

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Inside this week

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BT's island gaffe stuns company

THE DURABILITY of BT broadband's maintenance in Argyll has been called into question after a repair to a connection in North Connell was delayed because the company thought it was on an island.

Wyvex Media, The Oban Times' parent company, reported a fault in a business broadband connection in North Connell on November 7, following stormy weather.

BT Openreach said the earliest appointment its engineers could make was November 18 but no engineer attended and no contact was made.

When Wyvex Media's IT manager complained about the missed appointment and a lack of information he was told that an engineer 'needs to travel to the island from the mainland'.

He was also told that there were only two engineers available to cover 'the area'.

BT Openreach has since confirmed it has 19 engineers, 14 of whom are broadband trained, to cover Argyll and the islands.

Following an Oban Times press enquiry to BT, the telecommunications company's 'escalation team' and the broadband service was restored on November 20.

The Oban Times knows of at least one other business broadband service in North Connell that suffered from a similar fault and delayed repair.

A spokesman for BT said: 'We would like to apologise for the delay in attending to these faults and we're investigating why this has happened.'

Online conversation word for word

THE FOLLOWING transcript is an excerpt of an online correspondence between Wyvex Media's IT manager (IM) and BT online support (BT):

IM: How am I meant to plan anything with this approach to appointment keeping?

BT: The time of arrival can't be guaranteed I'm afraid however they are saying he will attend between now and 6pm. The engineer needs to travel to the island from the mainland.

IM: WHAT?

IM: I am on the mainland

IM: I am not on an island.

IM: I am here [Posts a Google Map link to location]

BT: Sorry, the delay is due to the availability of engineers in that area

IM: I want to speak to a senior manager right now please - and I want a phone call on my main line which is 01631 *****

IM: So where did you get the island information from then?

BT: the manager had thought this was on an island, with delays due to travel time. Though this seems to be due to availability of engineers, there are only two in the area

IM: Have you any idea how big this area is?

IM: For two engineers?

IM: Can I speak to a manager please as requested?

BT: This is the resource in place for that area, for this type of fault

IM: Can I speak to a manager please as requested?

BT: I can pass your details to them



Winter festival sparkles into life

The third Oban Winter Festival has already been hailed a roaring success after a big opening weekend attracted thousands of festive visitors. Oban's Carys Rimmer, pictured, had a leading role in a version of Cats that made up part of Ballet West's Winter Wonderland show, which kicked off the festival in style last Friday. Today (Thursday) will see town centre shops open late to offer discounts, as part of the festival. For more on the 2013 event, which runs until Sunday, see page 11.

Photo: Stephen Lawson.

Shop warning over Railway Pier barrier

Business could fold within months

A CONTROVERSIAL car park barrier is 'strangling' the life out of Oban's oldest shop by putting off customers, according to its owner.

D Watt and Son, the fishmongers on the Railway Pier, has been trading since 1918 but Allan Watt, who currently runs the business, says it could close within months if a new barrier installed by ScotRail isn't removed.

The barrier went up in early October at the entrance to the train station car park, blocking vehicular access to the six businesses beyond it when the car park is full.

Mr Watt attended a meeting of Oban Community Council on Monday to ask for help in getting the barrier removed or relocated to its previous position at the access to the main car park - beyond the road where the fishmongers is situated.

He said: 'I think we're the oldest shop in the town. We have been there since 1918 and it was probably easier to get to the shop in 1918 than it is now.'

'There doesn't seem to be anything we can do about it.'

Mr Watt received the backing of Oban councillor Roddy McCuish, who described ScotRail blocking off businesses

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by FAITH ORR
forr@obantimes.co.uk

as 'madness', adding: 'ScotRail are legally right but morally wrong. There is the chance of six businesses going to the wall because of this.'

'Six trains a day could be to the detriment of long established businesses in the town and that just can't happen.'

Mr Watt fears that in summer, during his peak trading time, the car park will be full and deny access to customers.

He said: 'In summer, workmen go over to Mull and leave their cars in the car park all day. If it is full 8am until 6pm and the barrier doesn't lift we will be stranded out of business.'

'The ideal thing is to get rid of the barrier but if we could get the limit taken off, freeing the barrier to go up and down, that will at least let customers through to the six businesses.'

Councillor Elaine Robertson believes the route could be a public right of way, a fact disputed by ScotRail. Councillor Robertson said: 'If you have been using an access unimpeded for 20 years you have a right

of access.' But a spokesman for ScotRail said the road was privately owned by Network Rail and pedestrian access is 'completely unaffected' by the barriers.

He said ScotRail was working with Mr Watt and Argyll and Bute Council to find a solution for businesses, adding: 'The barriers were installed to free up more spaces for customers, while still offering good value parking for others.'

'Before they were introduced last month, the car park was regularly full - leaving no space for rail users. Often this included people leaving cars there for several days on end.'

'Moving the barriers would result in spaces once again being available for an unlimited time, and for everyone - including non-rail users and people travelling to islands - to use. They were installed to combat exactly this scenario.'

The barrier was installed after ScotRail received a share of £5.27 million from the Scottish Government in April as part of a programme to refurbish 60 railway stations across Scotland.

Oban Community Council is now to write to the regions' MSPs on the issue.

Workers escape from collapsed tunnel

WORKERS at Glensanda Quarry managed to escape from a tunnel which collapsed and flooded during specialist work on the site.

Quarry operator Aggregate Industries is currently investigating how the incident happened and said it had informed all the relevant authorities, including the Health and Safety Executive.

It was during construction of an underground shaft by a specialist mining contractor on October 29 that a volume of processed rock and water was released into the existing tunnel from the adjacent excavation.

Men working in the tunnel were able to escape before being caught in the flood and no-one was injured.

A spokesman for Aggregate Industries said: 'Although personnel were present in the tunnel at the time, our incident plan was followed and everyone was able to leave the scene unharmed.'

The tunnel was initially closed for an assessment and repairs but the spokesman said it was now 'fully operational'.

He added: 'We treat all incidents seriously and a full technical investigation is ongoing.'

Thousands back campaign to free ex-soldier

THE CAMPAIGN to free ex-soldier Billy Irving has taken a leap forward this week as the number of signatures on an online petition surpassed 29,000 as The Oban Times went to press.

Billy, who grew up in Appin and Campbelltown and now lives in Connell, is one of six British ex-soldiers among the 35 crewmen jailed since October 18 after Indian authorities claimed their

boat was carrying weapons illegally. A petition started by his girlfriend, Yvonne MacHugh, calling on the UK Government to help free the six soldiers now has almost 30,000 names.

There was some good news for Billy's family after the charity Mission to Seafarers established contact with the men and are relaying messages between the families. Yvonne, who has been

inundated with media attention and well wishers as the campaign got underway, said the number of signatures on the petition was a great support to her cause.

She said: 'It shows how much support is out there for Billy.'

Yvonne, along with Billy's father, Jim, a former Appin policeman, is currently in discussion with the other families affected to agree a date on presenting the

petition to the UK Government.

Billy was on board the US-owned MV Seaman Guard Ohio when it was detained at Tuticorin Port in southern Tamil Nadu state. The ship is owned by security firm Advanport, which has denied allegations that the ship had illegally procured diesel and was in possession of arms and ammunition without required documentation.

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Oban Bay future plans on display

AN EXHIBITION on plans for the future of Oban Bay is still in the White Building and available for viewing until Saturday.

The display shows plans for the pedestrianisation of Stafford Street, the new marina and the possible future of the building itself.

Residents are invited to view the exhibition and give their thoughts on the future of Oban's waterfront, from Station Square to Stafford Street and the North Pier.

Feedback questionnaires will be available at the exhibition and through Argyll and Bute Council's website until December 6.

Scientist faces fear to raise charity cash

A MARINE scientist has faced up to a fear of the water to raise money for two Oban-based charities and remember two former colleagues who died in tragic circumstances earlier this year.

Clare Johnson from the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) decided in the New Year to raise money for Oban Lifeboat Station by learning to swim and clocking up one kilometre in the pool over the course of the year.

'If you are going to do a sponsored event you need to do something you hate,' said the 32-year-old.

'I'm a marine scientist who couldn't even put her face in the water, so a swim was the obvious choice.'

But later in January her fundraising took on a new meaning when Clare and her colleagues in the physics, sea ice and technology department of

when he was struck by lightning on Appin's Jubilee Bridge.

'Because both men 'loved the outdoors', Clare decided her fundraising should also benefit Oban Mountain Rescue Team.

She said: 'Chris and Tim were among the first people to sponsor me. Chris passed away a week later and Tim died a week after that.'

'I just felt like I had to do something.'

Clare learnt to swim and clocked up one kilometre over the year to September.

The full £870 Clare managed to raise was collected at SAMS and was split evenly between the two charities. The addition of Gift Aid will bring her total to around £1,000.

Clare is still swimming after overcoming her fear of the water.

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Mull police counter fears quashed

FEARS that islanders would have to travel to Oban for routine police matters once the counter on Mull closes have been quashed by local officers. Sergeant Mark Stephen told a recent meeting of Mull Community Council that any requirement to produce vehicle or other documents would be dealt with by contacting any of the Mull officers. The counter, which is closing as part of a national programme, had 'very limited' visits by members of the public - mainly in relation to lost property, Sergeant Stephen confirmed. He also told the meeting a request for portable speed cameras to be put in place in Craignure had been made as there had been a number of reports of speeding into and out of the village.

Appin and Duror Girlguiding appeal

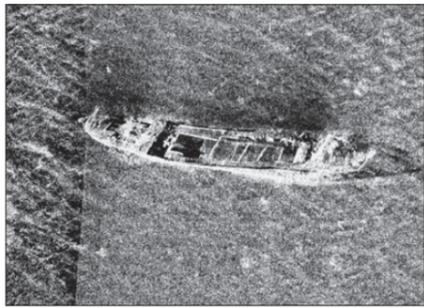
GIRLGUIDING Argyll is extending into Appin and Duror. Before Girlguiding can commit to booking a hall, the organisation needs to gauge the interest from girls aged from five-10 years who would like to join Rainbows or Brownies. For further information contact Stella McIver by email stella.mciver@btinternet.com or phone 01631 566793.

Artist raises money for carers

AN ARGYLL artist is raising money for a carers charity through an exhibition of paintings of two of his favourite islands - Mull and Iona. John Lowrie Morrison (Jolomo) is fundraising for the Carers Trust after his own experiences as a long-term carer inspired him to support the charity. Jolomo's new exhibition Isle of Mull, Isle of Iona (An t - Eilean Muileach, An t - Eilean Ithe) is being held at the Bank of Scotland headquarters on the Mound in Edinburgh.

Business event

A HIGHLAND Council event for businesses in Skye and Lochalsh has been moved and will now be held on Tuesday December 3 and Wednesday December 4. The free event at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, originally planned for Monday December 2, will see members of the council's procurement team discuss ongoing and upcoming contracts. To book a slot contact the Enterprise Europe Network team on 01463 715400 or enterprise.europe@highland-opportunity.com.



A scan of the SS Madame Alice, off Lismore.



A flying boat on the seabed off Oban.



Students from SAMS with the side scanner that helped them discover new wrecks. They are, from left: Sam Black, Dan Mulqueen, Vanessa Pitusi, Susanne Purdon and Lucy Hyam. 16_1455can01

Students' seabed revelations

PIONEERING students at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) have discovered 13 previously unregistered wrecks in the waters off Oban and Mull during a seabed mapping exercise. The marine science students were mapping the seabed

between Oban and Mull using a side scanner from SAMS' research vessel Calamus. Their work will form part of the Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland (INIS) Hydrographic Survey, which aims to give up-to-date and accurate charts of the seabed to aid navigation.

To help them, the students, led by lecturer Dr John Howe, had obtained a list of 44 known wrecks from the UK Hydrographic Office. But during their survey the students discovered the new wrecks, which have been added to the national records. Among

the newly-discovered wreckages, which were not disturbed during investigations, were boats and Catalina and Sunderland flying boats. Dr Howe said: 'This is a great opportunity for these students - it's not often you can do a degree and go wreck hunting! The pictures we got are

amazing. You can see trawling lines around the wreckages, so fishermen must have known that something was there.' Dr Howe said other 'lumps' had been detected by the side scanner but remain a mystery until divers can get a closer look.

St Kilda Centre dream plan moves closer to reality

PLANS for a St Kilda Centre - Ionad Hiort - in the Uig area of Lewis have taken two important steps towards reality. Firstly, landowners of the Geodha Sgoilt site, Uig, and Hamnaway Estate, have gifted the spectacular cliff-top location to Ionad Hiort Ltd, the local group aiming to create a world centre as a lasting legacy to St Kilda, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The move comes after discussions between estate principal Sir Peter Cresswell, who fully supports the project, were concluded satisfactorily with Ionad Hiort. Subject to agreement on decrofting with Mangersta Common Grazings Committee, an outline planning application will soon be submitted.

Secondly, Andrew Ormston, the consultant hired by Ionad Hiort to evaluate the project, has produced a positive report on how it can be delivered and sustained. The optimistic findings mean a business case can be written and presented to potential funders. Mr Ormston said: 'This is a really interesting project. Translating the most challenging strands, including World Heritage Site high value tourism, into tangible business propositions will create a unique opportunity to pioneer cutting-edge approaches and technologies. 'It is clear that the skills and enthusiasm exist locally to support that work.' If built, the St Kilda Centre could become a tourism money-

spinner for the isolated west coast of Lewis. Iain Buchanan, chairman of Ionad Hiort Ltd, said: 'We have always known it would be a long haul to bring Ionad Hiort to fruition. 'We believe its potential significance - not just for Uig but the whole of the Western Isles - will ultimately justify the effort. 'We now see 2014 as a crucial year for bringing everyone together in support of what they all recognise as an iconic project of local, national and international significance.' UNESCO has adopted the St Kilda centre idea as a model for 'remote access' to hundreds of World Heritage Sites which, for one reason or another, cannot physically be visited by large numbers of people.

Barra-Benbecula air link back on council agenda

FLIGHTS between Barra and Benbecula could yet be revived after Comhairle nan Eilean Siar accepted an SNP proposal to investigate reinstating the link. The committee also heard about the on-going discussions with Loganair to maximise the frequency of the Barra/Glasgow flights. The motion received the universal backing of the policy and resources committee. Councillor John A Maciver and party colleague Kenny Macleod last week successfully tabled an amendment asking for a report to be brought before the authority detailing the funding options to reinstate the flights, axed as part of February's budget. A council spokesman said: 'Part of this would be to establish whether the discount scheme for individuals would benefit from public bodies such as the comhairle paying full fares and whether this would make a restoration of inter-island air services viable. 'This would be part of the on-

going work of making internal flights more affordable to the public and more fairly share the cost of subsidising these flights across the public sector. The committee also heard about the on-going discussions with Loganair to maximise the frequency of the Barra/Glasgow flights. The motion received the universal backing of the policy and resources committee. Councillor John A Maciver said: 'I am delighted the committee accepted my amendment to ask the chief executive to submit a report to the comhairle detailing funding options for the re-establishment of the inter islands air services. This puts the Barra - Benbecula link back on the agenda. Councillors may have to make difficult budgetary decisions.'

Mull Lines

TENS of thousands of pounds have been raised in the first two weeks after the launch of Green Energy Mull (GEM). Set up to build and operate the Harmony Hydro Scheme, the first community-owned hydro project on Mull, GEM needs £1.1 million to succeed. The fund has got off to a good start, with £79,850 already raised - an average of £5,000 per day. GEM will also be seeking funds from the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS), a government initiative designed to boost economic growth in the UK. A total of £150,000 is the most that can be raised to qualify for SEIS so potential investors are urged to get in touch soon or risk missing out.



Ian Hepburn, Colin Morrison and Samantha and Robin Sedgwick.

A MULL-based woodfuel supplier has been bought over by a community company - creating an extra job in the process. North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd (NWMWC) has purchased Cranich Woodfuel and will trade under the new name, Island Woodfuels. The new company will sell woodchip as well as logs and kindling. This will allow the business to hire a new employee. The primary benefit will be the ability of the company, which owns and manages more than 1,500 acres of woodland, to ensure long term security of supply for customers. Colin Morrison, NWMWC chairman, said: 'When the opportunity arose to consider expanding our existing woodfuel business by the purchase and development of Cranich Woodfuel the board was understandably very excited. 'It seems a logical progression for NWMWC to add value to our timber resource while creating local

employment and ensuring security of supply for island woodfuel users.' Robin Sedgwick, who set up and developed Cranich Woodfuel, will stay on with the new company to encourage and provide guidance to people considering the switch to woodfuel. Robin will continue deliveries for the company while it trains up the new employee and ensure a seamless transition for customers. He said: 'I am delighted the woodfuel business which we have built up over the last eight years will be carried on by Island Woodfuels, a community-led company with its own forests providing secure future timber supplies. The business can now really expand and provide local job creation, ensuring a sustainable local fuel supply for existing customers and those contemplating investing in a biomass boiler in the future.' Anyone interested in finding out more can contact Island Woodfuels on 01688 400559 or visit www.islandwoodfuels.com from December 1.

AN IONA-based decorator has been announced as the most trusted man in his trade throughout the whole of Scotland. Jim Kyle, of Jim Kyle Decorators, has been awarded the honour of Scotland's Most Trusted Decorator by paint manufacturer Dulux Trade as part of its annual campaign to seek out the UK's most dependable painters. Jim said: 'To be awarded this honour and recognised by my customers and the community in this way is such a privilege, and I'm ecstatic to be part of it.'



Jim Kyle.

Homeowners across the UK have nominated local painters and decorators who always go the extra mile to earn their trust. There were more than 700 nominations nationwide. Joyce McIntyre, one of several homeowners who nominated Jim, said: 'Living so close to the sea means many houses need to be painted on a regular basis. 'Jim works hard at carefully preparing the surface and advising people on the best type of paint for the job to ensure results that last. On several occasions he has given his services free of charge, painting the village hall and the church.' Jim will now go through to the final stage of the competition, where he will compete with nine other regional winners for the title of the UK's Most Trusted Decorator. He will receive Dulux Select Decorator membership and could walk away with free fuel for a year if he wins the overall contest being judged today (Thursday).

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Mull wildlife cameraman fronts new eagle campaign

A MULL wildlife cameraman is fronting a new campaign to see the golden eagle named Scotland's national bird. Gordon Buchanan has joined forces with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland to submit a petition to the Scottish Government urging it to designate the bird as a national symbol. There are currently 431 pairs of golden eagles in the whole of Scotland and these are almost entirely confined to the more remote areas of the country, including parts of the west coast. Gordon said: 'Spending my childhood on Mull meant I grew up with eagles. I've been lucky enough to see hundreds since and each one is special. But golden eagles could and should be more common. Scots and visitors to Scotland shouldn't hope that an eagle sighting is a once-in-a-lifetime experience; they should expect to see them regularly.' The RSPB hopes the adoption of the golden eagle as Scotland's national bird will turn around its fortunes. The petition can be found at www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/petitions/goldeneagle.

MSPs vote on same-sex marriage

PLANS to introduce same-sex marriage in Scotland has passed the first hurdle - with seven MSPs from the Highlands and Islands backing the proposal. The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill passed the preliminary stage by 98 votes to 15, with five people abstaining. **Opposed** Alasdair Allan, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, and Jamie McGrigor, Highlands and Islands both opposed the plans. But Highlands and Islands MSPs John Finnie, Rhoda Grant, Mike MacKenzie, Mary Scanlon, David Stewart and Jean Urquhart all backed the bill. Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell also voted in favour as did First Minister Alex Salmond. Mr Russell said he respected the 'strongly held' opinions of constituents who disagreed with the proposals but added: 'I believe, along with the great majority of MSPs that the bill will help create a more equal and more tolerant Scotland which is the Scotland we should seek to create. 'Many of my constituents in Argyll and Bute have told me they agree with that point of view.' Mr Allan said hundreds of people in the islands had been in touch with him, the 'overwhelming majority' of whom were against the plans. 'The view which so many of my constituents have expressed to me has a right to be recorded, and for that reason I voted against the bill,' he said. 'However, whatever happens, it is important that Scotland emerges from this debate as a place that respects all its citizens, whatever their beliefs or their sexuality may be, and I am confident that this is and will be the case.'

Mr McGrigor told *The Oban Times* he 'listened carefully' to the debate in parliament and the views of constituents who contacted him with 'genuinely felt concerns'. He added: 'The Scottish Conservative MSPs had a free vote on this bill and after considerable consideration of all the issues and the points put to me by many constituents, I decided to vote against the bill at stage one.' Religious bodies would opt in to perform same-sex marriages and politicians have said they would not be forced into holding the ceremonies. If the legislation is successfully passed it is expected the first same-sex marriage could take place early in 2015.

Mr McGrigor told *The Oban Times* he 'listened carefully' to the debate in parliament and the views of constituents who contacted him with 'genuinely felt concerns'. He added: 'The Scottish Conservative MSPs had a free vote on this bill and after considerable consideration of all the issues and the points put to me by many constituents, I decided to vote against the bill at stage one.' Religious bodies would opt in to perform same-sex marriages and politicians have said they would not be forced into holding the ceremonies. If the legislation is successfully passed it is expected the first same-sex marriage could take place early in 2015.

Brooks Brothers' tartan task for Oban designer



Brooks Brothers' tartan.

AN OBAN woman has been handed the chance of a lifetime - impress fashion bosses and have her creations worn around the world. Sally Weaser has been asked to produce samples of her unique jewellery and buttons in the style of a new tartan produced for Brooks Brothers. Sally, who runs Boafrosh, was approached by Brian Wilton from the Scottish Tartans Authority in October, when she was at Dunollie's Fasanta selling jewellery. Sally said: 'He has asked me to make a sample of how I produce the jewellery so he can take a sample of buttons to Brooks Brothers. I'm re-

ally excited that someone has shown an interest.' Sally can produce a range of jewellery and accessories, including earrings, cufflinks and brooches, using polymer clay. She will mix the colours of the clay by hand until it matches those in the Brooks Brothers tartan, before creating the pattern. It is hoped the tartan will become synonymous with Brooks Brothers, similar to what Burberry has achieved. Sally hopes to have her samples ready early next year.



Sally Weaser. 16_148sally01

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Tobermory pupils raise typhoon cash

MORE than £1,000 has been raised by pupils and staff at Tobermory High School to help the relief effort in the Philippines.

Moved by the images of Typhoon Haiyan, the school swung into action to raise £1,190 for the Disasters Emergency Committee Philippines appeal. Pupils from primary one through to S6 got together for a fundraising breakfast in the canteen to share bacon rolls and porridge as well as playing games.

Friendship bracelets made by S6, with beads in the colours of the flag of the Philippines, quickly sold out. Everybody brought in their loose change and teams of primary and secondary pupils helped to arrange them to make a mile of coins around the gym. The Traditional Music Group provided a rousing accompaniment to the event. Youngsters sold tea and cakes at parents' evening and the primary school disco, organised by primary pupils, added a further £225 to the appeal. Secondary music students decided they'd like to donate the money they'd made from sales of their CD. The school wanted to thank everybody who donated money, time and materials. It was a great team effort by everyone involved.

Assault and robbery charges

A WOMAN and two men from Oban appeared in private in Oban Sheriff Court last week charged with assault and robbery.

Kerry Dale, 27, Michael McPhee, 28, and Andrew Mackenzie, 32, all made no plea or declaration during the petition hearing.

The case was continued for further examination and Dale was released on bail while McPhee and Mackenzie were both remanded in custody.

Alleged drink driver reported

A WOMAN has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal after allegedly driving while four times the legal alcohol limit.

The 57-year-old was stopped by police in Oban's Mossfield Avenue last Saturday at around 2pm.



Architect John Gleeson, centre, with St Conan's Kirk trustees, from left: clerk to the trustees David Hodge, David McLeod, Halbert Jamieson and Robert Campbell Preston. 15_148conans01

Urgent appeal for church restoration help

THE TRUST that has been tasked with restoring one of Argyll's best loved churches to its former glory says it has a plan of action - but needs help to do it.

That was the message delivered to those who attended an open day at St Conan's Kirk, Lochawe, last Saturday. Architectural consultant John

Gleeson, who assists the four trustees, explained how the Grade-A listed building needs a seven-figure sum overall to restore it to its former glory. Highlighting issues with damp, a leaking roof, structural problems and the need to restore some of the unique ironwork Mr Gleeson, from Inveraray, also explained how the trustees

wished to convert the gate lodge, beside the kirk, into a heritage centre and create a washroom and cafe for visitors.

A number of people who attended the open day have signed up to become Friends of St Conan's Kirk. Mr Gleeson told *The Oban Times*: 'We need money, of course, but we need physical assistance with things

like fundraising events. We know what we need to do but we just don't have the manpower to get it all done.'

The trustees have already applied for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to secure the perimeter walls, which, if not strengthened, could mean parts of the kirk will have to be closed to the public.

Fresh calls for abolition of 'bedroom tax'

Argyll and Bute tenants in arrears as impact of spare room subsidy bites

SIX TENANTS in Argyll and Bute have been issued with notices that could lead to eviction proceedings, as the impact of the UK Government's controversial 'bedroom tax' is felt.

Oban councillor Roddy McCuish has launched a stinging attack on the tax, saying without significant finance to build one-bedroom accommodation it was always going to be unfair.

More than 500 housing association tenants across Argyll and Bute have been affected, prompting fresh calls for its abolition.

Of the 466 Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) tenants faced with the spare room subsidy withdrawal, 247 are behind with rent payments, with 90 more than £250 in arrears.

While six have been issued with a notice of proceedings against them, giving them six months to improve their arrears situation or else face court

action, the association says it wants to help tenants manage their situation.

West Highland Housing Association (WHHA) has around 50 tenants affected by the tax. It too says it would rather work with tenants rather than evict them.

Councillor McCuish said: 'In my opinion this is a huge issue locally and it is only going to get bigger, affecting more and more people over time. 'We don't have a lot of one-bedroom properties. In my opinion it's targeting people who cannot afford it. We're dealing with the waves now but there's a tsunami coming.'

ACHA's chief executive Alastair MacGregor said: 'The association continues to work with its tenants who wish to move to a smaller property and also works closely with the council with respect to discretionary housing payments. 'At this point in time the

association's tenants, who we have supported in applications for discretionary housing payments to assist with the loss of income from the bedroom tax, has resulted in a 75 per cent success rate.

'The association's primary concern is to assist our tenants all we can to help them manage an arrears situation. The association continues to campaign for the repeal of the legislation that brought in the bedroom tax.'

Lesley McInnes, WHHA chief executive, said: 'Generally, we have seen some increase in arrears but in the main our tenants are keeping us informed and we are trying to advise them about options available to them. 'Our approach is not to threaten tenants - many people have issues at the present time and we try to get people to talk to us so that we can offer assistance or indeed signpost them to other organisations, where appropriate.'

Countdown to Oban playpark's yarnbombing 'reveal'



Oban First Rainbows made pompoms for the yarnbombing project.

THE BIG 'reveal' of Oban Playpark Committee's yarnbombing project will take place on Saturday, as volunteers work through Friday night to set up the colourful canvas of wool.

The playpark committee is undertaking the knitting project to raise awareness of the playpark fund, which will pay for the renovation of the park outside Atlantis Leisure.

The group said it had raised more than £21,000 and can now contemplate grant applications in the region of £380,000.

The craze, yarnbombing, involves knitters decorating

public areas with colourful creations made of wool. For the past two months, supporters of the playpark committee have been busy knitting a rainbow of colours. Fitting then, that one of the groups involved are Oban First Rainbows, who made pom poms as decorations.

Now all the creations will be hung at Atlantis Leisure under the cover of darkness, leaving the identities of the volunteer knitters a mystery.

Lyndsay Elliott of Oban Playpark Committee said: 'We've had a load of stitched donations already and expect

a load more by the November 28 deadline for handing items into Atlantis. The tennis court railings will be covered with stitched flowers and a massive slogan, plus we will have woolly scarves on anything we can.'

The playpark committee recently received donations from the following groups: D'Arcy Diving, £1,000; Rotary Club of Oban, £1,200; Argyll and Bute Council Third Sector Grant, £715; and MacQueen Bros Charitable Trust, £5,000.

The playpark committee has set up Just Giving online account for people to make donations.

New rules mean Argyll midwives need retrained to carry out antenatal scans

SCANS to confirm whether a woman is pregnant will no longer be done in Argyll after new rules came into force.

National guidelines recently introduced state health professionals carrying out antenatal scans must have completed a one year accredited post graduate certificated course. Until recently midwives in Argyll and Bute have carried out an antenatal scan on pregnant women to confirm the pregnancy and estimate the date of delivery.

While the midwives have all been trained to undertake this procedure the training they had

been provided with no longer meets the national requirements.

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'It has therefore been recommended that all antenatal scanning should cease in Argyll and Bute until it can be carried out by a trained obstetric ultrasonographer. This means that for the foreseeable future midwives in Argyll and Bute will no longer carry out any scanning until they have received the appropriate training.'

Women who require this service will now have to travel to hospitals within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

MP would support signal legislation

AFTER experiencing Oban's poor signal first hand, Scotland's only Conservative MP said he would support legislation to improve the west Highlands and islands' inadequate mobile phone coverage.

However, David Mundell, the under-secretary of state for Scotland, said the UK Government had to try to work with providers first before such measures were taken.

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell described the lack of a signal as a 'life and death' issue, saying the inability to get coverage even on some of the area's busiest roads

presented a serious risk to people's lives. While Mr Mundell criticised the lack of coverage, he stopped short of demanding action be taken now.

Asked by *The Oban Times* if he thought legislation should be introduced to compel mobile phone companies to improve their service in rural areas, he said: 'Clearly, it is a problem. The government has been working with mobile phone companies to ensure the maximum amount of coverage. One complaint is relating to the 4G rollout and the fact we still have large rural areas with no proper coverage.'

'It is not acceptable to have large areas with no signal - particularly along our main arterial routes. 'I think we have got to work with the mobile phone companies and allow them to do it first. If there is no progress though, it is a measure I would support.'

Meanwhile, Argyll and Bute's MP, Alan Reid, will this week meet communications firm Arqiva to get more clarity on how the £150million UK Government fund it has been asked to administer for the whole country could improve mobile infrastructure in Argyll and Bute.

National water safety forum call

TWO ARGYLL MSPs, who campaigned to improve safety on Loch Awe, have joined forces to ask the Scottish Government to establish a National Water Safety Forum.

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell and Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor have made the call in a joint letter to Roseanna Cunningham, the Minister for Community Safety. March next year will mark the fifth anniversary of the death of four fishermen, who drowned on Loch Awe.

Filling Oban's empty shops a BID4Oban priority

BUSINESS co-operative BID4Oban says it will make filling empty shops its priority for the coming year after 'laying strong foundations' in its first 12 months.

Speaking to *The Oban Times*, BID manager Nic Jones admitted the first year was a learning curve, but says there are several signs that the work it is doing is having a positive impact on trading conditions.

Having launched the new Love Oban voucher scheme last week, the manager says he is now keen to bring together landlords, the council and business interests in an attempt to ensure the town's empty properties are filled.

Key though was using the experience gained in year one of the organisation's five-year business plan.

He said: 'Empty shops are a big priority for us. We really want to see what we can do about these buildings and getting everyone involved around a table to talk about it would be a good start.'

'We really want to make an impact on that next year.' Other plans for the year ahead include progressing work done to attract more cruise ships to the area - and keeping their passengers in the town - releasing a new mobile phone app and improving the town's signage.

Lessons learned from the first year will be key to this, he added. 'I'd say year one has been a very positive start, but there has been a learning curve,' Nic said. 'As with any new start, you do need to learn and some of the things we've done have gone better than others and we need to address those in future. I'd like to think the things we've done so far have shown some success. We can't solve everybody's problems, but we can put things in place to try and improve the broader picture now and in the future.'

Other priorities for the coming year include working with the council to have a new street-cleaning machine brought into use. While the BID won't operate the machine, it will liaise with the authority on when it will be used and where. It is also working with the Oban and Lorn Tourism Association (OLTA) on marketing the town at next year's Ryder Cup and Commonwealth Games.

Mr Jones acknowledged there had been criticism of the BID, but said anyone who has identified an area for improvement should contact the organisation.

'What I'd say is become involved if you have any concerns or ideas that could be helpful. Find out what we're doing and what the BID is about. If that means a phone call or a meeting that's something we can do.'

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Planned new distillery would not affect air quality

A NEW single malt whisky distillery being planned in remote west Lochaber would not significantly affect air quality, according to environmental health at Highland Council.

Drimmin Distillery Limited lodged plans last month to build the plant on Drimmin Estate on the Morvern peninsula, using existing farm buildings.

And part of the application, a woodchip biomass plant to provide heat for the distillation process, received the all-clear last week. Environmental health technical officer Nick Thornton said: 'I am satisfied that the proposed biomass installation will not significantly impact upon local air quality. This is based upon the proposed stack height of 14m as per the permitted plans.'

The estate has submitted a separate application to create a hydro scheme nearby to provide power for the distillery. Project director Annabel Thomas told *The Oban Times* last month the craft distillery would mean at least seven additional jobs being created in the peninsula.

Off-sales licence clampdown

HIGHLAND Licensing Board is to clamp down on granting further off-sales licences to premises with an alcohol display area of over 40 square metres.

The new policy will take effect from December 1 and last for three years, unless changed by the board.

The move follows shock figures showing drink-related hospital admissions exceed the Scottish average in half the council's 22 electoral wards. Thirty three grocery outlets and supermarkets in the Highlands have an alcohol sales area of more than 40 square metres, the biggest being over 370 square metres in a supermarket. Around 234 off-sales grocery stores have sales areas lower than the threshold. Board convener Maxine Smith said there was 'compelling evidence' of over-provision of alcohol sales outlets in the Highlands.

She added: 'Licensing is one of the many ways that we tackle alcohol abuse and improve the health of our local communities.'

Argyll digs deep for typhoon appeal

BIG-HEARTED Argyll folk have responded to the appeal for aid in the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan.

The storm, known in the Philippines as Yolanda, has killed thousands of people and left millions more without food, water, shelter or electricity.

Appin woman Ali MacLeod is the director of fundraising and marketing for Mercy Corps Scotland, a global humanitarian organisation, and has issued an urgent appeal for donations to help people in the Philippines.

She said: 'Cash donations will help us to buy the items we need close to the disaster site, avoiding the high cost and difficulty of sorting, shipping, storing, and importing the goods.'

'By purchasing materials in nearby markets, we can purchase exactly what is needed, support local economies and businesses and get aid to those who need it more quickly, and ultimately use our funds more effectively and wisely.'



