

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Time running out on NHS dental centre

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PRESSURE is mounting on NHS Highland dental service chiefs who were told this week to quickly fill the vacant dental access centre in Oban - or go back to the drawing board.

The state-of-the-art, new-build dental access centre at Lorn and Islands Hospital has lain empty for more than a year because the health board has so far been unable to find a dentist willing to take on the lease.

At Monday's Oban, Lorn and the Isles locality public partnership forum (PPF) in the hospital, it was suggested by PPF member and Oban community council secretary Duncan Martin that the weekly charge being set to rent the unit was too high to be viable.

Health representatives, area committee chairman councillor Roddy McCuish and Argyll and

Bute MSP Michael Russell have all called on NHS Highland to find a leaseholder soon, or come up with a new plan after the latest potential recruit pulled out of negotiations on November 4.

The health board claims it is in discussion with a new potential tenant with a statement from Elizabeth Reilly, assistant clinical director for dental services in Argyll and Bute, being read out at the PPF.

She said: 'Another candidate came forward on November 5 and discussions are proceeding with him.'

'We had a face-to-face meeting on November 7 and another scheduled for November 27. Negotiations are proceeding with a positive approach on both sides and we are hopeful of a successful outcome.'

But PPF member Tom Dolan, claimed he had heard such promises before, adding that he had been raising the issue about

dental services for seven years. He said: 'Are some of the options for dental services discarded seven years ago worth revisiting?'

'We are where we are now; we have three lovely suites gathering dust, doing nothing. Is it worth continuing to go down this cul-de-sac?'

'For example, could these three dentist's chairs become NHS property with NHS dentists clinically supervised by someone like Colin Crawford (a senior Oban dentist)?'

Councillor McCuish added: 'We have to ask: was the wrong decision made at the time, or do we need to revisit this decision?'

'Someone must be thinking: 'Perhaps this is not going to work.'

'Budgets are only going one way, and that's down. The NHS cannot afford this.'

'If you ran a shop and had something you couldn't sell, you would just stop selling it.'



Oban company's sweet success

FORGET Paris, London and Rome; Oban is home to one of Europe's best chocolate shops, according to travel website GoEuro.

The Oban Chocolate Company was listed in a European top 10 of chocolate shops, an accolade that shocked owner Helen MacKechnie (pictured), who has been running the business with husband Stewart for 11 years.

'It took a while to sink in,' she said. 'We are the only business listed from the UK. There are lots of great chocolate shops in the UK now, so just to be recognised at a national level would have been amazing.'

A Glasgow Caledonian University alumni, Helen made a chocolate trophy and filled it with champagne to celebrate the recognition and praised all 16 permanent staff at the

company. She said: 'It is great to get this recognition but it is really for the staff who do a fantastic job. They create the atmosphere of a relaxing haven of chocolate indulgence.'

The shop makes and sells unique creations, such as Irn Bru truffles and has had its busiest year in 2014.

During the summer the shop can employ as many as 20 people.

TIMESLINE

Oban dog foulers go undetected

THERE have been no convictions for dog fouling in the last year in Oban.

Argyll and Bute council has admitted that while it has nine staff across the county to deal with the foul problem, they hadn't actually caught anyone in the town.

The local authority is encouraging the public to report incidents to its customer services department.

Dedications taken for Light up a Life

PEOPLE in Oban and Lorn are invited to join Oban Hospice's Light up a Life event in the Corran Halls on December 9.

Dedications can be submitted using the distributed forms.

The Light up a Life book will be on display at the event, as lights outside the venue are switched on.

Tarbert Christmas tree a 'disgrace'

CHRISTMAS cheer seems lacking in Tarbert, Mid Argyll, after locals branded the village's festive tree a 'disgrace'.

Argyll and Bute council, which spends £100,000 a year on Christmas trees, said the size of the 'smaller' Tarbert tree was restricted by a car park and footpath.

Global gong for SAMS scientist

AN ARGYLL scientist has won a prestigious international award.

Professor Stuart Cunningham of Dunstaffnage's Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) received this year's Society for Underwater Technology Oceanography Award at a London ceremony.

Fears that Rockfield repairs are set to rise

REPAIRS to the old Rockfield school in Oban may be set to rocket.

That's the stark view of a building expert who reckons dry rot and rising damp in the council-owned landmark building has caused widespread damage.

It was previously believed the cost of repair was approximately £40,000 after Argyll and Bute council carried out a site review of the ground floor of the building earlier this year.

However, the building expert, who did not want to be named, said: 'The building is in a sorry

state. I am well aware that people want to save the building for the good of the community, so builders are trying to keep the costs to a minimum. But there is no doubt that this is a big job. The costs could easily double or rise even higher.'

Oban Communities Trust (OCT), the group that is in negotiations with the council to buy the building and turn it into a cultural hub for the town, say it is not down to them to foot the bill.

Gordon MacNab, chairman of OCT, said: 'We would expect it to be wind and watertight and

guaranteed free of dry rot by the time it comes to us.'

Work has already been completed on the Victorian building's roof over the last month, with the council picking up the tab for the cost of the repairs.

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute council said: 'The possible presence of dry rot in the former Rockfield primary school was drawn to our attention.'

'We have asked specialists to investigate this. We are still awaiting their report and do not yet have any indication about potential costs.'

Tiree - best wee festival in Britain

THE MULTI-award winning Tیره Music Festival is now officially the best small festival in the UK.

The festival, organised by a team headed up by Tیره men Daniel Gillespie and Stewart MacLennan, won the category at last week's UK Event Awards in London.

The result follows on from consecutive victories in the Scottish equivalent in 2012 and 2013, when organisers also won best cultural event at the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards and best cultural event in Scotland at the Thistle Awards.

Daniel Gillespie said: 'It is



UK'S BEST: Stewart MacLennan receives the trophy

our first UK award and a real surprise to win because most of the people there didn't know where Tیره was. We usually

go to these awards nights as a team but Stewart went down to London without us.

'But the judges were very kind in what they said about us and spoke highly of the impact of the festival on the remote area we cover.'

And the three-day festival's impact is considerable to Tیره, and Argyll in general, with an economic impact of £634,971 this year - an overall increase of 29 per cent on the 2013 figure.

The festival has sold out each year since its inception in 2010 and now has a capacity of 1,600 per day, trebling the population of Tیره over the festival

weekend. Daniel added: 'The national award is recognition of all the hard work by our team and volunteers but also recognition for Tیره.'

'One of the biggest things that feeds back in visitor surveys is the welcome people receive on the island, the friendly atmosphere.'

'I think that is testament to the whole island; if the population didn't take on the ethos of the festival, it simply wouldn't work.'

A community consultation for next year's event, from July 17 - 19, will be held in Tیره's An Talla today, Thursday December 4.

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PM guarantees an equal post service

ARGYLL's postal service was at the top of the agenda in the House of Commons as the area's MP called for the 'equal service' to the whole country to remain intact.

Alan Reid, MP for Argyll and Bute, said: 'I asked the Prime Minister to give an assurance that he will never allow the universal service obligation to be watered down in any way.'

Prime Minister David Cameron said: 'I know how important the universal service obligation is, particularly in constituencies such as my honourable friend's, which includes so many islands and far-flung communities. It is very important that it is maintained.'

Speaking afterwards, Mr Reid said: 'It is vitally important for rural areas like Argyll and Bute that this is never watered down in any way.'

'I'm pleased that the Prime Minister agreed that it is very important that it is maintained.'

Good causes set for cash injection

TWO GOOD causes on the west coast have won funding from an online vote.

Friends of Oban Community Playpark and Iona Housing Partnership were awarded £2,000 and £1,000 respectively after coming top of a community vote to secure funding.

The money has been given by The Bank of Scotland Community Fund 2014 award.

Mike Moran, director of the Bank of Scotland, said: 'It has been fantastic to see so many public nominating and voting for good causes in the 2014 Bank of Scotland Community Fund.'

'Looking at all the wonderful causes that the awards will go towards is truly heartening.'

Young islanders at home in 'cop shop'

THE PORT Ellen police station, which has lain empty for around a decade, is to be refurbished as homes for young islanders.

The Mactaggart family has established a charitable trust, Port Ellen Station, to create four one-bedroom flats on the first and second floor, with offices on the ground floor. The cells, where writer George Orwell once spent a night because of bad weather, may become bunkhouse accommodation.

George Robertson, former secretary general of NATO, was born in the station, which was designed by Donald Gillies of Lochgilphead in 1885.

Holiday estate up for sale at £1.25M

A HOLIDAY park at Lerags, near Oban, has gone on the market for £1.25 million.

Lagnakeil Highland Lodges, set within 5.7 acres of the Lerags glen, is being sold by international real estate adviser Savills.

The estate comprises 17 timber lodges and the current owner's property.

A SAD SIGN OF THE TIMES AS DOG WALKERS TAKE NO NOTICE OF RESIDENT'S PLEA



YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED: Aileen Miller says she's had enough of irresponsible dog owners letting their pets foul her driveway 16_149dir01

I'll catch the foul owners on CCTV if I have to, says irate Oban woman

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AN OBAN woman is the latest to call foul on irresponsible dog owners not cleaning up after their animals.

Aileen Miller, who lives on Villa Road, bought three dog-fouling signs earlier in the year to put up in her driveway, but still regularly finds mess in the mornings.

She says she is now at the end of her tether and is considering installing CCTV as a last resort to stop the culprits.

She said: 'The attitude of, 'it's not my garden, so I'll just walk on' is not acceptable.'

'I saw the story in The Oban Times about a neighbour round the corner and also about Park primary school's issues with dog fouling, which I thought

was particularly disgusting and disgraceful when there's young children running about.'

'I really don't know what to do about the mess as it's usually every week or two I find it.'

'As a dog lover myself it's soul-destroying that people aren't looking after their dogs properly.'

Aileen has even said people are welcome to use her bin to deposit

dog waste as long as the mess is bagged properly by the owner.

She added: 'Dogs take a lot of looking after and the owners should be responsible, because fouling isn't just a nuisance, it's illegal.'

'I don't want to have to put up CCTV but it's coming to that, and I will be in touch with the dog wardens too to see what can be done.'

John's Euro epic for charity

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AN OBAN businessman has completed a charity motorcycle across 14 countries, raising three times his fundraising target on route.

John Forteith, a business development officer with Freetrade Scotland, travelled through Europe, starting his journey

in Ireland on November 2 and finishing back in Scotland on Sunday, raising more than £6,000 in the process.

The money raised will benefit the Oban Multiple Sclerosis Therapy centre, a place close to John's heart after his son Guy was diagnosed with the disease at the age of 16.

John, who was recently chairman of BID4OBAN, was

surprised to come across more than one person on his travels who knew the local area.

He explained: 'I was travelling through Venice and stopped at a filling station and started speaking to a local.'

'I hadn't even told him where in Scotland I was from and he blurted out, 'I love Oban whisky' which was an amazing coincidence.'

'Then I was at a BMW garage in Germany and there were a group of bikers there who had been in Oban earlier this year on their bikes.'

'I also got a bit of banter with a group of lads from Essex. They were doing a 3,000 mile journey in a car for charity, so I wound them up saying I was doing twice that and on a bike.'

'It was amazing just meeting people along the way though, every day was an adventure.'

As a memento of his journey, John collected a sticker for every country he visited, which now proudly adorn the side of his BMW motorbike that carried him across the continent for the challenge.

Having set a target of £2,000, both John and the MS Centre staff are delighted to have raised in excess of £6,000.

Sandra Owens, MS Centre manager, said: 'It was fantastic of him to volunteer to do it in his own time and at his own expense for the centre.'

'The money raised will go towards helping clients here and to keep the centre running.'

Anyone who would like to donate to John's cause can do so by going to the Oban MS Centre on Glencruitten Road or online at <http://mydonate.bt.com/fund-raisers/johnforteith>



ADVENTURE: Sandra Owens, MS centre manager, on the bike John used to travel in Europe 16_149dir01

MULL lines



RUSH TO ACTION: Post Office Counters say Sugar Rush at Ledaig car park is the ideal local location

Post Office hits sweet spot

MANAGERS at the Post Office believe they have hit the sweet spot with their new island location.

Post Office Counters is planning to move its business to Sugar Rush at Ledaig car park in Tobermory after its previous business closed.

The proposed site is 200 metres from the present location and the Post Office is now inviting customers and interested parties to give their comments on the move as part of a public consultation. The period of public consultation has been extended by 10 working days to allow for the holiday period over Christmas and New Year and will close on January 12 2015.

The proposed move is part of a major modernisation programme across the Post Office network, which it says is designed to make it easier for customers to carry out business, through longer opening hours and modern open plan environments.

David Duff, of the Post Office, said: 'We understand how important having a Post Office is to residents in Tobermory and we are confident that this new modern Post Office service will meet the needs of the local community and secure services for the future.'

'This modernisation is part of a major investment programme, the largest in the history of the Post Office, and marks a commitment to no more branch closure programmes.'

NHS to examine feedback

THE MULL and Iona Health and Care Review has highlighted some concerns from islanders about the care they receive on the islands.

NHS Highland has said it will use the information to build a better service for islanders in the future.

During August and September, members of the local communities across the islands of Mull and Iona were invited to complete the 'Your Views!' feedback form or complete the online version. Copies of the feedback forms were made available in a wide range of locations including the community hospital, local GP surgeries, post offices and village stores.

Only 109 islanders took part in the survey.

It revealed that there are fears about the loss of an out-of-hours service and the impact this could have on patient care, on the population, businesses and local economy.

People also asked for a general review of the health and care services on the island.

Caroline Cecil, of NHS Highland, said: 'I would like to thank everyone on the islands for taking the time to share their views with us.'

'The results of the community and staff feedback will now be used as we look forward to how health and care services might be organised in the future for the people of Mull and Iona.'

'If any community group would like us to attend one of their meetings to talk about the review, this can be arranged by calling me on 01546 605635 or emailing caroline.cecil@nhs.net.'



CHAIN REACTION: some of the families who took part in the Glengorm to Dervaig Ebola charity cycle

Tour de force for charity

THE 'chain gang' who cycled from Glengorm to Dervaig in aid of children affected by the Ebola crisis are still collecting cash for the crisis.

Parents, friends and children took part in the charity cycle last weekend to raise funds for the worthy cause. Finishing at the Bellachroy for sandwiches, one of the organisers Colin Morrison said it was a gruelling but worthwhile challenge. Donations can still be made at Dougie's in Dervaig.

Councillor to step down

A POPULAR community council convener has announced his resignation from the post.

Mull community councillor Mike Shilson has been a stalwart of a number of campaigns on the island, but has decided to step down for health reasons.

A fellow community councillor praised the contribution Mr Shilson had made to the community forum and to island life: 'Mike will be missed because he put his heart and soul into the job. He was doing so well - it's such a pity.'

Ulva bus in line for grant

ULVA Ferry Community Transport will benefit from government cash for its community bus.

The bus is one of 13 projects, including interchange hubs and community transport, which will receive grants under the second round of Transport Scotland's Bus Investment Fund.

The Scottish government's transport minister Keith Brown MSP said: 'I was delighted by the level of interest shown in this year's Bus Investment Fund and would like to congratulate all the successful applicants who have secured substantial funding.'

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Sickness blamed for 'no show' staff

ISLANDERS on Mull who missed out on chiropody appointments recently because of staff illness, have been told there is the option to make a 70-mile round trip to the hospital in Craignure.

Barbara MacDougall from Fionnphort and eight other people were sent appointments by NHS Highland but the chiropodist 'never turned up'.

Mrs MacDougall said: 'Patients in the Ross of Mull stayed in their homes all day waiting for a chiropodist.'

'We had received letters,

on NHS Highland notepaper, advising us of the date. 'No apology and no explanation came our way. This has now happened three times in a row.'

Mrs MacDougall was told that two members of staff went to Iona on the day of her appointment and went straight back to Oban without stopping to treat the patients on Mull.

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'We can only apologise to any patient who was inconvenienced.'

'We have recently experienced increased levels of staff sickness and this has had an impact on the level of service we have been able to deliver.'

'We have also investigated the specific issue of the podiatry service failing to attend previously agreed appointments and can confirm that this was due to earlier home visits overrunning.'

'We would also remind patients that if they are mobile then an appointment can be arranged at our weekly clinic at the hospital for their treatment.'

Candidate calls for tourism tax cut

THE TOURISM industry in the West Highlands could benefit from an £8 million boost if businesses received a tax cut, according to recent figures.

Research from the national 'Cut Tourism VAT' campaign showed a charge reduction from 20 per cent to five per cent for the hospitality trade in Ross, Skye and Lochaber, which makes up 18 per cent of the workforce, could see more than 200 extra jobs created

and the economy boosted by £8,397,536 every year.

Lindsay McCallum, Scottish Conservatives' UK candidate for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, has pledged her support to the campaign.

She said: 'A reduction in tourism VAT across the Highlands, and the wider UK, would bring more investment, jobs and increase our competition as a European tourism destination.'

'The UK is one of only four countries out of the 28

European member states that does not operate a lower rate of VAT for tourism. This puts us at a significant disadvantage.'

'While the big ticket tourism events such as the Olympics Games and the Commonwealth Games are great for our big centres of population, we must do everything possible to encourage visitors to our more rural areas and a reduction in VAT would incentivise that.'

UNIT TO STAY OPEN BUT CLOSE ITS DOORS AS A MEETING PLACE AS TREATMENT FOCUSES ON RETURNING PATIENTS TO THEIR HOMES

Day hospital rumours denied

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NHS HIGHLAND has denied that its day unit in the Lorn and Islands hospital is to close, despite plans to move patients out of the current venue by the end of the year.

Confusion and worry have arisen among elderly patients that the day hospital is to close.

But NHS staff dismissed the 'rumour', preferring to describe the new arrangement as a 'new service model' which will focus on treating people in their

homes. The majority of the people currently attending the day hospital are elderly and receiving rehabilitation and fall-prevention treatment.

They regard their weekly visits to the day hospital as a vital lifeline and a way to meet other people.

At Monday's Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP), Caroline Henderson, acting clinical services manager for NHS Highland strenuously rebutted rumours of closure: 'It is not closing.'

At the moment, patients of the

day hospital meet in a specific area but under new plans they will be referred to departments directly for treatment, taking away some of the social interaction aspect of the day hospital.

Treatment will then be targeted for home visits by NHS staff.

Speaking to The Oban Times, Mrs Henderson said: 'This is not a cost-cutting measure, it's making sure the services fit the needs of the individual.'

'There will be a focus on ensuring that people get back into their homes as soon as appropriate, with minimal risk

of re-admission.' Users of the day hospital who are currently on a course of treatment will finish the programme without interruption. Changes to the day hospital will come into effect in January 2015.

Councillor for Oban South and the Isles, Roddy McCuish, said he had been asked about the day hospital from several concerned constituents.

He said: 'I've been reassured the service is not going to be diminished but the extended community care team will be moving into the space used by

the day hospital. I've been told it's not closing and that it's a new model of care but in my opinion, the message has not been put across properly.'

'Another concern I do have is what consultation was done with the general public regarding this and I'm still worried about the social interaction aspect of this whole redesign - it remains to be seen if it's a good thing or not.'

A public drop-in event will be held at Glencruitten church hall today (Thursday) between 11am and 3pm, to make people aware of the social aspects of care that

are available in Argyll and Bute.

Mrs Henderson said: 'The social aspect of the hospital, which allows patients to meet before appointments, is better served by informing elderly people of the range of services that are available in the local area.'

'That's why we have organised the public drop-in event, to make people aware of the services that are on offer, many in the voluntary sector.'

The public drop-in event is part of the Scottish government initiative Reshaping Care of Older People (RCOP) across Scotland.

14 charged as police in crackdown on dealers

DRUGS busts across Argyll resulted in 14 people being charged.

The week-long operation targeted drug dealers operating in Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown.

It was in response to community concerns, said Marlene Baillie, area commander for the towns. During the week, houses were searched in Oban and Campbeltown with seven people being reported for possession and supply charges of controlled drugs including cannabis, diazepam, heroin, ecstasy and psilocybin (magic mushrooms).

In addition, a further seven people were stopped and found to be in possession of



Marlene Baillie

controlled drugs. In Oban, police also visited 11 licensed premises in the town centre and used cocaine wipes to test for drug misuse.

Traces of the drug were found in the toilets of three licensed premises and licenses were given advice on how to prevent this happening in future.

Chief inspector Baillie said: 'Drug abuse continues to be one of our top priorities. We are fully committed to tackling this issue.'

In the run up to Christmas, officers will launch their Shop a Dealer campaign, which will allow the public to give information directly to the police.

Turbine project now completed

CONSTRUCTION of the Islay Community Wind Turbine near Castlehill has now been completed.

The board of Islay Energy Community Benefit Society own and operate the turbine and will be passing the funds raised by the turbine to the Islay Energy Trust.

However, no surplus can be distributed until the organisation has been trading for 12 months.

Renewable energy has become Scotland's main source of power, according to government records from the first half of 2014.

Looking for lead to catch lead thieves

TWO BUILDINGS in the Glenorchy area have been targeted by thieves keen to get their hands on lead roofing material.

An eight-metre length of lead flashing was removed from the roof of Dalmlally surgery overnight between November 19 and 20. An unsuccessful attempt was made to do the same at the Gatehouse, next to St Conan's Kirk in Lochawe.

Police are keen to hear from anyone who noticed any suspicious activity in the area.

Glad tidings of comfort and joy

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RESIDENTS of 40 new houses in Oban have been given the keys to their new homes in what has been called a great early Christmas present.

Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) completed the new homes, a mixture of one and two-bedroom flats and terraced houses, for rent in the Glenshellach area of Oban.

The £5 million development, called Catalina Avenue, was funded by grants from the Scottish government, Argyll and Bute council and ACHA.

Oban Councillor Roddy McCuish officially opened the development on November 28, with ACHA chairman Mike Brown and chief executive Alistair MacGregor also in attendance.

Councillor McCuish said: 'This goes some way to addressing the housing shortage in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. However we must not stop here but continue with this housing programme to ensure our local families have comfortable and affordable homes here in Oban and the surrounding area.'

Mary MacIntyre, whose son Izyan Khan was invited to help open the houses, said: 'The house is great, there are good spacious



CHRISTMAS CHEER: ACHA chairman Keith Brown, councillor Roddy McCuish, ACHA residents Mary MacIntyre and son Izyan Khan and ACHA chief executive Alistair MacGregor are delighted to officially open the 40 houses in Catalina Avenue 16_149acha01

bedrooms and gardens. It's great to have a front and back door and a garden for him to play in.

'We will be moving in next week and fully settled, so it really is one of the best Christmas presents we could have hoped for.'

Alastair MacGregor, chief executive of ACHA, said: 'We are delighted to complete these desperately needed homes before Christmas.'

'By working together with the sum of our parts we can meet these housing challenges.'

'We look forward to working with the Scottish government and the council to build further

homes in Glenshellach in the future.' The building work, undertaken by Argyll firm Macleod Construction, brought 70 tradesmen, including 10 apprenticeships, to Oban.

Serving the public good to the end

AS THE Co-op store in Oban shut its doors for the last time on Saturday, generous staff gave almost £1,000 of food to Hope Kitchen and £1,300 to Friends of Oban Hospice.

The kind-hearted staff raised the money and wanted to give it to the hospice's Light up a Life campaign, which begins this week.

Co-op manager Christopher Taylor, said: 'Staff wanted to give this money to the Light

up a Life campaign for Oban Hospice because we have lost a number of people over the years to illnesses such as cancer.'

Mr Taylor locked the door of the shop shortly after 1pm, bringing to an end almost 100 years of the Co-op trading in the town.

Meanwhile, Lidl, which has bought the Co-op store plans to build a new supermarket on the site. It held a community consultation in its existing store

in the Lochavullin industrial estate on Monday, to address any issues the public may have with their plans.

Cameron Hall, who is acquisitions manager for Lidl, said: 'The response I've had has been overwhelmingly positive.'

'The sales floor planned for the new store is marginally bigger than in the existing Co-op, aimed at making the aisles more accessible for shoppers. 'People are very interested

in discussing the plans and it's certainly of great local interest, given how much has appeared in 'The Oban Times about the store.'

'The whole point of engaging with the community before the planning application is that it's helpful on plans, as we want to make sure we cover all bases.'

Provided the planning application is approved, the Lidl store is earmarked for completion some time in 2015.



PUBLIC SPIRITED: the Co-op staff say farewell

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Two Tobermory doctors resign

TWO DOCTORS have resigned from their practice on the Isle of Mull, leaving only two permanent practitioners on the islands of Mull, Iona and Ulva.

The resignations come after a bitter argument between the doctors and the local community when two GPs pulled out of out-of-hours cover on the islands.

Tobermory GP practitioners Dr Lavery and Dr Chapman have resigned and will leave their posts at the end of May.

A statement from NHS Highland read: 'We will ensure that there is continuity of the GP service following this date and the board will be working closely with the Mull and Iona Health Care Review Group to develop a sustainable model for GP provision in and out of hours on the islands of Mull and Iona.'

Earlier in the year two doctors resigned from the GP practice serving the Ross of Mull and Iona.

NHS Highland has since put in locum doctors to cover the posts and out of hours services.

The island practice at Salen is not affected by these resignations or the out of hours service provided to its patients.

Arduaine garden welcomes Santa

SANTA and his reindeer will be popping by the National Trust for Scotland's Arduaine Garden for some festive family fun on December 13 and 14.

A new addition at the garden for Christmas 2014 is the Hunt for Santa's Reindeer trail, where young visitors can follow the clues around the garden to help Santa track down his reindeer.

The event at the garden, off the A816, will run from 1pm to 3.30pm.

FILM DIRECTOR'S INSPIRING OLD SCHOOL VISIT

Directing pupils into filmmaking

STEVEN RAE
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OBAN youngsters enjoyed an exciting opportunity to learn about filmmaking recently when director David Stoddart visited two of his former schools.

David, who is also a writer and producer, was visiting the town from his London home to give a talk to students from Oban high and Park primary schools about his career, to answer questions and to challenge the pupils to create their own short film linked to the local area.

The event was arranged by Into Film, an education charity supported by the British Film Institute, as part of its drive to educate and inspire young people through film and provide young people from all backgrounds and areas of the UK with opportunities to go behind the scenes of the film industry.

David, whose credits include the documentary Driven: The Fastest Woman in The World,

There are more creative subjects, which is great to see

David Stoddart filmmaker and writer

which was written about his racing-driver sister Susie Wolff, said: 'It's always great to be back at the schools.'

'Oban high has changed as there are more creative subjects than when I was here, which is great to see.'

'I took the children through the different elements, such as what to do, how to put a

project together - the nuts and bolts of how these things work. Hopefully I'm inspiring some of them to take up filmmaking as a career. I really wish I'd had that inspiration myself as a youngster.'

Damian Heaney, who teaches business, design and technology at Oban high school, said: 'David was a star and really inspired the pupils with a fun, educational and engaging talk. The kids' learning experience has been enriched by his visit.'

David will return to Oban in February 2015 to view the finished products, which are a movie trailer about the Battle of Bannockburn by Oban high and a promotional film about Oban by Park primary.

Ruth Verner, principal teacher at Park primary school, said: 'The class enjoyed a fun, hands-on, creative session with David.'

'He introduced a film challenge to them and gave them advice on how to create it. His expertise has motivated the class to complete their challenge with enthusiasm.'



RETURN VISIT: David Stoddart with Oban high school pupils Kirsty MacIntyre, Matthew Hall, Ella MacDonald, Emily Reid and Matthew Houston. A former pupil of the school, David was back in Oban to give some advice to budding filmmakers from Oban high and Park primary schools 16_148fims01



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION: pupils put some of David Stoddart's filmmaking advice into practice at Park primary school

High-speed link for 2,000 homes

ALMOST 2,000 homes and businesses in Argyll can now order high-speed fibre broadband thanks to the £410m Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband partnership.

The premises - in Oban and Cardross - are among more than 150,000 nationwide which can now access broadband at speeds of up to 80Mbps.

And even more will be able to connect in the months ahead.

Announcing the milestone, deputy First Minister John Swinney said: 'The rollout of superfast broadband will allow more households in Argyll to connect to fibre broadband services for the first time, as well as giving businesses the opportunity to enhance their

services. This is the fastest rollout of its kind anywhere in the UK, passing 150,000 premises across Scotland, including 30,000 in the Highlands and islands, in record time - an engineering feat.'

A map showing the rollout in different areas in Scotland can be viewed at: www.digitalscotland.org/whereandwhen

Art on show as students collect awards

LORNE Resource Centre students gathered for an art exhibition and awards ceremony recently, to celebrate their endeavours for the year.

Held at Oban's Phoenix Cinema, the ceremony was also a chance to showcase some of the work created in the Big Art Project with the exhibition entitled 'Carnival of Dreams'. The event on November 26 was a celebration of the students' achievements, with the presentation of certificates awarded by West College Scotland for a variety of courses successfully undertaken in the centre, presented by centre manager Jim Thorpe and college lecturer Lynn MacKenzie.

Joanna Kirsop, one of the students, said: 'I think I've achieved a lot this year and in particular I enjoyed filmmaking.'

Rab Marshall, who studies film production and creative writing, said it was great to get certificates for things he loves doing.

Courses available include; communications skills with computing, producing a magazine with desktop publishing, film production and a perfor-



DELIGHTED: Lorne Resource Centre students with certificates they received from West College Scotland. As well as receiving their certificates at the Phoenix Cinema, an art exhibition was held, which remained open to the public until the end of Oban's Winter Festival. 16_149cinema01

mance and discussion group. Lynn MacKenzie said: 'The college works in partnership with the centre to deliver quality courses that teach skills relevant to life in today's world in a fun and creative way. We are particularly proud of our in-house magazine and our films which

are written, performed and edited by the students themselves.'

A variety of canvasses, large and small, were displayed in The Phoenix Cinema and were viewed by the public during Oban's Winter Festival at cinema opening times for the Carnival of Dreams exhibition.

Anna Twigg who ran the course and organised the exhibition said: 'The main objective was to have fun and use your imagination to produce artwork.'

'I would like to give a big thank you to all the artists and everyone involved and to the Phoenix Cinema for exhibiting the work.'

Cash rolls in for Oban lifeboat at annual RNLI ball

A GRAND total of £7,740 was raised for Oban RNLI lifeboat in less than an hour at the RNLI ball in Glasgow on Saturday.

A live auction of items donated by celebrities, and a silent auction of other donated items, raised a staggering £6,740.

An additional £1,000 was raised from a raffle held to raise more cash for the lifeboat's crucial work to save lives at sea.

Moira Kerr, fundraising secretary of Oban lifeboat, said: 'As hourly rates go this was an incredible result. There were about 100 people at the event so for them to put their hands in their pockets to the extent that they did was amazing and we cannot thank them enough.'

McTear's Auctioneers sponsored the services of auctioneer Natasha Raskin for the night and Susie Wolff's silver race suit went under the hammer for £515.

A bottle of rare Oban lifeboat limited edition 18-year-old malt whisky, donated by the crew, was auctioned along with a solid silver RNLI teaspoon, donated by Katie Boyd, from Oban, and made £275.

