and singing workshops, with Gillibride MacMillan, taking place in the Learning Centre on Mansfield Street.

The presence of students from Trinity College, Dublin, added to the event. After the daytime activities everyone moved to the Premier Inn for a social evening enjoyed by about 100 participants. Pupils from the Gaelic School provided musical entertainment and with songs from Gillibride and music from the Irish friends there was no shortage of variety. Playing a leading role was 10-year-old Andrew Grossart who played the accordion for the ceilidh dancing and showed why he is a worthy champion at UK competitions.

Na Mo Chuid Aodaich

EXCELLENT co-operation between Gaelic organisations will come to fruition on Saturday December 10 when the sixth Na Mo Chuid Aodaich will take place in the Debating Chamber of Glasgow University Union at 7.30pm.

The event is in aid of the West of Scotland Beaton Centre.

Sports coaching

SPORS Glaschu, with help from Bord na Gaidhlig and Glasgow City Council, is offering opportunities to develop coaching skills in a variety of sports.

While fluency in Gaelic is not essential, successful applicants would be expected to show a willingness to learn to use the language in a sporting environment. For further information or to receive an application form contact sporsglaschu@gmail.com.

Glasgow Skye Association

THE ANNUAL concert of the Glasgow Skye will be held tomorrow evening in the Gaelic School at 7.30pm.

The dance will take place in Glasgow University Union from 10pm to the music of Robert Nairn's Band.

Successful ceilidhs

SO FAR this session Paisley and District Highlander's Association has had successful ceilidh dances with more than 70 in attendance at both the October and November events.

Josh Fraser, just 14 years old, who made his debut at the November ceilidh, will be the resident piper for the rest of the session and Archie Duncan's Band will provide the music. The next ceilidh will be on December 10.

Diary dates

Thursday December 1: Glasgow Skye Association Annual Dinner, Hilton Grosvenor Hotel, 7.30pm. Christmas Carol Concert, National Piping Centre, in aid of prostate cancer research and featuring Bearsden Burgh Choir and Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir, 7pm. Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm, Lurach.

Friday December 2: Glasgow Skye Association annual concert and dance - see above.

Thursday December 8: Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm, North Sea Gas.

Friday December 9: Clydebank and District Highlander's Association ceilidh - see above.

Saturday December 10: Glasgow Skye Association children's party, Renfield Centre, 260 Bath Street, 2.30pm. Paisley and District Highlander's Association ceilidh dance, Elderslie Village Hall, 7.30pm. Na Mo Chuid Aodaich - see above.

Pub scene

WILLIE Cameron will be busy in the Park Bar where he will be playing on Friday evening and then it's Martin Pottinger on Sunday. Robert Nairn will be in the Park Bar on Saturday when Donald MacRae will be singing. In the Islay Inn it will be Parting Glass on Friday with Penny Dogs on Saturday. Remember that both pubs have sessions on Thursday evenings, in the Park with Nicky McMeechan, and in the Islay Inn there is an open mic on Sunday.

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



Acha School, Isle of Coll, 1924

This week's flashback photograph is of pupils of Acha School, Isle of Coll, thought to be taken in 1924. It was submitted by 95-year-old Sheila Clifford, nee Kennedy, who now lives in Essex and is keen to find out if any of her fellow classmates pictured are still alive. Not only does Sheila remember the class teacher, Miss Brodie, and the photographer, Robert Sturgeon senior, she also recalls the names of all her classmates and their craft houses. Her classmates were, left to right, back row: Donald Macdonald, Lonban; Alec MacFadyen, Ballyhaugh; Jim Irvine, Crossapol; Fergie Robertson, Acha; Duncan Gilchrist, Totamore; Robert MacKinnon; Neil Kennedy, Sheila's brother who died of pleurisy while still at school; Neil Macdonald, Kilbride; John Allan MacFadyen, Ballyhaugh; Hugh MacKinnon, Broadhill. Middle row: Mary Bell MacRae, Tigh na Craik; Chrissie Robertson, Acha; Katie Mary MacRae; Lexie Kennedy, Ben Meanach; Katie Kennedy, Arinthluic; Isa Irvine, Crossapol; Jessie Kennedy, sister of Sheila, Roundhouse; Miss Brodie. Front row: Jimmy MacFadyen, Uig; Johnny MacFadyen, Uig; Mary Margaret Macdonald, Kilbride; Sheila Kennedy, Roundhouse; Campbell MacKinnon; Lexie Kennedy, Arinthluic; Duncan MacFadyen, Garden House - his father was the laird's gardener. If you know anyone in the photograph, you can contact Sheila via her daughter, Liz Fletcher on 01962 868 305 or email lizfletcher@dsl.pipex.com We invite readers to send in flashback photographs. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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email: editor@obantimes.co.uk

Telephone: 01631 568000
Fax: 01631 568001

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Cancel fuel duty increase

Sir, You were correct to highlight the issue of high fuel prices in last week's editorial.

I spoke in the recent House of Commons debate on fuel prices and called on the government not to go ahead with the three pence a litre fuel duty increase planned for January.

In the March budget, the Chancellor cancelled Labour's fuel duty escalator which would have seen the tax on fuel go up by five pence a litre.

He cut fuel duty by one penny a litre at the same time.

I also warmly welcome the government's plans to cut fuel duty by five pence a litre on all Scottish islands from next March.

This coalition government has acted on fuel duty, but must go further and cancel January's planned increase.

Alan Reid MP, 95 Alexandra Parade, Dunoon.

High school pupils' unhealthy lunches

Sir, As we all become increasingly aware of the obesity and health problems this country is facing, I find it shocking that our high school children are permitted to walk into Oban and consume terrible food.

Surely we should be giving them a healthy school meal and educating them about the importance of nutrition?

Instead we are allowing peer pressure to take over so that even by the age of 12, to stay in for a healthier school lunch is considered 'uncool'.

Every lunchtime, school children descend upon the fast food outlets, shops, garages and cafés within Oban town centre. Their behaviour is almost always exemplary, but I am saddened to witness their lunch consisting of such things as noodles, chips coated with salt, boxes of 60 biscuits or even an aerosol can of cream.

I feel very strongly that as a nation, and a community, we simply cannot afford to overlook this fundamental aspect of our children's welfare and education.

Name and address supplied.

Wind farm objection

Sir, I was moved by the sentimental magic of Brigadier John Macfarlane's letter of objection to the proposed wind farm at the Kilmore end of Glen Lonan, *The Oban Times* November 16.

I wonder, where has John been living for the last 12 years or did he just drink the clear waters of the River Lonan and become intoxicated with a mythical past and a confused present?

Am I dreaming or are those really wind turbines above Barguilean Farm in Glen

Lonan and not just a figment of my imagination but perhaps 'Angels on the Hill' as they were nicknamed by the children of Taynuilt in 1999?

Sam Macdonald, Taynuilt.

Family history

Sir, I am writing to see if any readers may be able to help me in my family history search.

I have records dating back to 1796 when two brothers married two sisters. I know one of them became Captain Roderick Macdonald.

During family tree research the tale that came out is that originally our family came from a survivor of a Spanish galleon that sank in the Sound of Mull.

The family, as I understand it, became rather large. One side produced four children and the other produced seven.

The name of Pennygowan was the name that my mother chose for her house when she retired.

The earliest that I have been able to trace back to is 1796. Roderick Macdonald married Mary MacQuarrie, then came Neil Macdonald who married Mary MacArthur and Donald MacArthur married Flora Macdonald.

Can anyone help me fill in some of the history from that time or how do I go about it?

Another stumbling block is that my mother spoke Gaelic and I, sadly, do not.

There may be distant relatives still alive in Oban or Mull. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Michael John Macdonald, 166 St Andrew Street, Perth, PH2 8SA.

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 an email, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

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

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

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15 Years Ago

Those Were The Days

The Oban Times

Thursday, December 4, 1996

Bid for Eigg is rejected

EIGG islanders vowed this week to fight on in their battle to buy the island - despite their first bid being rejected.

Controversial German owner Marlin Eckhard Maruma has agreed to put the island back on the market after failing to attract offers of more than £2million.

Now, The Isle of Eigg Trust, although disappointed, is confident it can raise more cash to make a realistic bid. Undaunted by the sale of the island going into extra time, trust secretary Maggie Fyffe said: 'This is by no way the end of the road for us.'

'We feel we are still in with a very good chance of buying the island and over the next few weeks we will be pulling out the stops to raise more money and identify sources of funding.'

'Our message to the public is to keep the donations and pledges rolling in.'

'We are entering a critical stage of the campaign and every pound counts,' added Maggie. To date more than £300,000 has been raised by an appeal launched in August and flamboyant comedian Eddie Izzard is the latest donor.

An indication of the continuing interest in the campaign is that £40,000 of pledges has been received in the last two postal deliveries to the island.

Rising roll at Dalavich

THE ROLL at Dalavich Primary School, which has been earmarked for closure, has increased from two to three.

A mother, who was concerned about her daughter travelling on the bus to school in Oban after she was involved in an accident when she got off the bus in town, has changed her working hours in order to send her daughter to her local school.

In the meantime, residents of the 52 houses in Dalavich are drumming up support for keeping the school open, saying that the roll is likely to increase even more over the next three years.

Community spokesperson Joanna Blair told *The Oban Times* that there were five empty houses in the village and four up for sale, which could easily lead to young families moving into the area.

A decision will not be made on whether or not the school will be closed until December 19 at Argyll and Bute Council's education committee.

A number of parents and representatives of the three schools which have so far gone out to consultation for closure - Ardintny, Kerrera and Dalavich - are likely to be present to hear the committee's decision on the schools.

80 new ferry jobs

THE NEW Campbelltown to Northern Ireland ferry will create 80 jobs, according to the Argyll and Antrim Steam Packet Company.

There are also promises it will bring significant new investment to both communities.

Starting in July 1997, the seasonal service will offer two round trips each day, with a crossing time of just under three hours.

The service will be operated by the *MV Claymore*, which has capacity for 300 passengers and 50 cars, or 30 cars and two coaches. The ship can also accommodate freight traffic.

Argyll and Antrim Steam Packet Company is a subsidiary of Sea Containers Ltd, which has worked closely with Argyll and the Islands Enterprise and Moyle District Council to develop the new route.

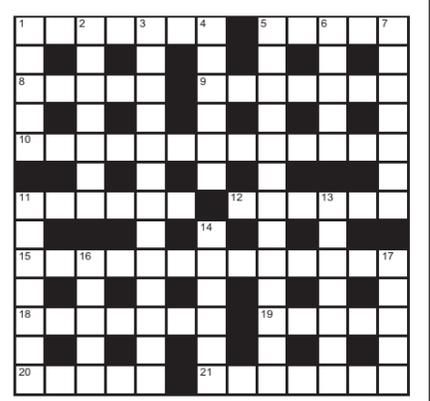
Hamish Ross, managing director of the Steam Packet Company, said: 'The new Campbelltown-Ballycastle service will become an important link between Ireland and Argyll and the Scottish Highlands and islands.'

'Research has shown there to be a significant tourist market between the two destinations.'

Mr Ross has said that he expects to hold a public meeting in Campbelltown, which will include a small exhibition, to explain the plans to the local population and invite their comments.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- Across
- Charge (7)
 - Text of Islam (5)
 - Become a member (5)
 - Covering (7)
 - One who works for the general masse (6,7)
 - Light coloured hair (6)
 - Dismal (6)
 - Luminous electrically charged globe (7)
 - Four square (7)
 - Kingdom (5)
 - Assignment (5)
 - Record (3-4)
- Down
- Depleted (3,2)
 - Buffalo (7)
 - For one's own satisfaction (4-9)
 - Crop stripper (6)
 - Four sided (13)
 - Cool Indian condiment (5)
 - Occurring at the end of every day (7)
 - Young one was looked after (7)
 - Paper fun (7)
 - Land on Lake Victoria (6)
 - Carelessly (5)
 - Final putt (5)



Last week's solution

S	A	C	K	A	M	E	T	H	Y	S	T
H	R	E	S	A	R	E	A				
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A	D	H	E	S	I	O	N				

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1971

January 1971
Cruachan five years on: a resounding success, says board
Cruachan, the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board's £24m. Argyll showpiece, has been an unqualified success in its first five years of operation, surpassing all the expectations of the board.

Last year alone it reduced fuel costs on the Scottish electricity system by £1m. Because of its success, a second pumped storage project, at Foyers, is under construction and sites are being examined for a third, possibly on Loch Lomond.

February 1971
Islanders upset over plan for Sunday sailings.
MacBrayne's plan to introduce Sunday sailings to Iona this summer has disturbed the peace of the Holy Isle. Mr J.L. Walters, the owner of the island's two hotels, the Argyll and the St Columba said: 'Iona is 99½ per cent against these sailings. It is a pity that the organisers did not consult islanders before they were arranged.'

April 1971
Inveraray work completed well ahead of schedule.
For almost a decade Inveraray has been without a hall or social centre for dances or concerts since the Drill Hall was burned down. But on Saturday night all this was changed with the opening of a new social centre, which is a conversion of the former school.

May 1971
Opening of new £330,000 Isle of Mull Hotel
Mr Michael Noble, Minister for Trade and Argyll's MP, predicted a big boom in the tourist industry of the Western Isles and said that provision must be made to meet this.

The hotel, which accommodates 120 people, is the first in a £1m hotel chain to be built in the Western Isles by the Highlands and Islands Development Board. It is located at Scottish Highland Hotels, Ltd.

May 1971
Lochgilhead firemen escape as floor collapses.
Lochgilhead's part-time fire brigade on Friday fought one of its worst ever blazes when the 71-year-old Crinan Hotel was severely damaged.

Initial estimates put the damage at £50,000.

July 1971
Worst Oban tragedy for many years.
Oban was a town in shock, a town in mourning, this week after a four-death yachting tragedy at the weekend.

The accident robbed the community of two doctors and a veterinary surgeon, and left seven children without parents.

August 1971
100 years old and still going strong!
The Argyllshire Gathering is always the top event in Oban's calendar, but this year more so than usual as the Gathering celebrates its centenary.

This year's piping events are being held 100 years to the day after the first Gathering.

August 25, 1971
Seven families made homeless in Oban fire.
Seven families were made homeless on Saturday by a blaze in a tenement block in Miller Road.

It was the worst fire in the town for a number of years.

February 1972
Oban to get inshore lifeboat.
One of the RNLI's new inshore lifeboats is to undergo operational trials at Oban this summer. If these prove successful, the vessel - the first to come to the North of Scotland - will be stationed there permanently.

February 1972
Power crisis hits all parts of Highlands.
Industry hit, hundreds of workers laid off, a near-blackout on entertainment and social activity and severe discomfort in shops, homes and offices



July 1969 - For Sale - Duror Hotel, an attractive and busy hotel which lies close to the main Oban/Fort William highway. Public Bar, Cocktail Bar, Residents' Lounge Dining Room, Kitchen, 9 Double Bedrooms, 3 Staff Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms, Chalet consisting of 3 Double Bedrooms each with Bathroom. Petrol Station with three Modern Pumps, Small Office and spacious outbuildings.



April 1969 - Skipness Castle, the late 19th century home of Mr and Mrs Charles Oakes, was destroyed by fire. And in rescuing and invalid friend who was staying with them on holiday, Mr Oakes lost his life.

- that was the grim story in the Highlands this week as the power shortage caused by the miners' strike reached crisis point.

Some highland firms are already facing huge financial losses as a result of the strike and the effects could be felt for many months to come in terms of lost orders. With coal supplies almost exhausted, coal rationing has been introduced almost everywhere in the area and householders have turned to logs, peat, paraffin stoves, calor gas and any other form of heating that can be obtained.

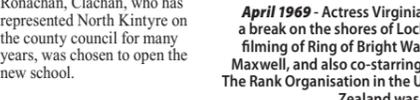
May 1972
David Cup player invited to defend Oban tennis title.
Young British tennis star David Lloyd who recently was selected for Britain's Davis Cup squad has been invited to defend his titles at this year's West Highland Lawn Tennis Tournament being held in Oban on September 4-9.

June 1972
Oban Pipe Band success
After 21 years without a competition success, Oban Pipe Band brought TWO trophies back to the town on Saturday.

The band's long years in the competition wilderness ended at the eighteenth annual championships of the Scottish Pipe Band Association's Glasgow and West of Scotland branch, held at the Seedhill Playing Fields, Paisley. The juvenile pipe band (Pipe Major Donnie MacDougall) won the novice juvenile championship and so collected the Letitia Dowds Shield.

June 1972
Opening of new school at Clachan.
A lady who fought a lone battle for a new school in her village sat among a happy gathering of pupils in the new £41,000 Clachan Primary School on Thursday. And it was fitting that the redoubtable campaigner, Mrs G.M. Pollok, Ronachan, Clachan, who has represented North Kintyre on the county council for many years, was chosen to open the new school.

April 1969 - Actress Virginia McKenna and her co-stars take a break on the shores of Loch Feochan near Oban during the filming of Ring of Bright Water, based on the book by Gavin Maxwell, and also co-starring Bill Travers. The film, released by The Rank Organisation in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand was a global success.



Gilchrist, chairman of the Highland Board. The board sponsored and assisted the project. Sir Andrew told a crowd numbering several hundreds: "This project is in what we consider the right line of Highland Development."

October 1972
Cable car proposed for Oban.
A cable car linking Oban's seaford with McCaig's Tower would be a commercial proposition it was suggested at a meeting of Oban Town Council's finance and law committee on Thursday.

The idea came from Councillor William Hunter while the committee were discussing an historical centre for Argyll which it is proposed should be located in McCaig's Tower. Pointing out that the tower proved a little difficult to find by car if one was a stranger to the town Councillor Hunter said a cable car sunning from Stafford Street area might be a solution.

November 1972
Argyll to share in oil boom?
Argyll may win a share of the spin-off from Scotland's oil boom, it was revealed last week.

The Scottish contracting firm of Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons, Ltd, has applied for planning permission to develop a site at Ardyne Point, Toward. McAlpines propose to construct a new type of concrete oilrig - rigs have hitherto been of steel construction.

Ardyne Point has been selected because of its deep-water facility - the same attribute which led to the giant Murco Oil Company of America to propose building a £27m refinery there two years ago. Although there is no confirmation from the companies concerned, there has been a rumour in Scottish industrial circles that McAlpines might eventually work hand-in-glove with the Marathon Company, which recently took over Upper

September 1972
Mull Distillery doubly welcome
Whisky is being produced in Tobermory again after a lapse of nearly half a century; and on Tuesday at the official re-opening of Ledaig Distillery, the development was welcomed for two reasons by Sir Andrew

April 1973
Woman first for Caol choral
For the first time in its 20 years of existence, Caol Choral and Dramatic Society at its annual general meeting last week chose a woman to fill the office of chairman. She is Mrs Rosemary Cameron, one of the club's most enthusiastic and active members.

May 1973
Islay church to closed
Sixty-year-old Kildalton Church of Scotland on Islay has ceased to be used as a place of worship following a special closure service at the end of last month by the parish minister, Rev. David Speed, Port Ellen.

July 1973
Worst fire in Scottish hotel history
In the aftermath of Tuesday's tragedy at the Esplanade Hotel, Oban, in which nine tourists were killed when fire swept through the hotel, praise has been heaped on the firemen,

police officers and civilians for their stark heroism in rescuing the guests and their handling of the situation.

The nine who died were members of a coach party from the West Country of England which had arrived at 6pm on Monday. In addition three people were seriously injured and taken to Glasgow, seven were admitted to the West Highland Hospital and a further 12 were treated as outpatients.

August 1973
Jimmy Savile stops traffic
Playing his first role as Highland Games chieftain, Jimmy Savile, disc jockey extraordinary, brought Fort William's holiday traffic to a standstill at midday on Saturday.

As he marched through the High Street on the way to the games, at the head of the military band of the Queen's Own Highlanders, bewildered holiday motorists sat stranded in their cars as crowds of spectators swarmed all round them trying to get a better view of the procession.

November 1973
Shinty players back from Dublin
A party of 33 shinty players from Lochaber High School, comprising two junior and one senior team, returned at the weekend after a three-day visit to Dublin.

The trip was in fulfilment of a promise made that they would return a visit by boys of the O'Connell School, Dublin, who visited Fort William some months ago.

November 1972
Marine biological research centre open day
Members of the public will this month be given an opportunity to visit one of Europe's leading marine biological research centres.

The laboratory at Dunstaffnage near Oban, which is to be open to the public on November 30, attracts distinguished scientists from all over the world, either to study the work being carried out there or to take part themselves in research programmes.

January 1973
Mallaig: Europe's No.1 herring port
Mallaig, which not so many years ago was little more than a backwater, is today one of the most thriving and prosperous communities in the West Highlands. Mallaig has developed a booming economy by intelligently exploiting the one natural resource available to her - fish.

March 1973
Skyecroft costs
A Portree public meeting of Skye crofters voiced a deeply held worry over the price they might have to pay if they wish to buy their crofts. And it led to Mr James Shaw Grant, the chairman of the Crofters Commission, accepting a wager that the average figure would be far in excess of £300 per acre.

Michael Taylor, Ardrchorck bet a bottle of whisky that the price would exceed the £300 mark. Mr Grant immediately accepted the bet.

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When twin brothers Murdo and Kenny MacLeod founded the parent company, M&K MacLeod Ltd, in 1975, it was as a basic house kit manufacturer and builder. Today, from its factory in Lochgilphead, Argyll,

1974
January 1974
Town plans whisky spree
Oban plans to put itself on the tourist map by holding a festival of whisky a meeting of the town council's publicity committee was told on Thursday. The promoters, Oban and District Tourist Organisation, are already making plans for the festival which will run from September 13 to 17.

February 1974
Cut in Jura ferry link
Islanders on Jura are claiming that the withdrawal of a direct ferry service to the island could threaten the survival of the community. Anger has arisen following the publication of Caledonian MacBrayne's summer timetable which does not include a direct service to Jura.

March 1974
Portavadie plan
A plan to build massive oil rigs on a site at Portavadie on Loch Fyne opposite Tarbert seems likely to be given the go ahead following a public meeting at the nearby village of Tighnabruaich on Thursday. It was clear from the meeting that the local population generally favours the proposal and sees in it a promise of new prosperity for the area. At the meeting five directors of the development company, a joint British-Dutch group, answered a barrage of questions from an audience more than 400 strong, many of them from as far afield as Cowal and Mid Argyll.

April 1974
Council to purchase Kilmory Castle
A recommendation that Kilmory Castle and grounds should be purchased as headquarters for the new Argyll District Council received overwhelming support at a meeting of the county council in Lochgilphead.

May 1974
HM Coastguard plan HQ move to Ganavan
Plans to move HM Coastguard's district headquarters from Southend to Oban were revealed in Oban on Friday. Lt Cmdr John Douglas, chief inspector, HM Coastguard, said that drawings for a Coastal Rescue HQ at Ganavan Point were just about to be submitted for planning permission.

May 1974
Proposed ice rink in Oban
Oban Town Council is to consider building a top class ice rink adjacent to the £200,000 plus municipal swimming pool currently under construction on a site at Dalrigh and expected to be open next year.

August 1974
Fort William Year of Destiny
1975 will be marked by three events of major importance to Fort William, already firmly established as the major growth point in the West Highlands. These are the completion of a bridge over the narrows at Ballachulish, the opening to a limited volume of traffic of a new relief road, not expected to be completed until 1977, and the transfer of administrative power to a Lochaber District Council.

October 1974
Gunna Sound drama
A dramatic sea rescue took place between Tiree and Coll on Monday when three crewmen were thrown overboard from the Oban based fishing vessel *Faithful* as she fished in the area. Two of the crewmen were saved but a third disappeared and is presumed drowned.

October 1974
Plane plunge at Connel kills two
A full scale air and sea search was launched over the Firth of Lorne on Thursday afternoon after a twin-engine Piper Comanche B Aircraft was seen to crash into the water. The plane had taken off from Connel airstrip carrying the pilot and one passenger.



July 1973 - Just after 4am on the morning of July 24, 1973, a fire call was received from the police about a fire at the Esplanade Hotel, Oban. The fire station at Oban turned out two fire engines immediately and at the same time summoned assistance from Lochgilphead and Inveraray. When the Oban fire engines arrived at the hotel they saw flames coming from the upper floors and in the roof of the six-storey building. Ten people lost their lives with more than 20 others taken to local hospitals, some seriously injured.



July 1973 - Left: Local policemen and firemen had the gruesome task of discovering and removing those who perished after fire engulfed Oban's Esplanade Hotel. **Above:** While fire crews with powerful hoses battled to control the flames in the upper floors of the burning hotel, ambulance crews and policemen joined forces with the firemen and risked their own lives to rescue the numerous holidaymakers who had been trapped or injured as the flames spread.

1975
January 1975
Tobermory's centenary
Tobermory is celebrating 100 years as a burgh this week - and a programme of events has got off to an enthusiastic start. On Sunday, Rev Gordon Holroyd pointed out the irony of the centenary coming only a short time before the burgh goes out of existence - a case of a birthday without many happy returns.

February 1975
Western Ferries may pull out of Islay
Western Ferries are planning to withdraw their passenger - car ferry service between West Loch Tarbert and Port Askaig.

June 1975
Opening of Fort William transport centre
A new transport centre - the first of its kind in the Highlands - opened in Fort William on Monday with the transfer of all British Rail services. When complete the complex will include a bus station, Highlands and Islands Development Board Tourist Office, a travel agent, 'superloo' toilet facilities and a bookstall.

July 1975
Pulpit Hill hotel plan - 'No'
The Secretary of State for Scotland last week said 'No' to a £250,000 hotel and skating/curling rink complex on Pulpit Hill, Oban.

October 1975
Barra fights factory shutdown
News that Barra Assemblies Ltd are to close their factory

at Castlebay has shocked the island. After more than six years in operation, the factory, which at its peak employed 12 people, is to be shut down.

November 1975
£1m contract placed for rebuilding of Inveraray Castle
Less than a week after a disastrous fire at Inveraray Castle, the Duke of Argyll confirmed that plans for its restoration had already been drawn up and a contract worth more than £1m placed with an Aberdeen firm.

The entire roof of the castle was destroyed; two floors gutted or badly damaged and 40 per cent of the cast's contents lost in the fire. Eight pumps from six fire stations fought the blaze, which started on the first-floor. Before the fire reached its height and the roof collapsed, an army of local volunteers cleared the castle of its more accessible valuables.

November 1975
Ex-Provosts of Oban and Fort William keep bridge 'date'
A 10 year promise was kept on Tuesday when Ballachulish Bridge opened.

A former provost of Oban Mr E T F Spence (now the chairman of Argyll and Bute District Council), and a former provost of Fort William, Mrs Margaret I D Murphie, met in the centre to exchange greetings. At a meeting of the Business and Professional Women's Club in Oban in 1965 Mr Spence and Mrs Murphie spoke in favour of a bridge as a means of strengthening the links between the two towns.

1977
January 1977
Barra flight cancelled
Loganair created a precedent last week by cancelling Friday's Glasgow flight because of unsuitable tidal conditions on the Cockle Strand which serves as the island's airport. This is the first time this has happened since Scottish Airways began the service over thirty years ago.

February 1977
New 'Peninsular War' looms
Ardnamurchan was in ferment this week over a threatened 40 per cent fare increase on its lifeline, Corran Ferry, effective from February 14. In Inverness yesterday a recommendation went to the regional transport committee that the vehicle single rate should go up to £1.05 from 75p.

February 1977
Age of the oil lamp ends for island of Kerrera
The age of the oil lamp will come to an end for Kerrera this month when the island is linked for the first time to the mains electricity supply system.

February 1977
Oil boom off west coast
The licensing of four blocks for oil exploration off the West Coast has heightened the prospect of a major oil-related spin-off for Argyll. Welcoming the prospect of an oil boom for the area Mr Alexander H MacPhail, the district councillor for Coll and Tiree said: 'Oil development could mean a great deal to Tiree. There is a good airport

on the island with a helicopter platform.'

March 1977
Lochawe station could reopen
Lochawe, on the Tyndrum-Oban line, is one of nearly 100 stations recommended for reopening by the Scottish association for Public Transport. The association considers the case for Lochawe strong enough to warrant its inclusion in a short-list of 30 possible station openings by 1980.

March 1977
Stork didn't wait for berth
Caledonian MacBrayne had another increase on Monday - not in fares but in the passenger complement of the car ferry *MV Arran*. The afternoon ferry arrived at Oban with a passenger more than it left Craignure, following a birth on board. Mother and baby are both well in Oban maternity hospital after what is only the second ferry birth in recent years.

April 1977
Rail tanker ends up in street
Firemen had to pump foam onto a British Rail diesel tanker on Monday after it crashed through a wall at Oban Station and onto the adjacent road during shunting operations. The tanker was severely damaged and a passenger coach and a goods vehicle were also damaged. No one was injured.

April 1977
50 sheep killed on Mull
Two rampaging dogs killed sheep valued at over £1,000 on three Mull farms during a week

long massacre. Both dogs were shot towards the end of last week after an extensive hunt in which nine armed shepherds and farmers took part.

April 1977
Eight 'drop in' at Salen
Mrs Eileen McEwan of Salen (Sunart) is not normally surprised when people drop in for coffee. But she was taken aback when a party of eight arrived by helicopter in her front garden. The two army helicopters were forced down by a sudden blizzard over Ardnamurchan.

June 1977
Catamaran link
Western Ferries new catamaran service linking Oban and Fort William was given an ecstatic welcome last Friday by passengers on its inaugural journey.

The twin-hulled craft completed the journey in a little over an hour. The vessel will operate two return journeys a day from Monday to Saturday. Vice chairman of the area tourist organisation, Mr William Henderson, Sutherland Hotel, said: 'This is the best thing that has happened to Oban since the days of the cruise steamers.'

June 1977
Strontian 'big game' hunt
Villagers in Strontian will take to the hills tonight in search of the big game. But instead of being armed with guns, they will be carrying portable TV sets. For the villagers plan to watch the international football match between Scotland and Brazil from Polloch Hill, 1,100 feet above the village. Explained Mr George Fox, a villager who is employed by Lochaber District Council: 'TV reception is very poor.'

July 1977
Queen sees the 'Carron giant'
Saturday was a big day in Loch Carron: the biggest Royal party seen in the West Highlands for a number of years came to see the Ninian Central platform, the biggest floating structure ever made. The occasion brought out an armada of small craft from Plockton, Strone, Lochcarron and Kyle to cheer the Queen and members of the Royal family.

July 1977
Lora leap brings in hall cash
The weekend charity plunge into the Falls of Lora by James Paton and Ian Hamilton has raised at least £400 for the village hall committees in Connel and Dunbeg. Some locals are said to have been sceptical about the two men going through their spectacular jump and are only now dipping into their pockets.

October 1977
Dalavich village is 25.
Dalavich, the Forestry Commission village 27 miles south east of Oban on the shores of Loch Awe, celebrated its silver jubilee last Saturday.

October 1977
Oban first in line for fluoride
Fluoride is to be added to Strathclyde's water supplies - and Oban will be the first to get it. The decision was taken at last week's meeting of the Regional Council in a non-party vote, making Strathclyde the first Scottish Region to fluoridate its water.

October 1977
Duror bid to restore organ
The tiny Episcopal community at Duror, Argyll has launched an appeal to restore the priceless organ in St Adamnan's Church.

Legend has it that Handel played on it, and it is also reputed to be the oldest pedal organ in use in Britain. Builder John Snetzler, a friend of Handel, came to England in the 1740's and became the leading organ builder of his day. The instrument is thought to have been built about 1750 - Snetzler habitually wrote his name and the date on the inside of the faceboard.



1980 - Up, up and away... brothers Kenny and Murdo MacLeod about to leave Lochgilphead by helicopter on Friday en route to the islands where they have been negotiating new housing contracts

operation of a filling station. The Company now owns two quarries, a service station and rented accommodation, and is the largest timber frame designer and manufacturer in the region. MacLeod Construction may have been founded on traditional house building values, but it has successfully incorporated modern practices and remains an innovator when it comes to materials, production and management. MacLeod Construction are dedicated to providing first-class training for their apprentices and despite the economic downturn, the company continues to commit itself to the youth of Argyll.

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1978

January 1978
Hit record will bring visitors to the wrong Mull

A hit record, plus English ignorance of Scottish geography, could lead to a substantial tourist boost for Mull, it was predicted this week.

Paul McCartney's *Mull of Kintyre*, the biggest selling single over Christmas, has already created enormous interest in the area it is actually about. But now the number of enquiries about the island of Mull is growing as a result of the record's popularity south of the border.

Mr David Webster, the chairman of the Oban, Mull and District Tourist Organisation, said this week: 'This is something that was bound to happen. They hear the word Mull and they naturally associate it with the island.'

February 1978

Without power for clear-up
Fresh snow on Tuesday hampered clearing-up operations after the worst blizzards in the North for 30 years.

The West Highlands escaped the worst of a snowstorm in which five people died, but 90 people were stranded in Glencoe. Islay and parts of Kintyre had a weekend without electricity.

March 1978

Confused start to Oban's one-way system

Oban's new traffic system got off to a somewhat confused start this week although motorists seem to be in agreement that it has not proved to be the 'one way' to chaos which many feared it might.

March 1978

Mull air service

A daily air service to the Isle of Mull is to start within the next few weeks. Loganair will operate the flights from their base at Glasgow Airport.

May 1978

Chalets for Dalavich

A massive investment in the Awe district of Argyll should be officially announced within the next few weeks.

The project will involve the building of 44 holiday chalets and a community centre at the Forestry Commission village of Dalavich.

July 1978

Wolves on the loose

Police are continuing their enquiries into the escape of two timber wolves into the Argyll countryside last week.

The animals went missing from the Lunga Wildlife Reserve near Ardrfern. One was killed by a Lochgilphead police sergeant and the other by a farm manager.

September 1978

Staffa on market for £50,000

The island of Staffa, off Mull, is up for sale at a price of at least £50,000.

The present owner, Chichester man Alistair De Wateville, wishes to part with the 70 acre island in order to finance expansion of his tourist business, Staffa Marine.

October 1978

It looks like a record Mòd!

As Oban prepared for the 12th time in its history for the friendly invasion of the National Mòd all the signs pointed to the busiest and best-supported Mòd of recent years.

Ticket sales and accommodation bookings tell the same story of Gaels making a record pilgrimage to the home of the Mòd. Up to 20,000 are expected to take over the town.

November 1978

Iron curtain journey for Isle of Mull heifers

Three Mull-bred Galloway's heifers started a voyage on Monday which will take them to much harsher climes.

The three heifers, bred by Messrs Elwis, Erray, Tobermory are on their way to the Soviet Union - and possibly Siberia.

Their unusual destination is a result of a £400,000 deal between the British Livestock Corporation and the Russian State Farms organisation.

December 1978

Helicopter link to Fort

Fort William's long-awaited helicopter link with Glasgow finally got under way last week when Burnthills Aviation started the first of many scheduled flights between the towns.



1970 - A ride in on an Irish donkey cart was the treat for Mr and Mrs Peter MacIntyre from Islay who were visiting the Lamans Fair at Ballycastle, Co Antrim for the first time in 58 years. This time Mr MacIntyre travelled on a modern car ferry which operates daily between the Glens of Antrim and the Mull of Kintyre. The last time he came, he was in his bare feet and he travelled in an open boat.



The old village hall at Caol was demolished and set on fire by council workers in March 1970. Villagers had started the job the previous day by removing as much timber as they could take away. The old hall had become both a danger and an eyesore.

February 1979

Ski-ing to work

Avalanches, igloos and ski-ing are not commonplace in downtown Fort William, but they are among the sights to be seen over the past week.

What are thought to be the heaviest snowfalls for 25 years have caused immense problems for pedestrians and motorists alike. With Lundavra impassable to cars, several people have chosen to ski to work. A doctor whose car stuck in a drift made an emergency call on skis.

March 1979

Snow stops schooling

Children from the village of Polloch, near Strontian, recently missed almost two months of schooling as a result of the atrocious weather conditions experienced this winter which made it impossible for them to travel to school in Strontian.

March 1979

Duke to sell Iona

The Trustees of the 10th Duke of Argyll are to sell the Isle of Iona and part of the Ross of Mull.

Iona Abbey and associated lands are not affected by the sale as the eighth Duke of Argyll gave the abbey and grounds to the Church of Scotland in 1899.

April 1979

Raasay reverts to State Hands

The island of Raasay properties in the ownership of Dr John R Green of Sussex have been sold to the Highlands and Islands Development Board at the district valuer's valuation, £135,000. The surprise breakthrough after years of attempted negotiations and threatened compulsory purchase against the absentee property-owner came 15 months after Doctor Green sold his second biggest property, Borrodale House, to the Board for £16,000.

May 1979

Easdale Island changes hands

Plans for 72 cottages, a bar and a restaurant on Easdale Island seem in doubt following the purchase of the island this week. The new owner, Mr Christopher Nicholson (31) from Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, indicated yesterday that his early plans included establishing an industrial museum based on the slate industry and the improvement of the harbour facilities.

June 1979

Marina scheme for Corpach

A Fort William businessman is planning to turn a piece of foreshore at Corpach into a yachting marina.

Plans have been lodged with the planning authority, Highland Regional Council, for a 100 berth marina near the Corpach

January 1979

Chopper drops drugs

An RAF helicopter made a life-saving dash to a remote Argyll farmhouse on Friday.

It carried essential drugs to a 61 year-old woman at snowed in Torinturk Farm near Kilmore. The helicopter had just lifted five climbers off a ridge in Glencoe and was heading for base at RAF Leuchers when it was diverted to Oban.

February 1979

Lifeboats in storm drama

Fourteen island lifeboat men had remarkable escapes in the



The Loch Ard leaves Oban for the last time in March 1970 when she sailed with a load of cattle for Lismore. Under the command of Captain Donald MacKinnon, the ship then sailed for the Clyde where she was due to be sold. Built in 1955 by the Ferguson Bros. Port Glasgow, the Loch Ard served mainly on the Glasgow - Islay cargo route with intermittent spells of duty on the Outer Isles run.

early hours of Sunday morning when their lifeboats overturned and righted themselves in storm force winds off Barra and Islay. The Barra lifeboat was answering a distress call from a Danish coaster when she was hit from behind by a huge wave. Although the 23 year-old lifeboat was not built as a self-righting vessel, she was fitted four years ago with an air bag device which saved the lives of the eight men crew. The other boat to overturn was the Islay lifeboat, *Helmut Schroder*, which capsized while also on the way to aid the Danish coaster. Again, remarkably the six man crew all survived.

October 1979
Early talks on RET
Consultations over the next few months will lead to significant moves to help island transport costs, it was predicted by a Government Minister at a meeting in Islay.

Mr Malcolm Rifkind, Minister for Home Affairs, told a meeting at Bowmore that the Government was committed towards the principle of road equivalent tariff - that ferries should be treated as extensions of the road.

December 1979
Causeway to Kerrera
A causeway to Kerrera is key to establishing Oban as a marine centre of international significance, with a capacity for many hundreds of vessels.

This is the most sensational proposal in a report which burst upon an unsuspecting district council committee at midday on Wednesday. Consultants carried out the study on the development of water sports facilities jointly for the district council and the HIBD.

December 1979
Peat or prison
A scheme which would permit island courts to impose orders which would require offenders to perform unpaid community work - such as cutting peats for the elderly - instead of going to prison was approved on Tuesday by the social work committee of the Western Isles Council.