Ali MacLeod. t48ali1no

She added: 'We are focusing on providing immediate, lifesaving assistance while keeping in mind longer-term recovery.'

'We are working with partners to immediately evaluate distribution needs of non-food items including shelter, hygiene kits, and water.'

'The needs are great and there is a very real threat of disease out-breaks. There is also growing concern about new storms in the region. They are nowhere near as powerful as Haiyan but with so many so vulnerable, further misery is inevitable.'

Meanwhile, the Rotary Club of Oban has donated two Shelter Boxes at a cost of £590 each to the emergency aid appeal.

A complete Shelter Box will provide a family with shelter and other vital equipment they need to survive after a disaster and start rebuilding their lives. Donations can be made at shelterbox.org.

The Oban Times reported last week of Margaret Campbell-Black's relief on hearing that her mum, Oban woman Tess Campbell had survived the storm.

Margaret and family friend Ann Rowan are trying to raise money to support the relief effort in Lawaan, Eastern Samar, where Tess was when Yolanda struck. Tess is also hoping to give 3,000 children there a Christmas Day - providing food and a small gift for them.

Margaret and Ann are holding a fundraising event in Oban's Corran Halls on December 12 with Zumba, a raffle and fun for children. Donations can also be made in McConechy's and Dolce Vita. You can donate to Mercy Corps at www.mercycorps.org.uk or by calling 0131 662 5173.



Lewis McKay of P1C tries out the doctor talkbag for size, while Erinn Higgins of the P1 Gaelic medium class takes a turn with the vet bag. 15_148rockfield1

Innovative new project helps Rockfield pupils with writing

INNOVATIVE new 'talk bags' are helping pupils at Rockfield Primary School with their writing, by encouraging them to talk about a subject and explore language.

Themed bags have been filled with props to inspire conversation between children and their parents after school, with microphones included in each one to allow the fun homework assignment to be recorded.

Yet, doctor, pop-star and even fairy tale bags are among those being sent home, with the children talking about the subject and participating in role-play games at home.

By exploring more expressive language in

discussing the bags, the children become more articulate, which makes them better prepared for writing.

The bags were created by the school and parents, while Lyndsay Elliot, a member of the parent council, sourced funding from Awards for All to buy the bags and microphones.

The school's Catriona Garvin said: 'We find we're very good at functional language with children, such as 'go here' or 'can you do this please' but we don't do so much with expressive language.'

'We talked with the parents and they thought their kids would be more interested in functional talk bags.'

Fort William Sheriff Court

A DRUNKEN tourist entered a family's holiday cottage in Glencoe in the middle of the night, took off his clothes and climbed into bed with a sleeping 12-year-old boy.

And Allan Beattie was so drunk he had soiled himself when the horrified youngster woke up and discovered him.

The 30-year-old sales manager had been drinking at the Clachaig Inn before trying to make his way back to the Red Squirrel Campsite, where he was staying with his father, in the early hours of August 25.

But, defence solicitor Hamish Melrose said, he became disorientated and instead ended up at the nearby Glencoe Mountain Cottages.

Beattie spent time in the dining room and kitchen before making his way to the bedroom where four youngsters aged between 12 and 14 were sleeping. Fort William Sheriff Court was told.

Depute fiscal Laura Ryan said: 'The child woke up at around 5.40am and found a person beside him in a seated position, and there was a smell of faeces.'

'Beattie was wearing only his hooded top and not wearing anything from the waist down. His lower half was covered in excrement.'

The child quickly ran for his mother, who phoned police when she found Beattie in the bed.

Miss Ryan said when officers arrived soon after they found Beattie in a 'confused and intoxicated' state.

She added: 'There is nothing to suggest there was any sexual element to this.'

Mr Melrose said Beattie had 'no recollection' of the night's events.

He said: 'He doesn't remember leaving the Clachaig Inn because clearly he had had far, far too much to drink. He is completely ashamed of what happened.'

Beattie, of 41 Leith Walk, Edinburgh, pled guilty to conducting himself in a disorderly manner by entering the cottage, defecating on the floor and climbing into bed with the child while naked and covered in faeces.

Fining Beattie £600, Sheriff Noel McPartlin told him: 'It is clear the family here would have been extremely distressed, alarmed and disgusted. It is a very serious example of abusive behaviour.'

A FORT William woman has admitted claiming more than £2,000 in benefits after failing to tell the authorities she started a new job.

Roxanne Simpson, of 22 Young Place, pled guilty to failing to tell Highland Council she was working at the Travelodge Hotel, claiming £1,169 in housing benefit and council tax between January 14 and May 12 to which she was not entitled.

The 25-year-old also admitted failing to inform the Department of Work and Pensions of her job, falsely obtaining £864 in employment support between January 10 and March 11.

Sheriff Noel McPartlin called for reports, with sentencing deferred until December 18.

LEAVING threatening voicemail messages on his ex-girlfriend's phone nearly landed a Claggan man in jail.

Martin Black left eight voicemails on the woman's

phone on September 28, and among the swearing and insults were threats to 'burst' her and two others if she came back from Inverness to Fort William.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard the pair had split up after a short relationship which lasted only two months.

The 33-year-old hotel worker had been drinking that night and had since apologised to the woman on several occasions, defence solicitor Stephen Kennedy said.

Ordering him to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work, Sheriff Noel McPartlin told Black: 'The messages you sent contain extremely violent and frightening language. It is with some hesitation I won't proceed to a custodial sentence.'

Black, of 24 Carn Dearg Road, pled guilty to sending telephone messages of a grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing character.

A KINLOCHLEVEN woman has been fined £100 after assaulting her then-lodger.

Kim Farbon admitted biting the teenager on the arm during an incident outside a Leven Road house on April 15.

The 49-year-old also pled guilty to throwing a brick at her victim and his female friend.

And Farbon admitted repeatedly kicking the door of the house and verbally abusing her victim by shouting and swearing at him.

Farbon, of 7 Lochaber Road, claimed she had been assaulted by two people during the incident, Fort William Sheriff Court heard.

AN ELDERLY tourist caused a head-on collision on the A82 in Fort William after falling asleep behind the wheel.

Glasgow man John McCluskey pled guilty to driving without due care and attention on Achintore Road on July 14.

Fiscal Laura Ryan told Fort William Sheriff Court the 75-year-old's Ford Focus had swerved onto the opposite side of the road 'for no apparent reason' and hit a 4x4 vehicle which was travelling in the opposite direction.

She said: 'Mr McCluskey suggested the accident happened through tiredness. He thinks his eyes may have closed while he was driving.'

Miss Ryan said both cars suffered extensive damage in the crash.

McCluskey and his wife, who was a passenger in the car, were both taken to Belford Hospital for treatment to minor injuries. The driver of the other car was unhurt.

Sheriff Noel McPartlin fined McCluskey, of 19 Banton Place, Easterhouse, £200 and gave him six penalty points on his licence.

A MALLAIG man accused of threatening to kill a man in the village on two separate occasions is due to stand trial at Fort William Sheriff Court on December 2.

William Grant, of 22 Lovat Terrace, denies behaving in a threatening or abusive manner by making the threats on Station Road on August 6 and Annie's Brae on August 20.

The 61-year-old also denies driving his car onto the pavement at Annie's Brae where the man was walking and blocking his way, following the man along the street in his car and shouting at him.

Gigha rescue heroes honoured

TWO FISHERMEN who saved their crewmate's life - ensuring he was around to see the birth of his daughter - have been named Scotland's real heroes.

Darroch Fulton and Mark Sheldrick won the courage trophy in the RBS Finding Scotland's Heroes Awards.

The two men were fishing aboard the *Blue Angel*, off the coast of Gigha, in January 2011 when crewmate Sean Taylor was pulled overboard by an automatic creel shooter. Darroch, now a diver with Oban-based North West Marine, and skipper Mark, from Tayinloan, sprung into action. They winched Sean back to the boat and carried out CPR until an air ambulance arrived.

Two weeks later Sean was out of hospital to welcome his daughter Corrin into the world. The men relived the experience for an STV programme in which they featured alongside other finalists in the courage award.

The Scottish public voted for the most worthy winner and the men collected the award at a star-studded ceremony in Glasgow.



Real heroes Mark Sheldrick and Darroch Fulton are presented with their award by Claire Grogan and David Hayman.



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First Islay homes for rent in 30 years open

THE FIRST homes for rent to be built in Port Ellen, Islay for more than 30 years have been opened by island-based councillor Robin Currie.

The eight houses were built by M&K MacLeod Construction at a cost of just over £1m for social housing landlord Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA).

ACHA contributed £525,051 towards them but the remainder of the cost (£479,865) was made up by Argyll and Bute Council's Rural Housing Development Fund.

The Port Ellen project was the first to benefit from the fund, which was conceived by Councillor Currie and set up by the council in 2011 to create small housing projects in rural areas.

Councillor Currie, the council's housing spokesman, said: 'I am very proud to officially open these eight new homes and particularly so as they are the first to be completed using the Rural Housing Development Fund which I set up, and which helps provide homes in areas where, because of the extra cost, it would be extremely



Councillor Robin Currie officially opening the new properties for ACHA at Church Way, Port Ellen, Islay.

difficult to develop. The last houses built for rent in Port Ellen were more than 30 years ago and with the demand for houses exceptionally high - there are 14 families for every vacancy - the opening of those homes is a significant milestone in addressing the housing situation. The properties are four three-bedroom houses and four two-bedroom flats.

Mike Brown, chairman of ACHA's board of management, welcomed the Rural Housing Development Fund and said ACHA planned to build 20 new homes for rent in Bowmore, on Islay in the spring of 2014.

Lorn Lines

FRIENDS of Oban Hospice are inviting residents in the town to remember someone special by sponsoring the hospice's annual Light up a Life.

This year's event will see the trees at the Corran Halls' gardens sparkle with memories and every sponsor will be recorded in the Light up a Life book.

The Light up a Life 2013 switch on will be held at the Corran Halls on December 10 at 7.30pm. The book will be available to view on the night and will be on display in Oban Library afterwards.

MEMBERS of the Lorn and Mid Argyll Members' Centre of the Scottish Wildlife Trust met recently to hear a talk by local member Pat Batty, entitled 'Dragonflies of Argyll'.

Pat is the Scottish Recorder for dragonflies and damselflies and has been studying these insects for more than 30 years. Most of the dragonflies and damselflies found in Scotland can be seen in Argyll, many of them close to Oban.

The next SWT evening lecture will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday December 19 at SAMS, Dunstaffnage, when local marine biologist and Sealife Adventures proprietor David Ainsley will speak on 'Watching wildlife without disturbance'.

OBAN Photographic Club enjoyed a good turnout last Monday for the first in-house judged competition of the winter season, an open competition for mounted prints.

First prize was won jointly by Edwina Aitken and Anthony Harris, beating a good number of excellent entries, both colour and monochrome.

The club meets at 7.30pm on Monday evenings at the Regent Hotel and would be delighted to see visitors or new members; experienced photographers or beginners are equally welcome.

□□□



Children from Happy House Nursery and Toddler group, Oban, raised £18.15 for Children in Need by dressing up and decorating spotty cakes for sale.

□□□

MEDICINAL 'weeds' were the topic up for discussion at the recent meeting of the Lorn Garden Club.

Clare Hoolihan, medical herbalist from Lochaline, fascinated members with an insight into her unusual line of work at their November meeting.

She inspired people to make potions from chickweed and to learn to love broom and horsetail. Many of the weeds found in gardens are medicinal along with a few common garden plants.

Clare pointed out 'tinctures' are more popular than teas and also happen to be alcoholic. Seaweed is one of the best fertilisers, particularly from the top of the beach.

pot marigolds are called that because they are intended for the cooking pot and if anyone is despondent about their inability to grow Achinacea, it's because it comes from the desert and won't thrive in Argyll.

She added: 'If everyone ate nettles we'd be a healthier nation.'



Councillor Aileen Morton, left, with children, staff and parents at Stramash Outdoor Nursery. 16_148nursery01

Hopes for more outdoor nurseries in Argyll

IT IS a nursery where children can run and play - they fall but pick themselves up and dust themselves off - now a councillor in charge of education wants to see the format rolled out across Argyll.

Stramash Outdoor Nursery, based at Ganavan, Oban, allows three to five-year-olds the freedom of the outdoors in which to learn. The youngsters learn through play, using tools including hammers and nails to create different crafts.

Morag Head, nursery manager, says it is all about having fun with the kids and not 'molly coddling' them. She said: 'We

have got to meet every outcome for the curriculum for excellence that an indoor nursery has to meet but we do it through using the outdoors.

'Every aspect the kids can achieve through being out and about and using natural materials. I'd love to see it across Argyll, I'd love to see an outdoor school as well.'

Opened

Councillor Aileen Morton visited the nursery last week to see how things are run as she hopes one can be opened in her hometown of Helensburgh.

She said: 'I think it is a great model. It is

the kind of thing that could be rolled out across Argyll and Bute. This is a stunning setting but there are lots of places in Argyll and Bute that are equally stunning and equally suitable.

'It is just the chance for kids to be outdoors. Even kids that go to a standard indoor nursery can come to Stramash one day a week.'

'This is a chance for children to learn that they don't just learn in a classroom and need to take the opportunities to learn wherever they can.'

'It would be great to see it offered as a choice to more families.'

Jailed on drug supply charges

SHOCKWAVES were sent through Tyndrum last week after a former resident was jailed for being involved in supplying up to £1.5million of cocaine from the tiny village.

Hugh Young, 41, appeared at Glasgow High Court last Wednesday after previously pleading guilty to being concerned in the supply of cocaine worth between £312,000 and £1.5million between October 1 and November 12 last year. He also pled guilty to the production of cannabis, which was found growing at the Tyndrum home he has since left. He was ordered to spend 44 months in prison for supplying cocaine and 24 months for growing and dealing cannabis - with both sentences to run concurrently.

The conviction is thought to be the first of its kind in Scotland and possibly the UK as Young didn't actually possess any cocaine. Instead, officers traced a 60lb package of the pharmaceutical drug benzocaine, which police established as most likely imported from China, to his Tyndrum address. It was shipped in containers marked as the food thickener, sodium alginate.

Young had initially argued the substance was to be used for a biofuel business he was setting up but faced with police evidence, including phone records indicating the substance was to be mixed with cocaine, he pled guilty. Residents of the tiny village, which has a population of just under 170, were shocked but not surprised by the conviction.

One said: 'He wasn't someone people warmed to. I think most tried to stay away from him



Hugh Young, who pled guilty to being involved in the supply of cocaine.

and there were rumours about him but nobody really believed them.

'He wasn't in the village for long.'

Another said: 'I'm not naive enough to think there's no drugs in Tyndrum, but not Class A drugs. That's surprising.'

'People who met him were put off him straight away.'

Detective Chief Inspector Gordon Crossan, from Police Scotland's specialist crime division, said: 'The sentence reflects the serious nature of his crimes and the commitment of both Police Scotland and COPFS in removing those involved in drug crime from our communities.'

'As well as securing a conviction, this investigation acts as a precedent for future cases where suspected dealers are caught in possession of significant quantities of mixing agent but no controlled substances, making it easier to secure convictions.'

Volunteers raise £2,000 festive lights cash

KILMALLIE will be shining bright this coming festive season after a group of local volunteers raised more than £2,000 to pay for Christmas lights.

Local residents were told 2012 would be the last Highland Council would pay for Christmas trees and lighting as a result of cutbacks, leaving the community to decide if they wanted to do it themselves, or face a bleak Christmas in Banavie, Tomonie and Corpach.

Kilmallie Community Council sent out a survey with their newsletter at the start of the year to gauge interest in community-run Christmas lights.

And after a positive response, a group of volunteers set up a small committee to raise the total of more than £1,500 necessary to pay for the decorations.

Kilmallie Christmas Lights Group treasurer Sue Hood told *The Oban Times*: 'The response was people wanted it to carry

on if it was possible. We're just delighted we managed to raise enough money.'

Now two Christmas trees are being erected - one at Banavie, another in Corpach - as well as festive lights in Corpach.

Tremendous

Mrs Hood continued: 'We wrote letters to all the businesses in the area asking if they would be able to make a donation and the response was tremendous.'

'We've also received some do-

nations and we've had collection boxes in local shops and pubs which have done well.'

The big switch-on of the lights will be held at Kilmallie Community Centre on Friday December 6 from 7pm, with carol singing and music from Lochaber Schools Wind Band.

Local charity STAR for Harris has got involved as well and will be providing tea, coffee and festive baked goods in the hall on the night.

Annual craft fair

INVERGARRY will be holding its annual craft fair in Glengarry Community Hall on Saturday December 7 from 10.30am until 3.30pm.

Items on sale include a wide selection of crafts, cards and cakes, woollen goods and jewellery from up and down the Great Glen.

The café will be open from 10am and there will be a craft area for children.

Ceilidh celebrates Skye college link

A COMMUNITY ceilidh and dance in Duisdale Hall on Saturday will celebrate the friendship and ties that have grown between the people of Sleat and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig since the college was established 40 years ago.

Local musicians and singers, along with SMO students, will entertain at '40 Bliadhna a' Fàs' (40 Years of Growth), which begins at 7.30pm. A dance at

10pm will follow where a house band made up of students from the college will play. The night is being organised by the Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative (CDI) and all ticket proceeds will go to the initiative and the SMO student association.

Looking forward to the night, CDI chairman and SMO lecturer Mark Wringe said: 'Locals from Camuscross and Duisdale have

been enabled to stay, bring up families and revitalise their language through finding employment in the college.'

'Sleat and the college have been in and out of each other's doors for 40 years. But if there's any special spot where it's right to have a party to celebrate the bond, it's our wee patch in Isleornsay, Camuscross and Duisdale.'

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CONNEL

PLANS have been submitted to build eight flats just off the A828 in Connel. MacLeod Construction has submitted an application to build four two-bedroom flats and four one-bedroom flats on ground between the junction with the A828 and the Connel-Oban back road. A former railway goods yard, the development will have room for 11 car parking spaces and access will be provided along an existing road.

CONNEL charity the Roses Charitable Trust has become one of the first charities to receive a cheque from the ScotRail Foundation, netting £3,150.

Established in May, the foundation will distribute £100,000 by its first birthday. Its donation to the Roses Charitable Trust will be used to offer a one-week outdoor activity course for up to 10 young carers.

The charity, which has a base on Mull, delivers challenging residential, personal development and outdoor activity courses for groups of disadvantaged young people. The range of activities it provides includes abseiling, kayaking, rock climbing, navigation tuition and gorge walking.

Jane Sayer, company secretary for the trust, said: 'We are extremely grateful to receive this support from the ScotRail Foundation. It will allow us to bring more young carers to Mull to take part in our courses which are designed to boost their self confidence and skills while giving them a break. Applying to the ScotRail Foundation is straightforward and didn't take long to complete. I would certainly recommend making an application to any other community group looking to secure additional help.'

The deadline for the next round of applications to the ScotRail Foundation is Friday January 17. Groups interested in submitting an application should contact Foundation Scotland on 0141 341 4960 or visit www.foundationScotland.org.uk/scotrail.

BARRA

AUTHORS Jonathon Meres and Mairi Hedderwick visited Barra recently to read some of their stories to Eoligarry

Primary School pupils as part of National Book Week.

Jonathan talked to the pupils about his former career as a comedian and his transition into a best-selling author. After his humorous talk, he spoke about his new book, *May Require Batteries*.

The school's P1-3 pupils travelled to Castlebay the following day to hear Coll's Mairi Hedderwick read aloud from her new book, *Katie Morag and the Big Boy Cousins*.

ARISAIG

TWO EVENTS are being held in Arisaig to help locals get into the festive spirit.

A Christmas craft and produce fair is being held in Astley Hall from 3pm to 7pm today (Thursday), with plenty of local gifts on sale.

And the Land, Sea and Islands Centre will be hosting the second Christmas Cheer event next Thursday from 2pm to 7pm, for anyone interested in doing some Christmas shopping with a glass of mulled cider in hand.

EASDALE

THE RBLS Easdale Branch Poppy Collection raised £1,578 this year, an increase on last year's total.

Organisers thank all the helpers who collected door to door and all the community who donated to help raise the sum.

A total of £1,176 was raised on Seil and Luing and £402 from Kilninver and Kilmelford.

SLEAT

A RESEARCHER and academic at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic college in Sleat, has won the Saltire Society's Scottish First Book of the Year award.

Tim Armstrong received the prize for *Air Cuan Dubh Drilseach* (On a Glittering Black Sea) at the society's awards night in Glasgow last week.

His book, the first Gaelic science fiction book for adults, was named joint winner alongside Eunice Buchanan with her collection of short stories, *As Far As I Can See*.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig principal Professor Boyd Robertson was 'delighted' Tim's skills had been recognised at a national level.



Firefighters' surprise medal presentation

WITH more than 40 years service to the Scottish Fire and Rescue between them, crew commander Iain Cruickshanks and firefighter Alasdair MacLachlan are not used to surprises.

But on Wednesday November 13, deputy crew commander Michael Fothergill and their six fellow firefighters managed to throw a surprise party for them.

With proud family and friends joining them, they were presented with their long service

LUING

The time and dedication of the Luing volunteers has been matched by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue which invested into the island by building a fully equipped station with appliance in 2001.

Michael Fothergill presented the medals on behalf of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to Iain and Alasdair, thanking them for the dedication and service they give to the island and the support they give their colleagues. t47uing1no



School helps cook celebrate 60th birthday

It was all smiles at Ballachulish Primary School last week as pupils and staff helped school cook Gina Donoghue celebrate her 60th birthday. Head teacher Sam Clark said: 'We did not know until the day before and we had to rush out and buy a card. Gina is very popular with the children and she always makes sure they eat their veg!' Ms Donoghue has worked at the school for 17 years.

FORT WILLIAM

STEPHEN Marshall, manager of the local Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), was guest speaker at this month's meeting of Fort William SWRI.

He explained each Bureau is a locally funded charity and a member of Citizen's Advice Scotland which is based in Edinburgh. The main funding is provided by the local authority, from whom the bureau is completely independent. Other funding is from smaller grants for specific projects.

Eighty per cent of the staff is made up of volunteers and the rest are full time and part time employees, specialists in their field.

The service provided by CAB is free, confidential, independent, impartial and assessable to all comers and aims to empower the clients to decide their course of action.

Using Citizen's Advice Scotland's online comprehensive information system, reference books and outside agencies, CAB aims and succeeds in answering almost all enquiries. When unable to do so they will try to find an external information source.

The local bureau is a very busy office. In the year 2012-2013, 4,890 contacts were made by the public and 14,049 issues dealt with. They were able to get more than £1million of unpaid money and benefits for clients. The biggest workload, 80 per cent, is made up of benefit and debt enquiries followed by employment, housing/homelessness, consumer relationship, legal issues and everything in between. An outreach service is available once a month in Kinlochleven and Mallaig.

An important part of their remit, through social policy, is raising issues, nationally, that are of particular concern and possible injustices for the general public.

After a lively discussion and question session, Mr Marshall was thanked for his enlightening talk by Isobel McGavin.

Hallowe'en Mask competition: 1 Edythe Knowles; 2 Hilary Dennis. The raffle was won by Eileen Cameron.

The next meeting is in Inverlochly Hall at 7.15pm on Monday December 2 and will take the form of a members' evening.

Down Your Way

Kinlochleven

KINLOCHLEVEN Community Trust (KCT) has announced the names of local amateur photographers whose snaps of scenes round Loch Leven are featuring in its 2014 calendar. There was no open competition this year because so many entries had been received over the previous five so judge, KCT chairman and local councillor Andrew Baxter was handed the task of picking out the 12 best photographs - one for each month.

Winners are: January - Ian Morrison; February - Ian Fraser; March - Lesley Woollacott; April - Graham Lawrie; May - Shannon Hartley; June - Allan Ferguson; July - David Collins; August - Alan Senior; September - Dougie McClymont; October - Nick McKeown; November - Mervyn James; December - Leslie Donald.

The calendars are on sale at the KCT office and Kinlochleven Post Office, price £2.99. All proceeds go towards trust activities and projects.



KINLOCHLEVEN joiner Gary MacDonald has won a record nine Scottish motorcycle trials bike titles - eight of those consecutively. Now the ace on two wheels has switched to mountain biking over the close season and is making quite a name for himself.

At No Fuss Events' 'Dudes of Hazzard Enduro' at Kinlochleven on November 17, Gary, 29, came third in the pro category to claim a podium place to further boost his standing in the sport.

Gary told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm delighted because mountain biking is totally different from trials and it keeps me really fit.'

'It was great to get on the podium because there were 350 entries from all over Britain and even overseas.' Next big event for Gary



Gary MacDonald: mountain bike success.

will be the 'Strathpuffer' at Strathpeffer on January 18-19, where he will be competing as part of a four-man Fort-William based Nevis Cycles Racing Team.



THE FESTIVE season in Kinlochleven will get underway in earnest on Saturday December 7 when the Ice Factor hosts the annual Christmas Evening Festival.

Highlights of the 11am to 3pm event will be Santa and his reindeer arriving at midday and, once Rudolph and company have been tethered, Santa's grotto in the early afternoon.

A tombola, raffle and stalls will also feature while a family disco will be held in the Bothan Bar in the Ice Factor from 9pm till late.

Tickets to see Santa are available now from the Wee Charity Shop.



Kinlochleven High School geography teacher Donald Smith got a bit of his own medicine when he was 'teacherjerked' by pupil Jamie MacDonald in the school grounds. But it was all in a good cause as £406 was raised for Children in Need and the Phillipine Disaster Fund on the day.



KINLOCHLEVEN Community Council held its last meeting of 2013 earlier this month.

Members backed a project to renovate the village public toilets - now under community ownership - promising financial support as 'a long term investment'.

The community first responder unit for Kinlochleven is almost ready to go live with a unit of eight personnel expected to be operational early in the New Year. The Christmas lights are

almost ready to be put up for the festive season with a £600 donation from KCC boosting the Kinlochleven Christmas Lights Fund.

Meanwhile, KCC is asking the local community for ideas about improving areas of the village for locals and visitors. Anyone with suggestions should contact any of the committee.

Members wished everyone a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. First meeting in 2104 will be on Wednesday February 5.



LOCH LEVEN children are keeping fit and active in the dark winter days thanks to a gymnastics club in the Leven Centre.

Run by local Active Schools co-ordinators, the club regularly attracts around 40 kids every Wednesday, acting Leven Centre manager Eoghan Carmichael told *The Oban Times*.

Primary school children attend from 3.30-5pm with those from secondary school enjoying tuition from 5-7pm.

Next week Down Your Way visits Appin and Duror with Euan Paterson. Contact Euan on 01631 568000 or email epaterson@obantimes.co.uk.

STRONTIAN

AWARD-winning writer Jenni Fagan will be reading from her debut novel 'The Panopticon' at the Sunart Centre, Strontian, tomorrow evening. Ms Fagan, who has been selected as one of publisher Granta's best young British novelists, will also be answering questions from the audience at the free event, which starts at 7pm.

GLENELG

NOMINATIONS for a contest for the best photographs of Glenelg and Arnisdale close this Saturday.

There are three categories in the Community and Scotland competition - people, land and other aspects of the area. For more information, visit www.communitylandscotland.org.uk.

APPIN

APPIN SWRI president Linda MacLeod welcomed everyone to Appin Hall on November 8 for the annual whist drive.

Cardmaster Alan MacKenzie got the whist underway and after the first half everyone everyone enjoyed a break for tea. While the scores were being checked, the raffle was drawn and Linda thanked all those who had helped arrange such an enjoyable evening, which raised £230 for SWRI funds.

Prizewinners: Ladies: 1 E Cameron; 2 Carol Livingstone. Consolation - Shona Bryson; Travelling prize - Jessie MacKenzie. Gents: 1 Mary MacNeill; 2 Christine Jackson. Consolation - Ross MacDonald; Travelling prize - Doreen Evans. Longest sitter - Shona Bryson.



Lady Lovat Primary School Pupils box clever for appeal

Lady Lovat Primary School in Morar recently collected 26 boxes for the annual Blythswood Shoebox Appeal. The Christmas packages, along with thousands of others across Scotland, are being sent to needy families in Eastern Europe and Pakistan. The shoeboxes are packed with goods such as toiletries, toys, sweets, stationery and underwear. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Christian charity's appeal, which began in during the war in the former Yugoslavia.



Strath of Appin teamwork sees pupils put finishing touches to clan totem poles

Pupils at Strath of Appin Primary School have been putting the finishing touches to their clan totem poles. The totem poles will be added to the banners and shields the youngsters have already created to help them learn teamwork and co-operation through clan challenges. It has been messy but fun as the children have pulled together their ideas to create a totem pole representing their clan but also incorporating their interests and the area and environment they live in.

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This could be a helping hand towards your Christmas shopping or a present to yourself for being good this year. Just imagine being able to put even more Christmas presents under the tree for your friends and family to enjoy.

To enter, simply collect five tokens
The final token will be printed next week along with full details on how to enter this fantastic competition.

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Terms and conditions: The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. The winner must take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvex Media publication and website. The competition is not open to Wyvex Media and associated company employees and their families. The winner must be aged over 18 years and provide proof of age. The winner must collect the prize in person at Tesco, Oban on an agreed date provided by The Oban Times. Digital subscribers can enter by printing the pages and cutting out the tokens and submitting their entry with the supplied entry form (printed Dec 5) accompanied by a letter explaining that you are a digital subscriber.

Harris charity wins £3,000 bank grant

A LOCHABER charity set up by a Corpach couple in memory of their 17-month old son Harris has won £3,000 for its work from the Bank of Scotland. Allan and Tanya Ross found out on Tuesday they had won the bank's community fund grant in a public poll. Tanya told *The Oban Times*: 'It's amazing that we got 57 per cent of the vote. We'd like to pass on a huge thanks to everyone who voted online, by phone or in the bank.' Meanwhile, Lochaber boxer Mark Curtis has raised over £640 for the charity by running up Ben Nevis. His feat was also in memory of his friend Drew Ferguson, who was a big supporter of 'STAR for Harris'. The combined proceeds will go towards hospital music therapy for children suffering from cancer, Tanya said.

MSP returns to political duties

SKYE, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson has returned to political duties after undergoing successful brain surgery in August. Mr Thompson had a chronic bilateral subdural haematoma - bleeding between the skull and the brain - but has made 'an excellent recovery' following the operation. Following a recent MRI scan and subsequent advice from neurosurgeons, the MSP is back in parliament part-time with Mike MacKenzie MSP continuing to assist him with constituency business until his recovery is complete. He said: 'Thank you to all the kind folk that have treated me and cared for me while I have been recuperating. I am pleased to be returning to work in this historic week [of the independence White Paper launch].'



Dave Thompson MSP.



Tribute to a young airman: Brian Mullins shows off 'Spitfire Sunrise' with Framing Place owner Allan Kinnear. 20_148spitfire01

Artist's new tribute to young fallen airman

SIX MONTHS ago a memorial was unveiled in Glen Nevis to a young Canadian airman whose Spitfire crashed into a Lochaber mountainside during the Second World War.

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

Now another lasting tribute has been created - a beautiful painting of the fighter, John Donald MacDonell was flying on his last reconnaissance mission. 'Spitfire Sunrise, in Memoriam 16th May 1943', by Lochaber artist Brian Mullins, captures the aircraft flying over Ben Nevis under a low morning sun. Flying officer MacDonell died when his aircraft exploded in a fireball on Meall an t-Suidhe below Ben Nevis on that fateful day. Not only does the work commemorate the 21-year-old and his machine - proceeds from its upcoming auction through Lochaber Archaeological Society, possibly in Fort William, will go to Highland Hospice.

The gift idea was born after discussions between Mr Mullins and Allan Kinnear, owner of High Street business The Framing Place, where the painting will hang until the sale. Ex-RAF pilot Mr Mullins, 62, chose the cancer charity after previously walking round the entire Morvern coastline in aid of Maggie's Centres. That fundraiser was prompted by his partner Vicki's diagnosis in 2008 with breast cancer, from which she has almost fully recovered. Now Mr Mullins, from Drimmin near Lochaline, is determined to do more to help those affected by the disease - while honouring the young Canadian flyer.

moderately successful. Most of my work concern aircraft, ships and steam railways with landscapes now and then.'

Mr Kinnear told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a one off and it is a very beautiful painting. Brian has done it proud. We took it down to West Highland Museum and they thought its value should be at least £1,000.' He added: 'We would like to get the Canadians involved in the auction as well - so it is possible the painting could end up in Canada, maybe even John MacDonell's home town of Smithers in British Columbia.'

Lochaber Archaeological Society chairman Robert Cairns, who organised the unveiling of the memorial in Glen Nevis on May 16, said arrangements for the auction were being made. Options include a Fort William sale, the Highland Hospice annual dinner and auction early next year in Inverness, or a specialist military auction with a global reach.

He said: 'It is a fantastic painting and a wonderful tribute to the young pilot who died. It would be nice to keep the original in Fort William and if somebody local could buy it for £1,000 I would be delighted.'

Song and dance over tycoon's Mallaig village hall plan

SIR CAMERON Mackintosh looks set stand by his proposed harbourside development in Mallaig following a surge of support on social media. The theatre impresario plans to replace Mallaig's old village hall created a real song and dance in the port after they were lodged with Highland Council. The multi-millionaire wants to create a £750,000 crannog-style building including toilets and showers for Mallaig marina, two residential units and a retail space with a food and drink sales area - including a hot food takeaway. Objections followed from local food outlets concerned about loss of trade. Residents also lodged complaints over loss of car parking and sea views.

But Sir Cameron's spokesman Andrew Aitchison told *The Oban Times* yesterday: 'The silent majority is now making its voice heard. There has been a response to the negative coverage and a lot of support has been coming through on social media. People have been writing to Sir Cameron expressing their disappointment and dismay that yet again his efforts to do something for Mallaig have been questioned without understanding what's intended by this project.' He added: 'Sir Cameron's intention is that the hot food area would be a village bakery which would not be in competition with local businesses and would complement them. A conclusion needs to be reached on how and whether the project goes ahead but we have been buoyed by the amount of support from within the community.'

Michele Milligan of the Steam Inn objected she would need to pay off staff, but Jacqueline MacVarish hit back on a social networking site: 'If people start turning against him I reckon this will be the last time he supports Mallaig.'

South Lochs residents seek 'amicable purchase' of land

SOUTH Lochs residents on Lewis have decided not to pursue a hostile purchase of the land they live on through the courts. At a public meeting in Graver last Friday, Paicr Trust instead agreed to seek an 'amicable purchase' of Paicr Estate from owner Barry Lomas. Of the 60 people present, 56 voted in favour to buy to buy the land and lease from the estate for £500,000, with an offer to be made immediately. The trust will consult the community again on the precise terms through meetings and a final ballot before any legal documents are signed. Trust chairman Angus McDowall said he was 'confident' the purchase could be 100 per cent funded by the Scottish Land Fund and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The community stands to benefit from a wind farm planned on the estate.