Villagers step in as memorial plea falls on deaf ears

AN ELEVENTH hour effort from the community of Kilchrenan was required to make sure the village war memorial was looking its best for Remembrance Sunday after the local authority failed to do so.

On the Friday and Saturday before Remembrance Sunday (November 9) villagers cut back grass and tidied around the memorial after a plea to Argyll and Bute council's amenities department, made on October 16, was not followed through.

The council had assured the community the work would be done before Remembrance Day. So, on Friday November 7 the community rallied and Mick Cope of Kilchrenan came to the rescue, rushing to cut the grass before darkness descended. The next day Mr and Mrs Craig of Kilchrenan did a quick tidy up.

A council spokeswoman thanked the community for making sure the grass was cut in time, adding: 'It is a matter of regret this work was not carried out before.'

'We are taking steps to ensure this does not happen again.'

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STATE-OF-THE-ART: retired matron Effie MacLennan unveils a plaque to open the new Harris House care home in Tarbert

Retired matron declares £6.3m care home open

A NEW care home worth £6.3 million has been opened on Harris.

The state-of-the-art centre in Tarbert, named Harris House, will replace an old building of the same name and will provide new jobs in the Outer Hebrides.

It was opened last week by Effie MacLennan, who was a matron at the old home for nearly 25 years.

Iain MacAulay, social and community services director with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'With an increasing population age and more instances of dementia, it is vital that we have modern, suitable facilities in our communities. Harris House is a building which will serve the families and community of Harris for generations to come.'

Unlike its predecessor the new home will have en-suite rooms.

Islanders welcome new shore powers

ISLANDERS could soon be in control of the foreshore and seabeds surrounding their communities, following a report revealing further powers to be devolved to the Scottish government.

Politicians across the Highlands welcomed the announcement last week that Holyrood should be able to set income tax in Scotland, following recommendations in the Smith Commission, a group set up in the wake of the vote against independence.

And those living in the Western Isles were delighted to hear Crown Estate revenues, including seabed and foreshores, could soon be under the

control of islands. Angus Campbell, leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and member of campaign group Our Islands, Our Future, said: 'The recommendations on the Crown Estate are historic and very welcome indeed.'

'The Comhairle has long made the case that Crown Estate revenues should be retained in Scotland and that local communities should be the beneficiaries of income derived from sea-bed and foreshore developments.'

'The commission's recommendations are a fundamental shift in the democratic structure of modern Scotland and recognise the wish for the

further transfer of powers to local levels. 'This is a particularly welcome recommendation and I look forward to discussing the format and structures that will make this a reality.'

Highlands and Islands MSP Rhoda Grant added: 'One aspect I particularly welcome is the opportunity for double devolution.'

'Now that the Crown Estate seabed and foreshore are to be devolved, the Scottish government can devolve those powers to our local authorities and communities.'

'I hope to see early progress on this from the government.'

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WINNER: Julie Fowlis
It's a first for Julie and for Gaeldom

SINGING star Julie Fowlis has become the first Gaelic artist to win at the national Scottish Music Awards. The North Uist native won the Creative Scotland Best Traditional Music Award at the 16th annual event last Saturday Glasgow's Old Fruitmarket.

The event raises funds for Scottish music therapy charity Nordoff Robbins.

The night brought together some of Scotland's most celebrated acts and artists and honoured them with numerous awards, named the Tartan Clefs.

Indie band Idlewild, fronted by Roddy Woomble, who lives on Mull, won the King Tuts Songwriting Award.

Virtuoso musician hits the high note

OBAN pianist Marek Kochanski played to a full Corran Halls Café as part of this year's Oban Winter Festival.

The local maestro delighted the audience with pieces from popular and well-loved classical repertoire of Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, Mozart and an improvisational work.

The musician's outstanding performance was complemented by a stunning photographic display from the lens of Willie Roger, with the images changing to suit the mood of the music.

The audience would not let Marek leave the stage without an encore, and one spectator hailed the event 'an informal, live musical evening with class, not to be missed for any conceivable reason'.

Drug dealer caught 'red handed' as police raided locked Oban flat

COURT REPORTER
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A 'HIGH level' drug dealer who was 'caught red handed' with a dealer's amount of a Class A drug has been found guilty by a jury in Oban.

The majority verdict at Oban sheriff court found Dale Montague, 27, of HMP Greenock guilty of being concerned in the supply of diamorphine (heroin) at flat 3/1, 19 High Street, Oban.

Police used a battering ram to enter the house on August 8 this year where they found Montague and Jennifer McIver, 38, c/o

HMP Greenock, who pleaded guilty to the charge at an earlier stage in the trial. Police searched the flat which belonged to Andrew McKenzie, 33.

However, charges were dropped against McKenzie, as the jury was directed by Sheriff Douglas Small to accept his not guilty plea.

DNA from Montague and McIver had been found on one or two knotted packages of heroin found in the flat during the raid.

On the last day of the four-day proceeding, procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said Montague was 'high up the food chain' in

the drugs world. He said: 'There was £1,400 worth of drugs in this flat. That is not a small amount of heroin, this is someone who is at the top of the chain.'

'Don't be mistaken, this charge is about anyone who is involved in the supply of drugs. That means if they are dealing, supplying, procuring, selling, providing; this charge is appropriate to them.'

'If it looks like a duck, it flies like a duck, then it is a duck - Mr Montague was caught red handed.'

In evidence, McKenzie said Montague and McIver had brought the drugs to his flat and

were allowed to use the drugs there, in exchange for 'a charge' - a small amount of heroin.

He admitted he had taken and used three 'charges', all provided by Montague, but had left the flat and was fit enough to walk his dogs and then visit his mother in hospital. When he returned, the police were in his flat.

The police had to break down the door because McKenzie had padlocked it from the outside. Mr McKenzie said this system of locking the door had been fitted by West Highland Housing Association because the previous lock had been broken.

Under cross-examination, Montague's defence lawyer Tom Brown put it to Mr McKenzie that he had 'come up with' a version of events during his time in custody in order to 'save his own skin' and suggested the drugs were, in fact, his.

Mr MacKenzie denied this, adding: 'I'm just standing here under oath telling you the truth.'

Sentencing on Montague and McIver was deferred for court reports until January 6.

Montague was remanded in custody while McIver was released on bail after serving more than 100 days in custody.

Village trap for speeding drivers

MOTORISTS travelling through the village of Taynult have been keeping road policing officers busy with four speeders being caught over two days.

In one incident last Saturday at around 1.17pm, a 26-year-old man was clocked driving at 62mph through the 30mph speed limit. He has been reported to the procurator fiscal for dangerous driving.

Police set up speed checks in the village during Thursday and Saturday last week.

At 4.25pm on Thursday, a 66-year-old woman from Derbyshire was seen travelling at 40 mph and at 5pm police stopped a 25-year-old man driving at 52mph.

Just half an hour later a 44-year-old man from Oban was clocked speeding at 58mph.

Man charged over knives offences

AN OBAN man who police allegedly found with knives and an offensive weapon has been charged.

Police were called to an Oban address in the early hours of Sunday morning in response to reports of a disturbance.

Subsequently, the 26 year old man was arrested and stands accused of breaching bail conditions, disorder, assault, possession of an offensive weapon and three charges in relation to the possession of knives.

Baby scans plan for Oban hospital

MATERNITY scans could be carried out in Oban in the near future if a proposal to train midwives from the town's Lorn and Islands Hospital gets the go-ahead.

Argyll and Bute community health partnership wants to recruit midwives for a two-year training programme in scanning services. At present, women have to travel to Alexandria, Glasgow or Paisley for scans. The NHS will consider the proposal on December 22.

The school of hard knocks for teenage drivers

STEVEN RAE
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PUPILS at Oban High school were recently given a crash course on the dangers of careless driving.

Firefighters from Oban taught pupils a hard lesson on November 19 as part of a programme aimed at reducing the weekly catalogue of misery and carnage on the roads.

The 'Cut it Out' programme is a joint initiative between Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland and Argyll and Bute council.

The programme targets young drivers and teenagers of driving age to the risks and possible life-changing consequences of bad driving.

The pupils were allowed to inspect the crumpled wreck of a car which had been involved in an accident in Oban.

The vehicle was driven by someone who crashed into a lamppost after taking their eyes off the road, highlighting how even a minor accident at a relatively slow speed can cause serious injury to the driver and passenger, as well as significant damage to the vehicle itself.

Dougie Black, watch commander with Scottish Fire and Rescue,



CRASH COURSE: the Oban High school pupils with station commander Martin Hill, watch commander Dougie Black and crew commander John Sweeney, all of whom are based at Oban community fire station 16_t48smashcar01

based at the Oban community fire station, is overseeing the programme, which is now in its third year.

He said: 'The programme is aimed at people either learning

or who are about to learn to drive, as well as passengers, as they can obviously influence a driver's behaviour.'

'The programme utilises a range of multimedia activities

such as an incident scenario, post-crash audio recording, incident investigation and discussing the role of the emergency services as well as the viewing of a crashed vehicle, reporting and

the conclusions to be drawn.

'It gives them an insight into the dangers, lets them know that it's not uncommon for incidents to happen and to try and stop them from becoming statistics.'



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Tiree

FORMER Scottish Labour leader Johann Lamont says picturing the peace and tranquillity of her home island of Tiree helped her through the media storm surrounding her resignation.

The MSP resigned from her position last month, citing interference from Westminster colleagues, some of whom she referred to as 'dinosaurs', as the reason. She also accused them of trying to run Scotland 'like a branch office of London'.

The resulting fallout was a stressful time for the Glasgow Pollok MSP but she has told The Oban Times the memories of the island her family hails from helped her to get perspective.

She said: 'With the challenges of the last period, I have to confess that Tiree would indeed have been a sanctuary. I have found myself imagining the shoreline and the tide at Ballevullin.'

'Thinking of the island and the constancy of its beauty put the current challenges in their proper place in the scale of things.'

She also revealed one of the highlights of her time as Scottish Labour leader was to chair the annual Tiree Association concert in Glasgow last November, choosing to attend that event over the Scottish Politician of the Year Awards the same evening.

Ms Lamont's parents were both from Tiree and she spent every summer there as a child. She still has close family living on the island but admitted she had not visited for years.

She added: 'My favourite place on the island has always been Ballevullin beach. Throughout my life it was a place of happiness, tranquillity and peace.'

Ms Lamont would not be drawn on her preferred successor as leader, saying: 'I shall be keeping out of that one. Whoever wins will have my full support and I shall do all I can to ensure that the needs of the island and remote communities of Scotland are understood and addressed as we look to the future.'

TIREE high school has raised two impressive amounts of money recently for charity through special fundraising days.

At total of £389.51 was raised for this year's poppy appeal on Tiree, with the school, the Royal Bank of Scotland and Church of Scotland all helping sell poppies for the Poppy Scotland Appeal.

The primary department at Tiree high school raised money on November 13 for Children in Need by holding a 'Bring your Bear and Slippers Day'. The pupils paid £1 to bring their favourite teddy and wear slippers to class, raising £119.75.

TIREE primary school pupils have submitted their entries for the Argyll and Bute council chief executive's art competition.

With Tiree youngster Lauren McArthur winning the competition two years ago and the school having also previously won the school award, pupils and staff have their fingers crossed it will be a successful year again.

Sally Loudon, chief executive of Argyll and Bute council, presents the winners with their prizes each year.



A selection of the artwork submitted by Tiree primary school for this year's chief executive's art competition.

Taynuilt

TAYNUILT SWRI meeting held in the village hall on Wednesday November 12 was opened by Alice Campbell who welcomed 18 members and one visitor.

Demonstrators for the evening were two members from Appin SWRI, Alison MacCorquodale and Ellen MacCorquodale, who showed members how to prepare and bake empire biscuits and macaroon bars.

Both ladies gave great hints and tips during their practical demonstrations and everyone present tasted the finished items which were delicious.

Alice Campbell gave the vote of thanks. Hostesses for the evening were Stella Huntingford and Jane Gillies. Competitions: Three Petticoat Tails - 1 Ann Sutherland; 2 Alice Campbell; 3 Agnes Robertson. Mug Hug - 1 Jessie MacFarlane and Alice Campbell.



Oban Rotary chips in with £509

RAFFLE REWARD: Marie Rowan and Christine Litster, right, of the Mary's Meals shop in Oban received a £509 cheque from the Rotary Club of Oban, the proceeds from the club's golf am-am raffle. Presenting the cheque are Rotary am-am convenor Iain MacIntyre, left, and club president Ronnie Neil.



FULL HOUSE: A bustling scene at the Argyll Animal Aid fundraiser.

Craft fair boosts animal aid coffers

A PACKED Corran Halls played host to the annual Argyll Animal Aid fundraiser, boosting the charity's coffers by £2,140.

The event typically makes £1,000 but Argyll Animal Aid chairwoman Jean Sutherland explained the extra profit will come in handy this year. She said: 'It is particularly important this year because we are building a new cattery at Lochandubh kennels and cattery.'

'The dogs have always been kept there but now the cats will be joining them.'

The Corran Halls was filled with stalls last Saturday with teas, homebaking, crafts, Christmas gifts and decorations and charity stalls on display.



HONOURED: Catriona Stuart receives her award from Kilmore SWRI president Fiona Dickie.

Taynuilt

A MEMBER of Kilmore and District SWRI for 44 years has been given an honorary life membership to the group.

At the first meeting of the Kilmore session recently, Catriona Stuart, a former registrar of births, marriages and deaths in Oban, received the award from the group's current president Fiona Dickie.

During her membership, Catriona held every office on the committee including president, treasurer and secretary and continues to be an active member of the group.

Mr MacDonald said: 'The training which we receive is essential as it helps us prepare for any conditions which we may encounter.'

Coll

THE COLL Association's annual ceilidh took place in Glasgow recently for the first time in three years, raising £900 for charity.

After two unfortunate years of cancellations, more than 120 people, including members and friends of the association, came together on November 22 to enjoy a buffet meal followed by a ceilidh with band Skipinnish.

Clara McGhee, Coll Association secretary, said: 'It was brilliant to see a large number of young people connected to the island in attendance, providing a breath of fresh air and a promising future for the Coll Association.'

The event also allowed the association to give formal thanks to Colin and Sandy MacKinnon who have stepped down from their positions as president and secretary respectively after almost 25 years on the committee in various roles.

Colin and Sandy have been replaced by Marc Griffiths and Clara McGhee, who took over their positions in May this year.

The event raised £900, largely thanks to a raffle that was generously supported by a number of Coll businesses including Tighna Mara, The Coll Hotel, Caledonian MacBrayne and Tiree Music Festival.

The money raised will allow the association to support future Coll causes generously.

Arisaig

ARISAIG Women's Rural Institution (WRI) met on November 20.

After business was concluded, as a result of the speaker being unable to attend on health grounds, members got down to planning the Christmas tea party to be held on December 18 in Astley Hall at 2.30pm.

Raffle winner was Rosie MacEachen. Competitions: green arrangement in a casserole dish: 1 Margaret MacEachen; 2 Yvonne MacDonald and 3 Anne Cameron.

Kyle of Lochalsh

LIFEBOAT volunteers from Kyle of Lochalsh have benefited from a survival training course.

Andrew MacDonald, 33, and Thomas Gardner, 20, travelled to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) college in Poole, south England, where they were taught crucial 'abandon ship' procedures and team swimming, plus how to deal with onboard fires and capsized lifeboats.

Mr MacDonald said: 'The training which we receive is essential as it helps us prepare for any conditions which we may encounter.'

MORVERN lines

THERE cannot be many remote communities in the West Highlands that can claim a direct link with the Tower of London but Morvern, or more precisely Drimmin, can.

In the last few weeks millions of visitors have poured into London to view the 886,246 poppies in the spectacular 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' exhibition mounted in the tower's dry moat to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War One. Each poppy, a symbol of remembrance in the UK, represented one of the British and Colonial soldiers who died in the Great War.

The first poppy was planted on July 17 and the exhibition was unveiled on August 5, the centenary of Britain's entry into the war. The last one was planted on November 11 - Remembrance Day. After that day, a team of about 8,000 volunteers began removing and selling the ceramic flowers to the public raising an estimated £15 million for six service charities including Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion.

Among the many visitors to view the exhibition were Archie and Jill Mackenzie from Edinburgh, formerly of The Mains, Oban. Archie was consultant editor of the Oban Times and editor of Scottish Field magazine for many years. Jill used to be personal assistant to Ray Michie, Baroness Michie of Gallanach, the highly popular Liberal Democrat MP for Argyll and Bute.

One of the highlights of their visit was meeting up with Archie's cousin Moira Cameron who is a Yeoman Warder of the Tower of London and the first woman to hold the position since 1485.



REUNITED: Jill Mackenzie and Moira Cameron at the Tower of London.

Moira, whose full title is Yeoman Warder of Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress of the Tower of London and Member of the Sovereign's Body Guard of the Yeoman of the Guard, is one of a corps of 37.

Her duties are to safeguard the Crown Jewels, act as a tour guide and to participate in a number of ceremonial occasions including the famous, nightly Ceremony of the Keys.

At exactly 9.53pm, the Chief Yeoman Warder, dressed in his brilliant Tudor Watchcoat, meets a military escort, made up of members of the Tower of London Guard. Together, the Chief Yeoman Warder and the Yeoman Warder 'Watchman' secure the main gates of the tower. On their return, the party is halted by a sentry and challenged to identify themselves.

All warders are retired from the armed forces and must be former senior non-commissioned officers or petty officers with at least 22 years' service. They must also hold the Long Service and Good Conduct medal. The Yeoman Warders and their families live in the Tower.

Born in 1964, Moira Cameron grew up in Furnace, Argyll. She joined the Woman's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) in June 1985. She was trained as a data telegraphist with the Royal Corps of Signals before transferring to the Army Pay Corps in 1988 to train as a military accountant. In 1992 the WRAC and RAPC were replaced by the Adjutant General's Corps. She worked her way through the ranks in its Staff and personnel support branch, completing 22 years service in the army in 2007. She served in England, Northern Ireland and Cyprus. Moira ended her army career as a Warrant Officer Class 2, holding the post of Superintendent Clerk in the 145th Infantry Brigade in Aldershot.

Moira is the daughter of Dugald and the late Eva Cameron. Her grandfather, also Dugald, was born at Drimmin. He volunteered when he was only 17 and served with the Royal Garrison Artillery in France where he was wounded in the leg in 1917. He came home to convalesce and returned to the front to carry on fighting.

The Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) was an arm of the Royal Artillery originally tasked with manning the gun of Britain's forts and fortresses, including coastal artillery batteries, the heavy gun batteries attached to each infantry division and the guns of the siege artillery. The corps name was discontinued in 1924 when the RGA was re-amalgamated into the Royal Artillery.

Dugald's name appears in the Rolls of Honour at Kiel Church and in Drimmin Hall. His parents, and of course Moira's great grandparents, were Archibald and Alexandrian Cameron who lived and farmed at The Mains, Drimmin, for many years.

Archibald, known locally as 'Archie Mor' (Gaelic, Big Archie), was factor of Drimmin Estate for the Gordons. Moira, appropriately, spent some time holidaying in Morvern with her grandparents at the War Memorial Cottage which I wrote about in last week's Morvern Lines.

Archie and Jill Mackenzie were present for the re-opening of St Columba's Church at Drimmin in 2010, not far from the Mains.

Archie recalls hearing of his grandparents and Moira's great grandparents, Archibald and Alexandrian, taking their boat, the Rona, across the Sound of Mull to Tobermory on shopping expeditions.

They also had a pony and trap and would regularly ride over the hill to Drumbuie, at the other end of the estate, to visit their friends John and Georgina MacDonald who lived there for many years before taking on two well-known farms near Roy Bridge. One of their grandsons, John, still farms Keppoch.

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TASTY: Roy Bridge primary school pupils can now add jam and chutney making to their set of skills. The children have put the preserves together to sell at the Christmas fair in Roy Bridge Hall this Saturday, December 6, along with Christmas cards and decorations, suncatchers and gift bags. The event will run from 11am-2pm, beginning with a coffee morning with home baking.



CREATIVE: countryside ranger Michelle Melville and some Caol primary fives show off the underwater sand models they created.

Caol

CAOL children took their imaginations to the sea to learn about underwater wildlife with the help of experts.

During the primary school's 'marine magic' day, the pupils learned about seabirds, fish, their habitats and how to protect them.

Members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Highland Council countryside rangers answered questions and helped the pupils make models of underwater animals and habitats.

Family faces Christmas apart as residency row blights plans

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A FAMILY face being separated weeks before Christmas as Lochaber man Martin McGuire and his American fiancée Mary Beard have been told she will be deported in a fortnight.

Mr McGuire, 29, has spent almost his whole life in Roy Bridge and wants to raise his daughter in neighbouring village Spean Bridge.

But his family could now be torn apart as the Home Office rejected Miss Beard's request for permanent UK residency for her and five-year-old daughter from a previous relationship, Brianna, who is a primary one pupil at Spean Bridge primary school.

The couple have been engaged for three years after meeting online in 2010 and had a daughter, Molly, two years ago. Mr McGuire travelled to his fiancée's home of Kansas City, Missouri, five times in two years before bringing Molly back to Scotland three weeks after her birth. Miss Beard and Brianna followed three months later on visitors' visas and the family lived with Mr McGuire's parents

Lochaber man's fiancée facing deportation in a fortnight

before securing a council house in Spean Bridge just two weeks ago.

Now, 27-year-old Miss Beard faces leaving her fiancé and daughter behind as both her application and appeal were refused.

She said: 'We're now waiting on a letter to see if we have grounds to appeal again but if not then that's it for us.'

'It's heartbreaking even thinking about it. How do you tell a five-year-old she has to leave her family, friends and school behind?'

'The people who make these decisions don't understand how it feels not knowing how long I'm going to be able to wake up with my daughter.'

A Home Office spokeswoman

said Miss Beard was refused a Derivative Residence Card because she 'failed to provide sufficient evidence' of Molly, who has a British passport, residing in the UK.

She added: 'The burden of proof is on the individual to provide the required evidence to support their application.'

'There was also no evidence as to why the British father would be unable to care for the child if the mother was forced to leave the UK.'

But Mr McGuire, a shop worker in Spean Bridge, disagrees.

He said: 'All of my family work full-time so I wouldn't have the childcare support to work and look after Molly but that's not the point. Mary is her mother and we should all be together.'

'I don't know why they're saying there's no evidence Molly lives here. We provided all of her healthcare records and all sorts of paperwork to prove that she is. If we're all here, where else would she be?'

The couple are now waiting to be told if they have grounds for further appeal. If not, Miss Beard and Brianna will have 14 days to return to America.



DISTRESS: Mary Beard faces leaving her fiancé Martin McGuire and two year-old daughter Molly in Spean Bridge to be deported to America with Brianna, five

New Skye hospital to be situated in Broadford

A NEW hospital for the isle of Skye will be located in Broadford, it was agreed on Tuesday.

The NHS Highland board in Inverness approved a proposal for a new community health 'hub' in the town, instead of Portree to the north of the island.

As a result, the current Dr MacKinnon Memorial Hospital in Broadford will close and all in-patient beds will be removed from the present Portree hospital, leaving the latter with minor injury, primary care, emergency and outpatient services only.

The news comes as a blow to residents in the north of the island, who will now need to travel south for overnight care, despite Portree being the largest and most populated town on Skye.

Garry Coutts, chairman of NHS Highland, was pleased a new hospital location had finally been agreed. He said: 'We are satisfied we have reached a decision that best reflects the needs and aspirations of the entire community. We would ask everyone in Skye, Lochalsh and south west Ross to pull together behind this decision.'

Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, said: 'This is great news for Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross as a new hospital is badly needed.'

'It is particularly important at a time when public money has been cut by the Westminster government that the Scottish government has committed to funding the new hospital.'

Residents in the north of the island were disappointed but not surprised at the news.

One, who did not want to be named, said: 'We have had gradual downgrading in Portree hospital and this is the final nail in the coffin.'



Experts to outline bilingual benefits

THE BENEFITS of children knowing more than one language will be explained to parents at a Fort William event on Saturday.

Highland Council has arranged for experts in bilingualism to give a presentation in Kilmallie Free Church at 12pm.

A council spokeswoman said: 'The aim of the presentation is to raise awareness of the many benefits of bilingualism among the parents who may be interested in enrolling their children into the new Gaelic school, which is due to open in Caol in August next year.'



FESTIVE CHEER: Santa and his reindeer visited Fort William on Saturday morning as part of the Rotary Club of Lochaber's Christmas Festival. Guided by his elves, Sebi Mrazek and Talia Stoddart, he made his way through the town before spending the afternoon in his grotto at the Nevis Centre. See page nine.

Council cash earmarked to help advice bureau improve support

MORE than £163,000 of Highland Council funding has been earmarked for improving support for vulnerable people.

The authority's resources committee approved the plan to provide £163,920 to the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide tailored welfare clinics across the region.

Maxine Smith, chairwoman of the committee, said: 'The focus of the advice will be primarily on welfare

benefits, but the service will also help to identify specific needs and provide advice on a range of other issues.'

'This should help to reduce levels of stress and anxiety, which would lead to improved health and wellbeing.'

Lochaber's CAB office received a share of the funding to train staff in how best to advise people with mental health problems.

Stephen Marshall, office manager, said: 'We welcome

this further commitment to the CAB service by Highland Council during a period of very scarce resource and look forward to putting this to good effect within Lochaber. We will work to ensure this targeted resource is put to best use to increase advice provision to minimise the impact on as many people within this vulnerable group as possible.'

'The additional funding will also allow us to develop valuable partnerships with existing mental health services in the area.'





Dear Business Gateway

My Christmas gift supply and delivery business operates in the fastest growing market on the planet, and I fear I may become a victim of my own success due to my unbreakable promise to 'always deliver'.

Dealing with customers in so many countries around the world (all of them in fact) is challenging. As well as the logistics of asking for directions in thousands of languages, I have to keep up with importing and exporting legislation, shipping logistics, currency fluctuations and so on, not to mention the cultural differences I encounter. It can be stressful.

I'm an old fashioned operator, but I'm aware I need to move with the times. My Elves developed a successful App allowing customers to track my progress on Christmas Eve but I need to find other ways to use digital technology to enhance my business.

The Elves do an incredible job but their work is very seasonal and they often struggle to make ends meet after the festive rush, drifting off to do other part-time jobs. What can I do to help them?

Your guidance on all these matters would be gratefully appreciated.

Santa Claus
Santa Claus

Dear Mr Claus

Thank you for taking the time to get in touch in the run up to what must be an extraordinarily busy period for you and your team. Fortunately, Business Gateway is here to help businesses in just your predicament.

It sounds like you may be in danger of overtrading. Our advisers can help by reviewing your business plan and suggesting strategies to avoid the pitfalls of growth and ensure that your business goes from strength to strength.

Digital technology is increasingly driving the way the business world operates. We run workshops on various IT, digital and social media topics and can refer you for specialist support focussing specifically on the needs of your business.

International trade offers huge opportunities, but can be daunting. We can direct you to training and resources designed to help businesses at all stages of international trading.

We can also help devise staff training and development plans to ensure all the Elves are reaching their potential and are engaged with their work when it's crunch time. Some may want to start their own businesses in the off season and we can assist them with that process too.

The best thing to do is make an appointment to meet with one of our Growth Advisers to talk over your challenges and opportunities. We can then direct you to a wealth of support to ensure that you can grow your business in a sustainable way.

Yours sincerely
Business Gateway Team
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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

The root of the problem

It seems the appointment of a dentist to run the dental access centre in the Lorn and the Isles hospital is like pulling teeth.

The state-of-the-art dental unit has lain empty for the past year and despite numerous attempts on the part of the NHS, no one has stepped forward to fill the gap.

Although health bosses say negotiations with a new practitioner are developing positively, some well-placed commentators say uncertainty over the service has been the watchword for the past seven years. Their call for a root-and-branch re-examination of the feasibility of the centre seems to be a wise course of action.

Glasgow Letter

Singing workshops

WITH Christmas rapidly approaching, there are only two of An Lochan's singing workshops to take place.

The first of these is on Tuesday December 9 when Alasdair Whyte will feature the Songs of Mull from 7pm to 8.30pm.

Then, on Tuesday December 16, Gillebride MacMillan will lead the workshop on Gaelic Christmas Carols from 7pm to 8pm. This will be followed by a Christmas carol session from 8pm to 9pm. The venue is Coffee and Craic, 74 Elderslie Street, and booking is necessary, £4/£2 for the workshops with free entry to the singing sessions. Entry to the singing sessions only is £3. For tickets contact Linda MacLeod at 0141 341 1025 or linda@anlochran.com

Uist and Barra annual dinner dance

ALTHOUGH numbers were slightly down this year, members and friends of the Glasgow Uist and Barra Association had an enjoyable dinner dance in the Glynnhill Hotel, Renfrew, where an excellent meal was followed by ceilidh dancing to Deoch 'n Dorus.

Christmas ceilidhs

THE TOLBOOTH, Stirling, is a venue which actively supports traditional music and as part of this it has, for the past few years, organised successful family Christmas ceilidhs.

This year they will take place on Saturday December 13, from 3pm to 5pm (£8) and then from 8pm to 11pm (£10).

Early booking is recommended and while both events are open to everyone, the afternoon ceilidh is particularly popular with families of all ages.

Brian MacAlpine and his International Ceilidh Collective are guaranteed to provide plenty fun.

Christmas carols

CLANN Gaidhlig has organised a Gaelic Christmas Carol Workshop with Gillebride MacMillan from 10am to 2.30pm in St Barnabas Holy Trinity Church, Paisley, followed by a concert from 3pm to 4pm.

Gaelic quiz

CLI GAIDHILG is holding a Gaelic quiz in Coffee and Craic on Thursday December 11 at 7pm.

Everyone is invited to attend this free event but those

Your Letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

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

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

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

going along should contact Robyn Ireland at robyn@eli.org.uk or call 01463 226841.

Reminders

THE GLASGOW Skye Association holds its annual dinner tonight (Thursday) and the concert and dance the following evening.

All three functions will take place in Glasgow University Union.

At the concert, starting at 7.30pm, the singers will be Margaret MacLeod, Eilidh Munro, Seumas Campbell and Robert Robertson while the instrumental music will be provided by Glasgow Skye Association Pipe Band, fiddler Fiona MacAskill and accompanist Alan Kitchen.

Robert Robertson's Dance Band will play at the dance from 10.30pm to 2am.

As detailed in last week's letter, the College of Piping will host the next concert in the Pipers and Pipe Music of the Great War series.

This coming Saturday the music of the Black Watch will be featured and the professional pipers will be Donald MacPhee and Robert Wallace, with contributions from members of the Army Piping and Drumming School.

Diary dates

Thursday December 4: Glasgow Skye Association annual dinner, Glasgow University Union, 7pm to 7.30pm.

Friday December 5: Glasgow Skye Association annual concert and dance - see reminders above. Scottish Music Concert, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 7.15pm. Paisley Christmas Carols - see above. Tolbooth, Stirling, 8pm. College of Piping - see reminders above.