January 1980
Old mine shaft discovered.
Mr Malcolm Brown, 14 Rhudal Cottages, Drumlemble, near Campbelltown, reported to police the

discovery of an old mine shaft on the Drumlemble Playing fields. It is 15 feet deep and a hole 5 feet in circumference. The former Drumlemble coal mine was situated in the area for many years and a large number of miners lived in the village.

January 1980
Luings to Uruguay
Twenty-three Luing heifers and two bulls are settling in well at their new home in Uruguay after a 5,000-mile trip.

The cattle left the island of Luing for a lairage near Edinburgh on November 12. From there they travelled to Folkestone and after resting crossed the Channel and headed for Luxembourg. After another rest they took a flight to Montevideo.

February 1980
New fish hall
A fully equipped pier complex for Oban came a step nearer with the handover of the new fish marketing hall.

The Railway Pier's owners, Caledonian MacBrayne, entrusted the £30,000 building to Oban Port Association in a brief signing ceremony at the Fishermen's Mission. The new building was hailed as a great advance from the primitive conditions, which had prevailed for fish trading.

The street value is unconfirmed but is unlikely to be less than £2 million.

April 1980
Dangerous road barriers
Following Sheriff Principal Dick's determination recently that Argyll's wooden road barriers are 'an obvious hazard', which had contributed to a number of deaths, Strathclyde Regional Council have doubled their budget for replacing the barriers. This year's budget for replacing barriers has been increased from £100,000 to £200,000.

May 1980
Village for sale
An unoccupied village, built at a cost of £3.3 million to meet the North Sea oil rush, is for sale.

The development, at Pollphail, Loch Fyne, was built to house 500 workers from Portavadie, the £11½ million dry dock development where concrete oil platforms were to have been built for oil exploration.

However, under Scots law the Government did not have time to buy the land, which is still privately owned.

The sale is being handled by Sussex Estate Agents Turner, Rudge and Turner.

May 1980
Drugs haul: seven in court.
Unprecedented activity by Customs and Excise officers and Special Branch detectives to uncover a cannabis network in the West Highlands was still in progress yesterday.

Cannabis valued at over £10m was recovered in raids which started on Friday and seven people arrested in simultaneous swoops all over Britain appeared in court at the Guildhall, London, on Tuesday.

June 1980
New factory at Lochgilphead

The opening of a new 8,000 square foot factory at Kilmory Industrial Estate, Lochgilphead, was described as 'a landmark in the economic development of Argyll and Bute' by sir Kenneth Alexander, chairman of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, when he performed the opening ceremony on Tuesday.

The new premises built by M. and K. MacLeod, house kit manufacturers, on a site leased from the Highlands and Islands Development Board, will allow the

MacLeod twins, Murdo and Kenneth, to commence a three year expansion programme which they hope will boost their workforce from 55 to 90.

June 1980
Furnace quarry blast
Houses and cars in Furnace were badly damaged by flying chunks of granite on Monday after blasting at a local quarry, owned by Tilcon Ltd.

The blast came just after five p.m., immediately following it, stones and rubble hailed hundreds of feet in the air and crashed down on houses, cars, caravans and boats on the shore.

June 1980
Alginite makes further cuts.
Alginite Industries, twice winners of the Queen's Award for outstanding exports success, this week announced further cutbacks in their production. At Barcaldine, where there are 137 workers on the payroll, it will be necessary to shed the equivalent of five weeks production on Lewis, North and South Uist, a cutback in production of ten weeks has been ordered. And in Tiree, Orkney and the Outer Isles, the traditional collection of tangle will be stopped.

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Factory for Claggan
Plans are forging ahead for a new fish factory at Claggan, Fort William after planning restrictions were lifted from the developer. Now Shiel Valley Services hope that their new plant will be able to go into operation before the end of the year.

August 1980 Plan for Oban
A blueprint for action with Oban as the centre described as the most exciting development in the Highlands and Islands since the construction of the Aviemore Centre was given the unqualified support of Argyll and Bute District Council's Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Committee.
They agreed to proceed with a water sports tourism development strategy, which consultants forecast could increase annual tourist expenditure by £6 million and create 1,000 new jobs in

BBC Food & Farming Award Winners
British Cheese Awards 2007 - Best Scottish Cheese
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1978 - Oban's crumbling South Pier is to be rebuilt almost five years after a similar scheme was shelved by the town council. The new project will cost an estimated £360,000 with funding coming from Strathclyde regional Council's 1978-1983 capital programme.

1980

June 1980 Colour TV for Islay
By the end of September the BBC will have opened both television and vhf radio transmitters at Port Ellen and at Bowmore on Islay. Each of these two stations will carry three colour television channels and three stereo radio channels and together will serve about 3,000 residents.

June 1980 Donald Thomson dies.
Mr Donald Thomson, who made outstanding contributions in the fields of education, local government and the Gaelic language, died at his home in Oban on Tuesday night. He was 72.

One of Oban's best known residents, he was the holder of the OBE for services to Gaelic and the Fellowship of the Educational Institute of Scotland. Mr Thomson was twice provost of Oban, on whose town council he served from 1954 to 1975. He was president of An Comunn Gaidhealach from 1962 - 1965 and convener of its Mod.

June 1980 The Queen in Islay
A cheerful crowd of islanders and holiday makers waited in a dull wind to see Her Majesty the Queen re-embark at Port Askaig last Saturday at the end of her first visit to Islay.
As Coxswain Alastair Campbell introduced the lifeboat crew to the Queen there was a sudden spontaneous burst of cheering from the crowd.

While all eyes had been on the Royal Rolls flying the Queen's Standard a Land Rover had drawn up behind. To the delight of onlookers Prince Charles and Prince Edward stepped out and crossed to chat with the crowd while Princess Margaret, who was accompanied by Viscount Linley and Lady Sarah Armstrong-Jones, moved across the pier to listen to Keills School choir sing about the exploits of Islay hero Godred Crowan. The Queen joined her to ask for an encore.

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1978 - Machines are at work on a £250,000 scheme to create a sports field from the former refuse site at An Aird, Fort William.



1978 - Edinburgh comedian Hugh Ferris entertains some of the former employees of the British Aluminium Company, Fort William when they were guests at the company's social club.

Argyll and Bute at the end of the decade. Half of the new jobs will be dependent upon the creation of a major marine sports centre at Oban with associated network of yacht harbours, yacht stations and new mooring points around the coast of Argyll and Bute.

October 1980 Achnacroish service.
The people of Lismore have voted by a large majority to keep their ferry service running between Achnacroish and Oban. Strathclyde Regional Council decided to have a postal ballot of islanders to discover which ferry service they preferred.

November 1980 Skye firm expand into Japan.
Gaeltec Limited, the firm who make specialised electronic devices in their purpose-built factory in Skye, have now appointed distributors in Japan for their tiny transducers.

December 1980 New hospital at Soroba
Oban's new hospital will be built at Soroba - but plans are being held back by lack of funds. Officials of the Argyll and Clyde Health Board visiting Oban on Tuesday said that although the board were still firmly committed to building a hospital in Oban, there were financial difficulties.

December 1980 Lingerbay quarry plan
A planning application for a £1¼ million development for a coastal quarry at Lingerbay in South Harris, which will eventually provide 15 jobs, was submitted on Tuesday to the Western Isles Council.
This follows a public meeting in Leverburgh on Monday night when a packed hall gave unanimous and enthusiastic support for the project, which

Local coastguards and police with the help of military aircraft have found sections of the plane which they now hope will help reveal the cause of the accident.

March 1981 Lochaline finds new markets for sand.
A new de-magnetised sand product from the famous Lochaline Silica sand mine on the Sound of Mull is meeting with considerable success in the UK and for export.

The sand marketed by Ticon Limited, the nationwide quarrying and industrial minerals group, can significantly reduce costs and improve quality in the manufacture of crystal glass.

June 1981 Gourock - Dunoon ferry grant withdrawn

The Government is withdrawing its subsidy to Caledonian MacBrayne's ferry service between Gourock and Dunoon; and in the House of Commons on Tuesday the Secretary of State for Scotland announced proposals for a comprehensive vehicle and passenger service to be provided by Western Ferries Limited.

July 1981 Clan Cameron gathering

The Clan Cameron recently announced that they will be holding a Clan Gathering at Achnacarry, by Fort William, the ancestral home of their

February 1981 Three plane crash

Parts of a Dutch military aircraft, which ditched over three weeks ago in the Atlantic 160 miles off Tiree are being found around the island's coastline.



1980 - New opportunities opened up for the 190 inhabitants of Gigha with the introduction of a new car ferry service from Tayinloan. One of the first vehicles to use the roll on - roll off service was the regional council's Daimler

Chief, Sir Donald Cameron of Lochiel, on Saturday, August 8, this gathering will form part of the clan's celebrations in this 'The Year of the Scot'.

August 1981 Soroba House fire

One of Oban's best-known hotels and entertainment spots, Soroba House, was largely destroyed by fire in the early hours of Friday.
An electrical fault has been blamed for the fire, which spread via dried moss insulation in the walls of the 160-year-old building to the upper floors and the roof.
Fire brigade units from Oban, Lochgilphead and Tarbert fought to bring the blaze under control by 6.50 a.m.

October 1981 European money for Isles

The Western Isles Council is the first local authority in Scotland to receive grants from the European Regional Development Fund at the 40% level. These are provided under new guidelines concerning less favoured farming areas which have suffered a decline in population and which have an integrated development programme.

November 1981 Maternity fears

Increased fears that the policy of taking expecting mothers to the Vale of Leven Hospital is a move towards the closure of Oban Maternity Hospital have been voiced by Oban Community Council. A Health Board spokesman, however, has given an assurance that there are no plans to close Gleneuchar until a new general hospital is built.

November 1981 Shellfish factory closes

A Stornoway shellfish factory

closed on Friday with the loss of 17 jobs because of the lack of crabs being landed by static gear fishermen whose creels have been lost or damaged by the mackerel fishing fleet. Some boats have lost their entire fleets of 200 creels valued at £3,000, while others have stopped fishing for fear of losing their gear.

December 1981 Ardcathart art theft

Police investigating the theft of paintings and silver from Ardcathart Priory in Argyll's biggest and boldest raid for some years issued the description of a vehicle they would like to trace.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Campbell-Preston, whose home Ardcathart Priory is, dismissed as 'rubbish' reports that the value of the property stolen might reach £500,000.
His own valuation of his loss is about £100,000.

December 1981 Mull Railway starts

The first lengths of the Mull Railway have been laid.
The little railway, of 10¼ gauge, will run for just over a mile from a terminus near the old pier at Craignure to a station within easy reach of Torosay Castle.
Part of the route follows close to the shoreline and passengers will enjoy a panoramic view of the Sound of Mull and Loch Linnhe.

1982

January 1982 Oban men in canal drama.

Two Oban men have survived a 40-minute ordeal in the freezing waters of the Caledonian Canal. The incident happened when John McTaggart fell into the canal and shipmate, Kenny Clark dived to his rescue.

The two men work on board the *Calamus*, the research vessel based at the Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory.
They had to jump from boat to boat to reach *Calamus* but ship's cook Mr McTaggart slipped and fell through the ice. Mr Clark jumped after him and held him out of the water by his hair.

January 1982 Big freeze

As temperature continue to plummet frozen and burst pipes have caused massive problems throughout Argyll and Bute, with 5,000 calls about plumbing problems since Christmas.

There have been 250 calls from Cowal, 50 from Islay, 150 from Rothesay, over 100 from Campbeltown and 50 from Mull.

On Monday the council were receiving 20 calls an hour in Mid Argyll.

Lots of furniture, carpets, curtains and blind ranges to choose in store.
(and we are there to help)

30 years supplying furnishings and carpeting to Oban and the surrounding area.

Tweedmill, Soroba Road, Oban. Tel: 01631 565195

ENJOY A NEW EXPERIENCE!

IAN MATHESON
Lochbridge, Fort William
The Highlands' Leading Furniture Retailers
are proud to announce the **OPENING at 9 a.m. on TUESDAY, September 15**

WIN A VOUCHER WORTH £100

NEW OBAN SHOWROOM
THE OLD TWEEDMILL
Soroba Road : Oban
Lochbridge, Oban G515

TOP DISCOUNTS ON ALL ITEMS

IAN MATHESON
Lochbridge Warehouse : Fort William and The Showroom, Soroba Road, Oban



February 1981 - Above and below - Gales which swept the west coast caused considerable damage. There were reports of flooding from many of Oban's shops and offices. Oban's Esplanade was not passable for cars and the Ganavan road was blocked by the high tide. The force of the waves on the town's seafront did considerable damage to the sea wall. Many areas throughout the west were blacked out by power cuts as storm force winds brought down cables, poles and trees.



January 1982
Crofters win case
The Keil crofters have won their fight against the resumption of common grazing at Tralee. In a written judgement by the Land Court, the landlords' application to resume the common grazings for mineral workings was dismissed on the grounds that the applicants had entirely failed to prove resumption was for a reasonable purpose. The true purpose of the application seemed to be to try to prevent crofters from being able to buy the land, the court said.

February 1982
Glensanda Quarry plan
A plan, which could provide up to 120 jobs for the Morvern area is to go before Highland Regional Council.
A coastal quarry is being proposed at Glensanda and the firm behind the move, Foster Yeoman Ltd of Somerset, say that the large, coastal quarry will supply stone to the company's existing and proposed terminals in London and the south of England.
The project will take about five years to establish, bringing 30 jobs in the early stages, building up to 60 when full production is reached.

March 1982
Tiree loses main employer
Hebridean Knitwear, Tiree's main employer of women, is to close this Friday with the loss of 12 jobs.
Hebridean Knitwear has been in operation on Tiree for 12 years and moved into its present premises only four years ago.
But the recession has resulted in reduced orders and coupled with rising costs has forced the East Kilbride based company to go into liquidation this week.

April 1982
Campbeltown cheese success
An Argyll cheese company opened a fresh chapter in their success story with the commissioning of the most advanced creamery of its kind in Britain.

While economic and market pressures have forced several small British creameries to close in the last decade, Campbeltown Creamery Ltd - formed to save jobs when Unigate pulled out of Kintyre in 1974 - have

made Campbeltown Cheddar a household name.

May 1982
STV appoint local director
Rev. Robin D. Buchanan-Smith, Isle of Eriska Hotel, was appointed a director of Scottish Television at a board meeting of the company in Glasgow.

May 1982
Oban Marine killed in action
A 20-year-old Oban man was killed in action in the Falklands at the weekend.

Marine Gordon MacPherson, whose family stay at 22a Glenruitten Drive, is thought to have died along with seven others from 45 Marine Commando Group, Condor, Arbroath, during the successful assaults on the heights surrounding Port Stanley. Marine MacPherson died just two weeks before his 21st birthday.

May 1982
Firefighting ferry
The Fishnish to Lochaline ferry performed an unusual role last week when its crew acted as fire fighters.

Early last Tuesday evening Shore Cottage, Lochaline, went on fire, and fortunately the ferry was passing at the time. The vessel at once moved into the shoreline and were able to put out the fire. Ferryman Donald Cameron commented: 'We were lucky there was a high tide and we got right up to the house. All the crew worked very well.'

November 1982
Inveraray seeks golf course.
Inveraray Community Council have taken the initiative in an attempt to revive the golf club.
The community council have been in touch with the Argyll Estates about the allocation of an area of ground, which would be suitable for a course.

November 1982
Lochearnhead fire
The Lochearnhead Hotel, which was razed to the ground on Thursday night by fire, will be rebuilt to luxury standards over the next two years. Hotel owner Mr Ewen Cameron, O.B.E., said on Monday that the hotel was insured for around £1½ million and that around £1 million could be spent on renewing it.



1981 - Above and below - A JCB digger which crashed through a wall at Back Brae, Tobermory, then fell 40 feet onto the roof of an outbuilding was recovered after three months of head scratching. A local firm dismantled the machine and manoeuvred it, bit by bit, via a narrow lane down and onto Main Street



1983 - Jimmy Savile, chieftain of Lochaber Highland Games leads the march through Fort William's High Street

December 1982
Knoydart says 'No' to Army
The people of Knoydart this week made their voice clear about the future of the Knoydart Estate, which the Ministry of Defence has expressed an interest in purchasing for training purposes. After a meeting in the Old Forge Club the following short statement was issued: 'A majority of 85% of those present were strongly opposed to any Army presence on the Knoydart Peninsula.'

December 1982
Oban marina recommended
Consultants investigating the development of water sports in Argyll and Bute have recommended a marina of up to 300 berths between the piers at Oban.
The development would cost an estimated five and a half million pounds. The consultants report, which was welcomed by members of Argyll and Bute's tourism, leisure and recreation committee last week, is now to be used as the basis for further public discussion involving Oban Community Council and Caledonian MacBrayne after the views of Strathclyde Regional Council have been clarified.

December 1982
Appin bridge considered
The Director of Architectural Services for Argyll and Bute is to investigate the cost of repairing the Jubilee footbridge and Achosrigan Lane in Appin. The footbridge carries a right of way across the estuary at the head of Loch Laich and was, in the days of the Ballachulish Railway, used as a shortcut by residents of Port Appin walking to and from Appin Station.

December 1982
Kerrera fish farm plan
Plans for a major fish farm development on Kerrera costing upwards of £500,000 are likely to be submitted early in the New Year. Lovat Estates of Beaulieu, who are behind the venture, confirmed this week that they hope to establish an inshore production unit at Ardentraive Farm.

January 1983
Community take over shop
Kilchrenan's chop re-opened on Saturday with the community as the owners.
The majority of local families own a share and many turned out to witness the start of the most challenging chapter in the Trading Post's 90-year history. The tape was cut by the oldest native resident, Mrs Bella Bolton, whose father, Mr McCall, established the general store on its present site in the 1890s and ran it until the First World War.

February 1983
New radar station for Tiree
The Isle of Tiree is to be the site for a new long-range radar station to serve air traffic over Scotland and on the busy Western approach.
The National Air Traffic Service (NATS) plan to build the new radar station at Ben Hynish.

March 1983
Half of Jura for sale
About 20,000 acres of the Island of Jura will be put up for sale next month, when the Viscount Astor puts on the market more than half of the Tarbert Estate on the island. Lord Astor will be retaining one house, Tarbert Lodge and around 15,000 acres of land on Jura.



1981 - Firemen and police are investigating a devastating fire at Caol Community Centre which caused £250,000 worth of damage. The fire is thought to have started around 1.15am shortly after the end of a disco attended by more than 200 local young people



1983 - Fort William's Ladies Circle celebrated their 21st birthday. Chairman Mrs Pat Leslie, assisted by Mrs Anne Austin, founder chairman, cut the cake at the Milton Hotel



1983 - The Tour of Argyll cycle race was voted a resounding success. Starting at Dunoon, more than 60 riders tackled the four-day event which took them over 317 miles via Campbeltown, Inveraray and Oban. After four days, there was only seven seconds between first and second place with David Whitehall of Greenock Cairney Sports taking the title

August 1983
Oronsay on market
The Island of Oronsay has been put on the market by Adam Bergius, a former chairman of Teacher's whisky company, at an asking price of over £150,000. Oronsay lies next to Colonsay at the south end of the Inner Hebrides and is about 1470 acres in size.

March 1983
Oban song pair do it again!
The song writing partnership of an Oban minister and a journalist has been chosen to carry Scotland's hopes in the Celtvision Song Contest in Killarney next month.
The Rev. John MacLeod, of Oban Old Parish church and Erik Spence, chief reporter of The Oban Times on Friday won the BBC new Gaelic song contest - for the second time.

May 1983
Mingary to Nova Scotia
It's a long way from Mingary to Nova Scotia.
But already plans are being laid to send the tiny Mingary School Choir to the 1985 Cape Breton Mod. One of the first fund-raising schemes will be a 25-mile sponsored walk this Saturday from Lochailort to Fort William, which will be undertaken by six local ladies.

June 1983
Raasay House bill
A 'horrifying' £600,000 is the cost of making Raasay House habitable and possibility of total demolition looms.
The only alternative, it became clear after Highlands and Islands Development senior officials met islanders on the island on Monday, is to find somebody with cash and commitment to buy the once-splendid mansion and restore it.

July 1983
Rhum power
The first phase of the Coire Dubh HydroElectric Scheme on the Isle of Rhum has been completed.
This project was awarded as a £40,000 Management Contract to Balfour Beatty Construction (Scotland) by the Nature Conservancy Council in January 1983.



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October 1983
Bird toll still rises.
Thousands of birds have died in oil around Coll and Tiree.
Thursday's oil spillage, which was dispersed by aerial spraying with detergent in an operation described as 'a major disaster' for the Hebridean birdlife by the Nature Conservancy Council.

October 1983
Sheep drowned.
Up to a hundred sheep are thought to have drowned at Dalmally last week when the River Orchy burst its banks

October 1983
Switch on for Colonsay
The island of Colonsay will be officially connected to the mainland electricity grid today (Thursday) by a 13.4 miles long submarine cable. Performing the 'switch on' ceremony will be the MP for Argyll and Bute, Mr John MacKay, Minister for Health and Social Work at the Scottish Office.

October 1983
Fish farms sold
Several Argyll fish farms have been sold to the Norwegian company Norsk Hydro, which has bought the fish farming interests of Fitch Lovell PLC for about £1.7 million. Farms include Scottish Sea Farms and the Golden Sea Produce operations at Ledaig, Loch Creran, Kinlochspelve, Lochaline, Knock and Ardkinglas.

October 1983
Craobh Haven plan
Argyll's newest village - at present an almost virgin 300-acre site of the Craignish Peninsula, south of Oban - was officially born this week.
All Seasons Craobh Haven Limited, an associate company of a West Midlands-based civil engineering and property development

November 1983
RSPB buy 3,000 acres of Islay
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has bought 3,000 acres of land around Loch Gruinart, Islay for a wild bird reserve.

December 1983
Minch plane crash
A post mortem examination of the four bodies recovered after a private jet plane plunged into the sea off Stornoway last Thursday night was to be held at Inverness on Tuesday.
The plane was carrying ten people - three couples, two young children and two pilots.
Three of the four bodies recovered have been identified and the fourth is now believed to be that of a Frenchwoman, Madame Charlette Gimbert.

The new Atlantis gym has now opened!

Come and try our new top of the range Technogym equipment or our new top-notch group cycle classes with music that begs your legs to pedal.

www.atlantisleisure.co.uk or contact reception for details. 01631 566800

1984

January 1984**Storm damage costing Hydro Board more than £250,000**

The number of consumers without electricity following storms in the West Highlands, where Skye was the worst affected, had been reduced to a few hundred. The estimated cost to the Hydro Board of repairing the damaged supply network is more than £¼ million. At one point last Tuesday morning, at the height of the bad weather, 40,000 consumers had power failures.

January 1984**Isles - energy exporter**

The Western Isles could become an exporter of energy in 20 years' time, provided wind farms are established throughout the area and a submarine cable link to the mainland is provided to feed the national grid.

January 1984**Super quarry**

The proposed quarry at Glensanda, on the Morven coast, is potentially the largest in Britain, with permission to take out 7.5 million tonnes of granite every year.

February 1984**India contract for Mid Argyll**

A Mid Argyll company has won a \$1.4m contract in India. The Ardrishaig-based Fish Farm Development Group are set to start construction of a project which will provide up to 200 jobs in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir.

February 1984**Campbeltown launch.**

The first vessel built by Campbeltown Shipyard for the Ayrshire fishing fleet was launched last Thursday from the yard at Trench Point, Campbeltown. The 70-foot steel-hulled seiner/trawler was named *Wanderer III*.

March 1984**Colonsay fights SSSI**

Colonsay crofters are fighting a plan by the Nature Conservancy Council to declare the Loch Fada area a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

March 1984**New hall for Ballachulish**

Ballachulish Community Hall Association were given the go-ahead last Monday for the erection of a village hall.

May 1984**Coll and Tiree to join grid.**

The islands of Tiree and Coll are to be connected to the national grid for electricity during this summer.

June 1984**Sea water heat source**

Iona Abbey on Friday became the first set of buildings in Western Europe to be heated by the use of seawater.

July 1984**Tiree museum opens**

A unique museum dedicated to the Skerryvore Lighthouse and its builder Alan Stevenson, was opened on Tiree on Thursday.

Appropriately, the ceremony was carried out by the Duke of Argyll, whose fourfold grandfather, the 7th Duke, laid the foundation stone of Skerryvore in 1840.

July 1984**Helicopter rescues six.**

A thrilling air/sea rescue featuring Campbeltown lifeboat and a Canadian helicopter took place near the Mull of Kintyre coastline, when the lifeboat received a call to go to the assistance of the yacht *Raith*.

The helicopter safely winched off six people, including a child, from the stricken yacht.

August 1984**Gaelic road signs for Skye**

Bilingual road signs will soon be abundant enough to be commonplace in Skye where almost 80 in number are to be replaced throughout the island by the roads and transport department of the Highland Region.

August 1984**Oban hotel shored up**

In an emergency measure, shoring has had to be built for the façade of the Argyll Hotel, Oban, because the building was potentially dangerous.

The shoring, which blocks off one lane of traffic on the town's Esplanade, is to remain in place until at least the end of the summer season.

August 1984**Sannox saved**

Quick action by her own crew and Islay Fire Brigade saved the *MV Glen Sannox* from serious damage when fire broke out below the car deck on Thursday last week.

August 1984

Ice rink for Oban

Oban Ice Rink Company are to be offered ground to build an ice rink - provided they can start work within two years. The offer is for the ground between the current swimming pool and the bowling green.



1989 - Fishermen, lifeboatmen and islanders gathered for a special fishermen's mass, celebrated by Fr Calum MacLellan on Barra



July 1987

Prince Charles in holiday mood at Fort William
Prince Charles was in true holiday mood when he dropped into Fort William from his summer residence at Balmoral on Tuesday. The Prince was a special guest of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team and witnessed mountain rescue technique demonstrations in Glen Nevis during his visit. Team leader Mr Donald Watt said: 'He enjoyed the day and so did we; it was good fun. He was telling jokes and we were telling jokes. He is an extremely nice person and made everything easy for us. We have invited him back to go up Ben Nevis and he said he will make a strenuous effort to do so. I insisted he should go to the top of the highest mountain of his future realm.'

October 1984
Hospital services go private
The five Oban hospitals may be used as a test case if Argyll and Clyde Health Board take the decision to contract out some of their catering and cleaning work to the private sector.

October 1984

Big Cat in Ardfern?
There have been sightings recently of unidentified big cat-like animal near Ardfern. One resident has described the animal as 'some kind of cat, about the size of a collie dog, dark and with a long tail.'

November 1984

Glider pilot in eagle attack
A golden eagle attacked a glider flying at Connel at the weekend. The bird was killed after hitting the tail of a Connel Gliding Pilot, flown by club member John Anderson.

December 1984

Amazing escape
A Spean Bridge girl had a miraculous escape when a Harrier jump-jet crashed, hurtling burning wreckage into a farm shed at her home. June Anne MacColl, of Redburn, Kilmonivaig Farm, would moments later have been working in the shed, which was ablaze within seconds.

December 1984

Calgary beach up for sale.
The popular sandy beach at the head of Calgary Bay in the north of Mull may be bought by Argyll and Bute District Council to be preserved as a tourist asset. The beach and machair area is being offered for sale for £2000 by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland.

January 1985

Lochalsh fire
A weekend fire at Kyle of Lochalsh destroyed the Pioneer Stores. The Saturday morning dawn blaze also damaged the Co-operative Store next door, which will be unable to trade for some time.

January 1985

Skye-born girl is Scottish champion.
Twenty-Six-year-old Karen MacLeod, who was born and spent her childhood on Skye, surprised a qualified field in the Scottish women's cross country championship at Cumbernauld to win her first national title. Karen who has been running for only three years, beat her international club mate, Yvonne Murray, into second place with a powerful late surge to win by seven seconds.

January 1985

£2m drugs case at Oban
Security was tight at Oban Sheriff Court for the appearance in private of eight men on a major drugs charge. Four of the men were held locally in an early-morning raid on the converted fishing cruiser

the *St Just* and four arrested in Liverpool were brought to Oban by car. HM Customs and Excise had said the previous day that cannabis worth up to £2m street value had been seized when the *St Just* was boarded at Pulldobhrain, Isle of Seil.

March 1985

Oyster harvest at Clachan.
Ten per cent of the entire production of oysters over one year in Scotland is being sent out this week - from one farm at Clachan, in Kintyre.

April 1985

Loch Lomond road
The Scottish Development Department have awarded a contract worth £5.64m to Tractor Shovels Limited for the first in a series of improvements to the A82 trunk road along Loch Lomondside. Work is due to commence next Monday and expected to take two years to complete.

April 1985

Filming in Lochaber
A new multi-million pound film starring Sean Connery is being shot in the Fort William area next month. And Lochaber folk - particularly the men - will be grabbing a piece of the limelight as hundreds of extras are needed for the Thorn/EMI production of *The Highlander*.

April 1985

Kilchrenan fire
A house at Achnacarron, near Kilchrenan, was totally destroyed by fire on Friday morning. The alarm was raised at 11.30 and two fire engines from Oban attended.

May 1985

Island firm on tender list.
An island firm, Rimmon Construction Ltd, is to be included in the tender list for the new £10m sixth-year school at Linaclate in Benbecula. It is the biggest contract ever issued by the Western Isles Council.

June 1985

Mull plane escape
Both a pilot and his aircraft had a remarkable escape when they crashed into the sea on the approach to Glenforsa aerodrome on Mull during the air rally at the weekend.

June 1985

Castle for sale
Kilchurn Castle is for sale - at an asking price of over £50,000. The castle is one of the best-known and most photographed castles in Scotland.

June 1985

End of era at Kilberry
An educational history stretching back well over a century drew to a close on Friday with the last day of Kilberry Primary School, south of Tarbert, Argyll. The 113-year-old school had a roll of one pupil and Strathclyde Regional Council decided that it should close and children from the area be educated at Tarbert.

June 1985**Faulty chimneys at Fort**

Major defects - which could cost up to a quarter of a million pounds to put right - have been discovered in the chimneys of council houses recently inspected in Lochside, Fort William - 74 out of 76 houses inspected had 'major faults'.

July 1985**Fire destroys lemonade works at Rothesay**

A major fire destroyed the Rothesay premises of W & J Kirkhope, Aerated Water Manufacturers, on the night of Friday, July 5.

August 1985**MacBrayne Haulage sale**

The Government has confirmed the sale of MacBrayne Haulage to the Turriff-based Kildonan Transport Ltd for £450,000.

August 1985**Polar Bear in Benbecula**

The carcass of an animal, which came ashore at Cula Bay, Benbecula, is thought to be that of a polar bear.

August 1985**Quarry in receiver's hands.**

Glasgow-registered Kiroval Ltd, with quarry operations in the Western Isles at Lingerbay in Harris, at Torrinn in Skye and at Dunblane, have gone into receivership.

September 1985**From Islay to the Falklands**

The Falkland Islands could benefit from experience gained by the Islay community. The manager of the Islay Co-operative, Mr George Graham, will spend a month setting up a similar operation in the Falklands before assistant manager, Hunter Jackson, takes over the running of the new co-operative for a year.

September 1985**Hay from Canada**

Hay shipped across the North Atlantic could be the only means of survival in the coming winter for livestock in the West Highlands and Islands. West Highland Crofters and Farmers Ltd are negotiating to buy and have sent by sea at least 6000 tonnes of first quality hay from Canada.

September 1985**Barra Head rescue**

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April 1986**Skye watermill comes back into service**

A 200-year-old watermill on Skye will grind locally grown grain again to provide a unique tourist attraction on the island. Glendale watermill has been taken over by local business people William and Julia MacKenzie.

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A new £150,000 livestock marketing facility is to be built at Lochboisdale in South Uist with assistance from the HDB under the Integrated Development Programme for the Western Isles.

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Campbeltown-born foods millionaire James Gulliver was this week the toast of his home town as local housewives welcomed the news that his firm, Argyll Foods, are keen to develop a new supermarket there.

August 1986**Royals visit Kilchoan**

The Royal Family returned the compliment in style when villagers from all over Ardnamurchan turned out in force to welcome Her Majesty the Queen, to Kilchoan. For the delighted crowd were rewarded with a surprise visit from the Duke and Duchess of York along with Prince Edward and Princess Anne's children Master Peter and Miss Zara Phillips.

The purpose of the Queen's visit was to mark the bi-centenary of the Northern Lighthouse Board.

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The tiny island of Easdale is for sale at an asking price of offers over £250,000. The island is owned by Mr Chris Nicholson, a businessman who operates Easdale Island Shipping Line.

September 1986**Cable car to McCaig's Tower?**

An Oban company announced

September 1985**Duror man at reins of Crofters' Union**

A Duror man has been appointed director of the Crofters' Union, which is due to be formally launched in November. Dr James Hunter will be the only full-time official of the new look union, which has undergone a major reorganisation recently.

October 1985**New factory for Skye**

A new meat processing factory opened in Portree on the Isle of Skye last week.

November 1985**Earthquake hits west coast**

An earthquake rocked the West Coast between Mallaig and Arisaig on Sunday night. The tremor, which gave a 3.5 reading on the Richter scale, was recorded by the Edinburgh Geographical Society.

November 1985**Trawlerman dies in heavy sea**

A French trawlerman died and another was seriously injured when their vessel, *Pors Ar Vag* was hit by heavy seas while the boat was off Benbecula in the Western Isles.

November 1985**Corran Halls - new shock**

The decay in the structure of the Corran Halls in Oban is worse than originally thought, it was revealed last week. The halls are closed for the winter season this year so that urgent repairs can be carried out. But when workmen started to prepare the building, they discovered that the problem was larger than expected.

1986

January 1986**Oil slick reaches harbour**

Stornoway Pier and Harbour Commission officials are investigating a large oil slick which entered the harbour area, blackening everything in sight. Harbourmaster Angus MacKenzie said it was the worst they had seen and appeared to be crude oil from a large tanker.

January 1986**Bakery jobs lost**

The Mothers Pride Bakery at Millpark, Oban, is to close at the beginning of next month with the loss of four jobs.

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An Oban company announced

this week that it intends to investigate the building of a cable car to ply between the Esplanade and McCaig's Tower, in Oban. The company - Oban Leisure Developments - says a cable car would encourage more visitors to come to Oban.

October 1986**Onich fires**

Fire chiefs are to investigate the tragic events which led to two timber houses going up in flames at Incheir, Onich.

December 1986**Boat on Mull rocks**

The three-man crew of the 54-foot crabber, *Petit Poisson*, took to a life raft when the vessel hit rocks at Ardmore Point off Mull in the early hours and sank.

January 1987**Rescue teams busy**

Lochaber and Glencoe mountain rescue teams faced their busiest New Years ever, dealing with a catalogue of mountain accidents in which two people were killed. Team members, police, helicopter teams and rescue dogs were out seven times in four days.

February 1987**Butter mountain**

Pensioners throughout North Argyll will share in a general distribution of free butter to be made throughout Britain with the aim of reducing the EEC's huge butter mountain.

March 1987**£5.5m plan for Oban**

Plimley Estates, a Stirling-based developer has been chosen by Argyll and Bute District Council as the preferred partner for the development of two sites in Oban - one at the Railway Station and the other at Lochavullin. The £5.5 million proposals include a hotel linked with an international curling rink; a heritage centre; tourist information centre, superloo and car parking.

May 1987**New sawmill for Corpach**

Thomas Smith & Sons (Kirkcaldy) Limited announced this week they are to open a new pallet wood and fencing mill, creating 33 new jobs at their Kilmallie sawmill, based at Corpach, Fort William.

May 1987**Prince finds peace on Berneray.**

The Hebrideans are chuckling and proud of the fact that they kept a Royal secret - a three day private visit by Prince Charles to give a hand with the croft work on the Isle of Berneray, population 130. The news did not leak out that he had spent a happy few days as the guest of a local crofter until after he had left by helicopter.

May 1987**Three drown in Loch Awe.**

Two men and an 11-year-old boy were the victims of a fishing tragedy at the weekend when their 16ft fibreglass dinghy overturned in Loch Awe.

July 1987**Berneray causeway**

Islanders on Berneray have voted by a huge majority for a causeway link with North Uist.

July 1987**Wave power for Islay**

Michael Spicer, Minister for Renewable Sources of Energy, has announced the construction of a new experimental inshore wave energy project on the Island of Islay.

July 1987**New CalMac ferry**

The State-owned Appledore-Ferguson yard at Port Glasgow have landed the £8m contract for a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry to serve South Uist, Barra, Coll and Tiree.

1988

February 1988
Taynuilt Station reprieve
Faced with demolition this spring, Taynuilt Railway Station has won a reprieve.

The station has been designated a B-listed building by the Historic Buildings Council. Consent from the Secretary of State will now be required before the property can be pulled down.

Built in 1879, Taynuilt is the last of the stations built by the old Callander and Oban Railway Company still in operation. The others have either been demolished or sold.

February 1988
Paper mill investment
The Wiggins Teape Group have announced a massive investment for their Corpach Paper Mill.

In a statement the group said: 'Over the next two years, a total of £12.5 million will be invested in new equipment for the mill, which now concentrates on manufacturing carbonless paper.'

February 1988
Police trace missing sheep.
Ten of the 90 sheep which disappeared from four farms in the Kilmichael-Glassary area in Mid Argyll have now been traced by police and returned to their owners.

The sheep, which have been sold at Stirling Market, are believed to have been rustled.

February 1988
Order for shipyard
Campbeltown Shipyard has clinched an important order for a Campbeltown '87 fishing vessel.

The 8-strong Shetland working partnership placed the order after negotiations lasting nearly a year. On receipt of the order work on the vessel, which is to cost £1.05m will begin immediately.

February 1988
Overweight ferry
There are weight problems and weight problems, but for Cal-Mac's newest ferry, the Isle of Mull, the prospect of shedding at least 40 tonnes in eight weeks is no laughing matter.

It was revealed this week that the new ferry, launched last year by Princess Alexandra, is 114 tonnes overweight. The British Shipbuilders owned Appledore Ferguson yard at Port Glasgow have now been told by Caledonian MacBrayne that this is totally unacceptable.

March 1988
Tyndrum forest fire
Fire last week swept a Forestry Commission plantation at Tyndrum causing many thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Fire units from Callander, Stirling, Oban, Killin and Tyndrum itself were called out to fight the blaze, which destroyed nearly 18,000 commercial conifers as well as broad-leaved species.

March 1988
Connel plane crash
Two men escaped injury last week after their plane crashed into a sheep on the runway at Connel airfield - bursting a fuel tank and causing a fuel leak at the airfield.

This week a spokesman for Strathclyde Regional Council, who owned the unlicensed airfield, said that measures were being looked at which would improve the safety of the runways. These include the termination of the lease, which allows stock to graze at the airfield.

March 1988
Mid Argyll sports complex
A multi-million pound leisure complex planned for Mid-Argyll was given the go-ahead last week.

Approved in principle by the District Council's planning committee were proposals for a 30-bedroom hotel, a championship standard golf course and a 60-house time-share development to be built at Killinochonoch Farm, near Kilmartin.

April 1988
Castlebay linkspan go-ahead.
The Scottish Office have given approval for the provision of a linkspan at Castlebay Pier, in Barra.

It is also thought that the completion date is expected in time for the new ferry coming into service in May 1989.

May 1988
Record number of dancers
A record entry of over 550 competitors from all over the country danced, played and sang their way through a weekend in Oban when temperatures soared into the 80s - just in time for the fifth annual Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival.