Leisure centre bollard hazard prompts call for colour change

MOTORISTS have been left with huge repair bills after crashing into invisible traffic bollards at Lochaber Leisure Centre in Fort William. And local councillor Thomas MacLennan is demanding the grey-coloured columns be brightened up to help unsuspecting drivers. He told *The Oban Times*: 'I have had at least three reports of people telling me about their cars getting damaged by the bollards. I was speaking to a pensioner recently who had £2,000 damage done to his car when he drove off. And another car reversed into a bollard so harshly he set the airbag off in his car. I know they are there to protect pedestrians and for traffic calming but motorists are not seeing them and they need to be more clearly delineated. 'Painting them high visibility yellow or with a reflective surface would be an option - leaving them dull battle-ship grey is something that should not be allowed to carry on.' Highlife Highland Lochaber Leisure Centre manager Gary Davidson said: 'There are discussions ongoing about painting the bollards and getting six of them lit. A Highland Council architect is looking at various solutions and we are hoping to get something done in the near future.'

Wind band winter concert

LOCHABER High School Wind Band will hold its winter concert at the Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church in Fort William next Wednesday at 7.30 pm. The concert will feature over 70 of Lochaber's finest young wind and percussion players. Items on the programme include original works for wind and big bands, classics from Queen and the Police and highlights from Les Miserables. Free tickets are available from the Lochaber High School office. Everyone is invited to come along and support the area's young musical talent.

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Dancers to strut their stuff in Scottish show

Dancers from the Oban and Lorn area will be strutting their stuff in a selection of Scottish-themed dances at the Corran Halls to help mark St Andrew's Day. Four dance classes, ranging from ballet to hip-hop, will line up in the Atlantis St Andrew's Dance Show this Saturday from 2pm. Part of the Oban Winter Festival, the dance show has obtained funding from the St Andrew's Charitable Trust. 15_148atlantis01

New end-of-life care programme launched in rural Argyll

A NEW health strategy aimed at keeping Argyll's palliative care patients in their own homes has been launched this week. Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP) has joined forces with Marie Curie Cancer Care to develop the area's Delivering Choice Programme (DCP) for more than 800 people in the county requiring end-of-life care. Part of the Reshaping Care for Older People strategy, the move aims to ensure patients in the area are not disadvantaged by their rural location. The new plan will see Marie Curie nurses providing a mix of short and long visits to patients' homes during the day, evening and overnight; an improvement to carers' information and training; events and roadshows raising awareness of death, dying and bereavement; and supporting palliative care in care homes and in people's own homes. Launching the programme at Loch Fyne Hotel, Inveraray on Monday, Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell said: 'This programme will make a huge difference to those patients and families with a palliative care need. It's an excellent example of local care providers working together to create local sustainable solutions to address challenging problems in the design and delivery of effective healthcare.'

Highland hotel chain donates £1.2m

A HOTEL chain which has its heart in the Highlands of Scotland has handed over £1.2 million to help children battle cancer. The Crerar Hotels Trust, funded by Crerar Hotel Group, has pledged the money to CLIC Sargent for its Homes from Home relocation appeal. Homes from Home provide free accommodation for children, young people and their families near major treatment centres. CLIC Sargent launched the £3 million appeal earlier this month following news that children's hospitals in Edinburgh and Glasgow were moving to new locations. Paddy Crerar, trust chairman, said: 'It is great for our folk in the hotels to see their hard work and efforts helping people in their own communities as well as those from throughout the whole of Scotland. It's been totally humbling to discover how many families have used these Homes from Home, while living through such an unimaginable challenge. It's impossibly tough for the kids who have to fight cancer, but the whole family is affected and that's why doing something to help a whole family is so important. Ellen Finlayson, CLIC Sargent's assistant director added: 'Without support the charity wouldn't be able to move its Homes from Home, and young cancer patients and their families would not be able to benefit from the service so close to the hospital.' Mr Crerar received a special key from Kelsee Grant, aged three, who stayed at CLIC Villa earlier this year after she was diagnosed with leukaemia. Kelsee's mum Louise said: 'CLIC Villa was a godsend for us. It made a drastic difference, as we would otherwise have had to make frequent two-hour round trips at rush hour from our home in West Lothian. Although Kelsee was scared of the hospital, she loved going to CLIC Villa, her room, all the toys and the staff, who are lovely. It is a safe house for her.'

The Oban Bay Hotel and Spa, Isle of Mull Hotel and Spa, Loch Fyne Hotel and Spa and Glencoe Inn are part of the Crerar Hotel Group that funds the trust.

Constituents urged to examine White Paper on referendum

THE LAUNCH of the Scottish Government's White Paper on independence took place on Tuesday and Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell is urging all his constituents to get a copy and read it. Mr Russell said: 'I know from my own work in the Argyll and Bute constituency that a large number of people want more information on independence before they make their mind up on how to vote in the referendum which is now just 10 months away. The Scottish Government promised that it would produce a comprehensive document that answers people's questions and made it clear what choices independence will bring. The document does all that but it does more too. You can secure a copy online at www.scotreferendum.com or ring 0300 012 1809 to have it sent to you free of charge. The paper is also downloadable as an eBook.

Sale will end family's link with shop

AN ISLAY family's 55-year association with a popular island shop is likely to end later this year after the current proprietor retires. Jimmy Campbell has built up his Bridgend Post Office and General Store over the past 39 years, having taken over from his parents in 1974. The family first took over the shop in 1958 after moving the short distance from Port Charlotte to Bridgend. The property is owned by Islay Estates, which has tasked property consultants CKD Galbraith to find a new tenant. It is hoped the new tenant will be chosen by the end of the year but with Mr Campbell's three children all living and working on the mainland, the 61-year-old shopkeeper is certain it won't stay in the family. He said: 'You can't stop the clock and the children are all on the mainland now. Anyway, I think 39 years is long enough!' Mr Camp-



Bridgend Post Office and General Store.

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CHRISTMAS is far too close already - and with just a few shopping days left before the day, you might already feel you're looking at getting your last-minute presents.

Nobody wants to be dashing down to the 24-hour garage at 11pm on Christmas Eve, faced with choosing between buying your loved ones spark plugs or window-wipers. If the thought counts, that choice proves there has been none.

So save yourself the hassle and start thinking now is your last-minute time.

MAKE A LIST

Get yourself started by making a list of who you still need to buy gifts for. It's a good idea to prioritise the list and set yourself a budget. Money can be tight at this time of year so it makes good sense not to exceed your budget. Pick a figure that doesn't leave you look miserly, but one that doesn't leave you out of pocket.

Looking online isn't ideal either. Yes, you might find something ideal, but the delivery could get held up in Christmas mail and the last thing you want to do is be checking your letterbox hourly for a 'missed package' slip.

THINK LOCAL

So get down to your local shops and see what they have. Think about who you are buying for and try to take inspiration from their character.

There's no point buying something just because you like it. Clothes too can be dodgy, you might think the top you choose would suit your chosen recipient, but they might think it merits a trip to the fashion police. Vouchers are a better bet in this case.

BE INSPIRED

Books, experience days, personalised jewellery or watches are always safe bets too, while perhaps you didn't consider booking a meal at their favourite restaurant, a pampering day at a hotel or spa, a holiday or even a back massager could be ideal. Everyone is different, after all.

But if you know the person, you'll know what they like, want or need and that should provide the perfect inspiration for you - and your local shops will always be able to meet your needs.



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Trio lined up for 'Ten Minute Talk'

THE ANNUAL 'Ten Minute Talk' evening of the Lochaber Local History Society has three speakers at the Ben Nevis Hotel next Thursday.

Mark Bowman will speak on plans to bring steam back to the Great Glen at the Invergarry Station Museum.

Robert Cairns is putting together a bid for funds to do an archaeological survey of Achnacarry from a wartime perspective - with interpretation boards explaining the importance of the area for commando training.

Finally, Roddy Mainland will be speaking on his latest project 'A Monumental Mission'. The evening gets underway at 8pm.

Heating oil stolen

A QUANTITY of heating oil was stolen from a property in West Laroach, Ballachulish between November 9 and 1.34pm last Saturday.

Anyone with knowledge of the incident should contact local police on 101 or the confidential line on 01397 702000.

Community council

SPEAN Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council will hold its December meeting in Spean Bridge Primary School next Tuesday at 7pm.

Items on the agenda include Roy Bridge sub-post office, Killiechonan woodland paths and Christmas celebrations.

Action group

NHS Highland is to set up an action group after failing to meet 'very challenging' infection control targets.

The move, to be announced to the NHS Highland board on Tuesday, will focus on reducing clostridium difficile and staphylococcus aureus infections.

Meanwhile, NHS Highland's financial position will also be raised at the meeting. At the end of October, the projected overspend was £8.5 million - a £1.1 million improvement on the previous year.

Other items to be raised at the board meeting include 'a possible major service redesign in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross' - thought to include a possible new hospital in Broadford or Portree - and an inspection of services for children and young people in Argyll and Bute.



Chief Inspector Derek Paterson and Inspector Neil Lumsden on the A82 at Glencoe with members of the new Fort William-based unit.

Police chiefs welcome road unit to Fort

POLICE chiefs have welcomed a new national roads policing unit to Fort William as a major commitment to road safety and ensuring a prompt response to major incidents.

The divisionally-based national trunk road patrol group - the first such specialist team to be based in Lochaber - will focus on keeping people safe on main local routes. Functions of the newly-formed unit, one of two based in the Highlands and Islands division out of 11 nationally, will include routine patrolling, attendance at incidents and the provision of specialist officers to assist fatal accident investigations.

Local commander for Lochaber, Lochalsh and Skye,

Chief Inspector Derek Paterson predicted 'direct benefits' to west central Highlands communities through a higher profile policing presence on the trunk road network. He said: 'I welcome the assistance the unit will provide to local policing through attendance at incidents thereby allowing local officers to spend more time in their communities.'

'In addition, they will provide a supplementary resource to identify, target and disrupt those criminals who use the road network for illegal activities.'

Highlands and Islands Road Policing Inspector, Neil Lumsden said the Fort William group had already attracted officers from

outwith the area keen to test their specialist skills in 'a brand new unit'. He said: 'It will allow us to have an even greater presence on the trunk roads in Lochaber, Argyll, Skye and Lochalsh with the primary aim of influencing driver behaviour and reducing casualties and fatalities on our roads. In addition, they will provide a supplementary resource to identify, target and disrupt those criminals who use the road network for illegal activities.'

'We already have a motorcyclist and a collision investigator in the team and I am looking forward to their skills and experience making a difference to the communities in this area.'

Crackdown on underage alcohol sales

POLICE are to launch a pre-Christmas crackdown on the sale of alcohol to underage youngsters in Lochaber.

Officers from Police Scotland Highland and Islands Division will carry out 'test purchase' operations involving 'a fully briefed teenager' under 18 over the next few weeks.

Under the scheme, a young person will enter licensed premises looking to buy booze.

If the proprietor does not ask their age and allows the sale they will be committing an offence, even if they claim they thought the buyer was 18.

However, if licence holders follow the law and ask the age of the test purchaser the youngsters will answer truthfully.

Anyone selling alcohol to a minor risks losing their license if they are caught, police warn.

Buzz surrounds launch of new Celtic myths board game

A NEW board game created in the West Highlands and based on traditional Celtic myths is to be launched in Fort William this Saturday.

Celtia - a multi-player, multi-board strategy game based on chess for two, three or four players - includes magic and questing on a landscaped board. It can also be joined together to create bigger games or include more players with additional landscape features.

Ballachulish man Simon Upton, who has been involved from the game's beginnings, told *The Oban Times*: 'It has been in development for around 28 years. It's gone through different stages of development, with many Skye and Lochalsh people involved in the project.'

Mr Upton said the aim was to create a 'mass-marketable' form of the game to help it spread across the world.



Simon Upton with the magical chess game Celta at a suitably mystical Ballachulish location.

Fun for all at Rotary Club festival

THE FESTIVE season in Fort William gets underway on Saturday with The Rotary Club of Lochaber Christmas Festival in the Nevis Centre.

The main event, a 74-stall designer craft and food fair gets underway from 10.30am.

A grand raffle, busker's corner, activity displays and, of course, Santa's Grotto are among the other many attractions.

Highlights include Santa and his reindeer with little elves, Fort William girls Charlie Barron, aged six, who is from Inverlochty, and Margaret Cummings, aged nine, from Achintore Road.

Santa's sleigh will leave from the Celtic Circle in The Parade at 11am and arriving at the Nevis Centre 15 minutes later.

Rotary president John Rosie

said: 'This is a showcase for the splendid crafts, artwork and food products that are created locally. I can promise everyone a great day out and an opportunity to buy great gifts and products on your own doorstep, with the knowledge that you are also supporting local charities and worthwhile causes.'

Lochaber Wind Band will play music on the day. Principal sponsor of this year's event is Ferguson Transport (Spean Bridge) Ltd.

Highland Council is funding the publicity material and Lochaber Housing Association is helping with the cost and construction of Santa's Grotto.

Mr Rosie said: 'The Rotary Club is indebted to all for their support.'

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Town eyecore to be transformed in council HQ

A FORT William eyecore is set to be transformed into new Highland Council office headquarters under a shake-up of services in Lochaber.

And if the former Fort William Secondary School on Achintore Road gets the thumbs up it would mean a further boost for the town's west end after years of decline.

The new hub would replace offices currently occupied by the council at Lochaber House, Fulton House and Tweeddale, all in Fort William High Street.

All main administrative offices, service point and registration offices

would transfer to Achintore Road. The move would see the council quit existing leased office space in Lochaber House and Fulton House when the new building is ready in 2016.

It would also allay criticisms of the £300,000-plus price tag to preserve, rather than demolish the category B-listed secondary school, which the council owns, last year.

Local councillor Brian Murphy told *The Oban Times*: 'The whole building has been stripped right back to the stone work. What's left is perfectly capable of being adapted

to take a modern interior. It retains the council offices in Fort William, which I think we all felt from our point of view was important for public access and for the footfall it would create for the High Street in economic terms.'

The radical relocation plan would involve relocating 104 staff and save £100,000 per year in running costs, according to council estimates.

However, a third office space on High Street, Tweeddale House, is more problematic. The council is locked into a lease until 2071, yet the building's upper two floors are

empty. The ground floor is sub-let to NHS Highland, but only until July 2014.

Keen to avoid being left with an expensive 'white elephant', the council will seek to buy the building and look at converting the upper two floors into flats.

Councillor Murphy said: 'That would be ideal because it would put more people into the High Street. There is massive space in there.'

Finance, housing and resources committee in Fort William were expected to approve the plan in Inverness yesterday (Wednesday).

'Dragon's Glen' winners presented with prizes

THE FOUR finalists from Lochaber Ideas Week entrepreneurs' competition 'Dragon's Glen' will be presented with their prizes in Fort William tomorrow.

Arisaig-based Anne Widdop of Fuze Ceremonies, Kieran Laureston of Gourmet Guides in Fort William, Mogs Blogs founder Morag Aitken from Banavie and Cheese Weasels Cuisine of Lochaber High School have been invited to attend the informal ceremony in the Ben Nevis Inn, Achintee.

In a take-off of the BBC show last week, local 'dragons', Finlay Finlayson, Sheila Rae and Douglas McDermott, together with Robert Muir of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, picked Fuze Ceremonies as the overall winner.

Ms Widdop scooped £1,000 cash, £1,000 worth of website design and hosting from event sponsors LamontDesign.

She also won Fort William Chamber of Commerce membership and business mentoring, plus support from Business Gateway.

Mr Muir also came up with a donation of £1,000 to 'Gourmet Guides'. The start-up company also won Fort William Chamber of Commerce membership and mentoring.

The week concluded with dinner and rewards ceremony in the Moorings Hotel in Banavie.

'Yes' campaigners hit the road

THE SKYE, Raasay and Lochalsh 'Yes' campaign will be hitting the road next week following the launch of the Scottish Government's White Paper on independence on Tuesday.

Public meetings across the area will feature presentations by local 'Yes' campaigners followed by question and answer sessions.

Press officer Ian Blackford, who will be one of the speakers, said the gatherings were open to all - not just 'Yes' voters.

An exciting future, a more just society and sustainable economic growth lay ahead with independence, he told *The Oban Times*.

He said: 'The debate over the next year is an opportunity for all of us to examine the kind of society we all wish to live in. We look forward to the public meetings in early December and beyond and trust that we can have a lively and informed debate exploring all aspects of the arguments for and against independence.'

Meetings are in Dornie Village Hall on Monday at 7pm and Kyle Village Hall at 8.30pm; Minginish Hall, Carbost on Tuesday at 7.30pm; Dunvegan Village Hall on Wednesday at 7pm and Waternish Community Hall at 8.30pm.

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Oban shines during winter festival

THE NEW lights proudly on display in McCaig's Tower seem to have lit up the hearts of Oban folk this week.

Residents of the town are sometimes guilty of failing to turn out and support local events but the apathy is distinctly lacking this week.

Hundreds of people have turned out for 2013's Oban Winter Festival. Even in the freezing cold people packed into the centre of town to see the reindeer parade and there must have been something that tickled the taste buds at the two food and drink markets - as 2,700 people can't be wrong.

Ballet West's showcase of a Winter Wonderland also brought imaginations alive in a packed Corran Halls.

And this outpouring of festive cheer is all down to a very small group of people, the festival organising committee. These dedicated and hardy souls haven't even taken this week off their full-time jobs - they're working on through to ensure there really is a winter wonderland for the residents of Oban. And so to them, and everyone involved with OWF, we say well done. But it's not over yet, this weekend promises a grand finale not to be missed.

GLASGOW LETTER

Glasgow Uist and Barra Association

FOLLOWING a successful annual reunion dinner dance in the Glynhill Hotel, Glasgow Uist and Barra Association held a concert to celebrate its 125th anniversary in Partickburgh Hall.

President Julia MacIsaac welcomed the audience and chairwoman for the evening, Seonag Monk, the well-known BBC Radio Nan Gaidheal presenter of Caithream Civil.

Piper Ross Campbell opened proceedings and in the first half the singers were Mary MacLean, Archie MacLean, Sineag MacIntyre and Cathy Ann MacPhee. The Fiona MacNeill School of Dance opened the second half and was followed by songs from Linda MacLeod and Maggie MacInnes, accompanied by son Calum on guitar, before Marybell MacDonald proposed the vote of thanks.

Margaret MacLeod and brother Donnie brought the evening to a close with a good selection of songs and banter.

Profits from the concert are to be shared between Gemma Steele's St Jerome's Orphanage in Kenya and the Maggie Centre.

Glasgow Skye Association

PREPARATIONS are well under way for the annual dinner, concert and dance of the Glasgow Skye Association which will take place in Glasgow University Union.

The dinner will be on Thursday December 5 at 7pm for 7.30pm and tickets must be booked by December 1, cost £30. Contact Karen Campbell 01786 832278 or skjcampbell@hotmail.com. Guest of honour this year is Kenneth MacLeod OBE, president of the UK Chamber of Shipping and chairman of Stenna Line UK.

At the concert the following evening, the artists will be singers Joy Dunlop, Ainsley Hamill, Donald Iain Brown and Norman MacKinnon, accordionist Stuart Cameron, Glasgow Skye Association Pipe Band and accompanist Alan Kitchen. Tickets for the concert cost £8 and for the dance £10. Deoch 'n Dorus will be playing at the dance.

Gaels ri Cheile

THIS Saturday is again Language Day at An Lochan on Mansfield Street when lessons in both Scottish and Irish Gaelic will take place from 10am to 4pm.

This will be followed at 8pm with an evening of music and dance in St Peter's Hall, Hyndland Street, Partick. Special guests for this event are Cathy Anne MacPhee and the group Turrailach. Cost £5.

Glasgow loves a party

GEORGE Square is the place to be as the city celebrates our patron saint.

A summary of the programme is as follows: Friday November 29 - Highland dancing at 6pm followed by dancing to Skipinnish at 8pm. Saturday November 30 - Storytelling with The Gruffalo at 1pm, fiddle workshop at 2pm, Williamwood Pipe Band and Highland dancers from 2.30pm to 5pm and then at 6.30pm Drums and Roses

will play before Face the West finish off the dancing for the evening from 7.30pm to 10pm. On Sunday December 1 there will be Scottish Storytelling from 12.30pm to 2pm and a showing of the film Brave from 2pm to 4pm. Gria, an all female four-piece band, will entertain from 6pm to 7pm, Lori McTear will sing from 7pm to 7.30pm and it will then be the turn of John Carmichael's band to provide the music for dancing until 10pm.

Congratulations

CONGRATULATIONS to the winners at the recent Scottish Gaelic Awards.

They included Beathag Mhoireasdan for Contribution to the World of Gaelic, Fiona Dunn for Work Place Initiative and the Campbells of Greepe for their splendid book 'Fonn'.

Mairi MacLeod

HER MANY friends in the city and beyond will be saddened to learn that Mairi MacLeod passed away at the end of last week.

Mairi, a retired police officer, coped bravely with a debilitating illness for 11 years. She was always full of fun and will be sadly missed. Her interment will take place on her beloved Isle of Skye at Dunvegan Cemetery at 11am on Friday November 29. There will be a service in St Columba's Church of Scotland, St Vincent Street, at 11am today (Thursday).

Diary dates

Thursday November 28: Comunn an Taobh-an-Iar, Haggis Supper, Ellangowan Social Club, 7.30pm. Scottish Music Concert, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 7.30pm.

Friday November 29: Eddi Reader, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 7.30pm. Cask Strength Ceilidh Band (Hamish Napier, John Somerville and Steve Fivey), St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm. Glasgow Loves a Party - see above.

Saturday November 30: St Andrew's Party with Phil Cunningham and Aly Bain, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 7.30pm. St Andrew's Day Concert with National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland, SEEC Auditorium, 3pm. Tolbooth, Stirling, 8pm - Dick Gaughan. Double bill concert with Paddy Callaghan Trio and Findlay Napier, St Andrew's in the Square, 7.30pm. Gaels ri Cheile - see above.

Tuesday December 3: Live at the Star, Admiral Bar, 72, Waterloo Street, 8pm - Brian Peters.

Thursday December 5: Glasgow Skye Association Annual Dinner, Glasgow University Union, 7pm for 7.30pm.

Friday December 6: Glasgow Skye Association Annual Concert and Dance - see above. Clic Sargent Christmas Concert, Royal Concert Hall, 7.30pm.

Pub scene

DEOCH 'n Dorus/Martin Pottinger will be playing in the Park Bar on both Saturday and Sunday evenings with Robert Nairn, together with Donald MacRae, playing there on Friday.

In the Islay Inn it will be Trail West on Friday and Ragaels on Saturday.

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



Oban station centenary celebrations

This week's flashback photograph of the Oban Railway Station centenary celebrations was submitted by Una Reid, Oban. The station opened on July 1, 1880 and Miss Reid, pictured second from right in the front row, was among those marking the anniversary 100 years later. Pictured from left, back row: D MacDonald, R Cornelius, H Blainey, R MacCallum, I Cumming, I MacKechnie, A MacCallum, D Campbell, S Thomson, I Campbell, G Webster, E Kennedy and A Boyd. Front row: S Wilson, D Fleming, B MacKillop, H MacKinnon, B MacKechnie, D MacGregor, J Rowan, N MacDougall, U Reid, H Broadfoot. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Demand a new ferry now

Sir,
The recent first trip of the Mallaig to Lochboisdale ferry - cancelled because of bad weather - was a portent that this is not going to be successful long term for the people of South Uist and their hope of having a ferry to Mallaig.

So now is the right time for everyone concerned, especially councillors from Uist and Barra and, of course, the Lochaber representatives, to demand a new ferry appropriate for our weather conditions all year round, as otherwise we will still be at this stage 10 years from now.

This is the time to say we need a new dedicated ferry that will travel in all weathers, save for force 10 to 12, which would be too extreme in anyone's book.

We shall have at least one or two sailings a week cancelled if we don't move on chasing a dedicated newly-designed ship for South Uist to Mallaig, with an appropriate hull design to plough the seas of the Minch. **Sarah Swain-Nisbet, Dalintart Drive, Oban.**

Threat to Oban's all-weather pitch

Sir,
According to last week's 'New school could leave sports teams stumped for pitch', the local community is to lose its all-weather playing field.

Not content with fencing off swathes of land with builders barricades, Oban High School wants to destroy the all-weather playing field. Eventually the community will have another playing field but would have to wait at least two years for it to be built. Where will it be built and at what expense and at whose expense?

I understand that though Oban High School gets the use of this facility it does not actually own it. It is not theirs to destroy. It belongs to SportsScotland and the community and was financed

with lottery money. As it was built only recently in 2005, can it be right to trash this playing field just because it happens to get in the way of the new school plans?

Where I live I look out on to this all-weather playing field. It is well-used almost continuously every day by many clubs from far and wide.

Some people complain, as it is, that there is not enough for young people to do in the area so to even think about removing this pitch is ludicrous.

The education committee should be promoting health and fitness. The new high school should add to the community not diminish its existing assets; otherwise it is not fit for purpose.

Sarah Swain-Nisbet, Dalintart Drive, Oban.

Opening of new Islay homes

Sir,
May I, through your columns, thank all those that made it to Islay last week in challenging conditions to join the association at the opening of our eight new homes in Port Ellen.

They are the first homes for affordable rent in the village in 34 years.

The association hopes to build a further 20 in Bowmore starting in March of next year. It was particularly heartening to be entertained at the opening by the young pipers from the island and the Port Ellen Primary School Gaelic Choir.

It absolutely made the day and it's good to see our piping and Gaelic heritage in such safe hands for the future.

Thanks again to everyone. **Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive, Argyll Community Housing Association.**

Residential care on the Isle of Mull

Sir,
Following a meeting between representatives from Argyll and Bute Council, local and community councillors and

residents' relatives it has been agreed that the management and organisation of Bowman Court Progressive Care Centre, Isle of Mull will be reviewed and changed.

Jim Robb (head of adult care, Argyll and Bute Council) gave an assurance and commitment to the group to this effect. He also gave an assurance that the Argyll Council will 'ring-fence' the provision of residential care accommodation in Bowman Court thus preventing anyone leaving the island for the same care that was previously available in Dunarros.

This reassurance has alleviated the concerns that the community of Mull and Iona have experienced since Bowman Court opened last year.

Mike Shilson, Mull PCC Steering Group, Dervaig.

Successful sports awards night

Sir,
Our awards night last Friday was an incredible testament to the big heart of our small community, without whom we would not be able to acknowledge the endeavours and achievements of our sportsmen, women and youngsters.

Thank you to Marine Harvest, BSW, Clydesdale Bank, Bowmans, the Outward Bound Trust, Voluntary Action Lochaber and the Rotary Club of Lochaber for sponsoring the awards.

Thank you to the several businesses who donated raffle prizes, the funds raised being split between our Youth Support Fund and our Indoor Training Facility Project.

Thank you to the Ben Nevis Hotel for looking after Mr Rob Wainwright, our guest speaker, and his wife so well, and to the Ben Nevis Distillery for their generous presentation to Rob.

Thank you to Jim from Outward Bound for directing proceedings in the kitchen. Thank you to Rob for his very entertaining talk, peppered with good words of advice, and to our guests Mike MacKenzie MSP

and David Laing, chairman of the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils, who both came from afar to join in the celebrations and lend their support.

Thank you to our Grants and Awards Committee, not only for ensuring the success of the night, but for their hard work supporting clubs throughout the year.

Thank you to Lochaber Rugby Club for allowing us to use their lovely clubhouse yet again, to the boys behind the bar and the boys and girls in the kitchen.

It was a very happy occasion, thanks to everyone who nominated, contributed and attended. **Jane Blanchard, Chairwoman, Lochaber Sports Association.**

Call to reinstate games 'winner'

Sir,
After attending Taynuilt Highland Games on Saturday July 20, I was disappointed to hear that the winner of two local heavy-weight events, Allan Stewart, was disqualified on the basis he was not wearing Highland dress and as a result he did not receive the first prizewinner's money.

This was despite the games commentator announcing over the public address system that you don't need Highland dress to compete in the local heavy events.

Mr Stewart has entered and won the same events many times over recent years and at no time in the past has he worn Highland dress. Taynuilt Highland Games Committee, despite my requests, have refused to provide a copy of the constitution/rules or reinstate Mr Stewart.

In the event that no such ruling existed before the games on July 20, Taynuilt Highland Games Committee as a matter of principle should do the decent thing and reinstate Mr Allan Stewart as the winner of the two events and issue the prize money to a very worthy competitor, together with an apology, which so far they have refused to do. **John Ross, Taynuilt.**

ISLAY LETTER

Gathering chairman

ONE OF the island's best known distillery managers will be guest chairman at next year's Islay gathering.

John MacLellan, manager at the Kilchoman Farm Distillery, will preside at the annual event which takes place in the Glasgow University Union on Friday March 7.

A native of Port Charlotte, he spent more than two decades in the distilling industry before taking over the managerial helm at the farm distillery in 2010. Situated in the Rocksle district, the Kilchoman Distillery opened its doors in 2005 and was the first new distillery to be built on the island for 124 years.

John began his whisky career as a mashman in Bunnahabhain Distillery in 1989. He became a brewer four years later and took over as the distillery's manager in 1997.

Since his move to Kilchoman, he has greatly added to his managerial laurels and, earlier this year, he shared the icon of whisky manager of the year accolade with his managerial colleague Eddie MacAffer at Bowmore Distillery.

The guest chairman is married to Lindy, nee Shaw, a projects officer with the Islay Energy Trust and they have a family of two. Son Sandy is presently studying medicine and daughter Rosie is attached to a Glasgow-based environmental consultancy.

Next year's gathering, the Glasgow Islay Association's 152nd to date, will also mark the 'now fully in charge' debut of An Comunn Healtach's new president Janette MacArthur.

Local politician

ILICH are justly proud that the new secretary of state for Scotland is one of their own.

Liberal Democrat politician Alastair Carmichael, who took over at the Scottish Office last month following the axing of Michael Moore, was born and brought up in the Mull of Oa where his parents are hill farmers of long standing.

He was educated at Port Ellen Primary School and the island's high school before joining the hotel and catering trade. He went on to study at Glasgow University where he was president of the Liberal Club and a member of the Students' Representative Council. Following further studies at the University of Aberdeen, he graduated in law and as well as practising as a lawyer he served as a procurator fiscal deputy at Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

He was elected as the Lib Dem MP for Orkney and Shetland in the 2001 general election and follows in the distinguished parliamentary footsteps of Jim Wallace and Joe Grimmond.

Following the formation of the Lib Dem and Conservative coalition government, the Northern Isles member was appointed as deputy chief whip and comptroller

of the household and also served as his party's home affairs spokesman.

The 48-year-old government minister married veterinary surgeon Kathryn Jane Eastham in 1987 and they have two sons, aged 16 and 13 years.

Outwith parliamentary duties, the new Secretary of State, who speaks French and German and has a smattering of Gaelic, enjoys music, theatre and cooking but still finds time to serve as an elder of the Church of Scotland.

PoppyScotland

THE RECENT PoppyScotland collection in the Kilarrow parish raised £748,48, the largest amount ever raised in the district for the cause.

This record figure was largely achieved through the sterling efforts of local organiser David Barr who pulled out all the stops. Well done David!

Christmas coffee

THE ROUND Church Christmas coffee morning takes place in Bowmore Buffet Hall on Saturday December 7.

Among the enticements will be gifts and novelties, home baking and produce and entertainment by pupils from the local high school.

The event starts at 10.30am and admission is £3. **Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810658.**



Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

BIDH cuid agaihse mar mi fhin a bhios tric a' faireachadh de'ja vu a' beachdachadh air naidheachdan!

Saoilidh sinn nach eil an saoghal a' dèanamh adhartas sam bith! Sin mar a bha bho chionn seachdain a thobh caochladh sgeulachdan agus bha mise a' faighneachd dhomh fhin an robh an suidheachadh seo na dhì-mhisneachadh neo an robh seòrsa de chofhurtachd ann a bhith a' cluinntinn nach eil mac an duine 's dòcha cho ealanta ann a bhith a' gabhail smachd air nàdar is a tha sinn a' suileachadh. Bheir mi dhuibh tri eisimpleirean à measg nan sgeulachdan sin a tha mi air a bhith a' cluinntinn.

Bha dòchas a' nochdadh a rèir coitais gum faodadh nàdar fhèin freagairt a thoirt air an dùbhlán mhòr a th' aig tuathana-san-eisg ann a bhith a' cumail bhradan saor bho mhialan-mara. Chualas mar a bha an t-iasg ris an canar muc-ruadh neo muc-creige, mar a chanamaid air taobh an iar an Eilean Sgitheanaich, air leth measail air a bhith ag ithe mialan-mara.

Bhathas a-nise ag àrach muc-creige airson an cur am measg a' bhradain air na tuathanaidh agus ma dh'obraicheas sin, cha bhì feum tuilleadh air stuthan ceimeigeach a chleachdadh.

Aig co-labhairt anns na h-Eileanan Siar bha VisitScotland, Buidheann Turasachd Nàiseanta na h-Alba, a' bruidhinn air an luach a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann an turasachd cultarach agus dualchasach dha eaconamaidh na Gàidhealtachd is nan Eilean.

Rinn mi sogan ris an dà sgeulachd, ged a tha deagh chuimhne agam a bhith a' cluinntinn agus a' deasbad nan cuspair eile mu fhichead bliadhna air ais! 'S dòcha gun tug e an ùine sin dòigh a lorg air muc-creige àrach chun na h-irè 's gun gabh an t-iasg cur an sàs air tuathana-san-eisg, ach 's coma ma dh'obraicheas e! Agus ged a bha mise is feadhainn eile a' bheith air teagannan fad bhliadhnaichean a thobh nan cothroman a bha sinn a' faicinn ann an turasachd cultarach, neo turasachd Gàidhlig, cha robh sinn a' faotainn eisteachd sam bith.

'S i an seùl mu dheireadh gum bheil àireamhan luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig a' sìodhadh às air an tuath far am b' abhaist dhi a bhith làidir. Tha an sgeulachd seo fù 's nas sine na càch agus chan eil fios carson a bha i na h-annas! Ach air cùlaibh na sgeulachd sin tha am fiosrachadh gum bheil crìonadh na Gàidhlig gu nàiseanta an imphis agus gum faodadh fù 's fàs ùr a bhith air tòiseachadh! Sin a-nise deagh naidheachd ùr!