Tuesday December 9: Live at the Star, Admiral Bar, 72A Waterloo Street, 8pm - North Sea Gas. Singing workshops - see above.

Thursday December 11: Gaelic quiz - see above

Friday December 12: Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, 7.30pm. Tolbooth, Stirling, 8pm - The Bevvys Sisters.

Saturday December 13: Glasgow Skye Association Children's Party, Renfield Centre, 260 Bath Street, 2.30pm. Tolbooth, Stirling, Christmas ceilidhs - see above.

Pub scene

CROOKED Reel will be playing in the Islay Inn this Friday with the Keelies there on Saturday while in the Park Bar it will be Deoch'n Dorus/ Martin Pottinger on Friday, Ceol an Aire on Saturday and Nicky McMichan/ Martin Pottinger on Sunday.

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



Oban painters and decorators - 1970

This week's flashback photograph was submitted by former painter and decorator Ronald MacKillop of Pulpit Hill, Oban. The photo, taken around 1970, features his workers, left to right: Robert MacCracken, Jack Wetherall, Collin Pearson, Gordon Lyall, Ian MacKechnie, John Campbell, Neil MacInnes, Ronnie White and Frank Turnbull. Prints or emails of flashback photos sent to editor@obantimes.co.uk should be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone who wishes a print returned must supply a stamped, addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Dunmar Court laundry service

Sir, This letter is in reply to the article in The Oban Times of November 20.

I, as chairperson of the tenants committee of Dunmar Court, called the meeting on November 3, to which 17 tenants and two carers attended, as we were all disgruntled with the laundry services - or lack of.

This means I was not the only person complaining about this as your reporter stated.

As for Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) saying it has no legal obligation to supply laundry facilities for the tenants in sheltered housing, why is it stated in the tenants handbook 'there are a number of sheltered housing complexes which have self contained flats with laundry areas and social areas'.

I, on behalf of the tenants social committee, have been in communication with both Mr Alastair MacGregor and Mr Brian Murphy about the laundry and at no time was 'no legal obligation' mentioned but it was supplying previous machines and maintenance. **Margaret Smith, Dunmar Court Sheltered Housing, Oban.**

Community council chaos

Sir, Your correspondent David Pollard from Mull thinks community councils should be given more clout including tax raising powers, The Oban Times, November 27.

Heaven forbid either should be on anyone's agenda under the present structure. Having been involved with a number of community councils since they were established under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, it is my experience that with one or two notable exceptions, they have been a disaster and the sooner they pass into history the better.

They have been unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. The list is long but the following may explain part of the problem.

Their remit is too wide and the membership, especially in small rural communities, is out of proportion to the population.

The organisation suffers from a high degree of frustration and self-imposed strangulation and is obviously impotent, evidenced by the high

turnover of participants. Confidentiality rarely exists which means community councils are usually and wrongly to my mind, the last to know about developments where contract tendering is concerned.

Meetings often descend into talking-shops. Gossip and parochialism, some of it potentially litigious, which, although entertaining and not always the fault of the members but the system, is rife at meetings and frequently leads to mid-term resignations and co-optations.

Local democracy would be better served by the return of independent authorities similar to the old district councils, sitting, for example, in Oban, Tobermory, Lochgilphead, Fort William, Campbeltown and other centres of population. They could act as agents for the large and unwieldy Highland and Argyll and Bute councils which are now so far removed from the man in the street as to be unrepresentative of the people they were set up to serve.

More importantly these smaller authorities could implement the instructions of a fewer number of representatives through professional and salaried staff instead of hard-pressed volunteers.

At the moment chaos reigns which is unfortunate and unnecessary given the wealth of knowledge and expertise there is available in most communities up and down the west coast. **Iain Thornber, Knock House, Morvern.**

New Mull road a red herring

Sir, The letter in the Oban Times criticising Val Ibsen who appears to be a regular visitor to Mull, is misplaced. This lady clearly loves the island and wants the best for it and like so many others she is now very concerned at talk of a large road going from the north to the south of the island.

Last week's Oban Times letter states that if this does not happen the people of Mull will somehow be living in a museum.

Not a single local person, nor visitor, sees the Hebridean islands as 'museums'.

It is the rest of Britain that suffers the huge and busy roads, traffic, pollution, crime and millions of people virtually trapped in their 'suburban museums'. Mull is a prospering island and some of us have worked very hard to get the island to where we are today - a top environmental destination in Britain.

Visitors such as Val Ibsen now annually bring millions of pounds into our economy and that means garages, pubs, hotels, B&B's, camp sites, shops, restaurants, sea and land trips, joiners, plumbers, electricians etc all benefit and these businesses in turn spend money on the island.

Mull is a peaceful, unspoilt, varied, wildlife friendly geological wonder and far more. It is the 'product' that the whole world wants to enjoy. This is not the time to tamper with something that is so successful.

It is the land of opportunity in these environmentally aware times and if someone wants a list of those opportunities I can happily provide this. This large new road is a red herring, deflecting the real concerns of local people.

It is the miles of existing single track roads which urgently need resurfacing. To my knowledge ours on the northern coast of the National Scenic Area has not been resurfaced since a team of Vikings did it.

What Mull currently needs is far more creative ideas on visitor management from our community council and not just gung ho 'let's build a big fast new road'.

I also don't agree that Val Ibsen or any of our visitors should not be allowed to put forward ideas.

There are millions of Scots visiting and living in other parts of Britain and the rest of the world, who will not be criticised if they suggest improvements or complain about an unsuitable development.

The rest of Europe and the hundreds of islands around the world that I have visited are pretty democratic I have found. **David Woodhouse, Isle of Mull Wildlife Expeditions.**

No point in A82 50mph limits

Sir, Regards 'A82 a Cinderella route', The Oban Times November 20, why bother with plans to introduce 50mph speed limits on certain sections?

On the vast majority of the three sections mentioned, especially Tarbet to Inverarnan, there's hardly anywhere it's safe to exceed 50 anyway. **Davie Kerr, Onich.**

Oban Winter Festival - wow

Sir, Through the letters column, could I convey my appreciation to the organisers of

Oban's Winter Festival with one word - wow! You make Oban the special place that it is. **Karen Oman.**

Stop dropping litter on road

Sir, For about the past year and a half, houses have been under construction along from where I live.

Co-inciding with the start of building I noticed, on my daily dog walks, a considerable increase in litter along the roadside. In particular paper coffee cups, drinks bottles, candy wrappers, cigarette packets, crisp packets, polystyrene food boxes and sandwich packaging.

What is it with builders? In the recent words of a high court judge, is it that they 'don't have the wit' to realise they are mucking-up this beautiful country?

However, they are canny. Not once in all these months have I seen litter being thrown out of a vehicle window.

I do pick it up. How can I not as it spoils my walks to see it lying there but I am scunnered with it.

And no, it is not tourists heading out of town. Come on guys, wise up, take your litter home or to a bin. Look after your country. **Jennifer Shaw, Oban.**

Ferry not fit for purpose

Sir, The usual Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) ferry was taken off the route to be serviced about two weeks ago, and the MV Isle of Arran sent as a replacement.

This ferry is not fit for purpose because the lift from the car deck has not been working since it arrived. Car passengers have had to climb two sets of steep metal stairs to reach the lounges, cafeteria and toilets.

For disabled or old and infirm passengers/drivers, this has been a huge challenge.

Arrangements were made to allow such passengers to go up the normal ramp, at the cost of delaying the ferry, but car drivers still have to climb the stairs.

Repairs are promised when spares can be obtained, but so far it has been two weeks without a lift, which is why the ferry is not fit for purpose and should never have been sent in such a condition by CalMac management.

It seems to me managers have overlooked health and safety. **Dr W G Thomson, Isle of Mull.**

Beachd Ailein Ailean Caimbeul

IS CLIÙTICH an onair nan t-òr! Bhiodh mo sheanair gu tric ag innse mu fhear a bha glè chàirdeach dha a bha daonnan a' bruidhinn air dòighean gus tuilleadh airgid a dhèanamh.

A' fàs searbh den chuspair thuir mo sheanair nach robh farmad aige ri bearirtes dhuine sam bith fhad 's a choisinn e gu h-onarach e! Ach cha robh a charaid idir ag aontachadh leis an fheallsanachd sin! 'Grab the shilling ille,' thuir Murchadh, 'smoinich air an onair a-rithist!' Nach iontach mar a tha saoghal an ionmhas air clù agus inbhe onarach a chall thar nam beagan bhliadhnaichean a chaidh. Chan e a-mhàin gun bheil na tuarastail mhòra a tha na h-àrd-oifigich a' faotainn air daoine a sgreamhachadh, tha am fiosrachadh a tha a sior nochdadh air mi-rian agus foill a thaobh nan dòighean san robh seirbheisean gan reic air uabhas a chur air daoine.

A thaobh a' mhòr-shluaigh a bha a' cleachdadh bhanaichean, thachair an cron ann an lùib iasadan agus seirbheisean àrachais. Aig ire eadar-nàiseanta chaidh dearbhadh gun robh co-obrachadh eucorach eadar cuid a bhanaichean gus luach Libor ann am margaid ionmhas Lunnainn fharadh gus buannachdan mòra pearsanta a chosnadh dhaibhsan gun dragh sam bith air a' chosgais a bha sin a' cur air daoine agus gnìomhachasan eile. As na còig bliadhna deug gu ruige seo tha na sgainnealan sin air faisg air dà fhichead billean na chosg dha bhanaichean Breatannach ann an co-dhioladh, ach 's e àireamh glè bheag a chaidh a pheanasachadh fon lagh. Anns na trì bliadhna mu dheireadh chaidh còrr air ochd ceud a dhiteadh ann an Ameireagaidh ma choinneimh dìreach fichead an seo.

'S dòcha gun robh e do-sheachanta gum biodh leithid seo a' tachairt aig àrd ire ann an saoghal ionmhas eadar-nàiseanta, ach nach bocht gum bheil na miltean de luchd-obrach bhanaichean aig na h-ìrean as ìle a' fulang ri linn eucor nam beagan a tha nas fhaigse aig mullach cùise! Aig an aon àm nach uabhasach an cuideam a bhathas a' cur air luchd-obrach gus seirbheisean a reic. Tiogaidean airson spòrs mar dhuisd don fheadhainn a shoirbhich agus a rèir aithris aon bhanna ann an Glaschu, a' cur stocan càil air deasg neach nach 'rinn reic! 'S dòcha nach beag an t-iongnadh mi-rian a bhith san reic is leithid sin de bhurraidheachd a gabhail àite!

MOST people will be horrified to find that some Scottish bank staff who had failed to meet 'new business' targets were made to display cabbages on their desks until they had sourced new customers.

Such a scandalous example of staff bullying would be outlawed in the majority of modern working environments.

Against such a background of pressure, it is not surprising that excessive mis-selling took place and the near £40 billion compensation this has cost the sector can in part at least be attributed to bad management practices. How can the massive bonuses still be justified and why have so few been penalised?

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

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LAST week's SOLUTION

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Anger as health centre suspends pick-up service

ELDERLY FORCED TO TRAVEL EIGHTY MILES FOR PRESCRIPTIONS

GORDON WEBSTER
fort@obantimes.co.uk

PENSIONERS with poor health in south Lochaber were forced to make up to 80-mile round trips to pick up 'lifecycle' prescriptions for two weeks due to NHS staff shortages.

Between November 17-28, Ballachulish medical centre's dispensing service was suspended, meaning people had to travel to the nearest pharmacy in Fort William.

People living as far as Duror, Kinlochleven and Glen Etive were affected, many of whom are elderly or do not own cars.

Some also made the lengthy journey north only to find their prescriptions were not in stock in Fort William and had to make the same trip again two days later.

An NHS Highland spokesman confirmed that normal service had resumed on Monday this week, and that insufficient staff to cover annual leave and absence was to blame for the problem.

Kevin Smith, chairman of Ballachulish community council, has written to Shona Robison, the Scottish government cabinet secretary for health, wellbeing and sport, to ensure that the same problem does not happen again. He said: 'This situation is totally unacceptable and I don't believe for a second that the same thing has never happened elsewhere.'

'NHS Highland should have a system in place for this because it puts an extra burden on the community which I don't think



Ballachulish medical centre suspended its prescription collection service for two weeks

“ This situation is totally unacceptable ”

Kevin Smith
chairman, Ballachulish community council

is right. I have already been informed by two different people that [the prescriptions they require] were not in stock in Fort William and they had to go back two days later.'

Villager Jimmy Waugh, a former chairman of the community council, raised the matter with Mary Scanlon, MSP for the Highlands and Islands.

He said: 'Prescription dispensing is a lifeline service so you

have to have a back-up plan for this type of situation.

'There are hundreds of dispensing services like this throughout the Highlands and the same could happen to them. It is not a fault of the practice, it is a fault of the system and we need to ensure it doesn't happen again.'

While prescriptions were unavailable, members of the public in Ballachulish were reluctant to comment on the matter and those who did asked not to be named, as they did not want to criticise what they believed to be an otherwise well-run medical practice.

One resident said: 'There are a lot of elderly people in the area, many who have had strokes. Some of them don't have cars and have to rely on the bus to Fort William, which costs four or five pounds. So much for free prescriptions.'

Both new medicines issued by GPs and repeat prescriptions - normally collected from a box outside the surgery - were unavailable in Ballachulish.

An NHS Highland spokesman said: 'The temporary suspension of dispensing prescriptions at Ballachulish medical practice has been lifted as from December 1. Staffing levels are back to normal and outstanding requests have been dispensed and are ready for collection.'

'The decision to suspend dispensing was made on November 17 due to significant administrative staff shortages and to protect patient safety. The practice apologises for any inconvenience this may have caused and thanks patients for their continued support during this time.'



Jane Angus, left, and Samantha Wilson dressed up to fundraise for drama troupe Lochaber Showstoppers' next performance



WISHLIST: Kate Ramsay, seven, and Ryan Armour, six, both from Kinlochleven told Santa what they would like for Christmas

Festive fun and frolics as Christmas arrives in Fort

CHRISTMAS arrived in Fort William with a bang this week, with two days of fun-filled family events.

The festivities began on Friday evening with the Christmas Gathering, organised by Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and Fort William Town Team.

A pantomime in Cameron Square was only the beginning, as Santa set up a grotto in High Street shop, Sweetness, and youngsters hunted the town for missing elves.

The Alexandria Hotel hosted a games fair, including bauble bobbing, hook a cracker, snowball shooting and find the lucky stocking.

Lesley Benfield, chief executive officer of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, said: 'We were delighted to support the Town Team in putting the Christmas Gathering together. It's a great opportunity to promote the buy local message. It's also extremely important for businesses to support initiatives such as the Christmas Gathering to encourage local people to support local service providers and retail outlets.'

'Fort William has a lot to offer and I want to encourage the people of Lochaber to support all our local businesses over the coming months.'

Fort William didn't stay quiet for long as the next morning

Santa arrived back in town, this time accompanied by his elves and reindeer, as he made his way down the High Street and through the Parade, before setting up camp at the Christmas Festival in the Nevis Centre.

Organised by the Rotary Club of Lochaber, the fair filled the hall to bursting point as local craft and food producers touted their wares and raffles raised money for local charities.

Lochaber Rotary president John Harvey said: 'The turnout and support from the general public was gratifying. We are indebted to Ferguson Transport and Shipping for its ongoing sponsorship. We are building on this festival year by year.'

'The local community now views this festival as an excellent and reliable source for Christmas shopping and the number of visitors that attend benefits the local economy.'

The festivities were still in full swing as the Highland Hospice Christmas tree on the Parade was lit up by three-year-old Pippa Tedham and her father, James, on Monday evening and Fort William primary school pupils performed a jazz-style nativity 'Rock around the flock' on Wednesday.



FUN AND GAMES: Deniel Snaith, left, and Melanie Service of Fort William Town Team sent local youngsters on a hunt for missing elves



Pippa Tedham, three, and her father, James, lit up the Highland Hospice tree on the Parade



CHRISTMAS STORY: Fort William primary school pupils prepare to showcase their nativity

Staffin responds to appeal

EFFORTS to set up a medical emergency volunteer service in north Skye have had an encouraging response.

Several people in Staffin said they wanted to take part in training for the first responders initiative, which sees volunteers respond to some emergency service calls prior to the arrival of an ambulance.

Hugh Ross, development officer for Staffin Community Trust, said: 'Having trained first responders in Staffin could be a huge asset in the

wake of an emergency such as a sudden cardiac arrest, given the distance to the district from the ambulance station and Portree Hospital.'

Volunteers would not replace the need for paramedics but can enhance the service already in place and save lives in hard to reach places.

Members of the Scottish ambulance service will host an information evening in Staffin early next year. Anyone interested is asked to contact norma.young@highland.gov.uk or mairi.mooney@nhs.net.



DELIGHT: Ballachulish pupils help resident Fay Stephens try out Abbeyfield home's new bath

Care home bath gift delight for residents

LOCHABER care home residents can now benefit from months of fundraising - in an £8,000 bath.

Local communities and businesses have been raising cash all year to help pay for the new equipment at Abbeyfield Ballachulish which includes an electric moving seat and other fixtures to make bathing easier for elderly residents.

Dominic Duffy, office manager at Abbeyfield, said: 'This is the sort of support that keeps Abbeyfield Ballachulish able to provide the highest standards of care for all of our residents. A massive thanks to everyone involved.'



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Solar panels to make electricity

Congested flights and jam-packed ferries for Tiree now on the radar

A PUBLIC meeting held on Tiree to discuss rising air-passenger levels during the tourist season was the overwhelming focus of attention for many of the island's population.

The meeting between airport officials, representatives from Transport Scotland and councillor for Oban South and the Isles, Roddy McCuish, on November 25, addressed the issue that a surge in tourism has left flights and ferries to the island at near-capacity in the summer months.

Islanders complained they had been stranded on Tiree for weeks during the tourist season because flights and ferries were fully booked.

John MacCaskill, who is vice convener of Tiree community council as well as an adviser at the airport, said after the meeting: 'I gave a 40-minute presentation showing that the island is struggling to meet transport demands as flights are almost always booked up and the ferries are struggling and I'm pleased with the outcome at this preliminary stage.'

'They [Transport Scotland] looked at what is in the Public Service Obligation (PSO) requirements and they haven't changed the specifications since the 1990s.'

'Overall they were very receptive to what we were saying, and the public here were very interested, with 65 people turning up, which is 10 per cent of our population.'

The proposals would see two flights a day to and from Glasgow, Monday to Saturday, in the summer months.

Transport Scotland said it was looking at ways to enhance services and will engage with passengers, local businesses and other interested parties to look at potential improvements, as well as maintaining and improving ferry services.

The current air service PSO for Tiree, Barra and Campbeltown is held by Loganair and FlyBe, but will be renewed in 2015.

ENERGY GIANTS SAY LAYING NEW SUBSEA CABLE FOR ISLAY, JURA AND COLONSAY WILL TAKE FIVE DAYS

Powering on with the work

EUAN PATERSON
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

A NEW subsea cable that will power three Hebridean islands was scheduled to be laid this week.

Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution (SSEPD) confirmed the cable, running from Tayvallich on the Argyll mainland to Jura, would be laid on Tuesday or Wednesday, weather permitting, with a timescale of around five days to complete the work.

The announcement this week, after Marine Scotland granted a

licence, brings to an end months of waiting for residents on the islands of Islay, Jura and Colonsay, who feared power failures over winter.

The cable is a direct replacement for the existing link that was damaged on June 20.

Since then, SSE has been relying on an over-worked, diesel-powered generator in Bowmore, Islay to keep the lights on in homes and businesses on all three islands.

The announcement has been welcomed by Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell, who had been critical of the five-month

delay caused by extended 'discussions' between the energy provider and Marine Scotland over how the cable was protected.

He had called for a meeting with Marine Scotland to resolve the issue but admitted the announcement had 'pre-empted' his request.

Mr Russell said: 'It has been a long wait. It is very good news for the islands affected because the diesel generator is extremely expensive to run and if it went down in a storm it would be terrible.'

'There was also an issue for community renewable schemes

that were looking to export energy from the island.'

Islay community council chairman Glen Roberts said the news would come as a 'relief' to islanders, but warned that the uncertainty around weather conditions meant residents would 'believe it when they see it'.

He added: 'The power station is still on and people here are watching and waiting to see what happens next. It will be a relief to see the work start and SSE has been very co-operative but we will need to see what happens with the weather.'

A spokesman for SSEPD said

on Monday that a vessel and engineers were ready to go as soon as sea and weather conditions allow.

Mark Mathieson, managing director at SSEPD, said: 'We would like to thank the residents of Jura, Islay and Colonsay for their patience while we lay the new cable.'

'I am pleased that the work can now go ahead and that local people will benefit from a more secure electricity supply this winter with the new cable in place.'

The old cable being replaced had supplied electricity to Jura and the other islands since 1991.

Room without a view leaves Fort couple furious over 'half-truths'

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

RESIDENTS concerned about a 13-metre tall primary school being built in Fort William say they are sick of 'constant deceit and half-truths'.

The Lundavra Road development, which will replace the current Upper Achintore and Fort William primary schools, is to be clad in black brick which nearby homeowners called 'imposing and prison-like' and say they should have been consulted beforehand.

Highland Council officials met the residents and chief executive Steve Barron said he would try to change the colour of the brick before it was ordered.

But when Robert Bruce, who lives near to the new school, visited the site the following morning, builders told him not only had the brick been ordered but it had already been laid on parts of the building.

Mr Bruce said: 'It has been deceit and half-truths right from the beginning. They told us it was going to be single storey and



BLEAK PROSPECT: Eddie and Jane Griffiths' view of Loch Linnhe has been taken over by the new school

blend into the surroundings and now look at it.

'If that isn't bad enough the council's chief executive promised he would try to have it changed when it was too late. He either knew it was too late or

didn't even bother to research the school before he met with us - I don't know which is worse.'

The angry group has now decided to take matters further and has written to Prince Charles. This comes after he responded

to a letter from Betty Cameron of Caol, who has lost her view of Ben Nevis due to a new Gaelic school under construction in front of her home.

Eddie and Jane Griffiths, the worst affected of the Upper

Achintore residents, asked for 'intervention' from Prince Charles in a letter.

Mr Griffiths added: 'I had an uninterrupted view over the fields, Loch Linnhe and the Argyllshire hills beyond and, whilst I do appreciate that you cannot buy a view, what the Highland Council has constructed is nothing more than an eyesore.'

The Oban Times previously reported the couple had lost £70,000 from the value of their home, which Mrs Griffiths said is still on the market.

A Highland Council spokesman said: 'At the meeting, the chief executive stated he would ask officers to explore if there was any scope for reviewing whether it was possible to achieve a consensus about the brickwork finish to the block facing the road, but expressed concern that it may have already been ordered.'

'However, the brickwork had been ordered and indeed work has now begun on the teaching block so consideration of any changes would therefore have serious cost and time implications.'

Traffic controls at new works on A83

MOTORISTS using the A83 between Ardenan and Drishag, near Inveraray, will soon benefit from an improved road surface following the completion of work starting next Monday, says Transport Scotland.

The road will have £230,000 spent on it to improve the 1.5km section over a two-week period.

The works will be carried out between 7am and 7pm each day from Monday to Friday with no works planned at weekends.

Due to the restricted width of the carriageway on this section of the A83 and to ensure the safety of drivers and road workers, temporary traffic lights and a 10mph convoy system will be in operation while works are undertaken.

Call for volunteers to keep standards

VOLUNTEER inspectors will be sought by NHS Highland to help improve service and standards at Lorn and Islands hospital.

The volunteers will be trained to look at, and comment on, issues such as cleanliness and the service provided by staff at the hospital.

The appointments would be part of a move by the area's community health partnership to increase community feedback.

This may also include a digital questionnaire at a monitor in the hospital's reception area.

Council picks up award for homes

ARGYLL and Bute council has won an award at the Empty Homes conference in Glasgow, after bringing 100 homes back into use for the community.

Judges at the prestigious awards, hosted by Shelter Scotland on November 27, gave the council the Empty Homes Champion of the Year Award for Outstanding Project.



GRAND NIGHT: Members and guests at the Rotary Club of Oban's annual charter night dinner

Rotary club celebrations are magic

THE Rotary Club of Oban recently held its annual charter night dinner in the Royal Hotel to mark the 65th anniversary of the club's charter.

Under the chairmanship of club president Ronnie Neil, the evening got under way with the cutting of a specially

made anniversary cake. Guests at the event, on November 14, included representatives from Oban's 'daughter' clubs in Campbeltown, Mid Argyll and Lochaber as well as the Inner Wheel Club of Oban.

Following dinner, entertainment was provided by the

principal guest, the magician and musician, Mr Bill Simpson of Motherwell.

A member of the Magic Circle and International Brotherhood of Magicians, Mr Simpson entertained and enthralled the audience with a range of impressive illusions involving

members of the audience. He also performed some humorous and heartfelt songs with his guitar.

The evening closed with a successful raffle raising funds for the victims of Ebola, through the Rotary Club of Monrovia, Liberia.

Jackie crowns great day at the salon with a top award

AN OBAN hair salon has won North West Salon of the Year at the Scottish Hair and Beauty Awards in Glasgow.

Avalon hair salon, which opened in January, won the award at the ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on November 28.

Owner Jackie Den Heijer said: 'I can't even put into words how it felt when our name was announced. It's topped off our first year perfectly and I would like to thank our clients for their fantastic support.'



GOOD HAIR DAY: Jackie shows off the award accompanied by mum Carol Young and husband Ian

LAST CHANCE TO VOTE!
 Nominations close
 on Monday
 8 December 2014

Calling all rural heroes

Do you know an Argyll rural business or an individual that deserves to be recognised for making a significant contribution to their local community?

Then why not nominate them to win one of our inaugural Scottish Rural Awards? The awards, affectionately known as the 'Scotties', are a joint partnership between Scottish Field and The Scottish Countryside Alliance and were formed to recognise excellence across a range of 12 award disciplines. Nominating couldn't be easier - simply go to www.scottishruralawards.org/category and choose your category or alternatively call 0131 551 7919 and we will post you out a form. You can nominate as many times as you like and each time you will be entered into a prize draw where six randomly chosen lucky winners will receive a bottle of Tomintoul 12 year old Speyside Glenlivet as a thank you from the judges. The awards will culminate in a special celebratory dinner taking place on 26 March 2015 in Edinburgh.

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what's on

THE OBAN TIMES
FREE EVENT LISTING

- THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER**
Oban Accordion & Fiddle Monthly Club Night, Royal Hotel, Oban, 7.30pm
Rambler's Walk, Meall nan Damh - Glenfinnan, Contact 01855 821279
Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs Pantomime, Corran Halls, Oban, 7.30pm
Gaelic Conversation Group, Furan Gaelic Centre, Corran Halls, Oban, 7pm
- FRIDAY 5TH DECEMBER**
Friday Break, Oban Pipe Band Hall, Shore St, 11am-2pm
CD Launch/Dance with Archie McAllister & Stretch, Cullivall Hotel, Kilmelford, 8pm
The Best of Scottish Comedy, Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern, 7.30pm
Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs Pantomime, Corran Halls, Oban, 7.30pm
- SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER**
St Orans & Dunbeg Church, Christmas Fayre, Connel Village Hall, 11am - 3pm
Gaelic Conversation Group, Furan Gaelic Centre, Corran Halls, Oban, 11.30am
Rockfield Holly Tea and Craft Fair, Rockfield Primary School, Oban, 10am-12pm
Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs Pantomime, Corran Halls, Oban, Matinee 2.30pm, Evening 7.30pm
- SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER**
Rambler's Walk, Tulla Cottage to Bridge of Orchy, Contact 01855 821279
- WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER**
Inveraray & District Accordion & Fiddle Club, Argyll Hotel, Inveraray, 8pm
- THURSDAY 11TH DECEMBER**
Rambler's Walk, Am Meall circuit - Glencoe, Contact 01855 821279
A Christmas Musical Evening with Dalriada Singers, Furnace Village Hall, 7.30pm
Gaelic Conversation Group, Furan Gaelic Centre, Corran Halls, Oban, 7pm
- SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER**
Christmas Fayre, Kilmallie Community Centre, Proceeds for upgrading of centre, 11am-3pm
Rambler's Walk, Ben Laga & Meall nan Each, Contact 01855 821279
Meet Santa at Arduaine Garden, Arduaine, By Oban, 1-3.30pm
- SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER**
Rotary Club of Oban, Charity Carol Concert, Corran Halls, Oban, 3pm
Meet Santa at Arduaine Garden, Arduaine, By Oban, 1-3.30pm
- Email details of your event titled 'What's On' to whatson@obantimes.co.uk

Meet the artist Alan Cunningham



AFTER four years in art college and a couple of years in industry, Alan completed his teacher training and spent nine years teaching art and design in a school near Glasgow.

In 1985 he moved to Tarbert Academy and spent ten years teaching before moving to Lochgilphead high school, finally retiring after 15 years in 2010.

Alan said: Now that I no longer teach I find I have the time and energy to resume my own art work and with this in mind I built a studio workshop in my garden three years ago. This has been the real asset I had always wished for. It's a beautiful space, filled with light, and allows me the facilities I always hoped for.

I tend to work slowly, often with several pieces on the go at once. Although I trained as a sculptor and still work in three dimensions with materials like wood and copper, most of the pieces can be wall hung. I find thinking and working in three dimensions natural and fluid, but usually struggle deciding on colour. I often joke that underneath what people see in my work there are another four versions.

'Until recently all of my work has had some

connection to the sea, the fishing industry, or those who work with boats or by the sea. My inspiration can come from poets such as Sorley MacLean, George Campbell Hay, Don Paterson, or from reading Scottish history or the Icelandic sagas. I have more ideas for work than I could ever get through in my lifetime.

'I spend hours combing beaches for detritus as inspiration and occasionally some of these beach finds are incorporated in a work.

'Over the years I have compiled a sizeable collection of photos to use as reference material.

'My late father was a naval architect, so in my childhood years I was surrounded by blueprints. That might explain my leanings.

'I try to do work that is unique and so far I have never knowingly repeated a subject. It is important to me that my work is not dogmatic, posing questions rather than giving answers. The viewer has to do some of the work as my work is deliberately enigmatic, open to interpretation. The work is often celebratory, marking some achievement or other.

'A few of the pieces I do are more conceptual in nature, not pictorial. I don't see a problem

with working in different styles, as an artwork is just a way of carrying an idea, after all.

'Will MacLean is the foremost exponent of box art and his work always impresses me with his light touch on what are often serious issues. There is so much hidden away in each of his works, they are so rewarding over repeated viewing. He explores historic subject matter but is never merely nostalgic.

'There are many truly talented artists working in Scotland right now that it is hard to single out individuals. Sadly, some of the best are under appreciated.

'Recently I have been trying 3D printing and laser cutting to explore the possibilities of those technologies.

'I would never wish to lose the pleasure of crafting something by hand, but the potential for some processes shouldn't be ignored. So far these have only found their way into fish shaped windvanes for the garden and for some text in my larger pieces. We shall see.