May 1988
Seil war memorial to move
Plans are being made to move the Isle of Seil War Memorial from its present site.



May 1988 - Seven of the 11 school children from Arinagour Primary School, Coll along with their teacher Mrs Louise Oliphant, visited the control room of Strathclyde Police during a four-day visit to Glasgow. The children were also interviewed for Scottish Television's main news programme.

The memorial currently stands between the two cemeteries on the island, on top of a hill. Its position means that it is fairly inaccessible and is not often visited by local people.

May 1988
Sunday ferry plan.
Strong opposition is expected over a plan to introduce a Sunday ferry service between Uig and Skye and Lochmaddy.

Mr Colin Paterson, chief executive of Caledonian MacBrayne, said this week that the company was considering such a service following requests from tourists and hoteliers.

The Caledonian MacBrayne ferry Pioneer will start a service from Mallaig to Castlebay, Barra on Sunday.

July 1988
Mull sawmill fire
Most of the 14 workers employed at the large Penrynghael Sawmill on Mull, are likely to find themselves out of a job as the result of the fire which destroyed most of the plant last Thursday.

The building was almost totally destroyed in the blaze and some sources have estimated the damage as being in the region of £400,000.

August 1988
Second gold strike
A second reported gold strike in the Tyndrum area now raises the prospect that the village could become a mini-Klondyke and the centre of a huge commercial mining operation.

August 1988
David rescues Goliath
It was a case of David rescuing Goliath on Tuesday when the Kylemhor, a 37ft boat skippered by Colin Currie, of Oban, towed the 200ft tanker Baysdale-H, gross registered weight 670 tonnes, to safety in the Sound of Mull.

August 1988
Loch Awe fish farm attacked
Nets were slashed at Tervine Fish Farm, Loch Awe, recently, releasing £6,000 worth of rainbow trout into the loch.

Last year the same fish farm lost between £50-£60,000 worth of fish through malicious damage to nets.

September 1988
Shinty finds new backer.
A lucrative new sponsorship deal for shinty was struck yesterday (Wednesday).

The game's new backers will be salmon farming pioneers Marine Harvest, who will support the national league to the tune of £30,000 for an initial three years.

September 1988
Ben Race runners suffer
The Ben Nevis Race claimed 18 casualties when it went ahead in the worst weather conditions for 30 years.

Rescue services were stretched to the limit Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team leader Mr Donald Watt said adding that he feared, at one point, that there would be fatalities. Suffering mainly from hypothermia - after running in 70 mile per hour winds and freezing cold - the casualties were treated in Fort William's Belford Hospital.

September 1988
£1000 reward after raid on fish farm at Kilmelford
A £1000 reward has been offered for information leading to the conviction of those responsible for last week's raid on a fish-farm at Kilmelford, about 15 miles south of Oban.

Between midnight on September 6 and 8am on Wednesday 7, intruders at Kames Fish Farms Ltd released an estimated 60 tonnes of salmon into Loch Melfort.

September 1988
MV Columbia's last sail
On Saturday the ferry Columbia sailed out of Oban for the last time.

However it is not goodbye to the Western Isles. Columbia will hopefully be returning - albeit with a new name and a facelift, which will render her almost unrecognisable - as a

top class cruise ship. Hebridean Island Cruises are to relaunch her as the Hebridean Princess and hope to sail her on week-long cruises on the west coast of Scotland.

October 1988
Award for Iona
The coveted Templeton U.K. Project award and £3,000 has been awarded to the Iona Community for its missionary work in Scotland and its contribution to the ecumenical movement.

The award of £3,000 has been earmarked to allow disabled and unemployed people to get to Iona and study.

November 1988
Drilling for oil off Barra
Exploratory drilling for oil off the Island of Barra is scheduled to start in 1990.

The news was given to the Western Isles Islands Council's Development services committee in Stornoway last week. Chevron are the sixth largest producers in the U.K. and have a 193 square mile licence block, approximately 16 miles south east of Castlebay.

November 1988
Aonach Mor underway
Work on the £10 million Aonach Mor Ski project - which will bring 50 new jobs to Lochaber next winter - should start next month.

The wheels are now firmly in motion following the final stages of the formation of the Nevis Range Development Company PLC being signed, sealed and delivered this week.

December 1988
Coastguard 'codswallop'
The Chief Coastguard for the UK this week described as 'codswallop' rumours that Oban Coastguard Station may be scheduled for closure.

Although there had been no official indication the station was to close, recent rationalisation has already seen the demise of three major stations and fears were growing that Oban was to be next.

December 1988
Lights for Lochybridge
Traffic lights are to be used in a bid to control one of Fort William's worst traffic problem areas it was revealed this week.

A spokesman for the Scottish Development Department confirmed on Tuesday that lights were to be put at the Road to the Isles junction at Lochybridge as a trial measure next spring.

1989

January 1989
Gales and floods
The West Highlands suffered from gales and flooding this week.

Although there were problems with road closures in Kintyre and Mid Argyll, Lochaber came off worst. The area was plagued with a catalogue of disasters at the weekend. The rain took an unexpected toll - even for an area, which has a reputation for being the wettest place in Britain.

A Fort William family had to be evacuated from their caravan home at Lochy Caravan Park when the River Lochy burst its banks. In Glencoe, homes were hit and Lochiel Estates lost 51 sheep worth £25 each at Strone.

The main railway line between Fort William and Crianlarich was closed on Sunday and most of Monday due to severe flooding on the track near Tulloch. The worst flooding problem for more than 30 years on the Spean Bridge to Tulloch section of the West Highland line closed the line at Monessie Gorge.

January 1989
Super Sprinter introduced
Scot rail start what they hope will be a new era in rail travel with the introduction of Super Sprinter trains to the Oban, Fort William and Mallaig lines from next Monday, 23 January.

The £125 million investment means that for the first time for over 100 years there will be new rolling stock on these lines.

February 1989
Tobermory Bay pontoons

A plan to install floating pontoons in Tobermory Bay, one of the most beautiful harbours in the Western Isles, has divided townspeople.

The pontoons would cater for up to 30 yachts and motor powered vessels and range in size from 30 feet to 70 feet, to be available to visiting yachtsmen only.

February 1989
Landslides cut-off Lochaber
Four separate landslides struck at opposite ends of Lochaber during Monday's torrential rain.

A large chunk of the hillside collapsed on to the main Inverness to Fort William Road at the entrance of Glegloy House, by Letterfinlay. Flooding hit houses nearby. Further up the road a second landslide closed the A82 at a second point by Corrieour Lodge Hotel, which had a 'full house' on Monday as stranded travellers sought refuge.

February 1989
Hurricane winds
Schools, shops and businesses closed early on Monday afternoon as hurricane force winds gusting up to 116mph wiped out electricity and telephone connections in the West Highlands.

As power lines were severed, shops in all the town centres closed their doors and staff watched helplessly as buildings and cars were battered by wind, rain and sea.

March 1989
Store closing shock for staff
Staff at Presto's supermarket in Oban, have been told the store is to close at the end of the month ... by their customers.

The seven staff worked as normal last week, unaware of any decision by their management. But meanwhile notices were issued to other George Street residents telling them the premises were to be changed into a shoe shop and one other 'unspecified retail outlet'.

March 1989
Highland cattle record
Records were smashed apart at the Highland Cattle Society Sale, held in the West Highland Auction Mart, Oban, on Monday.

The champion bull at the show before the sale was Gaoth Tuath of Balmoral, a two-year-old yellow bull owned by the Queen.

For the first time, a five-figure sum was paid for a Highland animal, with Mr Kees Hoogstede of Holland paying £14,700 for a two-year-old bull from Mrs Heather Corrigall. This new record price nearly doubled the previous breed record, set the previous year.

March 1989
More than £1m Tires centre
Over £1m is to be spent on a multi-purpose centre on Tires scheduled for completion this time next year.

The Oxford-based, Hebridean Trust, has received grants of £61,000 from the Highlands and Islands Development Board and a further £95,500 from the European Regional Development Fund for the £1.3m project at Hynish.

March 1989
Salmonella kills Skye cattle
Environmental health experts had this week still not positively identified the source of the salmonella outbreak, which has alarmed stockbreeders on Skye.

The outbreak left an island crofter and his son seriously ill, killed two of his cattle and left six others badly affected.

March 1989
New jobs for Mallaig
Up to 230 new permanent jobs could be created in Mallaig if the fishing port is given a multi-million pound new image.

That is the message of hope contained in a detailed report, which has been prepared by independent planning consultants Halcrow, Fox and Associates.

The firm were appointed in May of last year to complete an Economic Land Use and Environmental Improvements Study on the town.

March 1989
Island power cable cut to cost half a million to fix
Up to half a million pounds has been spent repairing a power cable linking the islands of Mull, Coll and Tiree, after a fishing vessel's trawl doors severed it in the days leading up to Christmas.

The islands were plunged into darkness without warning, but fortunately both Tiree and Coll have emergency back-up generator systems and supplies were soon resumed. However the severity of the damage meant the islands had to rely on generators for the past three months.

March 1989
Gigha for sale - at £2m-plus.
The Edinburgh-based estate agents Savills announced on Tuesday that they had received instructions from the Landale family to put the island of Gigha on the market.

The island has a population of 160. Included in the sale are the 19th Century Achamore House, which is surrounded by the world-famous rhododendron and exotic shrub gardens and the award-winning Gigha Hotel. There are 39 estate cottages, six let farms and 1250 acres farmed in hand.

May 1989
Jacobite relics stolen.
Thousands of pounds worth of Jacobite relics have been stolen from Fort William's West Highland Museum.

The thief's haul included seven Jacobite miniatures of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, his aunt Louisa Maria and his father James. Also taken were a pair of silver and amber candlesticks, which at one time belonged to James VII. A gold ring which features a picture of General Fraser, son of Lord Lovat, who was beheaded after the '45 rising was also stolen.

are no fixed plans for any permanent spiritual or welfare provision to be continued in the port. The news this week came as a crashing blow to fishermen, ferry crews and pier workers across the whole west coast, many of whom have been using the facilities all their lives.

July 1989
Fire at fish farm.
Fire broke out at a Marine Harvest base near Strontian last Thursday, causing extensive damage.

Firemen from Fort William and Strontian fought the blaze.

July 1989
Barra factory closes
News of the closure of fishmeal production factory on Barra came 'out of the blue' to islanders. As it was announced that 21 jobs would be lost, islanders were left wondering what had gone wrong. After problems throughout the years, the factory's future had seemed more stable in the weeks leading up to the closure.

September 1989
Eight drugs' arrests
Eight people appeared at Uxbridge Magistrates court on Monday, charged with the illegal importation of 1.25 tonnes of cannabis resin. Four of those appearing were arrested in the Oban area on Friday evening, after the haul was discovered on a vessel in the Firth of Lorn.

September 1989
Hovercraft service is set for Fort William.
A new hovercraft service - catering for up to 12 passengers at a time - may be operating from Fort William next year.

Captain Keith Lawrence, who is currently running a hovercraft business on the Isle of Man, has applied for planning permission to move the service to Loch Linnhe.



July 1990 - Heavyweight athlete Francis Brebner from Peterborough was 'getting in the zone' at Skye Highland Games held at Portree



December 1992 - Three-year old Sarah MacDonald of Oban watches over a Minkie whale which was landed at Oban's South Pier after being caught up in creel ropes. It is believed to be the largest single 'catch' ever to have been landed at Oban

June 1989
Glengarry Castle fire
Fire caused £100,000 damage to Glengarry Castle Hotel on Monday - but the blaze could have been worse had it not been for the quick action of staff.

June 1989
Pilot dies as aircraft hits West Ardnamurchan hillside.
A pilot was killed when his plane crashed into a hillside on the West Ardnamurchan Peninsula.

It had been carrying a cargo of lobsters from Benbecula to Glasgow when the accident happened on Friday.

June 1989
Fishermen's Mission closes
The Fishermen's Mission in Oban is to close completely in three weeks time and there

and were picked up by another northeast boat, *The Challenger*, after half an hour.

November 1989
Taynuilt brewery
An Argyll brewery is set to start production in the newly converted Taynuilt Railway station.

November 1989
Ardnamurchan school plan
Plans for a new £2.5 million secondary school in Ardnamurchan have got the backing of Highland Regional Council.

But the plans, which would bring at least 18 new jobs to Ardnamurchan, could mean staffing cuts at Lochaber High School.

November 1989
Fishing boat on fire
Five Campbeltown fishermen were saved when their 65ft boat the *Strathisla* burst into flames and sank near Skerryvore.

The fire was contained in the engine room long enough for the nearest ship, a German coaster, to steam to the rescue and lift off the crew, who were transferred to the Barra lifeboat.

December 1989
Road blocked by rock
An Argyll road was blocked for several days and phone lines cut when a massive boulder plunged 100 feet from a cliff face.

The rock fall hit the Gallanach road, near to Kilbowie school hostel. One huge boulder, estimated to weigh over 30 tonnes, uprooted trees and left a wake of destruction before embedding itself in the road and demolishing part of the roadside wall.

A new, fibre optic telephone cable, buried four feet under the road, was broken by the impact.

February 1990
Invergarry PO takeover
Invergarry this week became the only community in the Highlands to own their Post Office. The doors of the village's new sub Post Office, which is housed in a newly purchased portacabin, opened on Monday.

March 1990
Flooding hits Lochaber
Some of the worst flooding and landslide incidents to hit Lochaber this century were recorded at the weekend.

As Glenfinnan fell victim to severe flooding, Glen Roy experienced one of the worst major landslides ever recorded. Highland Regional Council's Divisional Roads Engineer Mr John Hutchison said: 'We've had a few landslides over the past few years but never as big as that. What we have here is the whole hillside moving.'

March 1990
Mull distillery re-opens
Islanders were this week celebrating the impending re-opening of Tobermory Distillery, which closed down 10 years ago during a world slump in the whisky trade.

The move will mean a boost for the local economy creating 10 full-time jobs as well as several part-time posts.

March 1990
Rain sinks records
At Loch Linnhe last Wednesday an astounding 74 inches was reported for the year so far - 77 per cent of the total average for a year.

It has rained every day since December 24, a total of 89 consecutive days.

At a Crofter's Union question and answer session last week, it was revealed the 'Brahan Seer' had predicted the Highlands would one day become too wet for man or beast to survive.

April 1990
Council house sales rise
Sales of council houses in Argyll and Bute soared to a record level during the financial year ended on March 31.

May 1990
Genesis leave Mull
A rock group's decision to sell off its vast estates on Mull has divided the island's community.

Superstar Phil Collins and his band Genesis are to sell the 20,000-acre Pennyghael Estate, which they have owned for the past seven years.

The move follows local criticism of the group who were branded by one councillor as 'The worst kind of absentee landlords.'

June 1990
Steam train fire threat
Tourist-packed steam trains have caused 33 fires in Lochaber since Easter - putting thousands of acres of forestry land at risk.

As holidaymakers admire the world-famous scenery on the Road to the Isles line, the trains they are travelling on are leaving a trail of devastation behind them.

June 1990
Commando Memorial to be improved say council
Highland Regional Council are to spend £300,000 on improving the Commando Memorial to be

Spean Bridge. Thousands of tourists visit the memorial every year and Lochaber Regional Councillors have successfully fought for the improvements to make the junction safer.

June 1990
Navy come to aid of injured Colonsay bull
The mercy men of the Royal Navy flew a tonne of Charolais bull to safety on Tuesday, after the beefy bovine proved too heavy for anyone else to lift.

Showman, an eight-year-old bull on Colonsay was stuck for almost four weeks after wandering into an inaccessible gully and injuring his front legs. He couldn't walk out, neither could tractors or tracked vehicles get in. Every day islanders had to scramble down with hay and water to keep him alive.

July 1990
Glenborrodale for sale.
Ardnamurchan, owned by millionaire Peter de Savary, has gone on the market at an asking price of over £2.5m.

The castle, which is being jointly sold by Knight Frank & Rutley and John Clegg & Co., is currently run as a top country-house hotel.

August 1990
Carradale aluminium scare
The water supply in an Argyll village has been contaminated with up to ten times the acceptable amount of aluminium - and the chemical was put there by the water authority's own treatment plant.

Residents at Carradale have been warned not to drink or cook with their tap water since Friday and there have been fears of a health risk.

August 1990
Letters take the long road
Letters sent just 18 miles over the Ardnamurchan peninsula are routed through six different post offices covering nearly a third of Scotland's entire land mass.

Lochaber MP Sir Russell Johnston has revealed that a letter posted at Lochaline destined for Strontian, 18 miles away, is taken first to Mull, then from Mull to Oban, from Oban to Paisley, from Paisley to Perth, from Perth to Fort William, from Fort William to Acharacle and finally from Acharacle to Strontian.

August 1990
Island airport facelift
A half million pound facelift is underway at Benbecula's Balivanich Airport.

The revamp work is scheduled for completion early next year and has been prompted by an increase in passenger traffic.

August 1990
Council buys a lighthouse
Highland Regional Council has clinched a deal which secures public access to Britain's most westerly point.

Property millionaire Peter do Savary has agreed to sell the Ardnamurchan lighthouse building and adjoining land to the Council, after weeks of negotiation.

November 1990
Fire burns down bus garage
Thousands of pounds worth of damage was caused when fire ripped through Midland Bluebird's bus garage in Oban at the weekend.

The inferno gutted the garage offices and virtually destroyed the roof. One bus was destroyed and a further seven were badly damaged.

November 1990
Whales died on west coast
Something fishy is going on off the west coast of Scotland ... 12 dead sperm whales have been washed up on shore this year, far more than normal, according to experts who are calling for Government funding to help solve the mystery.

December 1990
Skye garage wins award.
The entire staff of Sutherland's Garage, Broadford, is to be flown to Germany as guests of Volkswagen-Audi to receive an award won by the firm.

The garage is one of the smallest VW dealers in the UK but was one of three outlets chosen from almost 400 nationwide. As a result of their success, all 27 staff - from petrol pump attendants to directors - will fly to Germany for the presentation ceremony.

December 1990
Ferries hit record high.
Caledonian MacBrayne announced that they had carried a record six million passengers on their ferries this year.

December 1990
Village for sale
The majority of the forest village of Eredine, on the shores of Loch Awe is up for sale - as a whole or in three lots.

Described as a 'Unique opportunity to purchase the major portion of a West Highland village in a picturesque location' by estate agents, the sale is being handled on behalf of the Forestry Commission.

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KEEP IT CLEAN! BAWBAGS UNDERWEAR
Superdry.



The first of the new shop units in MacGregor Court, Oban, opened for business on Tuesday morning. The Jean Shop, owned by Mr David Finlayson, was officially opened by his father Donald. Our picture shows members of staff on the right and family guests on the left.

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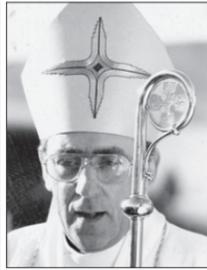
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 Light, crisp, tasty and satisfying FISH AND CHIPS



Enjoy the best at
NORIE'S FISH BAR
 George Street, Oban
 Good Luck to Oban's representatives in "It's A Knockout"



1991
January 1991
Bishop ordained
 The Right Reverend Roderick Wright was ordained as Bishop of Argyll and the Isles at a 90-minute service, conducted in both English and Gaelic, in St Columba's Cathedral, Oban. The Ordination was arranged for a Tuesday to allow as many people from the Isles as possible to attend the service, with Cal-Mac providing a specially reduced fare to mark the occasion.

January 1991
Wind turbine for Isles school
 A school in the Western Isles is using an innovative design of a tried and tested method to provide part of its energy needs. The showpiece community school at Lionacleit on Benbecula has had a 60 kilowatt wind turbine built to generate an alternative source of electricity.

January 1991
New hall for Crianlarich
 The Government is to provide £70,000 towards the cost of building the new village hall at Crianlarich. The total cost of the hall is £190,000.

January 1991
Mull dance band leader dies
 Bobby MacLeod, the Scottish country dance band leader and a former provost of Tobermory, died at his home on the Island of Mull at the weekend after a short illness. He was 65.

February 1991
US Navy pulls out
 Dunoon and the Cowal Peninsula have been dealt a hammer blow by this week's announcement that the United States Navy is to pull out of the Holy Loch.

Locals are still reeling from the news and are trying to come to terms with its far reaching and devastating implications of at least 800 lost jobs - with one estimate at 60 per cent of the peninsula's working population affected. The loss of the US Navy could mean a direct loss of £11m in the Dunoon economy alone.

February 1991
Campbeltown Royal visit
 The first Royal visit to Campbeltown in 33 years will take place in March 1 when HRH The Princess Royal will officially open the new extension of Jaeger's tailoring factory in the town.

February 1991
New Co-op store for Oban
 The Co-operative Wholesale Society have been granted permission in principle to build a new supermarket in Oban.

March 1991
Huge ships at Glensanda
 The two largest ships ever to sail up Loch Linnhe were loaded at Foster Yeoman's Glensanda Quarry. The 77,000 tonne-carrying *Yeoman Burn* and *Yeoman Brook*, along with their slightly smaller sister vessel *Yeoman Bank*, were loaded with a total of 176,000 tonnes of aggregate from the quarry in less than four days.

April 1991
Fort William distillery sale
 The United Distillers group are to put their Glenlochy Distillery in Fort William up for sale. A listed building, Glenlochy has closed several times in its 90-year history.

April 1991
Arnish yard expands
 Rapid expansion by a Lewis company is to create 80 badly needed new jobs. Lewis Offshore's oil fabrication yard at Arnish near Stornoway is to have nearly £1 million invested in it by the company and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

The 80 extra workers should be on the payroll by the summer, bringing the total workforce up to 250. The yard keeps another 100 subcontractors busy.

May 1991
Strontian forest fire
 Firemen called in two helicopters to water bomb a forest fire in Strontian on Saturday afternoon.

Seven appliances, including one from Inverness and two manned by volunteers, took four hours to control the blaze. It destroyed five hectares of forestry commission trees and 50 hectares of common grazing above Monument Park,

May 1991
4000-year old skeleton found
 The crouched skeleton of a 4000-year-old human being was discovered last weekend in a small stone grave at a new hospital site in Campbeltown. Thought to be of the early Bronze Age, the skeleton was accompanied in the grave at Limecraigs by a food vessel, which could contain traces of food or drink. The dry soil had preserved the bones in remarkably good condition.

June 1991
Blaze at Barcaldine sawmill.
 A fire destroyed half a Barcaldine sawmill - a fortnight before the firm moves to new premises. Fire brigades raced from Oban and Inveraray at 3.30 a.m. to control the blaze at Beaver Timber Company. Over £5000 of wood and 75 per cent of the equipment was devastated. Joint manager John Ormiston said booming business meant the firm was moving to a larger building a quarter of a mile down the road.



August 1992
Princess Royal visits Skye
 Crowds lined the streets of Skye and Lochalsh this week to greet the Princess Royal a sample of their famous Highland hospitality. Princess Anne flew into Kyle by helicopter to open a new, £300,000 swimming pool at the Douglas Park Playing Fields and despite pouring rain and midgies, the crowds huddled beneath their brollies to cheer Her Royal Highness as she unveiled a plaque at the pool.



May 1992
Prince is Capercaillie fan
 Prince Charles has declared himself a fan of the highland band Capercaillie - which could help it to break new ground. The six piece group, whose founder members come from Taynuilt, put together backing music for the television documentary *A Prince Among Islands*, in which Prince Charles lived as a crofter for five days on Berneray in the Western Isles. Since then the Prince has been hooked on Capercaillie's distinctive Celtic music and wants to buy their albums.

June 1991
Royal visit for Tiree
 The Princess Royal made history when she visited the West Highlands. For the first time 'in living memory' a member of the Royal Family set foot on the idyllic island of Tiree. The Princess Royal was also the first Royal to come to Oban in 35 years. She opened a £500,000 visitors' centre at the 200-year-old Oban Distillery.

June 1991
Rhum to lose 'h'
 Rhum is to lose its 'h' - the island will revert to the Gaelic spelling of Rum. The move will please Gaelic experts, who have long argued that the 'h' is illegitimate because the language never uses an 'rh' at the beginning of a word.

July 1991
Inveraray steeple rebuild
 Inveraray's famous church steeple, demolished in 1941, is to be rebuilt at an estimated cost of £350,000.

To raise such a huge sum, the church board has enlisted the help of a firm of professional fund-raisers, who will launch a fund-raising campaign in the autumn.

July 1991
Salmon tourist centre opens
 A salmon fish farm tourist centre opened its doors to the public last week. Thought to be the first of its kind in Europe, the £500,000 venture on Loch Feochan's shores in Kilniver illustrates what goes on behind and on the scenes at a fish farm.

August 1991
Letters 3-years late
 A letter posted in Lochgilphead more than three years ago arrived at its destination in Oban this month. The letter was addressed to a business - which has asked to remain nameless - on December 13, 1987 and contained a request for a quotation.



October 1992 - Jimmy Wilson, 71, a member of the Glasgow Hebridean Gaelic Choir demonstrates that 'top of the world' feeling after the choir won the premier choral trophy, the Lovat and Tullibardine Shield, at the Royal National Mòd in Oban

employment. The council lost £23 million with the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

October 1991
Oban twins with Gorey
 The town of Gorey on the South East coast of Eire is keen to restart moves to twin with Oban. An attempt to link the two towns was initially made in May 1990 when three members of Gorey Town Council toured Fort William, Dunoon and Oban to find a suitable partner.

October 1991
20 jobs for Skye
 More than 20 new jobs may be created on Skye if plans for a new heritage centre are given the go-ahead. Aros (Isle of Skye) Ltd., has applied for planning consent to build the centre at Glen Varrigall, near Portree. A total of 22 full and part-time jobs could be created if the plan gets off the ground.

October 1991
New ferry.
 A £1.8 million ferry for the Iona-Fionnphort crossing was launched this week at St Monan's Yard, Fife. The new Caledonian-Mac-Brayne ferry, Loch Buie will carry 250 passengers and ten cars or one commercial vehicle.

October 1991
Violin found at Campbeltown
 A Stradivarius violin, potentially worth £1 million, has been discovered in an old church cupboard. The violin, with a label inside it dating from the eighteenth century, was found in the Lorne and Lowland Church in Campbeltown.

November 1991
Skye mourners booked
 A row has broken out on Skye after mourners, leaving a funeral service, found that they had been booked for parking outside a church. Eleven cars received £16 tickets after parking on double yellow lines outside the Church of Scotland, near Portree's main square. The mourners had parked there, during torrential rain, for just 30 minutes.

November 1991
Fort visitor centre
 The £370,000 Ben Nevis Distillery Visitor Centre in Fort William was officially opened. The centre has already attracted over 1500 visitors since its completion in July.

September 1991
Skerryvore goes electric
 A lighthouse which has guided shipping along Scotland's treacherous west coast for over 140 years, this week became the latest victim of the high-tech 1990s. The towering Skerryvore Lighthouse perched on a tiny cluster of rocks 12 miles south-west of Tiree said goodbye to its last keeper on Sunday and a computer in Edinburgh took control of the flashing white beacon which steers shipping away from the dangerous reef.

September 1991
Seven Men of Knoydart
 More than 80 people gathered to Inverie on Saturday to witness the unveiling of a Cairn in honour of the Seven Men of Knoydart. Among those who gathered outside the village hall was Mr Archie MacDougall, one of the two surviving raiders who made an unsuccessful claim on their ancestral lands in 1948.

October 1991
Western Isles Council lose cash in bank collapse
 Warning bells are ringing that the Western Isles Council cash crisis will create modern day clearances as young people leave the islands in search of

employment. The council lost £23 million with the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

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October 1992
Glenspean Lodge fire.
 Roybridge hotelier Mr Neal Smith surveys the damage to his hotel and has pledged to rebuild his Victorian shooting lodge which was ravaged by fire. Fire swept through the upper storey of the 16-bedroom hotel destroying the roof and second floor. The remainder of the lodge, which had been closed for redecoration, suffered extensive smoke and water damage.

December 1991
Campbeltown shipyard fire
 A discarded cigarette is thought to have sparked a fierce blaze at the Campbeltown Shipyard last week. A security guard from the NATO depot on the opposite side of the loch raised the alarm in the early hours of Thursday morning. Two fire engines from Campbeltown raced to the scene and firemen battled for half an hour to get the fire under control.

December 1991
UA to sell to supermarket

United Auctions Ltd this week announced that they intend selling the existing Oban market to William Low plc. 1992

January 1992
Super quarry for Islay?
 Geologists are currently carrying out exploration drilling on Islay in their search to find a site for a new superquarry.

February 1992
Value of whisky
 The export value of whisky produced in the Highlands and Islands during 1990 - 1991 was around £700 million, a new survey reveals. A total of 12 whisky production units in Argyll exported whisky worth £70 million, while one unit on Skye exported whisky worth £5 million and one unit in Lochaber exported £2 million worth.

February 1992
Salmon stolen in Mid Argyll
 100,000 young salmon valued at £90,000 were stolen from a Mid Argyll fish farm in a 'well co-ordinated operation'.

March 1992
Stranded ship for sale
 The Russian factory ship 'Kartli' stranded off the island of Gigha for the last three months is up for sale. A spokesman for the owners indicated that any offer would be considered and potential buyers would have to take on board the existing cargo of 400 tons of rotting fish.

firemen who tackled Monday evening's blaze faced the additional danger of exploding oxygen tanks. Dr Andrew Hall-Gardiner, Colonsay's only doctor, now faces the painstaking task of re-writing the medical records of his 100 patients from memory.

October 1992
Filming in Lochaber
 More than 100 Lochaber people starred as 'extras' in a Warner Bros film, featuring Robin Williams, at the weekend. On Saturday, the crew of 'Being Human' were on location in Glen Nevis, near Fort William. A special medieval settlement has been built in the Glen for the film, which will hit the silver screen this time next year.

December 1992
Fire hits Lochaber smelter
 British Alcan's Lochaber Smelter was close to being crippled on Friday, after fire ripped through essential electrical machinery. The fire damaged three of the electrical generators in the Fort William smelter's power house.

December 1992
Hunt for big black cat
 The hunt is on for a black panther-like creature rumoured to be prowling throughout Kintyre. A number of people claim to have seen the mysterious animal and reported sightings have gained momentum in the last fortnight - this time near Southend, following earlier claims in Glenbarr and Largside. 1993

April 1993
Prince backs crofting
 Prince Charles wants Highland crofters and fishermen to be first in the queue to gain from the European Objective One cash fund. Speaking at the Scottish Crofting Union annual general meeting in Stornoway, Prince Charles said that crofters should be given substantial funds to maintain 'traditional' occupations.

May 1993
Rockfield School fire
 Police believe a fire at Rockfield Primary School, Oban, which caused thousands of pounds worth of damage, was started deliberately. The blaze broke out around 8.15pm on Sunday and extensively damaged the timber and slate roof of the old bicycle shed and an adjoining storehouse. Inspector Alistair Dewar, of Strathclyde Police, Oban, said: 'Everything points to this having been started deliberately.'

May 1993
War hero dies.
 A war hero who escaped the clutches of the German army, by speaking Gaelic, has died in Fort William, aged 81. Mr James 'Ginger' Wilson, from North Ballachulish, died at Helmsdale Residential Home. He became famous after he was taken prisoner by the Germans during the Second World War, but escaped with two other Lochaber men while on a march through France.

June 1993
Where there's Muck there's £600,000.
 Over £600,000 is being spent to bring a number of improvements to the Isle of Muck. The island now boasts a new schoolhouse, an innovative wind-power scheme and a larger pier for the island to allow large vessels from Mallaig, to berth at the island.

September 1993
Historic mission on Islay.
 A rescue mission has been mounted to save Kieils Cross on Islay. The carved stone cross shaft has been daubed with paint and is now heavily overgrown with lichen. It was also leaning at an angle of about 20 degrees. A team from Historic Scotland was on Islay to remove the shaft from its socket and transport it to their conservation centre in Edinburgh.

November 1993
40-foot whale dies after being washed up at Lochailort.
 A 40-foot whale died within five hours of being washed up on the shore near Polish Farm, Lochailort. It is the third time this year that a sperm whale has been found on a beach in northern Britain. Others have been in Shetland and Orkney.

December 1993
Jobs go as axe falls on base.
 The Kintyre peninsula faces a bleak New Year with news of devastating job losses at the Royal Air Force base at Machrihanish. From April 1 next year, 128 RAF staff and at least 15 civilian jobs will go - leaving local businesses to count the cost of an estimated £1.5 million drop in yearly income. Argyll and Bute District Council's George McMillan, called the cuts 'the worst possible Christmas present' for Kintyre.

September 1992
Bank raid near Lochgoilhead
 Two Inveraray women were held at gunpoint, handcuffed and bundled into the back of a van during a mobile bank hi-jack near Lochgoilhead. The Royal Bank of Scotland employees were returning from a weekly mobile banking run in the village hall, Lochgoilhead at 3.30pm last Thursday. A four figure sum was stolen.

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1994

January 1994
Air ambulance stranded on beach at Inveraray
An air ambulance helicopter attending a serious accident near Inveraray on Hogmanay, broke down and was left stranded on a beach.

Two people, badly injured in the crash, seven miles north of the village, had to be taken to hospital by road after the air ambulance developed a mechanical fault.

February 1994
Salmon galore
It was a case of salmon galore at Minard last week.

The storms towards the end of the week ripped more than a dozen salmon cages from their moorings at Quarry Point near the village. Two fishing boats were used in an effort to keep the cages from drifting ashore, but this failed and on Friday morning villagers awoke to find the shoreline littered with dead salmon. Said one resident. 'People were wandering about all over the place with carrier bags full of fish.'

March 1994
Two drown in white water raft horror in River Orchy.

A policeman and a 15-year-old girl died in a freak accident while white water rafting in the River Orchy on Tuesday.

The 37-year-old man and the girl, the daughter of another policeman, were in a party of nine - which apparently included six police officers from the Bellshill area and two outdoor activity instructors.

June 1994
Kintyre Chinook crash

As investigators began the Herculean task of sifting through the debris which is all that remains of the ill-fated Chinook, the communities in Kintyre and Northern Ireland face the heartache of trying to come to terms with the accident which claimed 29 lives.

On board were 25 of the top anti-terrorist experts in Northern Ireland on their way to a conference at Fort George and four crew members.

The Chinook's passengers included the head of the Royal Ulster Constabulary's Special Branch, the head of Army Intelligence and MI5's top man in Northern Ireland.

September 1994
Scalpay says yes to bridge

The islanders of Scalpay in the Western Isles have backed proposals for a bridge linking the island of Harris.

At a packed meeting in the community centre, members of the public backed the plans for a six-link bridge, with associated road works, which it is hoped will be started in spring 1995.

November 1994
Siege in Strontian.

A man appeared in court on Monday after rampaging through the Lochaber village of Strontian at the weekend with a knife and an axe and barricading himself in a house.

November 1994
US Navy to quit local base.

The United States Navy has confirmed that it is planning to move out of Machrihanish, Kintyre.

A spokesman for the US European Command in Germany said the Ministry of Defence had been notified that it was hoped to withdraw 80 naval commandos from RAF Machrihanish by next spring. Naval Special Warfare Unit No. 2 has been stationed by Machrihanish, near Campbeltown, since 1980.

December 1994
Oban armed robbery shock.

Oban was reeling this week after what is believed to be the first armed robbery in the town. Staff at the Yorkshire Building Society, in George Street, were held at knifepoint on Thursday afternoon by a man who escaped with an undisclosed four-figure sum.

December 1994
Ardgour school opening

Ardgour's new £595,000 primary school was officially opened on Friday, some 20 years after the site was bought for the venture.

1995

July 1995
History as Skye Bridge links.

A piece of Scottish history was made on Friday when Skye was permanently linked to the mainland for the first time, give or take the odd Ice Age to two. Whether or not it is the island's economic saviour, or a concrete monster squatting over the Kyle Akin, devouring the highest tolls in the land, remains to be seen.

'The Brig of Skye', as chairman of the developers Sir Alan Noble likes it to be known, has cost £25 million at 1991 prices and it will probably take 20 years to repay the cost in tolls to its private developers.



July 1994

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales made a dramatic entrance to Islay, Queen of the Hebrides. His aircraft of the Queen's Flight, with Prince Charles at the controls overshot the runway, after heavy braking on landing and tyres bursting. Prince Charles showed no sign of being shaken or shocked by the accident, which he played down, as if he didn't want to spoil the day for the islanders. Below - the Prince of Wales receives a warm welcome at Islay High School



August 1994

Oban livestock centre gets off to a flying start.

Crofters and farmers from across Scotland flocked to be in attendance as a little bit of Highland history was created in Oban. After two years of determined fundraising, Oban Livestock Centre became a reality by hosting its first sale in front of a packed ringside audience. The £750,000 plus, complex, situated two miles south of Oban town centre, attracted a first sale entry much higher than the managing director, Mr Tom Wallace of Argyll Auction Company Ltd, the operators of the new market, had anticipated. 'A great day,' claimed Mr Wallace. 'A day that only happens to a privileged few once in a lifetime and one that I feel very proud to be part of.'

August 1995
Big West Highlands welcome for Queen.

Oban and the West Highlands turned out in force to welcome Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh on Tuesday, when the Monarch came to open the town's new hospital.

The crowds began to gather as the Royal Yacht Britannia sailed into Oban Bay, with numbers boosted by tourists.

The magnificent old Royal yacht is making one of its last Royal Family summer cruises of the Western Isles before being sold off.

September 1995
Corrour Estate sold

A mystery American businessman has splashed out over £3 million to buy Corrour Estate at Rannoch Moor.

The man, whose name has not been disclosed, is expected to take over the 48,210-acre estate in November. Corrour Estate attracted worldwide interest with agents, Strutt and Parker, who sent out 300 brochures.

Access is by rail on the West Highland Line or a long rough track. Included in the selling price are a seven-bedroomed lodge, four holiday homes, two cottages, a ghillie's bothy and a former chapel.

September 1995
Lifeboat crew honoured

The crew of Campbeltown Lifeboat are to be honoured for their rescue of a man trapped in an air bubble after his boat started sinking off the south east coast of Kintyre in March.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution has announced that Lifeboat Coxswain Jim McPhee is to be awarded the Institution's Vellum for outstanding work.

Last year only six incidents out of a total of 6,156 RNLI launches attracted Vellum awards.

December 1995
Cheers! A new brewery for the Isle of Skye.

The Isle of Skye now has its own brewery, with the tapping of the first barrels by Leann an Eilein partners Angus MacRuary and Steve Tinney. The two teachers from Portree High School unveiled Red Cuillin, their first beer at a ceilidh at Sligachan Hotel and it met with a very enthusiastic response. The £90,000 Isle of Skye Brewery venture has been backed by Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise and as the SALE chairman Dr Jim Hunter said at the launch: 'A lot of people say that we couldn't organise a very basic social function in a brewery. Well, they can't say that about us any longer.'



June 1994

Kyles Athletic's captain David Taylor proudly holds aloft the Glenmorangie Camanachd Cup after his side won shinty's Blue Riband trophy at the Bught Park, Inverness when they overcame hot favourites Fort William by three goals to one.



December 1995
Man dies in Oban town centre flat fire.

One man died and two others were ill in hospital on Tuesday evening after fire engulfed a flat in Oban town centre.

December 1995
Mull Bakery just the business.

A bakery on Mull has won a prestigious business award after just a year in trade.

Joseph Reade and his fiancée Dawn Simpson, have been presented with a first prize of £1,000 by Kwik-Fit, sponsors of the Prince's Youth Business Trust awards for Argyll in 1995.