USE OF wrasse to clear sea-lice in salmon cages is not a new idea but the implementation is welcome. Equally encouraging is official recognition, at last, of the potential of linguistic and cultural tourism.

Declining Gaelic speaker numbers in traditional areas is also an old story, but the halting of the national erosion of the language and being on the threshold of growth is a new story!

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

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| 9 Ladylike (7) | 4 Carry on (3) |
| 10 American pitcher's perfect game (2-3) | 5 Greedy one (12) |
| 11 Remote (4,2,6) | 6 Better (7) |
| 14 Rule (3) | 7 Fill (4) |
| 16 Reaction between acid and alcohol without water (5) | 8 Can't be ruled (12) |
| 17 Even smaller (3) | 12 Clean (5) |
| 18 Lapstrake (7-5) | 13 From first to last (3-2-3) |
| 21 Cancel (5) | 15 Tungsten (7) |
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The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

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

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

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

Morvern Lines

THANKS TO the recent arrival of some gee-whizz technology in Morvern, it was possible to participate in a live debate taking place in a committee room in the heart of the Scottish Parliament last week.

'Now why would anyone in their right mind want to do that?', I hear you ask. The answer - to check up on what the Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee had to say about the future management of Scotland's wild red deer.

There were two sessions. On one panel were representatives of the John Muir Trust, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and RSPB Scotland and on the other, members of the Association of Deer Management Groups (DMG), the Scottish Gamekeepers Association and Scottish Land and Estates.

The purpose of the hearing was to decide whether deer management groups, a body set up over 30 years ago to liaise with government agencies and non-government organisations, should continue on a voluntary basis or be state controlled.

Although it was never intended as an 'us and them' forum it was very obvious from the beginning who was championing the deer!

Indeed, by the end of the second day, it was clear that the charities, the John Muir Trust especially, would prefer to see trees and winged-insects living in the glens instead of humans and certainly not deer.

When DMGs were first conceived, their meetings were pretty laid-back, providing owners and stalkers with an opportunity to pool their combined knowledge over a convivial lunch;

although it is rumoured that the inaugural meeting of the Moidart DMG was the only occasion when all the landowners over there had sat round the same table since the 1745 Rising!

IT WAS much the same in Morvern in the early days as the following account well illustrates:

John, our old friend and stalker, was not in good form after the bi-annual meeting of our local deer management group when all the neighbouring lairds, busy factors, balding stalkers and hairy ghillies, park their heavily-tweed-backed sides round the dining room table to deliberate on past and future stag and hind culls. These were usually good natured 'slaint-mhath' affairs as drams were quickly downed and the shots becoming longer and wider. This year things were a little different.

Aunt, the old laird herself, was present and secretly hoped to discover why more of her whisky was being consumed after her departure from the big house than at any other time of the year.

When asked, John's usual explanation was evaporation, but 'Madam', despite her advancing years, suspected otherwise.

From the beginning John had an inkling that this was not going to be a good meeting.

The chairman groaned on until 'tea' was announced. 'Tea?' There was a sharp intake of breath from around the table and an atmosphere you could cut with a gralloching knife.

'Where's the ten year old Loch Uisge whisky you promised us the day we looked away when the old so-and-so took a shot at the big beast across my march?' hissed the stalker beside John.

'It'll be here shortly, hold your tongue,' said John, thinking the gardener would be on his way up from the cellar with the customary six bottles of malt.

That pleasant dream ended abruptly, for the refreshment they shared with their hostess was indeed of the elegant drawing room variety. Only the empty, silver-topped vinegar bottle on the sideboard, spoke of fermentation.

'Damn her,' said John as he wandered home that night. 'I don't care if, at eighty five, she can still shoot two stags in the neck at 150 yards, she has no business whatever to be denying us our usual end of season dram.'

Iain Thornber iain.thornber@btinternet.com.



Ready to ride on Santa's sleigh for the Reindeer Parade are Isabella MacLean and Ceitidh Garvin, seated, with Alice Needham and Sam Rowley, who switched on the Christmas lights. 15_148fest03



The MacPherson brothers from Oban, from left, Alex, David and Andrew were among five winners of a festival competition to design a winter or nativity scene in a shoebox. 15_148fest01



There was a demonstration last Friday of McCaig's Tower's new lighting display. Photograph by Stephen Lawson.

Winter Festival sparkles into life



There was a spectacular display of dancing at Ballet West's Winter Wonderland in the Corran Halls last Friday. Photograph by Kevin McGlynn.



Jack Anderson of Dolce Vita got into the theme of a Victorian market at Oban Distillery on Saturday. 15_148fest02

Eight-year-olds Alice Needham and Sam Rowley switched on Oban's Christmas lights. Photograph by Stephen Lawson.

THE GRAND Finale fireworks display is yet to happen but Oban Winter Festival certainly came in with a bang last weekend.

The annual festival is now in its third year and has laid on a packed programme.

The main events kicked off with Ballet West's showcase concert, Winter Wonderland, in the Corran Halls.

Extra chairs had to be put out to cope with the demand for tickets to a show now synonymous with the festival.

The ballet was preceded by a demonstration of McCaig's Tower's new Oban CHORD-funded lighting system.

Into last Saturday, Victorian markets at Oban Distillery and the Caledonian Hotel attracted 1,500 and 1,200 people respectively. A number of events throughout the day culminated in the Reindeer Parade, organised by BID4Oban.

Santa and his reindeer were led by Oban Pipe Band from the Corran Halls to Station Square, where eight-year-olds Alice Needham and Sam Rowley had the important job of switching on Oban's Christmas lights.

A huge crowd flocked to Station Square to see the lights come on and enjoy Christmas carols sung by members of Spotlight Musical Theatre Group.

And on Sunday Barcaldine's Sealife Centre hosted a Winter Wonderland Fun Day, where youngsters had the chance to visit Mr and Mrs Claus' grotto.

Throughout this week there have been large attendances at various evening events; both nights of 'Christmas at Kitchen Garden' were a sell out.

A competition running ahead of the festival to design a winter or nativity scene within a shoebox had five winners: The MacPherson Family, Nicola, Jamie and Lauren Wilson, Ryan Daniels and family, Justin MacIver and his grandfather and the Hughes family.

All 29 entries are currently displayed in shop windows throughout the town.

Oban Winter Festival Committee member Pamela Lockhart said: 'The attendances have been really good and we have spoken to visitors from Durham, Northampton and Glasgow who are here especially for the festival. It is the busiest year yet.'

'The Oban Express lorry was fantastic and the fun fair on the North Pier has been really busy.'

This weekend sees the climax to the festival, including a St Andrew's Day celebration and ceilidh on Saturday and the Grand Finale fireworks display and lights show from the Corran Esplanade on Sunday.

Representatives from EventScotland will be attending events next weekend.



Members of Spotlight Musical Theatre Group performed Christmas carols at Station Square ahead of the lights switch-on. 15_148fest07



The Oban Express lorry, or 'Music Bus', provided the festive cheer by touring the town decked in streamers, tinsel and some larger-than-life characters. 15_148fest05



Santa Claus and Mrs Claus made a special visit from Lapland to Barcaldine for the Scottish Sealife Sanctuary's Winter Wonderland Fun Day on Sunday. The festive event also included a magician's workshop, seal and otter feeding, craft stalls and a woodcarving demonstration. Pictured meeting Mr and Mrs Claus are Oban cousins Olivia Gage, left, and Rosie Struthers. 15_148sant01

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Lochaber Sports Association award winners line up after the presentation. 20_148sports04

Standing room only as sports winners are honoured



John Harvey, president elect of the Rotary Club of Lochaber, presents Arran MacPhee with his Young Sportsperson of the Year award. 20_148sports02



Linda Campbell and Pauline Donaldson: joint winners on the night. 20_148sports03

AT LOCHABER Sports Association (LSA) awards night at Banavie on Saturday, chairwoman Jane Blanchard thanked all involved for making the event such a success.

Addressing the standing room only celebration in Lochaber Rugby Club clubhouse, she said: 'Tonight is all about the hard work and achievements of everyone here in this room and the support we get from our community.'

'So sincere thanks from all of us at LSA to the award sponsors, to the rugby club for letting us use their lovely clubhouse, to the chefs - especially Jim from the Outward Bound Centre - and helpers in the kitchen to all who have generously donated raffle prizes.'

'I should like to add my personal thanks to the grants and awards committee, who had the near impossible task of selecting winners from among the several nominations.'

'I know that their chairman, Stewart Sandison, will agree with me when I extend a special thank you to Christine Falconer who does an incredible amount for LSA, not only in preparing for tonight, but throughout the year.'

Award winners: Sportsperson of the Year - Jon Gay, Lochaber Athletic Club; Young Sportsperson of the Year - Arran MacPhee, Fort William Shinty Club; Team of the Year - Ballachulish Shinty Club; Coach of the Year - Donald MacLean, Lochaber High School; Youth Endeavour - Laura Davies, Lochaber Rugby Football Club; Under 14s who have shown the greatest improvement over the past year - Gregor Cameron, Fort William Shinty Club; Teri Fox, Inverness City Ladies Football Club; Cameron Whyte, Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club; Fort William Shinty Club Under-14 team; Club that has been most active in the promotion of sport in the community - Lochaber Rugby Football Club; Individual who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes for their club - Linda Campbell, Kilmallie Shinty Club and Pauline Donaldson, Lochaber Rugby Club; The school or community centre that has been most active in promoting sport in the community - Ardnarnachan High School.

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Kenneth Steven provides Oban with readings of poetry

Poet Kenneth Steven gave a reading of his new collection of stories and songs at Oban Library, with accompaniment from local musician, Stephen McNally.

Of the Song Among the Stones, Kenneth said: "This is the final night of a little tour around Argyll and Bute. The whole collection is

a sequence of musings. It is loosely based around the story of Christian hermits from Iceland making a pilgrimage to Iona. It didn't happen, but it is plausible."



Kenneth, right, is pictured with Stephen ahead of his reading. 15_147hermit1

Islay comes alive with the sound of music at Sessions Traditional Music Festival

THE ISLE of Islay once again highlighted its credentials as a hub for traditional music at this year's Islay Sessions Traditional Music Festival.

After three successive years it is now a firm fixture in the Islay calendar, offering three days of great music from some of the best traditional musicians in Scotland.

For the first time, the Islay Sessions weekend was started with a ceilidh at Laphroaig Distillery.

This was a lovely opening to the weekend with performances from the talented youngsters of Fèis Oigridh Ile agus Dhiura playing alongside some of the big names of the trad music world - the perfect example of what the Islay Sessions is all about.

The workshops the following morning continued the Islay Sessions tradition of giving opportunities for aspiring musicians.

The highlight of the weekend was undoubtedly the grand concert at Bruichladdich Hall on the Saturday night.

With four acts of the highest quality it was an incredible evening. Daniel Thorpe played with elegance, panache and unstoppable energy.

Accompanied by Islay favourite, Innes Watson, the former Young Traditional Musician of the Year set the pace for the rest of the evening.

Daniel was followed by a set of beautiful tunes sung by Hannah Beaton with Innes providing the perfect guitar performance to support to her rich voice.

After the break, the remarkable Ross Couper and Tom Oakes took to the stage.

Ross' fiddle playing was breathtaking and was matched in style and excitement by Tom's exceptional guitar playing. The Jarlath

Henderson Band brought together an eclectic mix of styles with Hamish Napier on keyboards and Euan Burton on double bass. Jarlath led the band through a wealth of memorable tunes demonstrating why he is a three times 'All-Ireland Champion' uilleann piper.

The weekend was rounded off with some fantastic sessions in the Bridgend and Port Charlotte Hotels and promises from everyone to come back for more.

The fourth Islay Sessions is now being planned to take place from November 7 to November 9, 2014.

The Islay Sessions team would like to thank the generous support of our sponsors; Laphroaig, Bruichladdich, Ardbeg, Lagavulin, Kilchoman and Bowmore Distilleries, Islay Ales, Wylie and Bisset, Carlsberg, B Mundells and Inverarity Morton.



The cast of Spotlight's Sleeping Beauty are ready for this year's pantomime.

Spotlight raring to go for this year's Panto

A COLLECTION of colourful characters, madcap antics and musical moments will tell the story of Sleeping Beauty in this year's Christmas pantomime in Oban. Spotlight Musical Theatre Group's annual festive of-

fering, being staged between December 4 and 7, promises to be a hilarious take on the magical tale starring the beautiful Princess Aurora (Aimie MacDonald), King Norbert and Queen Dorothy, played by panto-

regulars Colin Felgate and Roddy MacEachan, and their loyal servants led by Billy and the palace cat Kitty, will take the audience on a fun-filled adventure. Dashing Will the dashing Prince

Orlando (Alasdair Jordan) save the Princess in time? John Robinson, who has had numerous lead roles in recent years with the company, takes the helm as director and Louisa Hyde returns as producer and choreographer.

Kevin Baker brings his many years of expertise in the theatre to the other side of the stage this time as stage manager. The Corran Halls show will run on the four nights, as well as a Saturday matinee.



Staff from Ward A at Lorn and Islands Hospital have raised £2,382 for Cancer Research after hosting a Hallowe'en party this year at Oban Lorne Rugby Clubhouse. The staff and friends handed over a cheque to members of charity's Oban and District branch. This is the third year the staff have raised money for the charity and this year's total was boosted by an anonymous donation of £1,000.



Tina Cotton and Agnes MacKechnie from Albany Stores were clowning around in the shop as they got into the spirit of Children in Need, collecting £525 for the charity.

Input needed for developing Argyll arts community

PLANNERS developing Argyll's cultural, heritage, arts and Gaelic assets to contribute to community life need input from the area's residents.

Argyll and Bute Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) are asking artists and craft makers, voluntary organisations and businesses in the culture, heritage and arts community to tell them what their needs are and how they

can increase the number of people who visit.

Contributions can be made through an electronic survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/RY86T22. Workshops will also be held in Colintraive's Caol Rudh Sculpture Park today (Thursday), Tarbert's Templar Art and Leisure Centre tomorrow and the Scottish Association for Marine Sciences at Dunstaffnage on December 5.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

bonnie babies

competition 2014

in association with **The co-operative membership**
Here for you for life

Child's name.....

Child's date of birth.....

Tel: Subscription No: (if applicable).....

Address:

Name of parent/guardian.....

Signature of parent/guardian.....

I agree to all terms and conditions applied to this competition (please tick)

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

Terms & conditions: The Oban Times Bonnie Babies competition is open to babies and toddlers born on or after February 1, 2011. Entrants must live in Argyll or West Highlands. You may also enter a child if you are a subscriber living outside this area. Only one entry per child. By entering the competition and by filling in the parental consent form that is provided with your entry, you - the parent or guardian - consent to the reproduction of your child's photograph in The Oban Times Bonnie Babies features in the paper and online and in any other related Oban Times Bonnie Babies promotions. If you do not wish for your child's photo to appear in the newspaper or online then you should not enter the competition. The Oban Times cannot take responsibility for the safe delivery and safe return of the entrant's photograph. Photos posted in without an enclosed stamped addressed envelope will not be returned. Poor quality photographs, which are out of focus, difficult to see the child's face, ripped, torn or folded, will not be accepted as an entry and will be returned to the sender providing a stamped addressed envelope is supplied by the entrant. By sending us your photograph, you agree that Wyvex Media Ltd and The Oban Times have the right to publish the images and details of the entrant without payment for the purpose of promoting The Oban Times Bonnie Babies campaign(s). The winner must take part in publicity. Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter.

The Oban Times Bonnie Babies competition is back for 2014. Enter your little bundle of joy today for your chance to win a whopping £500 worth of vouchers to spend at The Co-operative! Plus, this year we will have £150 of vouchers for a second place winner and £100 of vouchers for third place. Just think how handy that would be after Christmas and New Year.

The Co-operative Group is the UK's largest mutual business, owned by nearly eight million members. It is the UK's fifth biggest food retailer operating across the country with almost 2,800 local, convenience and medium-sized stores, and is also one of Britain's leading farming operations. Further information is available at www.co-operative.coop

HOW THE COMPETITION WORKS

The competition will take place in weekly rounds where readers are asked to vote for that week's bonniest baby. For example, if your child is in week one and gets the most votes out of all the entries in that issue they will be entered into the grand finale. The baby who has the most votes from the grand finale, which will be held early next year, will be crowned the Bonniest Baby of 2014. It doesn't matter which round your baby appears in, you can keep voting every week from the date your child appears until the voting deadline, which we will announce in a future issue. Voting for your wee one every week after they appear gives them the best chance to be crowned their week's bonniest. We won't count the votes to decide who goes into the grand finale until the voting deadline has been reached. Readers will be able to vote by text or by coupon, details of which will be printed when the weekly rounds begin.

HOW TO ENTER

We are now open for entries! The Oban Times Bonnie Babies 2014 is open to babies and toddlers born on or after February 1, 2011. Entrants must live in Argyll or West Highlands. You may also enter a child if you are a subscriber living outside this area. You can enter your child by posting us a photograph along with a signed entry coupon, see left, to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Please make sure you write the name of the child, date of birth and a contact telephone number on the back of the photo. Should you wish your photo to be returned, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. We will do our very best to return your photo but please make a copy just in case. You can also enter online by visiting www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

After you have entered your child, keep an eye on The Oban Times every week to see when your baby appears. The closing date for entries will be announced in a future issue. For rules and terms and conditions, visit www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies or call 01631 568000.

Good luck!

what's on

THE OBAN TIMES
FREE EVENT LISTING

THURSDAY - November 28

Oban Winter Festival various events.
10am, Ramblers Scotland Glen Gloy walk, meet Oban's Longsdale Road car park at 8.10am, N Ballachulish PS at 9am, Fort William Woollen Mill at 9.20am or Spean Bridge Woollen Mill at 9.40am.
1.30pm, Mull Musical Minds, An Roth, Craignure, Mull.
8pm, Oban Music Club, O'Donnell's, Oban.
Until 9pm, Late night shopping, The Gem Box, Oban.
9pm, John 'the box' Turnbull, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

FRIDAY - November 29

Oban Winter Festival various events.
10am, Art exhibition, St John's Cathedral, Oban.
6pm, Late night festive shopping and Christmas lights switch on, Tobermory, Mull.
8pm, Oban Mic, O'Donnell's, Oban.
8pm, Seven Psychopaths, An Tobar, Tobermory, Mull.
10pm, Disco, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

SATURDAY - November 30

Oban Winter Festival various events.
9am, Strained wire fencing course, Ballislate, Tobermory, Mull.
10am, Art exhibition, St John's Cathedral, Oban.
10am, Ramblers Scotland Kingairloch walk, meet Oban's Longsdale Road car park at 8am, Fort William Woollen Mill at 8.45am or Corran Ferry slipway for 9.15am sailing.
10.30am, Christmas festival, Nevis Centre, An Aird, Fort William.
11am, St Oran's and Dunbeg Church Christmas fayre, Connel Village Hall.
12pm, Soup lunch and sale, Salvation Army Hall, Oban.
2pm, Imagined North, An Tobar, Tobermory, Mull.
9pm, Mel and Friends, O'Donnell's, Oban.
9.30pm, St Andrews Movenber Party, Markie Dans, Oban.
10pm, Live band, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

SUNDAY - December 1

Oban Winter Festival various events.
11am, Christmas craft fair, Seil Island Hall.
2pm, Producers' market, Craignure Hall, Mull.
2.30pm, Alba Brass, St John's Cathedral, Oban.
10pm, Disco, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

MONDAY - December 2

2pm, Community café, Lochdonhead Primary School, Mull.

TUESDAY - December 3

7.30pm, Whist drive, Glencruitten Golf Club, Oban.
8pm, Fort William Accordion and Fiddle Club, Railway Club, Inverloch.

WEDNESDAY - December 4

7.30pm, Sleeping Beauty, Corran Halls, Oban.
9pm, Pub quiz, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

THURSDAY - December 5

8am, Ramblers Scotland Loch Sunart walk, meet Oban's Longsdale Road car park, Fort William Woollen Mill at 8.45am or Corran Ferry slipway for 9.15am sailing.
10am, LORN Christmas fayre, Victory Hall, Benderloch.
5.30pm, Christmas shopping evening, Nancy Black's, Oban.
7pm, Oban Camanachd AGM, Royal Hotel, Oban.
7.30pm, Sleeping Beauty, Corran Halls, Oban.
9pm, John 'the box' Turnbull, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

FRIDAY - December 6

7.30pm, Sleeping Beauty, Corran Halls, Oban.
8pm, Christmas cocktail party, Paparazzi, Oban.
10pm, Disco, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

SATURDAY - December 7

10am, Soroba Young Family Group table top sale, Glencruitten Church Centre, Oban.
10.30am, Christmas fun, St Andrew's Church Hall, Fort William.
11am, Oban Lifeboat's Christmas Day, Palace Hotel, Oban.
12pm, Winter Wonderland, Stramash Outdoor Nursery, Ganavan, Oban.
2pm, Sleeping Beauty, Corran Halls, Oban.
Lunga Snow Ball, Lunga House, by Craobh Haven.
7.30pm, Sleeping Beauty, Corran Halls, Oban.
8pm, Christmas cocktail party, Paparazzi, Oban.
10pm, Live band, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

Send your events to whatson@obantimes.co.uk.

Screen Machine Scotland's Mobile Cinema

Fort William Thu 28 - Sat 30 November
Strontian Mon 2 December
Lochaline Tue 3 December
Craignure Wed 4 December
Tobermory Thu 5 - Sat 7 December



Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2 (U) 95 mins
"Plenty of belly laughs." Metro 29/11 at 5.30pm, 30/11 at 2pm, 2/12 at 5.30pm, 3/12 at 5.30pm, 4/12 at 5.30pm, 5/12 at 5.30pm, 6/12 at 5.30pm, 7/12 at 2pm

Sunshine on Leith (PG) 100 mins
This year's feel-fabulous film. "Will give you tingles of happiness." Daily Telegraph 29/11 at 8.30pm, 30/11 at 5.30pm, 2/12 at 8.30pm, 3/12 at 8.30pm, 4/12 at 8.30pm, 6/12 at 8.30pm, 7/12 at 5.30pm

Blue Jasmine (12A) 95 mins
Cate Blanchett is the Park Avenue princess whose luck runs out. "Not to be missed." Rolling Stone 28/11 at 5.30pm, 30/11 at 8.30pm, 7/12 at 8.30pm

NT Live: Frankenstein (15) 162 mins
Danny Boyle directs Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller. A pre-recorded encore screening. "A monster hit." Time Out 28/11 at 8.30pm, 5/12 at 8.30pm

Book in advance at: www.screenmachine.co.uk or phone 0871 902 5750. Tickets also at the cinema 30 mins before screenings. £7.00 Adults. Concessions £5.50. 3D +£1.50



Former Tobermory pupils travel from far and wide for reunion



Former pupils of Tobermory Junior Secondary School enjoyed their reunion.

FORMER pupils who attended Tobermory Junior Secondary School between 1950 and 1960 recently celebrated their first-ever reunion.

The event, organised by Janet MacDonald and Douglas MacNeillage, brought former pupils from far and wide, including London, Elgin and Aberdeen, to join those on the island.

The reunion saw old friends meet up over a cuppa

before making a visit to their former primary school, now An Tobar, then the current high school buildings.

In the evening everyone gathered at The Western Isles Hotel for the final event dinner. All were welcomed into the hotel by 13-year-old piper Alexander Anderson whose family, like him, attended the school.

After a welcome by Douglas MacNeillage, a meal was served and, following coffee,

memories, laughter and song, led by the irrepressible Ted Heath.

The many career paths folk had taken since leaving Tobermory Junior Secondary School included procurator fiscal, senior police officer and Army officer – as well as no fewer than four recipients of an MBE.

Mr MacNeillage said: "The day concluded in the wee small hours of Sunday morning at the end of an

event which will be remembered for a long time.

"Thanks are due to staff and management of The Western Isles Hotel, Gordon Maclean at An Tobar, Craig Biddick, head teacher of Tobermory High School, piper Alexander Anderson and everyone who donated baking.

"A very special thank you goes out to all who travelled home to make the day such a success."

Highland talents recognised at Scottish Gaelic Awards



TRAD music group the Campbells of Greepe added another accolade to their collection when they claimed the arts and culture award last week at the first ever national Scottish Gaelic Awards.

The ceremony at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh recognised achievements throughout the Gaelic world this year and was supported by the Daily Record and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Ardgour-based Mary Ann Kennedy and the other Na Caimbeulaich (Campbells) also won 'outstanding achievement in the arts in 2013' for their landmark book and album project, Fonn.

Elsewhere at the awards, Highland Council was celebrating after Bun-sgoil

Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (Inverness Gaelic Primary School) won the Innovation in Education category and Glenfinnan man Colm O'Rua, a teacher in Ardnamurchan High School, claimed the Sport award.

As well as being a keen musician, Colm's passion for Gaelic in sport has rubbed off on his pupils who brave all weathers to practice their shinty and use Gaelic outside the classroom.

The awards covered all aspects of Gaelic culture, education and language, highlighting the excellent work undertaken to maintain growth and heritage.

Pictured is Colm O'Rua: winner of the Sport category at the inaugural Scottish Gaelic Awards.
20_488finnan01

Nominate your favourite historic west coast figures

HISTORIC figures of the west coast are to be remembered on commemorative plaques – if they are nominated by residents.

People are being asked to put forward suggestions for those they would like to see honoured in

the second year of the Commemorative Plaques Scheme for Scotland.

The theme is inspired by the Year of Natural Scotland, celebrating Scotland's outstanding natural beauty and culture.

There will be a maximum

of 12 plaques awarded and these will be decided by an independent academic panel.

Nomination forms can be found on Historic Scotland's website.

The closing date is December 31.

Taynuilt whist drive raises funds for newly formed Brownies and Rainbows

A WHIST drive held in Taynuilt Village Hall on Friday November 15 raised funds for the newly formed Taynuilt Brownies and Rainbows.

There were nine and a half tables present and the sum raised was £158.

Results are as follows:
Gents: 1 Derek Lewis, 2 Jasmin MacLean Black, 3 Katie Clayton, 4 Gilbert Mullen; consolation and travelling prize: Colin Campbell.

Ladies: 1 Anja Powell, 2 Lorna Maclellan, 3

Christine Allen, 4 Sandra Steel, consolation: Sophia Lewis; travelling prize: Christine Allen.

The next whist drive will be held on Friday December 13 and proceeds will be for the senior citizens' outings.

Oban Camera Club look at the town in a different light

MEMBERS of Oban Camera Club took a nostalgic trip around the town at their last meeting, courtesy of Bob McCulloch.

Mr McCulloch, a club member but also guest speaker for the evening,

showed the group black and white images, from Victorian times to the early twentieth century.

The audience said his comprehensive knowledge of Old Oban added to the wonder of seeing places

and people from a bygone era and this was reflected in the 'heartly' vote of thanks.

The club meets in the Regent Hotel on Mondays at 7.30pm. New members are always welcome.



Model Elliot Dougall escorts a feminine-looking Jack Anderson down the catwalk at a recent fashion show held at Oban's M&Co. The event was organised in aid of the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT) Group 43 and raised £360. Jack, who organised the event, thanked M&Co for their help with the fashion show. Photo: Kevin McGlynn.



Friends of Oban Hospice

Light up a Life 2013

In memory of (name)

Dedication

(maximum of 20 words)

Please return your form by Friday 6th December 2013

Return to K Black, (Treasurer)
Friends of Oban Hospice,
C/O AVA, 21 High Street, Oban,
Argyll, PA34 4BG

I wish to support Light up a Life and enclose a donation of: £.....

Cheques should be made payable to Friends of Oban Hospice

Please tick the box if you require a receipt for your donation

From : (Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms).....

Postcode:.....

Tel:.....

Gift Aid Declaration

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and wish Friends of Oban Hospice to benefit from Gift Aid on my donation

The Oban Times caravan will be at Tesco's car park all week where Hospice volunteers will collect leaflets from Monday 2nd December through to Saturday 8th December 2013

Registered Charity Number SCO29457

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*Terms and conditions apply. Minimum one year subscription. New subscribers only. Cancellation charges apply and no refunds can be given. UK subscribers only. While stocks last. **Calendars issued towards end of year. McKelvie candle Argyll & Highland stockists: Poppies Garden Centre, Oban, Torrisdale Castle Estate (Carradale), Glencoe Mountain, The Ferry Shop (Mull), Scotch Corner Inveraray, Easdale Village Shop, Loch Fyne Galleries, Ben Lora Café (Benderloch), The Granite House (Fort William), The Green Welly Stop (Tyndrum), An Acaarsaid (Coll), Lochboisdale Post Office (Uist), Delights (Stornoway).

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Published on 12th December

SEND A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO FRIENDS FOR JUST £23.

<p>A</p> <p>MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR</p> <p>to all my relatives and friends from John Smith, Oban</p>	<p>B</p> <p>SEASONS GREETINGS</p> <p>to all my relatives and friends from John Smith, Oban</p>	<p>C</p> <p>MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR</p> <p>to all my relatives, friends and neighbours from John Smith, Oban</p>
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Simply fill in the coupon below with your special festive message and send or hand in to:-

OBAN TIMES, PO BOX 1, OBAN TELL: 01631 568000
OBAN TIMES, MAMORE HOUSE, FORT WILLIAM TELL: 01397 703003

ONLY £23 (inc. VAT), OPTIONS A,B OR C.

PAY BY CHEQUE / PO or

Phone in your message quoting your Access/Visa Number

Deadline Monday 9th December. To appear Thursday 12th December

*NAME..... **A** **B** **C**

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Tel.....

PLEASE TICK A BOX FOR THE TEMPLATE YOU WISH TO USE.

* (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

20 words maximum PRIVATE ADVERTISERS ONLY



Alba Brass.

Alba Brass quintet performing in Oban

OBAN Music Society's December concert highlights the 'brilliance of brass' with the Alba Brass quintet. The Scottish group, who will be performing in Oban's St John's Cathedral on December 1, add their own style to traditional brass music. Since their 2004 debut at the Aracena International Chamber Music Competition in Spain, they have appeared at concerts and festivals all over Europe, Russia, North America and the Middle East.

Alba Brass, comprised of Bryan Allen and Vicky Bede on trumpet, Fergus Kerr on French horn, Paul Stone on trombone and Andrew McKreel on tuba, regularly commission new work such as Terry Jones, Paolozzi's Windows, premiered at the 2010 Edinburgh Fringe. The group has also recently recorded for BBC's Songs of Praise. The repertoire for December's concert stretches from Handel to Gershwin and Piazzola and the performance starts at 2.30pm.



Fergie's Folk with Fergie MacDonald

I PROMISED the powers that be at The Oban Times that towards the end of the year I would choose what I thought was top CD album of the year.

At this moment in time the Scottish CD music industry has taken a real kicking in relation to sales. This is the case concerning all forms of music CD sales across the board.

This year has seen great album releases by many of our top stars and also young up and coming bands and groups. Generally the standard is very high.

To reverse the sliding trend of things in the Scottish traditional music scene, I feel that the new release, No Half Measures' by Alasdair MacCuish and the Black Rose Ceilidh Band will go a long way to restore CD sales on the Scottish scene back to what they should be. No question about it.

My favourite track is the barn dance section where he plays 'John MacDonald of Glencoe' and 'The Edinburgh Volunteers'. This is top of the range stuff - fantastic.

So there you have it. My choice for album of the year. So stop scratching your head wondering what to give Mary Margaret or Donald Archie for Christmas. No Half Measures would be my idea of the perfect present.

There is however a downside to this fantastic CD album. Alasdair doesn't have a 'Fergie' tune! When confronted about this dreadful mistake and omission all the poor guy could say was 'oh dear, oh dear!' Go on Alasdair, and tell them the story as only you can. It is better that a 'Phil' story.

Fergie MacDonald

New album: Alasdair MacCuish and the Black Rose Ceilidh Band.



The band members are



PRIMARY two pupils from Oban's Rockfield Primary School made a trip to the town's lifeboat station to find out about the work of the boat and the crew. The youngsters discovered what the crew wear when they are on a rescue and, most importantly, got to climb aboard the lifeboat for a tour. The children have been learning about People Who Help Us and they were very keen to learn about the work of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution as part of their topic.

Textile artist's wool spinning project will be the focus of a presentation in Portree

A UNIQUE project linking wool production on Skye with the traditional island crafts of spinning and knitting will be the focus of a talk in Portree on Saturday. Textile artist Deirdre Nelson will explain about Lùb (Loop), which celebrates culture, people and the communities producing wool in Skye. Crafters from stock clubs across Skye and Raasay have each donated a fleece that will be spun by a spinner from Skye. Using the yarn, Ms Nelson will knit socks to highlight crofting, craft skills and the feet that walk the land. The finished socks will then be gifted to the crofters who donated fleeces to the project. She said: 'The first fleece

has been spun and links with a spinner in Trotternish through a beautifully spun Jacob fleece that is now ready for knitting. It is hoped the project will map the spinning and crofting on Skye through those involved. 'We hope to spin all types of fleeces donated and challenge preconceptions about some of the wools considered coarse such as Herdwick and Blackface.' The project, part of Portree-based Atlas Arts Spincycle, aims to tackle the decline in spinning, now being practiced on Skye by only a small number of people, co-ordinator Rosie Somerville said. She added: 'It also appears that those doing this

work are actually able to command healthy prices for the spun wool and that there is a market. 'Atlas is keen to support this craft. We would like to make contact with spinners who might like to get involved, become part of the loop - and we will pay the going rate for the spun wool. 'We would also like to put together a list of all the experienced spinners in Skye and Lochalsh as a resource for the future and part in stimulating a revival that might attract a younger generation to the craft.' Ms Nelson's talk will be in the council chambers from 2pm to 3pm. Anyone interested can contact Rosie, info@atlasarts.org.uk.



Alastair Beaton, Balmeanach, Struan with artist Deirdre Nelson.

Oban Phoenix Cinema	Philomena	Thursday 28th	18:00
	Gravity 3D	Thursday 28th	20:30 3D
	The Counsellor	Friday 29th	21:30
		Saturday 30th	18:00
		Sunday 1st	20:30
		Monday 2nd	21:30
		Tuesday 3rd	18:00
		Wednesday 4th	21:30
		Thursday 5th	18:00
		Friday 29th	18:00
	Saturday 30th	21:00	
	Sunday 1st	17:00	
	Monday 2nd	18:00	
	Tuesday 3rd	21:00	
	Wednesday 4th	18:00	
	Thursday 5th	18:00	
	Saturday 30th	12:00	
	Saturday 30th	14:30	
	Sunday 1st	13:00	
	Sunday 1st	14:30	

Philomena (12A)
Falling pregnant as a teenager in Ireland in 1952, Philomena was sent to the convent of Roscrea to be looked after. Her baby was taken away for adoption in America. Philomena spent the next fifty years searching for him.