'I sense that my work is about to go off in a rather different direction soon. I don't yet know what that will be, but that is what makes being an artist so interesting.'



CD REVIEW Struileag: Children of the Smoke

THIS is the CD of the highly acclaimed story of the world and journey of the Gaels.

It is enthralling and mesmerising, not least for the outstanding voice of Connel's Joy Dunlop. But it is in its storytelling that there is an

option to stop knowing what it is all about and listen to the stories of those whose lives were turned upside down in the diaspora of the Gaels. Not only in resonance for those of us who have no Gaelic language and only the

culture, or have neither - but to remember those who have come to Scotland and the shared story that we have.

This is a masterful piece well placed to be a winner in one of two categories at the Traditional Music Awards

in December. This CD will become part of your most valued collection and as the blurb on the label says itself, this is an anthem to people of Highland and island descent stretching through time and around the planet.



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6pm for 7pm
in Oban Bay Hotel
To book your place, please call (office hours)
Oban 564848 with name, address and phone number

Friends of Crarae
A Christmas Musical Evening with The Dalriada Singers
Furnace Village Hall
Thurs 11th December
7.30pm
Tickets £5.00 on door. Children Free accompanied by adult.
Mince pies, seasonal punch, soft drinks.
Reg. Charity no SCO33244

INVERARAY & DISTRICT ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Argyll Hotel, Inveraray
Wednesday 10th December at 8.00pm
Guest Artistes From Perth Duncan Black & Marie Fielding
Supporting players most welcome

FRIDAY BREAK
Friday 5th December
Oban Pipe Band Hall, Shore St, 11am-2pm
TEA, COFFEE, HOME BAKING, EXPERIENCE A RELAXING HAND MASSAGE!
BE INSPIRED BY ART! OR JUST CHILL AND CHAT! (prayer available)
ALL WELCOME - ALL FREE!

ROTARY CLUB OF OBAN Charity Carol Concert
Corran Halls, Oban
Sunday 14th December at 3pm
Admission by donation

EASDALE ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL
Saturday 6 December
11 am to 4 pm
CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR
Free Entry, All Locally Made Art And Crafts, Soup, Teas, Home Baking, Face Painting
info 01852 300 093
arts.admin@casdale.org

Rockfield Primary School PTA (SCO33780)
Holly Tea & Craft Fair
Saturday 6th Dec
10 to 12 noon
Oban Primary Campus
£2/£1 includes refreshments
Contact Sally for Craft tables, home baking or bottle stall donations on 01631 570902

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Published on 11th December
SEND A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO FRIENDS FOR JUST £25

A to all my relatives and friends from John Smith, Oban	B to all my relatives and friends from John Smith, Oban	C to all my relatives and friends from John Smith, Oban
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Simply fill in the coupon below with your special festive message and send or hand in to:-

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Deadline Monday 8th December. To appear Thursday 11th December

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Sat 13 & Sun 14 Dec, 1pm-3.30pm

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Snow White ready for Oban

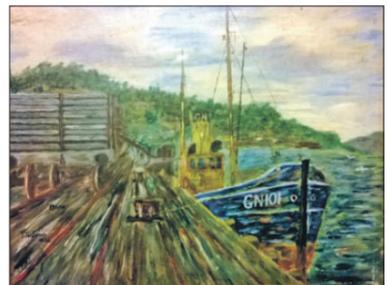
MIRROR, mirror on the wall, this year's panto is the biggest of them all! Benderloch and North Connell Drama Club take to the stage to present the pantomime Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs this week in a festive adventure. Will the wicked queen banish Snow White once and for all, or will the handsome Prince thwart her plans with the help of the dwarfs? The club has promised another year of amazing sets, glittering costumes and side-splitting comedy at the Corran Halls. The show opens tonight, Thursday, December 4, with further performances on Friday December 5 and Saturday December 6, all at 7.30pm. A special Saturday matinee will also be held at 2.30pm. For tickets, contact the Corran Halls box office on 01631 567333.

PANTOMIME: the cast of Benderloch and North Connell Drama Club, who are performing Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs at the Corran Halls from Thursday to Saturday 16_t49panto01

Do you know the story behind these paintings?



AN INHERITANCE of paintings of scenes of Oban have whetted the appetite of a Tewkesbury man to know more about them. The three paintings collected by the man's father all show scenes of the last century. Gloucestershire man Jon Harvey explains: 'I got the paintings from my dad after he died in 1996. He had spent years going to auctions and collecting paintings and prints. I have an Auntie that lives in Callander and I can only assume that he went to a sale there and bought them. I think the signature is: L W J Leishman, but I've had no joy finding the artist.' Readers who know the origin of the work should contact lee@obantimes.co.uk in the first instance.



Musical siblings in concert

CONNEL brother and sister Andrew and Joy Dunlop are no strangers to the music trail in Argyll. Andrew has hosted Lorne Live concerts in Oban over the last few summers. They are both accomplished musicians in their own right. Joy is a vocalist and a passionate promoter of Gaelic. She has won a gold at the National Mòd and been nominated twice for the Gaelic singer of the year. Her debut album Gusgadh (Awakening) has received high acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Andrew is an immensely versatile musician, both as an accompanist and soloist. He is the resident pianist for the Northern Ballet as well as working with the National Children's Choir of Great Britain among others. The programme will feature both new and traditional Gaelic songs, many of which are native to Argyll. These range from poignant love songs to working songs and lively waulking songs and mouth music. There will be plenty of opportunity for audience participation. There will also be a selection of songs in English and some piano solos. This is a concert that will appeal to a wide range of people and a rare opportunity not to be missed to be immersed in traditional Scottish music. Oban Music Society is hosting the concert on Sunday December 7 at 3pm at St John's Cathedral, Oban.

Perfect piano playing for winter festival

OBAN-based pianist Marek Kochmanski performed well-known works by Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, Mozart and an improvisational piece along with a photo display on screen by Willie Roger in the Corran Halls cafe area during Oban's winter festival. The audience would not let Marek leave without an encore.

An evening about history in the mountains

LOCHABER Local History Society is gathering in Fort William tonight (Thursday) for its December meeting. Mountain guide Mick Tighe will be joining the group in the Ben Nevis Hotel to talk about the hiking business in Lochaber. Owner of the Scottish Mountaineering Heritage Collection, Mr Tighe will be speaking about the local industries which branched from Lochaber to the best hills in Britain. Chris Robinson, chairman of the society, said: 'From the world's first all metal ice axe, Nevis jackets and mountain guides will all be part of his repertoire. A very interesting and entertaining evening is guaranteed.' Everyone welcome from 8pm.

Kinlochleven panto underway

KINLOCHLEVEN high school's pantomime kicked off last night (Wednesday), offering an 'unforgettable' evening for the audience. Pupils and staff teamed up with local community group Dramafish Studios for the production, Peter Pandemonium, performed every evening until Saturday December 6. Acting head teacher Gordon Milne said: 'The pantomime is sure to be an unforgettable experience and one that could lead to further joint school and community productions.' Tickets are available from Kinlochleven high school.

Jerwood Residencies 2015

ARGYLL'S Cove Park supports the creation of work and/or new ways of working, especially through collaboration across disciplinary borders and research that takes artists into new professional and/or creative territory. The Jerwood Residencies at Cove Park, in Lomond, are focused on developing performance-based practice and are open to emerging artists working across a range of performance disciplines. Individuals, groups and companies are eligible to apply. They are supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation. The Jerwood Residencies 2015 will take place in summer time with four two-week residencies for Scottish-affiliated performing arts initiatives. The deadline for all applications to the Jerwood programme is midnight on Friday December 19.

Seven Days

lee@obantimes.co.uk

Highlights of things to do this week

Thursday 4

What Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club
When 7.30pm
Where Royal Hotel
Cost £4

Renowned Iain Anderson Trio in change of venue to the Royal Hotel for the evening.

Friday 5

What The Best of Scottish Comedy
When 7.30pm
Where Craignish Village Hall
Cost £9/6/20

Including Vladimir McTavish, Kier McAllister and Jim Park.

Vladimir McTavish serves up a delightful feast of social observation and topical satire, seasoned with his caustic wit and presented via a platter of breakneck-pace patter.

In addition to his headline appearances throughout the UK Vladimir has also graced the stage in such far flung regions as Ireland, Holland, Cyprus, Kuwait, Holland, Singapore and at the Norwegian Comedy Festival at Stavanger, Norway, and the Aspen Comedy Festival in Colorado, US. Kier has gigged all over Scotland and the UK and can be seen regularly working for people like The Stand, HaHa Comedy and The Last Laugh Comedy Clubs. He has also had a string of successful festival shows with other comedians.

Jim Park's first foray into the world of show-business was as drummer for legendary Scottish punk icons, The Exploited.

He left to complete an economics degree shortly before the band's one-and-only performance on Top of the Pops. Jim is still trying to come to terms with his disastrous decision.

He played with a string of highly pretentious, obscure New Romantic bands in the 80s before inexplicably deciding to get a proper job as a computer programmer. Jim is still trying to come to terms with his disastrous decision.

Saturday 6

What St Orans and Dunbeg Church Christmas Fayre
When 11am until 3pm
Where Connell Village Hall
Cost Various

The annual Christmas Fayre in the hall at Connell will bring festive cheer to everyone who attends. A busy affair with plenty of goods for people to buy and lovely teas and soups. Everyone welcome, it's worth the bus/train/car ride to get to this once a year event.

On offer will be gifts, baking, preserves, decorations, books as well as a soup lunch.

Sunday 7

What Joy Exhibition
When 10am - 5pm
Where Dalmlally Train Station
Cost Free

To celebrate the joy of making and the delight of what Christmas is all about, come and visit Dalmlally Railway Station this December. Refreshments will be available.

Marys Meals will have a nativity scene on the platform. The Posting will have a range of locally made crafts on show.

There will be working demonstration of different types of felt making and other crafts until December 22. Small groups can be booked in with advance notice.

Monday 8

What Interstellar
When 8pm
Where Screen Machine Tarbert, Harris
Cost £7.50 adult

Set in the near future, a widower, Cooper (Matthew McConaughey) is bringing up his son and daughter on the family farm. There has been an environmental disaster and the planet's food is running out.

When the call comes to join an exploratory mission that might guarantee the future of humankind, Cooper - an ex-NASA pilot - signs up.

A mysterious space wormhole has opened, and it will be up to the explorers to navigate vast distances, pushing the boundaries of interstellar travel, to give planet earth a chance of survival.

At its simplest level, Interstellar is a family drama - an emotional tale with a father-daughter relationship at its centre. But on another level, it's a tale of love, loss and voyages to other galaxies which bends time, space and minds.

Tuesday 9

What The Crucible, a play by Arthur Miller
When 7pm
Where Lochaber high school
Cost £5/3

Lochaber high school's big dramatic performance this year is The Crucible by Arthur Miller, widely acknowledged as the greatest playwright of modern times.

In a departure from the highly successful musicals of recent years, the school is undertaking a full length play for the first time in decades. Based on real events and set during the time of the Salem witch trials, the play deals with major themes such as adultery, betrayal and revenge. This is a major challenge for the young actors but they are working hard to ensure that their performance offers a great night out.

Performances are at 7pm on Tuesday December 9, Wednesday December 10 and Thursday December 11 in Lochaber high school hall.

Wednesday 10

What Holy Communion
When 11am
Where St John's Cathedral
Cost Free

Holy Communion in St John's Cathedral in Oban. Everyone welcome.

Oban Phoenix Cinema	Time	Price
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part One	Thurs 4th	15.45, 18.15, 20.50
Mr Turner	Thurs 4th	17.30
What We Did On Our Holidays	Thurs 4th	15.15
The Drop	Thurs 4th	20.30
Penguins Of Madagascar	Fri 5th	14.10 3D, 16.20, 18.30 3D, 20.30
	Sat 6th	14.10 3D, 16.20, 18.30 3D, 20.30
	Sun 7th	12.30, 14.10, 16.20, 18.30 3D, 20.30
	Mon 8th	14.10 3D, 16.20, 18.30 3D, 20.30
	Tues 9th	14.10 3D, 16.20, 18.30 3D, 20.30
	Wed 10th	14.10 3D, 16.20, 18.30 3D, 20.30
	Thurs 11th	14.10 3D, 16.20, 18.30 3D, 20.30
Bolshoi Ballet: La Baydere	Sun 7th	15.00
National Theatre Live: John	Tues 9th	20.00
The Imitation Game	Fri 5th	16.00, 18.20, 20.40
	Sat 6th	16.00, 18.20, 20.40
	Sun 7th	16.00, 18.20, 20.40
	Mon 8th	16.00, 18.20, 20.40
	Tues 9th	16.00, 18.20, 20.40
	Wed 10th	16.00, 18.20, 20.40
	Thurs 11th	16.00, 18.20, 20.40
Dolphin Tale 2	Sat 6th	13.45
Frozen: Sing-Along	Sat 6th	12.00

Penguins Of Madagascar (U)
Super spy teams aren't born... they're hatched. Discover the secrets of the greatest and most hilarious covert birds in the global espionage biz: Skipper, Kowalski, Rico and Private. These elicits of the elite are joining forces with a chic undercover organization, The North Wind. Led by handsome and husky Agent Classified (we could tell you his name, but then...you know). Together, they must stop the villainous Dr. Octavius Brine, from destroying the world as we know it.

Bolshoi Ballet: La Baydere (PG)
When the beautiful dancer Nikiya and the warrior Solor meet in secret, they swear eternal mutual fidelity. However, the High Brahmin, who is also in love with Nikiya, overhears them. He rushes to reveal their secret to the Rajah, who has decided that Solor will marry his beloved daughter Gozmtzi.

John NT Live (18)
Internationally renowned DV8 Physical Theatre bring their powerful new production to the National Theatre. The company's new production, JOHN, authentically depicts real-life stories, combining movement and spoken word to create an intense and moving theatrical experience. Lloyd Newson, DV8's Artistic Director, interviewed more than 50 men asking them frank questions, initially about love and sex. One of those men was John. What emerged was a story that is both extraordinary and touching. Years of crime, drug use and struggling to survive lead John on a search in which his life converges with others, in an unexpected place, unknown by most.

The Imitation Game (PG)
Based on the real life story of legendary cryptanalyst Alan Turing, the film portrays the nail-biting race against time by Turing and his brilliant team of code-breakers at Britain's top-secret Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park, during the darkest days of World War II. Starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley and Matthew Goode.

WHAT'S ON this December

LIVE MUSIC

Friday 5th	Crackin' Craic
Saturday 6th	Disco
Friday 12th	Alan Frew
Saturday 13th	Blair McLeod
Friday 19th	Crooked Reel
Saturday 20th	Crooked Reel
Xmas Eve	Disco
Christmas Day	Xmas Night Party with Stevo
Boxing Day	Chunks
Saturday 27th	Chris Suckle
Sunday 28th	The Big 2014 Quiz
New Years Eve	Hogmanay Party Night
New Years Day	Ceol An Aire, 3pm-6pm Karaoke, 6pm-9pm Crooked Reel, from 9.30pm
Friday 2nd	Sandra MacBeth
Saturday 3rd	Sandra MacBeth

LIVE MUSIC STARS AT 9.30PM

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THIS WEEK'S LISTINGS

MONDAY:
0800 AM on FM, 0900 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning With Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Jim Edge, 1700 Drivetime With Danni Hay, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen, 2200 American Jukebox with Michelle

TUESDAY:
0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show with Maggie Hunter, 1000 Ken Hunter, 1200 Memories are

Made of This with Ken Hunter, 1300 The Quiz with Danni Hay, 1500 Lesley Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 1900 Sounds Scottish with Archie Cameron, 2000 Highest Praise with Stuart, 2100 Elaine Lamb, 2300 Northern Soul with Gordon Covey

WEDNESDAY:
0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Sound Scottish (repeat), 1000 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Elaine Lamb, 1700 Drivetime with Campbell and Coll, 1900 Country Meets Rock with Len

& Ken, 2100 Gordon's Grooves

THURSDAY:
0800 Maggie May's Carousel, 1100 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with DJ Taz, 1900 Christine's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY:
0800 Jean Ainsley Breakfast Show, 1000 Teeny and Tiny Show, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Weekend Warzump with Ian Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 1845 Sports View, 1900 Country Meets Country with Jackie

Craig, 2000 Friday Night with Innes, 2100 TFI Friday with Jim Lawn

SATURDAY:
0900 Maggie's Swingin' Sixties, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowscher, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis

SUNDAY:
0900 Sunday Morning with Breege, 1100 - 1400 Alan, 1630 Archie Darling, 1800 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 1900 New Country Show with David Entwistle, 2100 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott



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A Saltire flag was projected onto McCaig's Tower to mark the St Andrew's Day theme of this year's Oban Winter Festival. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Oban Winter Festival



OBAN Winter Festival 2014 was the biggest and best yet, with locals enthusiastically backing an event that acted as a pull for tourists.

As the festival continues to grow it is creating what some observers are calling a potential 'second season' for Oban businesses that traditionally relied on summer custom.

The climax to the 10-day event came with fireworks over the bay last Sunday but the festival had been built up around the St Andrew's Day celebrations last Saturday, which included the first Haggis Fest to find Argyll's top haggis maker.

The judges' favourite and also the people's choice was Taynuilt butcher Mark Grant.

There was also a sponsored run, known as the Tartan Dash, haggis hurling and a grand ceilidh in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls.

Festival organisers thanked everyone who supported this year's event.

A spokeswoman said: 'From businesses who hosted events, decorated their windows and stayed open late, to marshals, lantern makers, face painters, musicians, photographers, food vendors, stall holders, everyone who gave a venue, charities, schools, performers - we couldn't host the event without community and business support.'

'From arranging free parking to putting up the tree, banners and signs, there was great community support.'

'All our events were very well attended and the local community should be proud of its involvement on any level.'

'A special mention to our funders and sponsors who make the event possible.'



The first female finishers in the Tartan Dash. Photo: Stephen Lawson



OBAN was treated to an evening of entertainment when three local singing groups came together as part of the Winter Festival. Singers from Oban Gaelic Choir, Taynuilt Gaelic Choir and the Sequence Choir took part in the Choirs by Candlelight evening on November 26 at St John's Cathedral, in front of a crowd of around 50 people. 16_148choir01



Headliners Skipinnish at the Grand Ceilidh. Photo: Stephen Lawson



Oban Pipe Band play at the Grand Ceilidh. Photo: Stephen Lawson



Mark Grant, Taynuilt butcher and champion haggis maker. Photo: Stephen Lawson



First three gents in the Tartan Dash, from left, DJ Barr (second), winner Finlay Walton and Craig MacNiven (third). Photo: Stephen Lawson



The Three Wee Crows hosted a ghost walk through Dunollie woods. Photo: Kevin McGlynn

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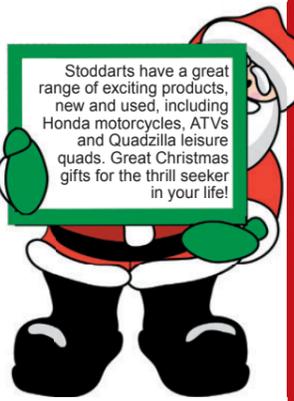
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OBAN Fish & Chip SHOP RESTAURANT

The Oban Fish and Chip Shop is going to be **closed from Monday 8th December** for refurbishment. Sorry for the inconvenience. Reopening Thursday 11th December at 5pm.

So that we can test run our new equipment we will be offering **half price take-away meals** from 5pm on Thursday and all day on Friday.

www.obanfishandchipshop.co.uk
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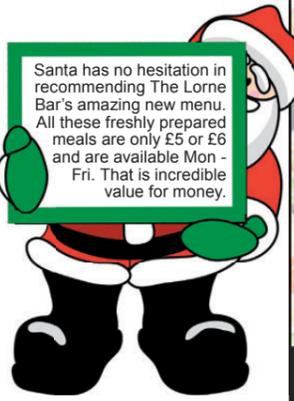


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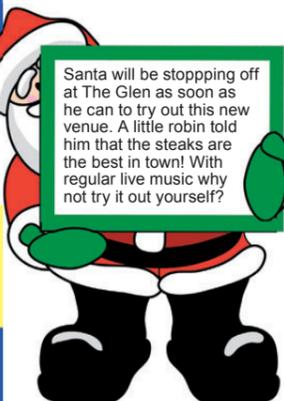
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Farming Focus
Lucy Sumsion, NFU Scotland
Regional Manager covering
Argyll & the Islands, including
Arran, gives an overview of
current issues in the region

Views sought on first land use strategy

LAST week I attended a Scottish Government stakeholder meeting held in Oban on the review of Scotland's first Land Use Strategy, which was published in 2011.

The strategy must be reviewed within five years and the second strategy is due to be published in March 2016.

Scottish Government has started this process with a series of workshops around the country. Amongst the questions it is asking is what have been the successes, barriers and challenges to delivering the first land use strategy.

One of the key barriers that everyone at the meeting agreed on was the lack of awareness or understanding of what the first strategy set out to achieve and whether it has in fact achieved anything?

There have been a couple of pilot local land use strategies based in the Borders and in the North East, and it will be useful to hear the results of those in due course.

At this stage, however, for most of you managing and working your farms, crofts or estates I suspect that like me you knew very little about the first strategy and what it might mean for you all as land managers.

Scottish Government is keen to hear your views and you can find out more by searching for Land Use Strategy on the Scottish Government website or calling the Land Use and Biodiversity Team on 0131 244 7968.

OWNERSHIP and management of land has very much been in the headlines lately with the new First Minister announcing last week the Scottish Government's legislative

priorities within their programme for government 2014-2015.

Relevant to the agriculture sector are proposals for the Land Reform Bill and the Succession Bill.

The former proposes a new land reform commission to develop the evidence base for future reform, supporting public debate and holding this and future governments to account.

The succession bill will make laws for succession clearer, removing the distinction between movable and immovable property to give children, spouses and civil partners appropriate legal rights over both forms of property.

NFU Scotland looks forward to engaging with the Scottish Government throughout this process and I know we will want to hear views from our members.

SO, LOOKING ahead to 2015 it looks as if there is going to be plenty to keep us all occupied.

A good way for NFUS members to get involved is to go along to branch meetings and let us know your views.

Branch AGMs are now underway and the regional board AGM will be held on Friday January 16.

This year the focus will be on our presidential and vice-presidential elections with all the candidates wanting to make a good impression and set out their priorities for the year ahead.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM, but in the meantime may I take this opportunity to wish you all a good festive season and best wishes for the New Year.

And let us hope it is a mild one - though my 13-year-old, like many other children I suspect, is wishing for lots of snow!

Mixed reaction from landowners and gamekeepers to new land reform package

PLANS to change the tax benefits and laws in land ownership have received a mixed response.

While First Minister Nicola Sturgeon says they will help to 'create a new, fairer and more prosperous society', landowners and gamekeepers are not so sure.

The package of land reform includes the removal of tax breaks for shooting estates through the Land Reform Bill. The government argues this will help expand the Scottish Land Fund to £10 million per year in order that communities can purchase their own land.

Ms Sturgeon said: 'It is well understood that a strong economy is essential to a fair society. But we need to recognise that the reverse is true too. A fair society also supports a strong economy.'

David Johnstone, chairman of Scottish Land and Estates, said: 'The first minister has stated that Scotland's land is an asset for the many, not for the few, and we agree with that.'

'The reality is that the land is already an asset for the many and landowners of all types and sizes are already delivering a huge range of public benefit and

we can provide even more. 'Indeed landowners, regardless of scale, are heavily involved in activities that support the policy objectives of the Scottish government including areas such as renewable energy, agriculture, housing and tourism.'

'Sporting estates are too readily singled out in a negative light when in fact they are businesses that make a key contribution to rural tourism, local employment and the environment. 'We believe it is time for a modern debate on land reform which recognises that both private and community land ownership make very worthwhile contributions to Scotland.'

A spokesman for The Scottish Gamekeepers Association said: 'It is highly important, when considering land reform that Nicola Sturgeon should see it as a duty to protect jobs of rural workers in fragile areas.'

'Should it make land reform an ideological vehicle to punish landowners on sporting estates, the real affect will be to sacrifice the jobs of working people such as gamekeepers, stalkers and land and river ghillies, and their families, who will be the first people to suffer if invest-

ments are withdrawn and taken elsewhere.

'We welcome greater accountability of land ownership and trust this will also extend to charities and government agencies, who are sizeable landowners in Scotland.'

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell was in favour of the land reform.

He said: 'The government's programme for the coming year is strong and ambitious in every area, but none more so than on the topic of land reform.'

'This is an area of great importance to this constituency, where community progress has sometimes been blighted by absentee and even resident proprietors who exercise too much power and show too little responsibility.'

'It is simply wrong that in the 21st century some communities and individuals are still suffering such anti-democratic abuse. It is time for the Scottish Government to ensure that all of Scotland's great land assets are put to work for the benefit of all of Scotland's people.'

'Land is a finite resource and it must be managed and utilised in the public interest.'



Crofters to 'shout if in doubt'

THE SCOTTISH Crofting Federation (SCF) is urging crofters to speak up if in any doubt about their region allocation for their Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) payment.

Joyce Wilkinson, a director of the SCF, said the organisation was urging its members to read carefully the letter they will have received from the Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspection Directorate (SGRPID) on which region their land has been classed as.

'If they are in any doubt about how they are being 'regionalised' they should contact their local SGRPID office immediately,' she said.

'The letter says the recipient has only 60 days to respond or they are stuck with the allocation. 'We are saying to crofters 'if in doubt, shout'.'

'As soon as you bring what you think is a mistake to the attention of SGRPID the 60-day clock stops ticking.'

Ms Wilkinson added: 'Crofters' in-by land is being designated either as Region 1 Permanent Grassland or

Region 2 Rough Grazing or even Region 3 Category A Rough Grazing.

'The region it goes into makes a huge difference as to how much is paid per hectare in basic Ppymment.'

Scottish Government calculations are putting the basic payment for Region 1 Permanent Grassland (PGRS) at about £175 per hectare, Region 2 Rough Grazing (RGR) Categories B,C and D at about £28 per hectare, and Region 3 Rough Grazing Category A at only £8.00 per hectare.

'The letter only deals with in-by; a further letter will be issued allocating common grazings, which, it is thought, will be put automatically into Region 3.'

'It is therefore essential to ensure that all improved land is in Region 1,' Ms Wilkinson added. 'There is not a clear definition as yet, but the advice we have been given is that if the grassland has been improved by reseeding at some time and the crofter is doing something to keep its condition up, such

as topping, applying fertilisers and so on, then it can be classed as Permanent Grassland and put in Region 1.'

'If more than 40 per cent of a parcel of land is Permanent Grassland then all of it is classed Permanent Grassland.'

'Conversely, if more than 60 per cent is Rough Grazing then all of it is Rough Grazing. So it is in crofters' interest to ensure that any PGRS they have is counted.'

Ms Wilkinson said the SCF had always advocated having only two regions but the farming industry lobby convinced Scottish Government to adopt three regions.

'We now have a system which will leave many crofters in an untenable situation,' she said.

'We want to hear from crofters what their position is, how they are being affected by the three-region system.'

'Scottish Government officials are trying to be helpful, but they can only be so if perceived problems are brought to their attention. As I said: 'if in doubt, shout'.'

Ardfern agri post-grad student boosts Scots numbers

A POST-graduate student from Ardfern at an English university that specialises in the agri-food sector is one of a number helping the institution boost its Scottish contingent.

Harper Adams University in the Midlands has seen 14 Scottish students join its 40 undergraduates and Cara Campbell, 22, from Ardfern is one of 18 Scots enrolled on post-graduate courses.

Former Lochgilphead High School pupil Cara completed her first degree in Zoology from Dundee University and an MRes on cobalt and vitamin B12 metabolism in sheep from Nottingham University.

She is undertaking dairy cow nutrition research and said: 'I had been to Harper Adams University to do some experimental work and I felt welcomed by everyone I met.'

'I'm really interested in research and in particular in agriculture, coming from a beef and sheep family farm, and was keen to focus on nutrition.'

'There are fewer opportunities to do this sort of work in Scotland and I have enjoyed being at Harper Adams so far.'



POST-GRAD: Cara Campbell

Argyll-born corporate communications manager Jaelyn Green, 35, who has worked at Harper Adams, in Shropshire, for more than six years, said: 'This year there has been a noticeable increase in the number of Scots, and they are spread across the range of subjects we offer, including food science, countryside and land management, and agriculture. I've never before been surrounded by so many 'home' accents.'

Lochhead retains rural post

RICHARD Lochhead, cabinet secretary for rural affairs, food and environment, has retained the post he has already held for seven years following the new Scottish First Minister's cabinet reshuffle.

Mr Lochhead's remit includes land reform, the physical and marine environment, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, food and drink, crofting, sustainable development, biodiversity, natural heritage, environmental protection, flooding, water quality, national parks, environmental and climate justice.

Minister for environment, climate change and land reform is Aileen MacLeod, list SNP MSP for South Scotland.

Poultry breeders urged to monitor birds

POULTRY producers are being urged to remain vigilant following the outbreak of avian influenza at a duck breeding farm in East Yorkshire.

Scottish rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead said: 'My officials have been liaising closely with Defra which has made it clear the public health risk is very low - and that it has ruled out the H5N1 strain that is infectious for humans.'

'Furthermore, the latest Food Standards Agency advice is that avian flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.'

'Although avian influenza has been confirmed in England only,

I urge Scottish poultry producers to stay vigilant for any signs of disease - and my officials have updated industry representatives and other key stakeholders with the latest information and veterinary advice.'

'The Scottish government is continuing to work closely with our counterparts and delivery partners across the UK and we stand ready to take appropriate action as required.'

Scotland's chief veterinary officer Sheila Voas said: 'As always, all poultry keepers should continue their efforts to maintain high levels of biosecurity and monitor their birds for any signs

of disease.

'Avian influenza is a notifiable disease, and so any suspicion should be reported immediately to the nearest Animal Health office.'

'As part of routine wildlife disease surveillance post-mortem examinations of birds are undertaken in incidents where five birds are found dead in the same location and at the same time.'

Members of the public are asked to report any such incidents by calling the Defra national helpline on 08459 33 55 77. Scottish Government advice is not to handle dead wild birds where possible.'

Market Reports

ISLAY

OVERALL an excellent show of stock sold at enhanced values and to a strong force of mainland buyers round the ringside at Islay Auction Mart on Saturday, November 29.

United Auctions sold 497 head of cattle. Bullocks sold to an average £789.55 per head or 244.56p per kilo against £742.24 and 234.61p at the corresponding sale last year whilst the heifers levelled out at £787.76 per head or 232.11p per kilo against £685.56 and 232.48p last year.

Uiskentuie's consignment led the top priced bullocks at £1,225 for Limousin Crosses and the same breed from Foreland Estate led the Heifer prices at £1,165.

The top priced bullocks per kilo came from the Smaladh consignment when their Limousin crosses sold to 320 pence and Dunlossit Farms, Knocklearach led the heifer prices in this section at 285 pence.