December 1995
Skye vet to take a back seat.

Farmers and pet owners will be seeing less of Donald John MacLennan, the Broadford based vet who retired this month after years of sterling service to the community.

1996

January 1996
Cure-all pool plan to benefit 850 infirm.

Fort William Community Council is to float the idea of a hydrotherapy pool for the district at an open meeting this month.

Figures show that there are over 850 people in the Lochaber area with a disability who could benefit from such a facility.

February 1996
Cash blow for sports hall plan.

Atlantis Leisure is reeling from the disappointment this week of being turned down for a Highlands and Islands Objective One grant for a new sports hall in Oban.

April 1996
Power station for Morvern.

An ambitious £750,000 project, which has given a west Highland estate its own hydro-electric scheme, was officially opened this week.

It is hoped that the scheme will help to safeguard the jobs of 15 estate workers at Ardormish Estate, Morvern, and turn one of the area's most plentiful assets - rain - into a regular source of income.

July 1996
Shock of £6m drug find.

Mystery still surrounds 60 kilos of cocaine found washed up on the shore of South Uist last week.

Crofter Duncan MacPhee of West Geirnish discovered the drugs, with a street value of around £6 million, while working on the beach with his tractor. The drugs were in packages bound by Hessian sacking containing several layers of plastic wrapping and are believed to have been in the water for some time.

August 1996
Warning to Barra crofters.

Crofters on Barra and Vatersay have been warned against selling land for a proposed hard airstrip on either island.

Islanders last week voted in favour of replacing the beach strip at Traigh Mhor but rejected having a new one built adjacent to the present runway.

October 1996
Go-ahead for Irish ferry link.

The dream of a ferry service from Kintyre to Northern Ireland became a reality when Sea Containers Ferries Scotland (SeaCat) announced it is to take on the new Campbeltown to Ballycastle route.

November 1996
Death of Sorley Maclean

The Gaelic-speaking world has lost a remarkable man with the death on Sunday of the poet Sorley Maclean, aged 85.

His death followed a short illness and he leaves his wife Renee and daughters Ishbel and Mary; a third daughter Catriona, having died three years ago.

December 1996
Bid for Eigg is rejected

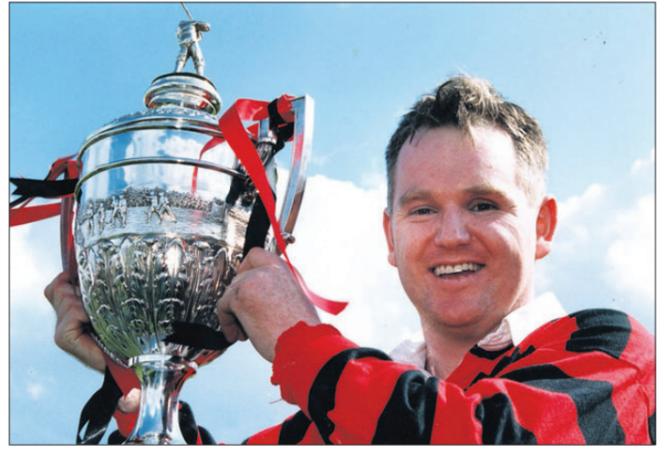
Eigg islanders vowed this week to fight on in their battle to buy the island - despite their first bid being rejected.

Controversial German owner, Marlin Eckhard Maruma, has agreed to put the isle back on the market after failing to attract offers of more than £2 million. Now, the Isle of Eigg Trust, although disappointed, is confident it can raise more cash to make a realistic bid.

Undaunted by the sale of the island going into extra time, Trust Secretary, Maggie Fyfe, said: 'This is by no way the end of the road for us. We feel we are still in with a very good chance of buying the island and over the next few weeks we will be pulling out the stops to raise more money and identify sources of funding.'

Right

July 1994
Heavyweight athlete Hamish Davidson generates enough momentum to lift himself off the ground as he winds up to throw the 56lb weight for distance



There was dancing in the streets of Oban on Saturday night and the party is still going on days after Oban Camanachd Club won the coveted Camanachd Association Challenge Cup for the first time in 58 years. For the team, the elation of winning their chosen sport's top accolade was perhaps to be expected - but what stunned the players and officials of the new Scottish champions was the reaction on the streets of their home town. Unknown to the team and many of their army of loyal supporters, arrangements had been 'pencilled in' for a victorious homecoming. Oban Pipe Band and Strathclyde Police's Oban office reacted to the direct call from the touchline immediately after the final whistle and while the team coach headed south from Inverness hundreds of fans gathered, patiently waiting with an emotional and tumultuous welcome for their heroes.

1997

February 1997
Caley takes over at Oban

Caledonian Marts, of Stirling, is taking over the auctioneering service at Oban Livestock Centre as of mid-April.

It is hoped the announcement will put an end to acrimonious debate on the mart's future, following the termination of United Auction's lease.

March 1997
Go-ahead for the Creagan road bridge.

The Scottish Office has confirmed that work on the Creagan Road Bridge, the long campaigned for road link over Loch Ceran, will begin this year.

Tenders for the £6 million project will be sent out later this month and contractors are expected to start work in late 1997 with a construction period of 12 months.

March 1997
The magnificent Severn!

Islay took delivery of Scotland's first Severn class lifeboat last week when the 'Helmut Schroder of Dunlossit II' arrived at Port Askaig.

The new £1.4 million lifeboat, which is fitted with the latest navigation and communications equipment and has a range of 250 miles, will replace the island's existing craft which has been in service for 18 years.

April 1997
Miraculous escape as landslide derails train.

Saturday's evening train from Oban to Glasgow was derailed by a landslide onto the track at Loch Awe.

The train came to a halt after ploughing up 100 yards of track and demolishing a bridge parapet. Inside the train were some very badly shaken, but very lucky people.

May 1997
Antiques Roadshow unearths Lochaber treasures.

Lochaber hoteliers, Alistair and Mairi MacLeod, are hanging onto a painting, which Antiques Roadshow experts have valued at between £18,000 - £20,000.

The couple were 'shocked' on Thursday to discover the angling picture, which has pride of place in the Morar Hotel, was so valuable.

June 1997
Following footsteps of Columba

President Mary Robinson of Ireland made what she described as her own pilgrimage when she attended last Sunday's celebrations of the 1400th anniversary of the death of St Columba, becoming the first Irish premier to officially visit Iona.

July 1998
Momentous day for Scalpay

It was a momentous occasion on Monday when Donald Macdonald, councillor for Scalpay walked across the new £7 million bridge linking the island to the Harris mainland.

August 1997
Fort William fire station gets the green light.

Plans to build a fire station in Fort William received the backing of councillors who overturned a recommendation to defer the decision.

The state-of-the-art fire station is expected to create jobs with moves afoot to upgrade the service in Fort William from retained fire fighters to full-time.

August 1997
Tilting tower of Glenfinnan.

Flooding around historic Glenfinnan Monument is causing it to tilt. Worried National Trust for Scotland officials are so concerned about the problem that a structural survey has been ordered. Built in 1815, the monument is in tribute to the clansmen who fought and died in the cause of Prince Charles Edward Stuart.



July 1994

The crew of the Vital Spark take a break during filming on the Crinan Canal, left to right, Sean Scanlan as Dougie, the mate, Gregor Fisher as Para Handy, Andrew Fairlie as the ship's boy and Rikki Fulton as the crusty engineer Dan MacPhail



August 1994

Happy Birthday Oban Co-op Brian MacLeod, assistant store manager, left, and John MacDonald from Nevis Bakery with the Co-op birthday cake are joined by Peggy Bryan and Sadie Fraser from Lynn Court and Chrissie Upton and Mammie Colthart from Dunmar Court. The cake was divided between the residents of the two housing units



August 1994 - HRH Prince Charles enjoys his guided tour of Laphroaig Distillery during his visit to Islay



September 1997
Highlands vote Yes Yes.
 Voters in the Highlands opted overwhelmingly for a Scottish parliament with tax raising powers at last week's historic referendum.

The area produced a turnout of over 60 per cent with 72 per cent agreeing with a Scottish parliament and 62 per cent agreeing it should have tax raising powers.

October 1997
Firm plans Scotland's first ever turbot farm.

Scotland's first commercially run turbot farms are to be set up in Tayinloan and in Gigha in a £2.1m project, providing a breakthrough for the aquaculture industry.

West coast Aquaculture, part of the fish farming to processing Aquascot Group is to establish units with £200,000 backing from Argyll and the Islands Enterprise.

The project will see production rise to around 450 tonnes a year by the turn of the century. Around 25 direct and indirect jobs will be created.

November 1997
'Join the fight' call to save Coastguards.

A backlash against the government's 1999 closure of Oban's Coastguard station swept the West Coast this week.

Argyll and Bute council is to launch a cross-party, Scotland-wide campaign and will ask transport minister Glenda Jackson MP to visit the area after she was accused of 'pontificating from London on the subject, obviously without any knowledge of the West Highlands' by Oban Councillor David Webster.

December 1997
£8 million Beinn Ghlas windfarm gets the green light.
 An £8 million windfarm near Taynuilt has won planning approval, despite opposition from local hoteliers who fear the development will be detrimental to tourism.

1998

January 1998
Oban's new TIC on course for March

Oban should have its new tourist information centre on-line by the end of March, with an exhibition area finished by April.

The contract for the first phase of the refurbishment of the church in Argyll Square was given out at the end of December by Argyll, the Isles, Loch Lomond, Stirling and Trossachs Tourist Board to Lorn Homes. The tourist board bought over the former church and then pub as new premises for Oban's tourist information centre, after considering a number of options.

February 1998
Coll over-run by rabbits
 Time is running out for the thousands of bunnies which are burrowing their way through the Isle of Coll.

The island has become so overrun with the bob-tailed rodents that professionals have been called in to deal with the matter.

"It is a terrible problem, we are literally being over-taken by rabbits," said Angus Kennedy chairman of Coll Community Council.

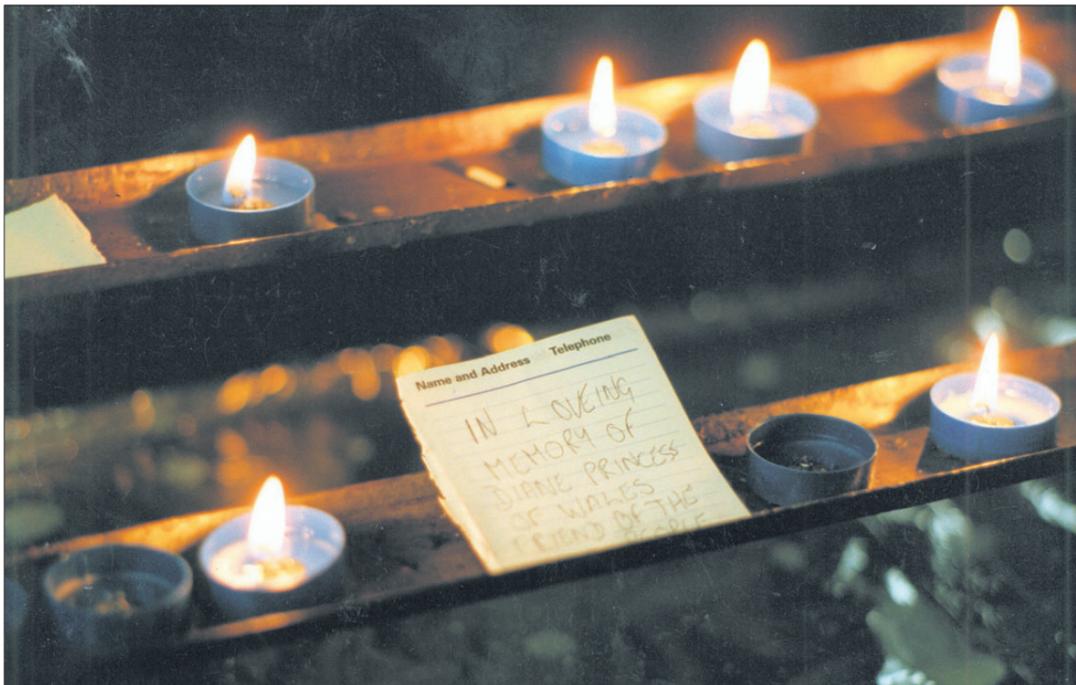
March 1998
Cameron call it a day after 80 years

The popular Nether Lochaber Stores closed its doors for the last time on Saturday after providing a much-valued service to the community of Oban for almost 80 years.

The Cameron family have run the store since 1919.

March 1998
Quick, quick Susie

A young lady is climbing the ladder of success in her chosen sport of Club Karting. Susie Stoddart, a fourth year pupil at Oban High School, is a member of the British Women Racing Drivers' Club and has been karting for five years. She trains three times a week by swimming and using the gym.



September 1997
 Flowers and prayers mark the passing of a Princess. The people of the West Highlands and the Isles have been paying their respects to Diana, Princess of Wales who died so tragically on Sunday morning. Across the region flags have been flying at half-mast, as Highlanders, like people throughout the United Kingdom, have tried to come to terms with the terrible news, which has robbed us of such a well-loved figure.

April 1998
Return of a Clansman
 A famous name will soon return to Oban and the Isles.

On Friday HRH The Princess Royal named the new £15.5 million Caledonian MacBrayne ferry, *Clansman*.

This is the fifth vessel to carry the name and continue historical island links.

The new ship has been built by Applodore Shipbuilders Ltd of Devon for the Oban to Barra and South Uist and Oban to Coll and Tiree routes. The 99 metre long twin screw passenger ferry will be able to take up to 100 cars and carry 634 passengers, with its crew of 32.

May 1998
Salmon farms hit by disease

Two salmon fish companies on the West Highland coast are at the centre of an outbreak of an infectious disease which could see hundreds of thousands of fish destroyed as a result.

Hydro Seafood GSP Ltd and Marine Harvest McConnell are having to destroy salmon at farms in Loch Nevis, north of Mallaig and Loch Snizort, Skye, respectively after confirmation this week that the salmon have Infectious Salmon Anaemia, which does not affect humans.

May 1998
Landcatch looks to Chile

Leading Scottish salmon breeder Landcatch has opened its first overseas operation with the creation of a joint venture in Chile - Landcatch Chile.

This new company has been set up to capitalise on the growth of the Chilean national market and will produce high quality salmon eggs in Chile.

June 1998
Oban air link

A new Oban-France air link has helped to cement the Auld Alliance - and though it will not provide a last minute alternative for local diehard World Cup fans, there are plans to establish a regular passenger service. Last Monday's 1.15pm Beech 100(Kingair) flight from Lorient, Brittany, which touched down at Oban Airport with eight passengers on board, was the first of many intended to enable French fishing crew to join the West Coast fleet operating from Oban.

July 1998
Reef plan in troubled waters

An artificial reef for an experimental lobster farm proposed off the Lismore coast has met with strong opposition.

At a hostile meeting last week on Lismore, islanders left Yeoman(Morvern)Ltd and Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory(DML) scientists in



April 1998
 Work begins on Creagan Bridge. The long awaited £3.37 million redevelopment of Creagan Bridge has begun. Contractors Balfour Beatty Ltd, who won the design and build contract, started work on the familiar landmark at Loch Creran last week. It ends a three decade wait for locals and tourists who have been frustrated by the delay over the promised conversion from railway to road bridge.

no doubt they would not agree to the project, to deposit 50,000 tonnes of concrete blocks into the Lynn of Lorn north of Eilean Dubh going ahead without a fight.

August 1998
Isle of Mull whale and dolphin centre opens

Saturday saw the official opening of the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust's visitor centre in Tobermory.

Watched by 200 well-wishers, and speaking in both Gaelic and English, Donnie Munro, former lead singer with Runrig, formally opened the new centre rented to the Trust for the purpose by Caroline Tisdale-MacKenzie of Letterewe Estate, herself a keen marine conservationist.

September 1998
PM opens £7m Scalpay Bridge

History was made on Scalpay on Friday when Tony Blair became the first serving Prime Minister to visit the Western Isles.

Mr Blair and wife Cherie flew in by helicopter to officially open the island's £7million bridge which connects it to Harris and replaces the car ferry Loch Rhum.

Harris school pupils were given a holiday for the occasion and joined islanders to line the bridge.

October 1998
Ship runs aground on Kerrera

A Norwegian vessel carrying sand from Lochaline ran aground off the North West coast of Kerrera in the early hours of Monday morning.



July 1999
 Above - Jessica Dalglish of Taynuilt was invited to officially open the 14-turbine wind farm at Beinn Ghlas, which cost £7 million. Jessica had written to owners National Wind Power saying the turbines she could see from her bedroom window looked like angels

December 1999
 Right - The dream of a small community on Mull became reality with the opening of the £310,000 Craignure Village Hall. The new hall was officially opened by the Honorable Mrs James of Torosay



Halls, Oban, Martin's father Ted Heath accepted The Oban Times Atlantis Sports Personality award from Sports Editor Stewart MacKenzie.

November 1998
Crofters to sell islands
 Crisis hit crofters on Barra are selling a group of islands steeped in romance and nostalgia.

A dozen or so miles south of Barra lie Mingulay, Pabbay and Berneray and a number of smaller islets in the ownership of the Barrahead Isles Sheepstock Company. They will go on the market in January.

The isles are uninhabited, except for thousands of sea birds and 800 sheep belonging to the crofters.

December 1998
'Argyll hub airport'
 Oban Airport could be the key to the future economic and social development of Argyll, according to a report.

The consultation document has been produced by Argyll and Bute Council on 'the way forward' for creating an 'Argyll hub airport'.

December 1998
Resounding 'yes' for a new Mart in Lochaber

Lochaber's new mart is a reality and will go ahead early in the New Year with £220,000 of community support behind it.

The steering team behind the rural complex plan announced on Friday that with the community cash in place over £1.2million of public money was now secured.

Work on the site at Aonach Mor will begin early in the new year to build phase one of the development, which will comprise a covered holding area, car and lorry parking and agricultural retail units.

February
Oil slick hits Islay

Dead and dying seabirds have been washing up on the coast of Islay smothered by a mystery oil slick, in the worst pollution incident in Argyll for years.

Now environmentalists are bracing themselves in case the slick is driven ashore by winds. So far 125 birds have come ashore along the western beaches from Smault to Laggan Bay, near Portnahaven and Port Wemyss.

March 1999
Wave power for Islay

The Rhinns of Islay is to be the site of the first commercial wave

power electricity generator. Wavegen, the company behind the project, has been awarded the first government contract under the Scottish Renewables Order (SRO).

SROs were set up to encourage a certain amount of electricity going into the National Grid to come from renewable sources. The Limpet, a shoreline device to harness the power of waves as they crash against the land, has been developed following several years of collaboration with Queen's University Belfast.

March 1999
First Argyll wind turbine.

The first commercial wind turbine in Argyll was completed on Monday.

National Wind Power began building the Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm in August last year.

When finished this May it will consist of 14 turbines each of 600 kW and the farm is expected to generate enough clean electricity to meet nearly one-quarter of the need for electricity in Lorn including Oban, Connel, Taynuilt and the rural areas in between.

April 1999
Historic Scotland to care for Isle of Iona

Negotiations are under way for Historic Scotland to take over the care of Iona Abbey.

This national recognition of the importance of the buildings, monuments and sites of the famous island would give a massive boost to the local economy.

Iona Cathedral Trust would remain owners; Historic Scotland would take over the care of Iona Abbey from Iona Abbey Ltd and the Iona Community would remain in residence.

May 1999
Campbeltown regeneration project gains support

A dramatic £1 million plus project to breathe new life into Campbeltown has received the wholehearted support of the town.

The Quarry Green Regeneration Project, which was unveiled on Saturday and Tuesday during two open days in Campbeltown Library, is the brainchild of Campbeltown Trading Association (CTA).

August 1999
NLB invests in Oban

The Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) intends to invest £3 million in Oban.

The board, which looks after a network of 200 lighthouses around the Scottish coast plans to upgrade its Oban base, home of its principal ship, *MV Pharos*. The Oban depot dates from 1904 and covers 117 lighthouses and almost 80 buoys, stretching as far south as the Isle of Man, with the buoys being brought back to Oban for refurbishment.

October 1999
Bell Ingram Scottish Series comes to Argyll

Argyll will play host to Scotland's largest sailing event of the new millennium, The Bell Lawrie Scottish Series, from May 25-30, 2000.

This popular Scottish regatta based in Tarbert and held on the natural racing arena of Loch Fyne attracts more than 2000 competitors annually.

Boats from the south of England and Ireland will join those from Scotland, the north of England and Northern Ireland.

December 1999
New bishop

Catholics in Argyll and the Isles turned out in force this week to celebrate the ordination of their new bishop.

The Right Reverend Ian Murray was ordained in Oban's St Columba's Cathedral.

His ordination officially ended three years of waiting, following the sudden departure of Bishop Roddy Wright.

December 1999
Kilmory HQ upgrade

Up to a million pounds could be spent upgrading Argyll and Bute Council's headquarters at Kilmory.

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March 2000
Council claim jobs will follow airport development
 An investment of £3million and hundreds of new jobs for the area are on the cards if Oban Airport is developed.

The long awaited Oban Airport Study was published by Argyll and Bute Council this week. Oban Airport is presently unlicensed, it can be used by private fliers, but cannot have scheduled airline services until the Civil Aviation Authority grants a licence.

April 2000
£1m for Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory
 Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory has been awarded nearly £1m to build a new test centre as part of a joint research programme with Aberdeen University.

June 2000
24 hours on the West Highland Way for charity
 Hundreds of walkers will set off from Glen Nevis next weekend on a 24 hour 54 mile hike along the West Highland Way to raise money for rural charities in Scotland.

Lochaber's resident cigar smoking marathon man Sir Jimmy Savile was out helping to clear their route last Saturday with the assistance of a helicopter.

August 2000
Water shortage on Tiree
 The worst water shortage in 20 years has led to West of Scotland Water (WoSW) transporting thousands of litres of water to Tiree.

On Friday WoSW ferried 36,000 litres of water to the island, repeating the delivery on Saturday, to replenish supplies depleted by the recent dry weather and the high demand created by tourists.

On Monday the company also had to switch its pumps off at Loch Nell which is used to top up Loch na Gleann Bheathrach to supply drinking water for Oban and Lorn and turn on an emergency pump to get water over the weir and into the River Nell, which had run dry with a loss of fish.

August 2000
Scallop ban faces crisis
 The scallop fishing industry is facing another crisis after the reintroduction of a devastating fishing ban across many parts of West highland waters.

Still reeling from last year's ban - estimated to have cost the industry around £10 million - scallop fishermen are once again looking at an uncertain future.

October 2000
Donald Dewar dies
 Argyll has been paying its own tribute to Scotland's First Minister, Donald Dewar, who died last week.

In Lochgilphead - the town of his grandfather's birth - the flag on the front green was at half mast last week and on Wednesday, the day of his funeral, people signed the condolence book at Dalriada House.

October 2000
Hydro move home
 Scottish Hydro-Electric is moving out of its purpose built office at Crannog Lane, Oban's Lochavullin Industrial estate. The 'for sale' sign will be going up in the next month, said a spokesman for the company. Hydro-Electric only moved into the premises five years ago, but has said that the building is now surplus to requirements.

October 2000
Islay pier upgrade approved
 Ambitious plans to spend £5million on upgrading Islay's Port Askaig ferry terminal have been recommended for approval. Argyll and Bute Council's planning department hopes the proposals will put an end to vehicle congestion at the terminal.

December 2000
Nutkins buys abbey
 Fort Augustus Abbey has been sold to wildlife television presenter Terry Nutkins after almost a year on the market. It was put up for sale after its resident community of Benedictine monks dwindled and dispersed. Mr Nutkins lives in Glenelg and runs the Lovat Arms Hotel in Fort Augustus. He has lived in the West Highlands since the age of 10. He says his company, Abbey Millennium Scotland, bought the building to give it back its dignity.

January 2001
Oban's bowling alley closes.
 Team Scotland Ten Pin Events and Management Ltd., trading as Pro Bowl, has gone into liquidation on the grounds it cannot pay its debts, said David Robb of W D Robb Accountants in Glasgow the provisional liquidator. He said: 'A petition is being presented to court for the winding up of the company.'

January 2001
Islay distillery bought.



January 2000
 Thousands partied in the centre of Oban to welcome the new millennium. Crowds gathered to watch pipe, samba and rock bands, and many took part in a torchlight procession. The highlight for many was a spectacular fireworks display.



August 2000 - There were many mixed emotions as the main building of Oban High School was demolished



September 2000
 Villagers in Taynuilt were shocked when the B-listed Taynuilt Station building was destroyed by fire. Fire investigation officers sifted through the remains of the Victorian timber building and came to the conclusion that the fire had been started deliberately. The railway line between Oban and Crianlarich was closed due to the debris on the tracks.

An independent whisky company, with connections to the Campbeltown's distilling family, has brought over Islay's Bruichladdich Distillery. Murray McDavid Ltd has taken three years to persuade Jim Beam Brands (JBB), a subsidiary of American company Fortune Brands, to sell the distillery and its maturing stock. Murray McDavid Ltd was founded by three friends passionate about fine quality malt whisky - Gordon Wright, aged 36, Mark Reynier, 38 and Simon Coughlin, 38.



April 2001
 Argyll mourns Duke's sudden death. There has been a sense of shock in Argyll this week after the sudden death on Sunday of the 12th Duke of Argyll, Ian Campbell, 26th Chief of Clan Campbell. The Duke is believed to have suffered heart failure during surgery in hospital in London. He was 63 years old.

June 2001
Jubilant Ballachulish opens new pavilion
 The new Jubilee Park shinty pavilion in Ballachulish was opened on Saturday after a six-year campaign and last-minute fund-raising.

erative bought Appin Stores and started trading as a community shop. Co-op chairman Dr Iain MacNicol told the assembled people that the £150,000 shop was a legacy, which he hoped, would be continued by the next generation.

September 2001
Gaelic college a first for Islay.
 Islay is an island at the heart of the history of Scotland. The Gaelic language has been spoken continuously on the island since the times of the Dalriadic Scots, through the period of the Lord of the Isles and up to the present day. On Tuesday Brian Wilson MP officially launched the building of Islay's first Gaelic college, which will aim to further the development of the Gaelic language, culture, history and heritage.

In recognition of the worldwide influence of Saint Columba, the new centre will be called Ionad Chaluim Chille Ie, or the Columba Centre Islay.

October 2001
Mull celebrates Mod medal.
 Gold and silver have gone home to Mull with the Whyte family. This year's top solo competition at the Mod, the gold medal, was won by a Mod veteran and a first timer. The ladies gold medal went to Riona Whyte, aged 39, a Mod veteran, who earlier in the week had seen son Alasdair take home the silver James C MacPhee top solo award for juniors.

The men's honour went to Barra's Archie MacLean who lives and works in Glasgow. He was taking part in his first Royal National Mod. 'You are looking at the most surprised medalist ever', he said.

2002
January 2002
Twenty jobs to go at mill
 Around 20 jobs are to go in a major restructuring at the Arjo Wiggins paper mill at Corpach, which will also see 'substantial investment' in the mill over the next three years. No details were released on which departments would be affected, but the company confirmed that there would be job losses. Unconfirmed reports say that investment in the mill will be in the region of £3million over three years.

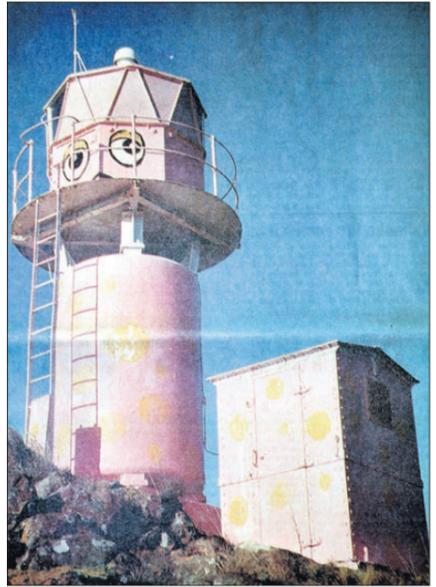


May 2001
 Pollution threat averted as Swedish freighter hits rocks in Sound of Mull. A potentially serious oil pollution incident has been contained thanks to swift action by coastguards and lifeboat crew. Initially it was believed that around 20 tonnes of fuel had leaked from a Swedish freighter, which ran aground in the Sound of Mull on Monday around 5.30am. The Lysfoss went onto the rocks on the Morvern Peninsula near the entrance to Loch Sunart.

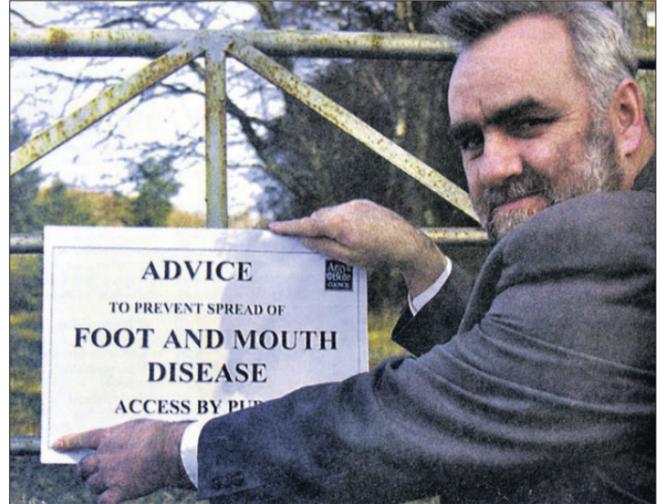
March 2002
Islanders take over Gigha
 It was party time on Gigha last Friday as the islanders officially took ownership of 'God's Isle'. Willie McSparran, chairman of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust set up to manage the island, officially received the title deeds and a symbolic handful of Gigha earth in the handover ceremony entitled 'A New Dawn'.

April 2002
Lochawe monster sets new British record
 Cumbrian angler Brian Rutland has realised a dream after landing a new British wild brown trout record with a 31lb 12oz monster from Loch Awe. The Keswick-based fisherman has tackled the Argyll loch's testing water for five years in search of that illusive big fish. But he finally found his dream on the opening day of a new season.

May 2002
Wind-turbine Factory opens in Kintyre
 Scotland's First Minister Jack McConnell put Kintyre back on the manufacturing map on Monday when he opened Vestas-Celtic Wind Technology's new factory at Machrihanish. In an inauguration ceremony watched by Vestas directors, politicians and members of the local community, Mr McConnell said that the wind-turbine factory could be the key to regenerating the area's struggling economy.



February 2001
 Shocking pink happenings in Port Appin. Shocking happenings have been taking place in Port Appin - shocking pink that is. For overnight, after a full moon and low tide, the villagers awoke on Friday to find that the lighthouse they are fighting to save, Sgeir Bhuidhe, had turned into 'Mr Blobby'. From top to base it had been painted a vivid shocking pink, with large yellow spots. An on an outbuilding alongside were the words 'save me'. The whole event captured the nation's imagination and the pink light featured on television, national and international press. As a protest against the replacement light planned for later this year, it did little to impress the Northern Lighthouse Board, which issued a stern press release and reported the matter to the police.



March 2001
 Frantic bid to keep west coast foot and mouth disease-free. The West of Scotland attempted to maintain its status as a foot and mouth disease-free zone this week with disinfected matting being thrown across trunk road boundaries in both the Argyll and Bute and Highland Council areas. Although initially regarded as an agricultural problem, which last raised its ugly head in the UK in 1967, the complexities of this most-feared of animal diseases will have far-reaching effects which will touch the day-to-day lives of almost each and every one of us. All too slowly, the enormity of the massive threat facing the rural community through this virulent strain of a disease, which could decimate livestock farming as we know it, has filtered through to all sections of the general public. Farms and forests, crofts, mountains and moorland have become deserted as the passionate plea to stay out of the countryside is being heeded by an understanding majority.



September 2001
 Read your Oban Times any time, any place, anywhere - well almost! The Oban Times has gone online with the launch this week of www.obantimes.co.uk. Those who are in far flung corners of the world can now access their Oban Times electronically and can interact direct with the news teams, subscribe online or view a host of photographs that didn't make it to print.

June 2002
Dunbeg Primary one of the country's best
 Dunbeg Primary School celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee with a special school dinner on Wednesday. Pupils were in fancy dress and the school dining room was decorated for the celebration. On Monday a party from the school will be in London to receive a School Curriculum Award.

June 2002
Duke of Argyll marries
 The marriage of the 13th Duke of Argyll took place on Saturday in Gloucestershire. Torquhil Ian Campbell, son of the late Duke and Iona, Duchess of Argyll, married Miss Eleanor Cadbury, daughter of Mr & Mrs Peter H G Cadbury. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church, Fairford, with Rev John Willard officiating, assisted by the Rev Brian Wilkinson of Inverary Parish Church. The bride was given away by her father and was attended by Alice Palau, George Bruce and Laura Landale.

July 2002
Fort William to get new medical centre
 The three medical practices in Fort William are poised to move from their present premises into a new health centre in the town. If the new building at An Aird is approved by Lochaber councillors, doctors at the High Street, Tweedale and Craig Nevis surgeries will work under one roof.

November 2002
Kilchoan outdoor centre approved
 The Ardnarmurchan Outdoor Trust has been granted permission to build a three storey outdoor centre in Kilchoan.

December 2002
Kinlochleven ice wall
 Kinlochleven is to have a £2.2million indoor climbing centre, which, it is hoped, will help to revive the village and attract thousands of visitors. After many years of planning the project was confirmed when leasing was agreed between Kinlochleven Land Development Trust (KLDLT), and the Helensburgh based firm Ice Factory, which will run it.

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2003

February 2003
Funding in place for Tiree livestock mart
 After years of effort by islanders on Tiree, funding is now in place for a livestock auction mart which should help protect the future of the island's crofting and farming communities.
 A grant of £230,507 from Argyll and the Islands Enterprise (AIE) to Tiree Rural Development Limited (TRD Ltd), which has been the driving force behind the project, is the final piece in the financial jigsaw to get £532,000 development up and running.

February 2003
Two new schools for Lochaber Kinlochleven
 Kinlochleven is to have a new high school and a new primary school funded by a Public Private Partnership (PPP).
 Highland Council says the new schools in Kinlochleven will have the most up-to-date educational resources, 'fit for 21st century'.
 The new schools will replace the 75-year-old campus both the secondary and primary schools share at the moment.

March 2003
£5 for a Uist hedgehog
 An animal rights group is to offer a £5 reward to islanders on Uist who catch them a hedgehog in a plan, which Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) says, is causing it 'concern'.
 SNH is due to hold a cull of the Uist hedgehogs in April, but St Tiggywinkles in Aylesbury plans to set up a hedgehog holding centre at the former Uist Animal Visitor Centre and will be sending representatives to Uist this week.

April 2003
New Oban Fire station to open
 Oban's new fire station will open on time and on budget, and the Fire Master of Strathclyde promises it will serve Lorn and the Islands for years to come.
 'I do believe it is one of the best stations the authority has ever built,' Jeff Ord said at a meeting with Argyll and Bute councillors from the Oban area.

July 2003
Oban Times buys Arran newspaper title
 Arran's weekly newspaper, The Arran Banner this week joins the Oban Times Group to become the company's fourth weekly title.

August 2003
Connell Bridge 100 years old
 Connell Bridge celebrates its centenary today (Thursday), with a brand new coat of paint making her look as good as she did the day she was opened.
 Although there is no tangible commemoration of the grand old bridge's 100th birthday yet, plans are afoot to erect a standing stone with a plaque as a permanent 'birthday card'.

August 2003
Invergarry shocked as Village hall collapses
 The village of Invergarry was in shock after its village hall



August 2003
 As a welcome party, it would take some beating: Tobermory's new Severn class lifeboat arrived on station last Thursday. The Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsay was lead into Tobermory Bay by the Anne Lewis Fraser, the Arun class she will replace. Dressed overall and with a piper at her bow, escorted by folk in ribs and speed boats she completed a circuit of Tobermory Bay as boats and yachts sounded their horns and crews cheered before she came alongside the lifeboat berth.

collapsed after its village hall collapsed on Sunday without warning.
 The hall, situated on the side of the A82 Inverness road just past the main village, was used by many groups including a playgroup and youth club and was licensed to hold 200 people.

September 2003
Train delayed by whale
 'We apologise for the delay of the 13.20 from Oban, because of a whale on the line'
 Forget about the wrong sort of snow or leaves on the rails, the Oban to Glasgow afternoon train met a dolphin on the line on Friday.
 It was one of the more, shall we say, unusual calls that John Smith has had to deal with in his career with First Engineering, keeping the West Highland line in working order.
 The call came through to our office at Crianlarich from control in Glasgow that I was to go to the 60-and three quarter mile post at Muckairn because there was a whale in the trees,' he said. So John, 43, from St Conan's Road, Lochawe, set off. He was soon able to reassure his control room that it wasn't a whale... it was a dolphin, but they didn't need to contact Greenpeace.
 The dolphin in question was about 15ft long, plastic, luminous green in colour and inflatable.

October 2003
Oban's Argyll Hotel to get £1.2m facelift
 The derelict Argyll Hotel on Oban's waterfront is to have a £1.2million refurbishment to return it to its former glory.
 The long boarded up 26-bedroom hotel on Corran Esplanade is to be transformed into a 42-bedroom hotel with

restaurant and two bars by next summer. Food Convertors Limited, a hotel and farming family business based in Bath, has bought the hotel.
October 2003
Lift off for Oban airport
 A major project to improve air services in Argyll has been given the thumbs up by Argyll and Bute Council despite fierce opposition from some councillors.
 The council agreed at its meeting last week to drive forward the Argyll Air Services project by taking advantage of capital and revenue funding from Argyll and the Islands Enterprise.
 The project involves big improvements to existing airstrips at Oban, Coll and Colonsay and licensing of the three airstrips to allow scheduled flights. Three already has a licensed airfield.

October 2003
Tobermory's toddler tourism boom
 Tobermory's toddler tourism boom is to be researched by a University of Stirling academic.
 Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, host to CBBC's popular pre-school television programme Balamory, has been experiencing an influx of young children who have persuaded their parents to take them to see where their favourite television characters live.
December 2003
Oban runner wins European Gold medal
 Oban runner Susan Partridge won gold at the European Cross Country Championships in Edinburgh on Sunday.
 Susan, the youngest member of the six-woman winning team, came 32nd in the race at Holyrood Park.



October 2003
Perfect end to 100th Mòd
 The 100th Royal National Mòd didn't want to end. After a magical week in Oban, complete with glorious weather, Saturday morning saw the traditional ending of the national event with a mass gathering of the choirs. Members of more than 30 choirs joined in the procession led by Oban Pipe Band from the Corran Halls down George Street to Station Square.
 There, under a perfect autumn sky with the backdrop of swans in Oban Bay and a trimaran coming into port the choirs sang, led by a number of the weeks' winning conductors, including Joy McAllister of Taynuilt, Kenny Thomson of the GGS, the Glasgow Gaelic Choir and Kirsteen Grant who took the Glasgow Islay to Lovat and Tullibardine victory. The choirs just kept singing; they didn't want to leave. The arrival of the ferry to Mull saw the choirs from Argyll, Tarbert Loch Fyne, Oban and Taynuilt, go down to the pier to 'sing off' the 12.30pm sailing. The Mull Gaelic Choir stood on deck and sang along with them until the ship's siren sounded the farewell.