Gravity 3D (12A)
Dr. Ryan Stone (Sandra Bullock) is a medical engineer on her first shuttle mission, with veteran astronaut Matt Kowalsky (George Clooney) in command of his last flight before retiring. But on a seemingly routine spacewalk, disaster strikes.

The Counsellor (18)
Legendary filmmaker Ridley Scott and Pulitzer Prize winning author Cormac McCarthy (No Country for Old Men) have joined forces in the motion picture thriller The Counsellor, starring Michael Fassbender, Penelope Cruz, Cameron Diaz, Javier Bardem, and Brad Pitt. McCarthy, making his screenwriting debut and Scott interweave the author's characteristic wit and dark humour with a nightmarish scenario, in which a respected lawyer's one-time dalliance with an illegal business deal spirals out of control.

The Hunger Games Part 2: Catching Fire (12A)
Katniss Everdeen has returned home safe after winning the 74th Annual Hunger Games along with fellow tribute Peeta Mellark. Winning means that they must turn around and leave their family and close friends, embarking on a 'Victory Tour' of the districts. Along the way Katniss senses that a rebellion is simmering, but the Capitol is still very much in control as President Snow prepares the 75th Annual Hunger Games (The Quarter Quell) - a competition that could change Panem forever.

Winter Festival

March of The Penguins (U)
Each winter, alone in the pilliless ice deserts of Antarctica, a truly remarkable journey takes place. Emperor penguins in their thousands abandon the deep blue security of their ocean home and dangle onto the frozen ice.

The Polar Express
This is the story of a young hero boy on Christmas Eve who boards on a powerful magical train that's headed to the North Pole and Santa Claus's home.

Frosty The Snowman
A discarded silk top hat becomes the focus of a struggle between a magician and a group of schoolchildren after it magically brings a snowman to life. Realizing that newly-living Frosty will melt in spring unless he takes refuge in a colder climate, Frosty heads for the north pole.

The Little Mermaid (U)
Ariel, youngest daughter of King Triton, is dissatisfied with life in the sea. She longs to be with the humans above the surface and goes to meet Ursula, the Sea Witch, to strike a deal, but Ursula has bigger plans for this mermaid and her father.

Local Origins Rural Network
COMMUNITY PRODUCERS
CHRISTMAS FAYRE
Thurs. 5th December
Victory Hall, Benderloch
10 am to 7 pm
LOTS TO EAT, BUY & DO
Support local at Christmas
01631 720223
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facebook.com/lorargyll

SPOTLIGHT Musical Theatre Group Presents

SLEEPING BEAUTY

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Opening Night Wednesday 4th December
4th-7th December 7.30pm Corran Halls Oban
2pm Matinee 7th December

Tickets £10 Adult, £7.50 Children/Cons Family £30
Corran Halls Box Office 01631 567333

This production by arrangement with Ben Crocker Pantomimes
spotlightmtg.co.uk facebook.com/spotlightmtg @spotlightmtg

Follow us on facebook
www.facebook.com/obantimes

Christmas Lunches & Dinners

4-course lunch only £9.95 per person
4-course dinner only £14.95 per person
Available from 1st December to 24th December

Christmas day Menu
5-course dinner only £25 per person
Children's menu also available

Friday 20th December
DON'T STOP ME NOW
The party has only just started with our fantastic Freddie Mercury Tribute night!
£24.95pp

Saturday 21st December
There will be **Mistletoe Madness** at our Christmas party night... dance along to all the classics with our resident DJ
£19.95pp

Party nights include dinner, glass of bubbly on arrival & party pack.

Call Santa's little helpers on 01631 562 188
Columba Hotel, North Pier, Oban PA34 5QB
email columba@seghotels.com www.ch-oban.com

WIN worth £160
a family photo session*
at Webster of Oban Photographic Centre

To celebrate the opening of the new portrait studio at Webster of Oban Photographic Centre they are offering one lucky reader the chance to win a family photographic session (*maximum 5 people). Simply answer the following question to be in with a chance of winning this fantastic prize

According to the well known song how many days of Christmas are there?

Send your entries in to Webster of Oban Photographic Centre, 122-124 George Street, Oban by 12th of December, 2013. The winner will be chosen at random from the correct entries.

Webster of Oban PHOTOGRAPHIC CENTRE
122-124 George Street, Oban • Tel: 01631 562917

Answer
Name
Address
Telephone.....

This competition is being run by Webster of Oban Photographic Centre. Entrants must be over 18. The prize is for a photographic session for a maximum 5 people. Prize value £160 - no cash alternative. The prize will be drawn on 13/12/13 and the winner will be notified by telephone.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

To advertise in the **WHAT'S ON COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD**
Telephone: **01631 568000**

Friends of Crae present a **CAROL CONCERT** by THE CORRAN SINGERS
FURNACE VILLAGE HALL
Thursday 12th December 7.30pm
Seasonal punch & mince pies; Raffle
Tickets £5.00 at the door children free if accompanied by an adult
Reg. Charity no. SC033244

OBAN U3A
Please be aware that there will be no monthly coffee and chat meeting on Tuesday 3 December because we are holding our Christmas Lunch on that day.
We extend festive greetings to all our members.

Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club
Monthly Club Night
Thursday 5th December 7.30pm
Argyllshire Gathering Hall
Guest Artists:
Gordon Pattullo & Gemma Donald
Admission £4

FORT WILLIAM ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Musical Evening
Tuesday 3 Dec at 8pm
GUEST ARTISTS:
Gary Sutherland Trio
Railway Club Inverlochy
All Welcome
Admission £4.00, Tea & Raffle Extra
IN THE EVENT OF A LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION BY ANY GUEST ARTIST THE COMMITTEE WILL FIND AN ALTERNATIVE ARTIST

Seil Island Hall
Christmas Craft Fair
Sunday, December 1
11am - 4pm
Many stalls, xmas presents, carol singing, refreshments, home-baking and light lunches.
Proceeds raised towards Seil Hall Recreation and Amenities Group
Sco 32419 and Fasdale School Parent Council

Oban Lifeboat fundraisers present...
Festive fun for all the family
THE PALACE HOTEL, OBAN
SATURDAY DECEMBER 7th 11am-4pm
Meet Santa and Stormy Stan - the lifeboat man!
TOMBOLA * FUN COMPETITIONS * HOME BAKING STALL TEAS, COFFEES, SANDWICHES, CAKES AND MINCE PIES
Children's lucky dip and Fancy Dress Competition (Judging 2pm)
£50 prize for winner kindly donated by Oban Express. Children to be accompanied by an adult please. See you there!

10 pairs of tickets to give away

CARNIVAL AT THE SECC

20 December 12 January

Win tickets to the IRN-BRU Carnival!

Celebrating 93 years of festive family fun, the IRN-BRU carnival at the SECC has over 60 rides and attractions and is Europe's largest indoor funfair. New additions this year include the Extreme XL which spins and swings visitors 50ft in the air! There's fun for all the family on the Teacups, Dodgems and the Carousel whilst older families will enjoy the Drop Zone, the Ghost Train and the Speed Buzz.

For more information visit www.irn-bru-carnival.com

For your chance to win a pair of tickets, simply answer this question, complete the form and send to Irn Bru Comp, Wyvex Media, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB by Monday December 9, 2013.

Question: How high will the new Extreme XL ride swing visitors in the air?

Answer
Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone..... Email.....

*Terms and conditions: Entry price is £12 with visitors receiving ten vouchers which can be used on all rides and most stalls. Some stalls are cash taking. Closed Christmas Day. Each ride is one voucher and stalls are two vouchers. The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. The winner may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvex Media publication and website. This competition is not open to Wyvex Media and associated company employees and their families. This competition is open to readers of other Wyvex Media publications.



North Argyll Carers Centre

Supporting Carers in North Argyll and the Islands

Do you provide unpaid help and support to a family member, child, partner, relative or friend, who could not manage without you? This could be due to age, physical or mental health issues, disability, long term condition or addiction.

We provide: advice and information, support groups, emotional and practical support, training and activities, therapies, counselling and advocacy.

We have an outreach service supporting carers in rural and remote areas with regular visits and activities organised for carers across the area.

Our young carers service offers after-school clubs, activities, respite and support to young carers from the age of 8 upwards.

Why not come along and see how we can help you. We are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm. You are welcome to drop in or can phone to make an appointment. Staff are always available and you will be most welcome.

For further information please call us on 01631 564422 or e-mail on info@northargyllcarers.org.uk
Registered as a Scottish Charity No: SC040902

THERE is no time of year that can be more lonely for people than Christmas. For those unfortunate enough not to be surrounded by loved ones during the festive period it can be a struggle.

A chat over a cup of tea and a few biscuits might solve some people's problems but others may have much more on their plate to deal with. And there are plenty of places in Argyll that you can turn to for care and support in a time of need.

You could be facing problems at home, whether that be coping with a loved one's illness, a recent bereavement or addiction issues.

There are many support and therapy groups that can help you overcome these issues and deal with the emotions you experience during them.

And as a friend of someone who has suffered loss,

close to Christmas, what should you do? People that have lost a loved one close to Christmas may not even want to think about it or acknowledge the festive season. So what does that mean to close friends who want to support them?

Jane Pope, bereavement service coordinator at healthcare charity Sue Ryder, said: 'Some people will try to avoid thinking of Christmas, but it is not possible as it's going to be around them everywhere.'

'As a friend you want to support that person through a very difficult time and reach a balance that's right for your friend. Don't make assumptions, ask your friend what they'd like, we're all different.'

'There's a time for staying with your grief and a time to be distracted from it; healthy grieving sees the individual oscillating between the two. Sometimes we grieve as much as our friends and each person's experience of bereavement is special to them.'

'Grieving is a natural process which helps most people, eventually, find a way

of learning to live with the death and continue with life.'

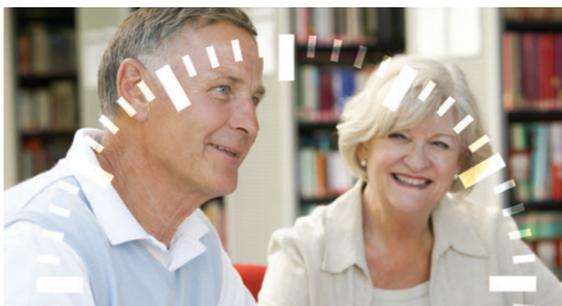
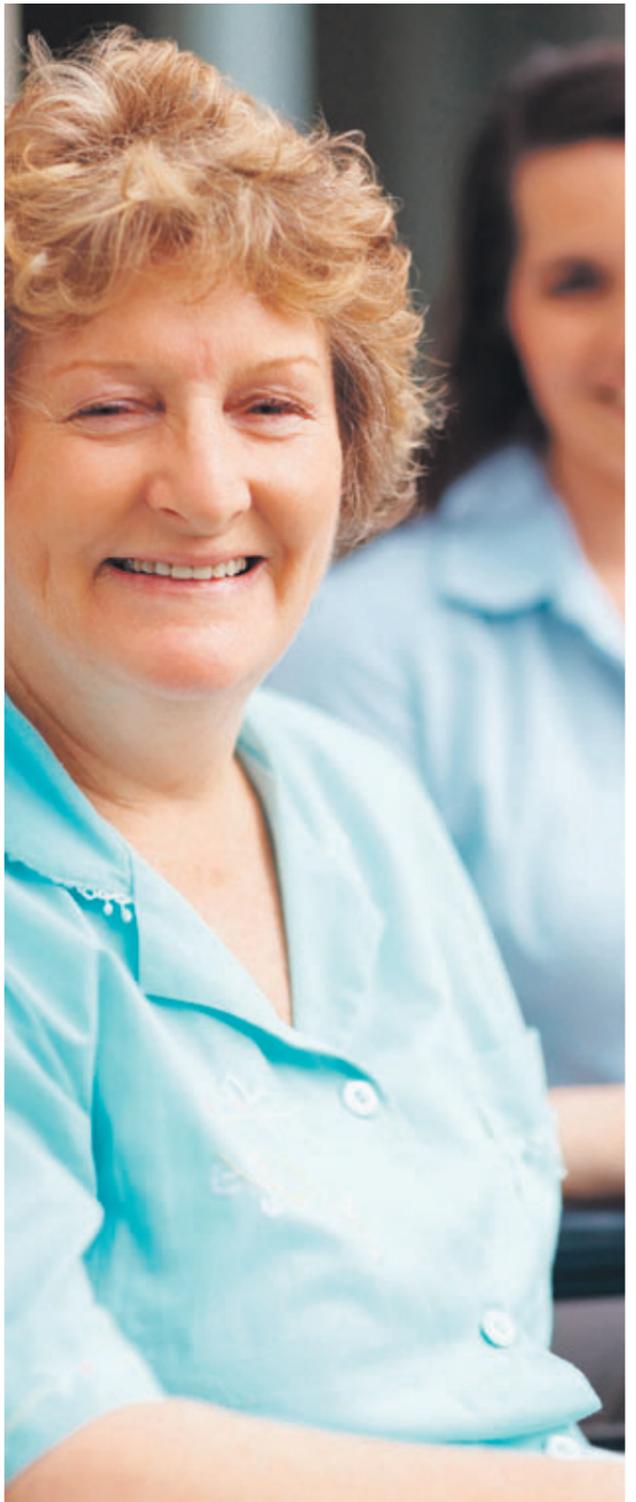
There are a few things that you can do to help your friends cope with bereavement especially at Christmas: help keep them busy, suggest things that might help and offer to take part with them, like lighting a candle in church or allow them to skip Christmas altogether if that's what they want to do.

Their choices must be sought and respected, the last thing they need is people bossing them around

Perhaps you're stuck in a situation you can't see a way out of, if you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse help is at hand - don't be afraid to speak up.

Reaching out to others can pull you back from a point where you may be considering harming yourself. Talking through our problems will help solve them.

If you're a carer for anyone and struggling to cope - or just looking for a bit of breathing space - there is also help available through respite services and support groups.



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Find out more at your local High Life Highland leisure centre
highlifehighland.com/youtime

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at Hand



If you or someone you know is being abused
Don't be scared tell someone

Lochaber Women's Aid

provide confidential, sensitive support and advice during and after crisis to women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. We have specialist workers who will understand your concerns and help you.

Contact us on: 01397 705734
3 Belford Road, Fort William, PH33 6BT
E-mail: lwa@lochaberwomensaid.org
www.lochaberwomensaid.org

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
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Lochaber Women's Aid has been providing support to women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse for over ten years. Our experienced staff are able to offer sensitive support for physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse. In addition to our support to women, we also provide support to children and young people who may be affected by domestic abuse or dating abuse. We can help with a variety of practical issues such as benefits, housing and legal issues. As we also work in partnership with other local agencies such as the Police, Social Work and Health and Housing professionals, we are also able to help arrange appointments for you. Through 1-2-1 support and group work, we can help you rebuild your self-esteem and confidence. We can meet you at home, our offices or at any convenient place which suits. Don't feel isolated or threatened, contact Lochaber Women's Aid for sensitive, specialist support.

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A B citizens advice bureau

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Kinlochleven: 1st & 3rd Thur of month, 1pm - 4pm
Leven Centre
MacMillan Cancer Support: Mon 3 - 5pm & Wed 10 - 12noon
Fort William Library

To volunteer with our service ring the tel no above or email below
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www.befriendersforchildren.co.uk
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SHE WAS ELDERLY, LIVED ALONE...

...WE DID EVERYTHING WE COULD.

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Farming

NEWS

US regulations threaten Scottish salmon industry

SCOTTISH farmed salmon could yet be off the menu in America as new regulations undergo internal review at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The organisation, part of the United States Department of Commerce, was petitioned earlier this year by anti-fish farm campaigners to ban the import of salmon from farms which shoot seals.

Fish farms in the north and west of Scotland have the worst records when it comes to killing the creatures – a practice the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation says is 'entirely legal and necessary to protect fish welfare'.

But the US Marine Mammal Protection Act prohibits the intentional killing of marine mammals in commercial fishing operations, including fish farms.

In May, Nina Young, a foreign affairs specialist with NOAA, said the body was in the 'midst of developing regulations which will apply globally to all fisheries and aquaculture'.

It had been hoped to have these proposals published and out for public consultation this year.

But Ms Young last week told The Oban Times 'developing such a comprehensive regulation is a daunting task', adding: 'While we have never been closer to publishing the proposed regulation, it is still undergoing internal review.'

'Unfortunately, I cannot provide a timeline or an estimate as to when it will be published. Since our discussion in May there have been no new calls or petitions to ban imports of aquaculture salmon.'

John Robins, secretary of Save Our Seals Fund, said: 'I am still hopeful that the import of Scottish farmed salmon into the United States will be banned.'

'Fish farmers there are not allowed to shoot seals and have to buy proper predator exclusion nets and employ the staff needed to fit and maintain them.'

'Instead of protecting seals our government gives salmon farmers the cheap option and allows them to shoot seals. This gives Scottish salmon farmers a very unfair advantage over American producers.'

Ms Walker added: 'We will use the consultation comments to finalise the form and grazing committees will then be asked to fill them in with their township information. We will analyse the statistics contained in the completed forms which will allow us to report to Ministers and the Scottish Parliament on challenges and opportunities for crofting communities.'

Crofters force extension to grazing response deadline

CROFTERS are to be given more time to give their views on how best to update their governing body on the condition of common grazings and crofts under new legislation.

The Crofting Commission was deluged with requests from grazing clerks, assessors and Scottish Crofting Federation members saying the deadline for two consultations - on grazing regulations - was impractical.

Around 300 forms sent out were due to be returned

last Friday, but now the commission has relented and extended the deadline to December 6.

Convener Susan Walker said: 'We have had a lot of calls from crofters who are unable to meet the deadline of 22nd November and obviously the feedback from crofters is vital.'

'This extension will allow us to reply so that their views are taken into consideration.'

'The Commission wants to maintain a balance between the statutory requirements

and the best working practice - but keep the valuable input from crofters at its core.'

The consultation on grazing regulations aims to get feedback from committees and shareholders on new guidance on regulating their common grazings.

Meanwhile, the duty to report consultation asks grazing committees to comment on the form they will use to report on the condition of their common grazing and every croft sharing in it, together with other matters of interest, to the Crofting

Commission. The form will be completed by grazing committees once every five years.



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www.harbrocountrystores.co.uk



Stock from M Campbell, Airds was among the pens at Caledonian Marts' sale of store lambs, feeding ewes and cattle at Oban Livestock Centre on Tuesday. See next week's Oban Times for the sale report. 15_148mrt01

Market reports

STIRLING - Caledonian Marts (Stirling) Ltd, Monday November 25, had forward 360 Store Cattle 17 Young Bulls.

Store Bullocks (105) averaged 226p (n/c) to 289p per kilo for a 370kg Limousin from South Medrox, Coatbridge and £1240 gross for a 505kg AAX from Busbie Mains, Kilmours. Store Heifers (97) averaged 221p (n/c) to 261p per kilo for a 310kg Limousin, from Powflats, Burnburn and £1170 gross for a 490kg Charolais from Wester Braco, Airdrie. Bulls (17) averaged 184p (n/c) to 232p per kilo for a 300kg Charolais from Ampherlaw, Carnwath and £1200 gross for a 555kg Limousin from Dalrippen, Girvan.

Bullock Calves (94) averaged 240p per kg selling to 289p for a 275kg Limousin from Hopstead, Eymouth and to £925 gross for two 350kg Charolais from Easterton, Caldercruix. Heifer Calves (64) averaged 225p per kg to £276 three 310kg Limousins from Mains of Burnbank, Blairdrummond and to £880 for a 390kg Limousin from Hopstead, Eymouth.

STIRLING - United Auctions Wednesday November 20, sold 431 store cattle.

Bullocks (22) - averaged 232.9p (+3.90p) to 262.5p per kg and £1370. Heifers (209) - averaged 224.60p (+3.80p) to 253.60p per kg and £1110. Cast Cows (134) - averaged 123.90p to 166.10p per kg and £1450.

Forward Cattle (12) - averaged 139.90p to 198.10p per kg and £190. Bullocks (222) averaged 232.9p (+3.90p) to 262.5p per kg for a 400kg CHX from Hilltown of Balindean and £1370 for a 570kg LimX from South Arditie. Heifers (209) - averaged 224.60p (+3.80p) to 253.60p per kg for a 276kg BBX from Lephinchapel and £1110 for a 474kg LimX from Little Pinkerton. Cast Cows (134) - averaged 123.90p to 166.10p per kg for a SimX from Gartincaber and £1450 for a AAX from Graystone. Forward Cattle (12) - averaged 139.90p to 198.10p per kg for a BBX from Percival and £1190 for a SimX from Harehead.

Bullocks: Up to 250kgs - Borland Farms £580, 248.90p; 251-300kgs: Lephinchapel £760, 254.00p; 301-350kgs: Fullarton £840, 250.70p; 351-400kgs Hilltown of

Balindean £1050, 262.50p; 401-450kgs Fullarton £1090, 250p; 451-500kgs Fullarton £1190, Parkgatestone 251.00p; 501-550kgs South Arditie £1280, 243.30p; 551-600kgs South Arditie £1370, 242.40p; Heifers: 251-300kgs Lephinchapel £750, 253.60p; 301-350kgs Graystone £820, 238.40p; 351-400kgs East Saucher £940, 239.60p; 401-450kgs Parkgatestone £1110, Parkgatestone 246.60p; 451-500kgs Little Pinkerton £1110, Leio 242.30p; 501-550kgs Greensburn £1100, 219.10p; OTM Cows - Graystone (AA) £1450, 160.40p; Leoch (CH) £1390, 163.90p; Cloquat Farms (Lim) £1290, 158.50p; South Arditie (Sim) £1230, Gartincaber 166.10p; Wemyss (SH) £955, 159.00p; Craighead (ContX) Craighead £1070, Leoch 165.00p; OTM Bulls - High Unthank (CH) £1470, 140.00p; Gartincaber (Lim) £1390, 139.80p; Lathrisk (AA) £955, 103.10p; West Park (SH) £1190, 115.80; Forwards - Percival (BBX) £1070, 198.10; Harehead (Sim) £1190, 175.00; West Park (Lim) £1090; 180.50p.

STIRLING - United Auctions Wednesday November 20 had forward 1748 store and breeding sheep. Averages: Btx £75.50 (+£7.83 on the week); Mule £56.97 (+£3.92p on the week); BF £40.41 (-£1.26p on the week); SuffX £58.09 (-£6.78p on the week); TexX £61.83 (-£0.22 on the week). Leading Prices - Bordland (Suff) £72.50; Dullart (Tex) £70; Stralochy (Chev) £59; Wright Park (X) £62; Muirton Farms (Mule) £64; Dall (BF) £53.50; Sydenham (BTX) £75.50 Fort William, Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd., November 15, sold 160 weaned calves and store cattle, 24 breeding cattle and 29 OTM cattle.

Bullocks (74) averaged 217.4p and sold to 309.7p per kg for a pair of 155kg Limousin crosses from Dunlichity, Farr, and £1,140 gross for a pair of 500kg Limousin crosses from Gortan, Arisaig. Heifers (83) averaged 211.7p and sold to 3.00p per kg twice for a 140kg Simmental cross and for a pair of 170kg Bazadaise crosses from Skye view, Arisaig, and £720 gross for a pair of 380kg Aberdeen Angus crosses from Breakachy, Laggan. Young Bulls (3) sold to 187.9p per kg and £310 gross for Shorthorn crosses

from Dunlichity. Cow with male calf at foot (4) sold to £850 gross for a Limousin cross from Insh, Spean Bridge. In-calf cows (18) sold to £700 gross twice for a Highland cross from Alaval, Oban and for a Simmental cross from 7 Back of Keppoch, Arisaig, Breeding Bull (2) sold to £1,500 gross for a Simmental from Alaval. OTM cattle (29) sold to 196.0p per kilo and £970 gross for a pair of 495kg Shorthorn cross bullocks from 118 Achnaha, Kilchoan, and £870 gross for a 715kg Limousin cross cow from Ardshona, Isle of Eigg.

Other leading prices per head and per kg: Bullocks up to 200kg - Skye View, £550, 282.1p; 201-250kg - Lundavra, Fort William, £610, 282.9p; 251-300kg - Mucomir, Spean Bridge, £680, Lundavra, 241.5p; 301-350kg - 4 Back of Keppoch, Arisaig, £780, 6 Osaig Park, 233.9p; 351-400kg - Gortan, £830, 215.6p; 401-450kg - 118 Achnaha, £850, 188.9p; 451-500kg - Gortan, £990, 228.0p; Heifers up to 200kg - Skye View, £510, Dunlichity, 275.0p; 201-250kg - Reispole, Acharacle, £600, Skye View, 257.8p; 251-300kg - Moy Farm, Banavie, £660, Mucomir, 228.1p; 301-350kg - 4 Back of Keppoch, £700, 209.4p; 351-400kg - Glen Nevis Estate, Fort William, £520, Breakachy, 189.5p.

FORT WILLIAM, Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd., November 15, sold 910 store sheep of all classes.

Lambs (604) sold to £68.50 gross for Suffolk crosses from Blargie Farm, Laggan. Ewes (282) sold to £48 gross for a Cheviot from 13 Peinchorran, Braes, Rams (24) sold to £65 gross for a Cheviot from Meall mo chridhe, Kilchoan.

Other leading prices per head: Store lambs: TexX - Blargie, £6700; Chev - Meall mo chridhe, £6100; Cross - Glendoe Estates, Borlum, £5000; BF - Blargie, £4750. Ewes: BF - Croft 6, Fort William, £3900; Cross - Strathochy, Aberchelder, £3500; Zwarb - Balgowan, Laggan, £3200; Chev - Ardornish, Oban, £2900; SuffX - 2 Achnaphuibail, Fort William, £2750; TexX - Carnoch Farm, Ardgour, £2700; Mule - Glendoe Estates, £2200.

Hebridean projects receive council grant

FOUR OUTER Hebrides community projects have claimed a share of £145,000 from Western Isles Council's capital grant fund.

West Harris Trust has been offered £50,000 towards a community enterprise centre to provide business expansion, community businesses, a café and tourism facilities, while Co-Chomunn Eirrisgeidh received £10,000 for an extension to the community shop.

North Harris Trust was awarded £35,000 for three new business units near Tarbert and Horshader

Community Development £50,000 for polytunnels to grow food and cut carbon emissions in Dalmore, Dalbeg and South Shawbost.

The first round awards are part of the comhairle's £1.8 million pot for community economic development projects.

Sustainable development committee chair councillor Archie Campbell said: 'With the quality of projects and high level of interest already demonstrated in the first round, we are confident that significant projects will accrue in the Outer Hebrides.'

MSPs welcome laser scanner decision

ARGYLL and Bute MSP Michael Russell has welcomed Police Scotland's decision to introduce 3D laser scanners to the assessment of road accident sites.

But Mr Russell has revealed that he asked the Transport Minister to consider introducing the equipment more than 18 months ago.

Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor has also welcomed the move, which comes following a

successful trial period in England. Mr Russell said: 'When I discovered that the equipment was being used in other countries for recording details of accident locations I wrote to the Transport Minister pointing out that the very long delays on roads caused by surveying after an accident were a major problem in Argyll and Bute, where there is rarely a convenient alternative road and sometimes no diversion at all is possible.'

Reduction in Western Isles fires

THE NUMBER of accidental house fires and deliberate fires in the Western Isles has fallen according to figures released to the fire scrutiny committee last week.

Local senior officer Billy Wilson told the committee there were two accidental house fires in the second

quarter of the year, a reduction of five compared to the same period in 2012.

One fire casualty was recorded, one less than 2012.

LSO Wilson's report also highlighted a reduction in deliberate fires, from two during the second quarter, compared to four last year.

Royal Mail delivers top service

ROYAL MAIL has delivered a target-beating performance in the IV postcode area between April and September, according to independent research.

TNS found 95.4 per cent of first class mail delivered on time, the next day after posting. The target is 93 per cent.

McCormick C1105, 2007, c/w Quicke loader. £19,495
Zator 6341 Super, 2002, 52 reg, c/w Maileux MX 75 loader. £14,495
Case 4240 XL, 1996 P reg, 4WD, 2 spools, PUH/Drawbar, aircon, 1 owner. £12,995
Deutz 4.7 Agratrac, 4wd, 1994 L reg, c/w Quicke 640 loader. £12,495
Case 4230 4wd, 1994 M reg, c/w Quicke 750 loader/3rd service/joystick, 2 spools, PUH, 540/1000 PTO. £12,495
Fiat Agri 82-94 DT, 1994 L reg, c/w Quicke 3260 loader/4ft bucket, 2 spools. £11,795
Lundini Blizzard 85, 2000 V reg, c/w FX loader and Lundini 9880 Evolution 4wd, 2001 Y reg. priced from £10,995
Massey Ferguson 390 1993 K reg, 1 owner from new, 12/12 shuttle. £11,495
Zator 5340 4wd 1996 N reg, c/w Trima 1532 loader/3rd service/joystick, 70hp, only 3500 hours. choice of 2 £10,995
Zator 6245 4wd, 1992 H reg, c/w Quicke 4060 loader. £8,495
Case 895 Super XL, and Case 885XL 1992 H reg, 4wd, 2 spools. each of £8,495
Renault 80.34, 4wd, 1993 K reg, shuttle box, HYD PUH, Perkins engine. £7,995
Case 4210, 2wd, 1994 M reg, and Case 885 2wd c/w loader, 2wd, PUH, drawbar, 2 spools. from £7,495
Massey Ferguson 3085 4wd, 1992, c/w Grays loader, poor linework. £5,995
Massey Ferguson 3070 4wd, 1988 E reg, Autronic 4x4 powershift. £5,995
Fiat 780 2wd, 1985 B reg, 2 door cab, 2 spools, PUH. £5,495
JCB 940 2wd, 1994 M reg, and Case 885 2wd c/w loader, 2wd, PUH, drawbar, 2 spools. from £3,995
Massey Ferguson 552 2wd, average order. £4,495
Siromer 204E 4wd Compact, and Kubota B1110 4wd compact. from £3,995
Kubota RTV 900cc utility vehicle, Camo edition, tipping body. £4,495
Kubota RTV 900cc utility vehicle. Camo edition, tipping body. £4,495

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Argyll & Bute Council

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'We have it all', says Argyll tourism boss

David Adams McGilp explains what to expect from 2014

THE WEST coast has all the potential of a world-renowned destination, says the regional director of VisitScotland.

And in 2014 - the Year of Homecoming - the 'offer' is a 'precious collection of people and places'.

'Sunshine is not always what the visitor is looking for, or expects,' explained David Adams McGilp. 'The visitor economy is all about the experience and with the wide range of possibilities; from a walk on the beach or in the hills, visiting an ancient castle, a cinema or theatre production, or the excellent locally-produced food and drink there are plenty on offer.'

Mr Adams McGilp, who grew up in Tayvallich, says everyone and every business has a part to play in making sure the area offers the best possible time for visitors.

He said: 'There has been a significant shift in what the consumer wants and expects over the last 10 years.'

'Evidence suggests visitors are looking for a unique way to spend their free time and will travel across the country or across the globe to get it.'

'For example, people visit Glasgow in the same way we might visit New York. The same could be said for the west coast.'

'The west coast has unique shops that attract people to its towns.'

'These places sell authentic products that cannot be bought anywhere else.'

It is all about the uniqueness of the west coast, Mr Adams McGilp explained: 'The visitor here is looking for heritage, castles, scenery, lochs, hillsides or life lived at a different pace.'

'People are looking for their own personal ancestral history and the sun doesn't need to shine

for visitors to get what they want. When the sun does shine, however, there is nowhere in the world that is better.'

Speaking of the Homecoming 2014 celebrations David said: 'Scotland is inviting its diaspora home. For relatively new societies, such as North America, the distinctiveness of the west coast simply blows people away.'

'If your nation's history is 200 or 300 hundred years old then coming to Scotland and seeing places like Dunollie Castle, Dunstaffnage Castle, Kilmartin is something really special.'

'This is a real opportunity for people on the west coast to seize that opportunity.'

'Ancestral tourism is an important growth market in Scotland. There are clan societies all over the world who are much more organised and aware of Scottish history that they are often given credit for.'

Unique
'When they come to Scotland, looking for their clan or their ancestors, they are often surprised at our lack of awareness of the unique nature of culture and heritage.'

Mr Adams McGilp, a keen yachtsman and member of the Scottish Government's Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism, believes that there's a return to a more traditional route for visitors to the area.

'If we stopped for a moment to celebrate the influence across ancient and modern pursuits, and the multitude of ways it contributes to the uniqueness of the regional offer, we would be blown away by those things that are still relatively untapped on the west coast,' he said.

'For example, canals, lighthouses, commercial fishing,

aquaculture, sea angling, sailing, watersports, sailmaking and boatbuilding. The possibilities for sea journeys for people coming to the west coast are endless and timeless.'

'Argyll's very name, EarraGhael, the coastland of the Gaels, characterises it as somewhere special, somewhere beautiful, a precious collection of people and places which are at once rugged, welcoming, secluded, vibrant, natural, progressive.'

'Such extraordinary concentrations of history, built and natural heritage, culture, the arts and the Gaelic tradition are made all the more sensory by inherent exposure to, and reliance on, the sea. We have it all.'

'And,' he laughed, 'I've not even begun to speak to you about Dunadd, now that's something quite special.'

David points out tourists are not always people from far away or across the oceans. 'Attracting visitors from nearer to home is equally important and the offer has to be attractive to the people who take holidays on the west coast who are from Scotland and other parts of the UK.'

'As a place for people visiting from nearer to home the opportunities are limitless. Building more experiences for visitors, wherever they are from, is essential.'

The opportunities for private, public and third sector organisations to get involved in delivering those experiences are endless.

'The more there is on offer, the longer people will want to spend here and that's what we all want. I have countless examples of people who came here on holiday and because of their experience decided to come here to live.'



David Adams McGilp says marine tourism is an area for growth, as businesses like Seafari have shown.

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<p>Substantial Building Plot, Taynuilt</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Building Plot Magnificent countryside views Planning Permission (11/01642/PPP) Circa 5 acres in total Walking distance of village <p>Guide Price £200,000</p>	<p>Eas a 'Mhuilinn, Kilmelford</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immaculate modern house Lounge, Family room, WC, Kitchen, Utility Room 4 double Bedrooms, 1 En Suite Underfloor heating throughout Substantial fully floored Loft Large garden with shed Surrounded by countryside views <p>Guide Price £287,500</p>	<p>12e Angus Terrace, Oban</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well presented top floor flat Hall, Lounge, modern Kitchen and Bathroom 3 Double Bedrooms Ample storage space plus Attic Fully double glazed Open countryside views Communal drying green <p>Guide Price £120,000</p>	<p>56 Lochnell Road, Dunbeg</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well presented family home Lounge/Diner, Kitchen, Porch 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom Great storage & large Loft Garage/shed & summerhouse Fully double glazed Private off-road parking Popular residential village <p>Offers Over £130,000</p>	<p>27 Acres, Taynuilt</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Opportunity Open Countryside Views Planning Permission for 5 houses (11/01646/PPP) Approx. 27 Acres in total Walking distance of village <p>Guide Price £400,000</p>

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Long service awards for fish farm employees

TEN EMPLOYEES of a fish farming company have received awards for chalking up a combined 250 years of service. Geoffrey Kidd, Scottish Sea Farms' (SSF) site manager at Loch Spelve, is the longest serving employee to receive an accolade this month. He has achieved 35 years of service and will be going on a European city break, courtesy of SSF. Other employees to have their length of service marked include Alastair MacFarlane, a husband-and-wife team from Lismore with 30 years of service. Alan Jamieson, from Creran, Andrew Tomison, from Spelve, Gordon Mackay, from Loch Damph, Brian MacRae who works across Loch Frisa and Loch Ba and Steven Jamieson, from Nevis, all received 25 years of service awards. Jane McCusker, who is employed in the personnel department, Arnaud Louis, based at Dunstaffnage, and Christina Milligan, in processing, all received 20 years of service awards. Jim Gallagher, managing director of SSF, said: 'We are delighted to recognise and reward the loyalty and commitment of our long service colleagues; they are a great example of the skilled and motivated employees who have helped us to have the successes and achievements in our business. 'We are extremely proud of each and everyone one of them and I would like to thank them for their continued support and contribution.' Another three employees, Alexander Mackay, David Watt and Jim Gallagher, also achieved 15 years of service to the company.



From left, Geoffrey Kidd, John Rea, Steven Jamieson, Alan Jamieson, Gordon Mackay and Mike Bauermeister with managing director Jim Gallagher.

Firms join forces to build trout farm in the Falklands

TWO ARGYLL aquaculture companies have joined forces to construct a brown trout farm - in the Falkland Islands. Fusion Marine supplied two fish farm pens in kit form for the pilot brown trout farm while Kames Fish Farming provided a wide range of ancillary equipment, as well as project managing the overall installation. This small-scale pilot venture, operated by Falklands based fishing company Fortuna, aims to assess the potential of breeding and growing brown trout in sea pens in the Falklands. Running the project for Fortuna is Simon Hardcastle who worked at Kames in the early 1980s and who previously led a trial farming operation in the Falklands with salmon and mussels. Peter Richardson of Kames said: 'Simon Hardcastle stocked the first consignment of smolts recently and they are doing well. 'His main challenge will be from predators since there are a lot of sea lions on the island. 'Tighter 'This is the principal reason behind fitting sinker tubes to the nets as it allows them to be kept very much tighter, thus helping prevent seal damage. 'There are no other fish farms on the island, so the environment is clear of any fish diseases or parasites, which represents a big advantage.'



Simon Hardcastle on one of the sea pens.

Meavag Fish Farm expands

AN ISLE of Harris company growing fry for the organic and conventional salmon market is expanding operations in response to customer demand. Meavag Fish Farm, south of Tarbet, will now grow the fry on to smolt stage after working up a business plan with Business Gateway Western Isles. Owner Paul Finnegan said: 'To meet demand we're expanding Meavag Fish Farm to grow smolts which are usually between 70 to 100 grammes. I will rent local fresh water lochs as I'll need a much larger area for growing the salmon to that size. The producers that we supply have just been taking fry but now want the salmon when they're ready to go to sea.' Mr Finnegan, 49, who grew up in Northampton, added: 'My wife Maria and I have been living in the Western Isles for 13 years now and run the business together with help from casual and seasonal staff.'

Doors open on recycling group's first shop



General assistant Iain Bark and LORI manager Julie Fairbrass put their feet up after opening the charity's new shop in Oban's Mill Lane. 15, 147lori

AN OBAN recycling group that restores unwanted household items to sell on has opened its first shop. Lorn and Oban Recycling Initiative (LORI), part of the GRAB Trust charity, is now selling sofas, tables, beds and electrical goods from its new premises at Mill Lane, opposite the Floorshop, freeing up space at the charity's cabins at Moleigh. The move will mean the charity can keep more stock for resale, and will be able to revive larger items at its Moleigh base before moving them into Oban for sale. LORI manager Julie Fairbrass said they were delighted with the new shop, which is being run on a six month trial basis and has allowed the social enterprise to take on two more part-time members of staff. 'It means we can take in more stock. Our prices are staying the same though,' she said.

PUBLIC NOTICES

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Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING
These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website 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.

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02246/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage	Land East of Tigh Na Ghlinne Kilinver Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
13/02349/PP	Change of use of dwellinghouse (Class 9) to hostel (Class 7)	Ardalium House Ulva Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA73 6LZ	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
13/02622/PP	Formation of vehicular access, layby and associated fencing/gate	Land South of Struthan Terrace Crossapoll of Tiree Argyll and Bute	Tiree Area Office

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street, Ardsheal PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times 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 (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02521/PP	Erection of communications mast (19.866 meters high).	Port Askaig Pier Port Askaig Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA46 7RB	Sub Post Office Port Askaig

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Planning and Regulatory Services Whitegates Office Whitegates Road Lochgilphead PA31 8SY at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times 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 (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02656/PP	Construction of 18 hole golf course and additional practice hole to form part of the Ardfin Sporting Estate	Ardfin Estate Craighouse Isle of Jura Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura

Argyll and Bute Council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Whitegates Office Whitegates Road Lochgilphead PA31 8SY. A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdair air fad airson Alba air fad

Information Notice
Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004

Ardsheal Peninsula
Site of Special Scientific Interest and Kentallen
Site of Special Scientific Interest

Scottish Natural Heritage gives notice that on 28 November 2013 it confirmed the re-notification of Ardsheal Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also Kentallen SSSI, both made on 21 March 2013. The SSSIs are located in Lochaber, at NM967560 and NN010579 respectively. Copies of the confirmations can be inspected or obtained free of charge from the address below or at www.tellmesotland.gov.uk

George Hogg, Unit Manager,
The Governor's House, The Parade,
Fort William PH33 7PE

North Argyll Carers Centre Ltd

Annual General Meeting and Lunch
Thursday 12th December 2013
Royal Hotel Argyll Square Oban
12 noon

We look forward to seeing you

Duncan Maccormick and Linda Macgillivray have registered their croft, 2 Upper Scotstown in the parish of Ardnamurchan & Sunart on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may appeal to the Scottish Land Court by 15 August 2014. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home

www.highland.gov.uk

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://www.highland.gov.uk>. Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
13/03462/PIP	Land 70m SE of Hillside Portuaik, Kilchoan	Erection of house
13/04093/FUL	89 Camanachd Crescent Fort William	Installation of domestic 8.5KW air source heat pump (Retrospective)
13/04132/FUL	Ardgour Outdoor Centre Kilmalieu, Ardgour Fort William	Garage and hydro thermal store building in garden ground
13/04211/FUL	Owner's Accommodation Laurelbank, Achintore Road Fort William	Owner's accommodation (Retrospective)
13/04258/FUL	Land to North of Laga House, Laga, Acharacle	Erection of two houses & associated roads & services
13/04265/FUL	Unit 3A North Road, Fort William	Formation of new display window
13/04284/FUL	Old jetty Laudale Estate	Proposed house on old jetty (removing existing structure)

Time period for comments is 14 days. Application 13/04132/FUL is 21 days.
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

WATER ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003
WATER ENVIRONMENT (CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2011
APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF AUTHORISATION
PORT NA MINE (ETIVE 3), LOCH ETIVE

An application has been made to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) by Dawnfresh Farming Limited to vary water use licence number CAR/L/1010366 authorising the carrying on of a controlled activity near or in connection with Port Na Mine (Etive 3) cage fish farm site, Loch Etive, as follows:

Description of change to controlled activity	Waters affected	National grid reference
Discharge of trade effluent from cage farming of rainbow trout including residues arising from the use of additional medicines and treatments for the eradication of sea lice.	Loch Etive	NN 0328 3308

SEPA considers that the above change(s) to a controlled activity may have an impact on the water environment and/or the interests of other users of the water environment. A copy of the application and any accompanying information may be inspected free of charge, at the SEPA Registry below, between 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (except local and national holidays). Alternatively, the application may be viewed on SEPA's website at: www.sepa.org.uk/water/water_regulation/advised_applications.aspx

Any person affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the application may make representations to SEPA in writing within 28 days beginning with the date of this advertisement, at the following address, quoting reference number CAR/L/1010366:

Registry Department, SEPA, Graesser House, Fodderty Way, Dingwall Business Park, Dingwall, IV15 9XB

Written representations received by SEPA within 28 days of this advertisement will be taken into consideration in determining whether or not to grant the application.

Before determining the application, SEPA will:

- assess the risk to the water environment posed by the carrying on of the activity or activities;
- assess the indirect effects of that impact on any other aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected;
- consider any likely adverse social and economic effects of that impact and of any indirect environmental effects that have been identified;
- consider the likely environmental, social and economic benefits of the activity;
- assess the impact of the controlled activity or activities on the interests of other users of the water environment;
- assess what steps may be taken to ensure efficient and sustainable water use; and
- apply and have regard to relevant legislation.

SEPA will then either grant or refuse to grant the application.

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CROFTING COMMISSION
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD
FIRST REGISTRATION OF COMMON GRAZINGS

The Crofting Commission have registered the following Common Grazings on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Arivegalg Common Grazings, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
Registration Number: CG31

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may appeal to the Scottish Land Court. The appeal must be brought within 9 months from the date of this advert and should be made directly to the Land Court.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home

Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

Revised June 2012 12
Assignment - Croft Tenancy
Revised June 2012 13
Assignment - Croft Tenancy



Supporting People & Communities

Carr Gomm is a national charity providing quality care and support across Scotland since 1997.

Community Contacts – a Carr Gomm initiative is now recruiting in Lochgilphead.

'Community Contacts' is an innovative new Carr Gomm volunteering project, funded by the Scottish Government to operate across Argyll and Bute. The aim of the project is to recruit and train volunteers to be knowledgeable about Self Directed Support (SDS) so that project staff and volunteers can assist individuals who are interested in the SDS option to explore what possibilities there are locally, formulate their person centred plan and implement.

Community Project Worker – 18.75 Hours £15,670 - £17,702 pa (pro rata)

Two year fixed term contract, based in Lochgilphead and surrounding area to support individuals to develop their personal plans and connect with community activities and support.

Please quote job reference number 386 when applying for this vacancy

Closing Date for applications: Noon, Monday 16th December 2013

Interviews will take place on Thursday 19th December 2013

We offer competitive terms and conditions including: pension, enhanced annual leave, training and career advancement opportunities. We aim to provide services and recruit staff without discrimination. For an application pack, which contains further project information, visit our website: www.carrgomm.org, e-mail: recruitment@carrgomm.org, phone: 0131 659 4770, or contact Carr Gomm, SPACE, 11 Harewood Road, Edinburgh EH16 4NT.



Oifigearan Leasachaidh Òigridh is Coimhearsnachd

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(Tuarastal £22-24K pro-rata. Cumhnant airson bliadhna le cothrom sineadh)

Tha Comunn na Gàidhlig a' sireadh Oifigearan Leasachaidh Òigridh is Coimhearsnachd anns an sgìrean gu h-àrd. Thathas a' lorg luchd-obrach a tha fileanta sa Ghàidhlig, eòlach air a bhith ag obair aig ìre coimhearsnachd, agus gu sònraichte obair òigridh, comasach air càirdeas a thogail leis an òigridh, comasach air a bhith ag obair le glè bheag de stiùireadh bho latha gu latha agus math air obair co-òrdanaiche agus a bhith a' bruidhinn ri buidhnean 's luchd-obrach aig iomadh ìre. Bidh làn chhead draibhidh a dhìth sna sgìrean far am biodh sin riatanach.

Ann an com-pàirtachas le sgoiltean, bidh na h-oifigearan seo a' libhrigeadh, a' cur air dòigh agus a' co-òrdachadh phròiseactan a chruthaicheas cothroman Gàidhlig don òigridh taobh a-staigh agus taobh a-muigh na sgoile. Bidh iad cuideachd ag obair còmhla ri roinnean leasachaidh eile, mar Sgioba Tràth Bhladhnaich aig Bòrd na Gàidhlig is Comann nam Pàrant.

Sa chiad dol a-mach, 's e cumhnant stèidhte airson bliadhna a bhios an seo ach, thathas dòchasach gum faighear an t-ionmhas a leigean leinn an obair a shineadh a-mach. Gheibhear Tuairisgeal Obrach agus tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, bho: Dòmhnall Mac Neill, Ceannard, Comunn na Gàidhlig, 5 Caolraid Mhicheil, Inbhir Nis, fòn 01463-234138, post-d ofis@cnaig.org

Feumaidh iarrtasan a bhith againn ro 12.00feasgair, Dihaoine 6 Dùbhlachd. Thathas an dùil gum bidh na h-oifigearan an dreuchd tràth sa bhliadhna 'ùr agus le sin thathas an dùil gum bidh na h-agallamhan air an cumail na seachdainean a' tòiseachadh 9 Dùbhlachd is 16 Dùbhlachd 2013. Gheibhear fiosrachadh mionaideach mun cinn-latha airson agallamhan aig www.cnaig.org

Tha na dreuchdan seo air am maoinachadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Comhairle Earra-ghàidheal is Bhòid, Comhairle Baile Ghlaschu is Comhairle Baile Dhùn Èideann.

'S e companaidh earranta le inbhe charrthais a th' ann an CnaG, àireamh charrthais SC007167.

A' CRUTHACHADH CHOTHROMAN DHAN GHÀIDHLIG

Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership
 Mis Argyll, Kintyre & Islay Locality

NHS Highland

Mental Health Administration & Clerical Department
 Argyll & Bute Hospital, Lochgilphead

Bank Administration Assistant
 Hours as & when required
 Band 2 £14,653 – £17,425 Pro rata
 Non-consolidated and non-pensionable
 addition of between £105 - £78 per annum, pro rata

An opportunity has arisen to join the Administration and Clerical Team within Mental Health Services as a member of bank staff.

This post provides the opportunity to work in various departments such as Estates, Medical Records etc. You should possess excellent communication and administration skills, typing skills will include audio transcription and a sound knowledge of Microsoft packages.

You must be available to undertake work at short notice.

Informal enquiries are welcomed by Fiona Broderick, Administration Services Manager, Mental Health on tel: 01546 604 908 or by email to: fiona.broderick@nhs.net

Application packs are available from HR Department, NHS Highland, Argyll & Bute CHP, Aros, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8LB - Tel 01546 606788 (24 hour answering service) or e-mail - recruitment.lab@nhs.net

Please quote job reference number 13bk/195.

Closing date for receipt of applications: 12 December 2013.

www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk



Farms Manager Loch Etive, nr Taynuilt

Dawnfresh Farming Ltd, part of the Dawnfresh Seafoods Group, is the largest Trout Farming Company operating in the UK. Our Marine and Freshwater farms are located throughout Scotland, England and Ireland.

We are currently looking to identify a suitably qualified and highly motivated individual to undertake the role of Farms Manager for our five seawater farms on Loch Etive, nr Taynuilt.

As Farms Manager you will be responsible for the day to day planning, running and reporting of the five farms. Reporting to and working closely with the Seawater Area Manager, the successful candidate will already be a Site Manager within the aquaculture industry, or an experienced Assistant Manager who is keen to progress in management, with proven ability for developing site infrastructure and establishing best farming practice. Essential skills will include the ability to manage and motivate personnel, first class planning and organisation abilities and a high degree of computer literacy. In addition, applicants should have a full driving license and be prepared to undertake travel as required.

Depending on experience, we offer a salary package circa £45k plus Benefits, along with the opportunity to develop your management career within a company at the forefront of UK trout farming. Our farms in Etive have a combined annual production of 2,000t sea-grown rainbow trout @ 4.5kg. This tonnage is expected to double within the next 2-3 years with the development of existing sites within Etive and the potential for opening new production in a separate geographic region.

Assistance with relocation may be available.

If you are interested in applying for this position please send your CV to Rhianon Davies on rhianon@fmcgexecutive.com or call her 07891245724.

BIDWELLS

Housekeeper wanted – Lochaber (Spean Bridge area)

Looking for responsible housekeeper to maintain a beautiful, private residence on a traditional Highland estate. The perfect candidate would be required to clean and cook for the owner when in residence. Ability to drive essential.

Regular duties would include cleaning on a daily basis, cooking duties, managing house provisions/shopping, and working within the Estate team.

The role is part time however there is a degree of flexibility and hours would depend on the candidate. There is also potential for accommodation to be provided.

Applicants should provide a CV to Bidwells, Carn Dearg House, North Road Fort William, PH33 6PP

Caledonian MacBrayne
 Hebrides & Clyde Ferries

Area Harbours Manager x 2 Posts
 Generous Salary Package, commensurate with suitability & experience Ref: 545-SB
 Network based - West Coast

Reporting to the Head of Harbours, this role is to assist with the growth, development and establishment of a fully functioning harbour operations business with a view to potential expansion across Scotland and the rest of the UK in the future.

- Job Requirements:**
- Support the Head of Harbours to deliver a safe, compliant and effective harbours operation
 - Leading Harbours Safety meetings, initiating actions to enhance safety culture
 - Provide guidance and operational requirements to Area Operations Managers in respect of harbour operations to ensure both statutory and contractual obligations are met
 - Creation of harbours operating processes and supporting documentation for use by port staff
 - Development of and reporting on KPIs, initiating corrective action where necessary
 - Liaison with internal and external stakeholders
 - Facilities management of multiple port locations
 - Development & Management of Waste Management Plans, Traffic Management Plans and Berthing Plans at relevant ports
 - Co-ordination of emergency plans and drills
 - Support port management through review of shore side and marine navigational risk assessments

Education/Experience/Qualifications:

- Essential**
- Good standard of education (minimum English & Maths qualifications)
 - Formal Facilities Management or Safety qualification
 - Willingness to undertake training and continuing professional development

- Desirable**
- Qualified Harbour Manager
 - Office productivity tools (Microsoft)

If you are interested in this position, please respond by sending your CV quoting reference number 545-SB and return no later than 6 December 2013 to:

David MacBrayne HR (UK) Limited
 Ferry Terminal, Gourcock PA19 1QP
 t: 01475 650100 f: 01475 650268
 E-mail: vacancies@davidmacbraynehr.co.uk

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Mallaig & North West Fishermen's Association Ltd
Chief Executive

The M&NW Fishermen's Association Ltd is a body owned by its members who operate fishing vessels within various areas of the UK and European economic zone. Its remit is to represent its members' interests at all levels in matters pertaining to the fishing industry.

The Association is seeking to appoint a Chief Executive, whose duties will include liaising with government and other bodies on industry matters, carrying forward the Association's policies as directed, overseeing the running of all Association business matters and office staff and ensuring good communication with our members.

The successful candidate will need to be able to work using their own initiative, have knowledge of the political structure within the industry, have excellent communication skills and an understanding of working in partnerships. Knowledge of the fishing industry and good IT skills are desirable.

You will be required to produce reports to the members on a regular basis, be prepared to travel, be available to attend meetings at short notice and be contactable by members outside normal office hours, if necessary. UK driving licence and passport required.

40 hours per week (plus some weekend and evening work as necessary) Salary negotiable - will reflect experience and qualifications. Company car supplied. Closing date: 23rd December 2013

Applications in writing are invited and should be sent with a C.V. to: MNWFA Ltd, Harbour Offices, Mallaig, Inverness-shire. PH41 4QB Tel: 01687 462046 email: mnwfa@btconnect.com



Part Time Administrator – flexible hours

Hygiene Teknikk Ltd is a rapidly expanding specialist engineering company based in Oban. For our next phase of expansion we are seeking a part time Administrator to come and join us.

Our working culture will suit you if you are self-motivated and enjoy working as part of a small team with varied skill-sets and a shared determination to succeed. In return we can offer appropriately qualified candidates a competitive salary and our support for you to work the flexible hours you require to suit your current lifestyle.

Please send a brief CV together with a short email explaining why you are interested in this opportunity to ian@aquatic.as Interviews will be held shortly with a view to starting in early January.

Head Bailiff / Fishery Manager

The River Naver Fishery is seeking to appoint an enthusiastic and dynamic full time Head Bailiff / Fishery Manager to supervise the enforcement and management of the River Naver salmon fishery.

The successful candidate will demonstrate a good working knowledge and interest in salmon fishery management and rural issues. Some scientific background would be beneficial.

- Essential capabilities and qualities are :-
- Proficient and qualified in the operation of sea patrol RIB,
 - Experienced in fishery protection duties,
 - Experienced in the management of full-time and part-time staff,
 - Ability to communicate at all levels,
 - Experienced in electro-fishing and hatchery work.

Attractive salary commensurate with experience, modern house and other benefits.

Applications in writing by Friday 20th December 2013 with details of previous experience to: **G J P Mason BSc FRICS, Bell Ingram Estate Office, Bonar Bridge Sutherland IV24 3EA Tel: 01863 766683 Fax: 01863 766736 Email: jonathan.mason@bellingham.co.uk**



Administration & Finance Officer
 For Maternity Cover of up to one year for 'Survive and Thrive'

This work supports a multi-agency approach to assist those who have experienced domestic abuse and their children to become a survivor. AVA works closely with partners of the Against Domestic Abuse Partnership.

The project is funded by Big Lottery (Scotland) Fund This full time post of 35 hours per week requires an excellent communicator, organised and efficient with empathetic manner and an understanding of the issues who will also work to support the ADA Partnership.

For information pack and application form please email: kathleen@argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk or telephone 01631-564839.

Based in Oban or Campbeltown The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act Posts will be open to women only. (Exempt under the Equality Act 2010 Schedule 9, Part 1) CV's will not be accepted.

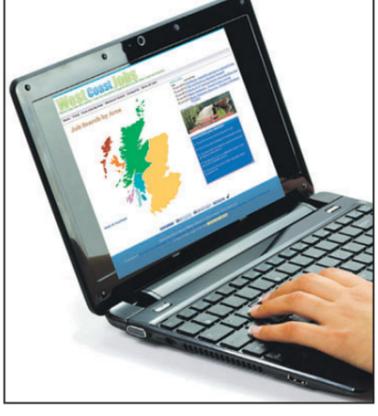
Closing date: Monday 16th December 2013. Interview date will be January 2014.



Argyll Voluntary Action. Charity no. SC029947. Company no. 277345

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 10.5 hrs per week, 9am to 12.30pm,
 Monday, Wednesday & Fridays

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LOVELY COUNTRY STYLE HALL Dressing table in ivory and pine £20 Telephone 07575 486498.

ROCKING CHAIR solid oak rocking chair (John Lewis), very good condition, can text photos £35 Telephone 07742 012085.

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PERSONALS

I am keen to have contact with anyone who may have knowledge of a family by the name of McLeod, who resided at 2, Longsdale, Oban in the late 1800's/early 1900's.

Charles and Mary Leitch were married in the parish of Kilmore and Kilbride on 4/7/1894 and the last child, the one in whom I have a particular interest, Mary Black McLeod was born on 29/8/1906.

Reply to P.O. Box 91, Oban Times, OBAN, PA34 4HB.

Marion and Angus MacFadyen

would like to thank family and friends for all the cards and gifts they received on the occasion of their 60th wedding Anniversary. A great day was had by all at Burnside, Kilniver.



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BIRTHS

ASTILL - On November 5, 2013 to Natasha and Mark, a daughter Mairi Jean Margaret, a sister for Agnes. Grateful thanks to all the medical and nursing staff at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley.



CRAIG

Robert and Louise are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their son, Logan John, at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital, on November 19, 2013. A wee brother for Iona and third grandchild for Alex and the late Helen Pow, formerly of Kinlochleven and second grandchild for John and Ileana, Lincona, Peninver, by Campbeltown.

DEATHS

CONNOLLY - Peacefully on Saturday, November 23, 2013, at Lorn & Islands Hospital, Oban, Christy Anne Connolly (née MacLeod), in her 90th year, (Bernera, N.Uist). Wife of the late Benny Connolly and loving mother to Brian, Joan and Fiona, wonderful gran to Angela, Andrew, Nicola and Jack, blessed to have had wonderful brothers and sisters, family and friends. Sadly missed.

FINDLAY - Margaret Findlay, beloved widow of Bob and loving mother of Kathleen and Hamish in her 90th year died peacefully on November 18, 2013. Funeral service will be held at West Chapel, Croydon Crematorium, Thursday December 5, 2013 at 1pm. Family flowers or donation if desired by cheque to Oxfam directed to Selsdon and district funeral service, 204 Addington Road, Selsdon, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8LD.

MACDOUGALL - Peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on Friday, November 22, 2013 in his 84th year, Callum MacDougall, beloved father of Iain and Lawrence. Sadly missed.

McINNES - Mary S. Retired former Matron of Glencoe Hospital (and late of 1 Park Road, Kinlochleven), passed away peacefully in Moss Park Care Home on November 26, 2013, after a long illness, bravely endured.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

STUART - The family of the late Bobby Stuart would like to thank all family, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy following their recent sad loss. Special thanks to Mabel Wallace for her comforting service. Grateful thanks to Scott Greenlees and all at John McLellans for their support and guidance throughout the funeral arrangements and to the Railway Club for providing the catering, especially Meg, Liz and Lizanne. Sincere thanks to Dr Feeney and all at Glen Mor Medical Practice and Dr Sedgewick and staff at the Belford. Finally thank you to everyone who paid their last respects and generously donated £501.53 towards the Belford Hospital. God Bless you all, you gave us strength. Margaret, Lisa, Robert, Delores and baby Michael.

MEMORIALS

CAMERON - In loving memory of a dear husband and father Alexander (Allie), who passed away November 24, 1998. Loved and remembered every day. - Inserted by his loving wife Florence and son David and Karen.

CROOKS - 29.11.58 - 27.11.12 In loving memory of Vera Grace Crooks, A truly devoted Mum and Nana, One year today we said goodbye. The tears and sadness will never fade, Your love and memories shall

live on forever, Miss you every day, Love you always and forever. - Kirsten, Donald John and Derek John xxx

CUMMING - In memory of a loving mum and granny (Molly), who passed away November 28, 2012. A special person, always with a smile. Loving nature, kind and true. These are the memories that remind us of you. - Ian and family.

MACCOLL - John. Cherished memories of a much loved dad, who passed away on November 30, 2010. So very missed each day. - Elspeth, Iain and families

MACDONALD - In loving memory of my mum Marybell, who passed away December 1, 2008. Sadly missed. Always remembered. - Your loving son Angus, Bayview, Morar.

MACDOUGALL - Colin. Memories are like leaves of gold. They never tarnish or grow old. Locked in our hearts you will always be. Loved and remembered for all eternity. - All our love Lesley, David, Donny, Holly, Kimberley and Cheyenne.

MACDOUGALL - Colin. For my dear son Colin A special person A special face Someone we love and can't replace Never selfish always kind These are the memories you left behind. All my love always son. - From Maw.

MACDOUGALL - Colin. The years may pass but still you stay As near and dear as yesterday. - Love always Bob.

MACINNES - In loving memory of a dear mum and grandma, Nancy, passed away November 25, 2005. Forever loved and missed. - Mairi, Donald and Sarah. xxx

MACINNES - In loving memory of my dear wife Ina who passed away on November 28, 2010. No tears, no verse, no words can say, how much I miss you every day. - Love Roddy xx

MACINNES - In loving memory of a dear mum/granny who passed away on November 28, 2010. The good times we had as a family, A beautiful nature, a heart of gold. These are the memories, we'll always hold. Love and miss you always - Brian, Fiona, Brian and Euan xx

MACINTOSH - In loving memory of my dear wife, mum and gran who died on November 27, 1979. Always remembered. - Inserted by her husband, Ewen, and family, Isle of Barra.

MACKENZIE - Treasured memories of Willie, a devoted husband, dad and granddad, who passed away on November 29, 2008. Always in our thoughts. - Neileen and family.

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of our dear dad Colin, who was lost at sea November 30, 1990. Love you always. - Yvonne, Richard and Michael.

MURRAY - Treasured memories of George, who died November 30, 2001, dear husband, father, grand-dad and great grand-dad. Always in our thoughts. - Love always Kathleen, Kathleen, the late John, Neil, Martin and Catherine.

NEWELL - Flora (Lily) Newell fell asleep 29/11/11. Very much missed but will be with me always and forever. -Ralph

SINCLAIR - Precious memories of my mother Karola whose suffering ended on December 2, 2012. What she suffered she told a few. She did not deserve what she

went through. So my wish for Christmas is that I could make a quick call to heaven. To hear the voices of the ones I miss. I don't need Angels on my Christmas tree. I have some in Heaven. Who watch over me and keep me safe. I miss you so much Mamma. With love always. - From your daughter Gina and son-in-law Sandy.

TIMMS - Treasured memories of our loving mum and nana Shena, who passed away November 30, 1971. Also remembering all other loved ones. Till memory fades and life departs. You will live forever in our hearts. - Love Catherine, Lachie and family.

CHURCH NOTICES

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Sunday 1 December 2013
Advent Sunday
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion.....08.00
Combined Mattins and Eucharist10.15

Children's Corner
Advent Ecumenical Service "From Darkness to Light"18.30
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Nick McNelly, Provost.
(01631) 562323

Kilbrandon Kirk
Holy Eucharist.....15.15
Holy Cross, Portnacraoish, Appin
Evensong.....18.00
A cordial welcome to people from any church or none

St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Eucharist.....11.00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist.....09.30

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GRANT-BROWN
Douglas Grant and Isobel Brown were married at Kilchrenan Church on September 21, 2013. Douglas is the son of Christine Grant, Newark. Isobel is the younger daughter of Johnny and the late Jane Brown, Kilchrenan.

ERIN MAEVE MACDOUGALL, grand daughter of John and Isa Donaldson, grand daughter of Jeff and Nelly MacDougall, daughter of Lachie and Ibbey MacDougall, graduated BSc in Nursing at Stirling University on Friday, November 22, 2013. Erin is now working in the A & E Department in Greenock.

DR ROSLYN ANDERSON graduated from University College Cork, Ireland, with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Ecology. She is a former pupil of Lochneil Primary School and Oban High School and is the daughter of Alan and Fiona Anderson, Barcaldine.

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Bells ring for Mid Argyll's new priest



Father Simon Mackenzie.

Father Simon takes up Inveraray Episcopal post

BELLS were ringing out over Inveraray at the weekend to welcome a new priest to Mid Argyll.

Father Simon Mackenzie has now taken charge of the Episcopal churches and his induction on November 23 was marked by bell ringers.

Father Simon was officially installed at a service in Lochgilphead on Monday.

Ruth Marshall, ringing master of Inveraray bells, said: 'We like

to record special events when peal attempts are made on the bells.

'The installation of a new priest is something that doesn't happen very often. We are pleased that Father Simon will be starting his ministry in the area which includes All Saints, Inveraray.'

The bells of All Saints are the second heaviest ring of 10 bells in the whole of the UK. The peal attempt started at about 11am and finished around 2.30pm.



Lochwatch volunteers Iain MacKinnon, left, and Murray Humphries, collectively known as the Hairy Boaters, helped launch the new LochWatch boat in September. Now they want people's 'lochsides' recipes for a new cook book.

Loch Awe's Hairy Boaters launch recipe book fundraising plan

TWO WATER safety promoters, known as the Hairy Boaters, have cooked up a new fundraising idea for their Loch Awe-based organisation.

LochWatch volunteers Iain MacKinnon and Murray Humphries are seeking help by asking for recipes that could be either made or enjoyed on the lochsides for a book to be published early next year.

Mr MacKinnon, deputy chairman of LochWatch, said: 'People

have been coming forward with some really good recipes for the book.

'But it would be great if there were some local recipes with stories attached that could also go in the book.'

Mr Humphries, operations director, added: 'Anyone who has an idea for a starter, main course, desert, non-alcoholic cocktail, or anything edible should please send them to us at LochWatch. If anyone has photographs that

they would like to include in the book, we would be delighted to have a copy of them.'

The book, which already includes a recipe from Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell, will include safety advice for people who use the loch.

Recipes and photographs should be sent to group secretary louiseglenlee@gmail.com, or handed to any member of the LochWatch board by December 10.

Lochawe SWRI

MEMBERS of the Lochawe SWRI were shown how to make Christmas and birthday decorations by Alison Livingstone, Dalmlady, at their November meeting.

A variety of designs were shown to the ladies who then followed instructions and produced very attractive and intricate cards. It was a very happy party that took home the excellent efforts and great ideas for making Christmas cards this year.

Competition winners - Chocolate truffles: Gold - C Milne, P McLeod; Silver - J Wylie, M MacKenzie, J Ogdan. The next meeting will be on December 4 in Lochawe Village Hall.

Arisaig SWRI

CHRISTMAS decorations were the order of the day when Arisaig SWRI held its monthly meeting on November 21.

Invited speaker Clare Walters showed the women how to make decorative boxes from card, the highlight of which was a demonstration on Christmas decorations.

Competition winners:
Decorated box - 1 June Cairns, 2 Vera MacDonald, 3 Anne Cameron.
Tray cloth - 1 Yvonne MacDonald, 2 Margaret MacEachen, 3 Anne Cameron.
The raffle was won by Rosie MacEachen.

The Oban Times
& West Highland Times
THE REGIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR THE WEST HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS AND ARGYLL

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GRADUATIONS

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Youth development fund

IN PARTNERSHIP with Scottish Hydro, the Camanachd Association has announced that The Scottish Hydro Youth Development Fund is now open for applications with a share of £5,000 available to all Camanachd Association member shinty clubs and associations.

The Youth Development Fund, established in 2009, aims to support member clubs and associations which wish to increase youth participation

YOUTH SHINTY

by providing a maximum grant award of £500 in support of new or enhanced initiatives which will deliver sustainable growth in the number of young people playing shinty.

If you would like to discuss your application, please contact National Development Officer, Ronald Ross, on 07718 630563: Deadline for applications is Friday December 20 2013.

Dirt crit at Nevis Range

A LOVELY morning welcomed 15 junior mountain bike racers to the first race of the West Highland Wheelers' winter junior dirt crit on Sunday.

The children who aged from six to fourteen years raced on the brand new tracks at Nevis Range.

Ruaridh Cant was overall winner with a stonking time of 7 minutes 40 seconds. The other age group winners were Jonny Forster (9.39), Daniel Parfitt (11.35), and Evan Macdonald (10.44). A special medal went to Charlie Henshaw who raced an extended course and still managed to finish on a high.

West Highland Wheelers staged the first round of the Winter League at the same venue an hour later. A multi-lap

CYCLING

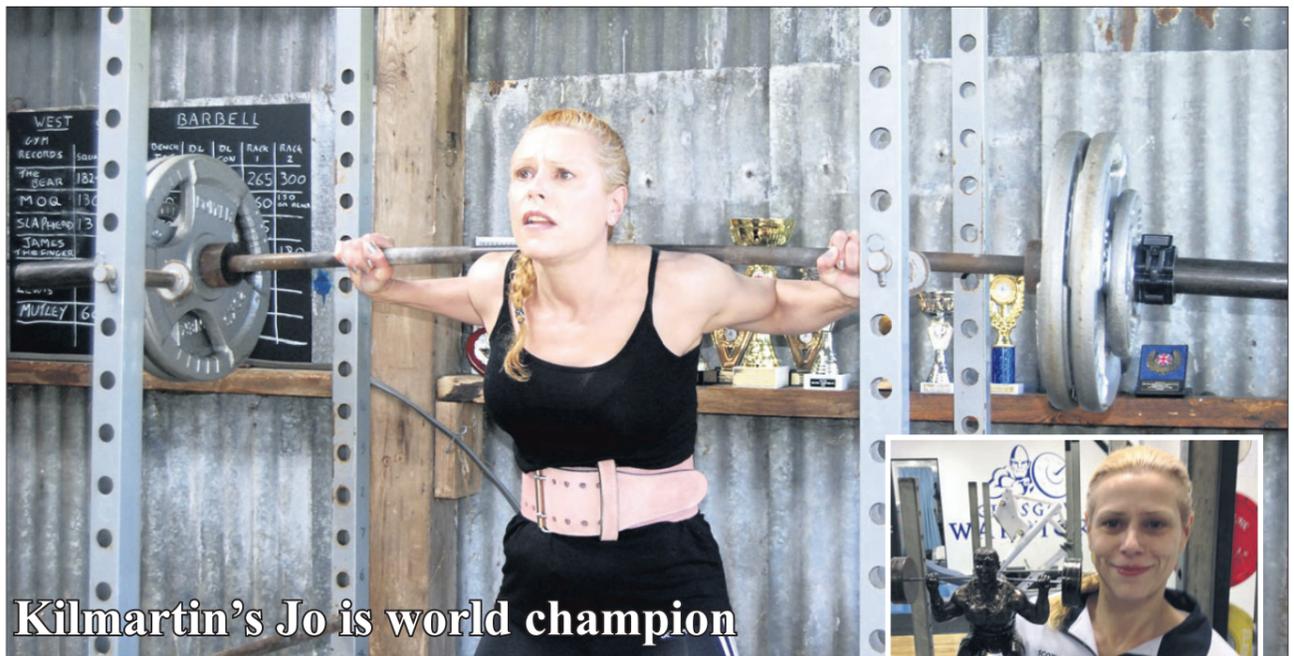
course proved to be a popular choice. Joe Barnes took in his first Lochaber race before he heads for his high-altitude World Enduro in Chile and came out as the worthy winner, beating James Shirley by more than minute. Stephen Dent came in for a well-earned third as first junior. Mairi Meldrum was the first lady home with a very vocal descent of the Big Doon included in her final lap. Graeme Corner sacrificed a near-podium finish to help extricate Ruaridh Wells from some bushes.

Thanks went to the marshals and Steve Bradley, Roddy Wells and Brian Barbour for getting the series off to a fine start. Next up is Glencoe on December 8.



The youngsters set off in the junior dirt crit at Nevis Range.

Title was worth the weight



Kilmartin's Jo is world champion

A FEMALE powerlifter has achieved her sporting ambition by lifting the world title - breaking two records in the process.

Jo Gaskin, from Kilmartin, broke world records in the squat and deadlift to win her 70kg category at the World Drug-Free Powerlifting Federation (WD-PFF) World Championships in Glasgow this month.

In the deadlift Jo lifted 155.5 kg, beating the previous record

by 5.5kg and in the squat she lifted 118kg on her third lift to take the record by 0.5kg.

Jo is the former British champion and won the title of best female lifter at the British Drug-Free Powerlifting Championship Association Scottish Nationals in July.

Jo, who only started powerlifting two and half years ago, finished in second place at the Home International competition, a UK-wide contest where she represented Scotland.

She said: 'The world championship could not have gone much better. It was what I wanted to achieve.'

'This year has really just all gone to plan and I have achieved all the goals I set out for myself, which is great.'

Jo, who is an electronic technician, also works on a croft at Tibertich with her husband Pete and trains five nights a week in the byre on the farm.

'It has been a busy year with working on the farm, training

and my usual work. The next competition I have is the British championship in April,' she said.

In a bid to attract other women into the sport Jo has been helping others improve their fitness.

'I have been working with a woman at the gym,' she said. 'I've been helping her to get fit and lose a bit of weight. She likes the training, so we will take it from there, but it is nice to have another lady interested in the sport.'



Jo Gaskin with her world title at Scotstoun, in Glasgow.



At Sunday's Oban Express Primary Football League are some of the primary ones who took part in Fun Fours. Argyll and Bute Football Development Officer Martin Rae said he wanted to start a new club for primary one footballers next year and invited any pupil with an interest in playing to come along to Fun Fours at Oban Community Pitch when it reconvenes in February. 15_480nes01

Unanimous vote for reconstruction at women's AGM

WOMEN'S SHINTY

THE Women's Camanachd Association (WCA) AGM was held recently in Fort William and the women's committee was delighted with a strong turn out representing clubs from across the country.

Regarding the possibility of league restructure, the WCA was able to present two options going forward. Both of these options had been formed based on vital focus group discussions which were held with clubs earlier in the season.

Ahead of the vote Lisa Norman ran through a brief analysis which had also been circulated to all clubs with the agenda ahead of the AGM.

Following the presentation of both options a vote was taken and clubs unanimously voted in favour of Option One, consisting of two leagues; Marine Harvest National Division One and Marine Harvest National Division Two.

A competitive National Division One will allow plenty of matches for all teams whilst a competitive National Division Two will allow developing teams to play at their own ability with a wide variety of games throughout the season. Proposed league format is detailed below (subject to confirmation by each club ahead of the 2014 season).

National Division 1 - Glasgow Mid Argyll, Badenoch & Strathspey, Lochaber, Skye, Glengarry, Aberdeen.

National Division 2 - Cowal & Bute, Glasgow Mid Argyll 2nds, Dunadd, Ardrumurchan, Lovat, Skye 2nds, Strathglass, Oban, Aberdeen.

Ballachulish Shinty Club hand out their awards at grand ball

SHINTY

PICTURED below are the Ballachulish Shinty Club award winners for 2013 at the club's grand ball in the Ballachulish Village Hall.

They were Elliot Wilson who won both the players' and manager's player of the year awards, Lorne Brown with the top goalscorer award, Cian MacPhee with the U21 player of the year award, Eoin Fyfe with his most improved player award and Donald Wilson with a presentation from his teammates to mark his retirement from playing.

The club thanked Maggie

Wilson for the inspirational décor of the village hall and also to Allan and Eileen Donald for the gourmet dining.

The Ballachulish club now find themselves managerless after their most successful season for years after Craig Monro stepped down because of work commitments - the club are keen to hear from any interested managers out there.

Left to right: Elliot Wilson, Cian MacPhee, Donald Wilson, Lorne Brown and Eoin Fyfe.



Goon Squad still top of the pile in Ali Young League

INDOOR FOOTBALL

GOON Squad maintained top spot on goal difference in the Ali Young indoor football league after round of eight of fixtures at the Nevis Centre, Fort William on Sunday night.

The leaders defeated title challengers Lochaber Leisure 5-3 while Portoway continued their good form to keep up the pressure in second with a 6-0 win over Kentallen.

Caol United and the Jamis B Team shared the points in a 6-6 thriller and AFC Distillery defeated Mallaig 5-3.

Result of the night was Ballachulish thumping With Ourselves 11-2 while Caol Cosmos overcame HWEnergy 5-2.

Clash of the ash at Kinlochleven for the George Cup

YOUTH SHINTY

Young shinty players from Inverloch and Ballachulish clashed camans in the George Cup at the Kinlochleven all-weather pitch on Saturday.

And it was the visitors from Fort William who came away with the honours in a 5-1 win courtesy of a hat-trick from Inverloch captain Paul Patterson, and goals from Ewan Easson and Evan Atkinson. Neil Minnis scored Balla's only goal.

Paul Patterson was named man of the match and received the George Cup from former Ballachulish player Iain 'Pongo' Macmillan.



Inverloch and Ballachulish players line-up for the camera

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

COMpetition

WIN £650

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.



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

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

J Goodbrand Drummore Road, Oban
A MacIntyre, Shuna Terrace, Oban

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

Please tape your £1 coin here

Name

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Pool players step up to the mark at national trials

Oban players qualify for European championships in Malta next year

POOL players from the Oban area will make up a considerable part of the Scottish team heading for the European Championships in Malta next year after superb performances at the trial matches last weekend.

The national trials in the Shandon Snooker Club, Edinburgh last weekend helped to decide the 2014 Scotland squad. Oban boasted 11 players, ranging in age from nine-year-old beginner Sean Sneddon, who is the youngest person on the Scottish tour scene, to senior players.

The players did Oban proud in all sections with Brandon Ferris gaining a reserve place in the junior section and Paddy Larmor who plays for Markie Dans B annihilated his competitors by qualifying top of the under-21 section undefeated to gain his squad place.

John 'Telly' Telfer from the Lancaster A team showed that it pays off not to give up as he took full advantage of a player's mistake to grab the deciding frame in the most important match of his pool career to date.

These players will join Region 5 Men's Tour winner Geo Adam, ladies player Laura Ann Sneddon and senior players Ian Blair, Gordon McKenzie and Andy Brown who have all been accepted to play in the European Championships in Malta in February 2014.

Meanwhile, week seven of the domestic pool calendar saw the teams return to league duty, following on from the previous week's cup exploits.

The Lancaster Hotel provided the setting for the eagerly awaited clash between The Lancaster 'A' and reigning champions The Cellar Bar.

Both teams knew the importance of this result and it was no surprise the whole match was played in a Crucible-like atmosphere with only the odd hysterical celebration interrupting the nervous silences.

The conclusion of the singles saw The Cellar have a slight advantage much to their delight, but any celebrations were

curtailed as The Lancaster 'A' rallied to secure two points with a clean sweep of the doubles.

A despondent Cellar team left knowing the possible implications of this loss, in contrast to a jubilant Lancaster side who have their sights firmly on rivals Markie Dans 'A'.

Oban Pool League is sponsored by the Creagan Inn		
	P	Pts
1 Markie Dans A	6	12
2 Lancaster A	6	12
3 Cellar Bar	5	8
4 Lancaster B	6	8
5 Lochavullin	6	6
6 Claredon	5	5
7 Markie Dans B	6	5
8 Lochnell	6	5
9 Creagan Inn	6	5
10 Gluepot	6	4
11 Foleys Bar	6	0
12 Outreach	6	0

Indeed it is still Markie Dans 'A' who lead the race by virtue of game difference after stumbling to victory over the fast improving Gluepot.

League sponsors The Creagan Inn travelled their shortest distance for a fixture to North Connel to face The Lochnell. Three consecutive losses would certainly have dampened the enthusiasm of most teams, but not this Appin side who savoured the journey home to Loch Crean courtesy of two well earned points.

Markie Dans 'B' hosted Foley's Bar in a match which showcased some of the league's brightest young prospects. On this occasion it was the home side who prevailed and have now mounted a serious challenge for a top six finish themselves.

The Lochavullin were the biggest movers in the championship table jumping up three places to fifth on the back of a dominant display against The Outreach.

This was a much needed confidence boost for the Combie Street side after their cup exit.

The Lancaster 'B' remain in fourth spot after an impressive away victory against The Claredon to extend their lead over the chasing pack.

POOL

The Claredon will get the chance to close the gap tonight (Thursday) when they face The Cellar Bar in a re-scheduled fixture from week two.

This will be the only match of the evening as many of Oban's best players will this weekend head to Aberdeen to participate at The National Inter-league, the largest team event in the country.

Week seven results (November 21): The Gluepot 4-6 Markie Dans A; The Lochnell 4-6 The Creagan Inn; Lancaster A 6-4 The Cellar Bar; Markie Dans B 7-3 Foleys Bar; Outreach 2-8 The Lochavullin; The Claredon 3-7 Lancaster B. Fixtures (November 28): The Claredon v The Cellar Bar.



Daniel Spiers outpaces the Dalziel defence on his way to scoring an Argyll try. 15_148rugby01

Double success for Argyll rugby boys

West Youth League
Argyll U18 15 Ardrossan Academicals 10
ARGYLL recorded their first win in the West Youth League against a much bigger Ardrossan side but tackled well and held out under immense pressure to take a well-deserved win.

Defended well
Pinned down in their own half for the first quarter of the game, Argyll defended well, with Kyle Ormiston putting in some great hits and leading in his role as captain, while Robert Dempster and Sandy Keys played a vital role in cover defence. After 20 minutes Ardrossan scored their first try but missed the kick.

Argyll started to put together some good play and Lewis Evans bulldozed his way over the line to level the score.

Both teams traded further scores, with Jamie Bate getting Argyll's touchdown. It was with 15 minutes to go that Argyll started to increase the pressure, as replacements Mark Reid, Ruarudh Cain and Alex Campbell all came on.

After good pressure on the Ardrossan pack Argyll were able to launch several attacks in a bid to snatch their first victory of the season, and Lewis Evans was the player who produced the winning try.

Oban coach Murray Hamilton said: 'I am delighted for the boys to get a win under their belt. Hopefully this will fill them with

confidence for the rest of the season.' Argyll U18s are in action away from home next Saturday visiting Allan Glens RFC.

Argyll Schools U15s 42 Dalziel RFC 10
A GOOD turnout of players from Oban and Mid Argyll looked strong from the start against the visitors to Glencruitten and within the first few minutes the pressure paid off with early tries.

Superb
Although the Dalziel forwards certainly had the edge in the scrum, the Oban backs were superb with scores coming from Alex Houston, Rufus Stone, Lomond MacPherson and Daniel Spiers.

Saints' players to line-up against Scotland

FOOTBALL

THREE Oban Saints players - Donnie Campbell, Marc MacCallum and Lewis Cameron have been picked for the Scottish Amateur League squad who will face the full Scotland international team at the new indoor facility at Ravensraig Football Centre, Motherwell, on Sunday. The game kicks-off at 2pm.

Squad
The SAFL squad: Scott Urquhart, Drumchapel Colts; Chris Connelly, Haldane United; Andrew Forrest, Busby; Tom Wilson, St Joseph's; Ally Mc-

Cabe, Haldane United; John Paul Seagrave, St Joseph's; Kevin Williams, St Joseph's; Marc MacCallum, Oban Saints; Kieran Timoney, St Joseph's; Thomas Finnegan, Castlemilk; Brian Blair, Finnart; Andrew Blair, Finnart; Scott Gold, Hillington; Colin Gailey, St Joseph's; Sunni Chatteria, Drumchapel Colts; Donald Campbell, Oban Saints; Ryan Halpin, Kilbowie Union; Lewis Cameron, Oban Saints; Kyle Halpin, Hillington. Saints secretary David Bucha-

nan said: 'This is a great chance for the boys to show what they can do against some of the best players in the country. Impressed

'The national team assistant manager Gary Black has watched us on a couple of occasions this season and has been impressed by what he saw, so hopefully the boys can do themselves justice and maybe force themselves into the full international squad.'



Donnie Campbell



Marc MacCallum



Lewis Cameron

Green Machine back in action at Glencruitten

RUGBY

OBAN Lorne are back in action at Glencruitten this Saturday in West Division 2 as fourth placed McLaren make the trip West from Callander.

The Green Machine had last weekend off duty for the international break.

The visitors will be running out in confident mood after a good run of wins that were halted last week with a defeat away to promotion rivals Carrick.

Oban defeated their visitors

10-7 in the first game of this season and will be expecting another tough encounter.

Oban will require a bonus point win to keep the pressure on Garnock and Carrick who currently occupy the league's two promotion places.

Kick off is 2pm at Glencruitten and the team is hoping for a strong home support.

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

FOOTBALL

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Cup 2nd round replay - Tarbert 3, Yoker 3. Yoker won 5-3 after extra time. Jimmy Marshall Cup 1st round - Dunoon Athletic 0, Dunoon 0. Athletic won 6-5 on penalties. Oban Saints v Shawlands walkover to Oban Saints. Inverclyde 5, Campbeltown Pupils 2. This Saturday's fixtures

- Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup 4th Round - Campbeltown Pupils v Carradale; Oban Saints v Ellon; Premier Division One - Dunoon v Paisley; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star v Dunoon Athletic; Division 1A - Tarbert v Inverkip Thistle.

Saints take on Ellon in the Scottish Cup

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints are on Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup duty this Saturday when they take Ellon Amateurs in the fourth round of the national competition.

The game will be played at Glencruitten with a 2pm kick-off with referee Alan Loch in charge.

The Aberdeenshire side are lying in fourth place in Division One (East) having played seven games, won five, drawn two and lost none, so Saints will have a tough game on their hands.

Ellon defeated the Jimmy Johnstone Football Academy 4-3 in Glasgow in the last round.

The Oban side should have a full squad to choose from.

Last Saturday's scheduled Jimmy Marshall Cup game due to be played in Oban was called off when Shawlands withdrew from the competition, leaving Saints without a fixture.

Former player Roy McLuckie has rejoined the club after impressing Iain Jackson at training.

Teams wanted for Islay tournament

FOOTBALL

ORGANISERS of an island football tournament have made an appeal for more teams to join and have extended their invitation to the mainland.

The Islay Easter Tournament is held over the weekend of April 18 - 20 across the island.

The first two games will be on Friday evening, with two games on Saturday morning and two that evening.

There are two groups and the top two teams in each group play the final on Sunday at midday, allowing visiting teams to get away on 3.30pm ferry.

Anyone interested in entering a team can contact tournament organiser Andrew McEachern by email at am245@btinternet.com or phone 01496 850011.

Oban Saints youths results and fixtures

YOUTH FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results - Under 13s v Clydebank; Under 14s v Drumchapel United; Under 15s v Goldenhill; Cowie United v Under 17s - all games postponed.

This weekend's fixtures - Antonine v Under 13s; Under 14s no game; Under 15s v Ardencaple; Cowie United v Under 17s.

League kicks-off

OVER 35s

THE OBAN Over-35 League kicked off last week with D&K Lafferty setting out their title ambitions with an 8-2 win over Tainuill.

In other games Clements beat Emergency Services by the odd goal in five, the Trialists beat the Teachers 6-2 and Emergency Services hammered Sail Trim Coach 14-1.

Islay Golf Club

GOLF

WINTER League played Sunday 24 November - 1 N Johnston 34 pts; 2p C Holyoake 33 pts; 3 D Livingstone 33 pts.

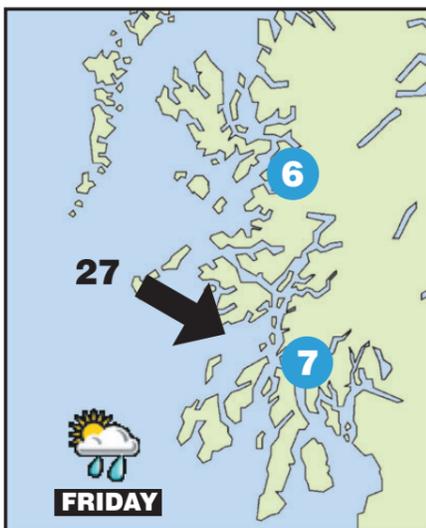
Weather

Thursday Cloudy
Winds light south south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 9°C

Friday Sunshine and showers
Winds strong west north westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 7°C.

Weekend Light rain
Outlook Winds moderate west north westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 8°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, November 28, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am			pm		
Thur	02.03	3.1	07.20	1.8	14.05	3.4
Fri	08.20	1.6	08.20	1.6	14.57	3.5
Sat	03.34	3.5	09.15	1.4	15.41	3.8
Sun	04.12	3.7	10.06	1.1	16.23	3.9
Mon	04.50	3.9	10.55	0.9	17.03	4.1
Tues	05.29	4.1	11.42	0.7	17.44	4.1
Wed	00.06	0.7	06.09	4.2	12.31	0.6

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

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Inside this week

WIN
We have 10 pairs of tickets up for grabs for the In Bru Carnival at the SECC

WIN £750
Submit your entries for Bonnie Babies 2014 to win Go-op vouchers

WIN
A family photo session worth £160 from Webster of Oban Photographic Centre

WIN £500
Collect token 4 in our Tesco hamper competition to win goodies including a Hudl

Harris charity wins £3,000 bank grant

A LOCHABER charity set up by a Corpach couple in memory of their 17-month old son Harris has won £3,000 for its work from the Bank of Scotland. Allan and Tanya Ross found out on Tuesday they had won the bank's community fund grant in a public poll. Tanya told *The Oban Times*: 'It's amazing that we got 57 per cent of the vote. We'd like to pass on a huge thanks to everyone who voted online, by phone or in the bank.' Meanwhile, Lochaber boxer Mark Curtis has raised over £640 for the charity by running up Ben Nevis. His feat was also in memory of his friend Drew Ferguson, who was a big supporter of 'STAR for Harris'. The combined proceeds will go towards hospital music therapy for children suffering from cancer, Tanya said.

MSP returns to political duties

SKYE, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP Dave Thompson has returned to political duties after undergoing successful brain surgery in August. Mr Thompson had a chronic bilateral subdural haematoma - bleeding between the skull and the brain - but has made 'an excellent recovery' following the operation. Following a recent MRI scan and subsequent advice from neurosurgeons, the MSP is back in parliament part-time with Mike MacKenzie MSP continuing to assist him with constituency business until his recovery is complete. He said: 'Thank you to all the kind folk that have treated me and cared for me while I have been recuperating. I am pleased to be returning to work in this historic week [of the independence White Paper launch].'



Dave Thompson MSP.



Tribute to a young airman: Brian Mullins shows off 'Spitfire Sunrise' with Framing Place owner Allan Kinnear. 20_1485spitfire01

Song and dance over tycoon's Mallaig village hall plan

SIR CAMERON Mackintosh looks set stand by his proposed harbourside development in Mallaig following a surge of support on social media. The theatre impresario plans to replace Mallaig's old village hall created a real song and dance in the port after they were lodged with Highland Council. The multi-millionaire wants to create a £750,000 crannog-style building including toilets and showers for Mallaig marina, two

residential units and a retail space with a food and drink sales area - including a hot food takeaway. Objections followed from local food outlets concerned about loss of trade. Residents also lodged complaints over loss of car parking and sea views. But Sir Cameron's spokesman Andrew Aitchison told *The Oban Times* yesterday: 'The silent majority is now making its voice heard. There has been a response to the negative cover-

age and a lot of support has been coming through on social media. People have been writing to Sir Cameron expressing their disappointment and dismay that yet again his efforts to do something for Mallaig have been questioned without understanding what's intended by this project.' He added: 'Sir Cameron's intention is that the hot food area would be a village bakery which would not be in competition with local businesses and would complement them. A conclusion needs to be reached on how and whether the project goes ahead but we have been buoyed by the amount of support from within the community.'

South Lochs residents seek 'amicable purchase' of land

SOUTH Lochs residents on Lewis have decided not to pursue a hostile purchase of the land they live on through the courts. At a public meeting in Gravir last Friday, Paicr Trust instead agreed to seek an 'amicable purchase' of Paicr Estate from owner Barry Lomas. Of the 60 people present, 56 voted in favour to buy to buy the land and lease from the estate for £500,000, with an offer to be made immediately. The trust will consult the community again on the precise terms through meetings and a final ballot before any legal documents are signed. Trust chairman Angus McDowall said he was 'confident' the purchase could be 100 per cent funded by the Scottish Land Fund and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The community stands to benefit from a wind farm planned on the estate.

Leisure centre bollard hazard prompts call for colour change

MOTORISTS have been left with huge repair bills after crashing into near-invisible traffic bollards at Lochaber Leisure Centre in Fort William. And local councillor Thomas MacLennan is demanding the grey-coloured columns be brightened up to help unsuspecting drivers. He told *The Oban Times*: 'I have had at least three reports of people telling me about their cars getting damaged by the bollards. 'I was speaking to a pensioner recently who had £2,000 damage done to his car when he drove off. 'And another car reversed into a bollard so harshly he set the airbag off in his car. 'I know they are there to protect pedestrians and for traffic calming but motorists are not seeing them and they need to be more clearly delineated. 'Painting them high visibility yellow or with a reflective surface would be an option - leaving them dull battle-ship grey is something that should not be allowed to carry on.' Highlife Highland Lochaber Leisure Centre manager Gary Davidson said: 'There are discussions ongoing about painting the bollards and getting six of them lit. 'A Highland Council architect is looking at various solutions and we are hoping to get something done in the near future.'

Artist's new tribute to young fallen airman

SIX MONTHS ago a memorial was unveiled in Glen Nevis to a young Canadian airman whose Spitfire crashed into a Lochaber mountainside during the Second World War.

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

Now another lasting tribute has been created - a beautiful painting of the fighter John Donald MacDonell was flying on his last reconnaissance mission. 'Spitfire Sunrise, in Memoriam 16th May 1943', by Lochaber artist Brian Mullins, captures the aircraft flying over Ben Nevis under a low morning sun. Flying officer MacDonell died when his aircraft exploded in a fireball on Meall an t-Suidhe below Ben Nevis on that fateful day.

entire Morvern coastline in aid of Maggie's Centres.

That fundraiser was prompted by his partner Vicki's diagnosis in 2008 with breast cancer, from which she has almost fully recovered.

Now Mr Mullins, from Drimmin near Lochaline, is determined to do more to help those affected by the disease - while honouring the young Canadian flyer.

Remembered He told *The Oban Times*: 'The tragedy really needs to be remembered and this is my artistic reaction to it. 'I should be able to raise at least £1,000 for Highland Hospice and more from the prints of the painting.

'I have also done three other paintings of steam locomotive trains running to Mallaig on the West Highland line - I will auction those too. All the money will go to Macmillan nurses, from the prints as well. I shall continue to do things like this.'

He added: 'I have painted for most of my life and been moderately successful. Most of my work concern aircraft, ships and steam railways with landscapes now and then.'

Mr Kinnear told *The Oban Times*: 'It is a one off and it is a very beautiful painting. Brian has done it proud. We took it down to West Highland Museum and they thought its value should be at least £1,000.'

He added: 'We would like to get the Canadians involved in the auction as well - so it is possible the painting could end up in Canada, maybe even John MacDonell's home town of Smithers in British Columbia.'

Lochaber Archaeological Society chairman Robert Cairns, who organised the unveiling of the memorial in Glen Nevis on May 16, said arrangements for the auction were being made.

Options include a Fort William sale, the Highland Hospice annual dinner and auction early next year in Inverness, or a specialist military auction with a global reach. He said: 'It is a fantastic painting and a wonderful tribute to the young pilot who died. It would be nice to keep the original in Fort William and if somebody local could buy it for £1,000 I would be delighted.'

Wind band winter concert

LOCHABER High School Wind Band will hold its winter concert at the Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church in Fort William next Wednesday at 7.30 pm. The concert will feature over 70 of Lochaber's finest young wind and percussion players. Items on the programme

include original works for wind and big bands, classics from Queen and the Police and highlights from Les Miserables. Free tickets are available from the Lochaber High School office. Everyone is invited to come along and support the area's young musical talent.

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Awards night celebrates sports achievement and endeavour

LOCHABER Sports Association annual awards night proved a real celebration of sporting achievement and endeavour on Saturday night. A packed Lochaber Rugby Club clubhouse at Banavie heard guest of honour, former Scotland rugby captain Rob Wainwright, and VIP guest, Highlands and Islands MSP Mike MacKenzie praise local clubs and sport heroes - as well as volunteers working to ensure the widest possible access to all sports across Lochaber. Mr Wainwright, from Coll, told *The Oban Times* at the event: 'I really want to pay tribute to the coaches, administrators and those people behind the scenes doing all the jobs that make team sports and individual sports happen in Lochaber. 'But it is about the sportspeople as well and it's great to see such a variety of sports being played year round throughout Lochaber. Congratulations to all the winners.' See page 11 for more from the awards night.



Balachulish Shinty Club won the team prize at the Lochaber Sports Association awards night. Above, John Flanagan, left, of the grants and awards committee presents players David Campbell, Donald Wilson and club chairman Iain Brown with their trophy. 20_1485sports01

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Trio lined up for 'Ten Minute Talk'

THE ANNUAL "Ten Minute Talk" evening of the Lochaber Local History Society has three speakers at the Ben Nevis Hotel next Thursday.

Mark Bowman will speak on plans to bring steam back to the Great Glen at the Invergarry Station Museum.

Robert Cairns is putting together a bid for funds to do an archaeological survey of Achnacarry from a wartime perspective - with interpretation boards explaining the importance of the area for commando training.

Finally, Roddy Mainland will be speaking on his latest project 'A Monumental Mission'. The evening gets underway at 8pm.

Heating oil stolen

A QUANTITY of heating oil was stolen from a property in West Laroach, Ballachulish between November 9 and 1.34pm last Saturday.

Anyone with knowledge of the incident should contact local police on 101 or the confidential line on 01397 702000.

Community council

SPEAN Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council will hold its December meeting in Spean Bridge Primary School next Tuesday at 7pm.

Items on the agenda include Roy Bridge sub-post office, Killiechonan woodland paths and Christmas celebrations.

Action group

NHS Highland is to set up an action group after failing to meet 'very challenging' infection control targets.

The move, to be announced to the NHS Highland board on Tuesday, will focus on reducing clostridium difficile and staphylococcus aureus infections.

Meanwhile, NHS Highland's financial position will also be raised at the meeting. At the end of October, the projected overspend was £8.5 million - a £1.1 million improvement on the previous year.

Other items to be raised at the board meeting include 'a possible major service redesign in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross' - thought to include a possible new hospital in Broadford or Portree - and an inspection of services for children and young people in Argyll and Bute.



Chief Inspector Derek Paterson and Inspector Neil Lumsden on the A82 at Glencoe with members of the new Fort William-based unit.

Police chiefs welcome road unit to Fort

POLICE chiefs have welcomed a new national roads policing unit to Fort William as a major commitment to road safety and ensuring a prompt response to major incidents.

The divisionally-based national trunk road patrol group - the first such specialist team to be based in Lochaber - will focus on keeping people safe on main local routes. Functions of the newly-formed unit, one of two based in the Highlands and Islands division out of 11 nationally, will include routine patrolling, attendance at incidents and the provision of specialist officers to assist fatal accident investigations.

Local commander for Lochaber, Lochalsh and Skye,

Chief Inspector Derek Paterson predicted 'direct benefits' to west central Highlands communities through a higher profile policing presence on the trunk road network. He said: 'I welcome the assistance the unit will provide to local policing through attendance at incidents thereby allowing local officers to spend more time in their communities.'

'In addition, they will provide a supplementary resource to identify, target and disrupt those criminals who use the road network for illegal activities.'

Highlands and Islands Road Policing Inspector, Neil Lumsden said the Fort William group had already attracted officers from

outwith the area keen to test their specialist skills in 'a brand new unit'. He said: 'It will allow us to have an even greater presence on the trunk roads in Lochaber, Argyll, Skye and Lochalsh with the primary aim of influencing driver behaviour and reducing casualties and fatalities on our roads. In addition, they will provide a supplementary resource to identify, target and disrupt those criminals who use the road network for illegal activities.'

'We already have a motorcyclist and a collision investigator in the team and I am looking forward to their skills and experience making a difference to the communities in this area.'

Crackdown on underage alcohol sales

POLICE are to launch a pre-Christmas crackdown on the sale of alcohol to underage youngsters in Lochaber.

Officers from Police Scotland Highland and Islands Division will carry out 'test purchase' operations involving 'a fully briefed teenager' under 18 over the next few weeks.

Under the scheme, a young person will enter licensed premises looking to buy booze.

If the proprietor does not ask their age and allows the sale they will be committing an offence, even if they claim they thought the buyer was 18.

However, if licence holders follow the law and ask the age of the test purchaser the youngsters will answer truthfully.

Anyone selling alcohol to a minor risks losing their license if they are caught, police warn.

Buzz surrounds launch of new Celtic myths board game

A NEW board game created in the West Highlands and based on traditional Celtic myths is to be launched in Fort William this Saturday.

Celtia - a multi-player, multi-board strategy game based on chess for two, three or four players - includes magic and questing on a landscaped board. It can also be joined together to create bigger games or include more players with additional landscape features.

Ballachulish man Simon Upton, who has been involved from the game's beginnings, told *The Oban Times*: 'It has been in development for around 28 years. It's gone through different stages of development, with many Skye and Lochalsh people involved in the project.'

Mr Upton said the aim was to create a 'mass-marketable' form of the game to help it spread across the world.

He said: 'We've brought it down to an affordable and mass production version with hand crafted pieces.'

'It seems to attract quite a strange and wide variety of people. Our youngest player so far was a six-year-old child.'

Celtia will be launched at the Lochaber Rotary Christmas Fair in the Nevis Centre, before visiting fairs across the country including Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Professors at the University of Aberdeen are also producing an online digital demonstration of the game, which is expected to catch the attention of games enthusiasts across the world.

Mr Upton said: 'The last big AI [artificial intelligence] challenge was the Grandmaster level of chess, which IBM spent millions to solve about 10 years ago, and there's a bit of a buzz in academia about this game.'



Simon Upton with the magical chess game Celtia at a suitably mystical Ballachulish location.

Fun for all at Rotary Club festival

THE FESTIVE season in Fort William gets underway on Saturday with The Rotary Club of Lochaber Christmas Festival in the Nevis Centre.

The main event, a 74-stall designer craft and food fair gets underway from 10.30am.

A grand raffle, busker's corner, activity displays and, of course, Santa's Grotto are among the other many attractions.

Highlights include Santa and his reindeer with little elves, Fort William girls Charize Barron, aged six, who is from Inverlochty, and Margaret Cummings, aged nine, from Achintore Road.

Santa's sleigh will leave from the Celtic Circle in The Parade at 11am and arriving at the Nevis Centre 15 minutes later.

Rotary president John Rosie

said: 'This is a showcase for the splendid crafts, artwork and food products that are created locally. I can promise everyone a great day out and an opportunity to buy great gifts and products on your own doorstep, with the knowledge that you are also supporting local charities and worthwhile causes.'

Lochaber Wind Band will play music on the day. Principal sponsor of this year's event is Ferguson Transport (Spean Bridge) Ltd.

Highland Council is funding the publicity material and Lochaber Housing Association is helping with the cost and construction of Santa's Grotto.

Mr Rosie said: 'The Rotary Club is indebted to all for their support.'

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Town eyecore to be transformed in council HQ

A FORT William eyecore is set to be transformed into new Highland Council office headquarters under a shake-up of services in Lochaber.

And if the former Fort William Secondary School on Achintore Road gets the thumbs up it would mean a further boost for the town's west end after years of decline.

The new hub would replace offices currently occupied by the council at Lochaber House, Fulton House and Tweeddale, all in Fort William High Street.

All main administrative offices, service point and registration offices

would transfer to Achintore Road. The move would see the council quit existing leased office space in Lochaber House and Fulton House when the new building is ready in 2016.

It would also allow criticisms of the £300,000-plus price tag to preserve, rather than demolish the category B-listed secondary school, which the council owns, last year.

Local councillor Brian Murphy told *The Oban Times*: 'The whole building has been stripped right back to the stone work. What's left is perfectly capable of being adapted

to take a modern interior. It retains the council offices in Fort William, which I think we all felt from our point of view was important for public access and for the footfall it would create for the High Street in economic terms.'

The radical relocation plan would involve relocating 104 staff and save £100,000 per year in running costs, according to council estimates.

However, a third office space on High Street, Tweeddale House, is more problematic. The council is locked into a lease until 2071, yet the building's upper two floors are

empty. The ground floor is sub-let to NHS Highland, but only until July 2014.

Keen to avoid being left with an expensive 'white elephant,' the council will seek to buy the building and look at converting the upper two floors into flats.

Councillor Murphy said: 'That would be ideal because it would put more people into the High Street. There is massive space in there.'

Finance, housing and resources committee in Fort William were expected to approve the plan in Inverness yesterday (Wednesday).

'Dragon's Glen' winners presented with prizes

THE FOUR finalists from Lochaber Ideas Week entrepreneurs' competition 'Dragon's Glen' will be presented with their prizes in Fort William tomorrow.

Arisaig-based Anne Widdop of Fuze Ceremonies, Kieran Laureston of Gourmet Guides in Fort William, Mogs Blogs founder Morag Aitken from Banavie and Cheese Weasels Cuisine of Lochaber High School have been invited to attend the informal ceremony in the Ben Nevis Inn, Achintee.

In a take-off of the BBC show last week, local 'dragons', Finlay Finlayson, Sheila Rae and Douglas McDermott, together with Robert Muir of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, picked Fuze Ceremonies as the overall winner.

Ms Widdop scooped £1,000 cash, £1,000 worth of website design and hosting from event sponsors LamontDesign.

She also won Fort William Chamber of Commerce membership and business mentoring, plus support from Business Gateway.

Mr Muir also came up with a donation of £1,000 to 'Gourmet Guides'. The start-up company also won Fort William Chamber of Commerce membership and mentoring.

The week concluded with dinner and rewards ceremony in the Moorings Hotel in Banavie.

'Yes' campaigners hit the road

THE SKYE, Raasay and Lochalsh 'Yes' campaign will be hitting the road next week following the launch of the Scottish Government's White Paper on independence on Tuesday.

Public meetings across the area will feature presentations by local 'Yes' campaigners followed by question and answer sessions.

Press officer Ian Blackford, who will be one of the speakers, said the gatherings were open to all - not just 'Yes' voters.

An exciting future, a more just society and sustainable economic growth lay ahead with independence, he told *The Oban Times*.

He said: 'The debate over the next year is an opportunity for all of us to examine the kind of society we all wish to live in. We look forward to the public meetings in early December and beyond and trust that we can have a lively and informed debate exploring all aspects of the arguments for and against independence.'

Meetings are in Dornie Village Hall on Monday at 7pm and Kyle Village Hall at 8.30pm; Minginish Hall, Carbost on Tuesday at 7.30pm; Dunvegan Village Hall on Wednesday at 7pm and Waternish Community Hall at 8.30pm.

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BT's island gaffe stuns company

THE DURABILITY of BT broadband's maintenance in Argyll has been called into question after a repair to a connection in North Connel was delayed because the company thought it was on an island.

Wyx Media, The Oban Times' parent company, reported a fault in a business broadband connection in North Connel on November 7, following stormy weather.

BT Openreach said the earliest appointment its engineers could make was November 18 but no engineer attended and no contact was made.

When Wyx Media's IT manager complained about the missed appointment and a lack of information he was told that an engineer 'needs to travel to the island from the mainland'.

He was also told that there were only two engineers available to cover 'the area'.

BT Openreach has since confirmed it has 19 engineers, 14 of whom are broadband trained, to cover Argyll and the islands.

Following an Oban Times press enquiry to BT, the problem was assigned to the telecommunications company's 'escalation team' and the broadband service was restored on November 20.

The Oban Times knows of at least one other business broadband service in North Connel that suffered from a similar fault and delayed repair.

A spokesman for BT said: 'We would like to apologise for the delay in attending to these faults and we're investigating why this has happened.'

Online conversation word for word

THE FOLLOWING transcript is an excerpt of an online correspondence between Wyx Media's IT manager (IM) and BT online support (BT):

IM: How am I meant to plan anything with this approach to appointment keeping?

BT: The time of arrival can't be guaranteed I'm afraid however they are saying he will attend between now and 6pm. The engineer needs to travel to the island from the mainland.

IM: WHAT?

IM: I am on the mainland

IM: I am not on an island.

IM: I am here [Posts a Google Map link to location]

BT: Sorry, the delay is due to the availability of engineers in that area

IM: I want to speak to a senior manager right now please - and I want a phone call on my main line which is 01631 *****

IM: So where did you get the island information from then?

BT: the manager had thought this was on an island, with delays due to travel time. Though this seems to be due to availability of engineers, there are only two in the area

IM: Have you any idea how big this area is?

IM: For two engineers?

IM: Can I speak to a manager please as requested?

BT: This is the resource in place for that area, for this type of fault

IM: Can I speak to a manager please as requested?

BT: I can pass your details to them



Winter festival sparkles into life

The third Oban Winter Festival has already been hailed a roaring success after a big opening weekend attracted thousands of festive visitors. Oban's Carys Rimmer, pictured, had a leading role in a version of Cats that made up part of Ballet West's Winter Wonderland show, which kicked off the festival in style last Friday. For more on this year's 10-day event, which runs until Sunday, see page 11. Photo: Stephen Lawson.

Shop warning over Railway Pier barrier

Business could fold within months

A CONTROVERSIAL car park barrier is 'strangling' the life out of Oban's oldest shop by putting off customers, according to its owner.

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by FAITH ORR
forr@obantimes.co.uk

D Watt and Son, the fishmongers on the Railway Pier, has been trading since 1918 but Allan Watt, who currently runs the business, says it could close within months if a new barrier installed by ScotRail isn't removed.

The barrier went up in early October at the entrance to the train station car park, blocking vehicular access to the six businesses beyond it when the car park is full.

Mr Watt attended a meeting of Oban Community Council on Monday to ask for help in getting the barrier removed or relocated to its previous position at the access to the main car park - beyond the road where the fishmongers is situated.

He said: 'I think we're the oldest shop in the town. We have been there since 1918 and it was probably easier to get to the shop in 1918 than it is now.'

'There doesn't seem to be anything we can do about it.'

Mr Watt received the backing of Oban councillor Roddy McCuish, who described ScotRail blocking off businesses

as 'madness', adding: 'ScotRail are legally right but morally wrong. There is the chance of six businesses going to the wall because of this.'

'Six trains a day could be to the detriment of long established businesses in the town and that just can't happen.'

Mr Watt fears that in summer, during his peak trading time, the car park will be full and deny access to customers.

He said: 'In summer, workmen go over to Mull and leave their cars in the car park all day. If it is full 8am until 6pm and the barrier doesn't lift we will be strangled out of business.'

'The ideal thing is to get rid of the barrier but if we could get the limit taken off, freeing the barrier to go up and down, that will at least let customers through to the six businesses.'

Councillor Elaine Robertson believes the route could be a public right of way, a fact disputed by ScotRail. Councillor Robertson said: 'If you have been using an access unimpeded for 20 years you have a right

of access.' But a spokesman for ScotRail said the road was privately owned by Network Rail and pedestrian access is 'completely unaffected' by the barriers.

He said ScotRail was working with Mr Watt and Argyll and Bute Council to find a solution for businesses, adding: 'The barriers were installed to free up more spaces for customers, while still offering good value parking for others.'

'Before they were introduced last month, the car park was regularly full - leaving no space for rail users. Often this included people leaving cars there for several days on end.'

'Moving the barriers would result in spaces once again being available for an unlimited time, and for everyone - including non-rail users and people travelling to islands - to use. They were installed to combat exactly this scenario.'

The barrier was installed after ScotRail received a share of £5.27 million from the Scottish Government in April as part of a programme to refurbish 60 railway stations across Scotland.

Oban Community Council is now to write to the regions' MSPs on the issue.

Workers escape from collapsed tunnel

WORKERS at Glensanda Quarry managed to escape from a tunnel which collapsed and flooded during specialist work on the site.

Quarry operator Aggregate Industries is currently investigating how the incident happened and said it had informed all the relevant authorities, including the Health and Safety Executive.

It was during construction of an underground shaft by a specialist mining contractor on October 29 that a volume of processed rock and water was released into the existing tunnel from the adjacent excavation.

Men working in the tunnel were able to escape before being caught in the flood and no-one was injured.

A spokesman for Aggregate Industries said: 'Although personnel were present in the tunnel at the time, our incident plan was followed and everyone was able to leave the tunnel unharmed.'

The tunnel was initially closed for an assessment and repairs but the spokesman said it was now 'fully operational'.

He added: 'We treat all incidents seriously and a full technical investigation is ongoing.'

Thousands back campaign to free ex-soldier

THE CAMPAIGN to free ex-soldier Billy Irving has taken a leap forward this week as the number of signatures on an on-line petition surpassed 29,000 as The Oban Times went to press.

Billy, who grew up in Appin and Campbelltown and now lives in Connel, is one of six British ex-soldiers among the 35 crewmen jailed since October 18 after Indian authorities claimed their

boat was carrying weapons illegally. A petition started by his girlfriend, Yvonne MacHugh, calling on the UK Government to help free the six soldiers now has almost 30,000 names.

There was some good news for Billy's family after the charity Mission to Seafarers established contact with the men and are relaying messages between the families. Yvonne, who has been

inundated with media attention and well wishers as the campaign got underway, said the number of signatures on the petition was a great support to her cause.

She said: 'It shows how much support is out there for Billy.'

Yvonne, along with Billy's father, Jim, a former Appin policeman, is currently in discussion with the other families affected to agree a date on presenting the

petition to the UK Government.

Billy was on board the US-owned MV Seaman Guard Ohio when it was detained at Tuticorin Port in southern Tamil Nadu state. The ship is owned by security firm Advanfort, which has denied allegations that the ship had illegally procured diesel and was in possession of arms and ammunition without required documentation.

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Dancers to strut their stuff in Scottish show

Dancers from the Oban and Lorn area will be strutting their stuff in a selection of Scottish-themed dances at the Corran Halls to help mark St Andrew's Day. Four dance classes, ranging from ballet to hip-hop, will line up in the Atlantis St Andrew's Dance Show this Saturday from 2pm. Part of the Oban Winter Festival, the dance show has obtained funding from the St Andrew's Charitable Trust. 15,148atant1501

New end-of-life care programme launched in rural Argyll

A NEW health strategy aimed at keeping Argyll's palliative care patients in their own homes has been launched this week.

Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP) has joined forces with Marie Curie Cancer Care to develop the area's Delivering Choice Programme (DCP) for more than 800 people in the county requiring end-of-life care.

Part of the Reshaping Care for Older People strategy, the move aims to ensure patients in the area are not disadvantaged by their rural location.

The new plan will see Marie Curie nurses providing a mix of short and long visits to patients' homes during the day, evening and overnight;

an improvement to carers' information and training; events and roadshows raising awareness of death, dying and bereavement; and supporting palliative care in care homes and in people's own homes.

Launch

Launching the programme at Loch Fyne Hotel, Inveraray on Monday, Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell said: 'This programme will make a huge difference to those patients and families with a palliative care need.'

'It's an excellent example of local care providers working together to create local sustainable solutions to address challenging problems in the design and delivery of effective healthcare.'

Highland hotel chain donates £1.2m

A HOTEL chain which has its heart in the Highlands of Scotland has handed over £1.2 million to help children battle cancer.

The Crerar Hotels Trust, funded by Crerar Hotel Group, has pledged the money to CLIC Sargent for its Homes from Home relocation appeal.

Homes from Home provide free accommodation for

children, young people and their families near major treatment centres.

CLIC Sargent launched the £3 million appeal earlier this month following news that children's hospitals in Edinburgh and Glasgow were moving to new locations.

Paddy Crerar, trust chairman, said: 'It is great for our folk in the hotels to see their hard work and efforts

helping people in their own communities as well as those from throughout the whole of Scotland.'

'It's been totally humbling to discover how many families have used these Homes from Home, while living through such an unimaginable challenge.'

'It's immensely tough for the kids who have to fight cancer, but the whole family

is affected and that's why doing something to help a whole family is so important.'

Ellen Finlayson, CLIC Sargent's assistant director added: 'Without support the charity wouldn't be able to move its Homes from Home, and young cancer patients and their families would not be able to benefit from the service so close

to the hospital.' Mr Crerar received a special key from Kelsee Grant, aged three, who stayed at CLIC Villa earlier this year after she was diagnosed with leukaemia.

Kelsee's mum Louise said: 'CLIC Villa was a godsend for us. It made a drastic difference, as we would otherwise have had to make frequent two-hour round trips at rush hour from our

home in West Lothian.

'Although Kelsee was scared of the hospital, she loved going to CLIC Villa, her room, all the toys and the staff, who are lovely. It is a safe house for her.'

The Oban Bay Hotel and Spa, Isle of Mull Hotel and Spa, Loch Fyne Hotel and Spa and Glencoe Inn are part of the Crerar Hotel Group that funds the trust.

Constituents urged to examine White Paper on referendum

THE LAUNCH of the Scottish Government's White Paper on independence took place on Tuesday and Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell is urging all his constituents to get a copy and read it.

Mr Russell said: 'I know from my own work in the Argyll and Bute constituency that a large number of people want more information on independence before they make their mind up on how to vote in the referendum

which is now just 10 months away. The Scottish Government promised that it would produce a comprehensive document that answers people's questions and made it clear what choices independence will bring. The document does all that but it does more too.'

You can secure a copy online at www.scotreferendum.com or ring 0300 012 1809 to have it sent to you free of charge. The paper is also downloadable as an eBook.

Sale will end family's link with shop

AN ISLAY family's 55-year association with a popular island shop is likely to end later this year after the current proprietor retires.

Jimmy Campbell has built up his Bridgend Post Office and General Store over the past 39 years, having taken over from his parents in 1974.

The family first took over the shop in 1958 after moving the short distance from Port Charlotte to Bridgend.

The property is owned by Islay Estates, which has tasked property consultants to have it sent to a new tenant. It is hoped the new tenant will be chosen by the



Bridgend Post Office and General Store.

end of the year but with Mr Campbell's three children all living and working on the mainland, the 61-year-old shopkeeper is certain it won't stay in the family.

He said: 'You can't stop the clock and the children are all on the mainland now. 'Anyway, I think 39 years is long enough!' Mr Camp-

bell will stay in Bridgend, the village he has lived in since the age of six.

He added: 'I enjoyed building up the business and providing a good service to the locals but I'll also miss the strange requests. I once had a man ask if I sold worms - I'm still not sure what he was planning to do with them!'



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Tobermory pupils raise typhoon cash

MORE than £1,000 has been raised by pupils and staff at Tobermory High School to help the relief effort in the Philippines.

Moved by the images of Typhoon Haiyan, the school swung into action to raise £1,190 for the Disasters Emergency Committee Philippines appeal. Pupils from primary one through to S6 got together for a fundraising breakfast in the canteen to share bacon rolls and porridge as well as playing games.

Friendship bracelets made by S6, with beads in the colours of the flag of the Philippines, quickly sold out. Everybody brought in their loose change and teams of primary and secondary pupils helped to arrange them to make a mile of coins around the gym.

The Traditional Music Group provided a rousing accompaniment to the event. Youngsters sold tea and cakes at parents' evening and the primary school disco, organised by primary pupils, added a further £225 to the appeal. Secondary music students decided they'd like to donate the money they'd made from sales of their CD. The school wanted to thank everybody who donated money, time and materials. It was a great team effort by everyone involved.

Assault and robbery charges

A WOMAN and two men from Oban appeared in private in Oban Sheriff Court last week charged with assault and robbery.

Kerry Dale, 27, Michael McPhee, 28, and Andrew Mackenzie, 32, all made no plea or declaration during the petition hearing.

The case was continued for further examination and Dale was released on bail while McPhee and Mackenzie were both remanded in custody.

Alleged drink driver reported

A WOMAN has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal after allegedly driving while four times the legal alcohol limit.

The 57-year-old was stopped by police in Oban's Mossfield Avenue last Saturday at around 2pm.



Architect John Gleeson, centre, with St Conan's Kirk trustees, from left: clerk to the trustees David Hodge, David McLeod, Halbert Jamieson and Robert Campbell Preston. 15_148conans01

Urgent appeal for church restoration help

THE TRUST that has been tasked with restoring one of Argyll's best loved churches to its former glory says it has a plan of action - but needs help to do it.

That was the message delivered to those who attended an open day at St Conan's Kirk, Lochawe, last Saturday.

Architectural consultant John

Gleeson, who assists the four trustees, explained how the Grade-A listed building needs a seven-figure sum overall to restore it to its former glory. Highlighting issues with damp, a leaking roof, structural problems and the need to restore some of the unique ironwork Mr Gleeson, from Inveraray, also explained how the trustees

wished to convert the gate lodge, beside the kirk, into a heritage centre and create a washroom and cafe for visitors.

A number of people who attended the open day have signed up to become Friends of St Conan's Kirk. Mr Gleeson told *The Oban Times*: 'We need money, of course, but we need physical assistance with things

like fundraising events. We know what we need to do but we just don't have the manpower to get it all done.'

The trustees have already applied for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to secure the perimeter walls, which, if not strengthened, could mean parts of the kirk will have to be closed to the public.

Fresh calls for abolition of 'bedroom tax'

Argyll and Bute tenants in arrears as impact of spare room subsidy bites

SIX TENANTS in Argyll and Bute have been issued with notices that could lead to eviction proceedings, as the impact of the UK Government's controversial 'bedroom tax' is felt.

Oban councillor Roddy McCuish has launched a stinging attack on the tax, saying without significant finance to build one-bedroom accommodation it was always going to be unfair.

More than 500 housing association tenants across Argyll and Bute have been affected, prompting fresh calls for its abolition.

Of the 466 Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) tenants faced with the spare room subsidy withdrawal, 247 are behind with rent payments, with 90 more than £250 in arrears.

While six have been issued with a notice of proceedings against them, giving them six months to improve their arrears situation or else face court

action, the association says it wants to help tenants manage their situation.

West Highland Housing Association (WHHA) has around 50 tenants affected by the tax. It too says it would rather work with tenants rather than evict them.

Councillor McCuish said: 'In my opinion this is a huge issue locally and it is only going to get bigger, affecting more and more people over time.'

'We don't have a lot of one-bedroom properties. In my opinion it's targeting people who cannot afford it. We're dealing with the waves now but there's a tsunami coming.'

ACHA's chief executive Alastair MacGregor said: 'The association continues to work with its tenants who wish to move to a smaller property and also works closely with the council with respect to discretionary housing payments.'

'At this point in time the

association's tenants, who we have supported in applications for discretionary housing payments to assist with the loss of income from the bedroom tax, has resulted in a 75 per cent success rate.

'The association's primary concern is to assist our tenants all we can to help them manage an arrears situation. The association continues to campaign for the repeal of the legislation that brought in the bedroom tax.'

Lesley McInnes, WHHA chief executive, said: 'Generally, we have seen some increase in arrears but in the main our tenants are keeping us informed and we are trying to advise them about options available to them.'

'Our approach is not to threaten tenants - many people have issues at the present time and we try to get people to talk to us so that we can offer assistance or indeed signpost them to other organisations, where appropriate.'

Countdown to Oban playpark's yarnbombing 'reveal'



Oban First Rainbows made pom-poms for the yarnbombing project.

THE BIG 'reveal' of Oban Playpark Committee's yarnbombing project will take place on Saturday, as volunteers work through Friday night to set up the colourful canvas of wool.

The playpark committee is undertaking the knitting project to raise awareness of the park fund, which will pay for the renovation of the park outside Atlantis Leisure.

The group said it had raised more than £21,000 and can now contemplate grant applications in the region of £380,000.

The craze, yarnbombing, involves knitters decorating

public areas with colourful creations made of wool. For the past two months, supporters of the playpark committee have been busy knitting a rainbow of colours. Fitting then, that one of the groups involved are Oban First Rainbows, who made pom poms as decorations.

Now all the creations will be hung at Atlantis Leisure under the cover of darkness, leaving the identities of the volunteer knitters a mystery.

Lyndsay Elliott of Oban Playpark Committee said: 'We've had a load of stitched donations already and expect

a load more by the November 28 deadline for handing items into Atlantis. The tennis court railings will be covered with stitched flowers and a massive slogan, plus we will have woolly scarves on anything we can.'

The playpark committee recently received donations from the following groups: D'Arcy Diving, £1,000; Rotary Club of Oban, £1,200; Argyll and Bute Council Third Sector Grant, £715; and MacQueen Bros Charitable Trust, £5,000.

The playpark committee has set up Just Giving online account for people to make donations.

New rules mean Argyll midwives need retrained to carry out antenatal scans

SCANS to confirm whether a woman is pregnant will no longer be done in Argyll after new rules came into force.

National guidelines recently introduced state health professionals carrying out antenatal scans must have completed a one year accredited post graduate certificated course. Until recently midwives in Argyll and Bute were trained to carry out an antenatal scan on pregnant women to confirm the pregnancy and estimate the date of delivery.

While the midwives have all been trained to undertake this procedure the training they had

been provided with no longer meets the national requirements.

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'It has therefore been recommended that all antenatal scanning should cease in Argyll and Bute until it can be carried out by a trained obstetric ultrasonographer. This means that for the foreseeable future midwives in Argyll and Bute will no longer carry out any scanning until they have received the appropriate training.'

Women who require this service will now have to travel to hospitals within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

MP would support signal legislation

AFTER experiencing Oban's poor signal hand, Scotland's only Conservative MP said he would support legislation to improve the west Highlands and islands' inadequate mobile phone coverage.

However, David Mundell, the under-secretary of state for Scotland, said the UK Government had to try to work with providers first before such measures were taken.

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell described the lack of a signal as a 'life and death' issue, saying the inability to get coverage even on some of the area's busiest roads

presented a serious risk to people's lives. While Mr Mundell criticised the lack of coverage, he stopped short of demanding action be taken now.

Asked by *The Oban Times* if he thought legislation should be introduced to compel mobile phone companies to improve their service in rural areas, he said: 'Clearly, it is a problem. The government has been working with mobile phone companies to ensure the maximum amount of coverage. One complaint is relating to the 4G rollout and the fact we still have large rural areas with no proper coverage.'

'It is not acceptable to have large areas with no signal - particularly along our main arterial routes.'

'I think we have got to work with the mobile phone companies and allow them to do it first. If there is no progress though, it is a measure I would support.'

Meanwhile, Argyll and Bute's MP, Alan Reid, will this week meet communications firm Arqiva to get more clarity on how the £150million UK Government fund it has been asked to administer for the whole country could improve mobile infrastructure in Argyll and Bute.

National water safety forum call

TWO ARGYLL MSPs, who campaigned to improve safety on Loch Awe, have joined forces to ask the Scottish Government to establish a National Water Safety Forum.

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell and Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor have made the call in a joint letter to Roseanna Cunningham, the Minister for Community Safety. March next year will mark the fifth anniversary of the death of four fishermen, who drowned on Loch Awe.

Filling Oban's empty shops a BID4Oban priority

BUSINESS co-operative BID4Oban says it will make filling empty shops its priority for the coming year after 'laying strong foundations' in its first 12 months.

Speaking to *The Oban Times*, BID manager Nic Jones admitted the first year was a learning curve, but says there are several signs that the work it is doing is having a positive impact on trading conditions.

Having launched the new Love Oban voucher scheme last week, the manager says he is now keen to bring together landlords, the council and business interests in an attempt to ensure the town's empty properties are filled.

Key though was using the experience gained in year one of the organisation's five-year business plan.

He said: 'Empty shops are a big priority for us. We really want to see what we can do about these buildings and getting everyone involved around a table to talk about it would be a good start.'

'We really want to make an impact on that next year.' Other plans for the year ahead include progressing work done to attract more cruise ships to the area - and keeping their passengers in the town - releasing a new mobile phone app and improving the town's signage.

Lessons learned from the first year will be key to this, he added. 'I'd say year one has been a very positive start, but there has been a learning curve,' Nic said. 'As with any new start, you do need to learn and some of the things we've done have gone better than others and we need to address those in the future. I'd like to think the things we've done so far have shown some success. We can't solve everybody's problems, but we can put things in place to try and improve the broader picture now and in the future.'

Other priorities for the coming year include working with the council to have a new street-cleaning machine brought into use. While the BID won't operate the machine, it will liaise with the authority on when it will be used and where. It is also working with the Oban and Lorn Tourism Association (OLTA) on marketing the town at next year's Ryder Cup and Commonwealth Games.

Mr Jones acknowledged there had been criticism of the BID, but said anyone who has identified an area for improvement should contact the organisation.

'What I'd say is become involved if you have any concerns or ideas that could be helpful. Find out what we're doing and what the BID is about. If that means a phone call or a meeting that's something we can do.'

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Fort face tough test at Turriff

'We took a lot out of the game even although the result was disappointing.'

REPORT BY STEPHEN NORRIS
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FORT WILLIAM will draw heart from an encouraging showing against Deveronvale last time out for a tough-looking test at Turriff United on Saturday.

The Fort will be without defender Sean Grant and hit man Duncan Campbell through work commitments but will be buoyed by the return from suspension of midfielder Michael Gillespie to the squad.

Firepower

Manager Danny Conlon could also have the services of striker Gordy McCarroll at his disposal and he will need all the firepower he can muster.

The addition of left back Matt Murphy from Inverness Caley Thistle and centreback Willie Gemmel from Oban Saints has stiffened the defence, but it is

up front where Fort are most in need of re-invention.

Conlon told The Oban Times: 'We still have a few areas where we are short and we are looking to strengthen those as soon as we can.'

'We are delighted with the quality of players we have brought in so far but Turriff have added Darren Mackie, who is ex-Aberdeen, and Jamie Beagrie from Peterhead, so that shows how ambitious they are.'

'They are a really good side and nice to play against. They are good people up there and a very friendly club so we are looking forward to it and it should be a good game.'

It was the same old story for the Fort against 'Vale in a match they could have led by two or three at the break.

But they suffered a killer blow seconds from the interval when Charleworth's low drive beat Donaldson and second half goals

FOOTBALL

from Rodger then Cowie sealed it for the visitors.

Trialist Nick Stein from Gairloch got himself into great positions on more than one occasion but the striker could not find the composure to apply the finish.

Conlon said: 'He was making the runs but knows he has come up a level and we are going to have another look at him.'

'We had four of five great chances in the first half compared with their one or two - but they were the ones who scored.'

'I thought we played some nice stuff in the first half and could have conceivably gone in 1-0 or 2-0 up.'

'The second goal early in the second half hurt us but to be fair to the lads we worked hard to get back into it.'

He added: 'We took a lot out of the game even although the result was disappointing.'



Three-try hero Conor Taylor sets up another Lochaber charge towards the RAF Lossiemouth line. 20_148rugby03

RAF Lossiemouth bombed out by Lochaber

Lochaber 32 Lossiemouth 5

LOCHABER got back to winning ways with a convincing win over RAF Lossiemouth at a chilly Black Parks on Saturday.

The home side started the game with a high intensity, racing into a 10-0 lead after a Kenny Turnbull penalty and a bulldozing Conor Taylor try.

The visitors began to settle and the game became more even, however both sides were guilty of rushing ball which resulted in a number of errors.

Lochaber extended their lead midway through the first half when Mike McLeish

charged down a box kick and crossed the whitewash. Soon after, Taylor picked from a scrum and dived in at the corner to make it 20-0.

Lossie began to exert some pressure at the beginning of the second half as they looked to get back into the game.

Poor discipline

Following poor discipline from Lochaber, which resulted in a number of consecutive penalties being conceded, the away team got points on the board with a try in front of the posts.

A number of niggling injuries from both teams disrupted the flow of the game, but

debutant Euan Larter secured a bonus point for Lochaber with a fine run down the left wing for a great score.

With the game all but over, Taylor scored his third try of the match to complete a dominating display from the Fort William outfit.

The win halts a run of defeats which had dropped Lochaber into sixth place in RBS Caledonia League Division 2 North.

Catian Mike McLeish said: 'This win gives confidence to the team, who now face Stornoway at home on Saturday, 2pm kick off. The team will hope to put in another dominant display to ensure the five points.'

Alleycats are scratch leaders

TEN PIN BOWLING

AFTER week eight of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling competition at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats remain the leaders in the scratch division with 36 points.

Rock and Bowl stay in second place with 30 points with Bandits slipping in third place on 29 points.

In the handicap division Bandits stretched their lead at the top with 33.5 points after beating British Legion Scotland 5-0. Alleycats remain in second place with 28 points and Council in third place with 21 points.

The top individual scratch game this week came from RossAmy Wareing of Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with 194. Pam Weller (Alleycats) rolled a 179. RossAmy also had the top handicap game of 245 and the top two-game handicap series of 432. Pam Weller had the top two-game scratch series of 332.

Alleycats swept the board for the highest team scores of the week with a scratch team game of 620, a handicap game of 800, a scratch two-game series of 1166 and a two-game handicap team series of 1526.

The highest scratch average is now held by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 161 followed by Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) on 159. Stewart Duncan (Rock and Bowl) remains next on 145.

Glengarry Shinty Club not happy

SHINTY

GLENGARRY Shinty Club have expressed unhappiness at being pitched into the Co-operative MacIavish Cup next season alongside the likes of Newtonmore, Kingussie and Kyles.

Coach of the North Division 2 outfit, Ewen Cameron, told The Oban Times: 'We can't beat Newtonmore second team so what would we do if met their first team?'

'What's the point in paying an £85 entry fee and getting beat 10-0 or 11-0? It is totally unrealistic.'



What might have been: Stein beats 'Vale keeper Fyfe but his effort flew over the bar. 20_148football01

Winter league results

FORT WILLIAM Golf Club held two more rounds of the winter league over Saturday and Sunday.

Returns (Saturday): 1 Sinclair Gunn, 19 points (three points last hole); 2 Alan Overend, 19 points (two points on last hole); 3 Steven Jamieson, 19 points (one point at last hole). Sunday

GOLF

- 1 Stewart Duncan, 21 points; 2 Eric Wallace, 19 points; 3 Robert McCover, 18 points.

Overall scores after eight rounds: 1 Neil Feggans, 155 points; 2 Eric Wallace, 154 points; 3 Davie MacPherson, 150 points.

Lochaber Yacht Club holds annual prizegiving

YACHTING

A HEALTHY turnout of over 40 members attended Lochaber Yacht Club's annual prizegiving dinner at its Fort William clubhouse on Saturday night.

Ryan McIntyre, sponsored by Chisholm Recovery of Ballachulish, not content with his success at the Oban Yacht club regatta, carried off several trophies this season at LYC, as did Hamish Loudon.

Winners: Ancient Mariner's Trophy - Marian Austin (Scintilla); Black Rock Bell - Paul Biggin (Bird O' Spray); Brass Monkey - Liz Loudon and Andy McKenna (Just Gonnae No); Commodore's Prize, Frostbite Shield, Icele Series Shield, K.K. Cameron Trophy, Merin Trophy, Vice Commodore's Cup - all won by Ryan McIntyre; Corpach Chandler's Cannon - Robby McKay; Endeavour Trophy - Margaret McKivror and Sarah Whyton; Kilmallic Trophy - Marian Austin; Lochaber Wheel - Hamish Loudon; Omega Trophy - Hamish Loudon; Scapa Trophy - Liz Loudon and Andy McKenna; Christopher Trophy - Ian Fleming and Keith Falconer; Trafalgar Trophy - Pete Hyde.



Left to right, Paul Biggin, Andy McKenna, Ryan McIntyre, Hamish Loudon and Robby McKay show off their trophies at the LYC annual prizegiving.

Weather

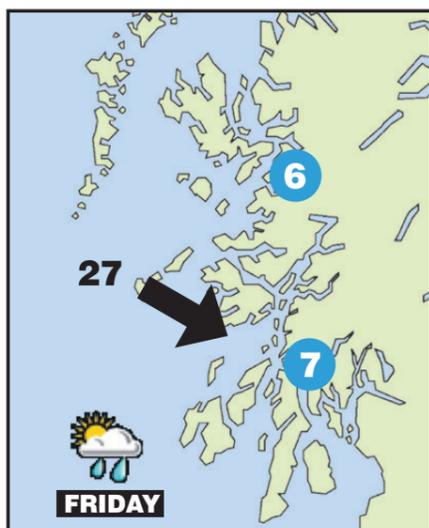
Thursday Cloudy
Winds light south south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 9°C

Friday Sunshine and showers
Winds strong west north westerly
Temperatures 5°C to 7°C.

Weekend Outlook Light rain
Winds moderate west north westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 8°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, November 28, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	02.03 3.1 07.20 1.8 14.05 3.4 20.35 1.8	
Fri	08.20 1.6 08.20 1.6 14.57 3.5 21.22 1.6	
Sat	03.34 3.5 09.15 1.4 15.41 3.8 22.03 1.3	
Sun	04.12 3.7 10.06 1.1 16.23 3.9 22.43 1.0	
Mon	04.50 3.9 10.55 0.9 17.03 4.1 23.24 0.8	
Tues	05.29 4.1 11.42 0.7 17.44 4.1 *** **	
Wed	00.06 0.7 06.09 4.2 12.31 0.6 18.25 4.1	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

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