Principal lots and prices:
Top prices per head:
Bullocks: AAx: £1,175 - Foreland Estate and Scarrabus (2): £1,125 - Uiskentuie: £1,015 - Knockrome (Boyle): £955 - Scarrabus: £1,205 - Knocklearach: 1055 - Cladville: £1,175 & £1,165(3) - Foreland Estate: £1,165 - Kilchiaran: £1,125 - Uiskentuie: £1,095 - Kilchiaran(2)

and Uiskentuie : £1,085 - Cladville: £1,075(3) and £1,025(4) - Uiskentuie: £1,005 - Ballychattrigan: £975 - Ballytarsin: £935(2) - Balaclava: £935 - Kintra: £925(2) - Kilchiaran: £915 - Ballytarsin(2), Uiskentuie(2) and Balaclava: £905 - Corrory: £815(8) - Kinnabus: SHx: £835 - Paire A Chlissan: BRBx: £845(4) - Knocklearach: Heifers: AAx: £945(3) - Lorgba: £905(4) - Scarrabus: CHARx: £795(5) - Ballinaby: LIMx: £1,165(3) and £1,155(3) - Foreland Estate: £1,115, £1,095, £1,085(2), £995(12) - Uiskentuie: £965 - Foreland Estate: £935(4) and £925(2) - Kilchiaran: £915 - Balaclava (3) and Uiskentuie (5).

Top prices per kilo:
Bullocks: AAx: 276p(26) - Scarrabus: 271p(2) - Kelsay: 241p(12) and 236p(12) - Scarrabus: 235p - Ballinaby: 234p(7) and 232p(9) - Kelsay: 228p(2), 227p(3) and 225p(3) - Scarrabus: 223p - Knockrome(Boyle): 223p(3) - Keppols: 221p - Uiskentuie: 220p - Ballinaby: CHARx: 308p (2) - Kintra: 288p (3) and 264p (2) - Ballinaby: 260p - Knocklearach: 235p (2) - Ballinaby: 229p and 221p - Knocklearach: LIMx: 320p(6) - Smaladh: 313p(4) - Kintra: 306p(4) - Knocklearach: 304p(5) - Smaladh: 299p - Woodend: 297p(4) - Knocklearach: 295p(8) - Kilbride: 281p -

Knocklearach (8) and Kintra(5): 280p - Kintra: 279p, 278p(4) and 277p(2) - Woodend: 275p(5) - Kintra: 273p(5) - Knocklearach: 270p(3) - Kintra: 267p(2) - Kilbride: 266p - Kintra and Knocklearach(6): 264p - Greanan: 262p - Knocklearach: 260p(7) - Smaladh: 246p - Balaclava: 242p - Kilchiaran: 240p(5) - Blackpark: 239p and 238p - Knocklearach: 237p(6) - Corrory: SHx: 231p (2), 228p and 224p - Paire A Chlissan: SIMx: 220p - Corrory: BRBx: 281p (2) and 262p - Knocklearach: Heifers: AAx: 262p (2) and 257p - Ballinaby: 224p (5) - Scarrabus: CHARx: 273p - Kintra: 262p (5) and 257p (5) - Ballinaby: LIMx: 285p(2) - Knocklearach: 280p(5) - Kintra: 279p(4) - Knocklearach: 275p(8) and 269p(4) - Kilbride: 269p - Smaladh: 264p(9) - Knocklearach: 262p - Woodend: 261p(4) - Smaladh: 259p(12) - Knocklearach: 255p(5) - Kintra: 254p(3) - Woodend and Kilbride: 253p - Kintra: 250p - Blackpark: 241p(5) - Woodend: 236p(4) - Smaladh: 235p - Kilchiaran(2) and Knocklearach(3): 230p - Ballychattrigan.

FORT WILLIAM

AT FORT William Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd on November, 28, 1,500 store sheep of all classes were sold.

Lambs (912) averaged £36.47 per head and sold to £57 gross for Crosses from Ardornish Farms, Oban. Ewes (512) sold to £90.00 gross for Suffolks from 1 Bunacaimbe, Arisaig. Rams (26) sold to £110.00 gross for a Suffolk from 1 Bunacaimbe.

Feeding sheep (50) sold to £50 gross for a Suffolk waddler from Glangarsk, Arisaig. Other leading prices per head: Store lambs: SuffX - 4 Glebehill, Kilechoan, £55; BF - Achindaul Farm, Spean Bridge, £52; Chev - Drumbuie, Drumadrochit and Ardgour Estate, Oban, £50; BDM - 19 Blarmacfoldach, Fort William, £50; Cross - Insh Farm, Spean Bridge, £50; Mule - Glendoe Estate, Fort Augustus, £47.

Ewes: Chev - Annbank, Acharacle, £62; BF - 13 Peinchorran, Portree & 4 Glebehill, Kilechoan, £52; TexX - Alean Highland Estates, £44; Heb - 3,4 & 5 Kinlochell, Fort William, £42. Rams: Suff - Little Mill, Rothienorman, £80; Oxford - Little Mill, £80; Chev - 4 Glebehill, £80; BF - Moy Farm, Banavie, £70.

Feeding sheep: Chev gmr - Insh Farm, £46; BF gmr - 19 Blarmacfoldach, £41; Cross wdr - East Croft Roy, Newtonmore, £41.

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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (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 9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
14/04180/FUL	Aultfean, East Bay, Mallaig	Demolish Aultfean and replace with two bed dwelling
14/04348/FUL	Land 50M NW of The Old Rectory, Ballachulish	Erection of house (renewal of 11/02953/PIP)
14/04356/FUL	Development Site at Former Builders Yard And Store Rear of Shop Units, Patience Way, Caol, Fort William	Change of use from industrial unit to dwelling house
14/04360/FUL	Annedale, 18A Glencoe, Ballachulish	Proposed dwelling house
14/04369/FUL	104 High Street Fort William	Variation to extend pavement cafe operating hours (previous permission 13/01172/FUL)
14/04370/PIP	Land 120M South East Of Woodside, Mingarry, Acharacle	Erection of 4no houses & formation of access

Time period for comments is 14 days
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: epanning@highland.gov.uk

First registration of a croft.
Mr Duncan MacKay has registered his croft at Ardtoe, Acharacle, Ardnamurchan and Sunart, on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.
Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 14 August 2015.
Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C697.

First registration of a croft.
Andrew MacDonald has registered his croft Ardhiaivaig Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon on the crofting register held by the registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by the 14th August 2015. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C698.

Proposed Assignment of a Grazings Share(s)
Mrs Mary MacLeod, is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to assign the crofting shares that pertain to the croft at 3 Uragaig, Isle of Colonsay to Mr Richard Buttrick of Dunluce, Prospect Road, Dullatur, Glasgow.
If you have an interest in this application, you may submit comments on the proposal in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW (e-mail info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk) within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert.
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.

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Sept 2006
86,000 miles MOT
March 15 Very light use.
Same owner 7 years.
Many extras etc.
Phone for details/photos

Tel 07789154936

Renault Clio Dynamique 1.2



54 Reg, MOT till October 2015,
6 months road tax, mileage 59,800.
£950 o.n.o.

Tel 01880 820883 (Eves only)

2007 Ford Fiesta Zetec Climate

1400cc 5-door hatchback. Diesel. Black. MOT Jan 2015. 153k miles but maintained by a qualified mechanical engineer. Starts well and drives well. Economical car.
£2,000

Tel 01586 553804. (Peninver)

2003 A4 TDI Sport Avant.

Black. MOT Oct 2015. 139k miles but maintained by a qualified mechanical engineer. All the usual Sport specs. Starts well and drives well.
£2,200

Tel 01586 553804. (Peninver)

NISSAN ALMERA SX

Hatchback, 1500cc, petrol, 60,000 miles, MOT October 2015, electric windows, CD, parking sensors.
£1,200

Tel: 07960 504683

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING APPLICATIONS

Applicant, Croft, Extent/Purpose, Case number

Mr C Cameron
29 Anaheilt, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
0.0063 ha - Site for a turbine house
4.86.53265

Comments can be made to the Crofting Commission by any member of the crofting community within the locality of the land, within 28 days of the date of this newspaper. Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW or info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk

First registration of a croft.
Donald McAllister has registered his crofts 1/2 3 Cladach (A0519) and Port-A-Reidhleinn (A0521) Kilchoman on the crofting register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person wishing to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 14 July 2015. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration numbers are C657 (1/2 3 Cladach) and C312 (Port-A-Reidhleinn)

First registration of a croft.
Donald McAllister has registered his crofts 1/2 3 Cladach (A0519) and Port-A-Reidhleinn (A0521) Kilchoman on the crofting register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person wishing to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 14 July 2015. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration numbers are C657 (1/2 3 Cladach) and C312 (Port-A-Reidhleinn)

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Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

marine scotland

Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

Marine Protected Areas management - Consultation 2014

A series of drop-in events is being held across Scotland to share information about Marine Scotland's consultation on statutory management measures for Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. The consultation is seeking views on possible management approaches which may be implemented for protected areas in local waters, and elsewhere around Scotland.

This is an opportunity to share your views, from a local or national perspective, directly with Marine Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage representatives and to help decide how protected areas are managed in the future.

Oban Drop-in Event:
Wednesday 10th December 2014 3pm to 9pm
Corran Halls

Tobermory Drop-in Event:
Thursday 11th December 2014 3pm to 9pm
Tobermory Harbour Exhibition

For more information please visit:
www.scotland.gov.uk/MarineProtectedAreas

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

A MEETING OF THE OBAN, LORN AND THE ISLES AREA COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD IN THE CORRAN HALLS, OBAN

At 10:30am - Wednesday 10th December 2014

Members of the public are welcome to attend and a public question time will take place during the meeting. Questions can be asked on the day or can be submitted in advance to the Area Committee Manager, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT. Telephone: 01631 567945. The Agenda for the meeting will be available to view from Wednesday 3rd December at the Service Point, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AW and at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Douglas Hendry
Executive Director - Customer Services

First registration of a croft.
Mrs Flora MacConnell has registered her croft Upper Kilchattan, Colonsay on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 20th August 2015. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is A0428.

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

THIRD SECTOR GRANTS 2015

Application forms for area grants to third sector organisations for 2015 are now available at local area community learning offices or can be accessed using the following link: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/funding-and-support

Closing dates for applications is Monday 2nd February and Monday 15th June 2015.
For further information please phone 01436 657600 or email communitydevelopment@argyll-bute.gov.uk

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

PLANNING

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

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 No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02629/PPP	Demolition of existing building, erection of dwellinghouse with detached garage, installation of septic tank and soakaway and formation of new access	Kentallen Farm Office Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JS	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
14/02662/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Plot A3 Land South East Of Ashcroft Dervaig Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6DS	Sub Post Office Dervaig
14/02664/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Plot A4 Land South East Of Ashcroft Penmore Dervaig Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6DS	Sub Post Office Dervaig
14/02669/PPP	Erection of staff accommodation unit and self catering unit and installation of septic tank	Glenforsa Hotel Glenforsa Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6WU	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
14/02707/PPP	Construction of cycle route and associated works	Cycle Track From Ferlochan Burn To Sea Life Centre Barcaldine Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Ledaig
14/02717/PPP	Erection of 2 dwellinghouses, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access	Land West Of Cnoc AMhuilinnPortsonachan Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Dalmaily
14/02741/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land South Of Toha Baracca Fiddon Fionnphort Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA66 6BN	Sub Post Office Fionnphort
14/02767/PPP	Renewal of planning permission reference 11/01894/PP (Erection of a dwellinghouse, formation of a vehicular access and the installation of a septic tank)	Land To North Of Seabank Farmhouse Benderloch Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1SB	Sub Post Office Ledaig
14/02799/PPP	Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse	Land To Northwest Of Ashlea Croft Drive Oban	Oban Area Office
14/02805/PPP	Installation of caravan for additional accommodation (retrospective)	The Old Wood Shed Glencruitten Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 40B	Oban Area Office

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 1A Manse Lochgilphead Brae PA31 8RD, 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.

Ref No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02659/PPP	Renewal of planning permission 11/01713/PP (Demolition of existing derelict building, erection of dwellinghouse and installation of septic tank)	Land East Of Machrie Rockside Kilchoman Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Port Charlotte

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, Central Validation Team, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD.

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.

COMMUNITY SERVICES : EDUCATION

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 1980 CHOICE OF SCHOOL

It is customary for children to attend their local school; however, parents may make a written request to place their child in any school under the management of the education authority. Such a request is referred to as a placing request.

Information concerning the authority's schools and the procedures to be followed in making placing requests is available at every school and at the Education Offices, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 708580). This information is also available for inspection or reference at public libraries. Information in relation to any particular school is available at that school.

Placing requests for session beginning August 2015 should be sent to the Executive Director of Community Services, Education Offices, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 708580) by 13 March 2015 for primary and secondary schools.

Gaelic Medium Education

Gaelic Medium Education is available in the following schools:- Bowmore Primary School, Islay; Tiree Primary School, Tiree; Salen Primary School, Mull; Rockfield Primary School, Oban; Strath of Appin Primary School, By Oban and Sandbank Primary School, Dunoon. For further information on Gaelic Medium Education please contact Donald MacLeod, Education Officer, donald.macleod@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Parents who are interested in such provision are advised to register at the Gaelic Medium School in their area in accordance with the advertisement on registration of children which will be published week commencing 29 December 2014.

Parents of children due to commence attendance at school in August 2015, whether or not they wish to make a placing request, should proceed in accordance with the advertisement on registration of children which will be published week commencing 29 December 2014.

Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director - Community Services

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS, 1985

NOTICE is hereby given that the Audited Financial Statements of Argyll and Bute Council and applicable charities for the year to 31st March 2014 together with the Audit Certificate, is available for public inspection during ordinary business hours at the undernoted main offices and libraries of the Council.

The Financial Statements can also be viewed on the Argyll & Bute Council website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

Copies of the Financial Statements will be available to any interested persons on application to the Head of Strategic Finance, Argyll & Bute Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Sally Loudon, Chief Executive

Offices of the Council:
Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead; Burnet Building, Campbeltown; Manse Brae, Lochgilphead; Hill Street, Dunoon; Albany Street, Oban; Eaglesham House, Rothsay; Scotcourt House, 45 West Princes Street, Helensburgh; Jamieson Street, Bowmore; Broadalbans Street, Tobermory; Crossapol, Tiree (restricted hours).

Libraries of the Council:
Lochgilphead Library, Manse Brae, Argyll Street, Dunoon; Aqualitrium, Campbeltown; Albany Street, Oban; Moat Centre, Rothsay; Barrmore Road, Tarbert; West King Street, Helensburgh; Main Street, Carradass; Primary School, Rosneath; Highland Avenue, Sandbank.

N.B. Please check with individual libraries for opening hours.

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If you've got the energy, drive, determination and ambition, we can offer you an exciting and rewarding career with one of Scotland's foremost independent newspaper publishers.

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Please apply by email with full C.V and covering letter to: ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk

argyllshire advertiser
Incorporating Campbeltown Courier

Reporter

An enthusiastic, multi-skilled Reporter is required to join weekly newspaper, the Argyllshire Advertiser, part of the award-winning Oban Times newspaper group.

Joining the team at the Lochgilphead office, Mid Argyll, the successful candidate will have a solid foundation in journalism, good leadership qualities, excellent communication skills, a great deal of energy and at least two years experience. A full driving licence is essential.

This is an exciting opportunity with excellent salary and benefits package.

To apply, please send a covering letter of application with CV by email to: ali@obantimes.co.uk

Trainer/Health & Safety Advisor

Marine Harvest (Scotland) is the largest Aquaculture Company operating in Scotland. The Company is seeking to recruit an additional Trainer/Health & Safety Advisor.

Reporting to the Health & Safety Manager, the primary focus of the role will be to deliver training to Marine Harvest employees in Health & Safety Awareness, Manual Handling, Chemical Handling, Confined Space Entry and other areas of Health & Safety. In addition the successful candidate will be required to assist the Health & Safety Manager with site audits, assist in developing, implementing and maintaining Health & Safety policies/procedures and ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation.

Applicants will preferably have a minimum of 1 years' experience in a Training/Health & Safety role and ideally possess a Train the Trainer qualification and NEBOSH General Certificate, or other industry recognised qualification. In addition applicants must possess excellent verbal and written communication skills, excellent presentation skills and knowledge of industry related Health and Safety legislation and regulations. The post is based in Fort William however regular travel to the company's sites throughout the West Coast and Outer Isles is required.

In return, Marine Harvest offers a competitive salary and benefits package along with excellent opportunities for personal growth and development.

If you have the drive, commitment and enthusiastic personality that is required for this role, coupled with experience, please apply in writing stating your reasons for applying and your relevant skills and experience to: Vicky Ferguson, Human Resources Manager, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William, PH33 7PT by closing date of Wednesday 31st December 2014.



Argyll College UHI

Secretary to the Board of Argyll College UHI

Salary negotiable 8 hours per week

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a suitably qualified individual to support the continuing development of Argyll College. The College is an academic partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands for the provision of Higher Education and is also a key provider of further education within Argyll and Arran.

The key purpose of this role is to provide guidance and support to the chair of the Board of Governors, Board members and the Principal on corporate governance, including acting as Secretary to the Board and its Committees.

The post is salaried at .20 FTE, equivalent to 1 day per week. The post holder will be expected to work flexibly as there will be certain times of the year when there is a higher time requirement than others. A valid driving licence is essential as attendance at meetings is required across the Argyll College area.

An application form and job description can be found on the vacancies section of our website: www.argyllcollege.ac.uk

All applications must be made on the Argyll College application form.

Please send/email completed application form to:

Lorna McDonald
Argyll College UHI Ltd, Glenshellach Business Park,
Oban PA34 4RY

or e-mail lorna.mcdonald@uhi.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is **Monday 15th December**

Farm Technician
Ardnish

Salary £17,978 to £22,808 plus overtime

We are currently looking to identify a Farm Technician to work within the Environment & Technical Services Department at our Lochailort Trials Unit at Ardnish.

The successful applicant will be required to carry out a variety of duties including undertaking internal and commercial feeding trials, fish husbandry and site maintenance. The successful applicant will be expected to work flexibly across the Unit's remit. The position is offered on a full time permanent position working a 40 hour week on any five out of seven days.

Applications are invited from individuals who have a positive approach to this type of work, are competent swimmers, have excellent communication, organisational and numerical skills and have the ability to work on their own initiative. In addition candidates must possess excellent computer skills, particularly in Microsoft Excel.

A driving licence is essential for this role.

If you are interested in applying for this vacancy, please submit an application in writing to Gillian Dempster, Human Resources Assistant, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William, PH33 7PT by the closing date of Friday 19th December 2014.



dawnfresh

Dawnfresh Farming Ltd, part of the Dawnfresh Seafoods Group is seeking to recruit 3 candidates to fulfil the roles outlined below. These positions will be based at our seawater cage farms on Loch Etive, near Taynuilt.

Fish Farm Technician – Loch Etive

The role of Fish Farm Technician is interesting and varied. Working outdoors as part of a small team, it is focused upon all aspects of successful trout production including feeding, grading, harvesting, net changing and other general farm maintenance tasks, including boat handling.

Previous aquaculture experience is desirable but not essential as full training and support will be provided. A full driving licence is essential.

Fish Farm Yardman/Technician - Loch Etive

The role of Fish Farm Yardman/Technician is interesting and varied. Working outdoors as part of a small team, it is focused upon all aspects of successful trout production including feeding, grading, harvesting, net changing and other general farm maintenance tasks, including boat handling.

As well as carrying out various duties of a Farm Technician, the ideal candidate will also be carrying out the role of Farm Yardman. Such responsibilities include maintaining the yard area and storage facilities in a safe and orderly fashion. Also carrying out daily safety checks on the forklifts and carry out routine maintenance on forklifts and other engines. There will be offshore work when required.

Previous aquaculture experience is desirable but not essential as full training and support will be provided. A full driving licence is essential. Experience of operating tele-handlers is a necessity and experience of routine maintenance is not necessary but advantageous. The successful candidate will have the ability to work autonomously and as part of a team.

Farming Administrator – Loch Etive

You will support the work of the farm staff in providing friendly and office based services, including being the first point of contact of the farm for all visitors and callers. You should have excellent office administration skills along with expertise in Microsoft Office.

Key accountabilities of the role include:-

- Input data on to Meractus software programme giving farming control, monitoring and planning;
- Maintain a rolling 6 month staff rota showing holidays, absence, etc;
- Keep employee records up to date and monitor and track absence;
- Learn and maintain knowledge of Codes of Good Practice on finfish farming, Freedom Food, quality Trout UK & Global Gap standards;
- Maintain visitor site PPE clothing is fit for purpose & ready for use;
- Support and assist the Farm Manager with administrative tasks in preparation for meetings.

All positions above are full time, working a 40 hour week. Beyond the nature of the roles of Farm Technician and Technician/Yardman, the post holder(s) would be expected to undertake additional hours as required in order to accommodate the needs of the business, this will include weekend cover on a rota basis.

If you are interested in applying for any of the positions above, please send your CV to hr@dawnfresh.co.uk

Keyline BUILDERS MERCHANTS

Yard Sales Assistant
Oban Branch (Salary + benefits)

Great benefits and plenty of opportunities for career progression - join our expanding team at Keyline as a Yard Sales Assistant and share our success and good times with a hard-working, friendly bunch of people.

This is a key customer-facing role, so your people skills will have to be razor-sharp. As a Yard Sales Assistant you will service all our customers with a smile and complete all necessary paperwork accurately to make sure they are absolutely satisfied with the products they buy and the service they receive. Full product training will be provided so the most important thing is that you have a flexible and can do approach.

Keyline is the UK's number one supplier of civils, heavy building materials and drainage solutions, with a nationwide network of branches and our aim is to be 'Best in Town' for product knowledge, availability and customer service. We're part of the Travis Perkins Group a FTSE 100 Company that's been recognised as one of Britain's Top Employers since 2010. If you aim to be the best you can be, then we'd like to hear from you.

If you would like to be considered for these positions please apply in writing to Iain Hunter, Branch Manager, Keyline Builders Merchants, Soroba Road, Oban PA34 4HQ. No agencies please.

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THE UNDERWATER CENTRE
FORT WILLIAM

The Underwater Centre has been at the forefront of delivering commercial diver training since 1975. We train air & closed bell divers, deliver a range of ROV training, & support a wide range of companies testing subsea technology.

Marine Operations Manager

An opportunity has arisen for a Marine Operations Manager responsible for management of vessels, moorings, infrastructure & equipment used for training; lead the marine & mechanical engineering team; project manage commercial trials.

Who We're Looking For:

You will have proven experience in marine operations, moorings, vessel management & project management. Be educated to higher level or equivalent with a further education qualification in engineering or technical discipline. Have a Masters (200t) commercially endorsed power certificate or a Coastal Skipper (80t) certificate & STCW 95 certificate.

Applications: With CV & current salary details to: hr@theunderwatercentre.com or Human Resources, The Underwater Centre, Marine Walk, Carmichael Way, Fort William PH33 6FF

CUILFAIL HOTEL
KILMELFORD

Chef, full time post

Pay negotiable according to experience

Please send CV to Yvonne, Cuilfail Hotel, Kilmelford, Oban, Argyll PA34 4XA or mail to cuilfail.co.uk Tel: 01852 200 274

G McNaughton & Son
Lochgilphead

Experienced 360 Degree Excavator Operator

Must have experience Driving License essential

Tel: (01546) 602 389 during office hours for an application form or email c.v. to gmnargyll@gmail.com

LQS
LOCHALINE QUARTZ SAND

Lochaline Quartz Sand Ltd. is looking for a **Maintenance Electrician** (full time) for plant and underground operations at Lochaline silica sand mine

If you are interested, please send your cv to veronique@lqsmine.com or post to LQS, Lochaline Mine, Morvern, PA80 5LQ

West coast recruitment

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National Aquaculture Company
Several Management Positions

- Farm Manager
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- R.O.N.C Net Cleaning Manager
- Land based Hatchery/Nursery Managers

World's largest barramundi sea cage operation and growing fast! Exciting work environment - Great career advancement opportunity - Attractive salary package - On the doorstep to Europe

NAQUA cultures premium quality barramundi in the Red Sea based in Saudi Arabia. The company's sea cage grow out site is situated at Al Lith south of Jeddah. This is an opportunity for a person seeking to kick-start their career in a growing environment, as well as the chance to get involved in a fast growing and exciting new aquaculture business.

What we are looking for:
NAQUA fundamentally is a start-up business although already the world leader. The company is looking to industrialize its business and is seeking to inject large scale aquaculture experience. The ideal applicant would possess 3-5 years cage farming experience, possess a solid understanding of fish husbandry, have good knowledge in cage and net installations, Good experience in boat handling and crane/winch operations, a good basic knowledge for management, commerciality and strategic planning and have the foundational skills to commence a career in a growing company. These are all key positions supporting the senior management team and would really suit someone who wants to be part of a motivated team that is determined for success. The position attracts a competitive salary package for the right applicant.
If you are interested please forward initial interest to: hrd-recruitment@naqua.com.sa using the Subject: **NAQUA Jobs + Position applied for.**

Oban Times Oban Times
RECRUITMENT RECRUITMENT
Oban Times Oban Times

ORMSARY FARMERS
EXPERIENCED SHEPHERD

An experienced shepherd is required to be responsible for the management of Hill and Lowground flocks at Ormsary Estate in Argyll. The successful candidate should be an enthusiast with initiative and the ability to work as part of a team on this busy estate.
Good dogs are required together with knowledge of relevant record keeping.
An attractive employment package including a modern family house and pension is offered for this position.
Ormsary is a diversified estate with excellent local community and schooling facilities.
Apply with CV and references to:
Archie McArthur, General Manager, Ormsary Farmers, Ormsary Estate Office, Lochgilphead Argyll, PA31 8PE
Email: archie@ormsary.co.uk



Stramash
Inspiring life through the outdoors

Be part of a growing and developing community social enterprise that uses the outdoors to make a real difference in people's lives.

- Outdoor Early Years Coordinator (Nursery Manager), Oban
- Outdoor Early Years Senior Practitioner, Fort William
- Outdoor Early Years Practitioner, Oban
- Outdoor Early Years Modern Apprenticeship, Oban

For an application pack, including closing dates, email recruitment@stramash.org.uk. For more information about Stramash visit www.stramash.org.uk or telephone 01631 566080. Stramash is a registered Scottish Charity SC040538

Argyll College UHI

Part-time Tutors Required

For our Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown centres, we are looking to recruit tutors with experience in the following subject areas, who have the enthusiasm to pass on their knowledge to others:

Web Development, Programming, SQL, MS Office Applications, Social Media, Digital Media, Local/Scottish History, Maths and Numeracy
No specific qualifications are required.

Health and Social Care
Tutors must hold a minimum of SVQ3 Health and Social Care or equivalent or have a nursing qualification with at least two years practical experience in health in the community.

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The successful applicants will be subject to an application to join Disclosure Scotland Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

An application form and job description can be found on the vacancies section of our website www.argyllcollege.ac.uk

All applications must be made on the Argyll College application form. Please send/email completed application form to:
Lorna McDonald, Argyll College UHI Ltd, Glenshellach Business Park, Oban PA34 4RY or e-mail lorna.mcdonald@uhi.ac.uk

The closing date for applications is **Wednesday 17th December**

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October was strongest month for new housing since 2011, National House Building Council figures reveal

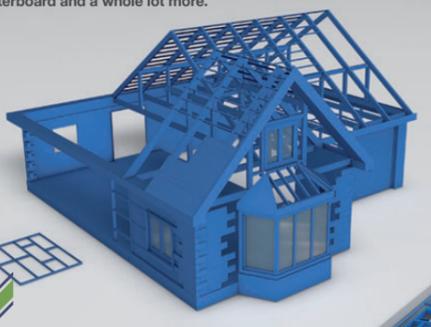
October was the strongest month for new housing registrations since June 2011, figures released by NHBC have revealed.
The figures show that a total of 13,950 new homes were registered in October with 11,151 in the private sector and 2,799 public sector. The previous highest single month for new home registrations was in June 2011, when 14,565 homes were registered.
October also showed a 10 per cent increase in growth compared to the same month last year when 12,682 new homes were registered (9,666 private sector; 3,016 public sector).
The rolling quarter August to October showed an increase of 14 per cent compared to the same period last year, with a total of 37,140 new homes (29,341 private sector, 7,799 public sector) registered across the country (32,716 for the same period in 2013; 24,350 private sector, 8,366 public sector).
This represents a 20 per cent increase in private sector registrations, while public sector registrations

are down by seven per cent. The strong October figures were boosted, in part, by the registration of 539 new units registered during the third phase of the Battersea Power Station redevelopment project.
As the leading warranty and insurance provider for new homes in the UK, NHBC's monthly registration statistics help to provide new and accurate data on the country's new homes market.
Commenting on the latest new home statistics, NHBC Chief Executive Mike Quinton, said: 'The October figures show that the UK housebuilding industry is continuing to build on the strong new housing volumes seen in 2013. All the signs are that 2014 will be another encouraging year with growth being registered across all parts of the UK.
'While this is obviously positive news, we know that the industry is working from a historically low base so there is still much work to do to ensure this momentum continues.'



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TUTOR REQUIRED OBAN AREA for 2nd year pupil to cover Maths and English. Please reply to PO Box 4, Oban Times Ltd, Oban, PA34 4HB.

PERSONAL NOTICES

Happy Birthday
Happy 70th Birthday Brian!!
6th December 2014

Happy Birthday
Thom Lewis Pettifor

Pettifor - Campbell - Iain and Audrey are delighted to announce the birth of Thom Lewis Pettifor on 11th October 2014. A wee brother for Alison and Daniel, first grandchild for Jim and Maureen Pettifor, Lenzie and fourteenth grandchild for Colin and Lorna Campbell, Oban. Heartfelt thanks to Oban Maternity Unit, Scottish Ambulance Service, RAH Paisley for the safe delivery of Thom, Neonatal Transport Team and Neonatal Unit at P.R.M Glasgow and for all the messages of support. We're home!

LOCAL SERVICES

BIRTHS



NEISH

Ruaraidh and Siobhan are delighted to announce the safe arrival of baby Honey Ann Neish on November 11 at 9.58am weighing a healthy 7 lb 1 oz! A wee sister for Colbie and Murphy, first grandchild for Fiona and Iain Mitchell, Taynuilt and third grandchild for Brenda and Brian Neish, Kilchrenan. Huge thank you to all the lovely midwives at Oban and Lorne Hospital who delivered her and for all their support.

ENGAGEMENTS



McCUSH - HRABALKOVA Roddy and Marian McCuish are delighted to announce the engagement of their youngest son Michael to Lenka Hrabalkova, second daughter of Petr and Zorka Hrabalkovi, Prague.

DEATHS

ACKROYD - Peacefully after a long illness on November 26, 2014 William (Bill) Ackroyd, aged 79 years. Loving husband of Janet, dear dad, grandad and brother. Sadly missed by all his family. Funeral service was held at Torosay Parish Church on Tuesday December 2, 2014 thereafter to Kilpatrick Duart Cemetery.