March 2004
 Tiree fishing fleet goes up in flames. Police are not treating as suspicious a fire on the island of Tiree, which destroyed five out of the six-strong fishing fleet on the remote Hebridean island. Teams from Strathclyde Police and Strathclyde Fire Brigade investigated the fire, which started in the early hours of Saturday morning at the remote Milton Harbour on the island, but the cause is still not known. No casualties were reported and none of the crew from the boats were on board during the blaze.

2004

April 2004
Seabed mystery plane is Catalina flying boat
 The mystery of the aircraft found on the seabed off Oban has been solved in time for the 59th anniversary of its crash.
 Photographs taken by Royal Navy divers have been studied by aviation experts at RAF Kinloss and identified as the wreck of a twin engine Catalina flying boat. With the help of Oban's War and Peace Museum they were able to find out a great deal of background behind the wreck.
 The wreck was found when the Third Mine Countermeasures Squadron was carrying out a coastal mapping task: divers from HMS Pembroke made the discovery.

May 2004
1,700 miles for a shinty match
 The longest journey in shinty history took place last Saturday when the Highlanders Shinty Club travelled to Lochgillhead in Argyll to play Kilmory in shinty's Bullough Cup.
 Not a quick trip down the road for the soldiers, as The Highlanders came more than 1,700 miles from Hanover in Germany and back to fulfil their junior cup fixture.
 A flight from Hanover to Birmingham was followed by a dash to Edinburgh to collect their kit before a journey across Scotland to Mid Argyll.

May 2004
Family and politicians remember John Smith
 Senior politicians joined Elizabeth Smith and her daughters at a memorial service on Iona yesterday for the late John Smith, former leader of the Labour party.
 John Smith, who died on May 12, 1994, aged 55, after a heart attack, was buried on Iona at a cemetery called Oran, close to the historic Iona Abbey, where many former kings are reputedly buried. The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott and former NATO secretary-general Lord Robertson were at the memorial service in the abbey.

June 2004
Walloped wallaby may be no stranger to Islay
 A wallaby found dead on the roadside near Islay Airport may not have been a new arrival and could have been on the island since October.
 Several Islay residents have spotted something resembling a wallaby on the island months ago and animal experts said the small marsupial could have survived winter on the west coast.
 The dead animal was spotted by drivers on the A846 Port Ellen to Bowmore road and was reported to Islay police at 9.30am on Tuesday of last week. Islay police say they believe the animal may have been hit by a vehicle as 'it suffered injuries compatible with a road accident'.

June 2004
A new chapter for Oban solicitor Graeme
 Graeme Pagan did not have to go far to launch his memoirs on Tuesday, just downstairs from his office to the Oban branch of Otakar's bookshop.
 There piled high were copies of *Once Bitten, Twice Fined* published by Birlinn. The title comes from an Oban Times headline reporting of a case in which Graeme was involved.

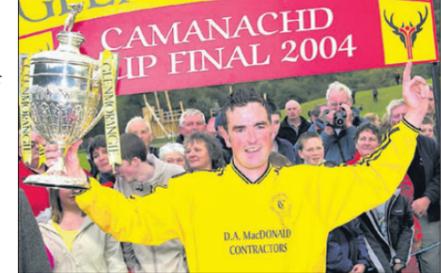
July 2004
Floods wreak havoc in Campbeltown
 Gallons of sewage and drain water flooded Campbeltown's roads, homes and businesses on Monday morning.
 Police closed Longrow Main, Bolgarn and Lochend roads for several hours with flooding three foot deep causing chaos and destruction.

September 2004
Morag becomes the first person to swim the length of Loch Shiel
 Steak, chips and a pint of Guinness awaited Morag Hughes as she stepped ashore at Glenfinnan on Saturday evening as the first person to have successfully swum the length of Loch Shiel.
 The 48-year-old long-distance swimmer from Corpach was met by a welcoming party of at least 50 when she finished her 18-mile open water challenge in 11hours 50mins and 16secs.

October 2004
Piper plays for Madonna
 Performing in front of 80,000 adoring fans of one of the world's biggest pop stars. Touring North America and Europe.
 Meeting the big names from the worlds of music, film and sport. All in a day's work?
 Certainly not for your ordinary man in the street, but Campbeltown piper Lorne Cousin lived the pop star lifestyle for four months this year when he was invited to play a very special part in Madonna's Re-Invention world tour from May to September.



April 2004
 Best in the world for skate fishing. The waters off Oban are rapidly getting a reputation for being the best in the world for skate fishing. Recent outings of Laura Dawn carrying parties of anglers have had some staggering results. Skipper Ronnie Campbell told The Oban Times that within a week anglers had caught skate weighing 211lb, 200lb and 193lb. 'To get three fish this size in a year would be good, to get them in a week is phenomenal,' said Ronnie from Bonawe. He has taken out anglers from New Zealand, Australia, America, Holland, Germany, Italy and Holland, on Laura Dawn.



September 2004
 There will be huge celebrations in Inveraray after the town's shinty team became the 2004 Scottish champions after a 74-year absence. Inveraray Shinty Club last engraved their name on the Camanachd Challenge Cup in 1930 when they defeated Caberfeidh, also at Oban. On Saturday, the team defeated Fort William 1-0 in a pulsating match at Mossfield Stadium in front of almost 3,000 spectators with Euan McMurdo scoring the only goal of the game midway through the first half. At the final whistle, the Inveraray players and spectators danced with delight amid floods of tears as the emotion of the occasion took over.

June 2005
Ribbon cut as Fort supermarket re-opens
 An official ribbon cutting ceremony marked the official opening last week of Fort William's newly refurbished, and largest supermarket.
 Morrisons opened its Fort William supermarket as part of the company's multi-million pound conversion of store acquired following its takeover of Safeway last year.

August 2005
Community delight as Appin GP gets MBE
 The communities of Appin, Port Appin and Lismore squeezed into Port Appin Hall to see their doctor collect his MBE.
 Dr Iain MacNicol MBE has served the three communities for 25 years having taken over the post from his late father. Around 150 people saw Lord Lieutenant Kenneth MacKinnon hand over the MBE after clerk to the lieutenant George Seaton read an extract from the citation.

October 2005
Oban lifeboat's very special delivery
 Congratulations to Rachael Holliday and partner Glenn Cato on their birth of their second daughter who chose to arrive in the world on board Oban lifeboat in the middle of the Sound of Mull early on Thursday morning.
November 2005
Argyll's holiday home ratio
 Argyll has 17 per cent -5,158- of all Scotland's second or holiday homes.
 Some parts of the area, including Mull, Tiree, Coll and North Lorn have more than 20 per cent second or holiday homes.
 A survey by Communities Scotland has revealed the latest figures on second and holiday homes and their impact on rural communities.

April 2005
CalMac opens new ferry terminal at Oban
 Caledonian MacBrayne's (CalMac) new Oban ferry terminal opened for business at 9am on Monday.
 To celebrate the occasion CalMac issued a free ticket and a bottle of champagne to its first customer. Lucky Neil Jordan from Hardgate, near Clydebank, was the first customer through the door. He was taking his daughter Cara and her friend Rhona Van Breda to 'Balamory'.

April 2005
Tunnel expert heads for the Isle of Luing
 A Norwegian engineering expert in building road tunnels has been invited to the Isle of Luing at the end of the month to assess the possibilities of a tunnel between the island and the mainland.
May 2005
Investigation into Kyle of Lochalsh fire
 Investigations are being carried out into a serious fire at Kyle of Lochalsh on Monday evening.
 Twelve fire fighters from Kyle and Broadford fire stations fought for 90 minutes to extinguish the blaze, which destroyed a van and a caravan on land between the Church Road and Wemyss Place.

May 2005
Musical duo hit high note
 A company formed just 18 months ago by musical duo Angus MacPhail and Andrew Stevenson has taken the Scottish Title in the Shell LiveWIRE Young Entrepreneurs of the Year contest.
 Accordion player Angus, from Tiree and piper Andrew from Achnacarry, near Spean bridge, set up Skippinich Records to produce CDs for their band.

November 2005
Sarah tunes up for top prize
 The talents of a young Skye fiddle player have been recognised with a top Scottish musical award.
 Sarah Naylor struck the tight notes with judges at the prestigious Glenfiddich Fiddle Championship, which took place at Blair Castle on Saturday.



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2006



January 2006
Two Minkie whales have been found dead on the beach at Killinallan, near Portnahaven, on Islay. Although the whale is commonly sighted off the island it is thought to be as long as 14 years since the last one came ashore dead.



Work has started on the new linkspan at Oban Harbour, which is part of the major re-development of Oban Ferry Terminal. Contractors George Leslie Limited of Barrhead, Glasgow, began construction on January 9 and hope to have the first phase, costing an estimated £1.3 million finished by April 14.



April 2006
Troops from across Europe turned back time when they marched into Spean Bridge at the weekend to re-enact a scene from yesteryear. Around 40 soldiers and war veterans dressed in World War Two uniform, marched the seven miles from the former top-secret commando base at Achnacarry to the village train station on Saturday. The event, which marked the 65th anniversary of the Commandos' arrival in the area, was organised to raise money for Combined Operations Memorial in Staffordshire, England.



May 2006
Pupils at Taynuilt Primary School may already believe their lollipop man is the best, but now, thanks to their help, it's official. Willie Campbell has been chosen as the Argyll and Bute and Inverclyde region's Lollipop Person of the Year.



May 2006
After a 10-year restoration programme, Gylen Castle, on the Isle of Kerrera is open once again. The castle, a MacDougall stronghold has been given a new lease of life after a 10 year restoration programme and it was appropriate that the present chief Madam Morag MacDougall of MacDougall and Dunollie, the 31st chief of the clan, should be present to cut the ribbon to open the castle to the public. She was accompanied by her husband Richard Morley and by their son Robin MacDougall of MacDougall Yr of Dunollie and daughter Fiona, the Maid of Lorn.



May 2006
Tobermory lifeboat refloats aground 300-passenger liner. Tobermory Lifeboat successfully refloated a cruise ship, which got into difficulty but it proved a bit of a David and Goliath struggle. The cruise ship, which has the capacity to carry 300 passengers, had run aground on Calve Island in the Sound of Mull near the entrance to Tobermory Bay after heavy weather had caused her to drag her anchor during the night. The MS Island Sky is a Bahamas-registered 90-metre vessel and weighs 4,200 tonnes - but that didn't daunt Tobermory's Severn class lifeboat.

June 2006

Dangerous A82
The A82 Tyndrum to Tarbet road is officially one of the most dangerous routes in the UK with motorcycles particularly vulnerable to being involved in fatal or serious crashes, a national report has concluded. The AA Motoring Trust analysed roads throughout the UK between 1999 to 2001 and 2001 to 2004 and its report How Safe are Britain's Main Roads? Classed the A82 as a 'medium to high risk' road, which is particularly 'high risk' for motorcyclists.



June 2006
A Connel archer can now call himself the best in the world after he became the first-ever winner of a new longbow world championship title. Sean O'Byrne, a member of Lorn Longbows, shot his way to victory at the Wand World Championship on Sunday on the grounds of Raby Castle, County Durham.

June 2006

Fire destroys part of Fort William High Street
Around 40 fire fighters fought the blaze which ripped the heart out of a Fort William landmark and the west end of the High Street. Not only was McTavish's Kitchen devastated by the blaze but two other businesses, West Coast Leisure and The Gift Box, were extensively damaged by the fire, with most of their roof collapsing too. Fort William's retained crew of Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service were at the scene within 10 minutes and fire appliances from Kinlochleven, Fort Augustus and a hydraulic platform from Inverness joined to fight the fire.



June 2006
Two girls from Canna can now get to school without donning their lifejackets. A bridge over 100 metres of troubled waters has literally been rebuilt between Canna and Sanday, where Kathryn MacKinnon, aged 11 and her sister Caroline, eight, go to school from their home on Canna. The bridge was blown down in hurricane-force storms last January and the girls' father, Patrick, a lobster fisherman, has had to row the two across the small stretch of water while Highland Council and the National Trust for Scotland, which owns the two islands, decided who would pay for the new bridge to be built.

July 2006

Gondola crash
Investigations are continuing after five people were injured in a cable car crash near Fort William. Two gondolas collided at the Nevis Range ski resort on Aonach Mor. It is understood one car slid down a cable around 500 metres from the top of the lift and hit another below before derailing and plunging 30 feet to the ground. A family of three from Northern Ireland, including a three-year-old child, and a 52-year-old man and his 24-year-old son, from Devon, were among the casualties. Twenty-five people were left dangling on the cable and about 50 people, including a party of pensioners from Peterhead, were stranded at the gondola's top station for up to four hours after the accident. An RAF helicopter flew about 40 people from the top station, while 10 others walked down the mountain.

August 2006

Europeans come to Scotland
More than 32,000 eastern Europeans have settled in Scotland in the two years since eight new members joined the EU, with an estimated 4,000 working in Lochaber. Latvian and Polish workers have become commonplace in many companies and next year when Romania and Bulgaria join the EU the influx of workers will increase even more. Most of the new migrants work in either fish farms, construction or the hospitality trade.



September 2006
Two men narrowly escaped injury on Saturday afternoon after a serious aircraft crash near Glenforsa Airfield on the east coast of the Isle of Mull. The two-man Zenair aircraft was owned by Larry Johnson of Bridge of Allan, Stirlingshire and Mike McCreavey, from Broughty Ferry near Dundee.

September 2006

Argyll fish farm attacked.
An Argyll fish farm faces a damages bill of more than £500,000 after members of an animal rights group destroyed property and cut fish cages to release stocks of halibut. Kames Marine Fish Farm, near Kilmelford, which has been running for 34 years and employs 37 people, was attacked between 10pm Wednesday and 6am last Thursday. The action of the protesters have been posted on a website where they boast of destroying cages to release the harvest halibut after breaking into the property.



September 2006
Oban Chocolate Company tasted sweet success after winning the Argyll and Bute regional final of the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT) Business Awards. Helen Miller and her brother Kenneth were on hand to pick up the Royal Bank of Scotland sponsored award.



November 2006
Only Abbie knows what Jack said. First Minister Jack McConnell met primary one pupil Abbie Wood as he was leaving Rockfield Primary School in Oban. Abbie was born 25 weeks prematurely but has more than made up for time and had quite a story to tell the First Minister. Mr McConnell MSP, who was a former maths teacher himself, gave a quick maths lesson to pupils and met pupils in the IT class. He faced some tough questions from Rockfield primary seven pupils as he toured the school at the start of the Scottish Labour Party Conference in Oban. He was joined in his tour by newly appointed Scottish Education Minister Hugh Henry MSP, who had also been to St Columba's Primary School and the new joint campus at Soroba.

October 2006

Irish ferry plans in tatters.
The Northern Ireland Office has decided to pull out of its part in the reinstatement of the Campbelltown to Ballycastle ferry. This leaves the hopes of restarting the ferry service by next summer in tatters as all that was to be tied up was the go-ahead from the Northern Ireland Office, which confirmed last week that it was withdrawing its share of the £300,000 per year subsidy.



November 2006
The first registered fishing vessel to join the Oban fleet for many years was launched in Whitby. The Star Fishing Company unveiled the 19 metre Star of Jura (OB 278) to company directors, and skipper John Scott is looking forward to taking charge of the scallop, which was named by Fiona Gault. The Oban-based company is delighted with its latest addition, and company director John MacAllister, and Jim Morrison of the boatyard Parkol Marine, commended their respective workforces on the successful build of the Star of Jura.

November 2006

Mull pool 'wonderful reward'.
It has taken more than a quarter of a century of hard work, but islanders on Mull are jubilant this week after building work finally started on their longed-for first ever community swimming pool. Twenty-six years after fundraising began,

residents saw their efforts pay off when Jill Galbraith cut the first turf at the pool site in the grounds of the Isle of Mull Hotel. Mull and Iona Swimming Pool Association member Jill said: 'This is such a fantastic day after so many years of hard work.'

November 2006

ACHA take council stock
Eleven months after council house tenants in Argyll and Bute said 'yes', to their homes being transferred to a housing association the deal has been signed. The agreement to transfer all 5,400 homes from Argyll and Bute Council to Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) was finally signed on Tuesday, after much hard work, talking and scrutinising of the smallest detail. The deal will see the council's £48 million housing loan debt wiped off by the Scottish Executive and ACHA have £260 million available to spend on improving homes and services over the next 30 years.



November 2006
Chris Innes from Spean Bridge is officially crowned Scotland's Strongest Man after a gruelling competition in Fort William. Chris, aged 24, finished head and shoulders above the rest of the competition to win the title of Strongest Man in Scotland and put him in contention for a place in the UK championships.

December 2006
Pope honours Inveraray man.
A dedicated Inveraray Roman Catholic has been awarded the Bene Merenti - a gold medal from His Holiness Pope Benedict the 16th. Danny Kennedy was presented with the medal by Argyll and the Isles Bishop Ian Murray during the Candlelight Ecumenical Episcopalian Carol Service in All Saints Episcopalian Church, Inveraray, on Sunday. Vet Max Bonniwell, who was on the hill assessing whether the bull would survive, said he knew nothing of the helicopter rescue until it passed overhead. 'It was like a miracle,' he said.

2007

January 2007
First female Beefeater
A former Mid Argyll woman has been appointed as the Tower of London's first female Beefeater. Moira Cameron, who grew up in Furnace before moving to Lochgilphead beat five men to win the vacancy in the Yeoman Warders, becoming the first woman guard in the 500-year history of the Beefeaters.



March 2007
'Oban High School Pipe Band was born here tonight,' said Netherlorn Piping Society president Alistair Dewar after the band played together in public for the first time. The society exists to promote piping and drumming in the area and one of its main aims has been to form an Oban High School Pipe Band.



April 2007
A world-class windsurfing event is coming to Tiree in the autumn - the first time any round of the PWA Windsurfing Wave World Cup has been held in Britain. From October 6 - 13 some of the world's top windsurfers will be coming to the Hebridean island, accompanied by an international following of sports and television journalists.



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July 2007
Bull rescued by Royal Navy
An airlift rescue of a Limousin bull which had been stuck in a hillside ditch near Dalmally in Argyll for almost a week has been described as 'a miracle' by Oban vet Max Bonniwell. The Royal Navy Search and Rescue helicopter, based on HMS Gannet, airlifted the three-quarter tonne animal. The bull had taken a tumble on the hill near Stromilichan. Vet Max Bonniwell, who was on the hill assessing whether the bull would survive, said he knew nothing of the helicopter rescue until it passed overhead. 'It was like a miracle,' he said.



July 2007
Couple escape airport terror
An Oban joiner and his girlfriend narrowly escaped death as terrorists tried to crash a vehicle through a door at Glasgow International Airport. Sean MacMillan, aged 24 and girlfriend Laura Summers, originally of Oban, were just metres away, opposite the door that the green Jeep Cherokee smashed into. He later admitted: 'If that car had come through those doors we would have been dead.' Two terrorists drove their jeep, packed with gas cylinders, at the terminal building.



June 2007
Schoolboy Alan Hunter of Benderloch has been on cloud nine since gaining his licence to pilot an aircraft solo - just a day after his 17th birthday. And as one of the country's youngest pilots, he knows who he wants to take up as one of his first passengers - his mum, Catherine. However persuading her may prove more difficult than passing his test. She is terrified of flying.

August 2007
Gaelic goes digital
Plans for a Gaelic digital television channel took a step forward this week with the news that the BBC has agreed to carry out a public value test. A public consultation will also be carried out into the channel, which will be run as a partnership between BBC Scotland and the Gaelic Media Service. The new channel hopes to be on air by March 2008.

August 2007

Seaplane service
Oban is the destination for Europe's first ever city centre seaplane service. Captain David West, who owns Loch Lomond Seaplanes, will be flying passengers on his nine seat luxury Cessna seaplane from Glasgow city centre to Oban Marina, three times a day, seven days a week between February and November.



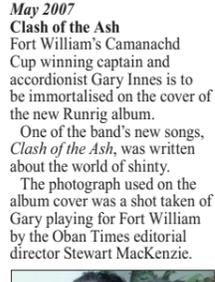
July 2007
Doctor is terrorist bomber?
One of the two men suspected of attempting to bomb Glasgow Airport was to start work in Oban hospital next month. Dr Bilal Talal Samad Abdullah was to start in Lorn and Islands District general Hospital (LIDGH) as a junior doctor and would have been assisting in different aspects of the job, including surgery. Dr Abdullah was in the blazing jeep as it crashed into the terminal building on June 30. The Iraqi diabetes specialist was arrested at the airport and has been charged with conspiracy to cause explosion. Dr Abdullah was the first of eight people arrested in connection with the attempted bomb attacks on London and Glasgow on June 29 - 30.



September 2007
Worms in water supply
The sea of complaints to The Oban Times and local councillors has followed the discovery of bloodworms in the water supply in and around Oban. Scottish Water, the company responsible for public water supply, has been slammed for not providing information to residents who feared for their health after finding the worm-like midge larvae, more commonly known as bloodworms, coming out of taps. Although the water authority was made aware of the problem on Thursday - it was five days later before it distributed information leaflets to worried Oban householders. Local councillor Roddie MacCuish said: 'This is too little, too late. It's unacceptable.'



October 2007
Earl of Wessex is Mod guest
His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex was guest of honour at the Royal National Mod in Fort William where he met dignitaries and heard songs from the newly crowned gold medal winners. The Earl met Mod officials including An Comunn Gaidheal president, John MacLeod and Lochaber Mod convenor Charlie MacColl. In the main hall of the Nevis Centre in Fort William the Earl then heard singing from the two Mod gold medalists, John Graham from Lochinver and Jean MacKay from Inverness. The Earl also heard singing from Coisir Og Lochabar, which won an amazing six competitions at the Mod this year.



November 2007
A landslide, which closed the main road into Argyll on Sunday, was expected to still be causing delays as The Oban Times went to press this week. Torrential rain saw 400 tons of rock, rubble and mud fall onto the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful at 3am on Sunday. A subsequent landslide on the underside of the road then took place. No one was injured.



November 2007
Single status row affects employees of Argyll and Bute
Around 700 Argyll and Bute Council employees are facing a cut in wages under a new 'single status' pay settlement. The council has written to all 4,350 employees outlining new pay, grading and conditions deal which will see 14 per cent of staff earning less while the remainder will either earn the same or receive a wage rise. Employees were told this week that if they did not accept the offer by this week the council would take steps to impose the deal by February next year - but that sparked an angry response from the workers who will lose out and their union.



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Stunned tourists were caught up in a terrorist attempt to bomb Glasgow Airport at the end of June 2007

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Doctor is terrorist bomber?
One of the two men suspected of attempting to bomb Glasgow Airport was to start work in Oban hospital next month. Dr Bilal Talal Samad Abdullah was to start in Lorn and Islands District general Hospital (LIDGH) as a junior doctor and would have been assisting in different aspects of the job, including surgery. Dr Abdullah was in the blazing jeep as it crashed into the terminal building on June 30. The Iraqi diabetes specialist was arrested at the airport and has been charged with conspiracy to cause explosion. Dr Abdullah was the first of eight people arrested in connection with the attempted bomb attacks on London and Glasgow on June 29 - 30.

September 2007
Worms in water supply
The sea of complaints to The Oban Times and local councillors has followed the discovery of bloodworms in the water supply in and around Oban. Scottish Water, the company responsible for public water supply, has been slammed for not providing information to residents who feared for their health after finding the worm-like midge larvae, more commonly known as bloodworms, coming out of taps. Although the water authority was made aware of the problem on Thursday - it was five days later before it distributed information leaflets to worried Oban householders. Local councillor Roddie MacCuish said: 'This is too little, too late. It's unacceptable.'

October 2007
Earl of Wessex is Mod guest
His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex was guest of honour at the Royal National Mod in Fort William where he met dignitaries and heard songs from the newly crowned gold medal winners. The Earl met Mod officials including An Comunn Gaidheal president, John MacLeod and Lochaber Mod convenor Charlie MacColl. In the main hall of the Nevis Centre in Fort William the Earl then heard singing from the two Mod gold medalists, John Graham from Lochinver and Jean MacKay from Inverness. The Earl also heard singing from Coisir Og Lochabar, which won an amazing six competitions at the Mod this year.

November 2007
A landslide, which closed the main road into Argyll on Sunday, was expected to still be causing delays as The Oban Times went to press this week. Torrential rain saw 400 tons of rock, rubble and mud fall onto the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful at 3am on Sunday. A subsequent landslide on the underside of the road then took place. No one was injured.

November 2007
Single status row affects employees of Argyll and Bute
Around 700 Argyll and Bute Council employees are facing a cut in wages under a new 'single status' pay settlement. The council has written to all 4,350 employees outlining new pay, grading and conditions deal which will see 14 per cent of staff earning less while the remainder will either earn the same or receive a wage rise. Employees were told this week that if they did not accept the offer by this week the council would take steps to impose the deal by February next year - but that sparked an angry response from the workers who will lose out and their union.

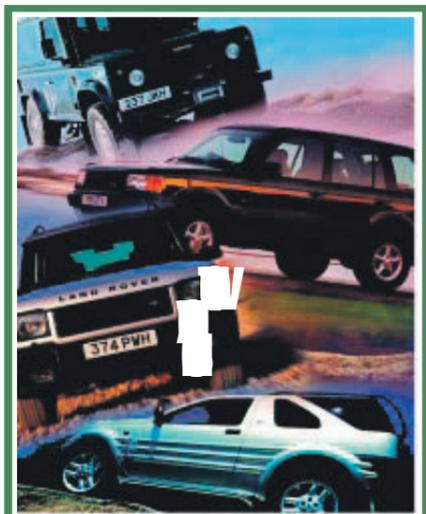
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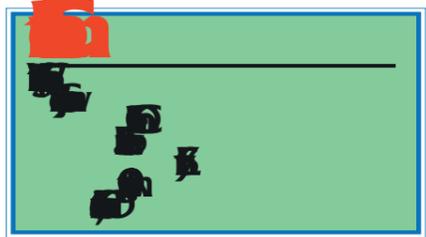
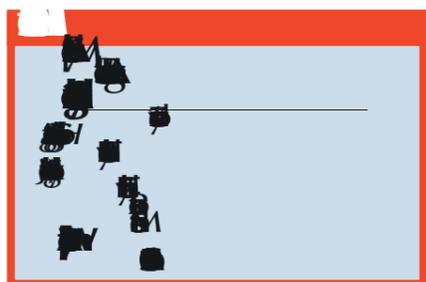


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2008
January 2008
Bishop Murray stands down
A letter from the Pope has confirmed that the head of the Catholic Church in Argyll and the Isles is to step down. Bishop Ian Murray has given notice to Rome that he is resigning from his post after eight years in charge.
The Right Reverend Murray has just turned 75 and has to offer his resignation so the church can appoint a successor.
The bishop's rural diocese stretches as far north as Kingussie, west to Skye and the Western Isles, all of Argyll and Lochaber and as far south as Arran.



February 2008
Young Oban Times reporter scoops top media award.
Oban Times reporter Euan Paterson has scooped a top media award.
Euan, son of Taynuilt police constable, David Paterson, and Mod silver pendant winner, Audrey Paterson, has won the Young Journalist of the Year title in this year's Highlands and Islands Media Awards.
A former pupil of Taynuilt primary and Oban High schools, Euan joined The Oban Times in 2002 progressing through the newspaper's own training programme.

Demand A82 Upgrade
www.a82.org
0777 224600 or 01294 224600 Fax: 01294 224600

February 2008
A82 campaign
Communities across the west Highlands are to unite behind a campaign to secure £90 million to upgrade the A82 along Loch Lomond - names as one of the most dangerous stretches of highway in Britain. The campaign will be launched at the Drover's Inn at Inverman on Monday, March 10 when MSPs, local authorities, road hauliers and HiTrans, the Highlands and Islands transport partnership will all attend to press the Scottish Government to make the A82 a top priority in this year's crucial transport spending review. The review, due to be announced in August this year, will set out the Government's transport spending until 2021. The campaign urges members of the public to sign an e-petition on the Scottish parliament website to force the government to take notice of the strong feeling in the west Highlands about the condition of the road.

February 2008
Pier work starts on Raasay
Work on the £12 million ferry terminal and overnight ferry berth at Churchton Bay, Raasay, which serves the route operated by CalMac between Sconser, Skye and Raasay, began on Friday.

May 2008
'It should never have happened but it did.'
That was the statement made by Argyll and Bute Council's spokesman for social services Councillor Donald McIntosh after last week's blunder when staff and residents were told that Eadar Glinn residential home for the elderly was closing - and then that it was not.
The 22-bed care home in Oban is taking part in a council review of older people's services throughout Argyll and Bute but there were issues of 'translation' which led to an officer of the council informing staff, residents and their relatives that the home could close within four weeks or six months.



June 2008
Kererra plans its future
It was with hope and enthusiasm that the Isle of Kererra celebrated on Thursday the launch of its community development plan for the next ten years. 'We have a development plan but the real work starts here,' Mark Jennison, co-ordinator told islanders and guests at the launch in the old school. The plan outlines the 34 residents' main targets and projects to make Kererra a thriving and economically viable community of around 60 people.



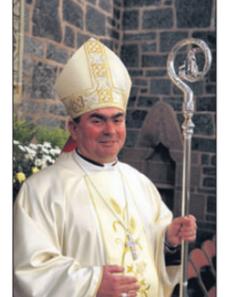
May 2008
Sunny Tobermory has its best coat on.
Tobermory is well known for its brightly coloured houses on its shore street but after a while the Argyll sunshine, wind and rain take their toll - but the paint brushes were spotted by passing photographer Frank Canon who saw this painter taking advantage of the spring sunshine to spruce up the building next to the Mishnish bar.

June 2008
Oban Airport flights take off
Some of Argyll's most remote islands were brought closer to the mainland on Monday as the first scheduled flight from Oban Airport to Coll and Tiree took off.
The flight, which took off minutes after the scheduled time of 8am, was followed on

for the new road in Argyll and Bute Council's new planning guidelines have this week produced their findings.
A final route for the road has yet to be decided but the council plan to link the A85 and A816 with a new Oban 'development road' possibly running from the Glencruitten road area and connecting with the A85 to the north of the town.

August 2008
Kintyre turbine factory could close with loss of 90 jobs
Meetings will take place in Glasgow between politicians and senior management of Danish company Vestas to see what can be done to keep the Vestas Celtic wind turbine tower factory in Kintyre.
The factory, which has had more than £10 million in Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) support will close by early 2009 with the loss of more than 90 jobs.

October 2008
A83 lights for another year
Traffic lights could rest at A83 landslide site for another year.
An end could be in sight for temporary traffic lights that have been in place at the Rest and Be Thankful on the A83 in Argyll since a landslide a year ago. But it could be another year yet before they are removed completely.
Hundreds of tonnes of rock and soil slid off the hillside in the early hours of the morning of October 28 last year after heavy rainfall initially closing the road before it was re-opened with temporary traffic lights.



October 2008
New bishop appointed
A Roy Bridge-born priest has been appointed as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles. Monsignor Joseph Toal will be ordained at St Columba's Cathedral in Oban on December 8, when he will officially succeed Bishop Ian Murray, who has been bishop since 1999.

November 2008
Oban Bay pontoons approved but with conditions
A proposal to build pontoons with 60 short-stay berths and a floating concrete breakwater in Oban Bay has been approved, with 12 conditions.
Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee also decided to drop a condition designed to give the plans a five-year time limit.
John MacGregor, chairman of Oban Bay Marine Ltd, the community company behind the plans, said that such a condition would render the project 'stone dead'.

December 2008
'Woolies' goes burst
More than 50 employees of retailer Woolworths in the West Highlands are waiting to see if they will still have jobs after Christmas. This follows the announcement that Woolworths PLC, which has more than 800 high street stores nationwide, has gone into administration with an estimated 25,000 jobs nationwide at risk.



November 2008
Thousands of people gathered at Oban's Mossfield Stadium for a fireworks display organised in part to discourage youngsters from building and setting alight numerous bonfires throughout the town. Organisers said that the event was a huge success and that plans were already in hand for next year when they aimed to make it even bigger.



March 2008
Balamory star comes back to Mull to open railway season.
One of the stars of the hit children's television show, Balamory, returned to the island of Mull last week to a hero's welcome. Juliet Cadzow, who played Edie McRae in the series filmed in Tobermory, was on the island to launch the 2008 season of the Isle of Mull steam railway and celebrate the 150th year of Torosay Castle and Gardens.



July 2008
Barge bursts into flames
Four emergency services attended a fire on board the marine engineering barge Multicat as an explosion and a large plume of smoke erupted from the vessel. The Multicat, operated by Tobermory-based company North West Marine, caught fire around 7pm when it was moored on Loch Creran at the Marine Resource Centre pier at Barcaldine, near Oban, but, as The Oban Times went to press, it was unclear how the fire began.



October 2008
Hero saves family following Bridge of Orchy accident
A heroic schoolteacher brought a man back from the dead and saved a family from drowning inside their car after it overturned in floodwater near Bridge of Orchy. Former lifeguard Tristen Kennett was driving behind the Turner family car last Saturday afternoon when it was blown off the road in horrendous weather conditions and overturned in four feet of water at the side of the A82 at Blackmount. Without a moment's hesitation the 26 year old plunged into the water, freed Joanne Turner and her two children from the car before freeing the unconscious Christopher Turner and administering cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)



Above
December 2008
Teenager pulls friends from burning car
An Oban teenager saved the lives of his two friends when their car rolled over and exploded into flames. Ian Harris, aged 19, had only seconds to get his friends clear of the car before it burst into a ball of fire on the A816 a mile south of Kilmore. He said: 'Time went in slow motion as I pulled my cussed pal out of the car. I could smell burning.' PC Greg Bryce told The Oban Times: 'It is amazing these three young men survived this incident almost unscathed. They are incredibly fortunate.'



Bottom left
November 2008
Islay families evacuated
Six families were evacuated from their homes on Friday following the collapse of a grain silo at Port Ellen Maltings, on the Isle of Islay. However, the clean-up job at Bay View, a housing development next to the maltings, is far from over and much of the hundreds of tonnes of grain still lies in the families' gardens. The silo at the maltings, which is owned by drinks company Diageo and supplies many of the island's famous distilleries, collapsed at 5.15am last Friday.

2009



January 2009
Oban hosts biggest street party in the west
 Nearly 7,000 people began 2009 dancing to the shrill of the Red Hot Chili Pipers at the town's Hogmanay party. The event, held in Tesco car park, was hailed a resounding success by its organisers and by the thousands in attendance. The Red Hot Chili Pipers headlined the bill and Skerryvore lived up to their growing reputation. Oban band The Works made a long-awaited comeback and the Homecoming Gaelic choir, consisting of singers from Oban and Taynuilt, and Oban High School Pipe Band, also performed. At the stroke of midnight, the crowd was treated to an impressive pyrotechnics display by the Oban Fireworks Team.



January 2009
Fire rips through Spean Bridge woollen mill
 Fire partially destroyed a popular Lochaber knitwear outlet and exhibition centre - despite the actions of a sharp-eyed police officer. Six pumps and 40 firefighters attended the blaze, but such was the ferocity of the flames they were unable to save large parts of the building. Speaking to *The Oban Times* at the fire scene, Inspector Dougie Allan of Fort William Police said two officers were on a routine foot patrol around 2.30am when one officer noticed the lights on the gable end of the building flickering. The officer turned back for a second check, then spotted smoke seeping from the roof. Inspector Allan said that Scottish Hydro Electric cut the power to the building to aid firefighters, this also resulted in the electricity supply being cut to 20 homes and the nearby Post Office. The A82 was closed during the height of the fire but reopened to a single lane around 5am and with traffic lights during the latter stages of the operation.

January 2009
Last load out of Lochaline mine after 68 years

As what is thought to be the last shipment from one of the last working mines in Scotland left Lochaline, hopes remain that the operation could be re-opened in the New Year. Members of Morvern Community Council are to meet with Lochaber MP Charles Kennedy and Highland Council deputy leader Michael Foxley in January to explore the possibility of a buyer coming forward. Community council chairman Iain Thornber said: 'We are pursuing the possibility of finding another buyer for the mine. It has been suggested that this is the last working mine in Scotland and there certainly can't be many mines left in Scotland. It makes it all the more poignant if that is the last load to leave. But we have to be up-beat and we hope that a buyer will come forward.' Mine operators Tarmac closed the mine on December 19 2008 with the loss of 11 jobs in the Morvern area, despite pleas from enterprise minister Jim Mather MSP and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to keep the mine open. Tarmac blame the closure on the slowing economy, rising costs and increased foreign competition.

January 2009
Uist golf course dispute

The South Uist legal dispute between Askernish crofters and community landowners Stòras Uibhist over the validity of an 18-hole golf course on the machair has opened at Scottish Land Court in Edinburgh. Seven of the eleven crofting members of the Askernish Crofting Committee contend that Askernish Golf Club, backed by Stòras Uibhist, laid out the course without the grazing committee's consent in contravention of Scottish law.

February 2009
Offshore windfarms for Tires, Islay and Kintyre

Massive offshore windfarms could give Argyll's west coast a huge jobs boost after power companies were given the go ahead to investigate three off-shore sites. ScottishPower Renewables will look at the largest area, off Tires's western shore, which could produce enough power for one million homes. Airtricity Holdings (UK) Ltd will explore the seabed off Islay's western shore and another smaller site off Kintyre. Communities are hopeful that research work at the sites as well as the potential construction and operation of windfarms in the future would boost the local economy and create quality engineering jobs. On Islay, the community energy company is looking forward to discussions and co-operation with Airtricity Chairman Philip Maxwell said

island businesses have much to contribute. He added: 'The important thing for the community is that the community does get a tangible benefit from having these big industrial generators close by.'

February 2009
'Car graveyard' near Taynuilt
 A mile-long stretch of road on the A85 between Taynuilt and Connel, which sees at least one road accident a week, has been labelled 'a graveyard for cars'.

Two corners on the road, one opposite the entrance to Muckairn House and one at Dalnamac, at the bottom of Fearnoch Hill, have become accident blackspots according to local landowners, who have noticed a steady rise in the number of accidents in the past 10 years.

March 2009
Climbing instructor cheats death in Glencoe drama

A FORT William climbing instructor cheated death in a terrifying 700-foot fall down a Glencoe mountain. Welshman Max Hunter was leading three novice climbers on Stob Coire nan Lochan when a snow cornice he was standing on gave way. He plummeted into the rock-strewn corrie but missed every boulder during his near-vertical fall, coming to rest in soft snow. Eight members of Glencoe Mountain Rescue team attended Mr Hunter, who was airlifted to the Belford Hospital in Fort William. Mr Hunter was found to have suffered only cuts and deep bruising. Mr Hunter's miracle escape happened on St David's Day - Wales' patron saint. 'I can't believe I'm alive,' he said.



March 2009
Woman escapes Kilmore car crash with minor injuries
 A YOUNG woman was declared 'lucky to be alive' after surviving a car crash that completely wrecked her vehicle and left it hanging over an embankment after hitting tree. The force of the impact threw the engine from the main body of the car. Yet incredibly, 27-year-old Susan Hall escaped with just minor injuries. Ms Hall was travelling south on the A816 at Kilmore last Thursday when she lost control of her Ford Focus. She had to be cut from the car by Oban-based firefighters - once the car was stabilised to prevent it falling down the embankment.

