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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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First house fire on Colonsay for 40 years destroys home

THE FIRST house fire on Colonsay in more than 40 years has destroyed the home of the island's former special constable.

Yasmin Milburn owned the house in Upper Kilchattan with her partner Trevor Crowe. The pair ran the property as a four-star bed and breakfast.

But a blaze which started at 4am on Monday morning saw the house reduced to a shell, with the volunteer fire crew unable to contain the flames. Two firefighters escaped the burning building just moments before the roof collapsed.

It is understood the couple and their pets are safe and staying with friends. Locals say they will help the pair get back on their feet after 'losing everything'.

A spokesman for Scottish Fire and Rescue said the cause of the fire was unknown but there was nothing to suggest it was suspicious.

Ms Milburn took up the role of Colonsay's special constable on June 19, stepping down just five weeks later.

Well-known Oban man Hector dies

A WELL-known Oban man and former Oban Times employee, Hector Morrison, died at his home in Mossfield Avenue last Saturday, aged 86.

Hector, who just weeks ago was pictured on the front page of *The Oban Times*, helping to lead the tributes on Remembrance Sunday, was a driver for much of his career, working briefly with *The Oban Times* in his retirement.

Husband to the late Mary, he had four children, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Time running out to send in your Bonnie Babies

THE OBAN Times mailbox is filling up with entries for this year's Bonnie Baby Competition.

With the first round of pictures due to be published soon, time is running out to get your pictures in. See inside this week's edition for a form and details on how to enter.



Theatre group turns up the panto horror

Screams replaced the typical jeers as Oban's Spotlight Musical Theatre Group turned up the horror for this year's Corran Halls pantomime. A spooky *Sleeping Beauty* came to an end last Saturday night in the last of five performances. The show was very well supported with more than 1,400 in attendance over the four days. Audiences screamed with delight as *Zombies* spilled out over the stage to rush between the seats during the second Act's opening number *Thriller*. *The Oban Times* was able to snap the happy 'undead' bunch just before the curtain went up on Friday night - though we haven't seen our photographer since...

New Year decision on Etive fish farm

PLANNERS are likely to meet in north Lorn on January 29 to decide whether or not a new fish farm should be established on Loch Etive.

Dawnfresh's application for a 10-cage rainbow trout farm has been recommended for approval by planners, although there is widespread condemnation of the plans from the community.

While a large proportion of the 587 objections and 215 expressions of support are from outside the local area, the vast majority of local respondents are against the proposal.

Dawnfresh say the farm is vital if it is to secure the future of fish farming on Loch Etive as well as those it already employs on its farms there.

Urgent call for council £2m to kickstart home repairs

CRUMBLING weatherproofing on houses across Argyll could be repaired and the economy given a £45million boost - if Argyll and Bute Council was to spend £2million.

That's the view of Oban councillor Fred Hall, who is becoming increasingly concerned by the 'perfect storm' of high heating bills and insulation problems affecting some of the social landlord's properties, particularly in the town's Soroba housing scheme.

ACHA has access to £45million to make roof repairs

and refurbish properties across the region, but cannot spend the money until it reaches agreement with all private owners, who have a common responsibility for the work. Nearly a third are so far refusing to pay their share.

Part of that headache is the Soroba estate, which is suffering from rapidly deteriorating roughcast. There is good news for some residents; after more than a year of negotiations, six of the scheme's 14 blocks are to be repaired after agreements were reached with flat owners.

However, owners in eight further blocks are preventing work going ahead. Councillor Hall believes the local authority has a part to play, saying a £2million investment and a means tested grant or loan system could speed progress and save families from spending more time fending off damp.

Councillor Hall said: 'In Glasgow, the district council took the lead and gave the money to Glasgow Housing Association to meet the sum of money they needed from owner occupiers to tap into funding. If the council here gave £2million to ACHA,

they could access £45million in funding to create jobs, refurbish flats, make homes more energy efficient and make more homes available - as flats currently not fit to occupy could be refurbished and let. The council could then go about recovering the money from the owner occupiers via interest free loan repayments if need be.'

Argyll and Bute Council has confirmed it is considering a number of options regarding the upgrade of properties, including the possibility of grants towards repair costs.

Get Billy home for Christmas

Campaign to free Connel man detained in India

PLEASE rang out this week for the west coast community to rally behind Connel's Billy Irving and get him home from atrocious conditions in a tiny Indian cell before Christmas.

The 33-year-old is one of 35 crewmen - including six Brits - arrested by Indian authorities in October over allegations the captain of their anti-piracy vessel, the US-owned MV Seaman Guard Ohio, had illegally bought diesel and was carrying weapons without a licence.

Billy has already been treated for dysentery during his stay in the cramped cell he shares with three others. Until then, Billy had been sleeping on a concrete floor with just a blanket to keep him warm.

Since his illness he has been given a mattress and bottled water, although concerns remain over a lack of nutrition.

The crew can be held without charge for 90 days and for up to a year without trial if a charge is pressed.

Hopes are growing though that Billy can get home for Christmas as the time limit for filing a charge approaches, despite no news on a bail hearing that was due to take place at the start of the week.

Yvonne MacHugh, Billy's girlfriend of the past four years, says she hopes public pressure can help secure his passage back to Britain.

She said: 'There's been absolutely nothing from India. We haven't had any phone calls

from Billy, not even when he's been unwell. It is so tough. I've just got to make sure I do everything I can to get him home and I'd ask everyone who can help to be a pest.'

'I've been the biggest pest so far and there's no doubting it does make things happen.'

'I'd ask people, write to the Indian High Commission, write to your local MP, write to the British Government. Put them under as much pressure as possible to release Billy and the crew.'

It is understood the allegations hanging over the crew relate to a trade of fuel the ship's captain thought was taking place on international waters and therefore outwith Indian regulation.

However, a small rocky outcrop, similar to Rockall, extends India's territorial waters beyond its traditional 12 miles from coastline.

When the Indian authorities demanded the vessel return to dock in India, weapons used in anti-piracy operations were discovered, prompting allegations of carrying without a licence.

Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid was due to meet with the Foreign Office in London this week for an update on the position. Speaking ahead of the meeting, he said: 'The 90 days will be up in early January, although the prosecutor can appeal for an extension.'

'The Prime Minister has raised it with the Indian Prime Minister, so it has been raised at the top level.'

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Colleagues forced to drive injured man to hospital

A WORKMAN hit by a falling tree during last week's storms had to be driven to hospital from Crianlarich because of a lack of phone and radio reception.

The injured man was working on the Pulpit Rock improvements on the A82 last Thursday when the stormy weather blew a tree over and onto a vehicle he was driving.

Colleagues tried to call for an ambulance but a power cut - which lasted 33 hours in the area - had taken down the mobile phone network. Landlines were also disabled by the storms, leaving even

old-fashioned analogue phones inoperable. The contractor's local radio systems were also rendered useless, with the base receiver knocked out by the power cut.

Workers drove their colleague to Crianlarich in search of a phone line but, having failed to do so, drove on to a hospital.

Isla Craig, who owns Crianlarich's village shop, said: 'It was quite scary to realise that not only did we not have power, but we couldn't contact anyone if there was an emergency.'

Transport Scotland confirmed an incident had

taken place and that an investigation had been launched. A spokesman said the man's injuries had not prevented him returning to work.

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell, who has previously said the west coast's poor coverage 'risks lives', said: 'The lack of investment from mobile companies in Argyll is a scandal. I would urge every customer who was affected to write to their supplier demanding compensation and every company or public body to complain to their supplier about their inability to sustain service when it was most needed.'

Cargo ship grounding probe blames sleeping watch officer

AN INVESTIGATION into the grounding of a cargo ship off the Isle of Mull earlier this year has blamed the officer on watch falling asleep for the accident.

A report by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch revealed the 90-metre Fri Ocean hit rocks two and a half miles south of Tobermory on June

14 after the 48-year-old Polish second officer dozed off around 3am. The ship, which weighs 3,640 tons when loaded, was travelling from Corpuach near Fort William to Varberg in Sweden.

The investigation found the second officer, who was alone on duty, fell asleep 'largely through lack of stimulation possibly exacerbated by fatigue'.

None of the navigational alarms were loud enough to wake the sleeping officer, and a system that could have alerted the other six crew members was 'probably not in use'.

The grounding was Tobermory lifeboat's longest ever rescue mission as the volunteer crew spent more than 30 hours at sea.

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Architects have designs on success

A GROUP of young architectural graduates from across Scotland has won a competition to create innovatively designed scenic viewpoints across Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Scotland's Scenic Routes pilot projects were launched by the Scottish Government in August and aim to make famous tourist routes more attractive by creating new vistas to stop and enjoy Scotland's landscapes.

Inspired by the National Tourist Routes programme in Norway, the pilot phase of the project will see three installations placed at popular visitor destinations across Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, at Inveruglas, the Falls of Falloch and Loch Lubnaig.

Lewis-born Ruaridh Campbell Moir, a graduate from the University of Strathclyde School of Architecture, has been selected to design the sheltered space at Loch Lubnaig, while the Falls of Falloch will benefit from a woven steel shelter, which will amplify the sound of the waterfall, designed by Greenock's John Kennedy.

Inveruglas will see a timer-stepped viewing platform and seating area at the SSE-owned site.

Team

This design was by a team of three, Sean Edwards, Daniel Bär and Stéphane Toussaint, all of whom work for the Dualchas Architects, which is based in Glasgow and Skye.

Gordon Watson, director of operations for the national park, said: 'This is a fantastic opportunity for architects just starting out in their careers to demonstrate design innovation within our best landscapes.'

'Here in the national park, we want to create sensitive focal points to encourage more visitors to stop in the park and take in some of the finest landscapes we have in Scotland.'

'We were really impressed with the enormous creativity and obvious talent displayed by the entries we received and look forward to watching the winning designs take shape.'

Building work is to start in early 2014, with a second competition to be held in the new year for sites on tourist routes in other parts of Scotland.



Dunbeg Primary School's pupils get ready to send their Christmas shoeboxes to Blythswood, destined for children in some of the poorest parts of the world. 15_150dunbegbly1

Big hearted Dunbeg youngsters remember others

BIG HEARTED Dunbeg Primary School pupils helped to fill 45 shoeboxes with Christmas presents for this year's Blythswood appeal, after helping to raise £129 for the Philippines disaster response.

Packing the boxes on Wednesday last week,

the pupils' gifts will be sent to children in poverty stricken countries such as Moldova, Kosovo, Bulgaria and the Ukraine - just in time for Santa.

It comes as part of a busy season for the school, which recently built a money snake

to help those hit by the typhoon in the Philippines. Now the school is preparing for its Nativity play, Too Busy for Christmas, which will raise money for CLIC Sargent. It will be held at the school on December 18, starting at 7pm.

Marine protected areas win council backing

CONSERVATION plans for a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) around the west coast of Scotland have been backed by Argyll and Bute Council.

The Scottish Government is consulting local authorities on Scotland's first National Marine Plan (NMP), which includes proposals for MPAs.

Argyll and Bute Council has supported the plan's objectives and marine planning policies on the basis it will ensure the sustainable development of the council's key economic growth sectors - aquaculture, fishing, marine renewables, tourism and transport.

The council said it would in turn lead to job creation in Argyll and Bute's rural, coastal and island based communities.

The proposals for new network of nature conservation MPAs also look to increase protection for a range of Scotland's marine habitats and species.

However, there are concerns within the fishing industry that MPAs would damage the industry by preventing certain areas from being fished.

Five inshore areas of Argyll and Bute have been included in the consultation - Upper Loch Fyne and Loch Gail, Loch Swene, Loch Sunart and the Sound of Jura, Loch Creran and the Clyde Sea Sill - as well as two areas

just out-with Argyll and Bute - the Loch Sunart and South Arran - which are considered of interest to Argyll and Bute's coastal communities.

At the same meeting that the council agreed its stance, councillors Fred Hall and John McAlpine both raised concerns about the plan, with councillor Hall stating an east-coast bias at Holyrood was 'having a negative impact' on the west coast fishing industry and that Scottish Government policy was turning the west coast in to a 'theme park'.

The council's lead councillor for sustainable environment, councillor Vivien Dance, said: 'While the council welcomes

the ambitious set of objectives and priorities identified in the NMP, it does have concerns over whether Marine Scotland will be able to effectively implement and monitor the plan and oversee the development of regional marine planning within existing resources and we will continue to engage in discussions on such matters.'

'Regarding the proposed MPAs, while the council supports the principles of MPAs, it is vitally important that the right balance is struck between environmental protection and socio-economic impact on marine activities and coastal communities and we will continue to highlight our concerns to Marine Scotland.'

Police warn elderly over fake medical firm

A ROGUE company offering fake medical advice is targeting elderly people in Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, police have warned.

Callers falsely state over the phone they are an area nurse, telling the old folk to stop using a particular medication and buy the

company's instead. Card or bank details are then demanded for payment.

A Police Scotland spokesperson said no-one should take medical advice from anyone other than their own doctor or local medical practice.

Nor 'under any circumstances' should

people change medication without consulting their prescribing doctor.

Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh residents are also being warned never to give bank details or card details over the telephone without stringent checks to ensure the company is reputable and genuine.

Christmas family cheer for Islay's Ciara

Girl given go-ahead by doctors to spend Christmas abroad

A YOUNG girl who has been battling a brain tumour for nearly 10 years has been given the go-ahead by doctors to spend Christmas abroad with her whole family.

Ciara Allan, from Bowmore on Islay, has been allowed to travel with her mother, Loret, and younger brother and sister to the UAE to join up with her father, Rob, who is working in Abu Dhabi.

Because the 12-year-old has required regular treatment at Yorkhill Children's Hospital in Glasgow she was unable to leave the country. Her father has been given time off to help look after his daughter and joined the whole family on a trip to the US earlier this year, where Ciara received state-of-the-art proton radiotherapy. Since then he has had to return to his job in the Emirates, arranging visits home to Islay every few months.

But following a recent check-up at Yorkhill, specialists gave Ciara the news she has been waiting to hear and agreed to let her travel to the UAE on the proviso she returns for an MRI scan every three months.

Mother Loret said: 'This is the best news Ciara has been waiting to hear for almost three years.'

'Her consultant at Yorkhill explained that although her tumour was still showing small signs of activity, he felt that given her current good health and what she has come through in the past few years, she deserved a break from treatment and that she was

happy for her and her family to get back together in Abu Dhabi. Ciara is fully aware that she will inevitably need further treatment in the future, but it is felt that the best medicine at this moment in time would be for the family to be together again and enjoy life for a while.'

The family will leave Islay next Monday and fly to Abu Dhabi the following day. From 2011 onwards Ciara has been unable to leave the UK because of her chemotherapy



Ciara and her specialist give the thumbs up after she received her good news.

treatment but doctors have so far been pleased with the effect of her proton therapy treatment in Oklahoma at the beginning of the year.

Ciara's brain tumour was discovered shortly before her third birthday in 2004, after she suffered a brain haemorrhage. She had three major brain operations, intensive physiotherapy and chemotherapy as specialists tried to keep the tumour from spreading.

Police probe Pennyfuir crash

POLICE enquiries are continuing into a crash on the A85 at Pennyfuir, involving a car and a motorcycle, which caused the road to close for a short period.

Following the collision, which happened at around 2.10pm last Saturday, the vehicles were blocking the road and police set up a contraflow from 3pm until 3.30pm to clear traffic.

In the meantime, the roads authority, BEAR Scotland, was tasked with cleaning up a fuel leak from one of the vehicles.

There were no serious injuries to anyone involved in the incident.



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Eye to eye with John Wallace

Christmas Gifts

I suspect my household is not untypical and conversation currently seems to revolve around purchasing and giving of presents. Television adverts seem to be full of messages about ever more expensive toys and computer games aimed at kids.

Perhaps we, as parents, should take a step backward and remember what Christmas is really about ... the birth of an infant and the offering of gifts. There are few gifts that can compare with the giving of sight. This can take the form of ensuring all our children are able to see at their maximum potential. Or it can be handing unused old spectacles to your optometrist for forwarding to third world countries where eye-care as we know it is unaffordable. Millions of children and adults throughout the world are functionally blind simply due to the lack of provision of spectacles. Most optometrists, myself included, would be delighted to receive your old

spectacles for forwarding to optical charities providing eye-care to the disadvantaged.

Closer to home we parents are familiar with the look of delight when a child receives a long desired present at Christmas. As an optometrist I constantly delight at the look of amazement on a child's face when they put on their first pair of spectacles and can see clearly possibly for the first time ever. I also get immense pleasure from the look of delight on a parent's face when their child can read with minimal effort after years of struggling with undiagnosed reading problems at school. Clear comfortable vision is a gift we can all give our children. Amazingly, at a time when family budgets are stretched to the limit, this gift is free. NHS Scotland pays for children's eye examinations and in many cases for any spectacles required. Make that call to your optometrist today!

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP
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Pledge to maintain parking management

HIGHLAND Council and Police Scotland have pledged to ensure parking management is maintained when the traffic warden service - currently provided by the police - ends.

Five traffic wardens, including one based at Fort William, will be redeployed to other duties on February 3.

In the medium term, the council will adopt a decriminalised parking

enforcement (DPE) scheme, employing parking attendants to issue penalty charge notices on vehicles parking in contravention of regulations.

Until then, the onus remains with the police to continue to enforce parking law. At one time there were 18 full and part-time traffic wardens employed in the Highlands. Councillor Drew Millar, chairman of the community safety, public engagement and equalities

committee, said: 'Until we are able to introduce the DPE regime, the police will continue to use their powers to take appropriate action on our streets when a parking problem arises and to closely monitor parking management.'

Chief Superintendent Julian Innes said: 'The onus clearly lies with the police and we will continue to promptly respond to any parking issue that requires our attention.'



Youngsters enjoying the pool at Lochalsh Leisure Centre: now hopes are high a funding bid will be successful.

Staff wait for news on shower cash

LOCHALSH Leisure Centre staff expect to find out today (Thursday) whether their bid for funding to refurbish swimming pool showers is a splash hit.

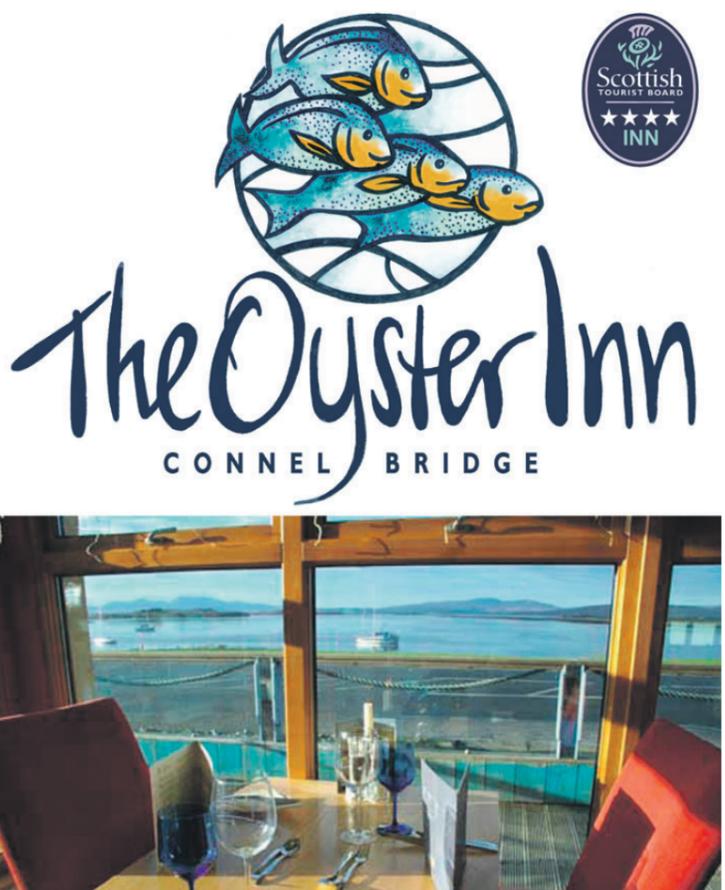
Voting closed yesterday in Intuit Quick Books' Love Our Local Business online poll - and the centre was vying for top spot against dozens of other groups from across the UK with almost 12,000 votes.

Up for grabs is £15,000, with £5,000 going to the winner and £1,000 to each of 10 runners-up. Upgrading the male and female shower areas will cost £2,000, leisure centre manager Chris MacKinnon told The Oban Times.

He said: 'We are well up in the voting - it has been a fantastic community effort to get us that high. It is so heart warming - people have been voting every day. Once voting is completed a panel sits and deliberates on who should get the money - but the public vote in only 25 per cent of the procedure.'

He added: 'We have been fundraising already and we hope to get some more money out of this. We are keeping our fingers crossed.'

The centre, which opened in 1992, refurbished its cubicles and lockers three years ago. A 'Swim to Swim', which saw 25 local volunteers complete between 50 and 300 lengths of the pool, could bring in an additional £1,000, Mr MacKinnon said.



UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT
You can find full details including new menus in next week's Oban Times

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Woman awaits sentence on drug charges

AN OBAN woman is awaiting sentence after admitting being concerned in the supply of diazepam and handling stolen goods.

Linda Boa, 41, of flat 3/2, 23 High Street, Oban, pled guilty to dealing the class C drug and receiving stolen clothing when she appeared at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

Honourary sheriff Graeme Pagan deferred sentence for the preparation of reports until December 23. He said: 'With great reluctance I'll allow bail in this case. I'm not at all confident it will be in your interests.'

Majority of salmon farm applications approved

ONLY four applications for salmon farms have been rejected by Highland and Argyll and Bute councils in the past 10 years.

Figures released through a Freedom of Information request show Highland Council has approved 66 farms while Argyll and Bute Council has given the green light to 32 since 2003. Both have turned down two applications.

Meanwhile, Western Isles Council has approved 73 applications and refused just one since 2008.

The figures emerged as anti-fish farm campaigners Protect Wild Scotland sent a letter to First Minister Alex Salmond calling for a moratorium on new farms.

Throughout the country, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has approved 585 salmon farming applications and refused just one since 2006.

Plan to turn hotel back into home

ONE OF Oban's former hotels looks destined to be returned to a home after plans were submitted to change its use.

The eight-bedroom Lerags House Hotel, just outside Oban, was recently taken off the market by agents Savills, who had previously been seeking offers over £495,000.

The applicants, Mr and Mrs S Adams, of London, have asked for permission to change its use to private residence, as well as leave to build a timber garage. The development would increase the number of parking spaces from six to eight.

Six of the eight bedrooms in the building are en-suite, while the property includes two acres of ground, including foreshore and tidal mooring.

When open, the Lerags House Hotel received excellent reviews, rating 100 per cent for satisfaction on TripAdvisor.

A decision on the application isn't expected until the new year.

Look back on a memorable year

AS 2013 draws to a close The Oban Times is taking a look back on what has been a memorable year.

From Oban Lorne RFC winning trophies in Murrayfield to babies born in helicopters, starting next week we'll take you on a trip down memory lane.

Don't forget to pick up your copy to see stories and photos, starting with January to April in the Thursday December 19 issue.

Fresh demands to remove station car park barrier

FRESH demands have been made to remove the new car park barrier at Oban Railway Station - as it emerged the controversial installation does not have planning permission.

Businesses on the pier say they are under threat because of the barrier ScotRail put in place in early October, as it does not open when the car park is full, limiting trade.

Now Michael Russell, MSP for Argyll and Bute, has waded

into the debate, urging ScotRail to have a 'change of heart' over the barrier.

Responding to fishmonger Allan Watt, who is concerned his business D Watt and Son could be closed 'within months' if the obstruction is not removed, Mr Russell said: 'It is utterly unacceptable that a good local business of long standing is being affected in this, with a knock on effect for a range of others including

suppliers of fish and shellfish. I have also contacted the transport minister and have urged him to ensure that ScotRail changes its position on the matter without any further delay and lifts not just the barrier but also this threat to a local institution.'

Illegal

Oban councillor Roddy McCuish, who has been backing Mr Watt, added: 'I am led to believe the barrier does not have planning permission and I

therefore consider it to be illegal and immoral to charge people moving in and out of the car park.

'Also, utilities vehicles, such as bin lorries, and other council vehicles cannot get in.

'I hope the two national organisations [Network Rail and ScotRail] come together and get a sensible solution, which should not be beyond them.

'It is imperative this is done as quickly as possible, as those

businesses affected continue to lose money every day.'

ScotRail confirmed it received the 'necessary landlord consent' for the car park barrier and is 'discussing the issue with Argyll and Bute Council and Network Rail, which owns the land.'

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'In accordance with council procedures, we have opened a file and, if required, will take appropriate action in consultation with ScotRail.'



Margaret Burgess MSP, centre, presents Oban Phoenix Cinema with their SURF award as Scotland's best example of a community led regeneration project. From left: Highlands and Islands Enterprise's Claire Hannah, who has supported the cinema since the beginning, director Louise Glen-Lee, community outreach worker Eleanor MacKinnon, cinema manager Carol Devine and board member Euan MacPherson.

Oban cinema named country's best community-led project

OBAN Phoenix Cinema has been recognised as one of the country's best community-led projects after clinching a top award.

The Scottish Urban Regeneration Foundation (SURF) praised the volunteers who kick-started the project and the committed team behind the revival of the cinema since, which is now once again a popular attraction in the town.

Picking up the Community Led Regeneration Award, the cinema triumphed over South Lanarkshire's Douglas St Bride's Community Centre restoration and Neilston's Building Our Future project.

Cinema general manager Carol Devine said the team enjoyed the celebrations. 'I am absolutely

thrilled and so proud of everyone involved in the cinema.

'All the hard work is paying off.

'It's amazing to get this kind of recognition from SURF, acknowledging that we are showing best practice in community-led regeneration. There was a wee bit of celebrating afterwards - we were the last to leave.'

A similarly delighted Louise Glen-Lee, a director of the community organisation, added: 'You know what? I'm chuffed to bits.

'It means that every single person involved with the cinema should have a pat on the back.

'This is a national award recognising innovation and good practise.

'There were 19 organisations in our category and the three finalists were all superb. Our work with volunteers, employing people, community partnerships, sound management structures and the ability to put on a good show were all recognised.

'It also means we get support from major national private and public sector organisations - and everyone and his dog now wants to come and visit us.

'You couldn't have bought the goodwill from all over Scotland for the cinema.'

She said the award was just as much for the community, adding: 'Thank you for everything you have done to help Oban's cinema become the best wee cinema in the world. No, really, I believe it is.'

Council defends amount received in computer disposal contract

ARGYLL and Bute Council received £23,783.12 as part of a new contract to dispose of disused computers in the last six months - an average of £16.20 per unit.

Figures obtained under freedom of information by The Oban Times revealed that the authority disposed of 1,468 computers through a contract with Flection since it started on June 6.

However, the local authority says the sum represents good value, with a 'disproportionately

high number of devices' older than four years, which it says have 'absolutely no value whatsoever'.

It states the merger of education and corporate IT services in 2010 was the start of a computer replacement programme, now in its third year, which has 'focused on replacing some very old equipment in schools.'

The authority added that 19 companies had bid for the contract, which will see Flection pay up to £110 per unit for 'the best of our old devices' over the course of its three-year contract.

Insight and HP are the main suppliers of computers to the council via the Scottish National Framework, with the authority paying £307 for a desktop unit and an average of £407 for a laptop. Computers are replaced every four years, except those on the authority's corporate network, which are replaced every three years.

Before the contract with Flection started, the council threw out 906 computers in the 2012/13 financial year, costing £4,530.

Nelson Mandela inspired Oban man into politics

AS PEOPLE across the globe mourn the death of former South African president Nelson Mandela, one Oban campaigner has recalled how the great man inspired his involvement in politics.

Retired solicitor and former Liberal Party member Graeme Pagan has for decades campaigned for the homeless and most recently spoken up for the people of Palestine.

But Mr Pagan's political career began when he joined up with local politicians of the day, aiding the Scottish campaign to free Mr Mandela from his 27-year imprisonment on Robben Island for opposing apartheid.

Mr Pagan said: 'The Nelson Mandela issue got me into politics.

'I knew the MP David Steele, who was chairman of the anti-apartheid movement, and I was so appalled by the treatment Mandela had received that I joined the campaign alongside the likes of Winnie Ewing and Iain MacCormick.

'Injustice has always prompted me to do things and I realised if there was to be any hope for South Africa he was the man to do it because of his vision,



Graeme Pagan holds his piece of rock from Robben Island and wears his Free Nelson Mandela badge with pride. 16_150mandela01

humanity and determination to do what was right.'

In 1993, Mr Pagan was among the guests invited to hear Mr Mandela speak at the Glasgow Concert Halls.

Mr Pagan said: 'It was one of those occasions when you couldn't believe what you were seeing.'

Nelson Mandela died last Thursday, aged 95, at his home in Johannesburg.

Man stole methadone and 'held it to ransom'

WHEN he thought part of his medication had been stolen an Oban man held another man's supply of methadone 'to ransom', Oban Sheriff Court heard on Monday.

In the dock was Daniel Kelly, aged 23, of 91 McKelvie Road, Oban, who admitted that on November 23 he had stolen a prescribed bottle of methadone from the same address.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty said witnesses saw Kelly with the drugs and he told them: 'Tell him he's not getting his methadone back.'

Kelly's defence agent told the court that Kelly 'perceived' that some of his own medication had been stolen.

'He took the methadone and effectively held it to ransom for want of a better description, for the return of his property.'

Sentenced

Kelly, who was subject to a return to prison order for a previous conviction, due to expire in March 2014, was told by Sheriff Douglas Small that he must serve out 124 days and was then sentenced to 110 days for this offence.

Lorn Lines

OBAN and District Classic Vehicle Club has given a 'clutch' of local causes a share of £750.

Money is raised by the club at events it holds throughout the year, with the top item on the November agenda to select who benefits.

This year's recipients are Oban Sea Cadets, the Eadar Glinn Residents Comfort Fund, and the Club nan Cairnrean, Benderloch, which were all nominated to receive the sum of £250 each. Members then went on to hold their annual 'bring and buy' auction, when the sum of £233.50 was generated by members to start off fund raising for the coming year.

An art exhibition held in St John's Cathedral in Oban for the victims of the typhoon in the Philippines raised £653.75. Sarah Campbell, right, one of the contributing artists, said: 'We all felt terribly sorry for the people in the Philippines. They are having such a ghastly time. We thought we would like to do something to help.'



A COLLECTION in George Street, Oban, by members of the Oban and Lorn Lions Club has raised the sum of £639.50 for the Philippines Typhoon Disaster Fund.