BAIN - Peacefully at Westpark Care Home, on Wednesday November 26, 2014, Sheila formerly of Kincardine, aged 88 years, beloved wife of the late John. Also a loving mum to Catherine, Iain and Colin. Funeral service will take place on Friday December 5, 2014 at Falkirk Crematorium at 12.15pm No Flowers Please. Donation if desired to Macmillan Nurses.

CAIRNS - Peacefully at the Belford Hospital Fort William on Monday December 1, 2014. Helen Elizabeth (nee Sutherland) beloved wife of Alan, dearly loved sister of Joan and the late David, daughter of the late David and Marjory Sutherland and a dear aunt. Funeral Service 12pm on Friday December 5, 2014 at Duncansburgh Church, The Parade, Fort William and interment thereafter 1.30pm at Ardgorce Cemetery to which all family and friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only.

CARMODY - Peacefully at Lorn & Islands Hospital, Oban on Wednesday November 26, 2014, in her 98th year, Robertina (Ina) (nee Cameron) beloved wife of the late Charlie and a much loved Auntie. She will be sorely missed.

GRACIE - On November 28, 2014, Alan Campbell, aged 85, passed away at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban. Beloved husband of Margaret (Ferguson). Devoted dad of Moreen and Sandra, much respected father-in-law of David and Bob. Precious papi of Jonathan, Jill, Lisa and the late Jason and great-pati to Nicole, Chloe and Poppy. 'Amulree', Laurel Road, Oban.

MACLEAN - Margaret. Peacefully at Belford Hospital on November 25, 2014, aged 85 years, Victoria Road, Fort William and former employee of John Menzies. Much loved sister of Donald, aunt and great-aunt. Gone but not forgotten.

MACNEILL - John MacNeill (formerly of Oban) passed away peacefully after a short illness at the Belford Hospital, Fort William on November 22, 2014. The funeral was held at St. Patrick's Church, Mallaig on November 27, 2014. John was a much loved husband and father to Iain. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all relatives and friends for their great kindness and support during this sad time. A special thank you to Fr. Joe Calleja. Also our thanks to the medical and nursing staff at the Belford Hospital who cared so well for John during his final days. Also the Mallaig Community Nurses and Dr. Gartshore and the local ambulance crew. To Mike McFall Funeral Directors for the excellent service provided John was laid to rest in Morar Cemetery close to the hills and lochs where he spent many happy days. The retail collection £425.00 to be shared between the Belford Hospital and The River Fund.

Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

MACNEILL - Avril Brown. Peacefully on November 29, 2014 aged 85 years. The beloved sister of Dugald, Anne, the late Jock, Mary and Gordon and much loved aunt to her seventeen nieces and nephews. Service of Thanksgiving to take place at St Mary's Church, Adderbury Oxfordshire, on Monday December 15, 2014 at 11.00am. Donations gratefully received for Alzheimer's Research and flowers welcome. C/o: Edd Frost & Daughters Family Funeral Directors, 20 Horton View, Banbury Oxon OX16 9HR Tel: 01295 40 40 04.

MARRISON - Laura, oldest daughter of Donald and Anne Beckitt, died at home in Alves, Moray on November 29, 2014 after six years courageously living with cancer. She is so much missed by her husband Andrew, two small sons, her sisters Bryony and Lissa, all her extended family and a huge circle of friends. Donations, if wished, to Macmillan cancer support.

MUNRO - Suddenly at Port Askaig, Islay on Monday November 24, 2014, Ian Fraser Munro (Kyle), aged 65 years. Greatly loved husband of Mavis, adored father of Cara and Evan, dearest father-in-law of Niall, proud grandpa of Eva, Charlet Rose, Maria, Freddy and Fraser, dear brother of Rita. Will be a huge miss to us all.

SULLIVAN - Elizabeth (Bessie) nee MacPhail of Ballephetrish, Isle of Tiree. Passed away on November 27, 2014, aged 76 years. Dear daughter of the late Callum and Mary. Wife of the late Jim, mother to David, Claire and Jennifer. Devoted Grandma to Matthew, Samuel, Ben, Suzannah and Alex xxxxx. Funeral mass to be held on Tuesday December 9, at St John the Evangelist Church, New Ferry, Merseyside at 12:00noon, followed by cremation at Landican Crematorium. Family flowers only please, donations if desired for MIND, c/o Charles Stephens Funeral Directors, 215 Bebington Road, Rock Ferry, Wirral, Merseyside, CH42 4QA. Tel: 0151 645 4396 or via www.charles-stephens.com/obituaries

YEOMAN - Peacefully at Lorn & Islands Hospital, Oban on November 28th, 2014, in her 84th year, Chrissie nee MacNeil, beloved wife of Hamish Yeoman, much loved mother of Tommy, a dear sister, mother-in-law, nan to five grand-daughters and four great-grandchildren. Rest in Peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BLACK - The family of the late James Black would like to thank his friends and neighbours for all their kind expressions of sympathy. Special thanks to all his carers especially Mary Kennedy for her unwavering friendship and support to Jimmy over the years. Also to the Rev. J. Paton for his touching service and to Billy McLymont for his compassionate funeral arrangements. Thanks to all who attended the church and graveside. Gillian, Douglas and families New Zealand and Canada.

GORDON - The family of the late Marjorie Gordon wish to thank the very caring staff at the Lynn of Lorne, Benderloch who were so good to her for the past three years and the kind neighbours and friends in Deirdre Road, Connel. Thanks also to D & A Munn undertakers for their sympathetic and efficient handling of the funeral and the Reverend Arthur Sinclair who conducted the service at the Inverness Crematorium. Marjorie's ashes will be interred in the Clachan Cemetery, Bettyhill.

MACINTYRE - Edith and the family of the late Ronnie MacIntyre would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy, cards and flowers following their sad loss. Very special thanks to Hilary Brown, Dr. Ewan Glen, community nurses, Marie Curie, E.C.C.T team, Care Plus, Carrigom and the Care Centre. Also special thanks to Rev. Dugald Cameron and Ian MacInnes for help, support and funeral service and Duncan MacDonald for gaelic singing and Donnie Files for playing the pipes. The sum of £1000 was raised for Marie Curie and Alzheimers.

WELSH - Catherine and family would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy, flowers, cards, phone calls and visits received since their sad loss of Mamie. Special thanks to Dr Rebecca Helliwell, nursing staff of Glenaray Ward, and the community nursing team for their kind care and attention to Mamie over the last few months. Our thanks are also extended to her friends and neighbours for their help and visits. Thanks to Rev Ken Ross for a lovely and comforting service; to Donald MacDonald Funeral

Directors for caring and efficient arrangements; to Morna for beautiful floral tributes and to Eileen and staff of Quarry View, Crarae for excellent catering. Finally, our thanks to all who attended at church and graveside to pay their respects.

MEMORIAMS

GILLIES - In loving memory of Graeme, who died on December 3, 2006. The family is growing year by year Our strength is stronger too But in our hearts there is a place which will always be for you. - With love Dad, Mam, Scott, Kevin, Sarah and Cameron, Ross, Asha and Sandy.

HARPER - Remembering with love my husband Donald who passed away December 4, 2013. Although we're not together we will never be apart because you have that special place right here within my heart. Always and forever. - Dorothy xxx

HARPER - Gone but not forgotten. - Love Fiona, Connor and Sophie

HARPER - Death leaves a heartache no-one can heal, Pops leaves a memory no-one can steal. - Love forever Robert, Allison and girls

HARPER - A beautiful memory dearer than gold, of a father whose worth can never be told, there's a place in my heart that no-one can fill. I miss you dad and I always will. Love you always. - Louise xxx

KENNEDY - In loving memory of a much loved sister, auntie and friend to many Anne Kennedy who left us on December 2, 2010. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day Unseen, unheard always near Still loved, still missed and very dear. - The Kennedy family

MACCOLL - In loving memory of our devoted Dad, John who died November 30, 2010. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day Unseen, unheard, but always near, Still loved, still missed and very dear.

MACGILLIVRAY - In loving memory of our dear wife, mum and gran, Morag, who died on November 27, 1979. Always remembered. - Inserted by her husband, Ewen, and family, Isle of Barra.

MACLEOD - In loving memory of Neil, a dear husband to Ruth, stepfather to Pauline and step grandfather to Nicholas and Phillipa, who passed away December 10, 2013. Always in our thoughts Forever in our hearts. - 'Alford', Glencoe and Eastbourne

MACPHEE - Treasured memories of our dear parents and grandparents, John (Jocka), who died December 2, 2003 and Angela (Angy), who died December 13, 2010. No tears, no verse, no words can say how much we miss you both. Love always. - John and Rosie, Julie and Ronnie, Nicola, Toni and Craig.xx

MACQUEEN - In loving memory of our dear dad Colin, who was lost at sea November 30, 1990. Love you always. - Yvonne, Richard and Michael.

MCDONALD - In loving memory of John (Ian), November 30, 2013. You never failed to do your best, Your heart was true and tender You simply lived for those you loved And those you loved remember. Always in our thoughts. - Your loving wife Lily, Bill, Graham, Lynn, Charmaine, Sharon, Kirsty, Lyndsey, Liam, Jack, Kaitlyn, Lily, Danielle and Sister Jeanette.

MORRISON - In loving memory of Hector, a special dad and seairn who passed away December 7, 2013. When someone you love becomes a memory the memory becomes a treasure. - Love Teeny and family.

MORRISON - Hector. In loving memory of dad and seairn. Missing you, loved you all the time. - With love from Angus, Margaret, Kirtseen, Ronnie, Carrick and Lily.

MORRISON - Hector. In loving memory of a father, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away on December 7, 2013. Forever loved, missed and remembered. - Christina, Banny, Laura, Martin, Sinead and Lewis.

MORRISON - In loving memory of a dear dad, seairn and father-in-law Hector, who died December 7, 2013, also remembering a loving mum and granny Mary, who died May 17, 2004. We hold you close within our hearts And there you shall remain To walk with us throughout our lives Until we meet again. - Lorraine, Paul, Jill and Kyle.

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, Catherine and family.

NEWELL - Flora Lily fell asleep November 29, 2011, very much missed but will be with me always and forever. - Ralph

O'BRIEN - Treasured memories of Valerie, a loving wife, mum and grandmother who died on December 4, 2010. Always in our thoughts Forever in our hearts. xxx - Billy, Louise, Laurence, Olivia, Amelie and Lucia.

TIMMS - Treasured memories of our loving mum and nana Sheena, who passed away November 30, 1971. Also remembering all other loved ones. Silent thoughts of time together, hold memories that last forever. - Love Catherine, Lachie and family

Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS



Children of St John's, Caol pictured after receiving the sacrament of confirmation. With them are parish priest Fr Roddy McAuley, headteacher of Lochside RC primary school Violet Smith and the children's teacher Ailise McLoughlin.

Church guild enjoys talk and whist drive

MUCKAIRN Church Guild met recently for a talk from Helen May Bayne, from one of the projects Out of Africa into Malta, discussing refugees suffering from flooding. After a very good illustrated talk on November 3, the ladies enjoyed a cup of tea and further questions and the meeting closed with a hymn and a prayer.

Dougie McDougall was card master at the Muckairn Church whist drive, welcoming four tables of players on November 7 raising £140 for Children in Need. The winners were: Gents: 1 Colin Campbell, 2 Stella Huntingford, 3 Florence Anderson. Consolation Prize: Cecilia Keenan. Gents travelling

prize: Florence Anderson. Ladies: 1 Margaret Forbes, Connel, 2 Marilyn Henderson, Kilchrennan, 3 Marina MacInnes, Connel. Consolation Prize: Peggy MacIntyre, Dalavich, Ladies Travelling Prize: Margaret Forbes. The December Whist will be held on Friday, December 12 to raise funds for the senior citizen outings.

Brownies support cancer awareness day



WHEN Taynuilt Rainbows and Brownies learnt that one of their Brownies had lost her grandmother to pancreatic cancer and that her family were working hard to spread awareness, they wanted to help support the cause too. Taynuilt Rainbows and Brownies hope that if the public become familiar with some of the signs and symptoms of Pancreatic Cancer this may help with earlier detection and ensure that others have a better chance of survival following earlier diagnoses.

The first-ever world Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Day took place on November 13 and the Brownies have been working hard since then to increase awareness of the signs and symptoms of the illness in the hope that lives may be saved.

Taynuilt Brownies have been making people aware of the symptoms of pancreatic cancer.

Thought for the week

From Darkness to Light

DARKNESS and light: surely one of life's most vivid contrasts. As winter advances with days getting shorter and nights getting longer we realise how much we long for light. No wonder that darkness and light have often been used, when reflecting on our human experience, as images for the deeper realities of the soul. No wonder that it is often a spine-chilling moment when we hear during the approach to Christmas the text which states: "The people that walked in dark-

ness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Darkness we know. It may be the personal darkness of sorrow and loss, of failing health, or of the disappointments life brings. It may be the economic gloom which has settled upon the world in our time, with our own country and our own community not being spared. Can we know light? Christmas lights, whether hung in our streets or strung on the tree at home, are there to

tell us that there is a force which dispels the darkness. The story we tell at Christmas brings us the sure hope that God has not left us in the darkness. Something exceptional happened with the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. As John's Gospel put it: "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world." Still today we may discover him as the light of our lives. Kenneth Ross Parish Minister, Netherlorn

CHARITY DONATIONS

Oban Hospice CARING FOR THE FUTURE. Donations always gratefully accepted. Please contact Jack Tolan, Birch Hill, Achnacreebeag, North Connel, PA37 1RE.

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WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT. Working towards a time when every person in Scotland has equal and ready access to the best information, treatment and care for cancer.

MARIE CURIE CANCER CARE. Oban & Lorn Fundraising Branch. Donations always gratefully accepted. Please contact Mrs Lillian Kermode, Tynwald, Glenburn, Soroba Road, Oban. 01631 571009

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GRADUATION David MacKinnon graduated from University of the Highlands and Islands, Perth College, with a BA (Hons) in Popular Music. David is a former pupil of St Mary's Primary and Lochaber High Schools and is the son of Mrs Diane King and Mr Ian MacKinnon.

Fort revival continues with four-goal romp at Huntly

Huntly 0
Fort William 4
Highland League

THE FORT William revival is showing no signs of stopping, following a 4-0 away thrashing of Huntly last Saturday.

The Claggan Park men made it three wins in a row for only the second time in their history and the first time in 13 years, after strikes from James Whyte, two from Callum MacLean and an own goal sealed another priceless three points.

The club's last three-game winning streak was in May 2002 with a 3-0 victory over the same opponents.

Saturday's rout at Huntly leaves Fort William in 13th place in the Highland League and eight points clear of bottom side Strathspey Thistle.

Manager Calum MacLean paid tribute to his players and coaching staff on what has been a fairytale run for the club.

He said: 'We have had some hard times at Fort William in recent years so its great to get a couple of wins and feel good about things again. I'd put it all down to the talent of the players we've got.'

'We've brought in quality, not just made signings to make up the numbers and it's all starting to gel. I'm absolutely delighted with Saturday's result, it was brilliant to watch.'

'We dominated Huntly, from the start we just went at them and the confidence grew from there.'

'I was also very pleased with the back four, but we don't like to

Football

pick out just one or two players, everyone was brilliant.'

Fort took a squad of seventeen to Huntly plus three trialists including David Osborne in goal, following his standout performance the week before against Keith. At half time, he was replaced by substitute goalkeeper Robin Harvey after reportedly suffering from migraines and double vision, though is said to have quickly recovered.

The visitors took only nine minutes to break the deadlock through James Whyte before Callum MacLean made it two on 24 minutes.

Fort were in full control during the second half and the match was effectively over as a contest when a James Whyte effort was helped into the net by a Keith defender, before MacLean scored his second of the afternoon to round off a famous victory.

Whyte also became the first ever player from an away side to win the man of the match award at Huntly's Christie Park.

However, the victory was overshadowed by the news that midfielder Craig Mainland has suffered ligament damage following a robust challenge by two Huntly players.

The 23 year-old, who has been a stand-out player this season, was rushed to hospital after the game and awaits a further scan to find out how long his recovery will take.

Fort's next match is a home tie on Saturday against Deveronvale.



West Highland Wheelers celebrated the club's 25th anniversary on Saturday 20_149wheeler01

Wheelers celebrate 25 years in the saddle

MEMBERS of West Highland Wheelers celebrated the group's 25th anniversary at the weekend - in the same place the first committee meeting was held.

The keen bikers and friends made up a party of 33 in Nevis Bank Inn on Saturday night, including founding members Davie Austin, Marian Austin and Graham Moss.

Former chairman Andy Rogers summarised the outstanding achievements and fun gained from 25 years of the club.

Emma Holgate, member of West Highland Wheelers, said: 'The club has been a part of the development and support of some huge achievements in the cycling world.'

'We have had several regional, local, national and international champions in the

Cycling

differing disciplines of cycling.

'Organisers from the Wheelers work hard to encourage more local people to get involved in cycling as well as creating new and exciting opportunities for existing members of all abilities.'

Four teams battle it out for top spot

Ten pin bowling

AFTER two months of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league the competition is becoming tight as four teams battle for first place.

In the scratch division the Creeps and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio are neck and neck at the top, both with 33 points, but Alleycats and Rotavators are hot on their heels with 32 points each.

Rotavators are leading the handicap division with 36 points, as second place Ardtoe/Nevis Radio lag behind with 31.

Stewart Duncan of The Creeps achieved the best individual game of week eight with 175, while Tony Whitelocke of Alleycats had the top two-game scratch series with 324.

It was a double success for Robert Cairns of British Legion Fort William C who managed both the top handicap game with 235 and the top two-game handicap series with 435.

Best scratch team game of the week came from Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with a score of 563 while Alleycats had the top two game scratch team series of 1095.

British Legion Fort William C had both the top handicap team game of 849 and the top two game handicap team series of 1628.

The highest scratch average is currently held by Pam Weller of Alleycats on 156 followed by Tony Whitelocke, also of Alleycats, with 147 and Stewart Duncan of The Creeps on 144.

Nevis Range gets ready for the winter season

Skiing

MORE THAN 100 ski and snowboard enthusiasts took to the slopes at Nevis Range to refresh their skills as the winter sets in.

Resort staff took their guests to the Aonach Mor hills for workshops including avalanche decision-making and companion rescue during the second annual pre-season backcountry gathering.

Jeff Starkey, head of ski patrol at Nevis Range, said: 'It's really important that skiers and boarders who venture off piste and into back country terrain are appropriately experienced and equipped.'

'This day has been all about getting these like-minded people together to learn, to share ideas and to plan adventures. We were delighted with the success of the day and we're already looking forward to our third gathering next year.'

School tournament

Badminton

PRIMARY school pupils from across the region met in Lochaber high for a badminton tournament on Tuesday.

The youngsters were competing as part of the Active Schools festival, which has included events from netball and basketball to cross country and rugby.

Look out for photos from the tournament in The Oban Times next week.

Head to head

Indoor football

THE TEAMS at the top of the Ali Young indoor football league will go head to head in the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.



Lochaber Welfare League prizewinners with sponsors and league organisers 20_149welfare02



Shaun Graham of Lundavra won both player of the year and top goal scorer 20_149welfare01

Lochaber Welfare League hands out the trophies

LOCHABER Welfare League players reunited at the weekend when they were presented with trophies for their efforts over the summer.

Silverware

Shaun Graham of Lundavra picked up silverware for player of the year and top goal scorer in the Railway Club on Friday night while Martin Kerr, captain of Caol United, collected trophies

Welfare football

for the Marine Harvest league and the John Baird Cup on behalf of his team.

Other prizes presented on the night were the Duthie Cup to Ballachulish, the Uisdean MacDonald Memorial Cup to Lochaber and the Kinloch Shield to Inverlochty.

Lochaber Yacht Club prizegiving

LOCHABER Yacht Club members gathered at the weekend for the annual dinner dance and prizegiving.

Keen sailors were recognised for their achievements at the Moorings Hotel event on Friday night, with almost 20 awards presented by commodore Richard Rumney.

Adrian Hope was honoured with the Ancient Mariner trophy for half a century of membership with the club.

All prizes: Frostbite Shield, Donnie Meldrum. Commodore's

prize, Hamish Loudon. Vice Commodore Trophy, Hamish Loudon. Merlin Trophy, Hamish Loudon. KK Cameron Trophy, Hamish Loudon. Black Rock Bell, Paul Biggin. Corpach Cannon junior member, Gregor Linfield. Faulkner Trophy for best crew, Lucy Ballantyne. St Christopher Trophy, Paul Biggin.

Brass Monkey Trophy, Hamish Loudon, Harry Jeffrey and Campbell Low. Omega Trophy, Hamish Loudon, Harry Jeffrey and Campbell Low. Scapa Trophy, Hamish Loudon, Harry

Yachting

Jeffrey and Ruari Edmond. Lochaber Wheel Liz Loudon, Andy MacKenna and John Wilson. Kilmallie Trophy, Marian Austin. No Duffers Cup, Ruari Edmond.

Endeavour Trophy for significant contribution, Harry Jeffrey. Ancient Mariner Trophy for half a century membership, Adrian Hope. Decanter set for long service, Chris Strong.



Prizewinners at the Lochaber Yacht Club annual dinner dance 20_149yacht01

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE. . .



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
A Gibb
Soroba Road
Oban
A Kennedy
Fort Augustus
Inverness-shire

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1300

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.

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, mistaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter. 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



Please tape your £1 coin here

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Saints push self destruct button again as they lose out to Finnart

'The other top teams in the league have definitely improved from last season while we seem to have gone backwards'

Finnart	4
Oban Saints	1
SAFL Premier Division	

SAINTS defensive woes continued on the 3G at Glasgow Green last Saturday against an in-form Finnart side.

The 4-1 final score was extremely harsh on Saints who played some good football throughout but struggled to find a way past a resolute home defence.

Saints battled hard until the final whistle but were once again undone by defensive lapses which were eagerly gobbled up by a clinical Finnart attack.

Desperately seeking a solution to Saints defensive problems, manager Iain Jackson made the bold step of dropping the ever present Alex Craik to the bench and deploying midfield anchorman Paul Kerr in the centre of the back three flanked by skipper Marc MacCallum and Jamie Graham.

Paul's midfield berth was taken by Roy McLuckie with the returning Myles McAuley and Ross Maitland also making the starting eleven.

After an even opening ten minutes, Finnart began to exert some pressure and forced a succession of corner kicks with which the Saints defence coped comfortably.

In the 15th minute Allan MacKay rose superbly against Finnart skipper Brian Blair to flick on a long Daniel Cassells clearance. Lewis Cameron was onto the flick-on in a flash and burst into the box only to be dispossessed before he could pull the trigger.

The Finnart clearance was met on the edge of the box by Donald Campbell who flashed a terrific drive narrowly wide.

The visitors were enjoying a good spell of possession at this point with Roy McLuckie, Myles McAuley and Donald Campbell pulling the strings in the centre of the park.

Ross Maitland came agonisingly close to opening the scoring in the 18th minute with a dipping 20 yard volley which cleared the cross bar by a matter of inches.

With 20 minutes on the clock, Saints were caught out by a long ball from the back down the Finnart left wing. Marc MacCallum appealed in vain for what looked to be a clear off-side decision but was unable to prevent his man from picking out an unmarked Jason McArthur in front of goal who netted to put Finnart in front. Jason is the brother of James McArthur, the Scotland and Crystal Palace midfielder.

Shortly afterwards Saints were indebted to Daniel Cassells when the big keeper made a fine point-blank stop to prevent Finnart increasing their lead.

On the half hour mark, Allan MacKay had a well-placed low shot tipped around the post by Finnart's accomplished keeper Brian Paton.

Two minutes later Finnart doubled their advantage with a good passing move on the left wing. Full back Andy Barnes and wide man Jason McArthur linked up well to find Ben Mills inside the Saints box and the striker made no mistake from close range with the Saints defence again all at sea.

The Oban side survived another scare in the 38th minute when, for the one and only time in the game, they failed to deal with a Finnart corner kick. Fortunately for Saints Ross Maitland had

Football

taken his customary position of guarding the far post and was able to block the Finnart header on the line and clear the ball to safety.

Saints closed the half pushing forward for a way back into the match and were desperately unlucky not to get it in the 43rd minute when Allan MacKay, Donald Campbell and Lewis Cameron linked up well on the right wing. Lewis got to the by-line and cut back for Donald Campbell to fire in a fierce shot which was blocked but spun loose to Allan MacKay whose shot shaved the outside of the post with the Finnart keeper rooted to the spot.

In spite of the 2-0 half time score line the Saints camp felt they were still very much in the game and started the second half in positive mood.

Finnart were now content to protect their two goal advantage and try to hit Saints on the counter attack, a tactic which was to prove successful.

Despite their territorial advantage Saints found clear cut chances hard to come by against a well-drilled Finnart defence which was excellently marshalled by their skipper Brian Blair.

Saints best openings fell to Ross Maitland and Allan MacKay who both shot straight at the Finnart keeper when they ought to have done better.

In the 58th minute Saints carved out a good shooting opportunity for Donald Campbell whose net bound shot was deflected wide of target.

From the resulting corner kick Finnart launched a long ball up field which left Jamie Graham



ON TARGET: Allan MacKay gets a shot on target during last Saturday's game against Finnart. Photo Derek Black

one-on-one with the pacy Jason McArthur.

The youngster's electric pace outstripped Jamie whose last ditch tackle just inside the box won the ball but was adjudged by referee Gordon Hay to be a foul. The referee later explained that, although Jamie had won the ball he had 'gone through' his opponent to get it. With the penalty kick awarded, Saints were relieved that the referee elected to caution Jamie rather than the anticipated dismissal.

When the two sides met at Glen-cruitten in a crucial top of the table clash towards the end of last season Daniel Cassells pulled off two excellent penalty saves but unfortunately for Saints the big keeper was unable to reproduce those heroics and was well beaten by Andy Robertson's spot kick.

Manager Iain Jackson freshened things up by introducing David McArthur and David Beaton to replace Roy McLuckie and Ross Maitland respectively.

In the 70th minute another Finnart counter attack brought panic to the Saints defence. Paul Kerr

felt he had been body checked in the build up. As he forlornly appealed for a free-kick Marc MacCallum rashly hauled back a Finnart striker in the box for the game's second penalty kick.

The Saints skipper was booked but on another day may well have seen red.

The penalty kick was again expertly dispatched by Andy Robertson for his second and Finnart's fourth goal of the game.

Brief appearance

In the 74th minute Dean Smith came on to replace Allan MacKay for what was to prove a very brief appearance for the Saints substitute. After just three minutes on the pitch Dean was involved in a nasty clash of heads in the centre circle with Finnart's Philip Blair. It was the Oban man who came off worse and after a lengthy stoppage a dazed and confused Dean was helped from the field of play.

Saints coach Peter MacCallum joined manager Iain Jackson to announce 'tell him he's Pele and send him back on'. It's not clear whether Peter was referring to

the Brazilian superstar or Saints' legend Pele MacCallum but in any event his advice was ignored and Alex Craik replaced the stricken Saints' striker.

With Alex taking up his usual place in the heart of the Saints defence and Paul Kerr moving forward into his accustomed central midfield role Saints continued to take the game to the hosts.

In the 83rd minute Saints were finally rewarded for their perseverance when a short corner routine involving Lewis Cameron and Craig MacEwan found Donald Campbell unmarked on the edge of the Finnart box. Donald's well placed curling shot through a ruck of players gave Brian Paton in the Finnart goal no chance.

Saints were desperate to reduce the deficit still further and should have been awarded a penalty kick when a Donald Campbell shot looked to be handled in the box by a Finnart defender. The referee decided he had already shown Saints enough sympathy and dismissed the appeal.

In stoppage time Saints

launched one last attack down the right wing, David Beaton sent over an inch perfect cross for Lewis Cameron whose header under pressure went narrowly wide of the keeper's left hand post.

There was no time left and the referee brought another disappointing afternoon for Saints to an end.

A disappointed manager Iain Jackson said: 'We played well enough, against a good side but like the game against St Joes the previous week Finnart looked sharper and quicker to the ball than us.'

'The other top teams in the league have definitely improved from last season while we seem to have gone backwards.'

'We need to get back to basics, and if every player at the club works really hard at training and on matchdays then I'm sure we can turn the corner.'

Saints have no game this Saturday, then face a tough trip away to face Harestones in the West of Scotland Cup on Saturday December 13.

Impressive win for Lochaber doctor in Lairg Mor race

Athletics

LOCHABER doctor Finlay Wild was first home in Lochaber Athletic Club's Lairg Mor Race on Sunday, more than five minutes ahead of second place Craig Mattocks of Carnethy.

Despite his impressive time of one hour, 28 minutes and 19 seconds, Wild fell just under three minutes short of breaking the course record of one hour, 25 minutes and 58 seconds, set by himself last year.

More than 70 runners took on the 13.8 mile course from Kinlochleven, following the West Highland Way to finish at Lochaber Leisure Centre in Fort William.

Lochaber's Stephen Burns took third place in 1:34:34 while Diane Baum achieved another local success as first lady home in 1:41:41.

Top 20 finishers (Lochaber Athletic Club unless stated): 1 Finlay Wild 1:28:19; 2 Craig Mattocks, Carnethy, 1:33:55; 3 Stephen Burns 1:34:34; 4 Steve MacDonald 1:35:53; 5 Lawrence Ramsay, unattached, 1:36:31; 6 Ryan Mackenzie, Highland Hill Runners, 1:37:18; 7 Allan Ross 1:38:13; 8 Diane Baum 1:41:41; 9 Jon Gay 1:41:53; 10 Steven Burns 1:42:36; 11 Ali Kennedy 1:42:40; 12 Luke Taylor, Highland Hill Runners, 1:42:45; 13 Stewart Wilson, Inverness Harriers, 1:42:49; 14 Aidan Donnelly 1:45:09; 15 Pawel Cymbalista 1:46:01; 16 Andy Craig 1:46:57; 17 Kate Jenkins, Carnethy, 1:47:11; 18 Sarah Mackenzie 1:47:49; 19 Neil Wasldge, unattached, 1:48:17; 20 Richard Roberts, Highland Hill Runners, 1:50:03.



Finlay Wild makes for the finish line 20_149athletics01



PRIZEWINNERS: The winners from the Kilmallie Shinty Club player of the year awards in Caol community centre

Player of the year awards handed over

KILMALLIE Shinty Club once again celebrated the end of the season end with its annual awards ceremony and dance in Caol community centre.

At the event on Saturday November 22, Martin Stewart won the Robert Hood Shield

for first team player of the year, while Innes Blackhall took the prize for reserve player of the year.

Under 17s player of the year went to Craig MacIsaac while Aaran Sandison was voted under 17s most improved player.

Shinty

Of the under 14s, Calum MacDougall was voted player of the year, while Calum Dingwall and Lewis Cameron shared the award for most improved player.

Back to league business for Oban pool players

AFTER the drama of the previous week's cup ties, all teams, with the exception of Outreach, got back to the bread and butter of the Oban Pool League championship.