March 2009
Glencoe hospital closes its door for the last time

Glencoe Hospital closed its doors for the last time on Monday, bringing more than 60 years of service to an end. Three remaining patients had been transferred to nearby Abbeyfield Ballachulish Care Home by 1pm, attended by hospital staff, many close to tears. Glencoe staff will work at the care home for a month to help patients settle in. Following the transfer, an open afternoon, including tours of the hospital and refreshments, saw around 70 local people make their farewells. The building was then locked up and secured.

March 2009
More crashes than fires
 Firefighters in Argyll and Bute are now attending more road crashes than fires.

A top fireman has described a league table, which puts Argyll and Bute at the top for road crashes in the Strathclyde area, as 'distressing'. Commander Paul Connelly was addressing Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee last Wednesday where he also revealed that the county had one of the lowest incidences of fires. Commander Connelly said: 'We had nine road traffic collision (RTC) fatalities last year in Argyll and Bute. Argyll MP, Alan Reid, said having to bring a rescue boat and trained crew all the way from Renfrew was 'inadequate'.

March 2009
Glencoe ski centre looks for new buyer

Glencoe ski centre has been put on the market in the hope a new owner will provide money for ambitious development plans. It has enjoyed a fairly successful season, but Glencoe Mountain chairman and main shareholder David Campbell has decided it is time for a big investor to step in. The ski centre, rescued from bankruptcy last year, has plans to rival Nevis Range by installing a gondola system and double visitor numbers to 50,000.

Speaking on behalf of shareholders, Mr Campbell said: 'The business is operating smoothly and there are good people in all the key positions. What is needed now is a new investor or owners. With ambition and drive they can take the resort forward over the next decade. The building blocks are all in place.'

Glencoe Ski Centre employs 28 seasonal and 10 full time staff.

March 2009
Kintyre wind turbine jobs saved as Skycon move in
 The 92 jobs at Vestas wind turbine tower factory in Campbelltown have been saved - and many more could be on the way.

The *Oban Times* understands that Scottish first minister Alex Salmond will make the announcement when he visits the Machrihanish plant this afternoon (Thursday).

The factory, crucial to the Kintyre economy, has been under threat since last August. It now looks as if the jobs have been saved, and there is the promise of hundreds more as a result of Danish company Skycon agreeing to take over the plant. Sources believe the new deal will see Skycon given government financial assistance so it can expand and make much larger towers to speed up Scotland's move to more renewable energy production - leading up to 400 being employed at the site.

March 2009
Great Glen water to boost Fort William supply

Great Glen water from above Fort William will soon be piped all the way to South Lochaber as a major Scottish Water investment programme nears completion.

Water from gravel beds under

the River Lochy will be supplying Ballachulish and Glencoe by the end of 2009, replacing existing sources in hills above the villages.

Pipe-laying works, currently moving along the A82 at Onich, will be connected to the Fort William supply at the south end of the town later this year, Scottish Water bosses confirmed to *The Oban Times* as they unveiled a state-of-the-art biological filtration centre at Camisky.

The new £3 million plant, built by Morrison Empure and sited half-a-mile from the Lochy, houses four huge filtration units with successively fine membranes to screen out dangerous microbes.

March 2009
Calls for safety boat as fishermen drown in Lochawe

Calls grew this week for a rescue boat to be established closer to Loch Awe after four fishermen drowned in the early hours of last Saturday morning. The four men, from Glasgow, perished on returning by boat to their campsite having visited Lochawe Village.

It took 90 minutes for a rescue boat to be brought from Renfrew after the alarm was raised and reports say that rescuers could only look on in vain from the shore as they heard cries for help from the mist-covered loch.

Argyll MP, Alan Reid, said having to bring a rescue boat and trained crew all the way from Renfrew was 'inadequate'.



May 2009
Oban thinks big

A dramatic sculpture to rival Gateshead's famous Angel of the North could soon command Pulpit Hill if tourism group Oban Forward gets the go-ahead. The 50-foot high sculpture would be of a fisherman casting his net over Oban Bay.

It would be the second highest piece of public art in Britain beaten only by the 66-ft high Angel.

The sculpture - visible from land and sea from as far away as Mull and Ben Nevis - would cost around £1 million. 'If we get this right it would attract tourists from around the world,' said Oban Forward member Callum MacLeod of Piazza Restaurant. 'It is the best idea to come out of the town for a long time. It is incredibly bold and exciting.'



June 2009
Big pull for charity

Strongman Mark Haldenby got to grips with 12 tonnes of fire engine last week to raise money for a local youth club.

Mark's amazing stunt took place at a youth awareness day at Lochaber Leisure Centre to show Lochaber what the Kidz Club in Fort William's Plantation area has achieved.

Mark said the idea for the stunt started at last year's Lochaber Highland Games when he pulled a car. 'Then I said I was going to pull a car for charity,' said Mark, 'but when I was working at the fire station I opened my big mouth before I thought about it and said I could pull a fire engine and it just escalated from there.'



June 2009
Islay honours its emergency services with parade

Islay honoured its emergency services in a Homecoming Parade down Bowmore's main street, which was attended by more than 1,500 people.

The idea for the parade fol-

lowed the tragic loss of three islanders, including a boy of 10, in a road crash last November that was attended by many of the island's emergency services.

Organiser Jim McEwan, director of distillation at Bruichladdich Distillery, Islay, said: 'These men, often called out of their warm beds on treacherously stormy nights, are brave indeed.'

'Not only do they risk their lives but they have a fairly high chance of knowing that the emergency they are about to assist will probably involve someone they know. They do it, God knows not for the money, but out of duty.'

Lord George Robertson, ex-secretary general of NATO, led the procession with Islay's distillery managers and workers, followed by the island's youth groups.

The parade finished in Bowmore Square, where Skerryvore performed for the crowd.

The event tied in with the island's week-long annual Malt and Music Festival.



June 2009
Young Mull soldier laid to rest

A 'unique and courageous' Mull soldier was laid to rest at Suie Cemetery, Bunessan this week - in one of the biggest funerals the island has seen.

An estimated 500 people spilled out of the small church at Creich. Mourners, young and old, were housed in two marquees, the village hall and still many more stood on the roadside and listened.

The funeral procession of Private Robert 'Robbie' McLaren arrived from Afghanistan on the early ferry from Oban on Monday morning as a fine mist of rain fell. 'It was like the heavens were crying,' an elderly Mull lady observed quietly.

The Rev Donald Prentice and Rev Roddy Campbell talked of the boy who attended Bunessan School and Oban High School, and how he tried his hand at being an electrician before setting out for the army where he was an outstanding recruit - a young man with 'sparkle and humour'.

He was sent to Afghanistan in May. Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Cartwright said: 'Private Robert McLaren was cruelly taken from us after only four weeks of active service in The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.'

July 2009
Three lost as scallop boat sinks near Ardnamurchan

An investigation will try to uncover why a scallop dredger with four crew aboard capsized off the west coast this week with the loss of three lives.

A fourth member of the crew of the Cumbrian-based scallop dredger, *Aquila*, which overturned near Bo Fasadale, one and a half miles north of Ardnamurchan Point on Monday at around 5.30pm, was picked up by a nearby yacht and is recovering from his ordeal.

July 2009
Have-a-go hero has his honeymoon on Islay

Glasgow Airport hero John Smeaton and his American wife Christy MacPheeran spent their honeymoon last week on the Isle of Islay. The couple were married at Balgonie Castle in Fife on July 18.

Former baggage handler Mr Smeaton became a national hero in 2007 after taking on two bombers who had driven a burning jeep filled with explosives into Glasgow Airport.



July 2009
Laura is Miss Mòd

A NORTH Connel woman has become the first Miss Oban Mòd for more than 30 years after she was chosen from entrants at the Mòd's final fundraising ceilidh.

Laura MacCuish, aged 22, went along to the ceilidh at the Argyllshire Gathering Halls with a friend and only decided to enter the competition on the night. So it was with some shock that Laura accepted the Miss Oban Mòd 2009 sash, a prize of £250 and tickets to see The Vatersay Boys during Royal National Mod week (October 9-17).

July 2009
Oops - Did someone call for a helicopter?

A misunderstood call threw Scottish Ambulance Service staff into a tailspin - sending a helicopter off to an island at a cost of thousands of pounds.

Instead, an ordinary ambulance should have been directed just 250 yards away to Fladda Road in Oban.

The air ambulance was misdirected to an empty house on Fladda on Luing to the astonishment of islanders.

They then watched in further disbelief as another ambulance arrived, this time by ferry and road with another two members of paramedic staff. They too made their way to the empty house at number six Fladda.



August 2009
Heavy rain causes road chaos

Heavy rain turned north Argyll into an accident blackspot last week with six people injured in a total of 18 road traffic accidents.

Six road crashes in North Argyll at the weekend alone followed 12 crashes the preceding week. Two of the injured people required helicopter airlifts to Glasgow's Southern General Hospital.

This week police are urging drivers to take care on the roads after the spate of accidents which they say were caused by the heavy rain.

October 2009
Mòd faces 'increase' problem

The Mòd has a big problem - but it is good news for the future of the Gaelic language. There are so many children wanting to take part in the Mòd this year that the rules may have to be changed so that everyone can take part.

It is all down to an upturn in parents choosing Gaelic education for their youngsters. Mòd organisers are aware that the way the competitions are organised may soon have to be changed.



November 2009
Piper lifts top award

Inveraray piper Stuart Liddell has won the ultimate accolade in piping, taking the prestigious Glenfiddich Piping Champion title for the first time.



December 2009
Oban Saints presented with national sports' award

The passion for football in the Oban area has been rewarded with a prestigious national sporting award. Oban Saints Football Club won the coveted Foot Club of the Year award, sponsored by the Sunday Mail and SportsScotland, at the Scottish Sports Awards in Glasgow.

Representatives of Oban Saints - David Buchanan, Iain Jackson, Iain Alexander and Thomas Sharp attended the black tie awards ceremony in the Hilton Hotel, hosted by STV presenters Stephen Jardine and Ali Douglas and attended by 500 people.

The Saints representatives were in top class company and the likes of Sir Alex Ferguson, Catriona Matthew, John Higgins, Dario Franchitti and Andy Murray were all vying for the Sports Personality of the Year Award.

December 2009
Morvern to change postcode

MORVERN residents have been handed a welcome Christmas present after Royal Mail announced it is proposing to change the local area postcode.

Campaigners have been battling for years to end mixups in their postal deliveries and last month won the support of the Scottish Parliament public petitions committee for their fight.

The area shares its current PA34 postcode with Oban and has witnessed years of bizarre incidents involving misdirected mail and goods.

Letters, flowers and even washing machines intended for Morvern have been delivered to addresses in Oban by mistake.



September 2009
Three-in-a-row for Fort

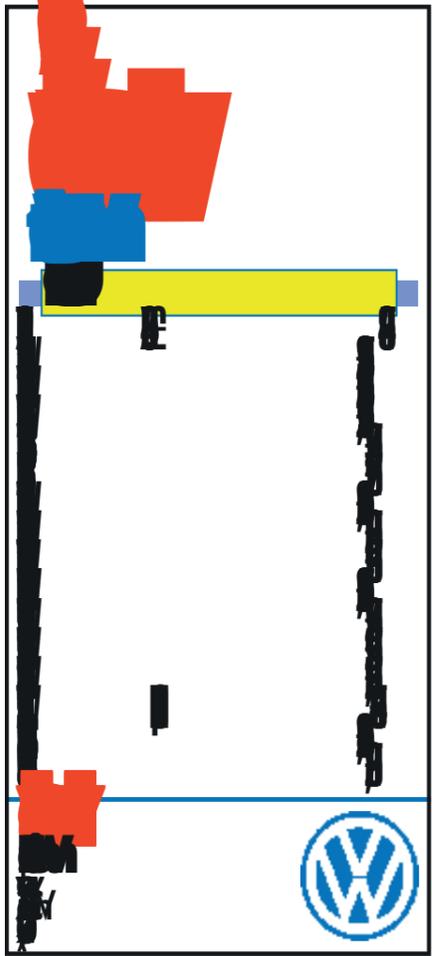
FORT William's three-in-a-row Camanachd Cup winners enjoyed a heroes' welcome back in Lochaber after their historic win over Kyles Athletic at Mossfield Park, Oban.

After a tremendous night of camaraderie with their erstwhile opponents the shinty kings returned to Fort William for two days of celebrations. After a Saturday night party at An Aird, the team toured town hostels on Sunday, ending up in 'their normal late night haunts', manager Drew McNeil told *The Oban Times*.

Fort William's 4-3 victory came after a stunning Kyles' fightback which saw the men from the South fire in three goals in seven minutes to cancel out Fort's 3-0 advantage, only for talisman James Clark to score with only three minutes left and win the cup.



December 2009
 Argyll Square, Oban is caught in a colourful Christmas spin by the camera skills of well known local photographer Dennis Hardley



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2010

January 2010

Reporter of the Year Award
Readers of The Oban Times will find a familiar name amongst the winners in this year's prestigious Highlands and Islands Media Awards.

Reporter Louise Lee won the coveted Jim Love Memorial Trophy, awarded to the most outstanding reporter during 2009.

Louise started as a junior reporter with the newspaper in August 2008 after studying journalism at Stirling University as a mature student and Gordon Fyfe, chairman of the judging panel, commented that he found her work 'excellent'.

Editorial director Stewart MacKenzie said: 'It is extraordinary that she has won this prized award at her first attempt.'

January 2010

Clunk-click - locked out your own nick!

RED-FACED island police were forced to let a drink-drive suspect go - after they found themselves locked out of their own police station.

Officers on the Mull arrested a driver in Tobermory - but when the driver was escorted to the island's only alcohol testing station at Craignure the officers discovered the police station locked and the keys could not be found.

With the nearest intoxometer in Oban, an hour away by ferry and no return ferry that day, embarrassed officers had no alternative other than to offer a warning.

March 2010

Coldest for 50 years

LOCHABER has been at the forefront of Scotland's coldest winter for 50 years, local weather records have confirmed.

During December, January and February, the average temperature near Spean Bridge for each month was never above freezing. And over the course of one night last month Fort William had 16 inches of snow.

March 2010

Skype firm closes

Efforts to find a buyer for a Skye medical equipment firm are continuing this week after the entire staff of 11 and the managing director were made redundant.

Gaeltec Ltd, on the Isle of Skye had built up an international clientele for miniature pressure sensors, which it manufactures and designs for various medical uses. The firm was forced to call in administrators Grant Thornton after failing to reach agreement with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs over £28,000 arrears in national insurance (NI) contributions.

The move provides a narrow window of opportunity to find a buyer for the dynamic company, but should the firm go into liquidation the loss of 11 high-grade jobs would represent a big blow to Skye's economy.



April 2010

Mull singer in New York

A Tobermory singer is taking a bite of the Big Apple during Scotland Week.

Kirsty Netta Mackinnon will lead celebrations in New York with movie star Alan Cumming OBE. Kirsty was chosen by the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama to perform at the twelfth annual Scotland Week festival in New York.

April 2010

Tiree's 'Tilley' turns £17,000 in first month

A community-owned island wind turbine has generated £17,000 for the local economy in just over a month.

The Tiree wind turbine, named 'Tilley', was formally handed over to its owner, the Tiree community, last Saturday, along with £17,000 in revenue raised from just over one month's production.



June 2010
Train crash at Loch Awe

'Bravery' and 'teamwork' were just two of the words used to describe the actions of passengers and staff on the 6.20pm Glasgow to Oban train, which derailed on Sunday night. Just before 9pm the train struck a boulder that had fallen on the line near the Falls of Cruachan, flipping the front carriage off the track. Only the second carriage, which acted as an anchor, and a clutch of trees prevented the first carriage rolling 50 feet down the embankment onto the A85 road or into Loch Awe, below. But while flames surged from a ruptured fuel tank heroic passengers and ScotRail staff helped each other to safety, although passengers in each carriage believed that those in the other carriage had been killed. Initial reports came through that the train was on fire with up to 50 injured and fatalities on board but every passenger walked from the wreckage, some with minor injuries. Hospitals as far away as Dundee had been put on standby, as the extent of injured passengers remained unclear.

July 2010

St Conans Kirk needs public support

Trustees of a popular and iconic Argyll tourist attraction are facing a seven-figure refurbishment bill and fear it will close without public support.

The 19th century St Conan's Kirk in Lochawe village is significant within the history of Lorn and Argyll but is also famed for its stunning architecture, and is a popular venue for weddings and is visited by thousands of tourists every year. However, structural frailties are emerging and the trustees have initially estimated refurbishment costs of more than £1million.

August 2010

Caol flooding fears

FEARS are growing that a vital flood prevention scheme for Lochside and Caol could be put back years because of government spending cuts.

Three years ago consultants identified large parts of the settlements as having a greater than one in 200 chance of being flooded in any given year, recommending a defensive wall be built along three miles of the River Lochy's right bank and the Loch Linnhe shoreline to protect homes nearby.



July 2009

Blast rocks Loch Linnhe

A 97,000-tonne cargo ship blasted for almost 24 hours after a conveyor belt on the MV Yeoman Bontrup at Glensanda Quarry, Morvern, on Loch Linnhe caught fire. Exploding oxy-acetylene cylinders were heard and felt 15 miles away as witnesses saw flames shoot 800ft in the air. Fire crews from across the West Highlands were called into action on Friday afternoon with a helicopter, barge and the superquarry's own ferry taking fire crews and equipment from as far as Inverness, Fort William, Oban and Strontian to the blazing vessel. It is understood that the fire may have started on the conveyor used to take stone off the Bahamas-registered ship but rapidly spread to the superstructure.

August 2010

Young pipers win world novice juvenile title

The shrill of world championship-winning pipes blared out across Oban Bay at midnight on Saturday to mark the triumphant return of Oban High School pipe band.

On their return from winning the novice juvenile grade at the World Pipe Band Championships at Glasgow Green, the band, led by Pipe Major Angus MacColl, stepped off the bus at Station Square to play their title-winning tunes. The music attracted Saturday night revellers and nearby residents, who joined friends and family in celebration.

Formed only four years ago with six pipers, the band is only the second to bring a world title back to Oban - Oban Pipe Band won the same category in 1974.

September 2010

First for a female piper

An 18-year-old law student has become the first woman to win a gold medal for solo piping at the Argyllshire Gathering.

Faye Henderson's victory in the international competition captured the imagination of everyone at the piping competitions in the Corran Halls, Oban, and at Oban Highland Games the following day.

The Aberdeen University student played one of the more challenging pieces to choose from, The Lament to Donald Duaghal MacKay, and nearly did not compete as she was only first reserve for the competition.

September 2010

Public back Oban pontoons proposal

Members of the public have given the strongest indication yet that they want a marina in the centre of Oban.

At a public meeting of Oban Bay Marine (OBM) on Monday those present voted unanimously in favour of a yacht facility in Oban. Early signs are that there are a number of funding streams and private sector backing to get the project underway in the shortest possible time. The meeting heard that Crown Estates have put their cards on the table and are willing to look at extra funding.



September 2010

A82 upgrade gets go ahead

An £11million plan to upgrade the A82 at Pulpit Rock has been tabled by the Transport Scotland.

The Scottish Government's Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson last week announced draft road orders for the work had been published to finally remove traffic signals and upgrade the section of road to re-introduce free flow of traffic.

Subject to the successful completion of statutory procedures the scheme could be open to traffic in 2012/13.

October 2010

Fire hits Isle of Mull slaughterhouse

Mull slaughterhouse will be closed until next year after fire ripped through the building on Tuesday afternoon.

Three engines from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue attended at the fire. Half of the building was destroyed, but the chairman of the community co-operative that owns the slaughterhouse, Tom Nelson, has already pledged that it will be rebuilt.



October 2010

Prince Charles supports Gaelic in Caithness

HRH THE Duke of Rothesay became the first honorary member of An Comunn Gàidhealach as he delivered a rousing speech in support of Gaelic and the Royal National Mòd.

The heir to the throne visited the Mòd by helicopter last Thursday to present the two gold medals in Thurso High School's games hall.

Before handing over the top solo singing prize to Connel's Joy Dunlop and Glasgow's Ian G MacLean, who is originally from Skye, The Duke of Rothesay said: 'The Mòd exists to promote the Gaelic language and culture and we owe a great deal of gratitude to An Comunn Gàidhealach for the enormous effort that goes into organising this most important annual festival.'

He also backed An Comunn's decision to base a Mòd in Caithness, saying: 'The argument has been made that the language has no direct relevance to this part of the world [Caithness].'

'I would suggest that Gaelic belongs to all the people of a nation, whether or not they are directly involved in it. So Gaelic will flourish, or perish, depending on what is happening in the whole of Scotland.'

During the speech The Duke of Rothesay tried a few phrases in Gaelic and received a cheer by ending his speech with 'Suas leis a' Ghaidhlig', a motto for the language meaning, 'Raise the standard for Gaelic'

2011

February 2011

University for Oban

Oban became a university town this week after a historic announcement confirming the University of the Highlands and Islands' (UHI) Millennium Institute has gained university status.

The move was confirmed by the Privy Council on Wednesday and brings the title to the UHI's 13 colleges, specialist institutions and research centres spread across the Highlands and Islands, including Argyll College, which has a campus in Oban, and the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Dunbeg.



February 2011

Merry Christmas - eventually!

A Christmas card posted first class on December 12, 2010 took eight weeks to travel to the recipients - who live a few hundred yards away.

Julie and Neil MacQueen on the Isle of Luing were delighted to receive a Christmas card from friends Peter, Fumiko and Musashi Miller - and a paw print from Rusky the dog.

However, the card was delivered about 60 days after it was posted within sight of their home.



March 2011

Message in a bottle

A message in a bottle was dredged from the sea 76 years to the day it was thrown into the Sound of Mull from a Caledonian MacBrayne vessel.

The bottle was dredged

from the sea by west coast scallop boat the *Dawn Maid*, which sails out of Oban. A note inside gave the date of March 10, 1935 and the bottle was pulled out from the depths on March 10, 2011.

Allan 'Winker' MacLean, from Isle of Mull Scallops, who operates the *Dawn Maid* said: 'It is a bit spooky that the message should be found on the same day - 76 years apart.'

April 2011

Cinema deal moves closer

Oban's Phoenix Cinema is one step closer to belonging to the community after the bank which owns the building agreed a purchase price with the steering group.

Naibiting negotiations with Santander ended in a deal suitable to all parties.

While final details are still to be hammered out and it will be a few months until the community group brokering the deal takes possession of the former Highland Theatre building, the bank deal was described as 'great news'.



May 2011

Moor and forest fires ravage West Highlands

LOCHABER fire and police chiefs say suspected arsonists are putting lives at risk after wild fires ravaged parts of the West Highlands over the past week.

Tinder box conditions and strong easterly winds fanned flames around Fort William, Shiel Bridge, Torridon, Lochailort and Glenfinnan, leaving huge swathes of heather moorland and trees in ashes.

Welcome rains expected will come too late for blackened hillsides but the hunt is just beginning for possible firerisers. Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service Lochaber area manager, Martin Haigh, told *The Oban Times* lives were being put at risk.

He said: 'There is no doubt there was malicious intent. We have had nine calls over the past week, five from Plantation and four involving fires round Cow Hill into Glen Nevis. People are either being very careless - or malicious.'



May 2011

Storms lash west coast

Gusts of up to 100mph battered the west coast and islands leaving thousands of homes and businesses without power and drivers stranded for hours. Age-old trees were uprooted and ancient walls failed to stand the test of time. Traffic was brought to a standstill in many areas including Oban, Dalmally, Lochgilphead, Campbeltown, Bridge of Orchy and beyond. One man, aged 36, lost his life when a tree crashed through the window of his van near Balloch. Police area commander Brian Auld said: 'We received 30 reports of fallen trees at various locations including Bridge of Orchy, Dalmally, Taynuilt, Dunbeg, Barcaldine, Benderloch and Fearnoch. All roads north were blocked at one point.'

November 2011

Fireworks fiasco is world-wide internet hit

It was meant to be a half hour extravaganza of light and sound, but instead Oban's community fireworks display became the town's most explosive marketing tool.

All £6,000 of fireworks shot into the air at once, thanks to a technical glitch.

However, since *The Oban Times*' video of the 50-second 'fiasco' went online, it has been picked up by news networks across the world, featuring on the likes of Good Morning America, ABC Eyewitness News, NBC's Today programme and Australia's NineNews.

July 2011

Bi-centenary celebrations

In sunshine, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal enjoyed a day in Oban helping to celebrate the town's 200th anniversary.

As part of the bicentenary celebrations, Princess Anne, made a series of presentations and cut the town's birthday cake. She was relaxed in her surroundings - laughing at jokes and enjoying a familiar face or two in the crowds that flocked to see her.

August 2011

Pipe band success

There were celebrations galore throughout Oban as the town's pipers struck gold at the World Pipe Band Championships in Glasgow. Winning grade 3A, the band has risen through the ranks to become renowned for its strength of playing.

Pipe Major Euan Dewar said: 'At the start of the season we were in a lower grade but the band has grown in strength with every competition it has taken part in.'

November 2011

Speedy Susie marries

Racing driver Susie Stoddart is used to covering her good looks with fire-proof racing overalls and full-face helmet. But the 28-year old looked stunning in a traditional wedding dress when she tied the knot with former racer Christian 'Toto' Wolff, aged 39.

Susie and Toto enjoy celebrity status as a couple in both Germany and in Toto's native Austria.

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Saturday 3rd December > Pub Quiz Championship The Oyster Inn & Gluepot, Connel £2.50 per player
Friday 9th December > Pool Competition The Oyster Inn & Gluepot, Connel Cash Prizes, 7pm
Saturday 10th December > Tambo Park and The Oyster Inn & Gluepot, Connel Open Mic Night
Saturday 31st December > Taste of Scotland The Oyster Inn & Gluepot, Connel Dinner Dance
Sunday 1st January > General Knowledge Quiz The Oyster Inn & Gluepot, Connel 1pm
Sunday 1st January > Glue Pot Race Night The Oyster Inn & Gluepot, Connel 8pm

From the city to the school room

TEN YEARS and five albums have passed since Colin MacIntyre released his first album, *Loss*, under the pseudonym of Mull Historical Society.

But his latest offering, *City Awakenings*, which will be given its first public airing on Mull next Tuesday, is expected to be a return to a more familiar sound, and surroundings.

Former school
Adding to the familiarity surrounding this much-anticipated performance, Colin will perform in his former primary school classroom in An Tobar.

He explained: 'I can't wait to go back home. I'll be bringing a full band with me and some of the local girls will be singing with me. "The room we're performing in is my old classroom but it's the first gig in there!"

Having composed *The Water and Island* albums under his own name, Colin will release *City Awakenings* under the banner of Mull Historical Society, such as the similarities to the sounds of his debut album, for which he has received a gold disc and national acclaim.

'A few people around me



Mull Historical Society's Colin MacIntyre will debut work from his latest album at a gig on Mull this week in familiar surroundings.

have heard bits from the new album and they reckon it sounds like Mull Historical Society for 2012.

'As I was recording the new album it just sounded like it should be a Mull Historical Society record. "Loss" was released 10 years ago but certain things have made me reconnect with that album and it seems like the right time to go back to that.

'Besides, there is no real Mull Historical Society any more; they changed their name to Mull Historical and Archaeological Society.'

Colin's first single from *Loss*, 'Watching Xanadu'

was included on the noughties shortlist in the recent STV series, Scotland's Greatest Album, an accolade Colin admits he was "flattered" by.

In contrast to his rural upbringing Colin's latest offering is inspired by the bright lights of the city and the first single, *The Lights*, recalls memories of urban surroundings, from a childhood car journey to the mainland with his parents to living in Glasgow for the first time as a student.

Mary's Meals
It has been a busy year for the Muileach, who has also taken on a role as London co-ordinator for the Dalnally-based charity Mary's Meals.

The charity provides a school meal to more than 500,000 children across the developing world in a bid to entice more of them to attend school.

Colin is spreading the word in the capital to attract more support, has organised a fundraising concert and recently visited Malawi with Capercaille's Donald Shaw, a former schoolmate of charity founder Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow.

City Awakenings will be released on January 23.



Dance groups excel in sell-out show

Dancers from the Atlantis Dance Group were putting in the hours rehearsing ahead of their big show in Oban at the weekend. On Saturday, the Corran Halls welcomed ballet, street and Highland dancers for the Atlantis Dance Show, which was a sell-out event. The group put on a spectacular exhibition of contemporary and classical dance. 15, 147danc01

Traditional country dance finds its footing in Lorn

THE MAIN hall at Atlantis Leisure was filled last Thursday with 250 feet-

footed primary school pupils at the annual Lorn schools Scottish country dance to celebrate St Andrew's Day.

The P5 - 7 pupils, along with their teachers and helpers represented Ardchattan, Barcaldine, Dalmally, Dunbeg, Easdale, Lismore, Lochneil, Luig, Park, St Columba's, Strath of Appin and Taynuilt schools.

Music for the dancing was by Oban accordionist

Michael Garvin with Sue Porter, teacher with The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) Lorn (Argyll) Branch, giving the young dancers a reminder of their dance instructions.

The event was co-ordinated by Dale Kupris, Active Schools Co-ordinator for Primary Schools in the Lorn Area and Mrs Porter and was the accumulation of sessions

given in the schools.

A new initiative this year was the introduction of 12 senior pupils from Oban High School to assist in the dancing as part of a scheme to enhance their leadership skills.

Also present were Royal Scottish Country Dance Society chairwoman Ruth Beatie, chairman-elect John Wilkinson and executive officer Elizabeth Foster.



Pupils from primary schools throughout Lorn were put through their paces at the Scottish country dance at Atlantis Leisure. 16, 148danc01

Rotary Club of Oban Charter Dinner



The Rotary Club of Oban held its 62nd Charter Dinner recently at the Oban Bay Hotel, attended by 59 people. Guest speaker Alex Lochrie described himself as an artist and author, but it was his experiences as a member of the Foreign Legion, where he served in several of the world's trouble spots, including the first Gulf War, that kept his audience spellbound. Pictured is the top table - Back Row Paul Brian (President, Rotary Club of Lochaber), Andy Less (Assistant Governor, District 1230), Ronnie Neil, Alex Lochrie (Guest Speaker), Sandy Taylor (President, Rotary Club of Mid Argyll). Front Row Mrs Liz Lees, Mrs Helen Brian, Ken Oxland, Mrs Lynda Oxland, Mrs Shona Neil (President, Oban Inner Wheel).

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Prime rates slip back on the week

UNITED Auctions sold 7,045 prime sheep including 5540 lambs averaging 196.2p/kg (-0.3p on wk) and 1504 ewes and rams at Stirling last Thursday. Texel lambs from Laigh Alticane sold to £112 and to 229p per kilo Craigend, while Suffolks from South Brownhill sold to £98 and 208p per kilo from Machriemore. Binzian and South Flanders sold Charollais lambs to £94.50 and 210p per kilo Mains of Struie, while Luckenburn and Oatfield had Beltex to £92.50. Markethill sold Mules to £87 while Dunruhan had Blackfaces to £86. Ewes sold to £139 for Texels from Carriston, while Kilkeddan sold Bluefaced Leicester to £108.50. Rams from Carriston sold to £142.50 with Suffolks from Balminnoch to £132.50.

Suffolk lambs sell to £130 at Stornoway

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 46 store cattle, two breeding cattle and 10 Over 30 Month cattle, plus 515 store sheep at Stornoway last week when a mixed show of cattle on offer all sold very well and sheep of all classes met a very strong demand. Bulls averaged 161.3p and sold to 225.2p per kg for 500kg Charollais cross from 2A Back, Isle of Lewis and £840 for 530kg Aberdeen Angus cross from 100 Cross Skigersta Road, Point, Isle of Lewis. Heifers averaged 150.9p and sold to 225.0p per kg for a 160kg Limousin crosses from 1 Obbe Road, Leverburgh, and £800 for a 657kg Charollais from 100 Cross Skigersta Road. In-calf cows sold to £790 for a Charollais cross from 42 South Bragar, Barvas. OTM cows sold to 108p per kg for a 463kg Aberdeen Angus cross cow from Lionel, Ness, and £540 for a 649kg Aberdeen Angus cross from 22 Ballantrushal, Isle of Lewis. Lambs sold to £130 for Suffolks from Ropework Park, Stornoway. Ewes sold to £57 for Blackfaces from 3 Ardhasaig, Isle of Harris. Gimmers sold to £40 for Blackfaces from West View, Tarbert. Rams sold to £140 for a Cheviot from Ropework Park. Feeding sheep sold to £59 for Blackfaces from 37 Arnol, Isle of Lewis.

Jura passenger ferry service may have a future as Minister for Transport confirms fund meeting

VITAL discussions over the future of the Jura Passenger Ferry will take place next year, the Scottish Government has confirmed. **Promise** The announcement comes after Argyll and Bute Council urged the government to fulfil its promise to support the struggling ferry service, which has been described as a 'lifeline' to islanders. The service, which runs between Jura and Tayvallich throughout the summer is the only direct link between the island and the mainland.

Argyll and Bute Council gave the Jura Passenger Ferry Service a one-off payment of £24,000 in June to safeguard the passenger only service this summer. There is currently no confirmed funding to operate the ferry in summer 2012. But, referring to a meeting held earlier this year, the council said MSPs had suggested the government would fund the service in 2012. Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council's spokesman for island affairs, said: 'At that meeting, there was a

very strong message given from the MSPs that if the council funded the operation of the Jura Passenger Ferry in 2011, the Scottish Government would help with the funding in future years. 'This is a vital service, which is a lifeline to the Jura community. 'The council kept its side of the bargain and identified money to ensure that the ferry could continue to operate in summer 2011 - despite the fact that all those involved acknowledge that funding this service is not a

matter for the council.' Refusing to confirm funding for the service, Keith Brown, Minister for Housing and Transport, said: 'I am sympathetic to strengthening Jura's ferry service and I plan to discuss this with Argyll and Bute Council. 'Proposals regarding this service and others will be clear in the draft Ferries Plan which is due for publication before Christmas.' Welcoming the news, Rob Darroch of Jura Development Trust said he was hopeful the minister would

find the money needed to sustain the service for the next three years - until the ferries review is implemented. 'It is the only strategic route that we have between Jura and the mainland and it has proved itself for the amount of subsidy it requires. 'We have found that for every £1 of subsidy the Jura economy benefits by £3,' Mr Darroch said. 'What we are talking about here is £35,000; it's a very small subsidy for a ferry service.'



Andy MacDowall with Ruth MacDonald and Anne Ferguson, of Dunmar Court, receiving a cheque from Anne MacDowall, a volunteer at MacQueen's Community Charity Shop 15, 148dunmar01

Green-fingered gardener helps Oban sheltered housing residents

THE COURTYARD of Oban's Dunmar Court has been brightened up thanks to a big-hearted volunteer gardener. Andy MacDowall has planted 93 metres of raised flowerbeds with spring bulbs, dwarf azaleas and a climbing rose. Anne Ferguson, community support assistant at Dunmar Court, said residents are delighted to have the bed planted with low maintenance, beautiful shrubs and plants. 'It's in a nice courtyard where they can sit and enjoy the sun and we have enough money left over to buy some garden furniture,' she said.

The work was made possible by grants from MacQueen's Charitable Trust and Argyll Community Housing Association. 'Thanks very much for their kindness and generosity,' Anne added. 'Without them, it just wouldn't have been possible.'

Andy MacDowall said he had a number of helpers, including Kinlochlaich and Cakebread Garden Centres, which provided discount plants, and David Black, Oban's hospital gardener. He added: 'It is nice to see all the residents having a place where they can go out and sit and enjoy themselves.'

A85 closed for nine hours as weather affects road surface

ENGINEERS are still investigating an incident that closed the A85 between Oban and Dunbeg for nine hours overnight on Saturday. Motorists contacted Oban police after they noticed the surface of the road was blistering following heavy rainfall. The road was shut to all traffic around 11.30pm for an inspection and remained closed until 8am on Sunday morning. A spokesman for Scotland TransServ, which maintains the road and carried out recent re-surfacing on the stretch of road, said: 'While the root cause of the incident is still under investigation the weather appears to have been a significant factor.'

Two arrests after texts

A 42-YEAR-old man was arrested by Oban police for sending nuisance text messages to a woman. He appeared at Oban Sheriff Court last Wednesday. Meanwhile, in an unrelated case, a 35-year-old man was arrested and charged on November 21, for sending allegedly threatening text messages to a woman. He appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff Court last Tuesday, November 22.

Back bullock is Isle of Lewis Christmas sale champion

DINGWALL and Highland Marts sold prime cattle and prime sheep at its Stornoway Christmas Show and Sale kindly sponsored by the Lewis and Harris Cattle Group and judged by R Smith Butcher of Francis Street, Stornoway. Overall champion, reserve champion, first prize bullock, second prize bullock, first prize heifer and third prize heifer were all won

by D M MacLeod Esq, 1 Gress, Back, Isle of Lewis, with the second prize heifer coming from A M Ferguson Esq, 3 North Street, Sandwick, Stornoway. Prime bullocks averaged 244.2p and sold to 260p per kg and £1,469.00 for a 565kg Charollais cross from D M MacLeod, 1 Gress, Back. Prime heifers averaged 197.4p and sold to 250p per

kg and £1,475.00 for a 590kg Charollais cross also from D M MacLeod, 1 Gress. The champion pen of lambs, first prize pen of Blackface lambs, second prize pen of Blackface lambs, second prize pen of Continental cross lambs and third prize pen of Continental cross lambs all came from Mrs A MacKay, 1 Eordale, Ness, Isle of Lewis. Reserve champion pen of lambs and first prize pen of Continental cross lambs came from A MacIver Esq, 15 Vatisker, Isle of Lewis while the third prize pen of Blackface lambs was from D J Murray Esq, 7B Shader Point, Isle of Lewis. Prime bullocks averaged 244.2p and sold to 260p per kg and £1,469.00. Prime heifers averaged 197.4p and sold to 250p per

kg and £1,475.00. Lambs averaged 178.8p and sold to 227.3p per kg and £100 for 44kg Blackfaces from 1 Eordale, Ness, Isle of Lewis. Texel crosses from 15 Vatisker, Isle of Lewis sold to £85, 204.8p; Cross lambs from 8 Swainbost, Ness to £83, 182.4p and Blackfaces from 30A Aiginish, Isle of Lewis to £74, and to 181.6p per kilo 7B Shader, Point.

Isle of Lewis, £390, 108.6p; 401-450kg - 8 Swainbost, Ness, £670, 153.0p. OTM cows: Lionel, (AAX), £500; 6 Garyard, Isle of Lewis, (ShoX), £390. Sheep Store lambs: Cheviot: 9 East Street, Stornoway, £51; Blackface: 20 Habost, Ness, £50; Cross: 21 Coll, Back, £45; Suffolk X: 9 East Street, Stornoway, £45; Texel X: 15 Vatisker, Back, £45. Ewes: Cheviot: Stoneyfield Cottage, Stornoway, £51; Blackface: West View, £48; Cross: 308 Valtos, Uig, Isle of Lewis, £47. Rams: Suffolk: Ropework Park, £120; Blackface: The Cottage, Garrynahine, £120; Cheviot: 47 Back, Isle of Lewis, £110; Texel: Ropework Park, £100. Feeding sheep: Blackface: 37 Arnol, £57.