This money will be combined with the totals collected by all Lions clubs in mainland Britain and Ireland and distributed to the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), which will then divert the final figure to the disaster area. Oban and Lorn Lions club president Bill Coutts said that although there were three other organisations collecting in town on the same day the response was fantastic. The Lions club will be hosting a Santa's Grotto this Saturday, December 14, in The Royal Hotel, Oban from 11 to 3pm.

OBAN'S business community has joined up with two of the town's charities to give hope to others at Christmas, while brightening up the town centre.

The Wish Window project, run by Crossroads North Argyll and North Argyll Carers Centre, encourages residents to write their Christmas wish on a star and place it in a window display at the former Scotch Corner premises in George Street.

Those posting a star on the window can make a donation to the charities and learn more about their work.

Councillor Roddy McCuish helped to get permission from the shop's landlord and has encouraged fellow Argyll and Bute councillors to start similar projects in their towns.

He said: 'Like all good ideas, this is not mine. I want to thank Carol Johnstone for bringing this to my attention and the generous landlord who allowed us to have this shop. I would urge everyone to support these worthwhile causes.'

Alister Jackson, vice chairman of BID4Oban, said: 'We are delighted to help with this project, which supports very worthwhile causes and fills a shop window at this busy time of year for the town centre.' The shop, which will be manned by staff from the charities, will be open from noon - 2pm on week days until December 20.



Helping to prepare the Wish Window are, from left: Bette Hunter of Crossroads North Argyll; Alister Jackson, vice chairman of BID4Oban; Oban South and the Isles Councillor Roddy McCuish and Iris Seager and Morag MacLean of North Argyll Carers Centre. 16_150wwindow01

WELL known musicologists and broadcaster John Purser and poet Meg Bateman recently visited Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society.

Illustrating their talk with photographs and music, they gave a fascinating presentation about the importance of circularity within the Gaelic culture.

The next meeting of the society is on Friday, December 13, when John Macfarlane will talk on 'Historic Christian sites in and around the Parish of Muckairn'.



Joan Reynolds received her award from former Commonwealth Games gold medal swimmer Sharon Davies.

Oban coach honoured

A VOLUNTEER lifesaving coach has been recognised as a driving force at her local club.

Joan Reynolds, described as 'a gem' by committee members at Oban Lifesaving Club, was recently given an award for the promotion of lifesaving by the Royal Lifesaving Society of Great Britain. She received her certificate from former international swimming champion Sharon Davies at a ceremony in London.

Oban Lifesaving Club vice chairman Gordon McNab said: 'Joan has helped turn the club around. She is able to teach swimming skills to all ages. She is an absolute angel.'

Merry Christmas

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Woman pleads guilty to slapping former partner

PARINDA MORRISON, aged 41, of Flat 4/3 Stevenson Street, Oban, pled guilty to Oban Sheriff Court on Monday to committing a breach of the peace on Oban's North Pier on August 27.

She also admitted slapping her former partner on the head at the same time.

Sheriff Douglas Small was told that the man repeatedly called at Morrison's home late at night, causing a disturbance and waking her child.

Sheriff Small deferred sentence until August 19 2014 for Morrison to be of good behaviour.

Workplace confrontation lands man £400 fine

A 22-YEAR-OLD man found it hard to accept that his relationship was over and confronted his former partner at her workplace, Oban Sheriff Court heard on Monday.

Patryk Mieczyslaw Wrona, of 84D George Street, Oban, pled guilty to a breach of the peace at the Balmoral Hotel, Oban, on Sunday night.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty told the court that Wrona had visited his wife at the hotel where she was working and was told she did not want to speak with him at her place of work.

He returned later, she sat down with him, and the conversation deteriorated; he threw a pint glass on to the floor.

Wrona's defence agent said that after a year of marriage he was finding it difficult to accept their relationship was over.

Sheriff Douglas Small fined the first-time offender £400.

Not guilty and no case to answer

APPEARING before Oban Sheriff Court on Monday, Steven Flanagan, aged 32, of Island View, Barmalinde, was found not guilty of committing a breach of the peace at his home on March 21 this year.

Sheriff Douglas Small also ruled there was no case to answer and acquitted Flanagan of a charge of assault.

Lochaber poppy tops £10,000

THE LOCHABER appeal for Poppy Scotland raised an incredible £10,001, Fort William members of the Royal British Legion Scotland heard on Sunday night.

Announcing the total at the branch annual general meeting at the Railway Club in Inverloch, co-ordinator Mark McCann paid tribute to all involved.

The 82-year-old said: 'This year I set a target of £10,000. I was told this was a very ambitious sum to aim for, but we achieved £8,140 last year so why not try?'

It is fantastic. Many thanks to all who made this possible - members who collected £2,130 at Morrisons, £1,242 at Tesco, £1,784 at Lidl, £687 at Caol Cop, and to the Army and Navy cadets and Kevin MacColl of the ATC who collected £684 outside the council offices on one day alone.'

Mr McCann, from Upper Achintore, told *The Oban Times* the total collected had more than doubled since he took over the role five years ago.

He said: 'I was going to give it up but I'm not going to - because there's no other fool out there to take it on!'

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Veteran fundraiser: Mark McCann co-ordinated the £10,000 Poppy Scotland campaign in Lochaber.



The new BBs and Anchor Boys pictured at the company's dedication with leaders, from left: Lieutenant Neil Price, Lieutenant PJ Miller, Captain Cameron Harris, Rev Ken Hunter, Robin MacQueen, Helen Harris and Lieutenant Kieran Healey.

Boys Brigade back in Oban after 15-year absence

AFTER an absence of 15 years the 1st Oban Company Boys Brigade has reformed.

The new Oban company is under the captaincy of Cameron Harris with the help of eight other officers and helpers.

Captain Harris said: 'To see the company being reformed and young lads being able to take advantage of what the Boys Brigade can do for them and have fun in the process is because of the dedication and hard work of the volunteers who make it all work.'

The company consists of 14 anchor boys aged between five and seven years and eight junior boys aged between eight and 12.

Since August they have met on Friday evenings when the boys take part in crafts, games and physical activities.

A company section for boys aged between 12 and 15 years and a senior section for boys aged up to 18 are planned to start in August 2014, but more volunteers and funding are required.

A recent tour of the Oban Lifeboat Station has been key in working towards the awards that the boys can achieve, which include the Queen's Badge and Duke of Edinburgh Award.

On Sunday the company had its inaugural dedication of the company and colours at Oban Congregational Church. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev Ken Hunter, chaplain of the company. The resurgence of the Oban company comes with a national increase in the number of boys joining the brigade.

Anyone interested in helping as a leader of the new company, or wanting to find out more about membership, should contact Captain Harris on 01631 566726 or email l1stobanbb@gmail.com.

Knitters drop yarnbomb on playpark in fund bid

A GROUP of knitters have dropped a yarnbomb on a community playpark in Oban - covering it with colourful woolen items to raise cash to replace the aging play equipment.

Lyndsay Elliott, chairwoman of the Friends of Oban Community Playpark, said the stunt was part of a campaign to raise £400,000 to upgrade the playpark, make the adjacent garden accessible for wheelchairs and to extend the overall area.

She said: 'We have been fundraising for two years and have about £21,000 in the bank. We were thinking people probably weren't seeing the hard work and we wanted to make people aware of what is going on.'

Yarnbombing is colourful street art, where everyday items such as trees, lampposts and railings are covered in knitted or crocheted items. The yarn bombers usually work under



Youngsters enjoy their yarnbombed playpark.

cover of darkness and fiercely hide their identities.

But the Oban Community Playpark yarn bomb has taken a different approach, involving the local and extended community, young and old in contributing to the project.

With more than 300 hours of stitching in the bag, a 16-metre long banner spells out 'Save Our Play Park Now', composed of 228 six-inch (15cm) squares, intertwined with more than 100 flowers.

Trees in the adjoining garden are covered in more than 150 pompoms. Even the CCTV post is being kept cosy with a woolly cover.



Helping to decorate Stramash Outdoor Nursery's Christmas tree are brother and sister, Roan and Millie Waslidge, from Connel.

Winter wonderland in the woods

TWO ORGANISATIONS with a love of the outdoors combined to create a Winter Wonderland on Saturday in the woods near Ganavan.

Stramash Outdoor Nursery and Forestry Commission Scotland ran a Santa's Grotto, Christmas tree decorating, wreath-making and even toasted marshmallows by the fire as they sought to encourage families to explore the environment.

The Forestry Commission holds a Christmas event every year but had previously hosted the event in Fearnoch. This year the event was held on the site used by the nursery and both groups agreed the successful partnership should continue next year.

Nursery manager Morag Head said: 'The Forestry Commission holds an annual event but approached us this year to do a joint effort because we are 'singing from the same hymn sheet'. It is a great day for the children to get hands on and we are encouraging parents to get involved as well.'

Jo MacLean, communities recreation and tourism manager with the forestry commission, said: 'We are all about working with families and communities and we try to get people to use our forests for their health and wellbeing.'

Patients asked to complete survey

OBAN residents who have suffered a mini-stroke are being called on to take part in a new survey by the Stroke Association.

Signs of a mini stroke, or Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA), include your face tingling, stumbling over speech or pins and needles in the arm.

A total of 2,299 people had a TIA in Scotland last year. Many people are not aware that if they experience these temporary signs of stroke, even only for a few minutes, it could be a TIA and the charity wants to raise awareness of the condition.

Angie Macleod, from the Stroke Association in Scotland, said: 'We've heard many stories of people who have gone on to have a major stroke within a day, week, or even a few months after their TIA, but had not recognised the signs.'

'We want people to know the symptoms and act immediately so they can prevent a stroke. I hope anyone affected by a TIA, including stroke survivors and their families, will help us by filling in this survey so we can campaign for change and increase awareness of TIA as a warning sign of stroke.'

The survey is available online at www.stroke.org.uk/tiasurvey and runs until 31 December. A printed copy is available by calling 0131 555 7244.

Morvern Lines

IT WAS wisely said by Marcus Aurelius, a Roman emperor who lived more than 1,800 years ago, that everything depends on the point of view.

Nowhere is this more true than when dealing with family history. People often speak of 'old families' but of course no family is older than any other if you accept we are all descended from Adam and Eve and not monkeys.

What historians mean by 'old' is that certain families managed to keep their identity and written records of their past longer than most other folk.

The Macleans, who were servants of the Macdonalds in the days when they lived in feudal splendour at Ardtornish, Moidart and in the Uists, are a family who claim great longevity.

As proof, if you believe any is required, there is a weathered inscription on a sandstone lintel in Kiel graveyard, Morvern, dated 1785, telling us that they are descended from Milesians who were the pharaohs of Egypt.

The claim, of course, is pure nonsense and an invention of medieval Irish historians, but full marks to the Macleans for trying before the days of Sir Walter Scott and the descent into tartan kitsch.

In the Maclean coat of arms there is a galley which, they say, was placed there to remind us that at the time of the Great Flood they had their own ship and did not need Noah and the services of his Ark.

Another tale they tell is of the waters rising and Noah shouting at them to hurry up and being told by the chief to wait as he had sent someone home for the family archives!

□□□

INCLUDED in a recent list of Highland Council planning applications there is one to build a house on the site of the old store on Laudale Pier on the south shores of Loch Sunart.

According to Donnie Macpherson, who has a prodigious memory and lives at Camasachroice on the opposite side of the loch, the Laudale pier was constructed in the late 1930s.

Goodwin Newton, owner of the 23,000-acre Glencripesdale Estate when it consisted of Laudale, Glencripesdale, Rahoy, Kinlochteacuis and the Island of Carna, not only paid for it but physically helped to build it.

Until it started to deteriorate in the 1970s, Laudale Pier was the only deep water facility along the entire length of Loch Sunart where a large vessel could come alongside.

There used to be a wooden pier of sorts at Salen but it was abandoned shortly after it was built. For 20 or 30 years many of David MacBrayne's vessels (including the 'Loch Shiel', 'Loch Nevis' and the 'Loch Broom') carried sheep, cattle and general cargo to and from Laudale for the communities round the loch-side.

For example, in 1947 most of the heavy material used in the construction of the Swedish houses in the Forestry Commission's new village across the hill from Strontian was shipped from the Clyde to Laudale from where it was taken by trucks to Acharacle.

There it was loaded onto a barge and towed up Loch Shiel to Polloch Bay. The last MacBrayne's boat to come alongside Laudale Pier was the 'Loch Broom' when, in 1960, she took away a consignment of sheep shortly after the estate changed hands.

The restoration of a deep water pier in the upper reaches of Loch Sunart at a time when yachting and boating is actively being encouraged in the area would be welcome.



1960: The MV Lochbroom takes sheep on board at high water at Laudale pier.

THE 400-acre Island of Carna, lying at the entrance to Loch Teacuis, used to be famed for the number of fiddlers among its inhabitants - 11 at one time I believe.

They must have lived there between 1841 and 1871 when, according to the national census, the population fell from 60 to nine.

I do not know what the dominant religion was then but it was evidently not the fundamental Calvinism introduced to the Highlands by the Rev Roderick Macleod (1794-1868).

'Maighstear Ruaraidh', as he was known, was minister of the Established Church of Bracadale and subsequently of the Free Church of Snizort, Skye.

He apparently set fire to a huge pile of bagpipes and fiddles on the shores of Loch Eishart, with the remark, 'Better the little fire that warms on the day of peace than the great fire that consumes on the day of wrath.'

About the same time a lay-preacher on Eigg stopped one of the residents, Donald Mackay, from playing his fiddle - reputed to be a Stradivarius.

Although as a youth the old man had sold 10 young bullocks to buy it, he was forced to part with it for 10 shillings.

Iain Thornber iain.thornber@btinternet.com

Gales wreak havoc on forest paths

GALE-force gusts have wreaked havoc in several west coast Forestry Commission paths after blowing down trees and branches.

Five routes in Argyll have been closed but the Forestry Commission has said they will be open again by Christmas.

Affected in North Lorn was Beinn Lora, while only Sutherland's Grove's short walk is open. Glen Orchy's main picnic site is closed and most trails in Kilmichael and West Loch Awe are closed too.

Members' cash boost for groups

LOCHABER Highland Council members have agreed to support seven local organisations through their discretionary budgets.

Recipients are:

- Sunart Centre Youth Club - £1,000 towards Duke of Edinburgh award fire service training in Strontian.
- Lochaber Music Festival Association - £1,000 towards cost of running the 40th anniversary music festival in March 2014.
- Fort William Chamber of Commerce - £2,300 towards cost of running a High Street Christmas Gathering on December 19.
- Isle of Rum Community Trust - £2,000 contribution to consultancy cost to produce a Kinloch local development plan.
- Glengarry Community Council - £450 towards senior citizens' Christmas party.
- Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council - £700 towards various Christmas meals and party costs.
- Voluntary Action Lochaber - £1,194 for SQA award in volunteering, subject to majority approval from Ward 12 and 22 members.

Plans for Highland science academy win backing

PLANS are in progress to set up a science academy for the Highlands aimed at children of all ages from pre-school to further education.

Highland Council, together with partner public bodies and leading companies, are backing a Highland-wide Science Academy project.

'It is likely that this will be networked to the new Inverness Campus at Beechwood but also linked to shared facilities across our whole region.'

Career

There is an overwhelming case for a networked science and technology hub, supported by industry, aimed at interesting and enthusing young people about a possible career in life sciences, energy, engineering and IT sectors.

'I am looking to take this to The Highland Council meeting in December for formal support and inclusion in our council's successful programme for the Highlands.'

He added: 'Science and mathematics are not difficult, in fact with the right exposure they can be grasped and enjoyed by our youngest children.'

'We have never had a better chance than now to change the learning environment, the access to future work and to prepare our young people for the future with a firm view on giving them access to thousands of highly paid and skilled jobs.'

Carroll Buxton, director of regional development with Highland and Islands Enterprise, said the academy would be an 'integral feature' of new, purpose-built premises which Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) plan to share at Inverness Campus.

Public has say on town regeneration

OBAN Bay regeneration took another step forward as members of the public gave their response to proposed plans to change the look of Oban Bay and the town's North Pier and Stafford Street.

Around 200 people attended the Public Realm Design Concept Development Exhibition at the White Building in the town to see early design proposals for the regeneration of the bay.

The event allowed the public to ask questions about the redevelopment, which is incorporated in the council's CHORD programme.

Argyll and Bute Council said the feedback from comments and questionnaires would be passed on to the design team. Capita and Oberlander architects.

The results will be discussed at the next design review meeting in December. The concept design ideas included the pedestrianisation proposals for Stafford Street; provision of more space for pedestrians along the waterfront, with the introduction of boardwalks; better use of the waterfront for annual events and the development of the Seafood Capital concept; integration of local art and structural maritime planting; potential for more weather protection and the enhancement of maritime visitor facilities on the North Pier.

Ross of Mull doctors opt to stay after talks

THE ROSS of Mull will retain residential doctors after the two GPs withdrew their resignations.

Dr Mark Astill and Dr Julia Henshelwood will continue to work from Bunnass Surgery following talks with NHS officials.

Ron Blacoe, chairman of the Ross of Mull and Iona Patient Participation Group (PPG), said: 'The Ross of Mull and Iona PPG is pleased to learn that both Dr Astill and Dr Henshelwood have withdrawn their resignations and that these have been accepted by NHS Highland Health Board.'

'Both general practitioners will continue to provide a 24-hour service in conjunction with NHS 24 for out of hours coverage.'

A spokesman for NHS Highland confirmed the doctors had withdrawn their resignations but said discussions were still underway regarding 24-hour care.

He added: 'Senior managers from NHS Highland will be holding discussions with the GPs in the near future and they also plan to meet with other interested parties to ensure that the community and others are kept updated.'

Dr Astill and Dr Henshelwood had tendered their resignations following 'discomforting pressure' from parts of the community.

The comments came in a letter to the Ross of Mull and Iona PPG, which also cited the difference between NHS practices and community expectation as 'chaotic'.

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Staff at Oban Bay Fish and Chip Shop get on with the clear up. 16_150storm04

Town weathers the storm

Worst flooding in Oban for around 30 years

SHOPS on Oban's Esplanade and George Street suffered the worst flooding for around 30 years last week after high tides and powerful gusts combined to turn the streets into rivers.

But there was an overwhelmingly proactive response on Thursday morning from business owners keen to get back to work, despite the damage.

Attempts to stem the flow of water into the buildings around Oban Bay and on the Esplanade proved futile as the water rose well above road level early on Thursday morning.

Colin Galbraith, postmaster at Esplanade Post Office, has lost much of his Christmas stock, which was damaged in the flood.

He said on Thursday: 'When I came down at 6.30am there was no difference between the sea and the road.'

Architect Ronnie Neil said in the 22 years he had been on

the Esplanade he had never seen flooding like it. 'When we have had flooding before it usually leaves the floor damp in parts. This time the water was all the way through to the back of the office.' But although Oban's proprietors would have been forgiven their moment of self pity, there was a much more positive reaction to the damage, as mopping made way for mopping.

Staff at Oban Bay Fish and Chip Shop and Boots Chemists - two of the businesses closed by flooding - had staff in to sweep water from the premises.

Renato Di Ciaffa, owner of Oban Bay Fish and Chip Shop, failed in his attempt to open on Thursday but that wasn't for the want of trying, as a small army of helpers pitched in to clear the restaurant.

Mr Di Ciaffa said: 'It is a shame but it's not as if we have tsunamis. No-one died here.

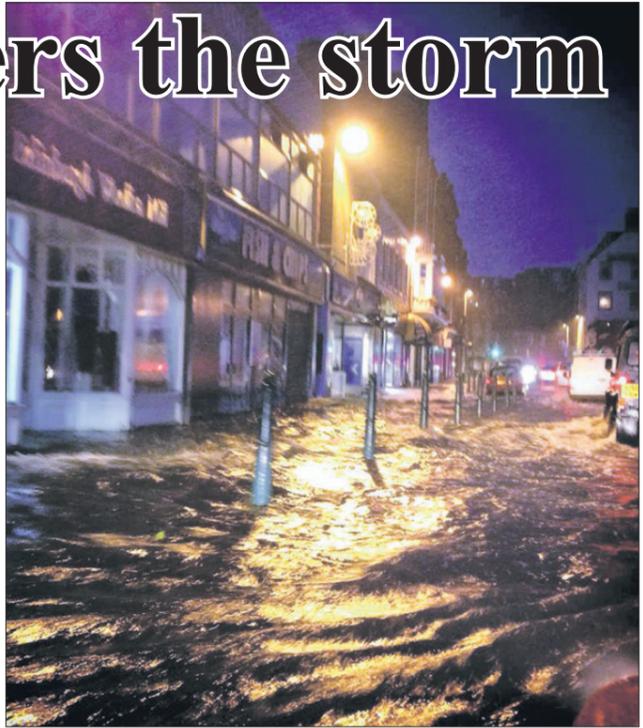
'When I came in this morning the water was meeting me at the back door and waves were lapping against the front windows. I burst out laughing when I saw it at first. What can you do?'

Staff at Boots Chemists rolled up their sleeves to dry out and clean the store but could not open because of a suspected electrical fault caused by the flooding.

Remarkably shops at the far end of George Street, such as Purdies, were bone dry as businesses further up the street took the brunt of the flooding.

Argyll and Bute Council workers were praised for their quick response on Thursday morning, clearing roads and car parks and culverts.

However many shopkeepers said they saw little of trunk roads authority, BEAR Scotland, which did not comment on the claim *The Oban Times* went to press.



George Street, Oban, was flooded on Thursday morning. Photo: Amy Russell



Council staff remove seaweed from the North Pier car park in Oban. 16_150storm03



Boats stored at Stramash's home in Glengallan Road were tossed about like toys as 82mph gusts battered Oban. 1509food7



Chaos: Debris and rubbish littered the streets in Mallaig as recycling bins were swept across a road. 20_150storm02

Mallaig residents pull together

MALLAIG residents pulled together in the aftermath of a storm that wreaked havoc on the village.

Scenes of devastation surrounded the port last Thursday as the tide hurled rocks larger than footballs over 100 yards at parked cars, smashing windows and lifting bonnets.

Shingle and stones littered the public park at West Bay, next to Mallaig and Morar Community Centre, after hurricane-force north-westerly winds drove in an exceptionally high tide.

One vehicle was shunted sideways into another car and huge recycling bins had been overturned as they were dragged from a nearby wall on to the

middle of a road, narrowly missing the community centre. Business in the village came to a standstill as shops closed, unable to continue trading without power.

The Chlachain Inn on Davie's Brae remained open, serving food that could be cooked without electricity.

'You just need to keep going when something like this happens,' owner Cameron Boyd told *The Oban Times* in the bar.

'We've been serving soup, sandwiches and chips because a lot of people can't cook anything at home and we're having a 'candlelight quiz' tonight.'

Members of the Fishermen's Mission

in Mallaig braved the weather to deliver food to pensioners, as their planned dinner in the community centre couldn't go ahead because of the power cut.

The food was cooked in Mallaig High School's hostel using generators for power then packaged into paper cartons and delivered to the senior citizens at home.

'It's very important to look after older people in times like this, it's nice that the village can come together to help each other,' said Rick Chabek, who runs the mission with a friend.

Mallaig was without power until 10pm last Thursday night.

Tens of thousands left with no power or phone lines after 142mph winds

GUSTS topping 142 miles per hour and a 35 foot storm surge brought chaos to the west coast on Thursday, leaving tens of thousands without power or a phone line.

Argyll, Lochaber, the islands and Highland Perthshire all suffered as a result of the weather and, while there was damage in several areas, the consensus was it could have been much worse.

Ferries and trains didn't run and roads were closed as falling trees and high waters brought much of the area to a standstill.

Forty Argyll schools were closed on Thursday, with a further seven remaining shut on Friday as SSE engineers worked hard to restore power. In total, 20,000 homes in the county were cut off from the grid, with power restored to most by Friday.

In Oban, shops were inundated as the tide rose to what is thought to be the highest recorded level for 30 years, however most of the damage was superficial.

Meanwhile, a boat was washed ashore at Glengallan Road after breaking its moorings,

a window was blown out at the Palava café and seaweed was strewn across the streets, blocking drains. Ganavan Sands has been left looking rocky again, after most of its famous sands were sucked away.

On Tiree, a 102 year-old marble monument erected in the memory of island physician Dr Alexander Buchanan was destroyed.

Island resident Mabel McArthur said: 'It's a shame, it's been there for more than 100 years and the storm knocked it over.'

Meanwhile, Argyll and Bute Council said it made looking after vulnerable people a top priority, with departments working together to contact people to make sure they were safe.

Residents of Crianlarich were left without power for 33 hours, with mobile phones and landlines rendered useless as the infrastructure failed to cope with the blustery conditions.

Bryan Craig, who owns the village shop, praised the community spirit of the whole of Strathfillan, with residents themselves

checking on the elderly and vulnerable. He said: 'Most of the looking after is being done by the neighbours of the elderly people and making sure everyone is okay. SSE have also been really good and sent up a burger van to serve food for people.'

In Lochaber, cable cars were toppled from the Nevis Range, with winds peaking at 142mph at the top of Aonach Mor, but there was no major structural damage.

Hunting lodges on Muck were damaged by the wind, while on Sleat sea defences were bypassed by the tide. Ord's Rob Ware said: 'The storm came up Loch Eishort with a bit of a blast. Rocks weighing between 20 to 30 tonnes were being tossed around like matchboxes.'

Barra airport recorded gusts of 98.6 mph overnight, although there was thought to only be minimal damage to the island.

SSE confirmed that, at its peak, up to 80,000 homes in the Highlands were cut off, but most had supplies restored by Friday afternoon.



Toppled by Tiree gales

This 102-year-old granite monument on Tiree was destroyed by last week's gales. It pays tribute to Dr Alexander Buchanan, who was born in Callander but became a staunch part of the island community, working and living there for 51 years. Photograph by Rhoda Meek.

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LUING

FUNDRAISING efforts to repair the war memorial on the island of Luing were boosted by £320 thanks to a St Andrews Night Ceilidh on Saturday November 30.

The event, organised by Cullipool Hall Committee, saw entertainment from Janet on her fiddle and spoons, Rachel Cruickshanks on accordion and Hugh MacQueen, who treated the audience to a song. Kay Benn was MC.

Jean Alexander, who leads the restoration project, thanked everyone for coming and supporting the cause, urging them to all plant poppies for next year's 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

PUPILS at Luing Primary School were showing their creative sides recently as a local artist visited them for six days.

Sian MacQueen talked about her work and brought a large textured picture for the children to look at and feel.

The youngsters' first activity was dot painting creating an abstract on a map of Luing. They worked with clay making things they had seen when they were out and about.

Every child in the school, including pre-5, was given sections of plaster coated wood to work on, creating images in the plaster with a variety of objects.

Applying the first colour with toothbrushes was great fun and the children were amazed when given cloths to rub the paint off leaving different depths of colour.

After the last session, Sian took away all 30 pieces of the picture to join together to make a vibrant image of Luing. Everyone eagerly awaited Sian's return with the completed piece of work and the children are all extremely proud of their work - the next job is to think of a title.

BALLACHULISH

A PATIENT participation group has been formed in Ballachulish to offer the patient perspective on services provided by the medical centre.

It works with the medical practice and will encourage feedback from patients with the aim of making the medical centre more efficient. Meetings are held monthly and anyone is welcome to attend. The group is made up of local people from a diverse range of backgrounds and interests and it is hoped to have all age groups



Ellie Cooper, Abbi Ferguson, aged three, and two-year-old Ben Cooper raise awareness for Connel Toddlers. 16_150Connell01

THE EIGHTH annual Christmas Fayre in Connel Village Hall saw money raised for church funds as well as the local school and playgroup.

Dorothy Hitchin, organiser, said the event was 'quite a big fundraiser for the church' as well as allowing local organisations to benefit - including Connel Toddlers which attended for the first time.

Ellie Cooper, secretary of the toddlers' group, said she

in our community represented. The group has already conducted a survey to find out if there are any areas of the medical practice which could be altered to improve the service.

The results have been posted on the centre notice board and a suggestion box has also been installed in the waiting area. All suggestions will be considered. Anyone wishing to get involved or find out more about the group can drop into the medical centre for information or call Ruth McCormick on 01855 811226. The next meeting is on the 15th January 2014 at 1.30pm in the medical centre.

FORT WILLIAM

FORT William Community Council held its monthly meeting in the Nevis Centre on November 19. Excerpts from the minutes: Extended Licensing Hours

DALMALLY

THEY have played venues of international repute and sold albums all over the world but this month Skerryvore will play Dalmally Community Centre as part of a small venues tour.

The award-winning trad rockers, who hail from Tiree, will give residents of the east Lorn village a concert to remember 2013 by when they appear on Saturday, December 28 from 8pm. The concert is for over-14s only and under-18s must be accompanied by an adult.

Tickets are available from Glenview Stores; Londis Stores, Inveraray; Brodie's Store, Tyndrum; Loch Awe Stores and Graham's Grocers, Taynuilt. The band will also play in Tarbert next Friday (December 20).

SLEAT

SLEAT Community Trust has donated £300 to Sleat Lunch Club towards covering the cost of its Christmas lunch at the Ardsvar Hotel.

Meanwhile, the trust thanked everyone who has donated their leftover foreign currency to date. Those still prepared to have a root around in cupboards for any they may still have can pop it into the collecting bucket at Armadale Post Office.

BUN-SGOIL Shléite (Sleat Primary School) had Pudsey come in with BBC Alba to meet all the pupils.

The sgóil-àrach and nursery did a sponsored spotty walk around the Clan Donald centre, Primary 5/6/7 did a bake sale, while all pupils came in spotty clothes and paid £1. Altogether the school raised at least £210 for Children in Need with sponsorship money still coming in. Head teacher Gwen Culbertson said: 'We all had lots of fun raising money and learning a lot too!'

Kinlochleven youngsters ready to deliver

KINLOCHLEVEN youngsters are getting ready to take over the local Christmas card delivery for the second festive season in a row.

Children from the nursery and primary school will place post boxes in the local Co-op, the school reception and the nursery and then hand deliver cards door-to-door to homes in the village - with next day delivery almost guaranteed!

The postage costs 25p per card, with all proceeds going to school funds. The boxes will be open until Thursday December 19.



Braving the storm: Alison O'Rourke, Gordon Stewart and Alison Stewart didn't let the power cut ruin their night.

ARISAIG locals braved the cold to attend a 'Christmas Cheer' event in The Land, Sea and Islands Centre last Thursday - despite the village being blacked out by the storm.

Organisers lit candles around the rooms and handed out mulled wine as the snow fell outside.