The scheduled fifth round of fixtures saw defending champions Lochavullin's Cellar (former Cellar Bar) flex their muscles and claim the first whitewash of the season.

The holders were simply merciless in their destruction of the Gluepot to make it five consecutive victories on the bounce and continue to set the pace.

The Gluepot had gone into the match buoyed by recent results and most would have predicted a tighter scoreline, however, this might be the reminder the North Connel outfit needed if they think merely turning up is enough to collect points.

Nearest challengers, the Lancaster 'A', also remain undefeated after chalking up their third win courtesy of Markie Dan's 'B'.

Despite some huffing and puffing, the Lancaster 'A' duly recorded a routine win over their Corran Esplanade neighbours, but some erratic shots will need to be eradicated to dislodge the pacesetters, although they have two games in hand.

Climbers

Markie Dan's 'A' were the week's biggest league climbers after defeating a disjointed Lochavullin at home.

Although an early unexpected league loss and exit from the cup hasn't helped their confidence, Markie Dan's 'A' have lifted silverware against the odds on numerous occasions and it would be foolish to dismiss

Pool

their challenge at this stage. The concluding match saw the first stalemate of the campaign between Lochnell and Lancaster 'B'. This tie has now delivered the most draws in league history and both sides had to settle for a point a-piece.

There are no scheduled league fixtures this week due to The Oban Pool League's participation at the national inter-league. Two selected sides will make the long journey to Peterhead to face off against some of Scotland's finest players over the weekend.

Results, November 27: Lancaster A 7-3 Markie Dans B; Markie Dans A 7-3; Lochavullin; Lochavullin's Cellar 10-0 Gluepot; Lochnell 5-5 Lancaster B.

Athletic pick up all three points against Cardross

Oban Athletic	1
Cardross	0
West of Scotland AFL	

OBAN Athletic welcomed Cardross to Mossfield Stadium for a West of Scotland league game on a cold but sunny afternoon on what proved to be a low scoring but entertaining game.

The match started with both teams trying to gain the upper hand in the middle of the park with the back four of Craig Livingston, Steven McLeod, Craig Campbell and Stephen Kelly putting in a solid defensive shift.

Because of this the midfield duo of Ryan Campbell and Andy Smith started to get a foothold in the game and went on to create a number of chances with Paul Carmichael, David Smith and Alan Buchanan all having shots blocked.

Athletic took the lead in the 21st minute when a good run from Ryan Campbell found Alan Buchanan with a pass. Alan then squared to Andy Smith who took the ball in his stride and thumped a curling shot into the top left hand corner of the goal from 25 yards.

Minutes later, a through ball from Ryan Campbell found Kris Gilles out on the wing. Kris cut back inside, played a one-two

with Paul Carmichael before taking the ball inside the penalty area and hitting an angled shot across the goal only for the keeper to turn the ball round the post.

Paul Carmichael was next to try his luck, shooting from 18 yards with the keeper making a good save.

The home side kept the pressure on the Cardross goal but could not force another goal before the half time whistle.

Cardross started the second half well forcing three corners in a five-minute spell with keeper Graham Douglas punching one away and the defence heading the other two clear.

David Smith made a good run down the right wing and crossed to Kris Gilles who hit a first time volley toward goal but again Cardross netminder Paul Smith pulled off another good save pushing the ball round the post, The resulting corner was played in by Andy Smith on to the head of Craig Campbell at the back post. Craig headed back across goal for Paul Carmichael, whose header shaved the crossbar.

On 66 minutes Alan Buchanan and Craig Livingston made way for Michael McGee and Stephen Fox with both youngsters having played well.

Stephen was immediately

Football

involved with a run down the left wing, playing Kris Gilles through, but his shot was turned round the post.

The corner was played in to the penalty area missing everyone before landing at the feet of Craig Campbell, but his shot went just over the crossbar.

With the clock running down, Cardross pushed forward looking for the equaliser and with two minutes left a ball played in from the left was met by Iain Collins whose shot was blocked by Steven McLeod. The ricochet landed back at the same player but this time his effort was blocked by Craig Campbell.

Referee Martin Rae, who had a good game, then blew for full time.

Manager Donald Campbell said after the game that he was happy with his team's performance but that they needed to be more clinical in front of goal but was happy with the chances they were creating.

This Saturday Athletic play host to Winlinton Wolves from Ayrshire in the 4th round of the West of Scotland Cup at Mossfield Stadium or Glen 2. Kick off is 1.30pm with referee Jimmy Lister from Lochgilhead in charge.

Fort William youngsters take part in Oban tournament

A NUMBER of new players represented Lochaber Rugby Club's mini section at Oban rugby club's third mini rugby tournament this season.

The club travelled with two teams and in the P4/5 team there were some players who had only recently started playing rugby.

This Saturday the S1-2s travel to Ross Sutherland to play a friendly fixture. This is their third fixture so far this season and the following week (December 13) the

Mini rugby

under-17s travel to play their first fixture against Nairn Academy.

This Saturday is the last mini rugby (primary three - primary seven) training day before the Christmas break, but the S1-2s and the under-17s will continue training every Thursday at Banavie.

The mini rugby will return to Banavie in February.



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Lorenzo shortlisted for world's top youth sailor

Sailing

SAILING sensation Lorenzo Chiavarini has been shortlisted for the youth sailor of year award. Named amongst the world's sailing elite, the nomination in the Yachts and Yachting Awards rounds off a perfect year for Lorenzo, who took a cache of silverware from the 2014 competitive season.

Despite suffering a season-threatening wrist break in March, the Bellanoch boy won both the Under 21 Laser European and Under 21 World Championship titles; he then achieved his best senior result at the ISAF Worlds in Santander, finishing 11th in a world-class fleet.

The 20-year-old, a member of the Great British sailing squad, is currently preparing to travel to Rio de Janeiro for the Olympic trial event. This will take place in December before he returns to Mid Argyll for Christmas.

Increase in unfulfilled shinty fixtures

Shinty

A TOTAL of 31 senior matches failed to go ahead last year, it was revealed at the annual meeting of the Camanachd Association.

The statistic, taken from a report published before the meeting last Friday, is an increase of eight from the 2013 figure.

Most of the games relate to the lower leagues, though a number of higher-profile fixtures were also affected over the course of the season.

One potential measure suggested to alleviate the problem would be to regionalise the early rounds of some cup tournaments, a decision which will rest with the competitions committee over the close season.

Elsewhere in the annual report, the association broadly met its financial targets for the year, with sponsorship showing an increase to offset a slight drop in income from grant funding.

The association's turnover for the year was just short of £575,000.

The report noted that youth membership levels had increased but, as in previous years, the recruitment of match officials remains a challenge for the sport.

In 2014 the number of association referees had fallen from 38 to 36, of whom only 31 were available throughout the season.

Archie Robertson formally handed over the presidency of the Camanachd Association to Jim Barr.

Susie is just champion

Motor racing

IN WHAT could be a watershed week for Oban racing driver Susie Wolff, she has been named as the first female driver to compete in the Race of Champions and Williams Martini Racing's F1 test driver for 2015.

Susie, nee Stoddart, will make motorsport history later this month when she becomes the first female to compete in the traditional end-of-season Race of Champions, which features drivers and riders from all forms of motorsport, both four wheels and two, racing in a number of different vehicles.

Join forces

She will join forces with fellow Scot and former DTM teammate David Coulthard for the Nations Cup part of the competition that takes place at the Bushy Park Circuit in Barbados on December 13-14.

'Any driver would love to be invited to do the Race of Champions,' she said. 'It's an event I've always looked closely at and always dreamed of being part of, so I'm proud to have been chosen.'

'But the biggest thing is the fact I'm just so looking forward to racing again.'

'I have a full-time job at Williams which is great, but it's about getting that adrenalin of racing back, and that's what I'm looking forward to most.'

Last week Williams an-

The former Oban high school girl will be stepping up to be Williams F1 official test driver in 2015



LOOKING AHEAD: Susie Wolff faces some exciting challenges in the next few months as a competitor in the Race of Champions and as a Williams F1 test driver.

nounced the former Oban high school pupil, who now lives in Switzerland with her husband, Mercedes director Toto Wolff, would be stepping up to the position of official test driver for 2015.

In this role Susie will be driving the Williams Mercedes FW37 in two practice sessions and two test days during the 2015 Formula One season.

Conducting

She will also be conducting extensive simulator testing to help in the ongoing development of the FW37 and FW38.

This new role builds on

Susie's three seasons as development driver for Williams, which culminated in driving the FW36 during practice at the 2014 British and German Grand Prix.

This saw her become the first female driver to drive in a Grand Prix weekend for two decades. The team said it was currently evaluating a number of drivers to replace Susie as development driver.

Speaking about her new role, Susie said: 'This is another step in the right direction for me. I am delighted Williams are recognising my progression, hard

work and that it is performance that counts.'

'Williams is at a very exciting stage in its history and we are moving into 2015 with fantastic momentum. I'm proud to be part of the team.'

'I'll be using my position to work closely with Felipe and Valtteri [Williams F1 drivers Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas] to make sure that the FW37 builds on the strong performance shown by the FW36.'

Claire Williams, deputy team principal of Williams Martini Racing, added: 'We are delighted to have Susie continuing

with the team next season in this new role. She continues to impress us with her strong technical knowledge, the feedback she delivers and the performance when she drives the car both, on the track and in the simulator.'

'She has steadily increased her time behind the wheel since she joined us in April 2012 and her appointment as official test driver was a natural progression. We have a very strong and stable driver lineup for 2015 and this will be a key asset as we look to build on a positive 2014 season.'

Vulnerable groups and youngsters invited to apply for sports cash

Sports funding

CALLS are being made for west coast sportsmen and women to apply to the Scottish Sport Relief Home and Away Programme which launched a funding programme last week.

Using the inspiration of the Commonwealth Games, this part of the Legacy 2014 programme is jointly funded by the Scottish Government and money raised through Sport Relief.

This fund will distribute £100,000 to groups and projects across Scotland using the power and inspiration of sport to reach, engage and support young people who face limited opportunities.

The programme will make grants up to £5,000 to support projects and initiatives which, using sport as a tool, can demonstrate the following: young people lead less chaotic lives and engage in less harmful lifestyles, young people recover, cope and thrive in the face of severe personal, family and social adversity and young people progress into employment, enterprise, training and education opportunities

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Premier Division - Finnart 4, Oban Saints 1; Campbeltown Pupils no game; Premier Division One - Dunoon 5, Hillington 2; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star 7, Paisley 2; Division 1B - Eaglesham 2, Tarbert 3.

Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Cup 4th round Craigshill v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division - Oban Saints no game; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star v Easthall Star; Port Glasgow v Dunoon Athletic; Division 1B - Tarbert v Whitehill.

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Baljaffray 3, Under 13s 3. On the scoresheet for Saints were Aidan MacPhee, Jamie Forgievie and Aaron McKay. Under 14s v Dumbarton Riverside postponed; Under 15s 2, Riverclyde 1. Netting for Saints were Lewis Buchanan and Kenneth Macdonald. Under 16s 4, Antonine 1. Saints goalscorers were Jay Cooper, Ross McCrone, Daniel MacVicar and Ewan MacLellan. Clydebank 2, Saints Under 19s 3.

Scoring for Saints were Connor Howe, Zak Straub and Douglas MacLeod.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Dumbarton United; Broomhill v Under 14s; Whitecraigs v Under 15s; Ardencaple v Under 16s; Under 18s v EDFC.

The restructuring proposal put forward by Kingussie and Newtonmore was agreed by a majority of 25 to one. Only Lochcarron rejected the proposal.

Application forms have been sent out to teams that can request which league and competitions they would like to enter, based on last year's league structure.

A new team from Oban, Oban Lorn, will also join the league set-up next year and are expected to join South Division Two.

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Injuries prove costly as Lorne draw at McLaren

McLaren	16
Oban Lorne	16
RBS West Division Two	

A DISASTROUS opening 10 minutes at Callander in which Oban Lorne lost 10 points and two key players to injury meant they were always chasing the game against mid-table McLaren.

The hosts had performed well at Glencruitten in the first league game of the season with Oban Lorne needing two late tries to secure a win, so a close contest was always anticipated.

But with only seconds on the clock Oban's Dan Hull collected the kick off and made a 20-metre rampaging run up field before going down with an injured knee. McLaren turned the ball over in the process, spun the ball wide and ran almost the length of the pitch for an early try.

Oban's injury problems got worse shortly after when centre Craig Wright followed flanker Hull off the pitch. Replacements Lorne MacLachlan and Richard MacKay took to the field for the injured pair.

A McLaren penalty soon after extended the lead to 10-0 and the home side were looking dangerous against a sloppy Oban defence.

Oban improved as the first half

went on but could not create any try scoring opportunities and both sides exchanged penalties to give a 13-3 halftime scoreline.

Oban dominated the opening period of the second half, aided by the experience of Dave McCabe, Andy MacDougall and Struan Smith, who had returned to the side, and an impressive scrum. McLaren were shoved off several of their own put-ins resulting in superior possession for the men in green.

With the forwards winning ball, the Oban backline was now on the front foot and were making headway upfield. After a good



INJURY: Craig Wright picked up an injury last Saturday.

Rugby

period of pressure on the home line, Oban captain Cammy Smith bundled over from close range for Oban's first try of the day. This reduced the score to 16-11, with both sides having exchanged penalties.

The Green Machine were looking very dangerous going into the last 10 minutes of the match with winger Callum MacLachlan, full back Richard MacKay and centre Dave McCabe all having good individual runs at the defence.

It was powerful winger Callum MacLachlan who would tie the game with five minutes to go with a superb powerful run from halfway to touch down out wide.

Unfortunately for Oban the resulting conversion was missed, meaning the score stayed at 16-16.

Both teams launched attacking opportunities to win the game in the last five minutes but there would be no further score.

The result means that Oban slip to third place in the table but have a game in hand against the teams around them.

This Saturday Oban entertain Waysiders Drumpellier at Glencruitten, kick off 2pm. Oban have already beaten this weekend's visitors 55-0 earlier this season.

Reconstruction means Oban shinty teams could both play at a higher level

TWO OBAN shinty teams could be playing at a higher level next season despite neither winning their respective leagues in 2014.

A proposal to restructure the Orion Group Premiership from eight teams to 10 has had repercussions throughout the national and regional leagues, particularly for Oban Camanachd and Oban Celtic.

Oban Camanachd, who lost out on the National Division title to Fort William this season, are already promoted to the top flight as a result of the restructuring process.

Camanachd manager Gussie Campbell said: 'It is a bonus for us but we wanted to go up as champions. Some clubs may question whether it is right or not, but you have to play where you are told to play.'

'We are pleased to be in the premier league because it is a higher level of shinty but we must stay in that league. You can't yo-yo up and down the divisions because that is not good for the club's stability.'

However, there may be an opportunity for Oban Celtic to join the National Division if, as has

Shinty

been suggested, Glenorchy and Bute elect to be relegated from that division into South Division One.

With the possibility open to Celtic, the club is to hold a discussion tonight (Thursday) on whether it would take up the option of automatic promotion.

But club president David Hamilton said he hopes the club can stay in South Division One. He added: 'The club has not decided what to do yet but my own opinion is if we were good enough to play in National Division, we would be there.'

The restructuring proposal put forward by Kingussie and Newtonmore was agreed by a majority of 25 to one. Only Lochcarron rejected the proposal.

Application forms have been sent out to teams that can request which league and competitions they would like to enter, based on last year's league structure.

A new team from Oban, Oban Lorn, will also join the league set-up next year and are expected to join South Division Two.

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WEATHER

Thursday Cloudy with light rain showers
Winds light southerly
Temperatures 3°C to 8°C.

Friday Light cloud
Winds moderate north westerly
Temperatures 1°C to 6°C.

Weekend Outlook Sunshine and showers on Saturday
Heavy rain showers on Sunday
Winds light south westerly
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, December 4, 2014** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm		
Thur	03.52 3.6	10.11 1.1	16.19 3.9	22.26 1.1
Fri	04.29 3.8	10.59 1.0	16.57 4.0	23.07 1.0
Sat	05.06 3.9	11.43 1.0	17.33 4.0	23.47 0.9
Sun	05.44 4.0	12.25 1.1	18.09 4.0	*** **
Mon	06.26 0.9	06.20 4.1	13.05 1.2	18.43 3.9
Tues	01.05 1.0	06.56 4.0	13.44 1.3	19.19 3.8
Wed	01.44 1.1	07.32 3.9	14.22 1.5	19.56 3.7

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardershaig	-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		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate



Festive fun and frolics as Christmas arrives in Fort William



Family faces Christmas apart as residency row blights plans

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A FAMILY face being separated weeks before Christmas as Lochaber man Martin McGuire and his American fiancée Mary Beard have been told she will be deported in a fortnight.

Mr McGuire, 29, has spent almost his whole life in Roy Bridge and wants to raise his daughter in neighbouring village Spean Bridge.

But his family could now be torn apart as the Home Office rejected Miss Beard's request for permanent UK residency for her and five-year-old daughter from a previous relationship, Brianna, who is a primary one pupil at Spean Bridge primary school.

The couple have been engaged for three years after meeting online in 2010 and had a daughter, Molly, two years ago. Mr McGuire travelled to his fiancée's home of Kansas City, Missouri, five times in two years before bringing Molly back to Scotland three weeks after her birth. Miss Beard and Brianna followed three months later on visitors' visas and the family lived with Mr McGuire's parents

Lochaber man's fiancée facing deportation in a fortnight

before securing a council house in Spean Bridge just two weeks ago.

Now, 27-year-old Miss Beard faces leaving her fiancé and daughter behind as both her application and appeal were refused.

She said: 'We're now waiting on a letter to see if we have grounds to appeal again but if not then that's it for us.'

'It's heartbreaking even thinking about it. How do you tell a five-year-old she has to leave her family, friends and school behind?'

'The people who make these decisions don't understand how it feels not knowing how long I'm going to be able to wake up with my daughter.'

A Home Office spokeswoman

said Miss Beard was refused a Derivative Residence Card because she 'failed to provide sufficient evidence' of Molly, who has a British passport, residing in the UK.

She added: 'The burden of proof is on the individual to provide the required evidence to support their application.'

'There was also no evidence as to why the British father would be unable to care for the child if the mother was forced to leave the UK.'

But Mr McGuire, a shop worker in Spean Bridge, disagrees.

He said: 'All of my family work full-time so I wouldn't have the childcare support to work and look after Molly but that's not the point. Mary is her mother and we should all be together.'

'I don't know why they're saying there's no evidence Molly lives here. We provided all of her healthcare records and all sorts of paperwork to prove that she is. If we're all here, where else would she be?'

The couple are now waiting to be told if they have grounds for further appeal. If not, Miss Beard and Brianna will have 14 days to return to America.



DISTRESS: Mary Beard faces leaving her fiancé Martin McGuire and two year-old daughter Molly in Spean Bridge to be deported to America with Brianna, five

New Skye hospital to be situated in Broadford

A NEW hospital for the isle of Skye will be located in Broadford, it was agreed on Tuesday.

The NHS Highland board in Inverness approved a proposal for a new community health 'hub' in the town, instead of Portree to the north of the island.

As a result, the current Dr MacKinnon Memorial Hospital in Broadford will close and all in-patient beds will be removed from the present Portree hospital, leaving the latter with minor injury, primary care, emergency and outpatient services only.

The news comes as a blow to residents in the north of the island, who will now need to travel south for overnight care, despite Portree being the largest and most populated town on Skye.

Garry Coutts, chairman of NHS Highland, was pleased a new hospital location had finally been agreed. He said: 'We are satisfied we have reached a decision that best reflects the needs and aspirations of the entire community. We would ask everyone in Skye, Lochalsh and south west Ross to pull together behind this decision.'

Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, said: 'This is great news for Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross as a new hospital is badly needed.'

'It is particularly important at a time when public money has been cut by the Westminster government that the Scottish government has committed to funding the new hospital.'

Residents in the north of the island were disappointed but not surprised at the news.

One, who did not want to be named, said: 'We have had gradual downgrading in Portree hospital and this is the final nail in the coffin.'

Experts to outline bilingual benefits

THE BENEFITS of children knowing more than one language will be explained to parents at a Fort William event on Saturday.

Highland Council has arranged for experts in bilingualism to give a presentation in Kilmallie Free Church at 12pm.

A council spokeswoman said: 'The aim of the presentation is to raise awareness of the many benefits of bilingualism among the parents who may be interested in enrolling their children into the new Gaelic school, which is due to open in Caol in August next year.'



FESTIVE CHEER: Santa and his reindeer visited Fort William on Saturday morning as part of the Rotary Club of Lochaber's Christmas Festival. Guided by his elves, Sebi Mrazek and Talia Stoddart, he made his way through the town before spending the afternoon in his grotto at the Nevis Centre. See page three.

Council cash earmarked to help advice bureau improve support

MORE than £163,000 of Highland Council funding has been earmarked for improving support for vulnerable people.

The authority's resources committee approved the plan to provide £163,920 to the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide tailored welfare clinics across the region.

Maxine Smith, chairwoman of the committee, said: 'The focus of the advice will be primarily on welfare benefits, but the service

will also help to identify specific needs and provide advice on a range of other issues.'

'This should help to reduce levels of stress and anxiety, which would lead to improved health and wellbeing.'

Lochaber's CAB office received a share of the funding to train staff in how best to advise people with mental health problems.

Stephen Marshall, office manager, said: 'We welcome this further commitment to the CAB

service by Highland Council during a period of very scarce resource and look forward to putting this to good effect within Lochaber. We will work to ensure this targeted resource is put to best use to increase advice provision to minimise the impact on as many people within this vulnerable group as possible.'

'The additional funding will also allow us to develop valuable partnerships with existing mental health services in the area.'

KEEP THE FAMILY WARM THIS WINTER

December bookings now being taken for Lochaber home surveys

"We can certainly recommend Tom for his service. We are very happy with the finished product and it has created a focal point and transformed our living room completely."

Mr & Mrs Young (Tain)

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Shopping trip on nursery menu

LOCHABER little ones were grown ups for the day when they went shopping for their own lunch.

Fort William RC English medium nursery pupils spent the morning at a supermarket last Wednesday and stocked up on all the ingredients for their lunch. The youngsters had been learning about money and how to pay for things and even had their own 'credit cards' to buy their groceries with.

STOCKED UP: Fort William RC nursery pupils, left, bought the ingredients for a lovely lunch

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Anger as health centre suspends pick-up service

ELDERLY FORCED TO TRAVEL EIGHTY MILES FOR PRESCRIPTIONS

GORDON WEBSTER
fort@obantimes.co.uk

PENSIONERS with poor health in south Lochaber were forced to make up to 80-mile round trips to pick up 'lifeline' prescriptions for two weeks due to NHS staff shortages.

Between November 17-28, Ballachulish medical centre's dispensing service was suspended, meaning people had to travel to the nearest pharmacy in Fort William.

People living as far as Duror, Kinlochleven and Glen Etive were affected, many of whom are elderly or do not own cars.

Some also made the lengthy journey north only to find their prescriptions were not in stock in Fort William and had to make the same trip again two days later.

An NHS Highland spokesman confirmed that normal service had resumed on Monday this week, and that insufficient staff to cover annual leave and absence was to blame for the problem.

Kevin Smith, chairman of Ballachulish community council, has written to Shona Robison, the Scottish government cabinet secretary for health, wellbeing and sport, to ensure that the same problem does not happen again. He said: 'This situation is totally unacceptable and I don't believe for a second that the same thing has never happened elsewhere.'

'NHS Highland should have a system in place for this because it puts an extra burden on the community which I don't think



Ballachulish medical centre suspended its prescription collection service for two weeks

“ This situation is totally unacceptable ”

Kevin Smith
chairman, Ballachulish community council

is right. I have already been informed by two different people that [the prescriptions they require] were not in stock in Fort William and they had to go back two days later.'

Villager Jimmy Waugh, a former chairman of the community council, raised the matter with Mary Scanlon, MSP for the Highlands and Islands.

He said: 'Prescription dispensing is a lifeline service so you

have to have a back-up plan for this type of situation.

'There are hundreds of dispensing services like this throughout the Highlands and the same could happen to them. It is not a fault of the practice, it is a fault of the system and we need to ensure it doesn't happen again.'

While prescriptions were unavailable, members of the public in Ballachulish were reluctant to comment on the matter and those who did asked not to be named, as they did not want to criticise what they believed to be an otherwise well-run medical practice.

One resident said: 'There are a lot of elderly people in the area, many who have had strokes. Some of them don't have cars and have to rely on the bus to Fort William, which costs four or five pounds. So much for free prescriptions.'

Both new medicines issued by GPs and repeat prescriptions - normally collected from a box outside the surgery - were unavailable in Ballachulish.

An NHS Highland spokesman said: 'The temporary suspension of dispensing prescriptions at Ballachulish medical practice has been lifted as from December 1. Staffing levels are back to normal and outstanding requests have been dispensed and are ready for collection.'

'The decision to suspend dispensing was made on November 17 due to significant administrative staff shortages and to protect patient safety. The practice apologises for any inconvenience this may have caused and thanks patients for their continued support during this time.'



Jane Angus, left, and Samantha Wilson dressed up to fundraise for drama troupe Lochaber Showstoppers' next performance



WISHLIST: Kate Ramsay, seven, and Ryan Armour, six, both from Kinlochleven told Santa what they would like for Christmas

Festive fun and frolics as Christmas arrives in Fort

CHRISTMAS arrived in Fort William with a bang this week, with two days of fun-filled family events.

The festivities began on Friday evening with the Christmas Gathering, organised by Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and Fort William Town Team.

A pantomime in Cameron Square was only the beginning, as Santa set up a grotto in High Street shop, Sweetness, and youngsters hunted the town for missing elves.

The Alexandria Hotel hosted a games fair, including bauble bobbing, hook a cracker, snowball shooting and find the lucky stocking.

Lesley Benfield, chief executive officer of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, said: 'We were delighted to support the Town Team in putting the Christmas Gathering together. It's a great opportunity to promote the buy local message. It's also extremely important for businesses to support initiatives such as the Christmas Gathering to encourage local people to support local service providers and retail outlets.'

'Fort William has a lot to offer and I want to encourage the people of Lochaber to support all our local businesses over the coming months.'

Fort William didn't stay quiet for long as the next morning

Santa arrived back in town, this time accompanied by his elves and reindeer, as he made his way down the High Street and through the Parade, before setting up camp at the Christmas Festival in the Nevis Centre.

Organised by the Rotary Club of Lochaber, the fair filled the hall to bursting point as local craft and food producers touted their wares and raffles raised money for local charities.

Lochaber Rotary president John Harvey said: 'The turnout and support from the general public was gratifying. We are indebted to Ferguson Transport and Shipping for its ongoing sponsorship. We are building on this festival year by year.'

'The local community now views this festival as an excellent and reliable source for Christmas shopping and the number of visitors that attend benefits the local economy.'

The festivities were still in full swing as the Highland Hospice Christmas tree on the Parade was lit up by three-year-old Pippa Tedham and her father, James, on Monday evening and Fort William primary school pupils performed a jazz-style nativity 'Rock around the flock' on Wednesday.



CHRISTMAS STORY: Fort William primary school pupils prepare to showcase their nativity



FUN AND GAMES: Deniel Snaithe, left, and Melanie Service of Fort William Town Team sent local youngsters on a hunt for missing elves



Pippa Tedham, three, and her father, James, lit up the Highland Hospice tree on the Parade



DELIGHT: Ballachulish pupils help resident Fay Stephens try out Abbeyfield home's new bath

Care home bath gift delight for residents

LOCHABER care home residents can now benefit from months of fundraising - in an £8,000 bath.

Local communities and businesses have been raising cash all year to help pay for the new equipment at Abbeyfield Ballachulish which includes an electric moving seat and other fixtures to make bathing easier for elderly residents.

Dominic Duffy, office manager at Abbeyfield, said: 'This is the sort of support that keeps Abbeyfield Ballachulish able to provide the highest standards of care for all of our residents. A massive thanks to everyone involved.'

Staffin responds to appeal

EFFORTS to set up a medical emergency volunteer service in north Skye have had an encouraging response.

Several people in Staffin said they wanted to take part in training for the first responders initiative, which sees volunteers respond to some emergency service calls prior to the arrival of an ambulance.

Hugh Ross, development officer for Staffin Community Trust, said: 'Having trained first responders in Staffin could be a huge asset in the

wake of an emergency such as a sudden cardiac arrest, given the distance to the district from the ambulance station and Portree Hospital.'

Volunteers would not replace the need for paramedics but can enhance the service already in place and save lives in hard to reach places.

Members of the Scottish ambulance service will host an information evening in Staffin early next year. Anyone interested is asked to contact norma.young@highlandgov.uk or mairi.mooney@nhs.net.

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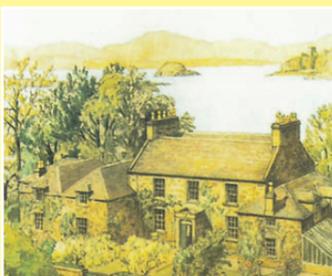
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Time running out on NHS dental centre

EUAN PATERSON
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

PRESSURE is mounting on NHS Highland dental service chiefs who were told this week to quickly fill the vacant dental access centre in Oban - or go back to the drawing board.

The state-of-the-art, new-build dental access centre at Lorn and Islands Hospital has lain empty for more than a year because the health board has so far been unable to find a dentist willing to take on the lease.

At Monday's Oban, Lorn and the Isles locality public partnership forum (PPF) in the hospital, it was suggested by PPF member and Oban community council secretary Duncan Martin that the weekly charge being set to rent the unit was too high to be viable.

Health representatives, area committee chairman councillor

Roddy McCuish and Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell have all called on NHS Highland to find a leaseholder soon, or come up with a new plan after the latest potential recruit pulled out of negotiations on November 4.

The health board claims it is in discussion with a new potential tenant with a statement from Elizabeth Reilly, assistant clinical director for dental services in Argyll and Bute, being read out at the PPF.

She said: 'Another candidate came forward on November 5 and discussions are proceeding with him.'

'We had a face-to-face meeting on November 7 and another scheduled for November 27. Negotiations are proceeding with a positive approach on both sides and we are hopeful of a successful outcome.'

But PPF member Tom Dolan, claimed he had heard such promises before, adding that he

had been raising the issue about dental services for seven years. He said: 'Are some of the options for dental services discarded seven years ago worth revisiting?'

'We are where we are now; we have three lovely suites gathering dust, doing nothing. Is it worth continuing to go down this cul-de-sac?'

'For example, could these three dentist's chairs become NHS property with NHS dentists clinically supervised by someone like Colin Crawford (a senior Oban dentist)?'

Councillor McCuish added: 'We have to ask: was the wrong decision made at the time, or do we need to revisit this decision?'

'Someone must be thinking: 'Perhaps this is not going to work.'

'Budgets are only going one way, and that's down. The NHS cannot afford this.'

'If you ran a shop and had something you couldn't sell, you would just stop selling it.'