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PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

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

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02160/PP	Erection of wind turbine (46.9 metres high) and formation of temporary access track.	Land South of Ardteale Cottage Dalmailly Argyll and Bute PA33 1AT	Sub Post Office Dalmailly
11/02170/PP	Construction of 2.5m wide tarmacadam foot/cycle path including installation of access control bollard and dropped kerbs and erection of stock-proof fencing, safety handrail and cycle shelter.	Dalmailly Community Centre Dalmailly Argyll and Bute PA33 1AX	Sub Post Office Dalmailly
11/02273/PP	Siting of chalet for ancillary accommodation (Retrospective).	Glenforsa Hotel Glenforsa Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA72 6JW	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
11/02278/PP	Change of use of footway to removable patio area	Cuan Mor 60 George Street Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 5SD	Oban Area Office

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

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02209/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse with attached muniments room, installation of septic tank and formation of new vehicular access	Land South West of Barcalidine Castle Benderloch Oban Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Ledaig
11/02261/PP	Erection of two storey extension.	Bishops House Isle of Iona Argyll and Bute PA76 6SJ	Sub Post Office Isle of Iona

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

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

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02201/PP	Change of use from Class 4 Business to Class 1 Shop and Class 6 Storage or Distribution	2 Colonsay Business Units Dunoran Colonsay Isle of Colonsay Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Isle of Colonsay
11/02282/PP	Erection of extension to existing sunroom.	Claverhouse Glenegedale Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7AS	Sub Post Office Port Ellen

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS, 1985

NOTICE is hereby given that the Audited Financial Statements of Argyll and Bute Council for the year to 31st March 2011 together with the Audit Certificate, is available for public inspection during ordinary business hours at the undernoted main offices and libraries of the Council. The annual accounts can also be viewed on the Argyll & Bute Council website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Copies of the Financial Statements will be available to any interested persons on application to the Head of Strategic Finance, Argyll & Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Sally Loudon, Chief Executive

Offices of the Council: Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead; Burnet Building, Campbeltown; Dalriada House, Lochgilphead; Hill Street, Dunoon; Albany Street, Oban; Eaglesham House, Rothesay; Scotcouth House, 45 West Princes Street, Helensburgh; Jamieson Street, Bowmore; Breadalbane Street, Tobermory; Crossapol, Tiree (restricted hours).

Libraries of the Council: Lochgilphead Library, Marise Brae, Argyll Street, Dunoon; Aqualibrium, Campbeltown; Albany Street, Oban; Moat Centre, Rothesay; Barmore Road, Tarbert; West King Street, Helensburgh; Main Street, Carradise; Primary School, Rosneath; Highland Avenue, Sandbank.

N.B. Please check with individual libraries for opening hours

COUNCILLOR'S SURGERIES

Councillor Mary Jean Devon (EW 4 Oban South and the Isles) Constituents can contact Councillor Devon on Tel: 01688 302083 or on her mobile 07912 949 073. She can also be contacted by email on mary-jean.devon@argyll-bute.gov.uk Councillor Gordon Chalmers (E.W. 4 Oban North and the Isles) Constituents can contact Councillor Chalmers on Tel 01688 302689 or email - gordon.chalmers@argyll-bute.gov.uk or gordon.chalmers@btinternet.com

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, FULTON HOUSE, GORDON SQUARE, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6XY; online at www.highland.gov.uk and, where given, the alternative location(s). Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description	Alternative locations where application may be inspected
11/03802/FUL	Land 80m South West of Heatherbank Strontian Acharacle	Renewal of planning consent (08/00254/OUTLO)	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04129/PIP	Land 90m NE of Adlarloch (ShoX), E390.	Erection of house (amended access) to 11/00567/PIP	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04185/FUL	Tigh Beag Arisaig	Demolition of wooden house and erection of new house	Mallaig Service Point (14 days)
11/04212/FUL	The Falconry Morar Mallaig	Extensions to house	Mallaig Service Point (14 days)
11/04227/FUL	Rhu-Mor 2 Duror Appin	Alterations & extension to house	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
11/04259/FUL	Land 15m North of Comusanallan Cottages Arisaig	Erection of house	Mallaig Service Point (14 days)
11/04264/PIP	9 Seaview Grazings Strontian Acharacle	Erection of house - renewal of 08/00458/OUTLO	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
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Email: p4i@highlandlife.net
www.highlandlife.net/p4i

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I believe Stuart's father is a farmer in The Oban Times coverage. Stuart worked for the Environment Agency in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

I need Stuart's help with information he has to help with my planning application to Gloucester County Council.

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Michael Howells, Colethrop Court Farm, Haresfield, Gloucester, GL10 3EP.
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Heifers
up to 200kg - 1 Obbe Road, £360, 7 Tobson, Bernera, 180.9p; 201-250kg - 12 Lionel, £520, 214.0p; 251-300kg - 7 Ballantrushal, Isle of Lewis, £500, 12 Lionel, 182.5p; 301-350kg - 11 Garrynahine, Uig, Isle of Lewis, £460, 134.1p; 351-400kg - 3 Mangersta, Uig,

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Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008

Planning Application Pre-Application Consultation

BSW Timber is conducting pre-application consultation on the following development proposal:

K2 Sawmill at Annat Point, Corpach, Fort William PH33 7AP

Further information can be obtained from:- Mr Andy Rogers, BSW Timber, Corpach, Fort William PH33 7NH Tel: 01397 772 455 (Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm)

A public consultation will be held at:- The Moorings Hotel Wednesday 7th December 2011, 4pm - 8pm & Treslaig Hall Monday 12th December 2011, 4pm - 8pm

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposal should do so by writing to:- Mr Scott Donald Kearney Donald Partnership, Hillside House, Belford Road Fort William, PH33 6BT by 4th January 2012

PLEASE NOTE - No application has been submitted to the Highland Council in relation to this proposal. Any comments made to the prospective applicant at this time are not representations to the Council and would not be considered as part of any future application. If the prospective applicant subsequently submits a formal application for planning permission there will be an opportunity to make representations on that application to the Council.

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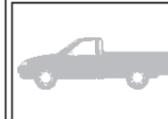
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For further information and to apply for this position online, go to: www.smi.ac.uk Alternatively, please write to: Human Resources, Academic Registry Officer (Job Ref. D17/11.AM), The Scottish Association for Marine Science, Scottish Marine Institute, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1QA or e-mail recruitment@sams.ac.uk

Closing date: 12pm Thursday 15th December 2011
Interviews will be held on Tuesday 20th December 2011

SAMS is a registered Scottish charity (SC 009206), has an equal opportunities policy and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

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If you are interested in either of the above posts please contact Human Resources on 01631 559000 or email recruitment@sams.ac.uk

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Job Title: Argyll Group Duty Manager (REF: OBANI6711)

Contract: Permanent
Accommodation: Live-in accommodation can be considered (note: there will be a small weekly fee).
Location: Oban Youth Hostel, Corran Esplanade, Oban, PA34
Hours per week: 40 hours a week with varying shifts.

We are currently seeking to appoint a Group Duty Manager to provide a high standard of customer care and management for the Argyll Hostels Group.

The Group Duty Manager will support the Group Manager in the day to day running of Oban Hostel and the Argyll Group, including deputising for the Group Manager during their absence, overseeing the varied operational requirements of the Hostel whilst ensuring the highest standards of customer service, hygiene and safety standards. Suitable candidates will be committed to providing outstanding customer service, strong leadership and supervisory skills, excellent communication skills and commercial awareness. Experience in a similar role within hospitality, tourism or service industry, as well as good understanding of Health and Safety at work, catering experience and IT literacy will be essential. Travel and overnight stays will be expected to the hostels within the Group. Full information of this position, job description and application form are available on our website. Please visit www.hostellingscotland.com and forward your application form, noting your current salary/salary expectation, with covering letter to Argyll Group Manager, Corran Esplanade, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5AF or argyllgroupmanager@syha.org.uk.
Closing date is 12/Dec/11.
Interviews held early January 2012.

SYHA has a commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity. Scottish Youth Hostels Association (also known as SYHA Hostelling Scotland) is a registered Scottish charity, No. SC013138 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland, No. SC310841, Registered Office 7 Glebe Crescent, Stirling FK8 2JA.

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All you have to do

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Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

I enclose £1 for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

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DEATHS

CANN - Peacefully at the Gilbert Bain Hospital, Shetland, in his 67th year, David (Canno), first son of Agnes Robertson (38 Glencruitten Drive). A cremation service will take place at Clydebank Crematorium on Thursday December 1, 2011 at 2pm where all friends are welcome. Will be sorely missed.

CLAYTON-MITCHELL - Jessica (Mackenzie of Roshven and Ardnish) died peacefully surrounded by her family on Monday, November 21, 2011 after a short illness. Beloved wife of Jason, loving mother of Simon, Penny and Hilary. Dearest grandmother of Sophie, Bella, Sandy, Susie and Emily. The Funeral Service will be held on Monday, December 5, at 11 a.m. at St Modoc's Church, George Street, Doune FK16 6BZ.

MACKENZIE - Peacefully at Inverclyde Royal Hospital on Thursday November 24, 2011, Kate (Catherine), beloved daughter of the late Alex and Mary, dearly loved sister of Morag, sister-in-law of Callum, loving cousin of Lorraine and beloved aunt of Alasdair, Connor and Coll. Will be sadly missed by all family and friends. The Funeral Service will be held in The High Kirk, Dumoon, on Friday, December 2, at 1.15pm and thereafter to Greenock Crematorium at 3.00pm, to which all are respectfully invited. Family flowers only please but donations, if desired, to Bowel Cancer UK.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MACKECHNIE - Betty, David, Agnes, Marina and families would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for their love and support given to us on the sudden death of Iain (Jura). Thanks for all the kind wishes, telephone calls, flowers and many cards. Thanks to Rev Dugald Cameron for a lovely service and everyone who attended the church and graveside. To Ian MacInnes Jr and Ian Snr. of D&A Munn for caring and efficient handling of the funeral arrangements, the Royal Hotel for catering and our thanks to Angus McColl Jr. (Piper) for playing so well for Jura. A retiral collection in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support raised £375.59.

SIM - The family of the late Ian Pickard Sim, would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy following their recent sad loss. Special thanks to Rev Jerome O'Brien for his most comforting service and to the elders who attended from Polmont Old Parish Church, thank you to Thomas Sneddon funeral directors for courteous and professional arrangements, the Park Hotel for catering and to all who paid their last respects at Falkirk Crematorium. The retiral collection raised £236.90 in aid of the Children's Hospice Association, Scotland. With grateful thanks.

TATTERSALL - Joe and Maureen Barr would like to thank Father MacNeil for his personal and heartfelt service for John, along with Hamish Hoey and Son for their professionalism

and all the staff at Eader Glinn who made his last months so enjoyable, also a special thanks to Aulay and Mary Dunn, for their generous hospitality on the day, as well as their kindness throughout John's life. Finally, thank you to all friends and family who offered their support.

IN MEMORIAM

DEVINE - In loving memory of William Anthony Devine, died November 29, 2005, a loving father, father-in-law and grandfather. Kevin, Margaret and girls **FORTEITH** - Loving memories of Iain, who died on December 3, 2002. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day. - With love, Janice and the children **GILLIES** - In loving memory of Graeme, who died on December 3, 2006. Too young to die Too precious to lose It wasn't our wish We could not choose. - With love Dad, Mam, Scott and Sarah, Kevin and Sarah and Ross. **KENNEDY** - In loving memory of a much loved sister, auntie, and friend to many Anne Kennedy who left us on December 2, 2010. Your life was a blessing Your memory a treasure Your love beyond words And missed beyond measure - Michael, Angela, Michael and Meghan **KERR** - Cherished memories of my dear husband, John, who died December 1, 2004. Remembered with love. - Mary, Fort William. **MACCOLL** - Cherished memories of John, Big Jock, much loved and loving husband, dad, dad-in-law and granddad who died November 30, 2010. It doesn't take a special day To call you to our minds A day without a thought of you Is very hard to find Remembered fondly and sorely missed each day. - Kathie, Elspeth, Iain and families. **MACDONALD** - In loving memory of my beloved mother Marybell, who passed away December 1, 2008. Sadly missed Always remembered In my thoughts at all times With such fond memories that will last forever. - Your loving son, Angus. **MACDONALD** - In loving memory of our mum and granny, Meg (Millar) Macdonald, who passed away December 4, 2010 and our dad, Donald Alick (Moy) Macdonald, who passed away October 20, 2003. Always in our thoughts. - Alasdair, John, Mairi, Sandra and families. **MACDOUGALL** - Colin Rowan. A dear husband, dad and papa To hear your voice, to see your smile To sit and talk with you awhile To be together in the same old way Would be our dearest wish today To us you were someone special Someone set apart Your memory will live forever Engraved within our hearts Love and miss you always - Lesley, David, Donny, Holly, Kimberley and Cheyenne xxx.

MACKAY - In loving memory of Alasdair, husband and stepfather, who died December 5, 2009. Always in our thoughts. - Janet, Cameron and Margaret. **MACQUEEN** - In loving memory of our dear dad Colin, who was lost at sea November 30, 1990. Always loved Always remembered. - Yvonne, Richard and Michael **McINNES** - Remembering our friend Ima taken from us on November 28, 2010. Sadly missed. - Inserted by Wilma and boys. **MURRAY** - In loving memory of George, who died November 30, 2001, loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. Gone but not forgotten Always in our thoughts. - Love Kathy and all the family. **O'BRIEN** - In loving memory of Valerie, a special mum and granny. A year has passed, loved and remembered every day. Sorely missed. - Love Laurence, Olivia and Amelie. **O'BRIEN** - Precious memories of Valerie, who passed away on December 4, 2010. A loving wife, mother and granny You always had a smile to share Time to give and time to care A loving nature kind and true Is the way we will remember you Sorely missed Billy and Louise **TIMMS** - Treasured memories of our dearly loved mum and nana Shena, who passed away November 30, 1971 And also remembering all other loved ones. The flowers we place upon your grave May wither and decay But our love for you who sleeps beneath Will never fade away Love Catherine, Lachie and family.

MACDOUGALL - Colin Sadly missed along life's way Quietly remembered everyday No longer in our life to share But in our hearts you're always there. Always in my thoughts son Love and miss you. - Maw xx. **MACDOUGALL** - Colin Your presence I miss dear brother Your memory I will treasure forever Loving you always Forgetting you never Miss and love you - From Bob xx. **MAGILLIVRAY** - In loving memory of Duncan who died December 5, 2009. Fond memories of a very special person. Always in our hearts. - All the family x

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Minister's pride as ten teenagers join church

AN ARGYLL minister has spoken of one of the 'proudest moments' in his career after 10 teenagers from his parish joined the church at the same time. The youngsters from the village of Appin marked their membership with a special service on Sunday at Appin Parish Church, which they conducted. Church minister, Dr Rev Roderick Campbell, gave the sermon. Rev Campbell, who has been a minister for 36 years, told *The Oban Times*: 'They all made a statement of faith, which was quite powerful. It was one of the proudest moments in my career. It used to be common for teenagers to join the church but since the early 1980s it has fallen out of vogue and I have not had as big a group as this joining since the 1970s.' The youngsters have all attended church from a young age and have bonded over recent tragedies faced by the community. Rev Campbell said: 'They are a good group that care about each other and their community. Appin has gone through a lot of pain and sadness with young deaths and unexpected deaths and this group has supported each other through that. The future of Appin is bright if we can keep young people here and find them work that will fulfil them. They are the future of the church, which will become what they conceive it to be.' One of the new church members, 16-year-old Alan Carmichael, said: 'We have all been going to church since we were very young and have taken part in family services. The service on Sunday just made things official.'



Rev Roderick Campbell with Appin's newest - and youngest - church members.

Historic Remembrance Day Service sees Tobermory's war memorial re-dedicated

A POIGNANT and historic Remembrance Service in Tobermory saw a re-dedication of the village's war memorial. The war memorial was originally dedicated in 1921 but needed much refurbishment. The ceremonial task was carried out by Miss Rachel Teggart, who had family names on the memorial and is the grand-daughter of the woman who originally helped to dedicate the war memorial 90 years previously. Also in attendance were members of 569 Squadron Frontiersman Yeomanry Volunteers, ex-servicemen and women, aided by the Royal British Legion Scotland standard bearers. Around 50 members of the public attended, and it was re-dedicated by Rev Linda Pollock. Colonel Ken Walker gave the address, the Ode of Remembrance was conducted by Major Peter Campbell and 'Do not stand at my grave and weep' was delivered by Captain Jim McWilliam. Veteran Danny Lamont, aged 90, of Tobermory laid the wreath, assisted by Donna Hutchinson and James Molloy. The wreath on behalf of the Merchant Navy was laid by John Weir. Brigade Pipe Sergeant Ruairidh Morrison played the lament and retreat, praise was led by Janet Campbell and prayers by Donald Kiroso. The Western Isles Hotel catered for the guests afterwards.



Ex servicemen and women and representatives of the Squadron Frontiersman Yeomanry Volunteers and Royal British Legion Scotland were at the Tobermory War Memorial re-dedication.

Lochaber Christmas Fair raises £1,010

A LOCHABER congregation has raised a four-figure sum for church funds. Proceeds from the St Paul's Episcopal Church Christmas Fair in Kinlochleven totalled £1,010.



Tiree artist Patricia Sharp was hard at work in her island gallery prior to sending her paintings of sea and land to the Macmillan annual cancer art charity show in Glasgow.



Iain Hurst, Pipe Major of Oban Pipe Band, led the parade and performed the piper's lament, Flowers of the Forest. 16, 146rem16



Oban Pipe Band, assisted by the High School Pipe Band, led the Remembrance Day Parade to the town's war memorial. 16, 146rem15

GRADUATIONS

Christine Kennedy Adams RGN, Dip(High) Nursing (Adult) graduated with a Bachelor of Science Nursing Studies, from the University of the West of Scotland. Christine is employed by NHS Highland at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban.

Mammie Cameron, Inion Farm, By Oban, graduated from Napier University, Edinburgh, qualified with a Bachelor of Nursing with Distinction in Adult Nursing. Former pupil of Ardoch Primary and Oban High School. Daughter of Donald and Kate.

Rosie Stevenson recently received an NC certificate in Sound Production at Argyll College UHI. Rosie runs Connel Village Store and Post Office and would like to thank all her staff for their support and hard work that allowed her to attend college for 5 months earlier this year.

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Paula Brook
Graduated from Langside College with an HNC in Social Care.

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MA, MTh
(01631) 567076
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SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Sunday 4 December 2011
Advent 2
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion.....08.00
Sung Eucharist.....10.15
Sunday School and Creche
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Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Norman MacCallum,
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St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Communion..... 11.00
St Columba,
Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist..... 10.00

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OT

Sports Hall Athletics awarded £2,000 grant

First competition takes place at Tobermory on Saturday

AFTER receiving a grant of £2,000 Argyll Sports Hall Athletics has announced this season's series of indoor competitions to be held throughout the county over the winter.

The grant received this week was the maximum available from Communities 2014 Lottery Grants.

The first competition for the Mull and Morvern area is being held at Tobermory High School this Saturday. It will be the first of four area events being held in Argyll this winter and is promoted jointly by Argyll and Bute Local Athletics Partnership and Mull Athletic Club. Qualifiers from the area competitions will be invited to take part in the Argyll Sports Hall Athletics final to be held on February 25, 2012 at Atlantis Leisure in Oban with successful athletes from the Campbeltown, Oban, Lochgilphead and Mull contests taking part.

The next local area competition is at Lochgilphead on Sunday, January 15 followed on Saturday, January 21 by the Oban event at Atlantis Leisure.

The Kintyre contest will take place at Campbeltown Grammar School on Sunday, January 29. Youngsters are reminded that the Tobermory contest on Saturday starts at 10.30am for the Under-7, Under-9 and Under-11 age groups with entries taken from 10am. The Under-13, Under-15 and Under-17s start at 2pm with entries from 1.30pm.

ATHLETICS

There will be awards for first, second and third overall in each age category and an overall trophy for the best primary school.

Age is taken as on September 1, 2011 and an entry fee of £2 per competitor will be levied.

The organisers introduced an Under-7 category at Mull for the first time in 2009 and this will apply again.

Instead of the normal seven events the under-7 boys and girls will compete in five events. There will be no under-7 competition at the Argyll Final, as Mull is the only venue where under-7s will take part.



Eilidh Shearer with her UK gold medal.

Eilidh is a triple gold medal winner

A YOUNG orienteer has won the British Schools Orienteering Championships to follow up success in district and Scottish events this year.

Triple gold medal winner Eilidh Shearer from Taynuilt Primary School recently won the UK title at Linlithgow.

Earlier in the season Eilidh won her age class in the Lorn and Isles schools competition in May then followed it up in June by winning her age class at the Scottish schools competition in Perth.

At the UK event, she formed

ORIENTEERING

formed part of a team of 10 pupils from Taynuilt Primary. The P6/7 boys, Alasdair Lilley, Harry McKechnie and Ewan Shearer won bronze in the P6/7 team event.

Also at the event were a team from Oban High School who also did well at the weekend with Callum Hunter and Emma Baird both taking third place in the Scottish School Sprint Championships, which were held alongside the British School event.



Oban Saints' Under 14s took on Kilpatrick in the second round of the Regional Cup at the Oban Community Pitch last Saturday in horrendous weather conditions. The Oban lads battled against the elements to record a fine 2-1 win thanks to a Stuart MacLean strike and an own goal. Pictured is Martin MacPherson taking on two Kilpatrick defenders. 16_148f04y01

Oban Saints on Scottish Cup duty

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints are on cup duty this Saturday when they travel to take on Dynamo East Kilbride in the 4th round of the Scottish Amateur Cup. The game will be played at the John Wright Sports Centre with a 2pm kick-off. Referee is George Allen from Johnstone.

Saints have reached the last eight of the competition twice in the last few years, so they will be hoping for another good run in the national tournament, which had an entry of over 700 teams this season.

Saints manager Iain Jackson said 'We don't know much about the East Kilbride team, but we're playing well at the moment and scoring plenty of goals, so hopefully we can progress to the 5th round.'

The West of Scotland Cup 3rd round tie between Myre Athletic and Saints due to be played at Howatshaws Park, in Dumbarton last Saturday was called off after a pitch inspection found the playing surface to be waterlogged.

Saints' youths - results and fixtures

YOUTH FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s v Antonine postponed; Under 14s 2, Kilpatrick 1. Saints scorers were Stuart Maclean and an own goal. Strathaven Dynamo 7, Under 15s 1. Netting for Saints was DJ Orr. Under 16s no game.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Lenzie; Under 14s v Goldenhill; Under 15s no game; Under 16s v Ardencleap.

Over 35s league

INDOOR FOOTBALL

Oban Over-35s League results: Hydro 0, Teachers 2; Emergency 6, Spartak 2.

'Moist' conditions to say the least for Ben Lora Race

ATHLETICS

LOCHABER Athletic Club's annual Ben Lora Race at Benderloch was preceded by some improved weather early morning, but some wild squalls ensured the course was 'moist' for the field - to say the least.

James Tullie of Shetleston Harriers had an outstanding run in the sloppy conditions to win and smash Andrew Wright's 2008 record by almost a minute.

Colin Donnelly kept him honest to the top, but Tullie flew on the now notorious descent to break clear and win by nearly two minutes from the Lochaber man, with Stephen Rawlison not far behind Donnelly at the finish.

First 40+ veteran was Tim Brand, who is enjoying a fine spell of form, who came in at just a shade under 28 minutes.

Nicola Meekin had another strong run, finishing just 30 seconds short of her own record, which was set last year in more favourable conditions.

Amanda Blackhall was second female and first 40+ female veteran, while Julia Connor was third in her 51st hill race this year. Well done to all, especially Ron-

Youngsters beat the weather

PRIMARY FOOTBALL

ALTHOUGH the older players of the Oban Express Primary Football League found their fixtures cancelled because of atrocious weather conditions on Sunday, the juniors had a ball in the warm and dry indoor hall at Atlantis Leisure.

This week all eight teams were well represented and it is evident that the youngsters are improving every week.

For Swifts 1 and 2 Marcus Lane scored an outstanding goal from long distance direct from a throw in and Ewen McFadyen demonstrated his passing skills by continually playing and passing his way out of difficulty.

For Spartak 1 and 2, Cooper MacIntyre continued his scoring form and provided plenty of chances for his team mates, Declan Thompson had a great day shooting on goal whenever the opportunity presented itself and scoring most of them.

For Ben Lora 1 and 2 Murray

Taynuilt Shinty Club holds prizegiving

SHINTY

STUART Scott has been named players' player of the year and manager's player of the year at Taynuilt Shinty Club's end of season prizegiving at the Taynuilt Hotel.

The forward scored important goals for the South Division One club, helping the team to fourth position in the table and unprecedented cup runs. Daniel Macdonald won young player of

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Weather

Thursday Sunshine and showers. Winds moderate, west, south westerly. Temperatures 7°C to 11°C

Friday Sunny. Winds light, east, south easterly. Temperatures 4°C to 5°C.

Weekend Rain.

Outlook Winds strong, westerly. Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate

Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, December 1, 2011** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	03.42 1.3 09.39 3.5 16.20 1.7 21.44 3.1	
Fri	04.34 1.5 10.38 3.3 17.16 1.8 22.45 2.9	
Sat	05.33 1.7 12.02 3.2 18.19 1.9 *** **	
Sun	00.24 2.9 06.41 1.8 13.31 3.2 19.26 1.9	
Mon	01.47 2.9 07.58 1.8 14.27 3.3 20.27 1.8	
Tues	02.38 3.1 09.05 1.8 15.10 3.4 21.16 1.7	
Wed	03.20 3.3 09.55 1.7 15.48 3.5 21.57 1.5	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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The following pages are from the Fort William (Northern) Edition of The Oban Times.

The Oban Times prints two editions of the paper. There is the main edition as well as the Fort William (Northern) Edition.

Sometimes pages that appear in the Fort William edition do not appear in the main edition (and vice versa).

As an electronic subscriber you get the main edition plus the pages that appear in the Northern edition.

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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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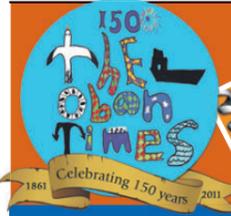
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Caol lunch club appeal

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
RICHARD HADDOCK

CAOL Community Centre's (CCC) senior citizens lunch club is to be opened up to people of all ages in an attempt to break even.

At a public meeting on Monday night, the steering group set up to pilot a transfer of control from Highland Council to local people told the 60-strong audience that without more business the club would struggle to remain self-supporting and prices could rise. Press secretary George Kerr said the success of the takeover depended on getting the entire community involved. He said: 'It's a centre that should be for all - for young people, for old people and for people in between. It's not just about the lunch club though, it's about the centre and it's about the community of Caol.'

Mr Kerr suggested a sub-committee to represent the views of people under the age of 25 be set up.

Group member Linda Campbell said local people needed to start using the centre more to ensure it remains financially viable. She said: 'We need functions, we need parties - the doors are open. We've got to keep the place open and we've got to keep the cash flowing.'

Chairman Donnie Corbett announced a funding application to Highland LEADER had been made. 'We are going to set up a company,' he said. 'We are going to employ a development officer, hopefully, if we can get the grant. If you want to be part of a new era for Caol Community Centre, the steering group would be pleased to hear from you.'

The group has launched a new website, www.caolcommunitycentre.co.uk, to give updates on latest news and events, as well as providing a booking service.

Leven Festival fun

THE ICE Factor in Kinlochleven will host the 2011 Christmas Leven Festival on Saturday at 11am. Organiser Kay McDuff said: 'It promises to be a great family day out.'



Dr Gregor Muir, right, and practice manager Jillian Bruce, centre, with other members of the surgery team and the two awards. 20_148dentist01

Town dentist best in the country

A FORT William dental surgery has been named the top NHS practice in the country after scooping two honours at the Dentistry Awards 2011 at Gleneagles Hotel last Friday.

M&S Dental Care on Glen Nevis Place was also named as the top overall dental practice in the north of Scotland.

Dental surgeon Dr Gregor Muir told *The Oban Times* he was 'over the moon' after receiving the

award. He said: 'Our calibre was good enough to know that we could win, but to get the best in the entire north was fantastic. For a general practice to compete at the same level as the large private practices is fantastic.'

'Everybody has worked so hard to achieve this, and it's great to have your hard work recognised.'

Dr Muir said the plaques would hang in the surgery reception.

Fort William volunteer awarded Poppyscotland's highest award

FORT William volunteer Audrey Dennison has been honoured for her contributions to Remembrance Day services in the town over the past 20 years.

Ms Dennison was given Poppyscotland's President's Award, its highest accolade, at the Railway Social Club, Inverloch, on Sunday afternoon.

The charity's president, Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin, presented Ms Dennison with a plaque and a golden poppy to mark her time and efforts.

During her time helping out with the charity, Ms Dennison, a bank worker, has counted the contents of more than 3,000 collecting cans single-handedly,

as well as sorting and banking more than £87,000 for the poppy collection.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm really pleased with the award.'

'But what I do is nothing compared to the people who go out there and give their lives. I enjoy it really.'

Scottish Poppy Appeal area organiser Mark McCann nominated Ms Dennison for the award.

He said: 'By making separate counts of each tin, Audrey has enabled us to give individual thanks to those who contributed to the appeal in the area. It is an honour for us all to celebrate with Audrey.'



Audrey receiving the plaque and a golden poppy from Poppyscotland president Sir Alistair Irwin. 10_148poppy01

Police pledge to open new station within two years

'Blue light' centre to be shared with ambulance service

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

THE WEST Highlands will have a new police operations centre at Fort William within two years, the area's new police chief has pledged.

And Area Commander for Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh David Bushell says sharing the building on the Blar Mhor with Scottish Ambulance service staff will deliver big benefits.

The combined 'blue light' centre forms part of Miller Developments' £50million phased scheme for a 70,000sqft Tesco superstore, other retail outlets and leisure facilities. A new Gaelic school, a relocated Belford Hospital and '3G' sports pitch are also planned for the 105-acre site.

AC Bushell said: 'I am absolutely confident we are going to get the new station within the next two years. It will definitely go ahead and the funding is there.'

'We are now starting to have meetings to decide what sort of things to have inside and how

it will work. We are about to appoint architects, but it will be into the New Year before the Northern Joint Police Board will be able to announce that.'

Lochaber's top cop said artist's impressions of the new facility were scheduled for completion by January or February 2012.

He added: 'The building will have the ambulance station at one side and ourselves at the other, with a shared social area.'

'It can only be a good thing if you can sit down in a rest room for half an hour with colleagues from another service - because half an hour later the same people could be attending an emergency situation, a car accident for example, trying to save life and limb.'

'Control rooms and all the other bits are separate because



Pledge: AC David Bushell. 20_148police01

but there's still a question mark how all that comes together. We will have to see how that pans out in the next few months.'

Local councillor Donald Cameron said: 'It's good to see joined up working to produce a first class facility. Both the existing police and ambulance stations are past their sell-by date.'

Upgrading the A830/A82 Lochybridge roundabout is scheduled to start in late January, funded through a community benefit deal agreed with Miller Developments.

Work on a new roundabout at the Blar Mhor Industrial Estate junction to handle traffic from the A830, the industrial estate and the new development will follow.

A fifth spur will extend towards Lochyside in anticipation of the Fort William link road being built some time in the future.

Highland Council granted the project outline approval in June. Miller expects a decision on detailed applications shortly.

Kinlochleven woman's delight at industrial tribunal ruling

A KINLOCHLEVEN woman has expressed delight after an employment tribunal ruled she was unfairly sacked by a Skye laird.

Maureen Byers was fired as Dunvegan Castle curator in March by Clan MacLeod chief Hugh MacLeod, who gave her 10 minutes to pack her bags after falsely accusing her of stealing a mahogany bureau and desk found in her lodgings in the castle grounds.

Mrs Byers told the Glasgow tribunal the furniture been gifted to her by the previous curator, Donald Stewart, when she

took up the post in 1997. Judge Alan Strain agreed, ruling the accusation of theft was simply a 'smokescreen' to sack Mrs Byers, who could now receive up to £20,000 compensation.

The 57-year-old, now working at the Glencoe Hotel, told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm really delighted after such a long and harrowing ordeal.'

'It's been going on for nine months. I feel sad it's ended this way, but I don't feel anger. I just think back to the good times I had with Donald Stewart and all the other members of staff there.'

A spokesperson for the MacLeod Estate said: 'Asking Mrs Byers to handover her keys and to leave the curator's flat at such short notice was a very difficult decision for Mr MacLeod to take, but once he had lost confidence in Mrs Byers he felt he had to act immediately to ensure the integrity of the collection.'

'The MacLeod Estate is naturally disappointed by the employment tribunal's decision. However we are pleased that the hearing is now over and we wish Mrs Byers all the best for the future.'

Mixed reaction to search and rescue switch

A DECISION to switch helicopter search and rescue operations from the military to civilian contractors has met with a mixed response.

Ageing Sea King helicopters, including those flying from RAF Lossiemouth in Moray and HMS Gannet in Prestwick, are to be retired by 2016.

The UK government wants the armed forces to focus on front-line operations. Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team Leader John Stevenson said: 'We don't yet know what kind of service we will get with the new helicopters and what rules they can fly to. But rescue co-ordination centre manager at Stornoway coastguard Jamie Ralston said the move would mean 'a better service with better aircraft'.

Probe launched after Canna house is destroyed by fire

A JOINT police and fire service investigation is underway after a house on Canna was destroyed in a blaze overnight on Sunday into Monday morning.

Police in Fort William received a call around 9.50pm on Sunday evening to say the New House, on the southeast shoreline close to the bridge to Sanday, was on fire.

Because of the response time involved and as no lives were at risk, it was decided not to deploy the Mallaig lifeboat to ferry the local fire crew to the island. Sea conditions were also extremely rough at time.

It is understood a woman got out safely from the burning building. Local sources said her partner

was stormbound in Mallaig over Sunday and Monday.

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service area manager Scott Hay said the fire was 'well developed' when reported and burnt out overnight. The island has no retained firemen or trained community response unit.

He said: 'I can't recall an incident like this on Canna. This is the first of its kind in quite a number of years. A request for a full investigation to be performed has been made. It will be carried out by police and the fire and rescue service and will look into the cause.'

He added: 'We are looking an opportunity to go to Canna to give safety advice on protecting homes

from fire.' Sergeant Michael Bell of Fort William police said on Monday afternoon that the severe weather had prevented investigators attending the scene.

He added: 'There are no suspicious circumstances at this time.'

A spokesperson for the National Trust for Scotland, the island's owners, told *The Oban Times*: 'We can confirm that there was a serious house fire on Canna on Sunday evening.'

'Fortunately no-one was injured, however, the damage to the property is extensive.'

'The trust is working with the tenants to provide support, including temporary accommodation, at this time.'

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Woman dies after car lands in loch

A STORNOWAY woman has died after her car slid off the road into a loch near Horsacraig Lodge on the Isle of Harris.

Speech therapist Lorna MacDonald, aged 26, of Cross Street, was taken to Western Isles Hospital after the accident last Thursday afternoon, where she was pronounced dead.

Police are asking for any witnesses to this incident to contact police at Stornoway on 01851 702222.

Teenage piper hits the high notes

ROY BRIDGE teenage piper Sandy Cameron made a clean sweep of awards at two recent national piping competitions.

Sandy, currently in his third year at Dollar Academy, won three events at the Scottish Piping Society of London's Solo Piping Championship, which attracts some of the world's top solo pipers. The competition was held in the Kensington Conference Centre.

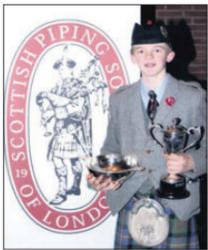
The 14-year-old won first place in every one of the categories in the under 18 age group - march, strathspey and reel; piobaireachd and slow air and jig. For his achievements, Sandy was awarded the Jim Caution Memorial Quaich by the Scottish Piping Society.

Skye youngster Brighde Chamberlain also took part in the event and scored second place finishes behind Sandy in the piobaireachd and march and strathspey and reel competitions.

The pair then both competed at the Scots Guard Association junior piping competition in Edinburgh. Sandy, who is tutored by Kyle of Lochalsh man Iain MacFadyen, won the under 15s, strathspey and reel, piobaireachd and the march, as well as the overall award. Brighde came second in the under 15 piobaireachd.

Craig Stewart, who is responsible for the pipe band at Sandy's school, praised the youngster's performances.

He said: 'Sandy's performances were first-class. He is an outstanding pupil and the whole school is delighted for his talents to be recognised at a national level.'



Champion piper: Sandy Cameron with his trophy haul from London.

Voluntary Action Lochaber to receive award

LOCHABER provost Allan Henderson will present Voluntary Action Lochaber with a European-standard award in Fort William tomorrow.

The afternoon 'celebration of quality' event in the Alexandra Hotel will see Councillor Henderson hand over the EFQM Committed to Excellence award to VAL staff.

Guest speakers will be Dave Bradley from Quality Scotland and Paul White of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.



High school boosts Macmillan coffers

Lochaber High School pupils have raised more than £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support Lochaber through school activities over the past year. The money was raised from a portion of the donations to the school's annual 'High School Hike' plus the proceeds of tea and coffee sales at the school's recent production of 'Mary - A Musical Play'. Pictured are the school's top fundraisers Matthew Catnach, 53, and Katie Hay, 51, presenting a cheque to Margaret Reid and May Dempster from the charity. Head Teacher Jim Sutherland said: 'Our annual hike raises a lot of money to support extra-curricular activities in the school but it's good to make a donation to charity too and Macmillan Cancer Support is certainly a worthy cause.'

Local views sought on future of rail services

TRANSPORT Scotland (TS) gathered the views of the Fort William public last week as it considers the future of the town's sleeper train service.

Possible cutbacks to the Caledonian Sleeper are among topics TS is looking at in its recently launched Rail 2014 consultation. TS officials were at Fort William Train Station last week inviting comments from rail users on how services could be improved.

Lochaber councillor Brian Murphy took part in the discussions. He said rail services were vital for the town but a number of improvements could be made, such as more frequent services, more carriages for the services which are provided and a simplified booking system.

Councillor Murphy said: 'I hope people will respond to the consultation. If people are concerned or interested they should get involved.'

A TS official told *The Oban Times*: 'We're not ruling anything in and we're not ruling anything out.'

'We want to increase patronage and we want ideas from the public. It's very much a consultation and we welcome any ideas people may have.'

The consultation booklet says TS is considering 'removing or increasing financial support' for



Councillor Brian Murphy looks over the consultation with two officials from Transport Scotland.

the sleeper. It says: 'We are also carrying out additional research and financial modelling and are looking at a number of options including letting the sleeper services as a separate franchise.' Local councillor Michael Foxley said he hoped as many people as possible got involved with the discussions. He said: 'The more information we can get, the better we can represent the views of local people. We have an opportunity to build a better service.'

People who want to give their views on the future of Lochaber's rail services can find information at www.transportscotland.gov.uk/rail2014 or by phoning 0141 272 7540. The consultation will run until February 20 2012. People can also contact Councillor Murphy or Foxley directly with their views.

Meanwhile, Highland Council's SNP group has backed calls for more investment in the sleeper. Highland MSP John Finnie raised the issue with transport minister Keith Brown in parliament last week.

Glass smashed

A GLASS panel on an exterior door leading to flats in Shaw Place, Fort William, was smashed on Sunday November 20. Elsewhere, a grey inflatable boat was removed from a compound at Glencoe sometime between 3pm on Friday November 18 and 11am on Sunday November 20. Anyone with knowledge of these incidents should contact Fort William Police on 01397 702361 or confidentially on 01397 702000.

Cash stolen

A QUANTITY of cash was stolen from a property in Portree sometime between 2pm and 5pm on Thursday.

The two-figure sum was taken from 4 Cruachan Place, the home of an elderly gentleman, police said. Meanwhile, a vehicle parked outside a residential property at Carboist, Skye, was extensively damaged between 6pm on Friday and 9am on Sunday. Anyone with information or who saw anyone acting suspiciously at the time of these incidents can contact Portree Police on 01478 612888 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Old slides on show

LOCHABER Historical Society welcomes well-kept postie and crofter Neil MacBride from Muirshearlich to its monthly meeting in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William, at 8pm tonight (Thursday). Neil will give a slide show on Old Lochaber.

Driver left biker badly injured

Lecturer escapes losing licence

A FORMER Fort William woman has narrowly escaped losing her driving licence after hitting and badly injuring a motorcyclist on the A830 Road to the Isles.

Pauline Goodridge, who ran J&M Florists on the town's High Street, was on a week-long visit to see her parents and was heading to the Caledonian Canal car park at Banavie to walk her dog when the accident occurred on July 26.

The 49-year-old was driving west when she attempted a right turn into Banavie, but as she pulled across the carriageway a motorbike travelling in the opposite direction crashed into the side of her Ford Ka.

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by

RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

throwing the biker onto the road. The motorcyclist suffered severe injuries as a result of the accident - a double break in her left leg, a broken right leg, a broken pelvis, a shattered wrist and a lacerated spleen.

The woman was taken to Raigmore Hospital and Fort William Sheriff Court heard she will take 12-18 months to fully recover from her injuries. Goodridge cried in the dock as the injuries were read out.

Defending, Hamish Melrose said the bright setting sun meant

Goodridge was unable to see the yellow and silver motorbike. He said: 'At that time of day, when the sun is setting, it is quite dazzling.'

Sheriff Kenneth Hogg said the college lecturer had suffered a 'momentary lapse of concentration'.

He fined Goodridge £200 and gave her four penalty points, bringing her to within a point of losing her licence.

Goodridge, now of 80 Bullscope Lane, Waterlooville, Hampshire, pled guilty to driving without due care and attention by turning right into the face of an oncoming motorbike, colliding with it and severely injuring the rider.

Warning over excessive festive period spending

LOCHABER Citizens Advice Bureau is urging local people to be 'savvy shoppers' this Christmas to avoid stacking up debt problems in 2012.

The festive campaign comes as CABs across Scotland warn of the dangers of over-spending unnecessarily and falling into a financial black hole.

Despite a historically low Bank of England interest rate of just 0.5 per cent, loan rates on many credit cards stand at 20 per cent or more.

That means someone owing £10,000 must pay £2,000 per year, or £40 a week, simply to repay the interest - without touching the original debt.

Meanwhile, payday loan companies currently advertising on TV charge up to 1,734 per cent interest over a year.

One firm, through its website, offers a £50 loan over 30 days for £64.75, or 359 per cent APR. If the borrower paid back nothing for 12 months, the debt would

By **STEPHEN NORRIS**
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

grow to £866 under the annual repayment rate.

Lochaber CAB manager Stephen Marshall said against this backdrop Christmas shopping presented 'a particular challenge' for many families.

He said: 'Spending a few pence extra here and there might not seem like much, but it all adds up. Sadly, we have also found over the years that shoppers can be caught out if they don't know their consumer rights - and mounting costs can mean some people start the New Year in debt.'

'All in all, we want to make sure that people in Lochaber have a great Christmas and New Year - unspoiled by the worry that you've spent too much.'

The campaign follows a CAB Scotland presentation on debt to the Scottish Parliament last week. Policy officer Matt Lancashire

told MSPs Scotland's 81 CAB had dealt with 143,566 new debt issues over the past year, or 400 per day.

He said: 'When we last analysed the debts of these clients, we found their average debt was now over £20,000. But one in 10 of them owed more than £50,000.'

'Yet they had an average net income of just £935 per month, and one in five of them had a monthly average of less than £400. Half were completely dependent on their pension or benefits.'

'All of this means that, for every £1 of income, they had on average £28 worth of debt. In these circumstances, it's no surprise at all that debt stress is a huge issue. 'MSPs need to understand the crisis that faces many families. We need measures that will help those who are facing debt and prevent others from falling into the same trap.'

Nurse fight moves to Scottish Parliament

A REMOTE west Lochaber community's fight to retain its out-of-hours emergency nursing cover moved to the Scottish Parliament this week.

Highland MSPs Mike Mackenzie, Rhoda Grant and Mary Scanlon asked questions of Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon about the situation in west Ardnamurchan during a debate at Holyrood last Thursday.

Ms Sturgeon said she would 'continue to look carefully' at the situation. She said: 'I have made it clear to both NHS Highland and SAS that I expect

them to work closely together, and with Highland Council and the local community, to come up collaboratively with a system that provides resilience and high-quality health services in the area.'

She continued: 'It is crucial that the health board, the ambulance service, the council and the community come together to come up with a model of service provision that is deliverable and which satisfies the community's concerns about safety and sustainability.'

Major Moidart road work contract awarded to Irish firm

MAJOR upgrades to a Moidart road are due to start in the New Year after a £900,000 contract was awarded to Irish firm Wills Bros Ltd to carry out the work.

The work will widen the narrow single track A861 at Drynie Hill between Kinlochmoidart and Archaracle to two track carriageway, as well as improving the surface of the road.

The work starts on January 9 and will be carried out Monday-Friday until April 4. The road will be closed between 10am and 12.25pm, and

1.10pm and 3.30pm. Local councillor Michael Foxley said he was pleased the European Regional Development Fund had responded to repeated requests to help fund the lifeline project.

He said: 'Drynie Hill presents a severe challenge and bottleneck for all motorists and visitors to Acharacle and the Ardnamurchan peninsula and this will improve access and make their journey a safer and more pleasant experience.'

Ardnamurchan Community Council chairman Hugh MacPherson also welcomed the work,

saying: 'This upgrade will provide a major boost for the community in the area who have had to negotiate this notorious sub-standard section of road for many long years.'

A row of Western Red Cedars trees planted during Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee celebrations will be felled during the works and replaced with 60 new trees to mark Queen Elizabeth's 60 years on the throne. A plaque will be placed in the new lay-by at the top of the hill with details of the trees.



Lochaber Shinty Club honoured its top performers of 2011 at its annual awards night at the Ben Nevis Hotel on Saturday night. Left to right: Jack Dignan, second team player of the year, Ryan Johnson, under 14 player of the year, Zands Ferguson, player of the year, Patrick Toal, under 17 player of the year, Christina MacIntyre, ladies player of the year and Shanna MacDonald, most improved ladies player. Photo courtesy of The Write Image.

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FW

Fuel rise delay is welcome news

MOTORISTS and politicians have welcomed the postponement of a rise in fuel duty planned for January until August 2012.

Chancellor George Osborne announced the move in Tuesday's Autumn Statement and said a second rise planned for August would now be cancelled, resulting in a total increase of 3p per litre.

Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid said: 'The postponement of the January fuel duty increase and the cancellation of the August one is great news for a rural constituency like Argyll and Bute.'

It follows last week's announcement that remote islands would benefit from a 5p per litre discount in fuel duty.

No walking over Connel Bridge

ANYONE hoping to get around next week's closures by walking across the Connel Bridge will be disappointed.

There will be access for neither pedestrians nor vehicles from 10pm to 6am between Sunday, December 4 and Friday, December 9.

The closures are to allow the replacement of cross beams damaged when a lorry hit the bridge in September and repairs to the support structure.

Access for emergency services will be maintained.

Countdown to 'Angel of the Year' nominations

THERE are just five days left to nominate an unsung hero or heroine for the first Angel of the Year Award.

The Oban Times has been flooded with inspirational stories of charity workers, full-time carers, nurses, neighbours and volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty to help people and make their local communities a better place.

Nominations close at 10am on December 5 and will be considered by an expert panel.

See the form on page two of this week's paper and more details online at www.obantimes.co.uk/angel.

NEWSDESK
01397 703003



A stunning fireworks display brought the curtain down the town's Winter Festival Picture - Tony Hardley www.scotphoto.com

'Obang' Bay fireworks spectacular sets new mark

WITH a crowd lining Oban Bay and photographers and television cameras from around the country positioned at vantage points around the town, Pyrol delivered a stunning fireworks display to end the town's Winter Festival.

The Edinburgh-based fireworks company became the most famous in the world after an Oban Times video of their botched fireworks display at Mossfield, Oban on November

4 went viral on YouTube and is approaching 900,000 views.

'Obang' The one-minute 'Obang', as it has become known, saw all £6,000-worth of fireworks go off at once and the resulting video footage made international news.

As a gesture to the town Pyrol produced a free-of-charge and faultless five-minute display on Sunday over Oban Bay. Martin Allen of Pyrol said

the company would be keen to come back for next year's display, adding that they hope to name a new firework 'Obang' when they visit China next February to see the latest fireworks available.

The much-anticipated event on Sunday brought people from all over the country, filling local hotels. Cafes stayed open late to welcome in customers from the busy streets. Oban Fireworks Committee chairman, Council-

lor Roddy McCuish, told The Oban Times: 'The feedback I got from Sunday was that it was so impressive people want it over the bay every year. For that to work we would have to devise a way of getting the money in before the event. I would like to thank everyone who helped to make it happen, especially the Northern Lighthouse Board, who moved their ship so we could set off fireworks from their pier.'

RET boost for more islands

Mull and Arran need better infrastructure claims SNP

MORE Hebridean islands are to benefit from reduced ferry fares after the Scottish Government announced an expansion to its Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) scheme.

But islands that currently suffer from problems with infrastructure, such as Arran and Mull, will have to wait at least three years for cheaper travel.

On Tuesday Transport Minister Keith Brown announced that RET would become a permanent feature on the Western Isles, Coll and Tiree, following a four-year pilot scheme on these islands, due to finish in spring 2012. Commercial vehicles longer than five metres will no longer benefit from the RET scheme but will instead receive a 25 per cent discount on fares.

An RET pilot scheme will be introduced to the islands of Islay, Colonsay and Gigha from October 2012, and to Arran from October 2014.

No date has been given for the introduction of the scheme to other islands, although Mr Brown stated they would be included 'within the term of this Parliament'. They include: Mull, Iona, Lismore, Raasay, Skye, Small Isles and the Sounds of Barra and Harris.

Mr Brown said RET, which prices ferry journeys at the equivalent journey by road, had boosted car journeys to the islands taking part in the pilot scheme by an average of 31 per cent.

He told The Oban Times: 'RET has been an SNP policy for decades and was included in our manifesto, so we didn't have to

REPORT

by Euan Paterson

epaterson@obantimes.co.uk



Transport Minister Keith Brown

win the argument over funding. 'This announcement shows islanders we are concerned with the cost of travel to the mainland and back and that we are a party for the whole of Scotland.'

Asked to explain the delay to islands like Mull and Arran, Mr Brown replied: 'There are different conditions for different islands.'

'We are not picking on Mull, we are just working our way

"Excellent news for Islay because it will drive down the cost of living."

community councillor Roberta MacNeill

through the scheme.

'Mull currently has a huge tourism demand and we have found that RET can increase demand by about 40 per cent. Mull also has infrastructure problems and it would be counter-productive to immediately put RET into a place that didn't have the required infrastructure.'

Mull-based SNP councillor Mary Jean Devon welcomed the news that RET would be coming to Mull but expressed disappointment it wouldn't come sooner.

'It's a bit like someone saying, 'I'll buy you a drink, but the pubs are shut just now', she added.

Islay community councillor Roberta MacNeill said the announcement was well timed, as islands are in need of a financial boost.

'This is excellent news for Islay because it will drive down the cost of living. We have also seen the Machrie Hotel taken over and the new Islay Hotel built so we can cope with extra visitors.'

'When the original pilot scheme was announced there was uproar that we were not included, so today's announcement will be widely welcomed.'

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell said the news would make a huge difference to Argyll's island communities, adding: 'Larger companies already enjoy discounts not available to anyone else but for the first time the regular van of messages and orders going, for example, to Colonsay, will be able to reduce prices for something as basic as bringing the shopping.'

Argyll Holistic Therapy can help you look good and feel fantastic

HAPPINESS is as much about looking good as feeling fantastic, which is why Argyll Holistic Therapy has welcomed beauty therapist Magdalena Sadlik to the company.

Magdalena's Beauty Care has joined Argyll Beauty Therapy as part of Argyll Holistic Therapy at Old Crofters, Soroba Road, bringing into one location everything you need to make you feel good.

Holistic therapist, Tracy Gilmour, said: 'I think what we offer is unique but a natural fit. Feeling good is as much about spirit as it is in body.'

'We offer a genuine way to improve your life.'

Magdalena says the working partnership has proved very fruitful.

'This works well for both of us, but especially for the clients because from one place they can get everything they need to leave feeling really good about themselves,' she said.

Magdalena comes into the business with over seven years' experience as a qualified beauty therapist. Having first qualified in Poland, Magdalena trained with Dermalogica on moving to Scotland, then working as a consultant for Clarins.

You can be sure, then, that she will be able to listen, advise and inform on the best treatments for you, offering a full range of beauty therapies and Magdalena's trademark Eyebrow Artistry.

This amazing treatment lifts the eye and frames the face, giving you the eyebrows you've always dreamed about.

Tracy, meanwhile, embodies the benefits of good holistic therapy, having experienced the benefits first hand. She said: 'Having continued to train in holistic therapy techniques throughout the last four years, I'm committed to broadening my knowledge for the benefit of the clients that come here.'



Tracy's therapies include Rainbow Reiki, Hopi ear candling, Indian head massage, eastern face massage, crystal therapy and face threading.

Her techniques can help relief stress, boost relaxation and concentration, something that appeals to a broad spectrum of her client base.

'People find reiki and Indian head massage particularly helpful for relieving stress. We get a lot of school pupils coming in for therapies ahead of their exams and they feel it helps their performance.'

For more information and special offers, check Argyll Holistic Therapy's Facebook page, or phone 07787125579 for an appointment. Argyll Holistic Therapy also has space available for use by other groups, speak to Tracy for details.

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ARGYLL BEAUTY THERAPY

One-day strike bites in Argyll

SCHOOLS, street cleaning, libraries and day care centres were all facing disruption yesterday as The Oban Times went to press, as a result of strike action by 30 unions.

Argyll and Bute Council said it was taking action to minimise the impact of strikes, though most services were reduced or closed.

Working parents were faced with child care problems as more than 70 schools were closed to pupils. Children in school hostels at Dunoon and Oban were sent home on Tuesday night and asked to return to school this morning.

NHS Highland said contingency plans would ensure core services, like cancer treatment and maternity, would be provided and emergency cover would be unaffected.

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Council must be bolder on 'local homes for local families'

CASH for rural social housing should be quadrupled in a bold move to tackle Argyll's chronic shortage of affordable homes.

As Argyll and Bute Council passed its housing strategy and set up a rural housing fund of £750,000, Councillor Roddy McCuish called for dramatic action to cut a waiting list of almost 4,000 people.

'It's a dire situation - 90 per cent of the representations I get are about housing,' he said. 'I welcome the release of these funds, but for £3m they could build 60 homes instead of 15.'

'If you build three or four houses on the Isle of Coll, it has the same economic

impact as 20 houses in Helensburgh.'

He added the allocation system and homelessness policies need to be looked at, if necessary in the courts, so they are fit for Argyll's needs. He said: 'What's the point in bringing four houses to Coll and having to give two of them to homeless families, when you have local families living in caravans? You need local connection points, local homes for local families. I know the council's hands are tied by legislation - but sometimes you have to challenge the legislation.'

The council's new rural housing fund will initially target Tiree, Iona, Ardfern, Strachur, Port Ellen and

Succoth. The executive also agreed £1.1m grants towards housing in Dunbeg, Dalmailly and Helensburgh and to ban the right to buy for most of Lorn, Mid Argyll and a number of islands.

Councillor Robin Currie, housing spokesman, acknowledged the 'acute shortage of affordable housing'. He said: 'We have a responsibility to look at all options to try and increase the supply of affordable homes. In setting up this new fund, the council has proved it is willing to take a lead in encouraging the development of new affordable homes to sustain some of our most remote and fragile rural communities.'

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whats on LOCHABER

Friday 2nd December > Late open music venue Skipinnish Ceilidh House 10pm - 2am £3 entry

Friday 2nd December > Clubnight with DJ Connor Skipinnish Ceilidh House 10pm - 2am £5 entry

Tuesday 6th December > Gaelic Conversation Group Skipinnish Ceilidh House 7 - 9pm, all welcome Speak Gaelic in an informal setting, FREE

Friday 2nd December > MANRAN Sunart Centre, Strontian 8pm. sunartcentre.org

Saturday 17th December > ZENWING PUPPETS WINTER WONDERLAND WORKSHOP 11am - 1pm

The Story of Father Christmas 2pm - 3pm Sunart Centre, Strontian 8pm. sunartcentre.org

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Lorn Lines



A YOUTH group from Oban is preparing to show Argyll in its best light next year with an exhibition of photos from around the county. The Zoom! group, run by H2O youth worker Ewen Munro, held a photo exhibition, sale of work and a coffee morning at The Well last Saturday to raise funds for the exhibition.

AN OBAN store is looking for a local charity partner to support during 2012.

Each year the Original Factory Shop picks a good cause and staff help to raise funds throughout the year.

Any club or charity would like to be considered should fill in a nomination form, available in store, before December 5.

A POKER competition has been held in memory of a regular player at Oban's Aulay's Bar who died earlier this year.

The inaugural Matt Watson Cockroach Championship was held on November 14. Matt was a regular at poker nights every Monday in Aulay's Bar and was affectionately known as 'Cockroach' because of his ability to stay in the game against the odds.

Twenty-five players entered the tournament last week with the £300 pot going to charity. The winner, David MacPhee, chose to donate the prize to Yorkhill Children's Hospital.

IT HAS been a busy week for the young Highland dancers of the Eilidh MacInnes School of Dance.

The dancers entertained the crowd at Oban Distillery at the close of the Winter Festival on Sunday.

The weekend before, the youngsters braved the damp weather conditions to perform at the Christmas Lights Switch-on in Station Square.

The dancers were: Charlie Nathen, Ragen Kelly, Lucy Croarkin, Bronwen Davies, Amy Gibb, Karina Black, Jenna MacInnes, Kirsty MacInnes, Abbie MacKenzie and Aisling McGuire.

ST COLUMBA'S Primary School, Oban will be holding an open evening for prospective pupils and their parents.

Next Tuesday, December 6, children eligible to start school in August can come along for a tour, the chance to meet teachers and pupils, games and refreshments.

MEMBERS of the Oban and District Classic Vehicle Club held their monthly meeting in the Lochnell Arms Hotel, North Connel. A Bring and Buy Sale took place at this meeting with a range of items from car magazines to aircraft parts being sold to raise a total of £142.00 for club funds.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, December 15 at 19.30 at the Lochnell Arms, North Connel, and anyone interested is invited to attend.

THERE was a large turnout of members and visitors to Oban Photographic Club's weekly meeting in the Regent Hotel Oban on Monday, November 21.

Douglas May, FRPS, a past president of Edinburgh Photographic Society and current chairman of one of the Royal Photographic Society's panels of judges, came along to give the results of the 'Abstract' competition.

As well as judging the entries, Douglas gave an extremely helpful and constructive commentary on what an abstract should be and where the entries could have been bettered.

Results
Projected Images: 1st Stephen Lawson who also received the John Douglas Trophy for the best overall image; 2nd Jim Kirkpatrick; 3rd Ronnie McKillop

Prints: 1st & 2nd John Douglas; 3rd Ronnie McKillop
The next meeting on December 5 is Alex Farquar from Fort William showing and talking about his photography.



TO MARK the 200th anniversary year of Oban's Royal Burgh status, the town's speakers club invited Oban historian Bob McCulloch to speak at its annual dinner last Thursday at Soroba House Hotel. Bob is pictured third from right with the club's office bearers, from left: Secretary Jim Fraser, vice-president Frank Walton, president John MacLean, social secretary Cameron Fletcher and educational director Eamonn Arthur.

Police files

A MOTORIST who tried to drive off with an over-laden trailer was stopped by police close to the Corran Esplanade in Oban.

The 44-year-old man has been charged with reckless driving.

A MOTORIST has been charged with driving aggressively and recklessly following an incident in Lora View, North Connel last Wednesday, November 23 at 2.30pm.

The 32-year-old man is the subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal.

AN 80-YEAR-old woman was assaulted in Lorn Road, Dunbeg on Sunday, November 27. A 46-year old man was charged in connection with the incident.

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after a handbag was stolen from an unlocked house in Longdale Road, Oban, between November 21 and 22.

The bag's contents included personal papers and a purse with a sum of money. Anyone with any information can contact Constable Danks at Oban Police.

A WOMAN aged 28 was charged with conducting herself in a disorderly manner towards a 58-year-old woman in Miller Road, Oban.

A report has been made to the Procurator Fiscal after the incident, at 2.30pm on November 22.

Oban's Argyll Hotel to be down by Christmas

THE ARGYLL Hotel will come down before Christmas - but a new hotel to be built in its place may not be ready until 2014.

Developers Alan and Callum MacLeod of Ee-Usk had previously been granted permission to demolish the crumbling Oban property, pending the granting of a method statement from the council, with a view to building a new hotel in its place.

But the father and son team claimed a condition, that stated a contractor for a new build had to be in place before demolition, was stalling their plans.

Last Wednesday, faced with a damning engineer's report,

which stated the structure may not survive a harsh winter, Argyll and Bute Council's planning, protective services and licensing (PPSL) committee threw out a recommendation by council officers to retain the condition. Work has begun this week to remove internal furniture and fixings from the derelict hotel.

The MacLeods, who say they have already spent around £500,000 on the acquisition of the building and administration costs, admitted they feel more relief, than excitement, at the news.

Callum MacLeod told *The*

Oban Times: 'The PPSL's decision is absolutely fantastic and we are keen to crack on with this long-awaited next stage of development. The hotel will be demolished by Christmas.

"We are keen to crack on with this long-awaited next stage."

Callum MacLeod

'I think the most recent engineer's report was the turning point and I welcome the unanimous decision by councillors to overturn the council officer's decision.

'The new hotel will be a 16-month build and we can't afford to be opening out of season. If I can't get the foundations in the ground in January or February next year then there is little chance of us starting the build in 2012. Timing is of the essence.'

The developers are planning to build a 64-bedroom hotel, believed to be the first new hotel built in the town for 100 years.

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee, whose ward covers the Argyll Hotel site, said: 'I am glad the PPSL saw sense and gave permission for this dangerous building to come down.'

'Having seen the plans for the new hotel, I am excited about the development and believe it will give Oban an extra edge over other coastal towns in Scotland.'

At hearing news of the pending demolition, Oban Community Council has called for improvements to be made to Charles Street, believed to be the town's oldest street, which lies in behind the Argyll Hotel.

Police find cannabis garden

POLICE searching a house at Corran Brae, Oban under warrant discovered a cannabis cultivation and hydroponics system. A 29-year-old man will appear at Oban Sheriff Court in connection with the find next week.

Xmas toy appeal



The Oban branch of the Salvation Army is pleased with the response so far to its Christmas Toy Appeal but is keen to collect even more contributions for under-privileged children.

People doing their Christmas shopping are being asked to buy an extra gift and hand it into the Superdrug store in the town.

Pictured with some of the already donated presents are Salvation Army majors John and Joan Swan and Superdrug assistant manager Dawn Walker.

Oban driver has car seized by police

A 24-YEAR-old man had his car seized by police after they stopped him on Oban's Corran Esplanade and discovered he was driving the vehicle with no insurance. He has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal following the incident, on Tuesday, November 22.

Guesthouse gains four-star gold

AN OBAN guesthouse has become the first in the town to achieve a four star gold award from VisitScotland.

After they impressed at their latest inspection, Alt na Craig House in Glenmore Road joins a select group of only 29 guesthouses in Scotland to reach this standard.

'Bloom' raffle aids drug education

OBAN in Bloom is helping fight the battle against narcotics by holding a raffle to help pay for schemes to educate children about the dangers of drug use.

Prizes range from £100 cash, donated by the MacQueen Brother's Charitable Trust, bed and breakfast for two at the Letterfinlay Lodge, Spean Bridge, and bottles of malt from Oban and Tobermory distilleries.

Tickets are available from Oban Police Office on Albany Street. The winners will be drawn by chief inspector Brian Auld on December 12 at noon.



The festival culminated on Sunday with a lantern parade from the Corran Halls to a festive market at Oban Distillery

10-day winter festival proves success

CHRISTMAS came early in Oban with the success of the inaugural 10-day Winter Festival.

Like the Oban 200 celebrations in the summer, the event highlighted Oban's community spirit, with most events being well attended. It also provided a financial boost to businesses in an otherwise quiet time of year for visitors.

The festival culminated on Sunday in a lantern parade with wax candles from the Corran Halls to Oban Distillery, where a festive market attracted hundreds of locals and visitors. The parade was led by Oban High School Pipe Band and provided a spectacle for the hundreds taking part.

From there, crowds gathered in the town centre and along the Esplanade to watch the spectacular Pyrol fireworks display.

Earlier in the week the

much-heralded synthetic ice-skating rink was fully booked for the four days it was open at Atlantis Leisure, the newly opened Dunollie House hosted well-attended guided walks and an Elves' Treasure Hunt run by Stramash. Evening events such as the Wine Call My Bluff, proved popular.

But most pleasing of all for organisers was the willingness of town centre businesses to decorate their shop fronts and design window displays to help everyone get into the festive spirit.

Pamela Lockhart, one of the eight festival committee members, said: 'The shop window

displays were better than we could have hoped for and we could not pick out the best one. In the end we declared Mary's Meals, Purdie's and The Pancake Place, as joint winners.

'The Lantern Parade was fabulous and the youth market at the Corran Halls, where primary school children formed a choir, was a joy to see. It was so busy.'

'The whole festival was very much a community event and it was great to see everyone out around the town.'

As a reward for the business's window display, The Pancake Place's Paula May was selected to start the short fireworks display at McCaig's Tower, which signalled the beginning of the Lantern Parade on Sunday.

Afterwards, Oban Community Council's Catherine Gillies said: 'To have that number of people going through the town at this time of year is amazing.'



Fireworks from McCaig's Tower signalled the start of the parade

Warning follows Mull eagle nest fines

THE ROYAL Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland has issued a warning to those attempting to disturb the nesting white-tailed eagles on Mull after two photographers were fined for the offence.

Yuli Panayotov, aged 32, from London and Ivaylo Takev, aged 36, from Norwich were found guilty at

Oban Sheriff Court last week of disturbing the nest site at Killiechraon on May 1, 2010 by setting up a tent less than 100 metres from the site and photographing the birds.

The men, who were fined a combined total of £1,100, had disregarded warnings from RSPB Mull Officer Dave Sexton not to approach the site.

The eagles are a significant tourist attraction on Mull, bringing £5m to the local economy every year.

Following the verdict, Mr Sexton said: 'Unacceptable behaviour from people who think they are above the law and choose to disturb protected wildlife like the eagles will not be tolerated - wildlife photographers in particular need to take note.'

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Silver medal for Lochaber's Isla

ATHLETICS

LOCHABER Athletic Club junior Isla Mackay ran superbly to win a silver medal at the North District cross-country championships in the under-17 women section at the weekend.

Over a hilly, undulating course Isla was level with Inverness schoolgirl international Mhairi MacLennan on the first lap, leaving the rest of the field 400 metres behind.

Mhairi drew away in the closing stages but Isla held on strongly to finish just a few seconds behind.

In the under-17 mens race, Calum Fraser from South Laggan was lying fifth after the first two-mile lap. In the second, the Lochaber boy closed the gap on Scottish international Sean Chalmers from Inverness, powering into third to finish strongly and claim a well-deserved bronze medal, splitting the winning Inverness team.

Lochaber's Joseph Tangney also ran well and moved up several places in the second lap to finish seventh. Craig MacLean also continues to improve and ran a well-judged race to take 11th place to complete the Lochaber team counters.

Lochaber took the team silver medal by several points over the Black Isle Squad – the first Lochaber team medal in this competition for 12 years.



Banned: Captain Andy Martin will sit out this weekend's game after being sent off against Huntly. 20_f48football01

Fort will need to be in top gear as they face the Mechanics

'They are a big physical side and we will be thinking about that when we pick our team'

REPORT BY RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

FORT WILLIAM face one of their toughest tests of the season so far when runaway league leaders Fort Mechanics visit Claggan Park this Saturday.

Fort have tightened up at the back in recent weeks, only letting in 10 goals in their last six matches, but they will have to cope without centre back and captain Andy Martin, who misses the game after picking up a red card against Huntly last weekend which his manager

Danny Conlon described as 'a bit harsh'.

The two teams played at Mossset Park in August with the home side running out 4-0 winners, although the game was closer than the scoreline suggests.

Physical

Fort manager Conlon told The Oban Times: 'They are going really well, its going to be a tough game. They are a big, physical side, and we'll be thinking about that when we pick our team.'

'I'm looking forward to it. Everyone is expecting us to lose, but we're going to go out there and give it a go.'

The game at Huntly last weekend was played in poor conditions, with strong winds making it difficult for both sides. Sean Ellis had an early chance but saw his shot saved before Russell Guild's 20-yard strike gave Huntly the lead. Fort keeper Stewart Grey made a number of good saves in the first half to keep the score at 1-0 going into the break.

Fort's Darren Quigg had a chance at the start of the second half but put his header narrowly wide.

Andy Martin then gave away a penalty and was booked for

FOOTBALL

kicking the ball away in anger. David Booth scored from the spot to make it 2-0.

Second Yellow

Martin was shown a second yellow 10 minutes from time after a challenge from behind on the halfway line, and after Michael Ellis missed a good chance late on, the game finished 2-0 to the home side.

Conlon said: 'The conditions were poor, but we didn't play very well. I think for the last 20 minutes we were the better side but the conditions spoiled it.'

Glenurquhart lift London Shield

SHINTY

GLENURQUHART youngsters lifted the Marine Harvest Under 17 London Shield after edging out Kinlochshiel in the final last Saturday.

The Drumnadrochit side opened the scoring at Balgait, Kiltarlity with 15 minutes on the clock through Conor Golabek. But 'Sheil hit back, with Aedan MacRae's shot's beating the keeper just before the half time whistle.

But The Glen kept going and got their reward in the 57th minute when Daniel MacIntosh struck to put his side into the lead. They were able to hold out for the rest of the match and pick up the trophy.

Lochaber Leisure lead the league

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LOCHABER Leisure maintained their place at the top of the Ali Young Premier League by thrashing fourth-placed Ballachulish 7-0 at the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

Second-placed Goon Squad kept up the pressure by edging out HWEntire 6-5, while TNF United moved into third after beating The Granite House 4-1.

Steuva Sookabreast came out on top of the day's highest scoring game, with their 6-5 win over Achintore FC moving them to sixth. Stroke City beat AA Young 5-2.

Bayern Bru's struggles at the bottom continued as they lost a close game with Livercaol 5-3.

New documentary on BBC Alba

SHINTY

A NEW shinty documentary series, 'Caman Shinty', begins on BBC ALBA tonight (Thursday).

Over six half-hour programmes, cameras gain exclusive access behind the scenes to some of the shinty community's best-known characters.

Sarring in the series are Fort William's Niall McPhee and captain Duncan Rodger, Duncan's uncle, Ian 'Sunshine' Rodger, Inveraray's David Macpherson and Eddie Tembo of Glenurquhart.

Scottish women's international Lisa Norman and cousins Thomas and Ryan Borthwick of Kingussie also feature.

'Caman Shinty' will be shown for the next six Thursdays at 8.30pm.



Isla Mackay on her way to a silver medal.

Alleycats stay top

TEN PIN BOWLING

AFTER week of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling league Alleycats remain in top spot in the scratch division with 18 points.

Council and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio stay in joint second just one point behind. Underdogs lead the handicap division with 15 points with Alleycats one point behind in second place and Rotavators in third a further point back. Council drop from first to sixth after going down 5-0.

The highest team games of the week went to Alleycats with 647 scratch, 829 handicap, both being season highs. Alleycats also had the highest two game scratch total of 1281 which again is the season high.

There were a number of noteworthy individual efforts this week. The best scratch games came from Pam Weller (Alleycats) with 195, Tommy McKnight (Alleycats) with 177, Laura Brown (Underdogs) with 176 and Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with 175. Pam Weller's handicap game of 241 was the week's best and her two game scratch series of 355 is the season high.

Currently the top averages are from Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with 164 followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 150 and Colin Pinkett (Council) on 147.

'Moist' conditions for annual Ben Lora Race

LOCHABER Athletic Club's annual Ben Lora Race at Benderloch was preceded by some improved weather early morning, but some wild squalls ensured the course was 'moist' for the field – to say the least.

James Tullie of Shettleston Harriers had an outstanding run in the sloppy conditions to win and smash Andrew Wright's 2008 record by almost a minute. Colin Donnelly kept him honest to the top, but Tullie flew

on the now notorious descent to break clear and win by nearly two minutes from the Lochaber man, with Stephen Rawlinson not far behind Donnelly at the finish.

Enjoying

First 40+ veteran was Tim Brand, who is enjoying a fine spell of form, who came in at just a shade under 28 minutes. Nicola Meekin had another strong run, finishing just 30 seconds short of her own record,

ATHLETICS

which was set last year in more favourable conditions.

Amanda Blackhall was second female and first 40+ female veteran, while Julia Connor was third in her 51st hill race this year. Well done to all, especially Ronnie Turner and Hazel Whiston that ran on despite injury to finish. Thanks also to the McGuire and Heinz for marshaling.

Results (Lochaber AC unless stated): James Tullie (Shettleston) 25:50; Colin Donnelly 27:34; Stephen Rawlinson (Tayside) 27:46; Tim Brand 27:59; Craig Mitchell (Shettleston) 28:22; Peter Devport (Bellahouston) 28:59; Donald Paterson 29:09; John Hepburn 29:12; Ben Thompson 29:20; John Binnie 29:37; Michael Bossard 29:38; Chris Bell u/a 30:17; Nicola Meekin 30:27; Andy Dale 30:30; Ali Kennedy 30:54; Pete Ward 31:19; Steve Macdonald 31:28; Stephen Whiston (Mid Argyll Tri) 32:40; Niall MacBeath 33:07; Dan Watson (Tayside) 33:11; Mathew Martin 33:13; Gordon Binnie u/a 34:05; Trevor Shaw (Tayside) 34:06; Jonathan Weir u/a 34:10; Amanda Blackhall 34:14; Ronnie Turner 34:44; Angus Bowman (Lomond) 34:57; Sean Bena u/a 35:26; John Dale (Mid Argyll Tri) 35:46; Julia Connor (Moorfoot) 36:01; Lyndsey Shaw 36:04; Graham MacNab 36:09; Andy Newis u/a 36:14; Tom Wilding u/a 37:49; Jo McGuire (Westerlands CCC) 38:19; Fiona Thompson 38:22; Herbie Maclean (Tayside) 38:25; Susan J Ross 38:46; Nick Charlton u/a 38:53; Phil Thompson 38:54; Julie Corner 39:03; Andrew Cameron 39:08; Jim Hamilton 39:12; Lucy Prins 39:27; Robert Dairon u/a 39:30; Emma Pearce 39:50; Victoria Leiper u/a 39:58; Helen Karlsson u/a 40:12; Richard Gatehouse (Lomond) 40:30; Ken MacDougall (Tinto HR) 40:58; Kyla Orr u/a 41:32; Sharon Morgan 41:41; Rebecca Hewell (Mid Argyll Tri) 41:49; Dave Ford 42:01; Jean Bowman (Lomond) 43:00; Jonathan Hart 43:48; Angie Kennedy (Jog Scot) 45:09; Suzanne Duncan (Jog Scot) 45:26; Marie MacCallum (Jog Scot) 45:53; Andrew Finniemore (Jog Scot) 45:53; Aileen Duncan 46:53; Kate Foster (Tayside) 48:23; Claire Treasurer 50:48; Margaret R MacPhee 51:24; Pamela Hamilton (Jog Scot) 51:50; Jane Watt 55:52; Hazel Whiston (Mid Argyll Tri) 56:49.



James Tullie and Nicola Meekin: winners of the Ben Lora Race.



Lochaber Yacht Club hand out the prizes

Lochaber Yacht Club held its annual awards presentation and dinner at the clubhouse on Achintore Road, Fort William on Saturday night. Club commodore Jim Shearer and his wife Moira presented the prizes to the winners, pictured above. Trophy winners included: Martin Wolfenden (Endeavour Trophy); Paul Biggin (Vice Commodore's Cup); Brian Holgate (G.A. Faulkner Trophy); Ryan McIntyre (Mirror Points Series Trophy); Brian Fallows (Black Rock Trophy).

Getting ready for the new skiing season

SKIING

CHAIR LIFTS to the slopes at Nevis Range have been overhauled in preparation for the new ski season.

Welcome

Safety checks on tows on the Goose, Warrens, Quad and Bra-

veheart runs are complete as the resort gears up to welcome thousands of skiers. Mild weather to date has meant any snow on the mountain has not lasted.

No winners

LOTTERY

THERE were no winners again in the Fort William FC lotto draw on Saturday. Numbers were 1-02-17. The jackpot goes up to £1,000 this week.

Chris just pipped in international bout

BOXING

FOURTEEN year-old Chris Bradley of Lochaber Phoenix ABC did his country proud in an international against Ireland at Motherwell last weekend.

In his second bout for Scotland, Chris faced Calvin Turner and again impressed to go into the last just two points behind.

He came out all guns blazing to try and pull the win out of the fire, but unfortunately for Chris and Scotland just failed get the verdict. Chris will box for Scotland again in an international against England in Manchester on Saturday.

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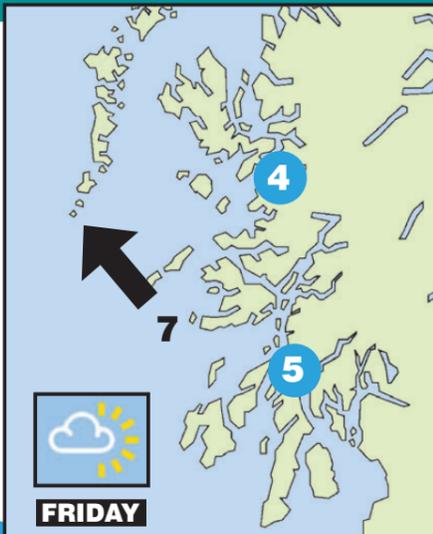
Weather

Thursday Sunshine and showers. Winds moderate, west, south westerly. Temperatures 7°C to 11°C

Friday Sunny. Winds light, east, south easterly. Temperatures 4°C to 5°C.

Weekend Rain. **Outlook** Winds strong, westerly. Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, December 1, 2011** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	03.42 1.3 09.39 3.5 16.20 1.7 21.44 3.1	
Fri	04.34 1.5 10.38 3.3 17.16 1.8 22.45 2.9	
Sat	05.33 1.7 12.02 3.2 18.19 1.9 *** **	
Sun	00.24 2.9 06.41 1.8 13.31 3.2 19.26 1.9	
Mon	01.47 2.9 07.58 1.8 14.27 3.3 20.27 1.8	
Tues	02.38 3.1 09.05 1.8 15.10 3.4 21.16 1.7	
Wed	03.20 3.3 09.55 1.7 15.48 3.5 21.57 1.5	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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