Alison Stewart, the local development officer, told *The Oban Times*: 'We considered whether or not to cancel the event, but we're very glad that we decided to go ahead.' 'Many people are grateful that somewhere is open. It's great to see so many locals here

ARISAIG

because a lot of people only see it as a visitor centre - but we're displaying their history.'

A raffle with prizes of local produce was on display, offering Arisaig oysters, lamb, beef, smoked salmon and jam.

But organisers decided to wait until the weekend to reveal the winners, because of a smaller turnout than expected.

'Local producers have been very generous with donations and we would like to thank them for their generosity,' said Mrs Stewart.

TAYNUILT

COXSWAIN of Oban Lifeboat John Hill gave an illustrated talk on the work of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution at the open meeting of Taynuilt SWRI.

Held in Taynuilt Village Hall on Wednesday November 13, there were 17 members and 17 visitors present. Members said the presentation was a fascinating insight into the work of all who put their lives on the line for those in need.



P6 pupils Erinn and Niamh Sweeney and Leia Levornese are ready for the Christmas rush.

Nominate your Angel of the Year 2013

THE SEARCH is on for *The Oban Times* Angel of the Year 2013 - and we want you to nominate those deserving of the accolade.

Now in its third year, the award recognises those who have made a real difference to their community, often with no thanks or reward.

The winners receive a special trophy and cash prize of £500, while two runners-up each receive £100.

Taynuilt's Stella Huntingford was named 2012's Angel of the Year after being nominated by friend Mary Nicolson. Our panel of judges were impressed by the number of organisations she was involved in and how tirelessly she worked for the community.

After receiving the honour, she said: 'I feel very honoured and very humble. A lot of the things I do are part of the organisations I belong to, so I enjoy doing them.'

After nominating Stella, Mary said: 'She is well known as someone who keeps us in order and gets things done. You can't say no to Stella!'

The *Oban Times* Angel of the Year 2013 will be someone who is compassionate, caring and selfless, thinking of others instead of themselves.

Euan Paterson, *The Oban Times* news editor, said: 'There are countless volunteers on the west coast who work tirelessly for the people around them and sometimes it is easy to overlook that.'

'Their efforts, no matter how small, can make a massive difference to people's lives. We think it is important to recognise those individuals and the



Last year's Angel of the Year, Stella Huntingford, receives her trophy from *The Oban Times* editorial director Stewart MacKenzie as friend Mary Nicolson, who nominated the community stalwart, looks on. 16_150Stella02

Angel of the Year award is the perfect way to say 'thank you' to those who deserve, but do not seek, recognition.' Nominations must be received by Monday, December 16, 2013, nominees will be assessed by a panel of judges, including a Wyvex Media director. Nominations can be made online by visiting www.obantimes.co.uk/angel or by post, using the nomination form which you can find in this issue of *The Oban Times* (page 6).

Patter of tiny feet in Kilchoan as piglets arrive



Kilchoan has 10 tiny new residents - of the four-legged variety. Ormsaigbeg crofter Hughie MacLachlan was delighted when his saddleback sow Betsy produced no fewer than 10 piglets around four weeks ago. Their stay at Kilchoan will, naturally, be limited! Photograph by: A kilchoan diary.

DUROR

DUROR Parish Church will be the venue for Duror and Kentallen's Christmas carol service next Tuesday.

Duror and Kentallen Community Choir will lead the singing. Everyone is welcome to attend the informal event, which starts at 7pm.

LOCHYSIDE

LOCHYSIDE RC Primary School pupils dressed up as their favourite book characters and we held a competition for the best dressed child as part of Literacy Week.

Local author Barry Hutchison, from Caol, came in to school and held a writing session with the P6/7 class to encourage their creative skills.

Down Your Way

Tyndrum and Crianlarich

STRATHFILLAN'S Senior Citizen's Christmas party has been saved after baker Kingsmill gave the event £2,000.

The event has been organised by the community for 20 years, but there were fears that it wouldn't go ahead this year as council and grant funding cutbacks meant sourcing funding was difficult.

By chance though, organiser Bryan Craig, who owns the Crianlarich Store, spotted the Kingsmill Christmas Community Grant campaign just before the deadline for entries closed, quickly submitting an application.

He was stunned to discover that the party had been picked - saving an event that helps bring Christmas in for the area's older population.

He said: 'We are so pleased to be the winner of Kingsmill's Christmas Community Grant campaign, especially at this time of year.'

'Our local community is thrilled to be able to attend the Senior Citizens Christmas Party for another year running, which will help bring

everyone together during this wonderful time of year - Merry Christmas!'

This year's party will be held on Thursday, December 19, but Bryan's wife, Isla, admits they didn't think they'd win.

She said: 'With all the cutbacks it was looking like it wasn't going to go ahead, so the grant is fantastic and means the party will be able to go on.'

'It's a national competition so we didn't expect to stand a chance, so it's fantastic.'

Mike Bailey, channels director of Allied Bakeries which owns Kingsmill, said: 'Kingsmill understands that retailers can have a huge impact on their local communities, and with Christmas being the single biggest sales opportunity in the calendar, being involved in the community also means engaging with shoppers which can have a positive impact on sales too.'

'We hope this grant will give Crianlarich Store an opportunity to build relations with the community and celebrate the festive season.'

STRATHFILLAN Community Council will hold its inaugural meeting last week after new members were elected onto the group.

Two new members were elected to the group, with 12 people standing for 10 positions.

However, ruling herself out of the running was Moira Robertson, who stood down from the organisation after 20 years as a community councillor.

Joining are Tyndrum pair Dennis Dawber and Alister MacDonald, while Callum Marr is new to the community council.

The new community council will hold its inauguration on December 16, when office bearer positions will be elected. Alan Smailes, was secretary in the old community council, said: 'We don't have the official turnout figures yet but there was a lot of ballot papers.'

'I think what's great is we've got a mandate from the people know; I think this is the first time we've had an election so it's great that we can go forward with that.'

A COMMUNITY movement to ensure Crianlarich remains a destination in its own right after the construction of a bypass has applied for permission to create a new attraction.

Crianlarich into Action (CIA) has lodged plans with the authority to transform Lower Station Yard into a landscaped public space, complete with parking, seating, interpretation boards and a wild garden.

The group has been working hard to upgrade the area for several years, having already cleared the site of rubbish thanks to a number of volunteer cleaning days.

Planning permission is the last step for the group before it progresses with plans to create the new Lower Station Yard, which it is hoped will be just as popular with tourists as it will with residents.

Isla Craig, who is heading up the project, said: 'It's really just pulling together everything we've been

working on. The plans have been there for a long time but once we've got planning permission we can start applying for funding.'

'We're not looking for massive amounts, just enough to buy a couple of benches and things. The bypass is due to be finished in summer of next year, but if we get planning permission we'd hope to be finishing the area by the spring.'

Much of the existing site is a hard standing, which will be used as car parking. The outer edges of the space will be delineated using reclaimed railway sleepers, but individual spaces will not be marked out. Large, free-standing planted tubs will prevent vehicular access from the A85, although pedestrian access will be retained.

The areas outwith the parking zone will be sown with grass seed and will be landscaped at the site boundaries using fruiting shrubs and bushes.

Next week Down Your Way visits Ballachulish with Stephen Norris. You can contact Stephen on 01397 703003 or email snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council

SPEAN Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council, held its December meeting in Spean Bridge Primary school last Tuesday.

Excerpts from the minutes: Roy Bridge Sub Post Office - the secretary had written to the Post Office twice, but they had refused to vary the hours offered.

He had then approached Charles Kennedy MP who has written to the Post Office and their reply is awaited. A proposal that the secretary write to the Post Office asking that they extend the hours at Spean Bridge Post Office was approved.

Transport Scotland - the secretary had prolonged discussions with Bob Mitchell of Transport Scotland. The

play park warning road signs for the A86 had been ordered, but he was unable to authorise the purchase of signs showing Achnacarry on either the A82 or A830.

Glen Gloy roadworks hopefully will be removed in Autumn 2014, with the construction of a realigned road.

The flashing warning sign to the east of Roy Bridge will be replaced as a priority, and Bear Scotland have been asked for an explanation as to why the drainage problem on the Roy Bridge has not been repaired, and why there are no cats eyes on resurfaced portions of the A82. The secretary will continue the dialogue with Transport Scotland to ensure all outstanding matters are successfully completed, and

also ask why the corners on the newly resurfaced A82 do not have continuous white lines.

Killiechonate Woodlands - funds and volunteers need to be found to keep paths open or a valuable community asset will be lost.

Correspondence: Gairloch Camping Boathies - The latest communication from Scottish Canals had been circulated to councillors and the secretary had contacted the residents but had not received a reply.

Concerns were expressed by Glen Spean Tourism Group and it was agreed that in the event of a planning application the community council would consult both the Gairloch residents and the business community before deciding on what course of action to take.

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Lochaber BID mix-up revealed as vote closes

VOTING closes today (Thursday) on setting up a Lochaber Business Improvement District (BID) - and the ambitious plan has remained controversial right to the end.

It had been thought businesses had only one vote each, but it emerged this week that every property has a vote.

That means large concerns with multiple properties - Highland Council has 47 - could potentially sway the result either way.

Should tomorrow's count end in a 'yes', opponents of the scheme could mount a challenge to the outcome because, they will claim, the process was flawed.

Local businessman Stewart MacLean, a leading member of opposition group Bid Farewell, told *The Oban Times*: 'My view is the vote will run through - but there will be an official protest if there is a 'yes' vote.'

'This horrendous misinformation going out to the Lochaber business community is symptomatic of what has been happening right from the beginning.'

Complaints

Living Lochaber chairman Frazer Coupland dismissed the complaints as 'hugely disappointing' and that the BID process had followed all legal requirements.

The BID would only go through, he said, if a majority of businesses backed the scheme both in terms of votes and rateable value, and that turnout must exceed 25 per cent.

Earlier this week, Highland Council apologised for the voting mix-up.

Chief executive Steve Barron said: 'I am aware that an impression has been given that businesses are eligible to just one vote no matter how many properties they might own.'

'I am clarifying that businesses are entitled to have one vote for each property they own and they should consider using all the votes available to them.'

'I can only apologise if this has not been made clear up until this point.'

Newsdesk
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Craft fair pair's novel sales technique

Mother and daughter Karen and Naomi Lees found a novel sales technique at their Christmas crafts stall at Upper Achintore Regeneration Group's Christmas Fair last week. Hundreds of Fort William folk turned out to support the event in Upper Achintore primary school. See leisure, page 13. 20_150upper04

Corran Ferry users urged to complete online survey

THE HIGHLAND Council is calling on people using the Corran Ferry to take part in an online survey on the service.

The move forms part of economic study on how fare levels impact on ferry use by both locals and visitors. Fares went up earlier this

year following a controversial consultation. The survey covers all individual users, including people who live in areas outside Lochaber, such as Mull as well as other parts of the country. Holidaymakers are also asked to respond to help ensure the results are representative. The survey

information will inform the council when determining future fare increases. Consultants will produce a report to the council in late January 2014. Fort William and Ardnamurchan councillor Brian Murphy said: 'Residents wanted to know what the impact of fare increases would be. I

believe we need economic data to make the case for the future. This could make the case for a ferry to replace *Maid of Glencoul*.' The survey will be available at www.highland.gov.uk from Monday December 16. A paper survey can be accessed by calling 01224 661830.

Donations flood in to food bank

LOCHABER Food Bank has received around four tons of food donations in the two weeks since it opened, organisers have revealed.

The lifeline service is now gearing up to hand out food packages once organisations such as Lochaber Housing Association, Tweeddale Medical Practice, Highland Council and health and social care services allocate vouchers to those who need them. Once received, the vouchers can be handed into the food bank on Fort William High Street in exchange for non-perishable groceries.

Food bank manager Alex McConachie said the slow start was

'not unusual' for food aid charities, with many taking a month to start giving out provisions.

However, Erin Greig, press officer for NHS Highland stated that nobody has approached them to request a voucher for the Fort William charity.

In the meantime, the food bank has been preparing emergency packages to send to Highland Council, in case they are required outwith food bank opening times.

Mr MacConachie said: 'We've had several people coming in looking for food but we need to direct them to the appropriate organisations so that they can get vouchers first. We think

we'll be busy over Christmas and we hope we'll be giving out food soon because we don't want anybody to struggle. We have had tremendous support and generous donations from the people of Fort William.'

He added: 'Local churches have been giving food to vulnerable people for many years, so it has been clear to those involved that there is a need for a charity like this in Lochaber.'

Mr McConachie would like to thank Tesco Fort William and everyone that donated to the Tesco food collection from November 29 until December 1. Over 300kg of food was donated over the three days.



Lochaber Food Bank: Volunteers prepare for the Christmas rush. Left to right: Anita Russell, Donald Elder, James Casey, Alex McConachie, Patricia Leslie and Catherine MacDonald. 20_150foodbank01

Ruthless gangs poaching deer from estates

RUTHLESS gangs using high-powered rifles are poaching dozens of red deer a week from remote west Lochaber estates, it is being claimed.

Highly-organised crime lords are thought to be behind the operation, with each haul netting them up thousands of pounds worth of venison as pre-Christmas demand for the premium meat reaches its peak.

In the latest incident, Ardnamurchan Estate was targeted but the poachers escaped empty handed after eagle-eyed workers caught them in the act.

Estate manager Donald Houston told *The Oban Times*: 'We had a major poaching incident in broad daylight last Sunday afternoon.'

'One of our workers clocked the guys - they were using rifles, sights and silencers.'

'We lost hinds but they did not take them because they noticed they had been seen and just legged it.'

'They brought down one stone dead and nicked another one which just ran. We found it dead the next day.'

'This was a well-organised,

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

somebody's car they will nick their deer. He added: 'Police in Fort William have it as an ongoing inquiry.'

Glenfinnan Estate manager and West Lochaber Deer Management Group chairman Alastair Gibson said vigilance was the key to deterring the criminals.

He said: 'We do a poacher patrol and we are out on the road 24/7. There is always someone out in the Land Rover so they are seen.'

'In the build up to Christmas and in times of recession poaching does rear its head.'

Police Scotland confirmed they were investigating the alleged attempted theft of deer from Ardnamurchan Estate.

A spokesperson said: 'We would urge residents not to approach these people directly and to phone the police timeously to provide them with information.'

He added: 'We are aware of the incident and inquiries are ongoing.'

Ardnamurchan Estate is offering a reward of £5,000 for information which leads to a conviction.

Music school concert

LOCHABER Music School will stage its annual Christmas concert in St Margaret's Church, Roy Bridge on Sunday at 3pm.

The seasonal family occasion will feature soloists, ensembles, choir, orchestra and handbell ringers, with the audience encouraged to sing a selection of favourite carols.

The concert will also feature a tribute to the late Rosemary Galer, who taught violin for

many years at music school. In her memory, a beautiful, specially commissioned trophy will be presented to Lochaber Music Festival by its designer, the luthier David Sutherland, also a former pupil of Rosemary's.

A raffle and refreshments in Roy Bridge village hall will follow the concert.

Admission is £5 for adults but children of school age have free entry.

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Alan Reid MP

Alan Reid will hold a surgery in Oban on Saturday 14 December 2013 at the Corran Halls, Oban between 10.00am - 11.00am.

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MOST of us have experienced the panic and pitfalls of last-minute Christmas shopping. Navigating your way through the crowds and waiting in long queues as you seek out those elusive gifts that your loved ones absolutely must have. It's the afternoon of Christmas Eve and you're out on the icy high street as the cold and rain dampen your ever worsening mood. This is not what you would call a Merry Christmas! But even if you have left things to the last minute, there is no need to put yourself through the mad dash of city shopping. You'll find your local high street has more than you think. When was the last time you browsed the shops in your nearest town. The high street traders will be hoping for a

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Christmas rush but their busy period will be nothing like the mayhem of a shopping centre, so why not have a stress free shopping experience, while supporting local businesses? Vouchers can be an ideal gift for that person who you just can't buy for and they are available from almost every shop. Or why don't you make your own gift? Homemade gifts are a great way of quickly and cheaply knocking up a present! They can also show that you've really thought about the gift and not just bought the first thing that came to hand. Make a list of who you still need to buy gifts for. It's a good idea to prioritise the list and set yourself a budget. Pick a figure that doesn't leave you look miserly, but one that doesn't leave you out of pocket. Looking online isn't ideal either. Yes, you might find something interesting and cheap, but the delivery could get held up in Christmas mail and the last thing you want to do is be checking your letterbox hourly for a 'missed package' slip. Think about who you are buying for and try to take inspiration from their character. There's no point buying something just because you like it. Books, experience days, personalised jewellery or watches are always safe bets, while perhaps you didn't consider booking a meal at their favourite restaurant, a holiday, or a pampering day at a hotel or spa.

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Crofters' warning over 'duty to report'

GRAZING committees in crofting townships could resign if they are forced to report on the condition of their neighbours' crofts, the Scottish Crofting Federation has warned.

The SCF says members have given a resounding 'no' to a draft 'duty to report' form put out for consultation by the Crofting Commission. Under the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, committees are charged with reporting on the state of common grazings and the crofts of every tenant and owner occupier in the township. That requirement is designed to check absenteeism and improve land use - but it has also sparked fears that checking up on neighbours could sow disharmony.

SCF chief executive Patrick Krause said: 'If it was felt by SCF members that if grazings committees were reporting on fellow crofters they could lose trust and credibility.'

'Many grazings committee members have told us that if they will resign rather than comply with this. We are all trying to help sort out common grazings but this hinders that intent. The Crofting Commission has shown its objective is to support common grazings but this obligation forced on them, by a law that is increasingly being seen as seriously flawed, could cause irreparable damage to the relationship between grazings committees and the commission.'

Crofting Commission spokesperson Jane Thomas stressed the duty to report was a requirement in law and there was 'no option' but to proceed. She told *The Oban Times*: 'We are trying to consult the people most closely involved to design something that is as easy as possible to complete and something that people won't find threatening.'

Ms Thomas stressed it was grazings committees, not clerks, who were responsible for completing the forms.



Fort William's Robert Robertson was a winner at the Scots Trad Music Awards. See more on the awards, pages 12 and 13.

Robert on song with Trad award

FORT William student Robert Robertson has another prestigious award to add to his list after winning the Up and Coming Artist of the Year award at the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards in Aberdeen.

The Gaelic singer's talent was recognised on Saturday night when he came top of his category after 90,000 members of the public voted for their favourites across different categories.

A delighted Robert, 19, *The Oban Times*: 'I feel amazing, I can't quite get my head around it yet. I couldn't get over being nominated so to win was just great.'

The accolade marks the end of a phenomenal year for Robert after winning the An Comunn Gaidhealach Gold Medal at the Royal National Mòd in October and bringing out an album with the band Skipinnish this summer.

Thinking in the future, Robert is planning on a quiet year to focus on his English literature honours degree at the University of Glasgow.

He said: 'Juggling music and studying has been a bit like walking a tightrope recently but the main thing is that I enjoy them both. I don't know whether or not to go into singing professionally but either way music is always part of the plan.'

Robert would like to thank everyone that voted for him in the Scots Trad Music Awards.

Spirit set to flow from new distillery

THE WEST Highlands' newest malt whisky distillery is nearing completion and could be producing spirit within 10 weeks.

Building work at Ardnamurchan Distillery between Salen and Kichaoan is almost finished and almost all the equipment - including the whisky stills - has been installed.

Owners Adelphi Distillery Ltd had hoped to start production at Glenbeg by December 31 but now aim to have spirit flowing by February 28.

Adelphi chairman Keith Falconer told *The Oban Times*: 'We currently have plumbers working flat out to connect everything up. 'Once we are in production, we are looking to operate three

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

in January and February as production picks up.'

Mr Bowie said: 'Forsyth's of Rothes made the stills. 'The wash still holds 10,000 litres and the spirit still holds 6,000 litres.'

'Once the distillation is finished we should get 2,000 litres of spirit as an end product. 'It will be about 68 per cent ABV. We will then reduce the spirit with water to 63.5 per cent ABV and fill it into casks to mature in our warehouse here at the distillery.'

He added: 'This has been a massive project which was first discussed in 2007 with the actual build starting in January 2013.'

'It is now nearing completion and we are looking forward to the first spirit being produced in late February 2014.'



The new distillery takes shape at Glenbeg.



The new stills at Ardnamurchan Distillery.

Moidart war memorial planned

PLANS are underway to construct the first memorial for the Moidart men who lost their lives in the World Wars.

The structure will be placed at the summit known as Bealach Carach, between Loch Moidart and Glenuig.

Donald Munro and Angus McLean of Kinlochmoidart, are in the process of setting up the 'Moidart War Memorial Fund' and have lodged a planning application.

The trustees are appealing for information about the fallen soldiers from relatives or friends.

Mr Munro, 71, told *The Oban Times*:

'I've been thinking about this idea for a few years and I thought it would be splendid to have the memorial completed by the centenary of the first World War next year.'

Mr Munro served in the Queen's Own Highlanders regiment of the British Army from 1962 until 1970, following his father who served in the 5th battalion of the Queen's own



Moidart Memorial: Angus McLean, left, and Donald Munro at the potential site of the new war memorial. f50memorial10

Cameron Highlanders and said this is why remembering soldiers is so important to him.

'It is striking and slightly surprising that there is no memorial to the men of the district who lost their lives in the two World Wars. It is thought that they number some 50 and of course they were the younger men on whom the future so much depended,' Mr Munro added.

The monument is expected to be a cairn of local stone with a remembrance phrase that is yet to be decided.

Contributions can be made by cheque, payable to 'The Moidart War Memorial Fund' and sent to: Donald Munro, Ardmolich, Kinlochmoidart, Lochailort, PH38 4ND.

Mr Munro can be contacted by telephone on 01967 431799.

Fish farm worker's trial deferred for second time

THE TRIAL of a Glenfinnan fish farm worker, accused of being drunk behind the wheel of his stationary car has been deferred for a second time until February 5.

Pawel Fronczek, 33, of Drimsallie Mill, denies being in charge of a vehicle at the Moorings Hotel in Banavie on April 21 while twice over the legal drink-drive limit.

The trial had been due to go ahead at Fort William Sheriff Court last week.

Sheriff Noel McPartlin agreed to the adjournment and the new date was set.

Un-named Scot buys uninhabited island off Benbecula

AN UNINHABITED island off Benbecula is to be bought for over £500,000 by an unnamed Scot with connections to the Outer Hebrides.

Way is being sold through agents Bell Ingram on behalf of owners, the Chettle family of Dorchester in England.

The 970-acre island boasts but a single roofless ruin but the owners recently received planning permission to renovate the property. It has been uninhabited since the early 1940s.

Polecat kills dozens of hens

DOZENS of hens have been killed in night-time raids by a polecat on Benbecula.

A local source told *The Oban Times* a crofter who keeps around 300 hens lost between 20 and 30 in a single night.

The predator left the dead birds uneaten.

Ballachulish panto a sell-out

CINDERELLA, the Christmas pantomime at Ballachulish, is a sell-out for its three-night run from December 19-21, writer and director Nairn MacArthur reports.

Mr MacArthur, who will play 'Velcro' - a modern-day Buttons - in the show, said a few tickets were still available for the matinee performance in the village hall on Saturday December 21 at 2pm.

Earl Haig Fund collection raises £4,057

THE POPPY collection for the Earl Haig Fund in Lochalsh, Glenshiel and Glenelg raised £4,057.02, Plockton Community Council chairman Charlie MacRae reports.

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From left: 1st Fort Augustus Brownies and Guides Rhianna MacCallum from Invergarry, Elnor Littlewood from Balmagaster, Megan Stewart from Invergarry, Sophie Rand from South Laggan and Jade Douglas from Invergarry enjoyed their day at their tombola stall. 20_1509garry01

Invergarry festive fun and games

GLENGARRY Community Hall was a hive of activity on Saturday as local people turned out in their droves to support Invergarry's annual Christmas fair.

Stallholders did a roaring trade as did the cafe next door where Belle Stewart and her helpers served up a steady stream of hot drinks, cakes and snacks.

Proceeds from stall fees raised £120 for the Archie Foundation, while raffle proceeds boosted hall funds by £185.

Co-organiser Sarah Sandham, of the Well of the Seven Heads shop, said: 'The event was really well attended and the quality of produce was fantastic. The kids enjoyed the craft section and made a lot of gifts to take away.'

Among those enjoying the day were the 1st Fort Augustus Brownies and Guides.

Leader Linda Stewart said: 'We are raising funds for our unit to help keep it open.'

Christmas fair and coffee morning cheer

ROY BRIDGE Hall was the venue for the annual village Christmas fair and coffee morning on Saturday - and two inches of snow outside made the event a suitably seasonal occasion.

Local people enjoyed a range of craft stalls, hot drinks and home baking and a raffle, while proceeds from the day, totalling £930, were split 50-50 between Roy Bridge

Primary School and hall funds. Hall committee treasurer Vernon Rodgers told *The Oban Times*: 'The day went really well and even Charles Kennedy turned up. We need a new kitchen which is why we are having a renewed effort to do these kind of things. The total we made is as good as we have had in the past two years which is great considering the

economic climate.' In the grand raffle, Jean Ross from Inverloch, Fort William, won the adults' hamper and Ann Barrie, also from Fort William, won the children's hamper.

Right: Julia Allison, Lynne Nairn, Mhairi Ross and Mylene MacDonald show off some of the tasty cakes on offer at the Roy Bridge Christmas Fair. 20_150ny01



Skye and Lochalsh Sports Council members fall silent in memory of past chairman

SKYE AND Lochalsh Sports Council observed a one-minute silence in memory of John (The Caley) Nicolson at its meeting in Plockton Hall on Monday.

Mr Nicolson, who died on October 24, was a past chairman of the council who never missed a meeting. Members said he would be 'very sorely missed'.

Meanwhile, grants totalling £863.86 were given to Broadford Youth Club, Broadford

Badminton Club, Skye Badminton Association and Kyleakin Indoor Bowling Club.

Schools co-ordinator Sarah Ross reported that Portree High School pupils have volunteered to form a rowing club. The last meeting of the financial year will be on March 17 in Portree.

All grant applications must be submitted by then.

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Help get Billy home for Christmas

AS WE all make our last minute preparations for Christmas, Connel's Billy Irving is lying in a tiny Indian prison cell with no idea of whether or not he will be released.

Experiencing degrading conditions and the pain of uncertainty over what could be described as dubious charges, it is no way to spend the festive season.

If he remains imprisoned, it will also be a particularly painful time for his family and his girlfriend who are desperate for a positive outcome to this ordeal.

Some of the more philosophical among us may say situations like this make you think of how lucky you are, but that won't bring Billy home.

He is one of our own and each of us should put pen to paper, write to the Indian High Commission and demand his and his compatriots' release.

If any of us were in the same situation, we'd hope our friends, colleagues and neighbours would do exactly that.

So lets all of us work together to get Billy home to his family in time for Christmas.

GLASGOW LETTER

Glasgow Skye Association

IT IS almost traditional now that the annual celebrations of the Glasgow Skye Association will be affected by an extreme of weather.

This year it was the aftermath of gales followed by very cold temperatures and unfortunately this did affect the attendance at the concert.

For the first time all three functions - dinner, concert and dance - took place in Glasgow University Union.

More than 70 patrons attended the successful dinner with guest of honour this year Kenneth MacLeod OBE who was brought up in Gourcock with parentage from the Greepe/Roag area of Skye.

From humble beginnings as a galley boy on a Clyde steamer, a period his parents hoped would extinguish his desire to follow a career at sea, he rose through the ranks to become a Master Mariner and is currently chairman of Stena Line (UK) Ltd and also, since March this year, president of the UK Chamber of Shipping.

Quite a career for a boy who liked nothing better than to spend his school holidays on Skye working on the croft. This, together with tales of life at sea, were the main themes of his address at both the dinner and concert.

Young Dylan Turner presented Kenneth with mementos of the occasion for both himself and his wife Sheila who unfortunately was unable to attend the concert.

At the concert Kenneth presided over a relaxed evening's entertainment with songs provided by Ainsley Hamill, Joy Dunlop, Donald Iain Brown and Norman MacKinnon who were all in fine form. One of features of the programme was that all the singers were asked to sing one of the Glendale Bard, Neil MacLeod's songs, to commemorate the 100 years since he passed away in 1913. The 'Skye' has the bonus of having the association pipe band which is always a star attraction and completing the entertainment accordionist Stuart Cameron, who would later play at the dance with his band Deoch 'n Dorus, was joined by accompanist for the evening Alan Kitchen for his well received selections.

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Christmas Songbook

IF SHOPPING expeditions have removed all your festive spirit there can be no better cure than to go along to Phil Cunningham's Christmas Songbook in the City Halls at 7.30pm on Thursday December 19.

Phil will be joined by Eddi Reader, Karen Matheson, John McCusker, Ian Carr, Kris Drever and Eddie McGuire as well as the Songbook Brass Ensemble. Such is the popularity of this event the number of venues increases each year with the tour of 2013 starting in Aberdeen Music Hall on Sunday December 15 before moving to the Queen's Hall in Edinburgh on December 16 and 17, Rothes Hall in Glenrothes on December 18, finishing in Perth Concert Hall on Friday December 20.

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On duty at Oban Airport - 1973

This week's flashback photograph shows the late Andrew McIntyre and Iain Darling on duty at Oban Airport in 1973 with the airport's fire tender. Also in the photograph are two Loganair Islander planes. The photograph was taken by pilot R E Foster and submitted by Mrs J Darling, Dunollie, Oban. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Little chance of closing down drug business

Sir
 Surely a 'legal' high can only be legal if it used for its intended purpose.

If it is used as a drug then surely the 'victim' should be prosecuted under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

People have chosen to ignore the many warnings about drugs and in this day of instant knowledge - if I sneeze in Paisley someone in Beijing says 'bless you' - it can only be assumed that they are not victims, but willing participants.

Especially the young intelligent 17-year-old who told his mother he was quite happy doing drugs and then gave a blow by drug account of his death by drugs to his friends on Skype.

They then waited an incredible 20 minutes before alerting anyone.

Most people would like to see a drug free society but, unfortunately, too many high profile people who pretend to be role models are themselves using drugs.

Drugs are now a multi-million pound business and I see little chance of closing it down.

George Doyle, 41 Ellenabeich, Easdale.

Concentrate on your customers BT

Sir
 I read with great interest your front page article about the service BT provides for us here in Argyll.

My first reaction is that surely we deserve the same as elsewhere unless, of course, we pay at a reduced rate.

We live in North Connel and have had a similar experience. About two years ago we moved to a brand new house and as such my husband notified BT well in advance to ensure we had telephone and broadband connections.

Six weeks after moving in these

had not been provided. We did not have a mobile phone facility either as our then provider does not serve this area well. We tried to change but discovered that our house was not registered on the new provider's database so we were homeless and unsuitable.

As we had moved the length and breadth of the British Isles in retirement, our family and friends were keen to know how we were progressing but it was a struggle to communicate.

Eventually my husband wrote to the chief executive of BT describing the service of his company as 'execrable'.

We got an immediate response and several phone calls to accompany it.

And then on the magic day an engineer drove up in his van and went to the green box at the bottom of our neighbour's garden where he flipped a switch. And bingo we were on. How easy was that BT?

Forget the hype and concentrate on the people who are your customers.

Jan Mitchell-Jones, Taigh A Ghiuthais, North Connel.

Independence upheaval

Sir,
 I am delighted to read my letter, in your November 14 edition, is still causing reaction over the matter of the Scottish Independence vote on September 18 next year.

This is a final 'yes' or 'no' with no minimum turnout.

As I understand it, if 'yes' then independence day is March 24 2016.

In this short gap all negotiations will be finalised.

Then there will be a normal election in Scotland in May 2016. In the meantime there is the usual general UK election in May 2015, which includes 59 Scottish MPs.

What happens to them if September 18 2014 is a majority 'yes'?

'So we have a final 'yes' or 'no' first then negotiate after on all the major issues.

I certainly have never made any decision that way round, but in this instance it has to be that way round or the rest of the UK would have nothing to negotiate if it was a no vote on September 18 2014.

I have phoned for a copy of Mr Salmond's White Paper to see if it will help, but not yet to hand. I have seen it called 'Pulp Fiction' in the press, but want to see it first hand.

Is all this potential upheaval really necessary?

G W Stewart, Clachan Seil.

Wish to live in a democracy

Sir,
 I write in answer to Hamish Macdougall's letter of December 5.

The British Government has spent billions of pounds, killed and maimed hundreds of our service men and women to give foreign countries a democracy.

Scotland does not at present have a democracy. It does not matter what the Scottish people vote for. It's what voters south of the border vote for. That's the government we get.

The majority of Scots don't want Trident, but once again we are outvoted by Westminster MPs.

I would dearly like to live in a democracy.

Neil Ferguson, Girvan.

Aim to destroy middle and working classes

Sir,
 I moved to Argyll some months ago and at first it proved a very good move - and it largely still is.

But living in a town dominated by one monopoly superstore - Tesco - which charges very high prices for their goods in contrast to shops like ASDA, and with only four other main stores, I have realised one thing.

However little and unimportant a few extra pounds on our shopping or our petrol may seem, it

is leading us one step nearer to living in a pre-Victorian era.

The only good thing about the rise of costs is that we comprise a significant part of David Cameron's potential electoral votes in 2015 and when even the most Conservative of us realise how much we are suffering, and that we may have to help financially support our young people for the bulk of their lives, perhaps this will finally show that voting for the Tory or Conservative Government is not in working class, or even middle class, interests.

Cameron aims to destroy both the working and middle class and to vilify unemployed people so that everyone turns against them. Divide and conquer!

Debbie Moran, Taynult.

Charity thanks

Sir,
 On behalf of Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland (CHSS), may I thank the many volunteers and supporters in the Highlands who have contributed to the work of our charity in 2013.

Chest, heart and stroke illness can affect anyone. Thanks to advances in treatment, and changes in lifestyle, many more people survive heart attacks and strokes than ever before. However, this means that many more people, and their families, are living with the long-term impact of these conditions.

CHSS is the only charity providing services throughout Scotland for people affected by chest, heart and stroke illness. During 2013 we were able to help more than 17,000 people through our advice line and patient information, support groups, financial grants, and our wide range of local services.

None of this would be possible without the contribution of our volunteers. Their work is absolutely vital. We very much appreciate the commitment, enthusiasm and care they bring to the charity and to their local community. With continuing thanks and best wishes for 2014.

David H Clark, chief executive, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, Edinburgh.



Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

THATHAS ag ràdh gum bheil mu 38 millean anns na Stàitean Aonaichte aig nach eil àrachas sam bith airson cobhair mheidigeach!

Faisg air ceithir bliadhna air ais bha toileachas ga dhèanamh gun robh Ceann-suidhe ur nan Stàitean air aonta fhaoitinn air reachdas a bheireadh leasachadh air seirbheis slàinte Ameireagaidh. B' e seo fear de na prìomh amasan poilitigeach aig Obama ach bha mòran a' cur air mhanadh dha nach soirbheicheadh leis, agus fìu 's dòcha gun caillleadh e a dhreuchd ri linn na h-ìomairt seo. Ach sheas e ris na gheall e agus bha na bhuanach e a' ciallachadh gum biodh còir aig naochad 's a còig sa cheud de shlugh na dùthcha gu lèir air cobhair mheidigeach fagh. Cha bu bheag an t-iongnadh toileachas a bhith ann ach bha e na annas feadh an t-saoghail gun robh an dùthaich as beartaiche air an t-saoghail cho fada air deireadh a thaobh ire seirbheis slàinte. Cò a shaoileadh gun ann mar sin a bhiodh is Ameireagaidh cho deiseil comhairle a thoir air dùthchannan eile!

Ach a dh'aindeoin an adhartais eachdraidheil, sheas na Poblachdaich, partaidh na làimhe deise, daingean an aghaidh an reachdais aig Obama. Ged a bha iad gu h-oifigeil airson leasachadh air seirbheis slàinte, cha robh iad deonach dad a bharrachd a phàigheadh, neo lùghdachadh sam bith fhactinn air na th' aca an-dràsta airson seirbheis na mòr-chuid a leigeil air adhart.

Tha na Poblachdaich air a bhith cho làidir nam beachd is gun robh iad a' bagairt an reachdas seo a chur às nam faigheadh iad air ais a riaghladh. Cha d' fhuair iad air ais, ach chuir iad a h-uile mail a b' urrainn dhaibh air Obama mar a thugar air an reachdas a b'.

Ged a fhuair an Ceann-suidhe na bha a dhith de thaic airson an reachdas a chur dhan lagh mu dheireadh thall, dh'fhàg trioblaiden mòra teicneòlais nach robh e idir cho furasta dha mòr-shluagh Ameireagaidh clàradh airson seirbheis ùr. Bidh an lagh ùr agus na còraichean air seirbheis slàinte a' dol an gnìomh air Latha na Bliadh'n Ùire agus feumaidh a h-uile duine a tha ag iarraidh na seirbheis bhon uairsinn clàradh ron 23 latha den Dùbhlachd.

Tha Obama den bheachd gur iad na duilgheadasan teicnigeach sin is coireach gum bheil faisg air dà fhichead millean fhathast gun chlàradh is an ceann-latha cho faisg, agus tha e air ìomairt ùr a thoiseachadh feuch an gabh daoine an cothrom air an t-seirbheis. Nach ann duinne a thigeadh a bhith taingeil airson na seirbheis slàinte a th' againn!

PRESIDENT Obama's American health care legislation becomes law on January 1 but because of serious IT problems an estimated 38 million have still to register before the December 23 deadline.

While the US President has predictably committed himself to work for as long as it takes to deliver medical protection for all American citizens we can reflect on how fortunate we are to have our National Health Service!

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

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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

CROSSWORD

Across

7 Life story in film (6)

8 Waiting for an answer (2,4)

9 Vagrant (4)

10 Ultimate (8)

11 Padding (7)

13 American state (5)

15 Tread heavily (5)

16 Detailed (2-5)

18 Cheat (8)

19 One may spin one (4)

21 Speaker (6)

22 Hang around (6)

Down

1 Pen name? (4)

2 Modern (2-2-3-6)

3 Level of command (7)

4 Out-witted (5)

5 Power effects produced by light (13)

6 Nice (8)

12 Improper (8)

14 With ire (7)

17 Say out loud by mistake (5)

20 Told porkies (4)

LAST week's SOLUTION

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Gaelic panto

MEANBH Chuilèag, the Gaelic theatre group attached to Fèisean nan Gàidheal, visited the island last week with their touring version of the Gaelic pantomime 'Seasaidh agus Sgeul na Sìleann Seunta' (Jessie and the Tale of the Enchanted Slippers).

This was performed at Bowmore primary school before an attentive audience of pupils from the Gaelic unit along with a group of supportive parents and grandparents. Jessie's tale certainly held the audience's attention and they loudly reacted in all the right places. There was music, dance, slapstick and a highly comic robot. The goodies were greatly encouraged, the baddies were treated with deserved contempt and there were many opportunities for audience participation. Especially so when the much sought after enchanted dancing slippers were forcibly removed from the safe keeping of audience member Jinty Hanlon.

The panto was penned by the participating Fèisean movement drama development officer Angus MacLeod and joining him on stage were Fèisean staff members Shona MacMillan and Dougie Beck. Adding to the merriment was actress and singer Eilidh Daniels, originally from Aberdeen but now resident in Glasgow.

The Gaelic panto has been on the road since the beginning of December and, following its island appearance, the cast

headed off to repeat its performance at Condorart primary school in Cumbernauld.

Ileach exhibition

AN EXHIBITION marking 40 years of the local newspaper the 'Ileach' was officially opened at Ionad Chaluum Chille Ile on December 4.

The display, in the Gaelic centre's main exhibition area, features highlights from the newspaper's four-decade history and also features eye catching front covers mounted by local gallery owner and photographer Mark Unsworth.

The event was hosted by the Ileach board of management, led by chairman Richard Russell, and the toast to the newspaper was proposed by Catriona Bell.

Catriona, a former editor, was responsible for the recent screening of the TV version of the John MacGrath play 'The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil', which was performed on Islay on the same weekend as the first edition of the Ileach hit the newsstands.

In her potted history of the newspaper, Catriona referred to the early days, the difficulties experienced with basic forms of printing and copying machinery, the tireless efforts of the editorial staff over the years, and the advancements made in printing technology which now effortlessly ensures the twice monthly appearance of the newspaper which now enjoys a circulation in excess of 3,000 copies per issue. During the course of the evening

tokens of appreciation were presented to Catriona, Mark and Katherine Wells who carried out the research into the display content.

The organisers also plan to take the exhibition to the Port Ellen district and the neighbouring isle of Jura.

Seasonal fun

There will be much excitement on the island on Saturday December 14 when Father Christmas, complete with sleigh and reindeer, makes his appearance at Bowmore.

The special visitor, along with the reindeer from the Cairngorms-based herd, will be accompanied by local children and he will be handing out gifts to happy recipients.

Santa's visit has sponsorship from Caledonian MacBrayne and the Islay and Jura Tourism and Marketing Group and has also been financed by a number of local businesses. The December 14 festivities continue with the provision of an ice rink at the Bowmore all weather football pitch. This is free to all children from Islay and Jura to whom the message is 'get your skates on'.

Greetings

I WISH a joyous Christmas to everyone who reads these meagre jottings and trust that Santa will fill your stockings to overflowing. Nollaig Chridheil!
 Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810658.

YOUR LETTERS

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 200 words in length for publication on this page.

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print

Grab a last minute Christmas deal!

SO, YOU haven't bought a Christmas present for someone close to you and the number of chocolates left in your advent calendar are quickly diminishing. Fear not, The Oban Times' Last Minute Deal feature has the answers for you. It may normally be frowned upon to leave your gifts to the 11th hour but when it comes to snapping up a Christmas deal, the waiting game pays off. Lots of hotels and restaurants in the area will be gearing up for a busy couple of weeks but they may not be completely booked out. Why not try to see if you can get yourself a bargain with a last minute booking at one of the west coast's premier establishments? Many of the area's hotels will be used to extending a healthy dose of west Highland hospitality over the festive period. And it doesn't matter when you book at table at one of the area's restaurants - as long as there is one left when you do book! So often, the material - and often unwanted - item is the gift of choice for the last minute shopper. So, why not think outside the box and find yourself a very Merry Christmas deal?

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FREE YOUR 2014 CALENDAR
IN NEXT WEEK'S OBAN TIMES

what's on

THE OBAN TIMES FREE EVENT LISTING

THURSDAY - December 12

7.30am, Ramblers Scotland Glencoe walk, meet Oban's Longdale Road car park, Fort William Woolen Mill at 8am or Glencoe Village car park at 8.50am.
 2.30pm, Christmas Tree Festival Opening, Salen Church, Mull.
 Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda fundraiser, Corran Halls, Oban.
 7.30pm, Mother Goose, Aros Hall, Tobermory, Mull.
 Corran Singers, Furnace Village Hall, Furnace.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 9pm, John 'the box' Turnbull, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

FRIDAY - December 13

7.30pm, Deirdre Nelson, An Tobar, Tobermory, Mull.
 7.30pm, John Macfarlane on historic Christian sites in and around the parish of Muckairn, St Columba's Cathedral Hall, Oban.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 Quiz Night, Park Lodge Hotel, Tobermory, Mull.
 7.30pm, Coffee and Carols, Buessan Hall, Mull.
 7.30pm, Mother Goose, Aros Hall, Tobermory, Mull.
 9pm, George Noble, Coasters Bar, Oban.
 10pm, Disco, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

SATURDAY - December 14

8am, Ramblers Scotland Glen Strae walk, meet Fort William Woolen Mill, Ballachulish tourist info at 8.30am or Oban's Longdale Road car park at 9am.
 10am, Open weekend, Inverawe Smokery, Taynuilt.
 11am, Santa's grotto, Royal Hotel, Oban.
 12pm, Soup lunch, Oban Pipe Band Hall, Oban.
 Christmas party night, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 7.30pm, Tobermory town Christmas dinner and dance, Aros Hall, Tobermory, Mull.
 9pm, George Noble, Coasters Bar, Oban.
 10pm, Live band, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

SUNDAY - December 15

10am, Open weekend, Inverawe Smokery, Taynuilt.
 12.30pm, Christmas dinner, Pennyghael Hall, Mull.
 3pm, Rotary Club Carol concert, Corran Halls, Oban.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 10pm, Disco, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

MONDAY - December 16

Michael Russell, Argyll and Bute MSP, hosting surgery, Aros Hall, Tobermory, Mull.

TUESDAY - December 17

7.15pm, Lorn Garden Club meeting, St John's Cathedral, Oban.

WEDNESDAY - December 18

7pm, Snow Queen, Buessan Hall, Mull.
 7.30pm, Christmas concert, Western Isles Hotel, Tobermory, Mull.
 9pm, Pub quiz, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

THURSDAY - December 19

9.30am, Ramblers Scotland Glen Nevis walk, meet N Ballachulish PS or Fort William Woolen Mill at 9.50am.
 10am, LORN Christmas Fayre, Victory Hall, Benderloch.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 9pm, John 'the box' Turnbull, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

FRIDAY - December 20

11am, Crofters' Christmas, Crofters' Kitchen, Kintra, Mull.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 Don't Stop Me Now, Columbia Hotel, Oban.
 10pm, Disco, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

SATURDAY - December 21

10am, Open weekend, Inverawe Smokery, Taynuilt.
 11am, Santa's grotto, Royal Hotel, Oban.
 11am, Crofters' Christmas, Crofters' Kitchen, Kintra, Mull.
 4pm, Mull Film Club A Christmas Story, An Tobar, Tobermory, Mull.
 Mistletoe Madness, Columbia Hotel, Oban.
 Christmas party night, Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 10pm, Live band, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

SUNDAY - December 22

9am, Ramblers Scotland Loch Creran walk, meet Oban's Longdale road car park or Ballachulish tourist info.
 10am, Open weekend, Inverawe Smokery, Taynuilt.
 12.30pm, Santa Dash, start Tobermory Lifeboat Station, Mull.
 3pm, Carols for All, Tobermory Parish Church, Mull.
 Christmas party night, Skipinnish, Oban.
 10pm, Disco, The Lorne Bar, Oban.

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

West musicians are talk of the trades

LOCHABER and Tیره musicians were the talk of the traditional music scene after claiming a collection of trophies at the MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards.

The glitzy award ceremony, organised by Hands Up for Trad, was broadcast live on BBC Alba on Saturday from Aberdeen Music Hall.

Tیره Music Festival won its fourth award of the year, picking up Event of the Year, and Tیره had further success when Trail West won Scottish Dance Band of the Year.

Fort William's Robert Robertson - this year's gold medal winner at the Royal National Mod and new Skipinnish frontman - topped a fantastic year as he was named Up and Coming Artist of the Year. His mentor, Rachel Walker, from Achnacarry, won Gaelic Singer of the Year. There was further success for Lochaber when Breabach, featuring Fort William's Megan Henderson, won Live Act of the Year.

Capercaille's Donald Shaw, who hails from Taynuilt and is artistic director of the Celtic Connections festival, was named Composer of the Year.

Neil Mackay, a director of the Tیره Music Festival, was among the first to praise the organising team in the event's

prizewinning year. The festival has already been named Best Cultural Event for the Highlands and Islands and for Scotland at the Thistle Awards and the Best Small Festival at the Scottish Event Awards.

Mr Mackay said: 'As organisers of the event the entire TMF team are delighted with such success, especially when the festival is only in its fourth year.'

'We want to thank all who have supported and attended the festival. The way the event has been embraced by the island, indeed the whole of the west coast and further afield, is overwhelming.'

The 11th Scots Trad Music Awards were hosted by Mary Ann Kennedy and Tony Kearney, who explained winners had been selected from almost 90,000 votes.

From Left: Trail West were voted Scottish Dance Band of the Year. Daniel Gillespie and Stewart MacLennan, who organise Tیره Music Festival, picked up the Event of the Year prize. Donald Shaw, Composer of the Year. Rachel Walker, from Achnacarry, won Gaelic Singer of the Year.



Brass quintet perform in Oban



Alba Brass in St John's Cathedral.

THE BRILLIANCE of brass was brought to St John's Cathedral as a Scottish brass quintet put on a Sunday afternoon show at the end of Oban Winter Festival.

Alba Brass opened their performance to a large audience with Handel's Firework Music, appropriate with the display that followed across the harbour only a few hours later. The mood then changed

with three Scottish love songs given subtle twists by this skilful brass quintet.

The group, comprised of Bryan Allen and Vicky Bede on trumpet, Fergus Kerr on French horn, Paul Stone on trombone and Andrew McKreel on tuba, regularly commission new work such as Terry Jones, Paolozzi's Windows, premiered at the 2010 Edinburgh Fringe.

Graham Moore, secretary of Oban Music Society, said: 'Either side of the interval two recent Alba Brass commissions demonstrated both the range of sounds and emotions that their instruments were able to produce. 'Three tangos had the audience tapping their feet and a John Philip Sousa encore blasted us happily out into George Street and the evening festivities.'



REVELLERS enjoyed the smooth sounds of the Jazz Bar Little Big Band in Skipinnish Ceilidh House on St Andrew's Day. Organiser Margaret Cooper wanted to thank local businesses who sponsored the £1,200 cost of bringing the band to Oban.

Picture by DigitalEcosse Photography.

Lochaber pupils delight at winter wind band concert

LOCHABER High School junior and senior wind bands and Lochaber High School Big Band treated an appreciative audience to a fine selection of tunes in their winter concert at Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church in Fort William last Wednesday night.

Conductor Mark Reynolds, who is brass instructor at the school, told *The Oban Times*: 'We are here partly to celebrate the opening of the new church hall. Thank you to the Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church for allowing us to host the concert.'



Hitting the high notes: band members Caitlin Gilchrist, Glen Falconer, Kirsty Menzies and Kayleigh MacDonald line up with Mark Reynolds and Lochaber High School woodwind instructor Karen Thomson during final practice before the concert. 20_f5band01

Good turnout for Kilmallie light switch on

IT WAS a real community celebration at Kilmallie on Friday night when more than 100 people gathered for the switch on of their Christmas tree lights.

The big event almost never happened after both tree and bulbs were battered by hurricane-force winds which hit the west Highlands early the previous morning.

But Roy Bridge farmer Robert Langan

straightened up the pine, Highland Council staff repaired the lights and there were cheers all round as Banavie Primary School pupils Laura Davie and Nia Reid got on the podium to press the plunger, switching on the festive illuminations.

Local folk fundraised for the tree and lights themselves following Highland Council budget cuts.

Kilmallie Christmas tree and lights fund chairman Paul Brian said: 'We have had tremendous support both from individuals and businesses and for that we thank them.'

Local councillor Bill Clark paid tribute to volunteers who raised the money 'to bring Christmas cheer to local residents'.

'Without their efforts

none of this would have been possible,' he said. 'Community spirit in Kilmallie is going strong.'

Part of the proceeds from the event went to Star for Harris, the charity set up by Corpach couple Allan and Tanya Ross in memory of their son Harris, who died from brain cancer in 2010 aged just 17 months.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

bonnie babies

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

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

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

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

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

HOW THE COMPETITION WORKS

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

HOW TO ENTER

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

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

Good luck!



Banavie Primary School pupils Laura Davie, primary seven, and Nia Reid, primary one, switch on the lights on Kilmallie Christmas tree on Friday night.



Huge support for Fort community Christmas Fair

HUNDREDS of Fort William folk turned out to support Upper Achintore Regeneration Group's Christmas Fair in the local primary school last week.

The volunteer body is leading attempts to regenerate the 680-property housing scheme through amenity projects - with community pride at the heart of its efforts.

And they were rewarded on Thursday night when almost 30 stallholders and Lochaber Wind Band attended the event

to add to the Christmas cheer. Chairwoman Jackie Carswell told *The Oban Times* on what was a snowy night: 'Because of the weather some people might not have thought it was on. But a lot of folk have turned up so I'm really pleased.'

'Whatever we make tonight will go to pay for the Christmas tree and the lights. A big thank you to Lochaber Wind Band for once again providing the music.'



Fort William Primary School pupil Kerri Watson, aged 11, turned on the lights on Fort William's Highland Hospice 'Light up a Life' Christmas tree on The Parade last week. Justin Cummings of the Faith Mission conducted a brief outdoor service before continuing the event in the nearby Mission Hall. f50lights1no



Lochaber Wind Band in full flow at the Christmas Fair in Upper Achintore Primary School. 20_f50upper03
Brother and sister Sean and Teresa MacDonald had a successful evening at their festive sales stall. sales 20_f50upper02
It's all smiles at the fair from this group of kids and mums. 20_f50upper05

Show must go on despite weather in Skye

PORTREE'S Royal Hotel provided a warm and welcoming haven for members and friends of the Skye Accordion and Fiddle Club at their December meeting, held on a day of severe storms which swept the whole country.

Road closures and diversions, not to mention driving conditions, meant that the club's guest band for the night, The Charlie Kirkpatrick Trio, who were travelling from Glasgow faced a lengthy and hazardous journey.

Local club musicians stepped in to entertain the appreciative audience for the first half of the evening. Setting toes tapping and the audience singing were fiddlers Caerina Campbell, Ellie MacPherson and Wendy Riva, accordionists Aly 'K' MacPherson, David Morton and John MacGilvary, and last but not least Donald John Campbell on drums.

Their contribution was much enjoyed by all present and varied from a beautiful slow air composed by Tom Anderson, 'The Shetland Ayrshire Lassies', played as a fiddle

solo by Caerina Campbell, to a lively stramash from all the musicians.

Better late than never, the valiant guest band arrived after many hours on the road in time to take over for the second half of the evening. It was a very warm welcome to The Charlie Kirkpatrick Trio with Charlie Kirkpatrick leading on button box, Derek Hamilton on keyboard and vocals and Gordon Young on drums. This trio, who are no strangers to the Skye club, launched into a terrific and varied programme of music in real west coast style which included sets from the band's newly released album, 'Heading West'.

For a bit of variety the multi-talented Derek Hamilton sang some songs, one of which was 'I'm Dreaming Of A White Christmas', eminently appropriate as there was a blizzard outside at the time.

All too soon the evening closed with a rousing stramash. The club looks forward to their next meeting on January 9 in the Royal Hotel, Portree with guests The Burns Brothers Trio.

INDOOR EVENT

OBAN'S FAMILY HOGMANAY PARTY 2013

Celebrate the bells with the whole family bring along the wee ones and the old gins

in support of: **Oban Hospice, Vasculitis UK and Anthony Nolan**

featuring
The Neil Sinclair Sound
- ceilidh music at its best!

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31st December 2013
Argyllshire Gathering Hall
8.30pm till late

Tickets - limited to 300
Adult: £12.50
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Tickets must be produced on the night for admission.

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Price includes cold buffet and a glass of sparkling white wine for the adults to toast the bells.

Special thanks to:

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Oban Phoenix Cinema			
Oban Phoenix Cinema	The Selfish Giant	Thurs 12th	19:00
	Pulp Fiction	Thurs 12th	21:30
	The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug	Fri 13th	17.00, 21.00 HFR 3D
		Sat 14th	13.00 3D HFR, 17.00 21.00 HFR 3D
		Sun 15th	14.00, 18.00 HFR 3D
		Mon 16th	19:00
		Tues 17th	19.00 HFR 3D
		Wed 18th	19:00
		Thurs 19th	19.00 HFR 3D
	The Hunger Games Part 2: Catching Fire	Fri 13th	19:00 Screen 2
		Sat 14th	19:00 Screen 2
		Sun 15th	19:00 Screen 2
	Mon 16th	18.30 Screen 2	
	Tues 17th	18.30 Screen 2	
	Wed 18th	18.30 Screen 2	
	Thurs 19th	18.30 Screen 2	
	Sat 14th	13.30 Screen 2	
	Sun 15th	13.00 Screen 2	
	Thurs 19th	14.00	
	The Grinch		
	Arthur Christmas		
	White Christmas		

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The Selfish Giant (15)
A contemporary fable about 13 year old Arbor (Conner Chapman) and his best friend Swilly (Shaun Thomas). Excluded from school and outsiders in their own neighbourhood, the two boys meet Kitten (Sam Gilber), a local scrapdealer - the Selfish Giant. They begin collecting scrap metal for him using a horse and cart. A tragic event transforms them all.

Customer Choice (£5/£3)
Pulp Fiction (18)
Jules Winnfield and Vincent Vega are two hitmen who are out to retrieve a suitcase stolen from their employer, mob boss Marsellus Wallace. Butch Coolidge is an aging boxer who is paid by Wallace to lose his next fight. The lives of these seemingly unrelated people are woven together comprising a series of funny, bizarre and uncalculated incidents.

The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug (Rating TBC)
The dwarves, along with Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf the Grey, continue their quest to reclaim Erebor, their homeland, from Smaug. Bilbo Baggins is in possession of

a mysterious and magical ring. This is the highly anticipated second part of Peter Jackson's incredible trilogy, once again starring Ian McKellan as Gandalf and Martin Freeman as Bilbo Baggins this is not a film to be missed by any Tolkien fan.

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

Christmas Films (£5/£3)
The Grinch (PG)
Based on the book by the famous Dr. Seuss. Inside a snowflake exists the magical land of Whoville. All the Whos love Christmas,

yet just outside of their beloved Whoville lives the Grinch. The Grinch is a nasty creature that hates Christmas, and plots to steal it away from the Whos which he equally abhors. Yet a small child, Cindy Lou Who, decides to try and befriend the Grinch. (Screen 2 - 20 seats)

Arthur Christmas (U)
Arthur Christmas reveals the incredible, never-before seen answer to every child's question: "So how does Santa deliver all those presents in one night?" The answer: Santa's exhilarating, ultra-high-tech operation hidden beneath the North Pole. But at the center of the film is a story about an unlikely hero, Arthur, with an urgent mission that must be completed before Christmas morning. (Screen 2 - 20 seats)

White Christmas (U)
Bing Crosby stars in this classic christmas film about good will and love. Having left the Army following W.W.II, Bob Wallace and Phil Davis team up to become a top song-and-dance act. Davis plays matmaker and introduces Wallace to a pair of beautiful sisters who also have a song-and-dance act.

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

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COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Your Christmas messages

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our relatives, friends and neighbours.
From Bill & Lil Mackie.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our friends.
From John and Molly MacLean, Craignure.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our relatives, friends and neighbours on Tiree and mainland.
MacPhail family, Clachan, Tiree.

TO ALL OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Best wishes James, Rona, Rachael, Kelly, Sarah, Salen, Mull

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our relatives and friends.
John and Margaret McFadyen, Sunnyridge, Oban.

NOLLAIG CHRIDHEIL AGUS BLIADHNA MHATH UR

bho Micheil agus Josephine

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our relatives and friends
From Mima and John McNab, Lochaline.

The Lord MacLean of Bentalla, wishes all family and friends

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all my relatives and friends from Rina MacEwan, Oban.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all my family, friends and neighbours from Jean Gillies, Taynuilt.

SEASONS GREETINGS

Definitely not coping with cards, but nevertheless thinking of all relatives and friends at this blessed season
Archie Lamont (Taynuilt).

Catherine and Buffy Donaldson wish all their relatives and friends a

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all my relatives, friends, and neighbours.
From Hamish MacMillan, Appin.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL FRIENDS

Peace and contentment 2014. From Jean MacGillivray, Lynne Court, Oban.

SEASONS GREETINGS

Annie Clark, Lorne Haven, 32 Pulpit Drive, Oban wishes all her family, friends and neighbours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous 2014

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WHAT'S ON COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

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Community Notice Board for just £14.95 (plus VAT)

This section is available to charitable organisations with a charity number.
All AGM's will be placed on the Public Notice Page
Please ask for details

Oban & Lorn Lions Club

SANTA'S GROTTTO

in the Royal Hotel, Oban
11am - 3pm
Saturday 14th & Saturday 21st
December
SEE YOU THERE!

A SOUP LUNCH in aid of OBAN PIPE BAND will be held in Oban Pipe Band Hall Shore Street on SATURDAY 14th DECEMBER 2013 From 12 noon - 2.00pm Admission: £3.00

ROTARY CLUB OF OBAN Annual Carol Concert

Sunday 15th December
at the Corran Halls, Oban 3 p.m.

Local Primary Schools, Oban Gaelic Choir, Spotlight Theatre, Oban High School, Norman Nicholson and Bach Orchestra
Collection in aid of Erskine Hospital and Children First

Seed sown for creative future

A TEXTILE and fashion festival inspired by the costumes of the Dunollie 1745 House, is beginning to reap what it has sown.

The Fasanta Festival gave life to centuries-old costumes but also explored the textile heritage of the wider Highlands and Islands through workshops, talks, exhibitions, music, a design award and a crafter's market place.

Fasanta – Gaelic for fashionable – was held in October at Dunollie House and in the Corran Halls, Oban.

Organisers hoped the festival would lead to new interest in the skills and crafts of the fashion and cloth industries.

It proved to be much more than that.

Textile businesses, designers, craftspeople and promoters have made connections that otherwise

would not have happened. This has led to a number of business and skills opportunities, and a design award for a Scottish student. The Dunollie team, Jane Isaacson, Breege Smyth and Fiona Thomson originally set out to find a way to recognise the launch of the re-woven 18th Century pre-clan Dunollie tartan. The tartan, or plaid, was recently discovered at the house and is believed to be amongst the

oldest in the world. The festival attracted almost 1,000 people, brought new life to old crafts and heritage and started a debate about traditional industries and their place in the global market. Jane, sustainability and development manager at Dunollie, explained: 'It was a massive opportunity to put on the Fasanta Festival.

'Dunollie has so many examples of textiles from so many ages.

'The starting point for us was about getting the community involved with the previously unseen collection we have here.

'The festival brought together the idea of fashion, cloth and its importance. But also looked at skills we no longer have in Scotland alongside the cultural experience of music and performance.

'The willingness of textile and fashion experts and musicians like Rachel Walker to come from all over the country shows us that people want to get involved.'

Singer and musician Rachel Walker composed Clò, the story of the textiles and tartan heritage told by musicians, dancers, singers, weavers and spinners through light, sound and visual art. The event was well received and it is hoped to bring the performance back to the town again, in the near future.

Dunollie 1745 House's product development officer, Fiona Thomson, said: 'One of our volunteers produced an exhibition of photographs of our festival exhibitions to put on show at the Corran Halls. This allowed everyone who came into the Corran Halls to see what was going on in Dunollie, and hopefully encourage them to come down to the house.

'The Old Drapers Shop, the Dunollie House Drawing Room and a display of the luxury wardrobe of a clan chief as well as cream teas saw a busy weekend at the house. People were shown around by our tour guides.'

Many people also attended the workshops held in the Corran Halls including Shetland and beginners' knitting, fascinator and fabric flower making, felting, quilting and contemporary pattern cutting.

Breege, sales manager for Dunollie Tartan, said: 'One of



Dancers from the Eilidh MacInnes School of Dance were among those to take the stage for Fasanta's finale, at the Corran Halls.



Jane Burns learns the nuances of pattern cutting from Karen Liversedge at the Corran Halls, who has worked for some of the largest fashion manufacturers in the world.

the many textile workshops we held over the weekend was in Tambour Beading, a skill from Jacobean times that is all but lost in Scotland. In the past it was used here and we even have evidence of it in the costumes at Dunollie. By hosting a workshop, led by Jan Timms from Devon, we are bringing back that skill to Scotland.'

Breege, who has a background in design, was also keen to promote the use of tartan in modern day design. The first Fasanta Design Award was held for the design of an outfit with the Dunollie Tartan. Youshan Zou from Edinburgh College of Art won the prize.

'We had a fabulously entertaining time at the catwalk community event on the Saturday night,' said Breege.

'Volunteers from all over Oban and Lorn took part in interpreting tartan in their own way on the catwalk. Fasanta was

not for Dunollie, it was for the community. And there will be a lasting effect from the event for a creative future.'

Visitors to the event had a range of talks and debates they could attend. These included the history of tartan in women's dress, Dunollie's ancient tartan, and a debate on the Scottish textile industry with Howie Nicolsby of 21st Century Kilts, fashion designer Sandra Murray MBE, Brian Wilton of the Scottish Tartans Authority and Amanda Millen from Creative HI.

'If we had not had the festival,' explains Jane, 'we would not have the new weaving room at Dunollie, or the Jacobean embroidery workshop inspired by the Dunollie Castle bed hangings or Clò, a tremendous composition which interpreted our textile traditions through music and dance.'

'This was a fabulous event



Learning to use the Tambour Hook at a workshop at Fasanta.

and has shown us there is a keen interest in our textiles and crafts and many skilled people want to be involved.'

Funded by the Heritage Lottery, Oban BIDS and MacQueen Brothers Charitable

Trust the event showed off the cultural assets of the costumes at the house.

At the same time made them relevant and significant to the future of the textile and fashion industry.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

TWENTY YEARS AGO

December 9 1993



Duncan on song with money spinner

A CASSETTE featuring Gaelic songs recorded by 84 year old Duncan MacPherson, a native of Argyll, has raised over £1,651 for Cancer Research.

Born in Craignish in 1909, Duncan moved with his family to Mull where he perfected his knowledge of Gaelic.

He competed at his first National Mod in 1933 reaching the finals of the Gold Medal competition, a feat he was to repeat in 1934 and 1935.

Freda Arkley, left, manageress of Thurso's Cancer Research shop, accepts the cheque from Duncan MacPherson as Bill Deans, who produced the tape, looks on.



Achaleven primary pupils win camcorder

AS PART of Scottish Co-op's Action For Schools initiative, Achaleven Primary School pupils have earned themselves a camcorder.

The youngsters collected a specific number of labels from Co-op brand products to claim their prize.

A total of eight schools from

Oban and surrounding districts have been participating in the initiative, which runs until Christmas. Achaleven is the first school to reach the target figure. Pictured above are Achaleven pupils with head teacher Fay Black, and Scottish Co-op area manager Graham Scott.



Santa's visit delights village youngsters

Santa paid an early visit to Benderloch, much to the glee of the village's youngsters. Over 50 children queued up patiently to meet the great man at his grotto in the Victory Hall on Friday. The whole event turned out to be a real festive success, with £400 raised towards the cost of the new village hall.



Beautician posts early for Christmas

Beautician Dawn McBay, Connel, had a 'Dickens' of a time trying to mail her giant card last week when she decided to post early for Christmas. Dawn, who works in Intershape, Oban, decided to strike the right mood by wearing period costume after the Post Office launched a new issue of festive season stamps which take Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' as their theme.

Belford Hospital cash appeal launched

ONE IN five Lochaber residents suffer from high blood pressure, claim local medics.

As a result, a £15,000 appeal has been launched at the Belford Hospital, Fort William, to purchase high-tech equipment which can accurately detect such a condition.

To set the ball rolling, the WRVS Tea Bar has donated

£2,000 towards the first ambulatory blood pressure recording machine.

These machines are currently only available at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

Right: Consultant physician at the hospital, Dr Gavin Brown, tests the blood pressure of John Steele, Fort William Round Table chairman.



Business

Business reporter:

Steven Flanagan
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk
01631 568021

Cameron House head chef wins industry 'Oscar'

RYAN Neil, executive head chef at the Cameron House Hotel, has picked up one of the industry's most prestigious awards.

The Hotel Cateys - described as the Oscars of the catering industry - picked Ryan as its hotel chef of the year over a host of the UK's best kitchen talents.

As executive chef at Cameron House, Ryan is in charge across the hotel's six kitchens - catering for more than 1,000 covers daily and looking after a team of more than 45 chefs and 25 kitchen porters.

The award is the latest in a series of culinary accolades for Ryan, a previous winner of an Acorn award, finalist in Chef of the Year at the 2013 CIS awards and finalist at the 2012 Hotel Cateys.

Furthermore, Cameron House Hotel, beside Loch Lomond, under Ryan's management has just received a second AA rosette for the Cameron Grill restaurant.

On receiving his award, Ryan said: 'It's always fantastic to be recognised by your peers and I'm so grateful to work with such a fantastic team at Cameron House Hotel.'

West Coast Motors acquires Fairline Coaches

CAMPBELTOWN-based coach firm West Coast Motors has expanded its business further by acquiring Glasgow-based Fairline Coaches.

The acquisition will allow West Coast Motors in Argyll and Bute, as well as other divisions within the group, to expand their touring programmes and private hire offering available to local schools, groups and event organisers.

Glasgow firm wins CMAL contract

GLASGOW firm Seaspan Shipping Ltd has been awarded a £115,200 contract to inspect ships for Caledonian and Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL).

Young coffee entrepreneur full of beans after £2,500 prize win



Young Islay student Ellise Morrison receives her award from Marie Mackintosh from Highland Opportunity Ltd.

Community council opens talks with charity on possible water course cash income

SPEAN Bridge Community Council has opened preliminary discussions with an environmental charity on the possibility of generating revenue from local water courses.

Chairman John Fotheringham recently met Nick Lyth and Ewan Ramsay of International Resources and Recycling Institute (IRRI) in Edinburgh to investigate the idea.

The charity is engaged in an EU Initiative to utilise under-used water resources to generate recycled energy.

In partnership with Scottish Water they have identified sites in the community council area

suitable for development. Their proposals are to suspend generating equipment in the river or burn.

Mr Fotheringham said: 'Scottish Water insist on community benefit for the communities they are operating in and Nick and Ewan were very pleased to hear we had a SCIO [Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation] in place to receive benefit.'

'It was only a preliminary discussion and there are still many hurdles to cross, but it was fruitful and possibly in two years there might be funds for the SCIO.'

A TEENAGER from Islay has picked up two prizes worth £2,500 at the eighth annual UHI-wide Business Idea Competition held at Inverness College UHI.

Ellise Morrison, who is completing her Highers at Argyll College UHI, recently received the top prize and the best student award for her business idea.

After spotting a gap in the market, Ellise wants to set up 'Ceol na Mara Coffee' a mobile vintage coffee wagon that will bring a unique and quirky barista coffee experience to Islay's tourism hotspots.

The 16-year-old, who was the youngest winner, said: 'Everyone really enjoys proper barista coffee on the island, but not many places sell it. The island itself only has around 3,000 inhabitants, but we welcome more than 25,000 visitors each year.'

Islay teenager scoops best student award

'Our distilleries in particular are popular amongst tourists, so I would like to set up a mobile coffee shop that will serve quality hot drinks across the island during peak season.'

'My focus at the moment is to finish my Highers and go to university.'

'But the prize money will really help me get the idea moving in the meantime. I've received some excellent advice

from the team at Create, and I'm really excited that they liked my idea.'

The annual competition is organised by CREATE (the centre for innovation and enterprise at Inverness College UHI) in partnership with Highland Opportunity Ltd's Business Gateway service and with support from local businesses and organisations. It launched in 2009 to give

UHI students and members of the Highlands and Islands community the chance to win funding by pitching their idea to an expert judging panel.

Another winner in the competition was Fort William's Jordan Tiernan, who won best engineering and technology idea.

Jordan's winning idea was 'Beta-Stream.com', a website where keen climbers can find all the available weather, avalanche and conditions forecasts in one convenient place.

He said: 'When I was a keen mountain climber in the Peak District I could never find a reliable mountain weather forecast as every website produced a different reading. This inspired me to create the website, which taps into all the available online resources, from websites to other climbers.'

Confidence continues to grow in Highlands and islands' economy

CONFIDENCE continues to grow in the Highlands and Islands' economy after it once again outperformed the Scottish average.

The latest figures from Mackay Consultants monthly economic bulletin shows that economic output in the area grew from £640million last year to £648million this year, a real terms growth of 1.3 per cent, compared to Scottish growth of 1.1 per cent.

Forecasts suggest 2014 will be another year of accelerating recovery for the region. It is expected full-year growth for 2013 will hit 1.8 per cent and 2014 will see 2.2 per cent of growth - although this year's figures are likely to be revised

downwards. Unemployment is also showing signs of reducing, with 5,660 recorded as collecting unemployment benefit across the whole area in October, as opposed to 7,384 for the same period last year.

There has been a reduction in unemployment benefit claimants every month from March this year, with October's figure a reduction of 111.

It is thought that the wider unemployed rate is much higher than the two per cent claimant count suggests though, with comparisons between the Scottish claimant and unemployed figures suggesting the Highlands and Islands rate is closer to five per cent.

Further positive developments

for the economies include Campbeltown's West Coast Motors taking over Fairline Coaches in Glasgow, an £8million upgrade of Stornoway harbour, approval of a £70million wind farm on Lewis and work starting on the Glencoe recreational track at Old Road Link.

While there were negatives, these were centred around Shetland's oil industry and Flybe's decision to close its Inverness base, costing 35 jobs.

Tony Mackay, who prepares the report, said: 'It was a mixed month for the local economy. It is currently doing a little better than Scotland as a whole, particularly in relation to unemployment, but that may change during the winter months.'

Brewery in bid to raise £4m

ARRAN Brewery has launched its own 'crowd-funding' initiative to raise £4million for an upgrade of the company's island brewery - by offering shares of the company.

Up to 50,000 new 'B shares' are being offered by the business, which will be unlisted securities.

Among other things, the company is planning to open Scotland's first sake brewery, open two new breweries and visitor centres, open a micro-distillery and bottling plant in Falkirk, launch a brewing school - as well as open a chain of beer bistros and craft beer bars.

In 2012/13, the company achieved sales of £824,829, an increase of 15 per cent on the previous year.

The net profit of £66,851 is a third up on the previous year.

Mum looks forward to firm's first Christmas online

A FORD entrepreneur and young mum is looking forward to a busy first Christmas after launching her new candle and gift online shop.

Joanne Macdonald is usually busy enough looking after her three young children, but has started running Angels with Love from her Mid Argyll home.

Offering a range of candles, bath bombs, Fair Trade fairies and unique

handmade 'button' jewellery, she's already attracting keen interest.

Her move into self-employment was prompted by a change in her circumstances.

She said: 'Having had to give up work a few years ago because of ill-health, I really was starting to feel a bit lost. I knew there must be something which I could do from home and also work

around the school holidays. After much soul searching, Angels with Love was born and the designing of our candles began. This really was so much fun and gave us all something positive to focus on again.'

All of the candles are handmade to Joanne's design by another small family run business in the UK. Joanne takes pride in supporting other small

businesses and working together. Whilst the candles are exclusive to Angels with Love, Joanne has also sourced a range of quality handmade gifts and crafts and expects to expand the range further in future.

As well as trading online Angels with Love has successfully attended a range of events and craft fairs.

One of the key aspects to its

establishment was help from Business Gateway, she said.

'Business Gateway was a great help. My adviser Barbara Halliday helped me get my accounts set up and the book-keeping workshop I attended was very useful. I'll be back in touch with Business Gateway soon to discuss my plans for expanding the business with new products.'



Ardnamurchan's Salen Hotel has gone up for sale, priced at £745,000.

Ardnamurchan's Salen Hotel goes on market

ONE OF the west coast's most reputable hotels, the Salen Hotel, Acharrach, has gone on the market for £745,000.

Based at the head of the Ardnamurchan Peninsula, the luxurious hotel dates from the end of the 19th century and comprises a stone-built main house and an attached cottage, built in 2008.

Featuring two bedrooms and a bathroom for the owners, the hotel's main building also features three en-suite letting bedrooms. The cottage sleeps four, with one double bedroom and one twin.

Substantially improved over the last few years by owners Jonathan and Julia Peill the public bar and formal dining room have been renovated and a newly-built, oak-framed

conservatory offers views towards the loch.

The property comes with a fully equipped commercial kitchen and modern preparation area, chill store and beer and wine cellar as well as a laundry.

Gregor King, consultant at Bell Ingram, said: 'Properties like the Salen Hotel are a one-off. Its idyllic location in one of the most remote and unspoilt areas of Scotland ensures tourists from around the world are enticed by its stunning surroundings throughout the year. The hotel - which has been painstakingly restored and upgraded over the last few years - is full of character. The property is in walk-in condition but there is also plenty of scope for further development to maximise the potential of the business.'

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Business Gateway team's tax return reminder

ARGYLL and Bute Council's Business Gateway is reminding anyone in self-employment that the deadline for self-assessment online submissions is midnight, January 31 2014.

Normally anyone registered as self employed with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will need to complete a tax return to tell HMRC about their income and capital gains or to claim tax allowances or reliefs.

'The local Business Gateway team is on hand to offer advice on completing self-assessment,' explains councillor Duncan MacIntyre, spokesperson for European Affairs, Sustainable Economic Growth and Strategic Transportation. 'Anyone looking for support should get in touch now to make sure they give themselves plenty of time to prepare.'

To help those filing returns, HMRC has produced a set of free online seminars both live and pre-recorded, to help customers to understand a variety of tax systems and learn what obligations they need to meet.

The 'webinars' include topics such as 'Business expenses for the self-employed', 'Capital allowances for the self-employed' and 'How to complete your first online tax return'.

Live webinars are available on set dates at set times. You need to register in advance, but the session is recorded and made available to view after the event.

Live webinars last for an hour, they are interactive giving you the opportunity to ask questions and get answers from your HMRC webinar host. Alternatively pre-recorded webinars are available to view now, or whenever suits you. You don't need to register for a pre-recorded webinar, simply choose the topic you are interested in then follow the link to start viewing the webinar.

To find out more about HMRC's range of webinars visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/webinars/index.htm

Small business seasonal checklist

As well as preparing to submit a self-assessment tax return if you are a sole trader or a partnership, there are other things that a small business should be thinking about at this time of year.

Is your business ready for winter conditions? Whether you are based in business premises or are out on the road, making contingency plans for bad weather is a sound idea. The weather may be uncontrollable but a recovery plan prepared in advance can help minimise the impact on your business. A Business Gateway adviser can help you create a practical plan and direct you to a range of useful guides and information.

Before and after the festive period, could a seasonal promotion help boost your business? A well timed offer could encourage your existing customers to buy more from you or tempt new customers to try out your product or services for the first time. Meeting with a Business Gateway adviser could help you develop a tailored marketing plan to grow your sales.

If winter is the quiet season for your business, you could use the down time for routine maintenance or improvements, developing marketing plans for the new year, or perhaps reviewing your suppliers or securing funding. If you are looking for ways to improve your business, take some time out to discuss your ideas with one of Business Gateway's experienced business advisers.

Angela Vernel and Barbara Halliday are the Business Gateway advisers providing support to the Oban area. Angela is based in Oban at least once a week, alternatively she or Barbara can travel to meet you at your business premises. To set up your free and confidential meeting contact 01546 605 459 or email business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

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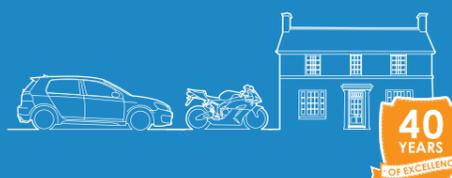
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Car for Christmas

AS WELL as gusting winds and snow, last week's wintry weather will have had many people take a fresh look at their cars.

The seasonal cold blast was a keen reminder that making sure your vehicle is up to the job - and that might mean looking for something new.

Forecasters are warning that this winter might be one of the worst for many years. Those who remember the big chill in the winter of 2010/11 will know exactly how difficult that can make conditions, so now is a great time to look for another vehicle.

Heavy rain and snow may block the culverts, but there's no reason to get a dredger for those difficult conditions when a decent 4x4 vehicle will do. Those who live or work off the main roads will appreciate the difference such a vehicle can make, particularly when the frost falls - making those difficult to reach areas a breeze.

Modern 4x4s are much more capable at dealing with challenging conditions, with some even eliminating the effort of manually selecting different modes to automatically adjust to the conditions under the wheels. They can in fact make the difference between getting somewhere and getting nowhere - and that can make all the difference when the seaweed covers Oban's Corran Esplanade all over again.

Four wheel drive is now available on many makes of smaller cars too, including coupés and saloons - meaning you don't have to be

victim to 'Chelsea tractor' accusations if you just want a car that's safer on the road. Not only does four-wheel drive make general road handling more efficient, but it makes negotiating difficult conditions such as icy roads much easier.

Most modern cars now though are capable of driving through most difficult conditions, with care, so if your current ride is getting a little long in the tooth, generally it is a good time to look around.

Many manufacturers are offering nigh-on unbeatable deals for finance at the moment too, which makes today's market very much one that favours the buyer. Every vendor is having to compete harder for sales too, so now is a good time to haggle and get your new marque at a keen price.

It goes without saying that with such appealing offers available on new cars, the second hand market is going to benefit. Many people choose to trade in after their tax exemption period expires, so there is a proliferation of nearly-new motors on the market now that represent a serious bargain. Many of these vehicles have low mileage too, but search around and find the right car for you.

If there's nothing there, be sure to ask your dealership, as sometimes they will know of cars soon to come in or currently in preparation for the showroom - and you could grab a bargain before anyone else even sees it.

Regardless of what market you're in, now is the perfect time to take a look at what's on offer.

'Re-tyring' for winter

AS CONDITIONS do deteriorate, it is essential you make sure your car is up to scratch to cope with the weather.

It can be easy to forget how dangerous travelling on the roads can be: 60mph on an A-class road feels fine when everything is going well, but hit a patch of ice at 40mph, and you'll quickly realise how precarious it can be.

So, don't take risks - make sure your car is safe.

First, check and make sure everything that should work, is working. Lights and window-wipers are a given. Without these, on a dark, wet day, you'll be stranded. It's the easiest thing to do so there really is no excuse.

Make sure your car is topped up with anti-freeze and screen wash; while checking your dip-stick is a must too. Cars need lubrication to work and no or low oil can have disastrous consequence not just for your engine but for your bank balance, so make sure it's checked.

Some motorists may look at winter tyres for the cold spell, and with good reason. Not only do they provide more grip, but they provide more peace of mind when ice does lie on the road.

They aren't miracle workers though and you should still drive to the conditions. Leave plenty of time for your journey, maintain a safe distance from other vehicles and don't rush - that way you'll make sure you're home safe for Christmas.

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Farming Focus

with Lucy Sumsion, NFU Scotland regional manager covering Argyll and the Islands.

AS WE near the end of the year, debate is intensifying on the future of agricultural support for farmers and crofters.

The move away from an historic basis towards an area based payment is going to bring many challenges, particularly for an area like Argyll and the Islands.

I was particularly reminded about this last week when I was in Campbeltown at a meeting of Kintyre dairy farmers, discussing with them how they can take the dairy sector in their area forward. Gary Mitchell, chairman of the NFUS Milk Committee, was also at the meeting and was keen to emphasise that he believes that collaboration, innovation and confidence are key to the future of the Scottish dairy sector and there is no reason the peripheral milk fields cannot play a full part.

However, until all farmers and crofters know more about what the changes to agricultural support are going to mean for their farm businesses it is going to be very

difficult to plan ahead and feel optimistic for the future.

No matter what type of farm you have, whether you are a dairy farmer in Kintyre or on Bute, a hill sheep farmer in north Argyll, or a crofter on Tiree, the new CAP will mean significant changes to your support payments. As I write, the Scottish Government is due to launch its consultation papers on the future of CAP and on the next Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

NFU Scotland is keen to gather members' views on these important consultations and in order to do this at a regional level we have organised a series of meetings around the country. The meeting for Argyll and the Islands region will be held this Friday, December 13 at 1pm in Tarbert Village Hall.

Nigel Miller, NFUS president, and Jonnie Hall, director of policy, will give an overview of the proposal but importantly we want to hear your views - so please come along and have your say.



Crowds flock to Oban Livestock Centre for show and sale

Oban Livestock Centre was particularly busy on Tuesday at the show and sale of suckled calves, and sale of store, breeding and OTM cattle. A full report will follow in next week's Oban Times.

16_150mart1



Auctioneer John Kyle got right into the festive spirit at Oban Livestock Centre's Christmas sale on Tuesday. 16_150farmmb1

Market report

UNITED Auctions held their annual Christmas Show and Sale of all classes cattle and sheep at Dalmlally Market on Saturday, when an increased entry in all sections sold exceptionally well and to a large turnout of buyers from all over Scotland.

Bullocks sold to average £823.59 per head and 236.76 pence per kilo and Heifers averaged £699.33 per head and 234.76 pence per kilo.

At the show previous to the sale, Mr Alister Morrison, Nether Blairmaud Farm, Banff judged the various classes and the following were his principal awards:

Bullock over 10 months - 1 I R Morrison, 13 Eoligarry; 2 A J Morrison, 10 Eoligarry; 3 MacTaggart, Carnoch.
Heifer over 10 months: 1 and 2 M's Anderson, Tulloch; 3 M's MacPherson, Balliemeanoch.
Bullock Calf: 1 Mr I R Morrison; 2 Mr A J Morrison.
Heifer Calf: 1 M's Anderson, Tulloch.

Champion Animal: Mr I R Morrison, British Blue Bullock which realised £1,320.
Reserve Champion: Mr I R Morrison, Charolais Bullock Calf which realised £960.

Aberdeen Angus Bullocks from No13 Eoligarry sold to £1,460 whilst a pen of six Aberdeen Angus Bullock calves led the kilo prices at 294pence.

Heifer Calves from Garraron and Melfort Farms led this section per head at £1,010 whilst a pen of three Linnousin Heifer Calves from No2 Kiel Crofts sold to 262pence.

A mixed show of sheep sold at levels in keeping with current trends.

Principal Lots and Prices:

Top Prices Per Head:
Bullocks: AAX: £1460 and £1420 - 13 Eoligarry, Barra; £1235(4), £1205(2), £1135(3) and £1015 - Moleigh Farm; £975 - Carnoch 16, Glencoe; £905(6) - Machrins Farm, Colonsay.

BRBx: £1320 - 13 Eoligarry, Barra
CHARx: £1325 - 13 Eoligarry, Barra; £1315 and £1300 - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; £960 - 13 Eoligarry, Barra; £915 - Carnoch 16, Glencoe.

LIMx: £1135 - Cairnbaan, Benderloch; £1025 - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; £1025 - Garraron and Melfort Farms; £985 - Cairnbaan, Benderloch; £975 - Craignagart; £945 - Tombuie; £915(3) - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; £915(2) - Garraron and Melfort Farms; £905(2) - Tulloch.

SALx: £1075(4) - Moleigh Farm, SIMx: £1345(2), £1205(3) and £1170(4) - Moleigh Farm; £1055 - Barguillan Farm; £1045(2) - Moleigh Farm; £1015, £975 and £935 - Craignagart; £915 - Drissaig.

Heifers: AAX: £785 - Machrins Farm, Colonsay.

CHARx: £745(3) - Braglenmore, LIMx: £1010 - Garraron and Melfort Farms; £985(2) - Balliemeanoch; £905(5) - Garraron and Melfort Farms; £865 - Garraron and Melfort Farms; £835 - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; £825 - Cairnbaan, Benderloch.

LINING: £905 - Balliemeanoch. SALx: £715(2) - Balliemeanoch. SIMx: £755(5), £745 and £725(6) - Drissaig.

Top Prices Per Kilo:
Bullocks: AAX: 294p(6), 269p(3), 261p(2) - Machrins Farm, Colonsay; 257p(4) - Moleigh Farm; 245p(2) - Machrins Farm; 242p(2) - Moleigh Farm. BRBx: 221p - Ashgrove. BRBx: 243p - 13 Eoligarry, Barra.

CHARx: 278p - Braglenbeg Farm; 268p - 13 Eoligarry, Barra; 250p - Braglenmore Farm. LIMx: 293p(4) - Brechoille Farm; 291p(2) - Tulloch; 280p(2) - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; 278p - Tulloch; 274p(2), 270p(4) and 268p(2) - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; 265p - Balliemeanoch; 263p(2) - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; 261p(2) - Garraron and Melfort Farms; 259p(2) - Tulloch; 258p(4) - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; 256p - 2 Keil Crofts; 250p - 5 Kilvaree. SALx: 265p and 252p - Balliemeanoch.

SIMx: 284p(2) - Brechoille Farm; 273p(7) - Blarghour Farm; 255p - Airds Croft.

Heifers: AAX: 244p(6) - Machrins Farm, Colonsay.

CHARx: 248p(3) - Braglenmore Farm; LIMx: 262p(3) - 2 Keil Crofts; 259p(2) - Balliemeanoch; 259p(4) - Tulloch; 255p(2) - 13 Eoligarry, Barra; 247p(3) - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; 247p - Garraron and Melfort Farms; 246p - 10 Eoligarry, Barra; 244p - Balliemeanoch.

SALx: 244p - Balliemeanoch. SIMx: 242p(2) - Glencran Estate.

Breeding Cattle:
Incalf Heifers: SIMx: £1440 and £1360 - Duncroisk; £1340 - Muckairn; £1320(2), £1300(2) and £1200 - Duncroisk.

LIMx: £1420 - Dall Farm. Incalf Cows: £1000 - Garvachy Bull; £1450 - Garvachy Sheep.

Lambs: SUFFx: £50.00 - Maam Farm. TEXx: £60.00 - Ardchnonnell Farm; £58.50 - Ederline Estate. BF: £37.50 - Maam Farm; £36.50 - Auchroch.

Cross: £40.00 - Ederline Estate. Rams: TEX: £70.00 - Lephinkill Farm; BF: £50.00 - Acharonich Farm; Ewes: Cross: £46.00 and £45.00 - Barguillan Farm. BF: £40.00 - Craig Farm.

Farmers' union urges Scottish Government to hold tight before diverting cash from direct subsidies

REFORM of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments should not divert from current voluntary modulation levels, according to NFU Scotland.

Responding to the Scottish Wildlife Trust's plea that the 'maximum amount of money' should be diverted from direct subsidies to farmers into schemes 'that benefit wildlife, rural business and farmers', the farmers' union has urged the Scottish Government to hold tight, warning that any rash moves could be a threat to the industry.

Jonathan Hall, NFU Scotland's director of policy, said: 'If the Scottish Government has to transfer money away from direct payments towards rural development, it should be in line with current voluntary modulation levels and only increased in 2017 if the Scottish Government can demonstrate that additional funds are required to support projects of real value under the new SRDP.'

'We maintain that it is better to target direct support payments at active farm businesses across Scotland to enable them to

continue to underpin all facets of rural development - prosperous local economies, flourishing environments, and thriving rural communities.'

'The pivotal role that farming plays will be under threat if too much direct support is withdrawn too soon. 'We will be pressing the Scottish Government to go no further than current voluntary modulation rates, and to review the rate in the light of budgetary demands and the uptake of future rural development schemes in 2017. 'As for greening of Pillar 1

[direct support payments], it is here to stay. But as we strive for a level playing field across the UK and the EU, it is vital that greening is implemented in Scotland in a way that is practical and manageable.'

'Taking up options to implement greening through additional equivalent measures, that go above and beyond the standard greening requirements, is likely to see any additional potential benefits outweighed by additional risks and complexity for both farmers and the Scottish Government.'

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Massey Ferguson 3070 4wd, 1988 E reg, Autotronic 4x4 powershift... £5,495
Fiat 780 2wd, 1985 B reg, 2 door cab, 2 spools, PUH... £5,495
Massey Ferguson 550 2wd, average order... £4,495
JCB 801.8, 2006, twin speed tracking, ascending undercarriage, q-hitch, choice of 5... from £8,495
Case CX 28 excavator, 2002, 3600 hours, c/w 3 buckets, rubber tracks... £8,995
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Business' party is a real treat

Oban company celebrates 10th anniversary with style

IT WAS a sweet celebration for one Oban couple at the weekend as they marked a decade since their chocolate company was established. Stewart and Helen MacKechnie hosted a 10th birthday party for friends and supporters at the Oban Chocolate Company shop on Oban's Esplanade last Friday, 10 years to the day since the business was started.

Mentor

Helen, who was 24 years old when she started out in her first premises in Craighard Road, said she hoped to one day use her experience to mentor young entrepreneurs in the area. 'Ten years is a big landmark because there was never a plan that far in advance,' Helen told The Oban Times. 'I always knew I wanted to start my own business but I wasn't sure what.'

has been creating a business that is a real part of Oban.' As the business grew, Helen's brother, Kenneth Miller, was drafted in and Stewart gave up a career in law to help full time, once the business expanded to its current premises. The company now employs 15 people. One of the guests at the 10th birthday party was Alister Jackson, vice-chairman of BID4Oban, who said: 'I would like to congratulate Helen, Stewart and their staff for what they have achieved in their first 10 years. It is really pleasing to see a young, local couple establish a business in the town and continue to develop and progress in a challenging trading environment.'

Asked what the next 10 years could have in store, Helen replied: 'I have no idea. We have a young family and are trying to achieve a good work/life balance. We are fortunate to have an amazing staff, who are helping to take things forward.'



Helen and Stewart MacKechnie, with Helen's brother, head chocolatier Kenneth Miller, centre, celebrate 10 years of Oban Chocolate Company. 16.150choc01

Coll's dark secret is rare gift

COLL is set to become a pilgrimage for star-gazers from across the world after it was officially recognised as one of the best places from which to view the universe. Years of hard work from a committed bunch of volunteers has seen the island granted Dark Skies status, making it one of only 22 places across the globe with ideal conditions for astronomers, amateur and professional alike. Coll's Dark Skies group, Coll Hotel owner Julie Oliphant, Paula Smalley, who runs the Tigh na Mara guest house and local astronomers Tony Oliver and Olvin Smith, are

delighted by the official recognition, which is hoped will boost winter tourism. Julie said: 'Oh my god, it's taken forever, but it's done now and we're having some fun. It's been a huge amount of work but it's nice that four people, without any outside funding, can do something quite big and achieve their goals. That's the way Coll has always been and the whole island has come together to support this, so it's great. It is hoped that the designation will deliver a boost to the island's

economy and encourage more tourists during the traditional 'off' season, when the skies are at their darkest. Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park, Scotland's other dark sky site, has seen a boom in off-season tourism since it was awarded dark sky status in November 2009. 'It's just about stretching the season out a bit really,' said Julie. 'This designation attracts people we'd like to see, environmentally aware and liking the natural space. We're hoping to start up some events and get something structured for people.' Tony added: 'The first winter on

Coll I was in awe of the night sky, it's on a par with many of the high arctic regions I'd visited. Soon I discovered Coll had some real star-gazers which eventually led, over many pints, to where we are today.' The International Dark Sky Association officially ratified the submission from the island last week after readings from the island confirmed it as one of the darkest places in Europe. Argyll and Bute Council supported Coll's application and councillor Fred Hall said: 'I can think of no better island in the inner Hebrides to gain the Dark Skies accolade.'

Atlantis Leisure marks 21st birthday

'There is an energy of things happening now, a massive amount of activities'

AS OBAN'S Atlantis Leisure celebrated its 21st birthday directors and staff past and present travelled from far and wide to come together for a party. The group reminisced over a slideshow showing the development of the building over the years as well as the changes to staffing. Neil Matheson, chairman of Atlantis Leisure, said the idea of the event was to 'bring everybody together'

that had been involved in the centre. He added: 'The changes over the years have been significant since a lot of these people have been involved. There is an energy of things happening now, a massive amount of activities have developed. We try to make it inclusive so anyone can access it. It is not all about sport, it's about having fun.' Andy Newiss, a current di-

rector, added: 'We have such a huge range of activities for all abilities and all groups. Our focus is to make it a community facility. The energy, commitment, enthusiasm and can-do attitude of the staff makes Atlantis what it is.'

Right: Current and former directors celebrated Atlantis Leisure's 21st birthday. 16.150atlantis01



Choristers call the tune for Sileas' accordion fund



Sileas Sinclair is presented with a cheque by members of Oban Gaelic Choir.

HOUSEHOLD budgets may be feeling the squeeze this winter but generous choristers in Oban have given their conductor £600 - to help pay for new accordion. Oban Gaelic Choir marked the 10th year under the baton of Sileas Sinclair by making the donation after finding out about her desire to buy a new type of accordion. A well known music teacher and box player on the ceilidh scene, Sileas' current accordion, which she has played for the past 10 years, is well used. So, when her choristers were deciding how to thank her for a decade in charge of the choir,

there was only one way they could say it. They handed Sileas the grand cheque following the choir's recent annual meeting in Oban Pipe Band Hall. Sileas said: 'I'm not a typical girl; I don't tend to wear much jewellery, so I'm quite difficult to buy for. My sister suggested putting something towards the accordion fund and they managed to raise £600 between them. I nearly fell off my seat when they told me!' Sileas, who hails from Connel, plays with the ceilidh band Drams Allowed and also conducts Taynuilt Primary School Choir.

Gathering for independence event

AROUND 130 people packed into Oban's Argyllshire Gathering Halls to celebrate St Andrew's Day as part of an independence event. The dinner and ceilidh, organised by Yes Lorn and the Islands, saw speakers including lawyer Tasmina Ahmed Sheik, Allan MacInnes, a professor of history at Strathclyde University and author and poet Alan Bissett. Bob Allan, coordinator for Yes in Argyll and Bute, said: 'We're here to celebrate Scotland's national day. We never used to do that. It's not too formal; it's a chance to enjoy.' The evening continued with a ceilidh dance to the music of Neil and Sheila Sinclair.



The evening in full flow. 16.150yesScotland01

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITTEARACHD DECROFTING DIRECTION ISSUED

Mr J D Cameron
Tigh Ard, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
0.106 ha - Site for a dwelling house
4.86.45478
Conditions: 1, 2, 3b & 4

Conditions

- (1) Purchase area within 5 years of the date of direction.
- (2) To provide a site for a dwelling house
- (3) Complete enclosure of the land with a stock proof fence within 4 months of: (b) the proposed development completion
- (4) That fence shall be maintained in good order and repair by each successive owner or occupier of the land.

Any person with an interest in the application may appeal against a decision to the Scottish Land Court within 42 days of the date of this advert.

PUBLIC NOTICES

www.highland.gov.uk



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9.30am - 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
13/04327/PIP	Land 40M North of Lynlevier, West Laroch Ballachulish	Erection of house (Renewal of planning permission 10/03092/PIP)
13/04181/FUL	Sruth A' Mhuilinn Glenfintan	Erection of holiday chalet
13/04019/FUL	Land At Cul A Bhile, 3 Bohuntin, Roy Bridge	Erection of Timber Holiday Chalet
13/04363/FUL	Corran Ferry Hotel Ornich, Fort William	Erection of restaurant with letting bedrooms
13/04233/FUL	Land to South West of Tigh An Uilt, Kilchoan	Erection of house
13/04319/FUL	Land at Balmagister North Laggan	Erection of house (renewal of 08/00483/FULLO)
13/03902/PIP	Dal Na Crannich Glenmammie, Lochailort	Erection of house (renewal of permission 10/03381/PIP)
13/04441/FUL	White House, Isle of Rum	Erection of log cabin

Time period for comments is 14 days.
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: epanning@highland.gov.uk

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PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02556/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land North West Of The Old Schoolhouse (Plot 1) Kilmore Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
13/02602/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land South East Of The Old Schoolhouse (Plot 2) Kilmore Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4QR	Oban Area Office
13/02698/PPP	Site for the erection of 4 dwellinghouses	Land North East Of Glenshellach Farm Glenshellach Road Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4QJ	Oban Area Office
13/02710/PP	Erection ofcroft house, installation of septic tank and formation of new access	Croft 5 Langamull Dervaig Isle of Mull Argyll And Bute PA74 6NH	Sub Post Office Dervaig
13/02722/PP	Improvements to existing road junction from the B8073 to serve private road	Land South West Of Errary Farm Calgary Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6DX	Tobermory Area Office
13/02723/PP	Formation of vehicular access	Land North Of Campbell Hall Cottage Ledaig Oban Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Ledaig
13/02755/PP	Renewal of planning permission 10/01975/PP - Erection of dwellinghouse, detached garage and formation of access	Land North Of Ardnacross Aras Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Aras Isle of Mull
13/02802/PP	Renewal of planning permission 10/01677/PP (conversion of outbuildings to form dwellinghouse)	Outbuildings At Rosal Farm Pennymugh Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA70 6HB	Sub Post Office Bunnassan Isle of Mull

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS)(SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02571/PP	Erection of polytunnel	Land West Of Arnish Isle Of Iona Argyll And Bute PA76 6SJ	Sub Post Office Isle of Iona
13/02695/PP	Demolition of outbuildings, erection of letting/staff accommodation building, biomass boiler building, bin store, retaining wall, installation of solar panels on hotel roof and formation of culvert	Taynuilt Hotel Taynuilt Argyll And Bute PA35 1JN	Sub Post Office Taynuilt
13/02696/LIB	Demolition of outbuildings, erection of letting/staff accommodation building, biomass boiler building, bin store, retaining wall, installation of solar panels on hotel roof and formation of culvert	Taynuilt Hotel Taynuilt Argyll And Bute PA35 1JN	Sub Post Office Taynuilt

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED)

Notice is hereby given that Mr David Winter has submitted a Masterplan to Argyll and Bute Council in respect of potential development area 5/115 Tourism/Leisure as designated by the 'Argyll and Bute Local Plan (2009)' in association with planning application 13/01501/PP for the development of Relocation of existing plots 22 and 24 to new plots 4a and 8, additional new plots 5a, 18a and 37 and repositioning of chalets on plots 17 and 18.

A copy of the Masterplan (Document Number 20921758 and dated 5th December 2013) and the associated planning application may be inspected Monday to Friday 9 am to 12:30 pm, and 1:30 pm to 5 pm, at Planning and Regulatory Services, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AW, at the Sub Post Office Taynuilt during normal opening times (on Wednesdays the Customer Services Points open at 10 am) and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications during the period of 21 days beginning with the date of this notice.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the council about the Masterplan or the associated planning application should make them in writing to Planning and Regulatory Services, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AW before the 2nd January 2014.

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02661/PPP	Site for the erection of 3 dwellinghouses, installation of septic tank and formation of new access	Land North Of Glemachrie Glemachrie Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA42 7AW	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
13/02751/PP	Alterations and erection of extension to existing Pavillion	Recreation Ground Port Ellen Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Port Ellen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS)(SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
13/02752/PP	Erection of single storey rear extension	The Old Bakery The Square Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA43 7JP	Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>
The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Whitegates Office Whitegates Road Lochgilphead PA31 8SY.
A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.
Any request 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.

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL 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 708560). 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 2014 should be sent to the Director of Community Services, Education Offices, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 708560) by 14 March 2014 for primary and secondary schools.

GAELIC MEDIUM EDUCATION

Gaelic Medium Education is available in the following schools:- Bowmore Primary School, Islay; Three 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 30 December 2013.
Parents of children due to commence attendance at school in August 2014, 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 30 December 2013.

CLELAND SNEEDON Executive Director - Community Services

COUNCIL SURGERY

Councillor Louise Glen-Lee (Ward 5 Oban North and Lorn) will be holding a drop in surgery in DALMALLY VILLAGE HALL on WEDNESDAY 18TH DECEMBER from 12 NOON - 1.00PM.
Councillor Glen-Lee can also be contacted by e mail - louise.glen-lee@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by phone/text 07717 526 999

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

THE ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (DESIGNATED TAXI/DISABLED PERSONS' VEHICLE PARKING BAYS)(TOBERMORY, ISLE OF MULL) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 201_

Argyll and Bute Council proposes to make an Order which will amend the descriptions within the existing order of the taxi bay and disabled parking bays on the south side of Main Street, Tobermory, to correspond with their positions as marked on the ground.

Full details of these proposals together with a Plan and a Statement of Reasons for proposing to make this Traffic Regulation Order, are available for inspection during normal office hours Monday to Friday inclusive at the offices of:

- (i) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Breadsbane Street, Tobermory;
- (ii) Roads & Amenity Services, Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban;
- (iii) Argyll and Bute Council Offices, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

Any person wishing to object to the proposals should send details of the grounds for objection in writing to the Head of Governance and Law, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT, by 10th January 2014.

JIM SMITH Head of Roads & Amenity Services, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD



2ND ENGINEER OFFICER

For service onboard their Lighthouse Tenders on a fixed manning rota - 28 days duty followed by 28 days leave.
 The Northern Lighthouse Board - www.nlb.org.uk is the General Lighthouse Authority for Scotland and the Isle of Man, responsible for the provision and management of marine aids to navigation - lighthouses, buoys, beacons and a precision satellite-based navigation service.
 Minimum qualification is a valid STCW95 Chief Engineer's Motor Certificate of Competency, Class III/2 or Chief Engineer's III/3 with endorsement up to 6000 kW. This is due to the requirement to deputise for the Chief Engineer on occasion. An electrical qualification would be an advantage, as would experience of diesel/electric powered vessels. The successful candidate will require a valid unrestricted MCA Medical Certificate (ENG 1).
 Flexibility and good interpersonal skills are essential, as is the ability to communicate at all levels.
 The current pay band for a 2nd Engineer is £36,996 per year rising to £40,368 per year depending on skills and experience. Benefits package includes occupational sick pay scheme and career average occupational pension scheme.
 For further details and an application pack please e-mail jobs@nlb.org.uk or write to: The HR Adviser, Northern Lighthouse Board, 84 George Street, EDINBURGH, EH2 3DA. Tel No 0131 473 3123 .CLOSING DATE Friday 3rd January 2014

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 All appointments will be subject to a PVG enhanced disclosure check.
 Affinity Trust are an equal opportunities employer.
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Harvesting Contracts Manager, Argyll & Lochaber

UPM Tihill has an immediate vacancy for a Harvesting Contracts Manager to assist in the management of timber harvesting contracts and to develop our established resource based from our district office in Oban.
 The successful applicant will assist with the management of timber harvesting operations within the mid Argyll and Lochaber Areas, with specific responsibility for all aspects of site management and harvesting logistics. This exciting and challenging role will operate as part of UPM Tihill's North Scotland Region, reporting to the Area Harvesting Manager for Argyll.
 This role is key to our business development, and we are looking for an individual either with proven management or supervisory experience, or someone who is keen to develop their career in this capacity. An understanding of commercial forestry or land based industry would be an advantage. Essentially we are seeking applicants from individuals with the enthusiasm, drive and ability to organise and motivate timber harvesting teams and apply the relevant standards required to satisfy our health & safety, environmental and business accreditation within a commercially driven business.
 The position will be challenging and rewarding, and offers the opportunity for considerable personal development.
Closing date for applications: Monday 13th January 2014
 To apply, please visit the careers section of our website at: www.upm-tihill.com. For all other enquiries please email: contacthr.uk@upm.com or call 01723 502550.
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 You will preferably have a recognised engineering qualification (time served or equivalent), a proven track record in Maintenance Engineering and the ability to plan and prioritise your workload on a day to day basis with the longer term objectives of the department in mind. For the right candidate additional training will be given where required.
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 If you are confident that you can fulfil this role, please apply in writing by sending your CV along with details of your current salary package to Matt Donald, Engineering Manager, Ormsary Farmers, Ormsary, Lochgilphead PA31 8PE, or email mdonald@ormsary.co.uk by the 10th January 2014.

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To my daughter Leah MacCorquodale and Merry Christmas Hope you get loads of presents. Really missing you. Luv Dad xxx

Ronnie and Edith thank everyone who phoned and sent cards during Ronnie's illness. Special thanks to medical staff, ECCT and ambulance crews for such wonderful support. Nollaig Chridheil Dhuibh Uile.

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PERSONALS

Happy 21st Ross McKillop

Love from Mum, Dad, Scott and Craig xxx

Thank you St. Jude for prayers answered.

C.S

HAPPY XMAS to my granddaughter Leah MacCorquodale. Missing you as always. Gran xxx

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BIRTHS

FREYTAG - Daniel and Lorna are delighted to announce the arrival of their beautiful boy, Torin Alexander on November 27, 2013. A wee brother for Juno, third grandchild for Patrick and Margaret, Oban, and fourth for Derek and Margaret, Edinburgh. Happy family.

MACKELLAR - Walter and Ann (née MacKenzie) are delighted to announce the birth of their son Jamie Campbell on November 22, 2013, at RAH Paisley, a wee brother for Anna, second grandchild for Tom and Violet, Ian and Maria.

SCOTT - McINTYRE - Stuart and Kay are delighted to announce the safe arrival of James Lawrence Scott on Tuesday, December 3, 2013. A wee brother for Kara. A new grandchild for Ann and Lawrence Scott, Taynult and Iain and Pat McIntyre, Dalmlally. With thanks to Oban Maternity Unit.

ENGAGEMENTS

FORRESTER - KING - Jamie, son of Peter and Alison Forrester of The Letter, Port of Menteith and grandson of John and Anne Forrester of Ardnacross, Isle of Mull, to Philippa, eldest daughter of Tom and Dame Eleanor King of Harrogate.

DEATHS

BUCHANAN - It is with deep sadness that the family of Matthew, 57, (formerly of Oban), share the news of his passing on December 8 after a short but brave fight. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends in Oban and Australia. Always loved and never forgotten. In the arms of the Angels now.

HARPER - Suddenly but peacefully at Lom and Islands Hospital, Oban on December 4, 2013 with his loving family by his side Donald Harper, much loved husband of Dorothy, devoted father to Fiona, Robert and Louise, loving father-in-law to Allison, best Pops ever to his five grandchildren and good friend to Craig.

LAY - Stella of Darlington, formerly of Bedfordshire, Ballachulish and Spean Bridge, passed away on December 6, aged 90 years. Wife of the late Arthur, and mother of Susan. Friends are invited to a service at Darlington Crematorium on Monday 16 December, at 2.45pm. Flowers welcome, but donations if preferred to St. Teresa's Hospice At Home. Any enquiries 01325 465597

MORRISON - Peacefully at home, on Saturday December 7, 2013, in his 87th year, Hector, beloved husband of the late Mary, much loved father of Catriona, Margaret, Christina, Lorraine and the late Mary and a much respected father-in-law. Also, an adored Seinar to his eight grandchildren and "Seinar Hector" to his six great-grandchildren. He is also held very dear in the hearts of his surviving brothers and sister. Will be very sorely missed.

REID - At Ystrad Mynach Hospital, South Wales on November 23, 2013 after a short illness, Anne Reid (née Boustead), aged 88 years, beloved wife of the late Dr Alexander Reid, a loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother and dear sister of John. Funeral service at St Martin's Church, Caerphilly on December 13, thereafter to the Crematorium.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MACCALLUM - Heather and all the family would like to thank everyone for their presence at the funeral of Christabel. Thanks also to the staff at Moss Park Care Home for their care and attention to her in the past months, also a big thank you to Scott and staff at John McLellan & Co for their help and assistance and to the staff at the Spean Bridge Hotel for the great fire and hot soup on such a cold, stormy day. The total sum of £279.00 was raised for the Moss Park Resident's fund. Thank you.

McDOWALL - The family would like to thank everyone who sent kind expressions of sympathy after the recent sad loss of Jessie. Special thanks to Dr Jespersen, District Nurses, Macmillan Nurses and Marie Curie for their kind care and attention, also all at Hamish Hoey.

McLAREN - The family of the late Dorothy McLaren would like to thank all who attended her funeral on Monday. Also all the staff of the acute dependency unit of Ninewells Hospital, Dundee and all the carers and neighbours who over the years administered to her care. The Reverends WT Hogg and Shedden who took a most comforting service, and the staff of D&A Munn who conducted proceedings in their usual professionally sympathetic manner. Finally thanks are due to the staff of Mhor 84, Balquhider for their most excellent purvey.

MEMORIAMS

BUNTING - In loving memory of my mother Jessie, died 11/2/80, my stepfather Willie died 10/2/03 and brother Arthur Straker died 30/10/01. Remembered with love.
- From Alasdair and family, Tiree.

CAMERON - In loving memory of my beloved husband and dear father of Margaret, Lachlan Cameron, who died December 14, 1994. Also remembering loved ones who have departed before and since. Precious memories are always near. Keeping you close to us each passing year.
- Mary

GIBSON - Loving memories of a dear mother and granny, Jenny, died December 12, 2003. Also remembering loved ones gone before. Forever in our thoughts.
- Tommy, Nellie and family.

HAY - Precious memories of Robert, who died December 13, 1998. Memories are like leaves of gold. They never tarnish or grow old. Locked in our hearts you will always be. Loved and remembered for all eternity.
- From all the family.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of a much loved dad, grampa and father-in-law, Hector James, who died December 9, 2012. We thought of you with love today. But that is nothing new. We thought about you yesterday. And days before that too. We think of you in silence. We often speak your name. All we have are memories. And your photo in a frame. Your memory is our keepsake. With which we'll never part. God has you in his keeping. We have you in our hearts.
- Your loving family.

MACINTYRE - In loving memory of Joe (McCombie), husband, dad and grandad who passed away December 11 2004. Always in our thoughts.
- Love Wilma and family, Oban and Glasgow.

MACLEAN - In loving memory of our mother and grannie Rose, who passed away on December 15, 2011. No tears, no words, no verse can say. How much we miss you everyday.
- John, Sandra, Maggie, Janet and Kirsten.

MACPHAIL - In loving memory of our dear loved mother Christina, who passed away on December 14, 2012 and our dear loved father Colquhoun who passed away on February 13, 1994. Precious memories of them both.
- William and Christine.

MACQUARRIE - In loving memory of a dear mum Agnes, who died December 14, 2008. Also remembering a dear dad who died May 21, 1989 and loved ones gone before. A smile for all. A heart of gold. The very best the world could hold. Those we love don't go away. They walk beside us every day.
- Inserted by their daughter Ann and son-in-law Cameron, Erskine.

McGILL - In loving memory of Archie a dear husband, father and brother, who died on December 10, 2012. Always in our thoughts.
- Joan, Cairina, Jessie, Margaret and families.

McKINNEY - In loving memory of Marjorie, a dear sister, who died December 15, 2003. It's 10 years since we lost you. We never said goodbye. But you are still with us. Every minute of every day.
- From Jessie and Pat, Sandra and James.

MCKINNEY - 10th Anniversary. In loving memory of Marjorie, who died December 15, 2003. When thoughts go back As they often do. We treasure the memories. We have of you. Love always.
- Drew, Anne and Liam

RICHMOND - In loving memory of our dear father and grandfather, John Richmond, 9 Lismore Crescent, Oban, who passed away on December 13 1973. Although your soul is now at rest, And free from care and pain, This world would seem like heaven. If we had you back again. But still we say, 'His will be done.' Your soul is with the blest, And we who grieve for you today. Are the ones who loved you best.
- Inserted by his ever loving son Victor, daughter-in-law Anne and Grandchildren Yvonne and John, Bermuda.

SANDISON - In loving memory of our precious son Liam. It's lonely here without you, nothing is the same. All we have is memories and your picture in a frame. We can't get over losing you, no matter how we try. We'll keep you in our hearts until the day we die.
- Love and miss you Mum, Dad, Aaron and Cameron.

SANDISON - In loving memory of our darling grandson, nephew and cousin Liam, who died December 10, 2006 age 4 years. We are sending a dove to heaven. With a parcel on its wings. Careful when you open it. As it's full of beautiful things. Inside are a million kisses. Wrapped up in a million hugs. To say how much we miss you. And to send you all our love.
- Grandpa and Granny, Claggan and Auntie Linda, Uncle Angie, Lisa & Sean.xxxxx

SANDISON - In loving memory of Liam, our precious grandson, who died December 10, 2006. His light shines on in our hearts. And he is always in our thoughts.
- Love Granny and Grandpa.xx

STEWART - In loving memory of our dear parents and grandparents, Ann Campbell passed away December 12, 1982, Angus Alexander passed away October 7, 1994. Till a memory fades and life departs. You will live forever in our hearts.
- Inserted by Angus, Nancy, Rena, Mavis and families, Islay and Canada.

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Thought for the week

Love came down at Christmas

Christmas is often blighted by all the expense, stress, commercialism and what are we going to eat.

The real meaning though is often hidden in our secular world today.

We look into the Bible and find that Jesus was there in the beginning. In John's gospel 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He (Jesus) was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made.' If we go onto Isaiah we find the messianic prophecy

about the coming of Jesus 'For to us a child is born, to us a child is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'

The shepherds and the wise men came to worship Jesus in that lowly stable in Bethlehem. That great love that God has for each of us was manifest that first Christmas when he came into the world.

The true nature of that love became evident when Jesus was

crucified on the cross for our sins. The reconciliation of God to man for all who come to believe in Jesus and accept him as Saviour. When we come to know Jesus and follow him we receive that great love and compassion that he had for people.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, he said 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is; Love your neighbour as yourself.'

This Christmas let us celebrate

that great love that God and Jesus have for us. As we worship them in our services let us give thanks for that love.

With our families this Christmas help us to remember that great love we have for each other, in Christ, and see the true meaning of Christmas, Christ come to earth. We also should always remember, with Christ's love, those who are in unfortunate circumstances.

May God's richest blessing be on you and all your family this Christmas.

Santa and Stan aid lifeboat fundraiser

SUPPORTERS turned out in force to support Oban Lifeboat Station's annual fundraising day and donated £950.

The highly successful event, featuring Stormy Stan the Lifeboat Man and a Santa Claus in yellow wellies, was held at the Palace Hotel last Saturday, courtesy of the Donn family.

Les Stewart, treasurer of Oban RNLI Fundraising Group, said: 'We really couldn't have asked for better support and we can't thank the people of Oban enough.'

From those who supported us by attending the event, to the kind-hearted businesses who donated prizes and the army of home-bakers who provided the food, our heart-felt thanks go to you each and every one of them for making the day such a success.

Christmas came early for three-year-old Emily Pagan, of Oban, who left the event £50 richer after winning the children's fancy dress contest.

The cash prize was donated by Oban Express, while Inverlussa Marine Services sponsored the Children's Lucky Dip, which was a sell-out.

The winner of the competition to guess the value of the hamper, donated by The Kitchen Garden, was Joan Baldwin; winner of the contest to guess the number of sweets in the jar, donated by Oban Co-op, was Kelly Macgillivray and the winner of the guess the weight of the cake, made and donated by Peigi Robertson, was Roy Rutherford.



RNLI fundraiser Jackie Craig collects donations at the door of the Palace Hotel with the help of a yellow-boated Santa Claus and Stormy Stan the Lifeboat Man. 16.150rnli01



Morvern MacAulay and Cath Thomson from the Salvation Army at the organisation's soup lunch. 16.150salvation01

Salvation Army appeal to gift a gift this season

THE ANNUAL appeal for Christmas presents to be handed out to children in the Oban area is well underway thanks to the Salvation Army.

The group organised a St Andrew's Day soup lunch and sale of hand crafted items to raise funds for the appeal.

Cath Thomson, Oban Salvation

Army's community development worker, said: 'We're looking for new toys and these will be distributed in conjunction with St Vincent de Paul Society, which also hands out food parcels.'

Last year the group handed out around 100 presents to children from vulnerable families in North Argyll.

SWRI hosts a cracker of a Christmas event

OBAN SWRI's open night was full to capacity with guests eager to enjoy a Christmas Cracker evening, enjoying a tea party with a difference.

Oban president Jenny Moody welcomed more than 60 guests from local rurals for an evening of tea party related crafts.

Lyndsay Elliott kicked off the evening by making green tea sorbet. Kay McDonald warmed the crowd with Highlander and white Russian cocktails made in vintage china tea pots and served in a cup and saucer.

Ruth Miller made her SWRI

debut by making cake stands from mis-matched vintage plates, and a scented candle in a tea cup.

Sally Weaser made a Christmas themed pin cushion in a tea cup, followed by Karen Mackie making delicate teapot shaped biscuits and giant chocolate buttons.

A delicious supper was provided and followed by a sizeable raffle, where most people won a prize. Guests are welcome to attend the next meeting on January 28, which will be a hands-on paper crafting evening.

CHURCH NOTICES

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Sunday 15 December 2013
Advent 3
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion.....08:00
Sung Eucharist.....10:15
Children's Corner
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Nikki McNelly, Provost.
(01631) 562323
St James, Ardbrecknish, Cladich
Holy Eucharist.....15:00
St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Communion.....11:00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist.....09:30
Advance notice
Thursday 19 Dec 2013
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Nine Lessons and Carols..... 19:30

CHARITY DONATIONS

Oban Hospice
CARING FOR THE FUTURE
Donations always gratefully accepted
Please contact
Jack Tollan
Birch Hill
Achnacreebeag
North Connel, PA37 1RE

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.
West of Scotland Fundraising Office
1st Floor, Erskine House
North Avenue, Clydebank
Business Park, Clydebank G81 2DR
Tel 0800 100 6000
In memory of Dawn Joyce

GRADUATION

Murdo Maclean recently graduated from the University of Glasgow with a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Theoretical Physics. Murdo is the son of Murdo and Susan Maclean, Kingsburgh, Isle of Skye and the grandson of Rita and the late David Campbell, Kingsburgh and Kenny and Annie Maclean, Muir of Aird, Isle of Benbecula.

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Oban All Blacks win crucial game

'The result means that Oban Lorne close the gap on Carrick to three points but have a game in hand'

RBS West Division 2
Carrick 3
Oban Lorne 5

THE GREEN kit of Oban Lorne is well known among the rugby fraternity and has given rise to the team's 'Green Machine' nickname.

But a mix up ahead of last weekend's away trip to Carrick resulted in the strips being left behind in Oban and the visitors lining up in the black colours of Carrick Under-18s.

The change in jersey didn't seem to affect Oban Lorne too much, however, as they churned out another crucial win in their bid to reach promotion to West Division One.

Oban had beaten their Ayrshire opponents 12-6 at Glencruitten in the second league game of the season and were boasting a strong squad including the return of flanker Dan Hull and Hooker Ryan Jackson. The backline remained unchanged from last weekend's win over McLaren.

Lorne made a good start to the game and looked to adapt well to the boggy playing surface and swirling wind. The back three of Calum MacLachlan, Struan Simpson and Connor Ferris coped well with some testing kicks from the Carrick stand off.

Meanwhile, a rhythm developed within Oban's pack and captain Robin MacQueen was denied a score after 20 minutes, referee Dave Mathias adjudging the Oban captain to have been held up over the line.

With the conditions worsening, a penalty from the home side on the stroke of half time was the only score in a tightly contested first half.

Oban had been unable to find a consistent rhythm, despite dominating play, but their fortunes changed with 20 minutes to go when a superb charging run down the wing by Callum MacLachlan kick-started a strong period of pressure for Oban Lorne.

RUGBY

The Carrick defence held out valiantly but with seven minutes remaining on the clock, Robin MacQueen bundled over the line from only a metre out to score Oban's first points of the afternoon. Craig Wright narrowly missed the conversion for a nervy finish to the game.

As Carrick pressed to look for a last-gasp score Oban stand-off Alex Lawson did well to peg the hosts back into their own half as the final whistle sounded.

The important result means that Oban Lorne close the gap on Carrick to three points but have a game in hand on their rivals.

The Green Machine face another tough task this weekend with a tricky away fixture to Stewartry, who upset the odds already this season by winning at Glencruitten. Oban's next home game is against Clydebank on December 21.



Prizewinners for Oban Sailing Club's 2013 season.



Thomas Smith, top dinghy helm for 2013.

Oban Sailing Club hand out the prizes

OBAN Sailing Club's top keelboat for the 2013 season was Eric and Irena Chapman's Sigma 33 Amber Haze.

Prizes were presented to club members at the annual dinner dance held this year in the Oban Bay Hotel.

The Sigma lifted the Rosebowl Trophy for the best results in the club winning both Fast Aggregates, the RHYC Cup, Minots Light, Donald Sutherland Trophy and the OSC Challenge Cup.

Billy and Steven Fortie were second overall with wins in the Fast Handicap Shakedown Aggregate, the Elis Tankard and won the Leicester Society Building Plate. New to Richard Shellock, the high tech Prism 28 Thrust, finished third overall winning the Fortie Trophy, the Sutherland's Law Quach and the Dr Ivor Campbell Trophy.

Thomas Smith of Kilmore was the star in the dinghy section winning the top dinghy helm. He had wins in the Port Beag Cup and, sailing the high school's Feva with Matthew Strachan, had first equal in the Dinghy Cup, the D McLeod TV Cup and in the first Icele Series slow handicap section.

Runner-up was Matthew Strachan who finished first equal in the Dinghy Cup with Thomas and the D McLeod TV Cup as well as the 1st Slow.

Third overall was Andrew Chapman with firsts in the fast handicap section of the Icele Series and the first Thursday aggregate. Andrew also won the Mini Regatta for both keelboats and dinghies.

Eric Chapman, the 2013 sailing secretary, said it had been a good season even if numbers for both keelboats and dinghies were low at points.

This did not however diminish the enthusiasm and all aggregate series and trophy races were keenly contested.

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results: West of Scotland Cup 3rd round - Oban Saints 2, Glasgow Harp 1, after extra time; Premier Division One - Paisley v Cambeltown Pupils, postponed; Premier Division Two - Port Glasgow United v Dunoon Athletic, postponed; Division 1A - Tarbert 0, Drumchapel Amateur Colts 1.

This Saturday's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup 4th round - Blochairn Star 'B' v Lochgilphead Red Star; Premier Division - Oban Saints v Haldane United; Premier Division One - Cambeltown Pupils v Centre; Premier Division Two - Goldenhill v Dunoon Athletic; Division 1A - Tarbert v Millbeg Villa

Kingussie win Wade Cup

YOUTH SHINTY

KINGUSSIE High School won the Wade Cup at Dunbarry Park, Kingussie recently.

A cold wind and heavy showers of rain made the conditions difficult but the games were played in a good spirit and refereed by David Anderson and Ronald Ross.

The results of the round robin league were as follows:

Kingussie HS 1 Kinlochleven/Ardnarrachan 0; Charleston 0 Lochaber 0; Kinloch/Ard 0 Lochaber 0; Charleston 0 Kingussie 3; Lochaber 0 Kingussie 3; Charleston 1 Kinloch/Ard 2.

Final Positions: Kingussie 6pts; Kinlochleven/Ardnarrachan 4pts; Lochaber 2pts; Charleston 1pt

Tommy Wade presented the cup and Schools Camanachd Association President Colm O'Rua presented medals to the winning players.

Wasted trip for Oban Athletic

FOOTBALL

OBAN Athletic travelled down to Alexandria to take on Antonine in a League Cup match last Saturday but the game was called off.

The teams were actually out warming up when the referee deemed the pitch to be unplayable.

Athletic are at home to Crossbar this Saturday.

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Bad weather hits Oban pool league

POOL

A COMBINATION of horrendous weather and work commitments meant that only half the scheduled Oban Pool League matches were played last Thursday.

Reigning champions the Cellar Bar had previously defeated the Claredon by the narrowest of margins in a re-scheduled fixture from week two to pull themselves back into title contention and were looking to build momentum against Foleys Bar.

Although the venue was switched at short notice, due to the Regent Hotel's power being down, the Cellar proved too strong for their opponents and ran out comfortable winners to once again draw level with bitter rivals Markie Dans 'A' and the Lancaster 'A' at the summit.

The Lancaster 'B' now look to have a stranglehold on fourth spot after cruising to victory

over the Lochavullin, giving them the luxury of a four-point gap over the chasing pack allowing them to solely focus on reeling in the big three over the next few weeks.

The Claredon and Markie Dans 'B' couldn't be separated in the only other contest last week, with both sides having to settle for a point in the battle for a top six.

Without doubt next week's matches will centre around the top-of-the-table clash between the Lancaster 'A' and Markie Dans 'A' which promises to be a classic with neither of the old foes having dropped a point to date.

Results week eight (December 5): Markie Dans A P-P Lochnell; Creagan Inn P-P Lancaster A; Cellar 7-3 Foleys Bar; Outreach P-P Gluepot; Lancaster B 8-2 Lochavullin; Claredon 5-5 Markie Dans B; Claredon 4-6

Oban Pool League is sponsored by the Creagan Inn

	P	Pts
1 Markie Dans A	6	12
2 Lancaster A	6	12
3 Cellar Bar	7	12
4 Lancaster B	7	10
5 Claredon	7	6
6 Markie Dans B	7	6
7 Lochavullin	7	6
8 Lochnell	6	5
9 Creagan Inn	6	5
10 Gluepot	6	4
11 Foleys Bar	7	0
12 Outreach	6	0

Another round of shinty coaching sessions

SHINTY COACHING

THE Camanachd Association is delighted to announce the launch of another round of shinty coaching sessions in partnership with the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) to deliver a food safety and healthy eating programme in tandem with shinty coaching to thousands of primary school pupils across Scotland.

Initiative

In school year 2012/13 nearly 2,500 primary school pupils between P4 and P7 were involved in this initiative and we had some great feedback from pupils and staff alike.

The main aim of the Hygiene, Healthy Eating and Activity in Primary Schools initiative (HHEAPS) is to promote integrated messages about food safety and a healthy diet, along with physical activity over a six-week period to primary pupils in schools identified by the Camanachd Association and the Active Schools network.

The teacher-delivered classroom activities are one hour per week and are based around a pupil mission book which covers six key topics: Bacteria Facts; Being Healthy; Personal Hygiene; Getting the Balance Right; Food Storage and Help Yourself Stay Healthy. This is followed by one hour of shinty coaching per week delivered by Camanachd Association qualified coaches in curriculum time during which they will provide a link between the classroom and physical activities.

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Further HHEAPS sessions for more than 1,500 pupils will take place from January to March in Highland, Argyll and Bute, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

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George Bryson, manager of GeoPlant, presented a new set of strips to the Ballachulish Under-17 team after the company agreed to be the team's sponsor.

Shinty in Mallaig again

YOUTH SHINTY

SHINTY is being played again in Mallaig thanks to the formation of an after school club set up by three Marine Harvest employees with the assistance of Highlife Highland Active School Co-ordinators.

Former Skye Camanachd player and current Grade 1 referee John Angus Gillies has worked in Mallaig for 10 years as a manager for Marine Harvest and along with Christopher Simm and Innes Morrison, who also work for Marine Harvest, they have begun shinty coaching sessions on Monday nights between 5pm and 6pm at Mallaig High School. Christopher and Innes recently attended a Camanachd Association Foundation coaching course in

Inverness and their sessions are regularly attended by around 20 primary school aged children.

Active School Co-ordinators Emma Walters and Pamela Macdonald booked the facilities and sourced funding for Chris and Innes to attend the coaching course. They also timetabled shinty coaching at Mallaig, Morar (including pupils from Knoydart) and Arisaig primary schools during curriculum time which Highland Development Officer Russell Jones is currently delivering as part of the HHEAPS programme.

John Angus, Chris and Innes plan to hold indoor tournaments throughout the winter months.

Mull driver rewarded

RALLYING

A MULL rally driver has been rewarded for his commitment to the sport at the 2013 Brick and Steel Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge presentation of awards.

At the prizegiving in Glasgow on St Andrew's Day Alasdair Currie was presented with the Spirit of the Championship award.

Alasdair had to spend a large element of his budget on ferries but he achieved considerable success and admiration from his fellow competitors for his commitment and driving skills behind the wheel of his ageing Citroen AX rally car.



Alasdair Currie receives his award from Euan Thorburn, the recently crowned BTRDA Rally Series Gold Star Champion.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

WIN £750

COMPETITION

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of Wyves Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

I enclose £1 for 20 crosses (tick box) The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

Name

Address

..... Tel No.

Please tape your £1 coin here

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

A MacDonald, Drummore Road, Oban

S McGillivray, Lanark Place, Fort William

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

Corporate stationery
Business cards, letterheads, envelopes, comp slips

Personal stationery
Matching paper & envelopes,
postcards, address labels

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www.krispprint.co.uk

Saints battle through in extra time

'I don't think Harp can have any complaints - we were the better team on the day and deserved to win.'

West of Scotland Cup
Third Round
Oban Saints 2
Glasgow Harp 1
(after extra time)

GLASGOW Harp, last season's Scottish Amateur Cup semi-finalists travelled to Glencruitten to take on Saints in the 3rd round of the West of Scotland Cup and it was the local side who eventually came out on top in a cracking game of football.

Despite the horrendous weather conditions earlier in the week Glencruitten was in excellent condition for this eagerly anticipated cup tie and the hardy band of supporters who braved the cold were thoroughly entertained.

Manager Iain Jackson was forced into making three changes from the team that defeated Ellon in the Scottish Cup the previous Saturday. Ross Maitland, Myles McAuley and Dene Cassells were unavailable so Colin Carswell, Mattie Rippon and Jamie Graham came into the squad.

The visitors came storming out of the blocks and had Saints pinned back in the early stages and Michael Giblin came close with a fine effort in the fourth minute.

to get going and their first half chance fell to Donnie Campbell, but his shot sailed over the bar. Saints should have taken the lead in the 9th minute when a mistake at the back from the Harp defence allowed Craig MacEwan a clear run through on goals, but Harp keeper Stephen Johnstone saved Craig's effort and a glorious chance was missed.

Saints have been drawn away to Dennistoun Vale in the 5th round of the Fosters Scottish Amateur Cup. The game will be played on Saturday 11 January.

The Oban side have been drawn away against Argyll rivals Lochgiphead Red Star in the 2nd round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy. A date for this game has still to be scheduled.

The local side were starting to take control of the game in midfield and Donnie Campbell sent Craig MacEwan through on the left, but there were no takers in the box for Craig's excellent cross.

Saints were dealt a cruel blow in the 20th minute when the visitors went ahead, Mattie Rippon was forced to give away a corner.

FOOTBALL

The ball was swung into the box where the usual jostling was taking place. The ball hit off Alex Craik and ended up squirming over the line for an own goal.

This was a sore one to take for the Oban boys but this Saints side don't give up and Marc MacCallum was unlucky when he got on the end of a Lewis Cameron corner, but his header flew inches past the post.

Harp nearly increased their lead in the 25th minute but Saints netminder Daniel Cassells made a tremendous save touching a curling shot over the bar.

The home side should have been back on level terms just before the interval when Lewis Cameron fired over a great corner from the left allowing Craig MacEwan to outjump the Harp defence to head the ball home despite a brave effort on the line by Gordon McClune. This was no more than the home team deserved as they were now controlling the game.

Saints had a claim for a penalty turned down by referee Jimmy Litster, who handled the game well, after Donnie Campbell was upended in the box.

Although having most of the possession and territorial advantage, Saints just could not get that vital second goal that their play deserved so after 90 minutes the game ended one goal apiece - so on to extra time.



Craig MacEwan outjumps Glasgow Harp goalkeeper Stephen Johnstone to head home the equaliser during last Saturday's West of Scotland Cup match at Glencruitten. 07_150saints03

was defending well.

Saints drew level in the 57th minute when Lewis Cameron fired over a great corner from the left allowing Craig MacEwan to outjump the Harp defence to head the ball home despite a brave effort on the line by Gordon McClune. This was no more than the home team deserved as they were now controlling the game.

Saints had a claim for a penalty turned down by referee Jimmy Litster, who handled the game well, after Donnie Campbell was upended in the box.

The first period was fairly uneventful with neither goalkeeper getting troubled all that much, but Saints got off to the perfect start in the second period when they were awarded a penalty after only 30 seconds of the restart for a hand ball offence in the box. Allan MacKay stepped up and slammed the ball home to give Saints the lead for the first time in the match.

The Oban side were looking for a third goal that would kill the game off, but Harp were defending in depth. They had a great chance to net an equaliser in the dying seconds of the game, but thankfully for Saints Gordon McClune pulled his effort wide of the target.

It was a very happy Saints contingent that celebrated a well deserved win after the referee blew the final whistle.

Manager Iain Jackson was delighted with the performance. He said: 'The boys were excellent today. Our workrate was first class and once we settled down we passed the ball well. I don't think Harp can have any complaints - we were the better team on the day and deserved to win.'

This Saturday Saints return to league duty with a home game against Haldane United. The match will kick-off at 2pm with referee Gordon Hay from Glasgow in charge.

The teams have met already this season. The Oban side were leading 3-0 at one stage, but let that slip with the game ending up as a 3-3 draw, so a tough game is in prospect again on Saturday.

Artemis Macaulay Cup draw

SHINTY

THE Draw for the 2014 Artemis Macaulay Cup was made live on Oban FM, by Argyll & Bute Councillor Roddy MacCuish along with Davie Thomson and Davie Hamilton from the Macaulay Association.

The final will take place at Mossfield Stadium, Oban on Saturday 23 August 2014.

Round 1 - Inveraray v Kyles Athletic; Taynuilt v Glenorchy; Aberdeen v Oban Camanachd; Glasgow Mid Argyll v Bute; Kilmallie v Newtonmore; Lovat v Kinlochshiel; Fort William v Glenurquhart; Lochaber v Kingussie.

Round 2 - Taynuilt / Glenorchy v Aberdeen / Oban Camanachd; Glasgow Mid Argyll / Bute v Inveraray / Kyles Athletic; Lochaber / Kingussie v Kilmallie / Newtonmore; Lovat / Kinlochshiel v Fort William / Glenurquhart.

Semi Final - Taynuilt / Glenorchy v Aberdeen / Oban Camanachd v Glasgow Mid Argyll / Bute v Inveraray / Kyles Athletic; Lochaber / Kingussie v Kilmallie / Newtonmore v Lovat / Kinlochshiel / Fort William / Glenurquhart.

Magnus scores for Scotland

RUGBY

FORMER Oban Lorne player Magnus Bradbury starred for Scotland Under-19s despite his team's defeat to a touring Australian side.

Number eight Magnus scored his side's only try in the 29 - 5 defeat to the Australian schools squad at Watsonians' Myreside ground.

The score was the Bonawe teenager's first at this age group as he continues to develop with Edinburgh Rugby's Elite Development Programme.

Oban Saints youths results and fixtures

YOUTH FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s v Ardencape, postponed; Under 14s no game; Antonine 2, Under 15s 1. Saints goalscorer was Ben Coates. Balloch Eastfield v Under 17s postponed.

This weekend's fixtures: Blair Thistle v Under 13s; Under 14s no game; Blair Thistle v Under 15s; Balloch Eastfield v Under 17s.

Teams wanted

FOOTBALL

ORGANISERS of an island football tournament have made an appeal for more teams to join and have extended their invitation to the mainland.

The Islay Easter Tournament is held over the weekend of April 18 - 20 across the island.

The first two games will be on Friday evening, with two games on Saturday morning and two that evening.

There are two groups and the top two teams in each group play the final on Sunday at midday, allowing visiting teams to get away on the 3.30pm ferry.

Anyone interested in entering a team can contact tournament organiser Andrew McEachern by email at am245@btinternet.com or phone 01496 850011.

Tobermory Golf club hand out the prizes

GOLF

THE ANNUAL prizegiving at Tobermory brought silverware to many, with prizes shared widely amongst the members.

There were top awards for club champion Paul MacKinnon and open winner Paul Brown.

Shaun Fisher marked an excellent season winning both club and open handicap championship trophies.

Graham Davidson won the President's Cup, Donald Brown picked up the Brockville Quaich for best eclectic round, and Peter MacCrone won the Order of Merit for his consistently good season.

For one member, however, there was additional silver in the shape of a £500 cheque. The annual 100Club draw also took place and the lucky winner of this year's major prize was Andrew Reid of Tobermory.



Andrew Reid, left, receives his prize cheque from club captain John Wilshire.

Shinty's Heroes on BBC ALBA

SHINTY

TWO of BBC ALBA's television highlights over the festive period will feature 'Shinty's Heroes' which was one of the outstanding successes of this year's Blas Festival.

On the eve of the shinty world's day of days, the Camanachd Cup Final in September, and the centenary of the Great War, Blas 2013 paid tribute to its sporting heroes, many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Shinty's Heroes was staged by Musical Director Gary Innes and wordsmith Hugh Dan MacLennan at the Nevis Centre, Fort William on Friday, September 13 and filmed for BBC ALBA by Bees Nees Production company from Glasgow.

Amongst the stellar list of guests are the renowned fiddler Duncan Chisholm from Cannich, master piper Duncan MacGillivray from Easter Ross, singers Norrie MacIver and Kathleen MacInnes, along with Allan Henderson, Iain MacFarlane and the one and only Fergie MacDonald - all from various parts of Lochaber.

The first programme, to be broadcast on Sunday December 29 at 8.30pm, 'Shinty heroes' revolves round the impact of the First World War on shinty-playing areas and in particular some of the exploits of Highland Heroes at battles such as Festubert in 1915 through a combination of war-time and sporting images, many of which have been unseen before.

Presenter Hugh Dan MacLennan said: 'The starting point of our journey is really the unique success of the Lovat and Beauty teams who allegedly combined to win the Camanachd Cup in 1913. We celebrate that remarkable event and then follow a couple of the Beauty players who went to war and left us a remarkable pipe tune which we will play on the evening. There are extraordinary tales to tell and on the eve of shinty's greatest day out, it was singularly appropriate that we marked the shinty players' and the shinty

community's contribution to the Great War. And the impact that had on the game.'

Musical Maestro Gary Innes will mastermind the musical aspects of the event, and is behind the news that the show will be repeated in a slightly different form at this year's Celtic Connections in the Mitchell Theatre in Glasgow on Sunday, February 2.

He said: 'I am delighted that so many top musicians from the shinty-playing areas, each with a connection to shinty teams, joined us for the show. It was a remarkable evening in the Nevis Centre and the start of a perfect weekend for shinty fans throughout Scotland. I am delighted that we are able to take the show to Glasgow and Celtic Connections.'

The second television programme from the Fort William show will be broadcast on BBC ALBA on Saturday, January 4 at 9pm.

Weather

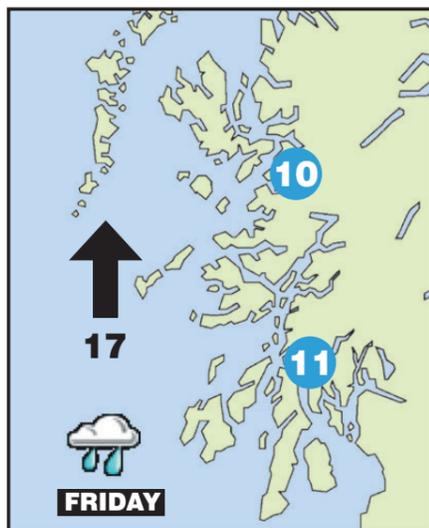
Thursday Heavy rain
Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 10°C to 11°C

Friday Heavy rain
Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 6°C to 11°C.

Weekend Sunshine and showers
Outlook Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 6°C to 8°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, December 12, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	07.46	1.5	14.25	3.4	20.22	1.6
Thur	01.41	3.0	07.46	1.5	14.25	3.4	20.22
Fri	02.42	3.1	08.57	1.5	15.17	3.4	21.17
Sat	03.26	3.3	09.55	1.4	15.58	3.6	22.02
Sun	04.04	3.5	10.42	1.4	16.34	3.7	22.42
Mon	04.42	3.7	11.24	1.3	17.09	3.8	23.55
Tues	05.18	3.9	12.02	1.3	17.43	3.9	23.57
Wed	05.56	4.0	12.37	1.3	18.19	3.9	*** **

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrisaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

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Lochaber BID mix-up revealed as vote closes

VOTING closest today (Thursday) on setting up a Lochaber Business Improvement District (BID) - and the ambitious plan has remained controversial right to the end.

It had been thought businesses had only one vote each, but it emerged this week that every property has a vote.

That means large concerns with multiple properties - Highland Council has 47 - could potentially sway the result either way.

Should tomorrow's count end in a 'yes', opponents of the scheme could mount a challenge to the outcome because, they will claim, the process was flawed.

Local businessman Stewart MacLean, a leading member of opposition group Bid Farewell, told *The Oban Times*: 'My view is the vote will run through - but there will be an official protest if there is a 'yes' vote.'

'This horrendous misinformation going out to the Lochaber business community is symptomatic of what has been happening right from the beginning.'



Craft fair pair's novel sales technique

Mother and daughter Karen and Naomi Lees found a novel sales technique at their Christmas crafts stall at Upper Achintore Regeneration Group's Christmas Fair last week. Hundreds of Fort William folk turned out to support the event in Upper Achintore primary School. See leisure, page 13. 20_150upper04

Corran Ferry users urged to complete online survey

THE HIGHLAND Council is calling on people using the Corran Ferry to take part in an online survey on the service.

The move forms part of economic study on how fare levels impact on ferry use by both locals and visitors. Fares went up earlier this year following a controversial consultation. The survey covers all individual users, including people who live in areas outside Lochaber, such as Mull as well as other parts of the country. Holidaymakers are also asked to respond to help ensure the results are representative. The survey information will inform the council when determining future fare increases. Consultants will produce a report to the council in late January 2014. Fort William and Ardnamurchan councillor Brian Murphy said: 'Residents wanted to know what the impact of fare increases would be. I believe we need economic data to make the case for the future. This could make the case for a ferry to replace *Maid of Glencoul*'. The survey will be available at www.highland.gov.uk from Monday December 16. A paper survey can be accessed by calling 01224 661830.

Ruthless gangs poaching deer from estates

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

RUTHLESS gangs using high-powered rifles are poaching dozens of red deer a week from remote west Lochaber estates, it is being claimed.

Highly-organised crime lords are thought to be behind the operation, with each haul netting them up thousands of pounds worth of venison as pre-Christmas demand for the premium meat reaches its peak.

In the latest incident, Ardnamurchan Estate was targeted but the poachers escaped empty handed after eagle-eyed workers caught them in the act.

Estate manager Donald Houston told *The Oban Times*: 'We had a major poaching incident in broad daylight last Sunday afternoon.

'One of our workers clocked the guys - they were using rifles, sights and silencers.

'We lost hinds but they did not take them because they noticed they had been seen and just legged it.

'They brought down one stone dead and nicked another one which just ran. We found it dead the next day.

'This was a well-organised, somebody's car they will nick their deer. He added: 'Police in Fort William have it as an ongoing inquiry.'

Glenfinnan Estate manager and West Lochaber Deer Management Group chairman Alastair Gibson said vigilance was the key to deterring the criminals.

He said: 'We do a poacher patrol and we are out on the road 24/7. There is always someone out in the Land Rover so they are seen.'

'In the build up to Christmas and in times of recession poaching does rear its head.'

Police Scotland confirmed they were investigating the alleged attempted theft of deer from Ardnamurchan Estate.

A spokesperson said: 'We would urge residents not to approach these people directly and to phone the police timely to provide them with information.'

He added: 'We are aware of the incident and inquiries are ongoing.'

Ardnamurchan Estate is offering a reward of £5,000 for information which leads to a conviction.

commercial activity - not locals after 'one for the pot'. These are needs - this is not your local crofter. Dealers are involved in it as well.'

According to Mr Houston, estates in Morvern, Moidart and Sunart have seen up to 20 hinds taken at a time - and warned if the poaching continues unchecked jobs could be at risk.

He said: 'Coming up to Christmas is when the big market is for venison. You are talking about tens of thousands of pounds of venison alone - never mind anything else.

'Our main concern is that this is depriving folk of a livelihood - the people that do the butchering and despatching. If this is not stopped it will cost men their jobs.'

'This is organised crime on a big scale. It's not just poaching, it's sheep and cattle rustling, car theft and breaking and entering.

'It's the same people doing the same things - instead of nicking

Donations flood in to food bank

LOCHABER Food Bank has received around four tons of food donations in the two weeks since it opened, organisers have revealed.

The lifeline service is now gearing up to hand out food packages once organisations such as Lochaber Housing Association, Tweeddale Medical Practice, Highland Council and health and social care services allocate vouchers to those who need them. Once received, the vouchers can be handed into the food bank on Fort William High Street in exchange for non-perishable groceries.

Food bank manager Alex McConachie said the slow start was 'not unusual' for food aid charities, with many taking a month to start giving out provisions.

However, Erin Greig, press officer for NHS Highland stated that nobody has approached them to request a voucher for the Fort William charity.

In the meantime, the food bank has been preparing emergency packages to send to Highland Council, in case they are required outwith food bank opening times.

Mr MacConachie said: 'We've had several people coming in looking for food but we need to direct them to the appropriate organisations so that they can get vouchers first. We think we'll be busy over Christmas and we hope we'll be giving out food soon because we don't want anybody to struggle. We have had tremendous support and generous donations from the people of Fort William.'

He added: 'Local churches have been giving food to vulnerable people for many years, so it has been clear to those involved that there is a need for a charity like this in Lochaber.'

Mr McConachie would like to thank Tesco Fort William and everyone that donated to the Tesco food collection from November 29 until December 1. Over 300kg of food was donated over the three days.



Lochaber Food Bank: Volunteers prepare for the Christmas rush. Left to right: Anita Russell, Donald Elder, James Casey, Alex McConachie, Patricia Leslie and Catherine MacDonald. 20_150foodbank01

Music school concert

LOCHABER Music School will stage its annual Christmas concert in St Margaret's Church, Roy Bridge on Sunday at 3pm.

The seasonal family occasion will feature soloists, ensembles, choir, orchestra and handbell ringers, with the audience encouraged to sing a selection of favourite carols.

The concert will also feature a tribute to the late Rosemary Galer, who taught violin for many years at music school. In her memory, a beautiful, specially commissioned trophy will be presented to Lochaber Music Festival by its designer, the luthier David Sutherland, also a former pupil of Rosemary's.

A raffish and refreshments in Roy Bridge village hall will follow the concert.

Admission is £5 for adults but children of school age have free entry.

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Parents irate over prolonged school computer blackout

KINLOCHLEVEN High School was still without computer and internet access on Tuesday - more than five days after last week's storm.

The prolonged blackout has meant curtailed lessons for pupils and recruitment for senior posts being postponed.

It is understood repeated calls have been made to IT firm Fujitsu, which this week had its contract with Highland Council to maintain computer networks extended, and to Vodafone, which has a mast above the village, to fix the problems - but so far without success.

Irate parents contacted *The Oban Times* to complain about the ongoing disruption.

Sybil Munro, who runs the Laroeh Bar in Ballachulish with husband Craig, said: 'My insurance company has been in touch with me faster than they have sorted the computers.

'It is just not good enough for the children. It's them that are suffering and the teachers are suffering frustration as well because they can't teach. If the computer system keeps on going down it's not very conducive to a good learning environment, especially when they are bringing in new exam systems.'

Parent council chairman Stewart Borland said no access to computer records meant key job interviews had to be postponed.

He said: 'All the interviews for promoted posts were set for Monday and this delay means people have to go through the holidays not knowing whether they have the job or not.'

Head teacher John McGilp told *The Oban Times* on Tuesday morning: 'A Vodafone engineer is going up to the mast site today to try to re-align the satellite feed.

'But there is also a problem with the internal server and we are waiting on a Fujitsu engineer to come and have a look at it.

'The advent of ICT has impacted greatly on the classroom - staff are using smart boards, internet, various pieces of software and websites to make lessons as interactive and relevant as they can.

'But with all this going on we have had to go back to 'chalk and talk' and books and pencils. It has had a major impact on the planning and delivery of lessons.'

A Vodafone spokesperson insisted on Tuesday the problem had been rectified - despite reports from the school that systems were still down at 6pm. She said: 'Our local mast in Kinlochleven is operating as it should but a number of nearby sites were affected recently by weather conditions resulting in intermittent service issues.

'The service was back to normal by 8am yesterday. We're sorry that some of our customers will have been inconvenienced by these signal problems.'

Highland Council told *The Oban Times* that Fujitsu said there was nothing they could do as it was not their system at fault.

A council spokesperson said: 'We fully understand the frustration and the disruption that the loss of ICT services is causing at this critical time of the school year. We are doing what we can to get the problem sorted.'

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Crofters' warning over 'duty to report'

GRAZING committees in crofting townships could resign if they are forced to report on the condition of their neighbours' crofts, the Scottish Crofting Federation has warned.

The SCF says members have given a resounding 'no' to a draft 'duty to report' form put out for consultation by the Crofting Commission. Under the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, committees are charged with reporting on the state of common grazings and the crofts of every tenant and owner occupier in the township. That requirement is designed to check absenteeism and improve land use - but it has also sparked fears that checking up on neighbours could sow disharmony.

SCF chief executive Patrick Krause said: 'If it was felt by SCF members that if grazings committees were reporting on fellow crofters they could lose trust and credibility.'

'Many grazings committee members have told us that if they will resign rather than comply with this. We are all trying to help sort out common grazings but this hinders that intent. The Crofting Commission has shown its objective is to support common grazings but this obligation forced on them, by a law that is increasingly being seen as seriously flawed, could cause irreparable damage to the relationship between grazings committees and the commission.'

Crofting Commission spokesperson Jane Thomas stressed the duty to report was a requirement in law and there was 'no option' but to proceed. She told *The Oban Times*: 'We are trying to consult the people most closely involved to design something that is as easy as possible to complete and something that people won't find threatening.'

Ms Thomas stressed it was grazings committees, not clerks, who were responsible for completing the forms.



Fort William's Robert Robertson was a winner at the Scots Trad Music Awards. See more on the awards, pages 12 and 13.

Robert on song with Trad award

FORT William student Robert Robertson has another prestigious award to add to his list after winning the Up and Coming Artist of the Year award at the MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards in Aberdeen.

The Gaelic singer's talent was recognised on Saturday night when he came top of his category after 90,000 members of the public voted for their favourites across different categories.

A delighted Robert, 19, *The Oban Times*: 'I feel amazing, I can't quite get my head around it yet. I couldn't get over being nominated so to win was just great.'

The accolade marks the end of a phenomenal

year for Robert after winning the An Comunn Gaidhealach Gold Medal at the Royal National Mod in October and bringing out an album with the band Skipinnish this summer.

Thinking in the future, Robert is planning on a quiet year to focus on his English literature honours degree at the University of Glasgow.

He said: 'Juggling music and studying has been a bit like walking a tightrope recently but the main thing is that I enjoy them both. I don't know whether or not to go into singing professionally but either way music is always part of the plan.'

Robert would like to thank everyone that voted for him in the Scots Trad Music Awards.

Spirit set to flow from new distillery

THE WEST Highlands' newest malt whisky distillery is nearing completion and could be producing spirit within 10 weeks.

Building work at Ardnamurchan Distillery between Salen and Kichao is almost finished and almost all the equipment - including the whisky stills - has been installed.

Owners Adelphi Distillery Ltd had hoped to start production at Glenbeg by December 31 but now aim to have spirit flowing by February 28.

Adelphi chairman Keith Falconer told *The Oban Times*: 'We currently have plumbers working flat out to connect everything up.'

'Once we are in production, we are looking to operate three

By STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

shifts, six days a week, and produce 400,000 litres of new spirit, which will become whisky after three years.

'This is a big investment, not only in terms of money but in terms of the local community as well.'

'There should be up to 10 jobs in the distillery when we are in full production, including seasonal posts in the summer season, plus three more in the wood chip business.'

He added: 'We have the distillery manager Graeme Bowie, who was assistant manager at Balblair, in place. He and wife Astrid have fitted into the community really well. We will be engaging more people

in January and February as production picks up.'

Mr Bowie said: 'Forsyth's of Rothes made the stills. 'The wash still holds 10,000 litres and the spirit still holds 6,000 litres.'

'Once the distillation is finished we should get 2,000 litres of spirit as an end product. 'It will be about 68 per cent ABV. We will then reduce the spirit with water to 63.5 per cent ABV and fill it into casks to mature in our warehouse here at the distillery.'

He added: 'This has been a massive project which was first discussed in 2007 with the actual build starting in January 2013. 'It is now nearing completion and we are looking forward to the first spirit being produced in late February 2014.'



The new distillery takes shape at Glenbeg.



The new stills at Ardnamurchan Distillery.

Moidart war memorial planned

PLANS are underway to construct the first memorial for the Moidart men who lost their lives in the World Wars.

The structure will be placed at the summit known as Bealach Carach, between Loch Moidart and Glenuig.

Donald Munro and Angus McLean of Kinlochmoidart, are in the process of setting up the 'Moidart War Memorial Fund' and have lodged a planning application.

The trustees are appealing for information about the fallen soldiers from relatives or friends.

Mr Munro, 71, told *The Oban Times*:

'I've been thinking about this idea for a few years and I thought it would be splendid to have the memorial completed by the centenary of the first World War next year.'

Mr Munro served in the Queen's Own Highlanders regiment of the British Army from 1962 until 1970, following his father who served in the 5th battalion of the Queen's own



Moidart Memorial: Angus McLean, left, and Donald Munro at the potential site of the new war memorial. f50memorialno

Cameron Highlanders and said this is why remembering soldiers is so important to him.

'It is striking and slightly surprising that there is no memorial to the men of the district who lost their lives in the two World Wars. It is thought that they number some 50 and of course they were the younger men on whom the future so much depended,' Mr Munro added.

The monument is expected to be a cairn of local stone with a remembrance phrase that is yet to be decided.

Contributions can be made by cheque, payable to 'The Moidart War Memorial Fund' and sent to: Donald Munro, Ardmolich, Kinlochmoidart, Lochailort, PH38 4ND.

Mr Munro can be contacted by telephone on 01967 431799.



From left: 1st Fort Augustus Brownies and Guides Rhianna MacCallum from Invergarry, Elnor Littlewood from Balmaglasser, Megan Stewart from Invergarry, Sophie Rand from South Laggan and Jade Douglas from Invergarry enjoyed their day at their tombola stall. 20_150garry01

Invergarry festive fun and games

GLENGARRY Community Hall was a hive of activity on Saturday as local people turned out in their droves to support Invergarry's annual Christmas fair.

Stallholders did a roaring trade as did the cafe next door where Belle Stewart and her helpers served up a steady stream of hot drinks, cakes and snacks.

Proceeds from stall fees raised £120 for the Archie Foundation, while raffle proceeds boosted fund funds by £185.

Co-organiser Sarah Sandham, of the Well of the Seven Heads shop, said: 'The event was really well attended and the quality of produce was fantastic. The kids enjoyed the craft section and made a lot of gifts to take away.'

Among those enjoying the day were the 1st Fort Augustus Brownies and Guides.

Leader Linda Stewart said: 'We are raising funds for our unit to help keep it open.'

Christmas fair and coffee morning cheer

ROY BRIDGE Hall was the venue for the annual village Christmas fair and coffee morning on Saturday - and two inches of snow outside made the event a suitably seasonal occasion.

Local people enjoyed a range of craft stalls, hot drinks and home baking and a raffle, while proceeds from the day, totalling £930, were split 50-50 between Roy Bridge

Primary School and hall funds. Hall committee treasurer Vernon Rodgers told *The Oban Times*: 'The day went really well and even Charles Kennedy turned up. We need a new kitchen which is why we are having a renewed effort to do these kind of things. The total we made is as good as we have had in the past two years which is great considering the

economic climate.' In the grand raffle, Jean Ross from Inverloch, Fort William, won the adults' hamper and Ann Barrie, also from Fort William, won the children's hamper.

Right: Julia Allison, Lynne Nairn, Mhairi Ross and Mylene MacDonald show off some of the tasty cakes on offer at the Roy Bridge Christmas Fair. 20_150m01

economic climate.' In the grand raffle, Jean Ross from Inverloch, Fort William, won the adults' hamper and Ann Barrie, also from Fort William, won the children's hamper.

Right: Julia Allison, Lynne Nairn, Mhairi Ross and Mylene MacDonald show off some of the tasty cakes on offer at the Roy Bridge Christmas Fair. 20_150m01



Skye and Lochalsh Sports Council members fall silent in memory of past chairman

SKYE AND Lochalsh Sports Council observed a one-minute silence in memory of John (The Caley) Nicolson at its meeting in Plockton Hall on Monday.

Mr Nicolson, who died on October 24, was a past chairman of the council who never missed a meeting. Members said he would be 'very sorely missed'.

Meanwhile, grants totalling £863.86 were given to Broadford Youth Club, Broadford

Badminton Club, Skye Badminton Association and Kyleakin Indoor Bowling Club.

Schools co-ordinator Sarah Ross reported that Portree High School pupils have volunteered to form a rowing club. The last meeting of the financial year will be on March 17 in Portree.

All grant applications must be submitted by then.

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First house fire on Colonsay for 40 years destroys home

THE FIRST house fire on Colonsay in more than 40 years has destroyed the home of the island's former special constable.

Yasmin Milburn owned the house in Upper Kilchattan with her partner Trevor Crowe. The pair ran the property as a four-star bed and breakfast.

But a blaze which started at 4am on Monday morning saw the house reduced to a shell, with the volunteer fire crew unable to contain the flames. Two firefighters escaped the burning building just moments before the roof collapsed.

It is understood the couple and their pets are safe and staying with friends. Locals say they will help the pair get back on their feet after 'losing everything'.

A spokesman for Scottish Fire and Rescue said the cause of the fire was unknown but there was nothing to suggest it was suspicious.

Ms Milburn took up the role of Colonsay's special constable on June 19, stepping down just five weeks later.

Well-known Oban man Hector dies

A WELL-known Oban man and former Oban Times employee, Hector Morrison, died at his home in Mossfield Avenue last Saturday, aged 86.

Hector, who just weeks ago was pictured on the front page of *The Oban Times*, helping to lead the tributes on Remembrance Sunday, was a driver for much of his career, working briefly with *The Oban Times* in his retirement.

Husband to the late Mary, he had four children, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Time running out to send in your Bonnie Babies

THE OBAN Times mailbox is filling up with entries for this year's Bonnie Baby Competition.

With the first round of pictures due to be published soon, time is running out to get your pictures in. See inside this week's edition for a form and details on how to enter.



Theatre group turns up the panto horror

Screams replaced the typical jeers as Oban's Spotlight Musical Theatre Group turned up the horror for this year's Corran Halls pantomime. A spooky *Sleeping Beauty* came to an end last Saturday night in the last of five performances. The show was very well supported with more than 1,400 in attendance over the four days. Audiences screamed with delight as *Zombies* spilled out over the stage to rush between the seats during the second Act's opening number *Thriller*. *The Oban Times* was able to snap the happy 'undead' bunch just before the curtain went up on Friday night - though we haven't seen our photographer since...

New Year decision on Etive fish farm

PLANNERS are likely to meet in north Lorn on January 29 to decide whether or not a new fish farm should be established on Loch Etive.

Dawnfresh's application for a 10-cage rainbow trout farm has been recommended for approval by planners, although there is widespread condemnation of the plans from the community. While a large proportion of the 587 objections and 215 expressions of support are from outside the local area, the vast majority of local respondents are against the proposal.

Dawnfresh say the farm is vital if it is to secure the future of fish farming on Loch Etive as well as those it already employs on its farms there.

Urgent call for council £2m to kickstart home repairs

CRUMBLING weatherproofing on houses across Argyll could be repaired and the economy given a £45million boost - if Argyll and Bute Council was to spend £2million.

That's the view of Oban councillor Fred Hall, who is becoming increasingly concerned by the 'perfect storm' of high heating bills and insulation problems affecting some of the social landlord's properties, particularly in the town's Soroba housing scheme.

ACHA has access to £45million to make roof repairs

and refurbish properties across the region, but cannot spend the money until it reaches agreement with all private owners, who have a common responsibility for the work. Nearly a third are so far refusing to pay their share.

Part of that headache is the Soroba estate, which is suffering from rapidly deteriorating roughcast. There is good news for some residents; after more than a year of negotiations, six of the scheme's 14 blocks are to be repaired after agreements were reached with flat owners.

However, owners in eight

further blocks are preventing work going ahead.

Councillor Hall believes the local authority has a part to play, saying a £2million investment and a means tested grant or loan system could speed progress and save families from spending more time fending off damp.

Councillor Hall said: 'In Glasgow, the district council took the lead and gave the money to Glasgow Housing Association to meet the sum of money they needed from owner occupiers to tap into funding. If the council here gave £2million to ACHA,

they could access £45million in funding to create jobs, refurbish flats, make homes more energy efficient and make more homes available - as flats currently not fit to occupy could be refurbished and let. The council could then go about recovering the money from the owner occupiers via interest free loan repayments if need be.'

Argyll and Bute Council has confirmed it is considering a number of options regarding the upgrade of properties, including the possibility of grants towards repair costs.

Get Billy home for Christmas

Campaign to free Connel man detained in India

PLEASE rang out this week for the west coast community to rally behind Connel's Billy Irving and get him home from atrocious conditions in a tiny Indian cell before Christmas.

The 33-year-old is one of 35 crewmen - including six Brits - arrested by Indian authorities in October over allegations the captain of their anti-piracy vessel, the US-owned MV Seaman Guard Ohio, had illegally bought diesel and was carrying weapons without a licence.

Billy has already been treated for dysentery during his stay in the cramped cell he shares with three others.

Until then, Billy had been sleeping on a concrete floor with just a blanket to keep him warm.

Since his illness he has been given a mattress and bottled water, although concerns remain over a lack of nutrition.

The crew can be held without charge for 90 days and for up to a year without trial if a charge is pressed.

Hopes are growing though that Billy can get home for Christmas as the time limit for filing a charge approaches, despite no news on a bail hearing that was due to take place at the start of the week.

Yvonne MacHugh, Billy's girlfriend of the past four years, says she hopes public pressure can help secure his passage back to Britain.

She said: 'There's been absolutely nothing from India. We haven't had any phone calls

from Billy, not even when he's been unwell. It is so tough. I've just got to make sure I do everything I can to get him home and I'd ask everyone who can help to be a pest.'

'I've been the biggest pest so far and there's no doubting it does make things happen.'

'I'd ask people, write to the Indian High Commission, write to your local MP, write to the British Government. Put them under as much pressure as possible to release Billy and the crew.'

It is understood the allegations hanging over the crew relate to a trade of fuel the ship's captain thought was taking place on international waters and therefore outwith Indian regulation.

However, a small rocky outcrop, similar to Rockall, extends India's territorial waters beyond its traditional 12 miles from coastline.

When the Indian authorities demanded the vessel return to dock in India, weapons used in anti-piracy operations were discovered, prompting allegations of carrying without a licence.

Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid was due to meet with the Foreign Office in London this week for an update on the position. Speaking ahead of the meeting, he said: 'The 90 days will be up in early January, although the prosecutor can appeal for an extension.'

'The Prime Minister has raised it with the Indian Prime Minister, so it has been raised at the top level.'

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Alan Reid MP

Alan Reid will hold a surgery in Oban on Saturday 14 December 2013 at the Corran Halls, Oban between 10.00am - 11.00am.

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Woman awaits sentence on drug charges

AN OBAN woman is awaiting sentence after admitting being concerned in the supply of diazepam and handling stolen goods.

Majority of salmon farm applications approved

ONLY four applications for salmon farms have been rejected by Highland and Argyll and Bute councils in the past 10 years.

Plan to turn hotel back into home

ONE OF Lorn's former hotels looks destined to be returned to a home after plans were submitted to change its use.

Look back on a memorable year

AS 2013 draws to a close The Oban Times is taking a look back on what has been a memorable year.

Fresh demands to remove station car park barrier

FRESH demands have been made to remove the new car park barrier at Oban Railway Station - as it emerged the controversial installation does not have planning permission.

into the debate, urging ScotRail to have a 'change of heart' over the barrier.

suppliers of fish and shellfish. I have also contacted the transport minister and have urged him to ensure that ScotRail changes its position on the matter without any further delay and lifts not just the barrier but also this threat to a local institution.

therefore consider it to be illegal and immoral to charge people moving in and out of the car park.

businesses affected continue to lose money every day.



Margaret Burgess MSP, centre, presents Oban Phoenix Cinema with their SURF award as Scotland's best example of a community led regeneration project.

Oban cinema named country's best community-led project

OBAN Phoenix Cinema has been recognised as one of the country's best community-led projects after clinching a top award.

thrilled and so proud of everyone involved in the cinema.

'There were 19 organisations in our category and the three finalists were all superb.

Council defends amount received in computer disposal contract

ARGYLL and Bute Council received £23,783.12 as part of a new contract to dispose of disused computers in the last six months - an average of £16.20 per unit.

high number of devices' older than four years, which it says have 'absolutely no value whatsoever'.

Insight and HP are the main suppliers of computers to the council via the Scottish National Framework, with the authority paying £307 for a desktop unit and an average of £407 for a laptop.

Nelson Mandela inspired Oban man into politics

AS PEOPLE across the globe mourn the death of former South African president Nelson Mandela, one Oban campaigner has recalled how the great man inspired his involvement in politics.



Graeme Pagan holds his piece of rock from Robben Island and wears his Free Nelson Mandela badge with pride.

'I knew the MP David Steele, who was chairman of the anti-apartheid movement, and I was so appalled by the treatment Mandela had received that I joined the campaign alongside the likes of Winnie Ewing and Iain MacCormick.

humanity and determination to do what was right.

Man stole methadone and 'held it to ransom'

WHEN he thought part of his medication had been stolen an Oban man held another man's supply of methadone 'to ransom', Oban Sheriff Court heard on Monday.

Kelly's defence agent told the court that Kelly 'perceived' that some of his own medication had been stolen.

Better coverage on cards

THE COMPANY tasked with improving the UK's mobile phone coverage has said it will be looking for 'several sites' throughout Argyll to upgrade to 4G coverage.

Argyll and Bute's MP Alan Reid recently met with Arqiva to make the case for Argyll and Bute.



Joan Reynolds received her award from former Commonwealth Games gold medal swimmer Sharon Davies.

Oban coach honoured

A VOLUNTEER lifesaving coach has been recognised as a driving force at her local club.

Advertisement for Scottish Field magazine subscription, featuring a 30% discount and a festive theme.

Advertisement for Oban Stove Centre, featuring a large wood-burning stove and festive Christmas decorations.

Large advertisement for BT Sport, highlighting 'Must-see double headers' and 'Free with BT Broadband'.

Lorn Lines

OBAN and District Classic Vehicle Club has given a 'clutch' of local causes a share of £750.

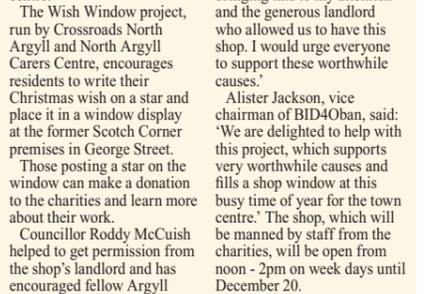
This year's recipients are Oban Sea Cadets, the Eadar Glinn Residents Comfort Fund, and the Club nan Cairnnean, Banderloch, which were all nominated to receive the sum of £250 each.



An art exhibition held in St John's Cathedral in Oban for the victims of the typhoon in the Philippines raised £653.75.

A COLLECTION in George Street, Oban, by members of the Oban and Lorn Lions Club has raised the sum of £639.50 for the Philippines Typhoon Disaster Fund.

OBAN'S business community has joined up with two of the town's charities to give hope to others at Christmas, while brightening up the town centre.



Helping to prepare the Wish Window are, from left: Bette Hunter of Crossroads North Argyll; Alister Jackson, vice chairman of BID4Oban; Oban South and the Isles Councillor Roddy McCuish and Iris Seager and Morag MacLean of North Argyll Carers Centre.

WELL known musicians and broadcaster John Purser and poet Meg Bateman recently visited Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society.

Illustrating their talk with photographs and music, they gave a fascinating presentation about the importance of circularity within the Gaelic culture.

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Pam holds highest scratch average

TEN PIN BOWLING

AFTER week 10 of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling competition at the Nevis Centre in Fort William Allecats remain the leaders in the scratch division with 46 points after beating Likely Lads 5-0.

Rock and Bowl move into second place on 35 points with Council moving into third on 34 points after beating previous second place team Bandits 5-0, who drop to fourth.

In the handicap division Bandits stay at the top with 38.5 points despite going down 5-0 to Council. Allecats closed the gap with a 5-0 win but stay in second place with 36 points. Council also closed the gap by beating leaders Bandits 5-0 and now have 31 points.

There were a rash of good individual scratch games this week with Pam Weller (Allecats) bowling a 199 and a 187. John Weller (Allecats) had a 193 and Colin Pinkett (Council) had a 183.

Gary Cowan (Likely Lads) had a 175 and Gus Fraser (Council) had a 170. Pam Weller also had the top two game scratch series of the week with 386 (the season's high so far) and the top two game handicap series of 448. John Weller had the top handicap game with 247.

Allecats swept the board with this week's top team scores with the highest scratch team game of 668, the top handicap game of 867, the top scratch two game series of 1286 (the season's high so far) and the top two game handicap team series of 1684.

The highest scratch average is held by Pam Weller (Allecats) on 165 followed by Tony White Locke (Allecats) on 157 and Stewart Duncan (Rock and Bowl) next on 143.

Goon squad go three points clear

INDOOR FOOTBALL

THE GOON Squad went three points clear in Aii Youth indoor football league at the Nevis Centre after round 10 of fixtures on Sunday night.

The leaders saw off HW Energy 4-1 while second placed Portwocky slipped to a 5-4 defeat at the hands of AFC Distillery, who moved up to fourth.

Lochaber Leisure did themselves no harm with a 5-3 win over The Janis B to go third in the table and Ballachulish pulled off a surprise 6-2 victory against Caol United.

Caol Cosmos were held to a 4-4 draw by Kentallen and With Ourselves gained three cheap points after Mallaig failed to field a team.

A Nevis Centre spokesperson said: 'It looks like Mallaig have given up on the league so space available for another team to take their place.'

Team	Pts
Goon Squad	27
Portwocky	24
Lochaber Leisure	21
AFC Distillery	20
Caol United	19
Caol Cosmos	17
Ballachulish	15
The Janis B Team	14
With Ourselves	9
Kentallen	8
HWE Energy	6
Mallaig	3

Brave fightback from Fort William

REPORT BY
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FORT WILLIAM travel to title challengers Formartine United on Saturday in fine goal scoring form after notching four in last weekend's thrilling draw with Rothes.

Assistant coach John Matheson is hopeful a strong squad can be assembled for the long trip east - and the Fort management team knows a performance of the highest level will be required to have any chance of pulling off a shock result.

That said, the Lochaber men have scored some notable results on the road this season, not least a fine 3-2 win at Wick last month.

But top priority will be cutting out the glaring defensive errors which saw the Fort go 4-1 down against Rothes before mounting an incredible comeback to salvage a 4-4 draw.

Matheson told the Oban Times: 'It is another very difficult game against a very well organised team who will be there or thereabouts to win the league title at the end of the season.'

'We may have some players who have work commitments but we have no injuries or suspensions and we are looking forward to having a full squad on Saturday.'

Long-suffering Fort fans are used to watching through their team through cracks in their fingers - and it was no different on Saturday as Rothes romped to a 4-1 lead in just over an hour.

Gibb gave the visitors the lead on just six minutes and it was two shortly after when Rodrigues beat Donaldson.

Fort passed up a glorious chance when MacLellan missed from the spot but gave themselves hope just before the break when Danny Mackintosh netted from close in.

However, disaster struck with 60 minutes gone when slack defending allowed Forbes then McIntosh to fire Rothes 4-1 ahead.

Fort were staring humiliation in the face in the bottom of the table clash - and that prospect seemed to inject some much-needed urgency.

Clinical
Winger James MacKay cut the deficit to 2-4 with a clinical close range finish then Rothes' Forbes missed the second spot-kick of the afternoon.

That let-off spurred on Danny Conlon's men and with 10 minutes left Andy 'Zoomer' Martin blasted home to make it 3-4.

The great escape was on - and when Duncan Campbell rifled a great shot past Horne from 12 yards the Houdini act was complete.

Matheson said: 'The overall performance was very poor defensively. Our goalkeeper had a few great saves in the second half but we still looked like we could lose goals at any time.'

'But we showed great character to come back and we could have stolen the game at the end.'

He added: 'Duncan Campbell and Iain MacLellan linked well up front and Danny Mackintosh and James Mackay along with our goalie had impressive performances.'



Duncan and Rosie MacPhee present Inverlochty captain Johnny Forster with the Fraser MacPhee Memorial Shield as Johnny's teammates and runners-up Lochaber look on. 20_150shinty01

Inverlochty win Fraser MacPhee Memorial Trophy

YOUTH SHINTY

INVERLOCHTY won the 2013 Fraser MacPhee shinty tournament at Lochaber High School on Friday night after coming through the eight-team round robin competition with six wins and a draw.

Lochaber ran them close and played well throughout to claim runners-up medals.

Inverlochty coaches Willie MacDonald and John MacLeod were delighted to win the shield for the first time - and it was all down to a tactical switch.

Willie told The Oban Times: 'We never played well in the first two games so we moved Johnny Forster from full centre to defence and switched Paul Paterson into the centre. That allowed Paul and Craig MacDonald to squirrel away more goals. That's how we won it.'

'We came good after that, especially against a strong Lochaber team.'

Wheelers introduce new Glencoe venue

WEST HIGHLAND Wheelers incorporated a new venue into this year's Winter League as the riders visited Glencoe.

Jonny Henshall had set a fine, well-marked figure of eight course that included some fine road climbs and some typical

rooty, slithery single-track descents.

Ewan Thorburn took it all in his stride as he powered away to a fine first place with Gary Macdonald coming home second.

Lachlan Blair was at home on the descents to be the first junior and Fiona Beattie finished in the overall top 10 to be first lady back.

Ed Daynes came upon the latest next new development in the mountain bike world just before the finish as he hit a compression too hard, snapped his chain-stay and ended up with a revolutionary rear wheel steering mode.

The club thanked Johnny and Fiona for timing, and the excellent marshals. Next round is due to be at Glen Loy on December 29.

CYCLING

Results: 1 Ewan Thorburn 32.18; 2 Gary Macdonald 34.12; 3 Sam Wood 37.88; 4 Lachlan Blair 38.39 (1st Junior); 5 Stephen Dent 41.22 (2nd Junior); 6 Jesse Wigman 42.31; 7 David Macdonald 44.16; 8 Gavin Linfield 44.35; 9 Fiona Beattie 45.09 (1st Lady); 10 Ed Daynes 46.50; 11 Ros Newman 46.58 (2nd Lady); 12 Alan Dent 47.41; 13 Fos Forster 48.00; 14 Steve Bradley 48.07; 15 Ian Macdonald 51.26; 16 Brian Barbour 51.38; 17 Marie Meldrum 53.21; 18 Peter Martin 55.14; 19 Nix Forster 56.43; 20 Doug Little 58.11; 21 Andy Rogers 60.30; 22 John McIver 60.40; 23 Marian Austin 68.58.



West Highland Wheelers line up at the startline at Glencoe.

Lochaber win cross country championship

LOCHABER Athletics Club is celebrating after winning the under-20 men's team title at the North District cross country championships at Nairn on Saturday.

Craig MacLean, Joseph Tangney and Arran MacPhee came home first, second and eighth respectively to take the trophy.

And Lochaber won a second gold when Isla Mackay won the under-20 women's event.

The largest Lochaber team for several years competed on a testing course out over the beach, followed by two river crossings and came back through the Culbin forest. Craig won in 30mins 32sec for the 8km course, just one second ahead of silver medalist Joseph, with Arran also posting a strong run to earn the team victory.



Craig MacLean: won for Lochaber. 20_150lac01

Isla Mackay had a clear win in 22.54mins to give Lochaber a second title to follow up on her win in the under 17 women category at Evanton last year.

Innes Orr was first out on the starting line for Lochaber in the under 11 age group and, although starting quickly, finished well up the field.

Newcomers Rebecca Johnston ran well in her first championship event and was fourth in 15.30 mins.

In the under-13 girls race, Erin Lawrie placed 14th in a good time. Rebecca's brother Ben Johnstone also had an exceptional time of 14.21mins in the under 13 boys race in ninth place in a large and very competitive field, and the team was completed by Fergus Fraser with a time of 15.19 and Sean

ATHLETICS

MacDonald in 15.56 to complete the Lochaber team scoring.

Twins Abbie and Robyn continued the Blackhall family running tradition with good pace to take 12th and 18th places in the under 15 race.

This is encouraging for the future as the girls were the youngest in the field and only missed qualifying for the under 13 girls race by 12 days.

The under 17 women were in a very competitive race with Eilidh Moynihan finishing in ninth place and Holly Sharratt making her racing debut in 14th place.

Bruce McLean had a good performance in the under-17 mens race to finish in 33.40 mins to complete the scoring for Lochaber.



Badminton double for Ballachulish

A TOTAL of 52 pupils representing 13 Lochaber primary schools took part in a badminton tournament at Lochaber High School last week.

And it was a great day for Ballachulish after Jodie Daynes won the girls' event and Aaron MacIntyre took silver in the boys' competition.

All players competed enthusiastically with the winner from each of the eight pools automatically qualifying for the semi-finals.

Results: Girls - 1 Jodie Daynes (Ballachulish); 2 Callie Rodgers (Invergarry); 3 Laura Davie (Banavay). Boys - 1 Johnny Forster (Inverlochty); 2 Aaron MacIntyre (Ballachulish); 3 Dillon Brockie (Spean Bridge).

Ballachulish won the Bain Cup at Kinlochleven on Saturday when they defeated Caol 5-1. Man of the match Lewis Moran scored four with Jude Pitt notching Balla's other goal. Caol's scorer was Ben MacKinnon. The trophy and medals were presented by former Ballachulish player Ian 'Pongo' MacMillan.

Weather

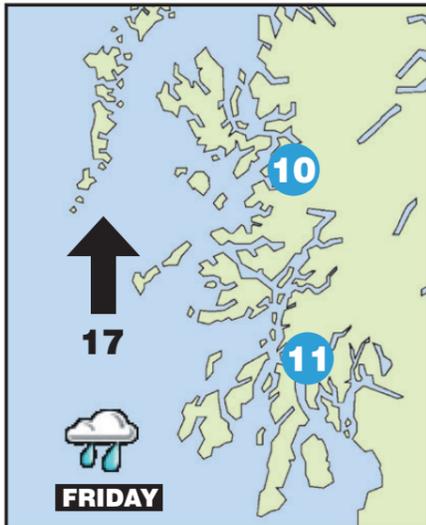
Thursday Heavy rain
Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 10°C to 11°C

Friday Heavy rain
Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 6°C to 11°C.

Weekend Sunshine and showers
Outlook Winds moderate southerly
Temperatures 6°C to 8°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, December 12, 2013** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	01.41 3.0 07.46 1.5 14.25 3.4 20.22 1.6	
Fri	02.42 3.1 08.57 1.5 15.17 3.4 21.17 1.5	
Sat	03.26 3.3 09.55 1.4 15.58 3.6 22.02 1.4	
Sun	04.04 3.5 10.42 1.4 16.34 3.7 22.42 1.3	
Mon	04.42 3.7 11.24 1.3 17.09 3.8 23.55 3.2	
Tues	05.18 3.9 12.02 1.3 17.43 3.9 23.57 1.1	
Wed	05.56 4.0 12.37 1.3 18.19 3.9 *** **	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

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