Oban company's sweet success

FORGET Paris, London and Rome; Oban is home to one of Europe's best chocolate shops, according to travel website GoEuro.

The Oban Chocolate Company was listed in a European top 10 of chocolate shops, an accolade that shocked owner Helen MacKechnie (pictured), who has been running the business with husband Stewart for 11 years.

'It took a while to sink in,' she said. 'We are the only business listed from the UK. There are lots of great chocolate shops in the UK now, so just to be recognised at a national level would have been amazing.'

A Glasgow Caledonian University alumni, Helen made a chocolate trophy and filled it with champagne to celebrate the recognition and praised all 16 permanent staff at the

company. She said: 'It is great to get this recognition but it is really for the staff who do a fantastic job. They create the atmosphere of a relaxing haven of chocolate indulgence.'

The shop makes and sells unique creations, such as Irn Bru truffles and has had its busiest year in 2014.

During the summer the shop can employ as many as 20 people.

TIMESLINE

Oban dog foulers go undetected

THERE have been no convictions for dog fouling in the last year in Oban.

Argyll and Bute council has admitted that while it has nine staff across the county to deal with the foul problem, they hadn't actually caught anyone in the town.

The local authority is encouraging the public to report incidents to its customer services department.

Dedications taken for Light up a Life

PEOPLE in Oban and Lorn are invited to join Oban Hospice's Light up a Life event in the Corran Halls on December 9.

Dedications can be submitted using the distributed forms.

The Light up a Life book will be on display at the event, as lights outside the venue are switched on.

Tarbert Christmas tree a 'disgrace'

CHRISTMAS cheer seems lacking in Tarbert, Mid Argyll, after locals branded the village's festive tree a 'disgrace'.

Argyll and Bute council, which spends £100,000 a year on Christmas trees, said the size of the 'smaller' Tarbert tree was restricted by a car park and footpath.

Global gong for SAMS scientist

AN ARGYLL scientist has won a prestigious international award.

Professor Stuart Cunningham of Dunstaffnage's Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) received this year's Society for Underwater Technology Oceanography Award at a London ceremony.

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Fears that Rockfield repairs are set to rise

REPAIRS to the old Rockfield school in Oban may be set to rocket.

That's the stark view of a building expert who reckons dry rot and rising damp in the council-owned landmark building has caused widespread damage.

It was previously believed the cost of repair was approximately £40,000 after Argyll and Bute council carried out a site review of the ground floor of the building earlier this year.

However, the building expert, who did not want to be named, said: 'The building is in a sorry

state. I am well aware that people want to save the building for the good of the community, so builders are trying to keep the costs to a minimum. But there is no doubt that this is a big job. The costs could easily double or rise even higher.'

Oban Communities Trust (OCT), the group that is in negotiations with the council to buy the building and turn it into a cultural hub for the town, say it is not down to them to foot the bill.

Gordon MacNab, chairman of OCT, said: 'We would expect it to be wind and watertight and

guaranteed free of dry rot by the time it comes to us.'

Work has already been completed on the Victorian building's roof over the last month, with the council picking up the tab for the cost of the repairs.

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute council said: 'The possible presence of dry rot in the former Rockfield primary school was drawn to our attention.'

'We have asked specialists to investigate this. We are still awaiting their report and do not yet have any indication about potential costs.'

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The Elves do an incredible job but their work is very seasonal and they often struggle to make ends meet after the festive rush, drifting off to do other part-time jobs. What can I do to help them?

Your guidance on all these matters would be gratefully appreciated.

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Santa Claus

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We can also help devise staff training and development plans to ensure all the Elves are reaching their potential and are engaged with their work when it's crunch time. Some may want to start their own businesses in the off season and we can assist them with that process too.

The best thing to do is make an appointment to meet with one of our Growth Advisers to talk over your challenges and opportunities. We can then direct you to a wealth of support to ensure that you can grow your business in a sustainable way.

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UNIT TO STAY OPEN BUT CLOSE ITS DOORS AS A MEETING PLACE AS TREATMENT FOCUSES ON RETURNING PATIENTS TO THEIR HOMES

Day hospital rumours denied

STEVEN RAE
srae@obantimes.co.uk

NHS HIGHLAND has denied that its day unit in the Lorn and Islands hospital is to close, despite plans to move patients out of the current venue by the end of the year.

Confusion and worry have arisen among elderly patients that the day hospital is to close.

But NHS staff dismissed the 'rumour', preferring to describe the new arrangement as a 'new service model' which will focus on treating people in their

homes. The majority of the people currently attending the day hospital are elderly and receiving rehabilitation and fall-prevention treatment.

They regard their weekly visits to the day hospital as a vital lifeline and a way to meet other people.

At Monday's Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership (CHP), Caroline Henderson, acting clinical services manager for NHS Highland strenuously rebutted rumours of closure: 'It is not closing.'

At the moment, patients of the

day hospital meet in a specific area but under new plans they will be referred to departments directly for treatment, taking away some of the social interaction aspect of the day hospital.

Treatment will then be targeted for home visits by NHS staff.

Speaking to The Oban Times, Mrs Henderson said: 'This is not a cost-cutting measure, it's making sure the services fit the needs of the individual.'

'There will be a focus on ensuring that people get back into their homes as soon as appropriate, with minimal risk

of re-admission.' Users of the day hospital who are currently on a course of treatment will finish the programme without interruption. Changes to the day hospital will come into effect in January 2015.

Councillor for Oban South and the Isles, Roddy McCuish, said he had been asked about the day hospital from several concerned constituents.

He said: 'I've been reassured the service is not going to be diminished but the extended community care team will be moving into the space used by

the day hospital. I've been told it's not closing and that it's a new model of care but in my opinion, the message has not been put across properly.'

'Another concern I do have is what consultation was done with the general public regarding this and I'm still worried about the social interaction aspect of this whole redesign - it remains to be seen if it's a good thing or not.'

A public drop-in event will be held at Glencruitten church hall today (Thursday) between 11am and 3pm, to make people aware of the social aspects of care that

are available in Argyll and Bute.

Mrs Henderson said: 'The social aspect of the hospital, which allows patients to meet before appointments, is better served by informing elderly people of the range of services that are available in the local area.'

'That's why we have organised the public drop-in event, to make people aware of the services that are on offer, many in the voluntary sector.'

The public drop-in event is part of the Scottish government initiative Reshaping Care of Older People (RCOP) across Scotland.

14 charged as police in crackdown on dealers

DRUGS busts across Argyll resulted in 14 people being charged.

The week-long operation targeted drug dealers operating in Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown.

It was in response to community concerns, said Marlene Baillie, area commander for the towns. During the week, houses were searched in Oban and Campbeltown with seven people being reported for possession and supply charges of controlled drugs including cannabis, diazepam, heroin, ecstasy and psilocybin (magic mushrooms).

In addition, a further seven people were stopped and found to be in possession of



Marlene Baillie

controlled drugs. In Oban, police also visited 11 licensed premises in the town centre and used cocaine wipes to test for drug misuse.

Traces of the drug were found in the toilets of three licensed premises and licenses were given advice on how to prevent this happening in future.

Chief inspector Baillie said: 'Drug abuse continues to be one of our top priorities. We are fully committed to tackling this issue.'

In the run up to Christmas, officers will launch their Shop a Dealer campaign, which will allow the public to give information directly to the police.

Turbine project now completed

CONSTRUCTION of the Islay Community Wind Turbine near Castlehill has now been completed.

The board of Islay Energy Community Benefit Society own and operate the turbine and will be passing the funds raised by the turbine to the Islay Energy Trust.

However, no surplus can be distributed until the organisation has been trading for 12 months.

Renewable energy has become Scotland's main source of power, according to government records from the first half of 2014.

Looking for lead to catch lead thieves

TWO BUILDINGS in the Glenorchy area have been targeted by thieves keen to get their hands on lead roofing material.

An eight-metre length of lead flashing was removed from the roof of Dalmlally surgery overnight between November 19 and 20. An unsuccessful attempt was made to do the same at the Gatehouse, next to St Conan's Kirk in Lochawe.

Police are keen to hear from anyone who noticed any suspicious activity in the area.

Glad tidings of comfort and joy

STEVEN RAE
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RESIDENTS of 40 new houses in Oban have been given the keys to their new homes in what has been called a great early Christmas present.

Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) completed the new homes, a mixture of one and two-bedroom flats and terraced houses, for rent in the Glenshellach area of Oban.

The £5 million development, called Catalina Avenue, was funded by grants from the Scottish government, Argyll and Bute council and ACHA.

Oban Councillor Roddy McCuish officially opened the development on November 28, with ACHA chairman Mike Brown and chief executive Alistair MacGregor also in attendance.

Councillor McCuish said: 'This goes some way to addressing the housing shortage in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. However we must not stop here but continue with this housing programme to ensure our local families have comfortable and affordable homes here in Oban and the surrounding area.'

Mary MacIntyre, whose son Izyan Khan was invited to help open the houses, said: 'The house is great, there are good spacious



CHRISTMAS CHEER: ACHA chairman Keith Brown, councillor Roddy McCuish, ACHA residents Mary MacIntyre and son Izyan Khan and ACHA chief executive Alistair MacGregor are delighted to officially open the 40 houses in Catalina Avenue 16_149acha01

bedrooms and gardens. It's great to have a front and back door and a garden for him to play in.

'We will be moving in next week and fully settled, so it really is one of the best Christmas presents we could have hoped for.'

Alastair MacGregor, chief executive of ACHA, said: 'We are delighted to complete these desperately needed homes before Christmas.'

'By working together with the sum of our parts we can meet these housing challenges.'

'We look forward to working with the Scottish government and the council to build further

homes in Glenshellach in the future.' The building work, undertaken by Argyll firm Macleod Construction, brought 70 tradesmen, including 10 apprenticeships, to Oban.

Serving the public good to the end

AS THE Co-op store in Oban shut its doors for the last time on Saturday, generous staff gave almost £1,000 of food to Hope Kitchen and £1,300 to Friends of Oban Hospice.

The kind-hearted staff raised the money and wanted to give it to the hospice's Light up a Life campaign, which begins this week.

Co-op manager Christopher Taylor, said: 'Staff wanted to give this money to the Light

up a Life campaign for Oban Hospice because we have lost a number of people over the years to illnesses such as cancer.'

Mr Taylor locked the door of the shop shortly after 1pm, bringing to an end almost 100 years of the Co-op trading in the town.

Meanwhile, Lidl, which has bought the Co-op store plans to build a new supermarket on the site. It held a community consultation in its existing store

in the Lochavullin industrial estate on Monday, to address any issues the public may have with their plans.

Cameron Hall, who is acquisitions manager for Lidl, said: 'The response I've had has been overwhelmingly positive.'

'The sales floor planned for the new store is marginally bigger than in the existing Co-op, aimed at making the aisles more accessible for shoppers. 'People are very interested

in discussing the plans and it's certainly of great local interest, given how much has appeared in The Oban Times about the store.'

'The whole point of engaging with the community before the planning application is that it's helpful on plans, as we want to make sure we cover all bases.'

Provided the planning application is approved, the Lidl store is earmarked for completion some time in 2015.



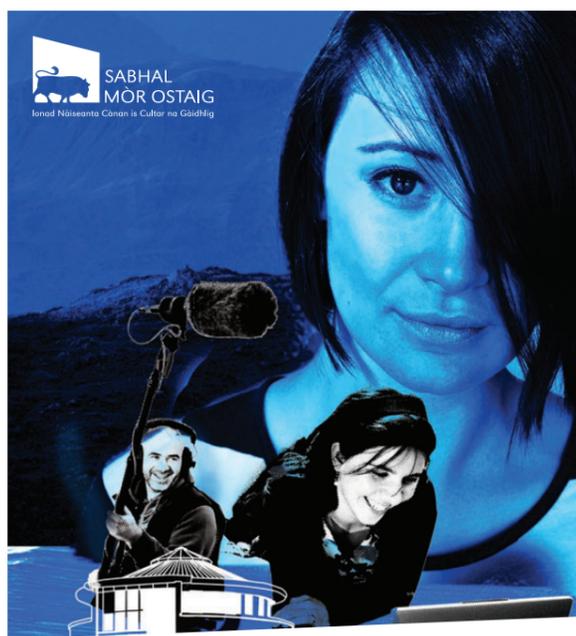
PUBLIC SPIRITED: the Co-op staff say farewell

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FW

Lorenzo shortlisted for world's top youth sailor

Sailing

SAILING sensation Lorenzo Chiavarini has been shortlisted for the youth sailor of year award. Named amongst the world's sailing elite, the nomination in the Yachts and Yachting Awards rounds off a perfect year for Lorenzo, who took a cache of silverware from the 2014 competitive season.

Despite suffering a season-threatening wrist break in March, the Bellanoch boy won both the Under 21 Laser European and Under 21 World Championship titles; he then achieved his best senior result at the ISAF Worlds in Santander, finishing 11th in a world-class fleet.

The 20-year-old, a member of the Great British sailing squad, is currently preparing to travel to Rio de Janeiro for the Olympic trial event. This will take place in December before he returns to Mid Argyll for Christmas.

Increase in unfulfilled shinty fixtures

Shinty

A TOTAL of 31 senior matches failed to go ahead last year, it was revealed at the annual meeting of the Camanachd Association.

The statistic, taken from a report published before the meeting last Friday, is an increase of eight from the 2013 figure.

Most of the games relate to the lower leagues, though a number of higher-profile fixtures were also affected over the course of the season.

One potential measure suggested to alleviate the problem would be to regionalise the early rounds of some cup tournaments, a decision which will rest with the competitions committee over the close season. Elsewhere in the annual report, the association broadly met its financial targets for the year, with sponsorship showing an increase to offset a slight drop in income from grant funding.

The association's turnover for the year was just short of £575,000.

The report noted that youth membership levels had increased but, as in previous years, the recruitment of match officials remains a challenge for the sport.

In 2014 the number of association referees had fallen from 38 to 36, of whom only 31 were available throughout the season.

Archie Robertson formally handed over the presidency of the Camanachd Association to Jim Barr.



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Susie is just champion

Motor racing

IN WHAT could be a watershed week for Oban racing driver Susie Wolff, she has been named as the first female driver to compete in the Race of Champions and Williams Martini Racing's F1 test driver for 2015.

Susie, nee Stoddart, will make motorsport history later this month when she becomes the first female to compete in the traditional end-of-season Race of Champions, which features drivers and riders from all forms of motorsport, both four wheels and two, racing in a number of different vehicles.

Join forces

She will join forces with fellow Scot and former DTM teammate David Coulthard for the Nations Cup part of the competition that takes place at the Bushy Park Circuit in Barbados on December 13-14.

'Any driver would love to be invited to do the Race of Champions,' she said. 'It's an event I've always looked closely at and always dreamed of being part of, so I'm proud to have been chosen.'

'But the biggest thing is the fact I'm just so looking forward to racing again.'

'I have a full-time job at Williams which is great, but it's about getting that adrenalin of racing back, and that's what I'm looking forward to most.'

Last week Williams an-

The former Oban high school girl will be stepping up to be Williams F1 official test driver in 2015



LOOKING AHEAD: Susie Wolff faces some exciting challenges in the next few months as a competitor in the Race of Champions and as a Williams F1 test driver.

nounced the former Oban high school pupil, who now lives in Switzerland with her husband, Mercedes director Toto Wolff, would be stepping up to the position of official test driver for 2015.

In this role Susie will be driving the Williams Mercedes FW37 in two practice sessions and two test days during the 2015 Formula One season.

Conducting

She will also be conducting extensive simulator testing to help in the ongoing development of the FW37 and FW38.

This new role builds on

Susie's three seasons as development driver for Williams, which culminated in driving the FW36 during practice at the 2014 British and German Grand Prix.

This saw her become the first female driver to drive in a Grand Prix weekend for two decades. The team said it was currently evaluating a number of drivers to replace Susie as development driver.

Speaking about her new role, Susie said: 'This is another step in the right direction for me. I am delighted Williams are recognising my progression, hard

work and that it is performance that counts.'

'Williams is at a very exciting stage in its history and we are moving into 2015 with fantastic momentum. I'm proud to be part of the team.'

'I'll be using my position to work closely with Felipe and Valtteri [Williams F1 drivers Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas] to make sure that the FW37 builds on the strong performance shown by the FW36.'

Claire Williams, deputy team principal of Williams Martini Racing, added: 'We are delighted to have Susie continuing

with the team next season in this new role. She continues to impress us with her strong technical knowledge, the feedback she delivers and the performance when she drives the car both, on the track and in the simulator.'

'She has steadily increased her time behind the wheel since she joined us in April 2012 and her appointment as official test driver was a natural progression. We have a very strong and stable driver line-up for 2015 and this will be a key asset as we look to build on a positive 2014 season.'

Vulnerable groups and youngsters invited to apply for sports cash

Sports funding

CALLS are being made for west coast sportsmen and women to apply to the Scottish Sport Relief Home and Away Programme which launched a funding programme last week.

Using the inspiration of the Commonwealth Games, this part of the Legacy 2014 programme is jointly funded by the Scottish Government and money raised through Sport Relief.

This fund will distribute £100,000 to groups and projects across Scotland using the power and inspiration of sport to reach, engage and support young people who face limited opportunities.

The programme will make grants up to £5,000 to support projects and initiatives which, using sport as a tool, can demonstrate the following: young people lead less chaotic lives and engage in less harmful lifestyles, young people recover, cope and thrive in the face of severe personal, family and social adversity and young people progress into employment, enterprise, training and education opportunities

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Premier Division - Finnart 4, Oban Saints 1; Campbeltown Pupils no game; Premier Division One - Dunoon 5, Hillington 2; Premier Division Two - Lochgilhead Red Star 7, Paisley 2; Division 1B - Eaglesham 2, Tarbert 3.

Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Cup 4th round Craigshill v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division - Oban Saints no game; Premier Division Two - Lochgilhead Red Star v Easthall Star; Port Glasgow v Dunoon Athletic; Division 1B - Tarbert v Whitehill.

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Baljaffray 3, Under 13s 3. On the scoresheet for Saints were Aidan MacPhee, Jamie Forgievie and Aaron McKay. Under 14s v Dumbarton Riverside postponed; Under 15s 2, Riverclyde 1. Netting for Saints were Lewis Buchanan and Kenneth MacLeod. Under 16s 4, Antonine 1. Saints goalscorers were Jay Cooper, Ross McCrone, Daniel MacVicar and Evan MacLellan. Clydebank 2, Saints Under 19s 3. Scoring for Saints were Connor Howe, Zak Straub and Douglas MacLeod.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Dumbarton United; Broomhill v Under 14s; Whitecraigs v Under 15s; Ardencaple v Under 16s; Under 18s v EDFC.

Islay golf club

Golf

WINTER League played Sunday November 30 - 1 R Quail 40 pts; 2 A Woodman 40 pts; 3 D Muir 37 pts. Ccs 71.

A new team from Oban, Oban Lorn, will also join the league set-up next year and are expected to join South Division Two.

Injuries prove costly as Lorne draw at McLaren

McLaren	16
Oban Lorne	16
RBS West Division Two	

A DISASTROUS opening 10 minutes at Callander in which Oban Lorne lost 10 points and two key players to injury meant they were always chasing the game against mid-table McLaren.

The hosts had performed well at Glencruitten in the first league game of the season with Oban Lorne needing two late tries to secure a win, so a close contest was always anticipated.

But with only seconds on the clock Oban's Dan Hull collected the kick off and made a 20-metre rampaging run up field before going down with an injured knee. McLaren turned the ball over in the process, spun the ball wide and ran almost the length of the pitch for an early try.

Oban's injury problems got worse shortly after when centre Craig Wright followed flanker Hull off the pitch. Replacements Lorne MacLachlan and Richard MacKay took to the field for the injured pair.

A McLaren penalty soon after extended the lead to 10-0 and the home side were looking dangerous against a sloppy Oban defence.

Oban improved as the first half

went on but could not create any try scoring opportunities and both sides exchanged penalties to give a 13-3 halftime scoreline.

Oban dominated the opening period of the second half, aided by the experience of Dave McCabe, Andy MacDougall and Struan Smith, who had returned to the side, and an impressive scrum. McLaren were shoved off several of their own put-ins resulting in superior possession for the men in green.

With the forwards winning ball, the Oban backline was now on the front foot and were making headway upfield. After a good



INJURY: Craig Wright picked up an injury last Saturday.

Rugby

period of pressure on the home line, Oban captain Cammy Smith bundled over from close range for Oban's first try of the day. This reduced the score to 16-11, with both sides having exchanged penalties.

The Green Machine were looking very dangerous going into the last 10 minutes of the match with winger Callum MacLachlan, full back Richard MacKay and centre Dave McCabe all having good individual runs at the defence.

It was powerful winger Callum MacLachlan who would tie the game with five minutes to go with a superb powerful run from halfway to touch down wide.

Unfortunately for Oban the resulting conversion was missed, meaning the score stayed at 16-16.

Both teams launched attacking opportunities to win the game in the last five minutes but there would be no further score.

The result means that Oban slip to third place in the table but have a game in hand against the teams around them.

This Saturday Oban entertain Waysiders Drumpellier at Glencruitten, kick off 2pm. Oban have already beaten this weekend's visitors 55-0 earlier this season.

Reconstruction means Oban shinty teams could both play at a higher level

TWO OBAN shinty teams could be playing at a higher level next season despite neither winning their respective leagues in 2014.

A proposal to restructure the Orion Group Premiership from eight teams to 10 has had repercussions throughout the national and regional leagues, particularly for Oban Camanachd and Oban Celtic.

Oban Camanachd, who lost out on the National Division title to Fort William this season, are already promoted to the top flight as a result of the restructuring process.

Camanachd manager Gussie Campbell said: 'It is a bonus for us but we wanted to go up as champions. Some clubs may question whether it is right or not, but you have to play where you are told to play.'

'We are pleased to be in the premier league because it is a higher level of shinty but we must stay in that league. You can't yo-yo up and down the divisions because that is not good for the club's stability.'

However, there may be an opportunity for Oban Celtic to join the National Division if, as has

Shinty

been suggested, Glenorchy and Bute elect to be relegated from that division into South Division One.

With the possibility open to Celtic, the club is to hold a discussion tonight (Thursday) on whether it would take up the option of automatic promotion.

But club president David Hamilton said he hopes the club can stay in South Division One. He added: 'The club has not decided what to do yet but my own opinion is if we were good enough to play in National Division, we would be there.'

The restructuring proposal put forward by Kingussie and Newtonmore was agreed by a majority of 25 to one. Only Lochcarron rejected the proposal.

Application forms have been sent out to teams that can request which league and competitions they would like to enter, based on last year's league structure.

A new team from Oban, Oban Lorn, will also join the league set-up next year and are expected to join South Division Two.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE. . .



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
A Gibb
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A Kennedy
Fort Augustus
Inverness-shire

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1300

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.

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, mistaid 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

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: 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

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company. In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.



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Fort revival continues with four-goal romp at Huntly

Huntly	0
Fort William	4
Highland League	

Football

THE FORT William revival is showing no signs of stopping, following a 4-0 away thrashing of Huntly last Saturday.

The Claggan Park men made it three wins in a row for only the second time in their history and the first time in 13 years, after strikes from James Whyte, two from Callum MacLean and an own goal sealed another priceless three points.

The club's last three-game winning streak was in May 2002 with a 3-0 victory over the same opponents.

Saturday's rout at Huntly leaves Fort William in 13th place in the Highland League and eight points clear of bottom side Strathspey Thistle.

Manager Calum MacLean paid tribute to his players and coaching staff on what has been a fairytale run for the club.

He said: 'We have had some hard times at Fort William in recent years so its great to get a couple of wins and feel good about things again. I'd put it all down to the talent of the players we've got.'

'We've brought in quality, not just made signings to make up the numbers and it's all starting to gel. I'm absolutely delighted with Saturday's result, it was brilliant to watch.'

'We dominated Huntly, from the start we just went at them and the confidence grew from there.'

'I was also very pleased with the back four, but we don't like to

pick out just one or two players, everyone was brilliant.'

Fort took a squad of seventeen to Huntly plus three trialists including David Osborne in goal, following his standout performance the week before against Keith. At half time, he was replaced by substitute goalkeeper Robin Harvey after reportedly suffering from migraines and double vision, though is said to have quickly recovered.

The visitors took only nine minutes to break the deadlock through James Whyte before Callum MacLean made it two on 24 minutes.

Fort were in full control during the second half and the match was effectively over as a contest when a James Whyte effort was helped into the net by a Keith defender, before MacLean scored his second of the afternoon to round off a famous victory.

Whyte also became the first ever player from an away side to win the man of the match award at Huntly's Christie Park.

However, the victory was overshadowed by the news that midfielder Craig Mainland has suffered ligament damage following a robust challenge by two Huntly players.

The 23 year-old, who has been a stand-out player this season, was rushed to hospital after the game and awaits a further scan to find out how long his recovery will take.

Fort's next match is a home tie on Saturday against Deveronvale.



West Highland Wheelers celebrated the club's 25th anniversary on Saturday 20_149wheeler01

Wheelers celebrate 25 years in the saddle

MEMBERS of West Highland Wheelers celebrated the group's 25th anniversary at the weekend - in the same place the first committee meeting was held.

The keen bikers and friends made up a party of 33 in Nevis Bank Inn on Saturday night, including founding members Davie Austin, Marian Austin and Graham Moss.

Former chairman Andy Rogers summa-

rised the outstanding achievements and fun gained from 25 years of the club.

Emma Holgate, member of West Highland Wheelers, said: 'The club has been a part of the development and support of some huge achievements in the cycling world.'

'We have had several regional, local, national and international champions in the

Cycling

differing disciplines of cycling.

'Organisers from the Wheelers work hard to encourage more local people to get involved in cycling as well as creating new and exciting opportunities for existing members of all abilities.'



Lochaber Welfare League prizewinners with sponsors and league organisers 20_149welfare02



Shaun Graham of Lundavra won both player of the year and top goal scorer 20_149welfare01

Lochaber Welfare League hands out the trophies

LOCHABER Welfare League players reunited at the weekend when they were presented with trophies for their efforts over the summer.

Silverware

Shaun Graham of Lundavra picked up silverware for player of the year and top goal scorer in the Railway Club on Friday night while Martin Kerr, captain of Caol United, collected trophies

Welfare football

for the Marine Harvest league and the John Baird Cup on behalf of his team.

Other prizes presented on the night were the Duthie Cup to Ballachulish, the Uisdean MacDonald Memorial Cup to Lochaber and the Kinloch Shield to Inverlochty.

Lochaber Yacht Club prizegiving

LOCHABER Yacht Club members gathered at the weekend for the annual dinner dance and prizegiving.

Keen sailors were recognised for their achievements at the Moorings Hotel event on Friday night, with almost 20 awards presented by commodore Richard Rumney.

Adrian Hope was honoured with the Ancient Mariner trophy for half a century of membership with the club.

All prizes: Frostbite Shield, Donnie Meldrum. Commodore's

prize, Hamish Loudon. Vice Commodore Trophy, Hamish Loudon. Merlin Trophy, Hamish Loudon. KK Cameron Trophy, Hamish Loudon. Black Rock Bell, Paul Biggin. Corpach Cannon junior member, Gregor Linfield. Faulkner Trophy for best crew, Lucy Ballantyne. St Christopher Trophy, Paul Biggin.

Brass Monkey Trophy, Hamish Loudon. Harry Jeffrey and Campbell Low. Omega Trophy, Hamish Loudon. Harry Jeffrey and Campbell Low. Scapa Trophy, Hamish Loudon, Harry

Yachting

Jeffrey and Ruari Edmond. Lochaber Wheel Liz Loudon, Andy MacKenna and John Wilson. Kilmallie Trophy, Marian Austin. No Duffers Cup, Ruari Edmond.

Endeavour Trophy for significant contribution, Harry Jeffrey. Ancient Mariner Trophy for half a century membership, Adrian Hope. Decanter set for long service, Chris Strong.



Prizewinners at the Lochaber Yacht Club annual dinner dance 20_149yacht01

Four teams battle it out for top spot

Ten pin bowling

AFTER two months of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league the competition is becoming tight as four teams battle for first place.

In the scratch division the Creeps and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio are neck and neck at the top, both with 33 points, but Alleycats and Rotavators are hot on their heels with 32 points each.

Rotavators are leading the handicap division with 36 points, as second place Ardtoe/Nevis Radio lag behind with 31.

Stewart Duncan of The Creeps achieved the best individual game of week eight with 175, while Tony Whitelocke of Alleycats had the top two-game scratch series with 324.

It was a double success for Robert Cairns of British Legion Fort William C who managed both the top handicap game with 235 and the top two-game handicap series with 435.

Best scratch team game of the week came from Ardtoe/Nevis Radio with a score of 563 while Alleycats had the top two game scratch team series of 1095.

British Legion Fort William C had both the top handicap team game of 849 and the top two game handicap team series of 1628.

The highest scratch average is currently held by Pam Weller of Alleycats on 156 followed by Tony Whitelocke, also of Alleycats, with 147 and Stewart Duncan of The Creeps on 144.

Nevis Range gets ready for the winter season

Skiing

MORE THAN 100 ski and snowboard enthusiasts took to the slopes at Nevis Range to refresh their skills as the winter sets in.

Resort staff took their guests to the Aonach Mor hills for workshops including avalanche decision-making and companion rescue during the second annual pre-season backcountry gathering.

Jeff Starkey, head of ski patrol at Nevis Range, said: 'It's really important that skiers and boarders who venture off piste and into back country terrain are appropriately experienced and equipped.'

'This day has been all about getting these like-minded people together to learn, to share ideas and to plan adventures. We were delighted with the success of the day and we're already looking forward to our third gathering next year.'

School tournament

Badminton

PRIMARY school pupils from across the region met in Lochaber high for a badminton tournament on Tuesday.

The youngsters were competing as part of the Active Schools festival, which has included events from netball and basketball to cross country and rugby.

Look out for photos from the tournament in The Oban Times next week.

Head to head

Indoor football

THE TEAMS at the top of the Ali Young indoor football league will go head to head in the Nevis Centre on Sunday night.

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WEATHER	
Thursday	Cloudy with light rain showers Winds light southerly Temperatures 3°C to 8°C.
Friday	Light cloud Winds moderate north westerly Temperatures 1°C to 6°C.
Weekend Outlook	Sunshine and showers on Saturday Heavy rain showers on Sunday Winds light south westerly Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, December 4, 2014** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	03.52	3.6	10.11	1.1	16.19	3.9	22.26	1.1
Fri	04.29	3.8	10.59	1.0	16.57	4.0	23.07	1.0
Sat	05.06	3.9	11.43	1.0	17.33	4.0	23.47	0.9
Sun	05.44	4.0	12.25	1.1	18.09	4.0	***	**
Mon	00.26	0.9	06.20	4.1	13.05	1.2	18.43	3.9
Tues	01.05	1.0	06.56	4.0	13.44	1.3	19.19	3.8
Wed	01.44	1.1	07.32	3.9	14.22	1.5	19.56	3.7

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardershaig	-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		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate