

# The Oban Times

## & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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## Heating system fails as icy blast freezes Oban homes

### Residents had 'icicles hanging from windows'

DAVID MCPHEE  
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RESIDENTS in Oban were left without heating or hot water on what has been the coldest week of the year.

People living behind the hospital have reported having icicles on their windows and sleeping fully clothed.

The issue was highlighted on Sunday night, but the problems were ongoing until Tuesday, when the heating was 'back on and running'.

West Highland Housing Association has apologised for the problem and is supplying each household with a temporary heater.

The affected areas consist of those that rely on the Biomass Energy Centre, such as Rhuvaal Road.

'It's been a bloody nightmare,' Jacqueline Macallister said. 'I'm in Rhuvaal Road and I think everyone here is in the same boat.'

'I have a four-month-old baby and a two-year-old. We [were] sitting with blankets and no hot water.'

'I phoned the out-of-towners the other night at 6pm-6.30pm and was told they were on to it and had received other complaints and were getting someone out as soon as possible.'

'I phoned again at like 11.45pm and spoke to a woman who said it most probably hadn't been fixed because they are really busy.'

Ms Macallister then took to social media to vent her frustrations.

'WHHA then phoned the next day as someone had seen my Facebook post and said they were really sorry and they can't leave us freezing and they were on to it,' the mother-of-two said.

'But by say noon-1pm [on Monday] I phoned back and said you need to do something.'

'Again they apologised and said they had everyone complaining and it was getting sorted and if it wasn't they would deliver heaters.'

'It then came back on but the annoying thing is when the heating goes off, as it's under-floor heating, it eats your credit trying to heat it back up again.'

'All was good then I went to bed the kids [on Monday night] at 8pm and hot water had gone again.'

'And it was same for others on the road as well. It's back today but will it last is the question.'

'It affected quite a lot of us behind the hospital. People are saying it's this new heating system – it's not coping with cold weather. They changed it all a few months back and there's been nothing but problems since.'

'Another resident, who wished to remain anonymous, said: 'Every year mine goes off. It's so frustrating.'

'My whole family are sleeping in our clothes and quilts and there were icicles on my windows.'

A spokesperson for WHHA said: 'The heating system is back on and running.'

'It is a new system installed this summer, so it's had teething problems.'

They added: 'Keeping our tenants warm in this weather is a priority.'

The association also issued a statement on its Facebook page.

'Earlier this year we replaced our Biomass Energy Centre at Glenshallow; it wrote.'

'As you know over the past couple of days there have been issues with the system which has resulted in the loss of heating and hot water to some of our properties.'

'We want to apologise for any problems or inconvenience you have recently experienced with the heating and hot water system.'

'We have treated these repairs as a priority and engineers have been onsite over the last couple of days to overcome these problems.'

'Due to the time of year, we are supplying each household with a temporary heater just to ensure that you have a source of heat in the unlikely event that further problems with the new boiler arise. We will collect the heater in January 2018 once the festive period is over.'

'If you do experience further problems with your heating and hot water, please contact our office on 01631 566451 and we will resolve the issue as quickly as possible.'

### Battle of the sexes? Oh yes it is!



Oban's Corran Halls was home to a fantastic panto last week, featuring John Robinson and Roddy MacEachan among others. Full report and a picture special on pages 14 and 15.

Great value for money

THE OBAN TIMES has been bringing all the news, events and sport to the people of Argyll and beyond for the past 156 years.

Our hard-working team produces the weekly print edition while keeping the newspaper's new website ([www.obantimes.co.uk](http://www.obantimes.co.uk)) and social media channels up to date seven days a week.

And it all happens right at the heart of the community in Oban, just as it has always been.

But as the costs involved in printing a newspaper, such as newsprint and delivery charges, have risen in recent years, *The Oban Times* and our sister titles have taken the difficult decision to increase our cover price to help with these added costs.

The increase in price – the first in two years – is just 5p, meaning the print edition costs 90p, still offering great value for money.

At *The Oban Times*, we value the loyalty of our readers – print and online – and look forward to your continued support.

And don't forget, you can subscribe to the online edition from as little as 56p a week.

### Airlifted out after A85 crash

A 24-YEAR-OLD man was airlifted to hospital following a crash on the A85 on Monday.

The incident involving two vehicles occurred at around 12.30pm near Pennyfuir Cemetery. The road was closed in both directions for three hours.

'Emergency services attended and a 24-year-old man was airlifted to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital as a precaution.' The man was later released from hospital.



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OT

# Council ferries 'unsustainable' without extra £500,000 a year

**SANDY NEIL**

sneil@obantimes.co.uk

ARGYLL and Bute Council's ferry services are facing an 'unsustainable' £500,000 funding shortfall every year, its leader has said, while calling for ministers to honour a 'fair funding' pledge in today's (Thursday's) budget.

ASP Ship management operates four ferry services on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council: between Islay and Jura, Luing and Seil, Seil and Easdale, and Lismore and Port Appin.

The average cost per year to the council is £1,176,578, but the Scottish Government only gives a grant of £675,000, leaving a funding gap of £500,000.

Currently both Orkney Islands

and Shetland Islands Councils are having on-going discussions with the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland regarding the funding of internal ferry services, which cost the councils more than £6 million each year. Like Argyll and Bute Council, both councils have a gap between ferries expenditure and grants received.

In a Holyrood debate last week, MSPs secured support across the chamber 'forcing the Scottish Government to accept that they must honour their commitment to fair funding for internal ferry services in the Northern Isles'.

The motion cited former transport minister Derek MacKay's previous assertion that 'provision of transport

services should not place a disproportionate financial burden on any council, particularly with reference to revenue support for ferry services'.

Argyll and Bute Council leader Aileen Morton welcomed the Scottish Parliament's decision calling for the Scottish Government to spell out how it will ensure local ferry services are fairly funded.

Councillor Morton said: 'Local people in some of our most remote rural and island communities depend on the ferry services that Argyll and Bute Council operates. These services may be small, but they are vital. They cost us as a council over £1.1 million to run but the funding we receive falls short by over £500,000.'

The way these are funded isn't sustainable – and the people who need the services deserve a better solution.

'We are engaging with local communities about future ferry provision and would welcome the Scottish Government backing fair and equitable funding for all ferry services, as proposed in the Scottish Ferries Plan.'

The Scottish Government is due to announce its draft spending plans for 2017-18 in today's (Thursday's) budget.

In a bid to plug its projected £20 million budget black hole, Argyll and Bute Council launched a consultation, which closed on Monday, to identify cost-saving measures. These include increasing ferry charges on the Islay/Jura ferry service 'to better

reflect actual cost, with council staff managing ships instead of an external company'.

But the proposals have drawn fire. One Jura resident said it was 'like proposing a Jura-only tax'. He added: 'This short, life-line crossing, bears the dubious honour of having among the highest fares per kilometre of any crossing in Europe.'

'Furthermore, since centralising much of Jura's service provision through Islay was a key part of a previous money-saving plan, raising revenue through the necessity of residents gaining access to such essentials as eye tests, dental care, high school parents' meetings and hospital appointments makes this is a particularly unjustifiable proposal.'

A council report, presented to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee earlier in the autumn, stated: 'Most of the council ferries will require replacement over the next few years (indeed several are overdue). The replacement of the passenger only ferries combined will cost circa £400,000 and the total combined cost of replacement car ferries is estimated at £3.4 million.'

The council plans to terminate ASP's contracts when they end next year on June 8 for the Luing, Easdale and Lismore services and on December 31 for the Jura/Islay service. The council will then have 'full responsibility for the safe operation of the four ferry services'.

## TIMELINE

### Heritage meeting dates are chosen

THE next Heritage Network Conference for Comainn Eachdraidh and other community organisations will be held on January 17, 18 and 19, 2018, at Sgoil Lionacleit, on Benbecula.

The theme of the conference will be Building a Heritage Strategy for the Outer Hebrides and will include a comprehensive piece of work mapping the heritage sector. This includes analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing heritage organisations and prioritisation of project ideas.

Speakers will include Alison Boyle of the Highland Museum of Childhood and Lorna Cruickshank of Highland Council.

Visitor attendance at Museum nan Eilean Lewis Castle continues to outperform expectations with a target of 35,000 visitors for 2018/19.

### Cash transferred to loan fund

AT LAST week's meeting of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Sustainable Development Committee, it was agreed to transfer £141,000 of the funds earmarked for the Global Guarantee to the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF).

The RLF was established within the economic development service in 2006-07 utilising loan repayments 'recycled' from cumulative EU grants received via comhairle applications to several structural funding programmes. The RLF, which provides loans to local businesses, is administered by the comhairle's Business Gateway team with the total value of the fund currently standing at in excess of £1.2 million.

### App will try to teach Gaelic

IF YOU always wanted to learn Gaelic but were put off by the pronunciation, help may soon be at hand with the development of a new app that aims to make it easier to learn the language.

The project, which has recently launched on Kickstarter, aims to use the latest automated speech recognition technology to provide feedback on your pronunciation – with the idea that you can practice and build-up your confidence speaking Gaelic on your phone.

For more, go to <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1525985825/a-new-app-to-perfect-your-gaelic-irish-or-welsh>

### Funding for sports councils continues

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar's Education, Sport and Children's Services has agreed to continue funding for the two local sports councils through devolving £13,000 to the Lewis and Harris Sports Council and £8,500 to the Uist and Barra Sports Council.

The sports councils operate a grant aid programme for their memberships.

The sports councils also work with the Western Isles Development Trust to distribute the £60,000 donated by Transocean following the oil rig incident near Dalbeg in 2016.

The support through the sports councils has allowed individuals and clubs to attend coaching courses, purchase equipment and host events.

## Hugh Smith's letter from Islay

### Getting lit up

INCESSANT rain did not dampen the enthusiasm of the revellers who met at Morrison Square in the centre of Bowmore for the official switch-on of the village Christmas lights on December 2.

Joining them at the celebration were two special guests who have a long affinity with the Christmas festival. They were the crowd-pleasing donkeys Pearl and Sunnie Lottie, who were seasonally clad and decorated, and were happy to obey, for most of the time, the commands and directions of their owner Alex Fairbairn from Lon Bàn.

Engaging the appropriate switch was popular local GP Dr Kate Pickering, who is shortly to head off for warmer climes when she takes up residence in Brisbane, the premier city in Australia's state of Queensland.

The party atmosphere continued with the crowd enjoying musical entertainment and Highland dancing around the village Christmas tree.

The Christmas lights, the brainchild of the Bowmore sports committee, certainly enhance the surroundings and are now covering a larger area thanks to the continuing generosity of local businesses and civic-minded donors.

### Trees and trail

DURING the Armistice period in



Revellers throng the centre of Bowmore for the Christmas lights switch-on, which featured Pearl and Sunnie Lottie.

November, the first tranche of trees which will create a First World War commemorative woodland was planted on ground opposite the war memorial at Port Bàn and situated between Bruichladdich and Port Charlotte on the Rhinns peninsula.

More than 100 hardy volunteers, including Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara, were involved in the operation and the end result will provide a growing memorial to the Ilich who were killed in the Great War as well as to the American servicemen and the crew members who lost their lives following the loss of the troopships Tuscania and Otranto off Islay's

shores in the closing months of the 1914-18 hostilities.

The plantation will contain a variety of trees and all were specially selected to withstand the prevailing winds and vagaries of the west coast of Scotland weather.

Sponsorship for the undertaking was provided by the Woodland Trust, Sainsbury's Centenary Woods, Bruichladdich Distillery, the Museum of Islay Life and WW100 Islay.

Thirty locations across Islay and Jura have been chosen to feature in the First World War commemoration programme. They will form a trail which will also highlight buildings in

both islands and the part they played in the war effort.

The trail will be marked with bronze plaques and the accent will be on remembrance and reconciliation. Accompanying the venture will be a guidebook and specially created website which will include input from the islands' schools.

### Songbook launch

THE launch of the songbook *Orain Ileach* in the Islay House Hotel was a musical affair enjoyed by the large and appreciative audience seated in

what was the former mansion house's servants' hall.

The collection contains a number of favourite Islay Gaelic songs, along with a selection which are appearing in print for the first time.

The book was edited by Lynn MacDonald, the Comunn na Gàidhlig development officer for Islay and Jura and a lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Responsible for the music content of many of the unpublished songs was Kenneth Thomson, a noted choral music arranger, adjudicator, Mòd gold medallist and probably best known as the conductor of the celebrated GG Gaelic choir.

Photographs in the bilingual Acair publication are by island artist Dr Raymond Lafferty and launch entertainment was provided by local performers who had covered themselves with glory at the recent Royal National Mòd at Lochaber.

*Orain Ileach* retails at £15 and is available at various outlets, including the Celtic House at Bowmore.

### Festive greetings

FINALLY, may I wish you all a happy Christmas and overflowing stockings. Sláinte!

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810 658

## Children transported from Barra to Bouffant

A PRIMARY school on Barra embarked on its first off-island school trip last week, travelling to the fictional village of Bouffant – located in Oban's Corran Halls (oh yes it was!).

Eoligarry Primary School travelled to Oban on Saturday to watch *Rapunzel: A Tangled Tale*, a pantomime put on by Spotlight Musical Theatre Group, which is set in the imaginary village.

This trip was the first time that the whole school had travelled.

Head teacher Mary Flora MacNeil said: 'It was fantastic. They were taken backstage to meet the cast, who were brilliant. One of the pupils was chosen to go on stage as a volunteer.'

'To make this possible, we had help from the parent council.'

'We also had a lot of people contribute money to us: Barra Football Club, who paid for the pantomime tickets; donations from the community; Northbay Community Council donated money; Isle of Barra Beach Hotel; MP Angus MacNeil; Councillor Donald Manford; Tesco Oban; and CalMac who gave free travel to the pupils.'

'CalMac Captain Mark Scott and his crew were brilliant. He took the kids up to the bridge and spoke to the children.'

In total there were 23 pupils who made the trip, with one child not being to attend.



The excited children were allowed backstage to meet the cast of *Rapunzel: A Tangled Tale*.

## Man attacked in pub toilet

A MULL fisherman was found in the gents of a local hotel putting a headlock on a man and trying to push his head down a toilet.

On Tuesday December 5 in Oban Sheriff Court, Sheriff Patrick Hughes was told that Jamie MacLean, 21, of Tobermory, believed the man had punched his brother. He admitted the offence, which happened on July 9.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said: 'For no apparent excuse, MacLean approached the complainant, grabbed him and pushed him into the nearby toilet.'

MacLean's defence agent said: 'During the evening his brother said that the complainant had hit him.'

Sheriff Hughes told MacLean: 'This is an appalling thing to do.'

He deferred sentence for four months for MacLean to be of good behaviour.



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# Parents bid to save road unit

**SANDY NEIL**  
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PARENTS have appealed to Argyll and Bute Council not to scrap the Road Safety Unit as part of its proposed budget savings.

Over the next three years, Argyll and Bute Council needs to find savings expected to be between £11.1 million and £33.9 million, and has put forward a proposal to 'reduce road safety materials, budget and remove the Road Safety Unit'.

But the suggestion met strong opposition from Lochgilphead High School Parent Council, which wrote to all councillors arguing: 'The Road Safety Unit provides a vital service to the 12,000 primary and secondary pupils spread right across the

council area. It also works with our early years bases.'

[It] challenges all pupils to take responsibility not just for their own safety but for the safety of others in the roads environment. These are not just the young pedestrians, cyclists and passengers of today. They are Argyll and Bute's drivers of tomorrow.

'Argyll and Bute Council's Road Safety Unit is at the forefront of road safety education in Scotland. We are shocked its existence is now hanging in the balance.'

The 1988 Road Traffic Act stipulates that it is the responsibility of the local authority to 'prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety'.

'Removing the Road Safety

Unit would render Argyll and Bute Council incapable of fulfilling these responsibilities. The apparent attempt at justifying the saving by stating "road safety information available through other organisations" is, at best, misleading.

There is no other organisation which can teach road safety to young people across Argyll and Bute.

'Road safety is an issue which affects everyone, regardless of age. As well as being traumatic and often tragic, accidents are very expensive. Transport Scotland's 'Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2016' report put the average cost of a fatality at £2,161,725 and of a serious injury at £245,144.'

'At your budget meeting, you will be asked to agree

to remove Argyll and Bute's innovative and proactive Road Safety Unit for a saving of just £84,000 – a fraction of the cost of dealing with even one serious road accident.'

'The work this unit does is vital to the current and future safety of Argyll and Bute's population. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to reject this proposal.'

Bill Dundas, chairman of Lochin Primary School Parent Council, added: 'Road safety is a big issue for the school, which sits on the A828 trunk road. Most of the pupils live in villages close by the A828 or the A85 and learning road safety is a critical life skill.'

'The Road Safety Unit provides a lot of regular support to the school through initiatives

like 'icycle'. The unit has also helped raise awareness of the dangers of the main road crossing and supported the school in developing strategies to minimise risk.'

'Lochin Parent Council would not want to see this level of support removed or reduced.'

Councillor Roddy McCuish, policy lead for Roads and Amenity Services, said: 'Unfortunately, there's no getting away from the fact that these are really tough times for councils.'

'Funding cuts demand difficult decisions. Next year alone our budget gap is estimated to be as much as £8.5 million. We don't know yet what exactly we're dealing with. The Scottish Government is expected to announce funding later this month. We're using this time to

ask local people for their views on changing the work of the council.'

'Thank you to the Parent Council for taking the time to give us this feedback. I'd encourage everyone to get involved by answering the consultation: [www.arygg-butte.gov.uk/planningourfuture2017](http://www.arygg-butte.gov.uk/planningourfuture2017).

'In a perfect world we would love to be in position we make no cuts at all.'

'We can only spend what we have. Ideally, I would like to have more than a one-year settlement as this would allow us to plan for the future and not put our staff and constituents through this turmoil every year.'

The consultation ends on January 2.

■ Letters – page 10.

## TIMELINE

### Residents urged to use all their bins

Residents in Soroba are being asked to make full use of the communal bins, with some lying empty and some overflowing.

At the monthly residents' association meeting, the contrast in bins was noted, with Councillor Roddy McCuish saying: 'There's bags left out and there's two bins without anything in them.'

Committee members wanted people to know that if their usual bin is full, they can use another communal bin that has space – even if it is in a different part of the estate.

*The Oban Times* has reported on the state of the bins in Soroba numerous times since the collection moved to a three-weekly uplift.

### River Awe salmon numbers plummet

THIS year's run of salmon in the most closely monitored and biggest river in Argyll is by far the lowest since records began in 1964. The annual salmon count on the River Awe has now been confirmed as only 480. The figure compares to 807 in 2016 and a five-year average of 1,400. The previous lowest total was 781 in 1998.

### First caviar farm planned in Argyll

PLANS have been submitted for Scotland's first caviar farm at Loch Fyne. Argyll and Bute Council is considering the Fyneest Caviar Co's plan to build a closed containment aquaculture facility at Ardkinglas Sawmill, Cairndow. The £4m project aims to turnover £3.6m over six years.

### Hut vote delayed until New Year

A DECISION on a hut built without permission by Deputy Lord Lieutenant Graham MacQueen by Seil Sound has been deferred until January for more details. The application is recommended for refusal by planning officers.

## Christmas generosity: OLDS lunch and store collects presents for elderly



Pensioners from the Oban area enjoy their festive lunch on Monday.



Marion Chamberlain, Michelle Marlow and Jessica May of McCaig's Warehouse. 17\_T50\_McCaig'sWarehouse

Oban Bay Hotel manager David McGhie, on behalf of Crerar Hotels, received the grateful thanks from Graham MacQueen for the group's outstanding support of Oban and Lorn District Seniors by way of £2,415 cheque and providing a superb Christmas lunch.

Over the past 100 years, this event has taken place annually, organised by a committee orig-

inally known as Oban and District Old People's Welfare Committee, which lapsed in 2006.

In 2006, Graham, with a band of volunteers, resurrected the renamed Oban and Lorn District Seniors committee (OLDS) and revived the now well-established pensioners' Christmas lunch.

Close to 100 senior citizens enjoyed a marvellous lunch in the Oban Bay Hotel on Monday.

Customers of McCaig's Warehouse can give something back this Christmas, as staff are collecting presents for residents of Eadar Glinn Care Home.

For the second year running, a festive stall has been set up in the Station Road premises and the donations will be handed out at the care home on Christmas Eve.

Marion Chamberlain, supervisor of the store, said: 'We started it last year, as we thought it's something to give back to the community.'

'Sometimes people in a home don't have family and Christmas can be a lonely time.'

'It makes them very happy and lifts their spirits, so it has a positive community impact at Christmas.'

## Woman injured in US accident is home



Agnes and David were photographed the day before the accident at the Red Bull Arena in New Jersey.

THE Oban woman seriously injured in a hit-and-run accident in the United States has returned home.

Agnes MacKeanie suffered multiple fractures and other injuries during the incident at Hallowe'en in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, while on holiday with her husband, David.

Agnes told *The Oban Times* on Sunday December 10: 'Myself and David are so glad to be in our home after being away from our family for so long. We've missed them all so very much and are really grateful for everyone's support.'

Her daughter, Karen, spoke on Sunday of the family's delight after being reunited.

She said: 'After spending 40 days in hospital, undergoing operations and treatments in America, my mum and dad are finally home!'

'Myself and my brother Gavin collected them yesterday after they experienced a day's worth of travelling to bring them home for Christmas.'

'My mum is doing fantastically well, but there is still a long road to recovery with many follow-up appointments and physiotherapy to come.'

'We are so grateful that they

## Council rejects bid to broadcast meetings

THE costs of broadcasting council meetings would be almost £16,000 for a one year, and £50,000 over five years, it was revealed to councillors in the Kilmory chamber.

Opposition councillors proposed a one-year trial, but this was defeated by an administration motion to consider it within next year's budget.

Argyll and Bute councillors heard a report outlining the costs of live broadcasting full council meetings in Lochgilphead, and expanding coverage to all venues used by area committees, using the UK's leading council chamber broadcast service from Public-I.

The report explained: 'The council chamber in Kilmory is already equipped with audio and video technology to allow a range of connectivity options such as video conferencing, Skype conferencing, audio conferencing and presentations.'

'The system was designed to provide a feed to a webcasting solution should the council decide this was an option they wished to pursue in the future.'

'Public-I are based in Hove in East Sussex and they broadcast live and recorded meetings for 2018-19.'

110 local authorities in the UK, including 10 in Scotland.'

The company confirmed it could install a fixed encoder in the chamber and take a feed from the existing cameras and audio system, costing from £15,900 for a one year contract to £49,800 for five years.

'The system offers a basic 50 hours of webcasting, hosted and streamed over a 12-month period with access to six months of archived material. Additional hours of material can be hosted and streamed at a cost of £46.50 per hour, per annum.'

'If the system is adopted, members will be required to sit in the same seat in the council chamber on each occasion they attend a meeting. Name badges would be produced and laid out at the start of each meeting. This is to ensure that pre-configured automatic settings for the cameras and microphones correctly identify individual members when they are speaking.'

Council leader Aileen Morton, seconded by Councillor Kieron Green, moved the matter should be considered further in the budget process for 2018-19.

## POLICE FILES with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

BETWEEN noon on Sunday December 3 and 5.30pm on Monday December 4, at Boots the Chemist in George Street, Oban, several Ted Baker and No 7 gift sets were stolen. Police are investigating and are appealing for anyone with information to contact them.

**ABOUT 8.20am on Monday December 4, on the A816 in Kilniver,** a motorist was stopped for allegedly exceeding the speed limit. The driver, a man aged 44, was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

**ABOUT 2pm on Monday December 4,** on a footpath off George Street, Oban, a man aged 39 was stopped and

searched by police. The man was allegedly found to be in possession of a small amount of heroin. He was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

**ABOUT 1.20am on Tuesday December 5,** in Stafford Street, Oban, a 24-year-old man breached curfew bail conditions imposed by the court by being outwith a Port Glasgow address overnight. Police arrested and charged the man, who was held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

**ABOUT 7.10am on Wednesday December 6,** on the A85 near Taynuilt, a collision occurred between a Volvo V40 and two

lorries. A 57-year-old man was charged with dangerous driving. No persons were injured as a result of the collision and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

**ABOUT 11.40pm on Saturday December 9,** there was a disturbance between a group of youths near Lidl, Soroba Road, Oban. As a result, a girl aged 15 suffered a facial laceration and was taken to hospital for treatment. Police are investigating and are appealing for anyone with any information to contact them.

If any member of the public has information in relation to the above, or to any incident, they can contact their local police office on telephone number 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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OT

## 'Plummeting' sales close Oban shop

THE OWNERS of Nancy Blacks chandlery, camping and coastal clothing shop, which closed last week after 50 years of serving customers in Oban's Argyll Square, have expressed 'great sadness' in not being able to save it.

'Over the past year our sales plummeted and with rising overheads we couldn't carry on trading,' they said on Facebook. 'It was the most difficult decision to make. We would like to thank our amazing staff.'

Last month a second Oban business, the Seafood Temple on Gallanach Road, also closed its doors after seven years 'due to a change in our circumstances', the owners said, also thanking their team for their hard work.

## Mindfulness charity morning

CLAIRE HARTLEY is holding a mindfulness class in aid of Lorn and Oban Healthy Options, helping to improve physical and mental health.

It is on Tuesday December 19 from 10-11am at the Rockfield Centre in Oban.

Scientific studies show that mindfulness reduces stress, anxiety and pain. It lowers blood pressure and improves memory and concentration.

This event is for beginners and those who already practise mindfulness. There is no fee but donations are suggested.

There is no need to book but for more details contact Claire on 01852 300073.

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# North Pier centre to open at last

**SANDY NEIL**  
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

OBAN'S delayed new Maritime Visitor Centre should be finished early in the new year, after a total redesign and four years in the pipeline.

The £1.6 million building on the town's North Pier is designed to complement the new pontoons, which opened in the summer, catering for marine tourists from cruise passengers to kayakers, yachters, and sea-day trippers.

The expectation is to increase visitor numbers with an estimated benefit of around £20 million to the area over the next 25 years. The 36 new finger berths have already welcomed 472 boats and 1,930 visitors (excluding cruise passengers) in August, and 225 boats and 4,709 visitors in September.

The new visitor facility, attached to the category B-listed Columba Hotel, will provide public toilets and showers, secure lockers, waiting areas for cruise ship passengers and coach parties, waterfront office space, and the council's harbour master office.

The Maritime Visitor Centre sits on the site of the former White Building, built in 1902 as the Steam Packet ticket office, and most recently used as a charity shop.

It has been in development since 2013, with Argyll and Bute Council granting planning permission to the architects' designs in August 2014, and signing off the £1.6 million budget allocation in the November.

A council spokesperson said: 'The maritime facilities building



An artist's impression of the new facility.

is substantially complete. Additional work is being undertaken to the commercial unit and we are evaluating a number of offers to operate it. The contract has been extended to complete the North Pier public realm work as soon as possible.

'No work will take place over Christmas to ensure there is no disruption during this important business and trading period. We look forward to the opening of the facility early in 2018.'

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A council spokesperson said: 'The maritime facilities building

## Early Christmas for Kelsey



Christmas came a little early for nine-year-old Kelsey MacEwen who won The Oban Times' colouring competition. Kelsey, who is a pupil at Rockfield Primary School, received a £50 Argos voucher for her efforts. Her picture was chosen out of dozens of entries. She stood out from the rest by catching the judge's eye by adding glitter.

## BEHIND THE SCENES at Atlantis

### Boiler breakdown

ATLANTIS is protected by a combination of our eco-friendly biomass boiler, our air-source heat pump and two back-up oil boilers, so the chance of being without heat and hot water is very low.

But that's exactly what happened last month when the biomass and oil boilers all broke down at the same time.

Kyle Dods, facilities manager, and Maurice Lockhart worked round the clock to get the heating back up and running within 24 hours so you could enjoy your swim and shower afterwards.

### 25 years fundraiser

OUR TEAM of volunteers and staff are working hard to organise fundraising events in 2018 to raise funds for our changing room replacement (more on this in next month's round-up).

The team is also organising Buy a Brick, which is re-invented from 1998 when the community raised money to help build the Atlantis building.

### Pool programme

WE HAVE decided to publish the pool programme monthly rather than quarterly in 2018.

Changes next year will support the development of Oban Otters Swimming Club, more family fun space and the chance to use the new pool inflatable.

### Hall leak

WE HAVE an infuriating leak which is proving hard to solve. The next step will be to bring in a heat-sensitive camera to help us fix it. It's possible the leak has been caused by the seagulls who are pulling out the roof sealant.

More news online at [www.obantimes.co.uk](http://www.obantimes.co.uk)

## Sad to see local firms closing down

### WHERE IS THIS?



George Street so we have to take some responsibility and

realise that if we don't use the shops we have we will lose them and it will be our own fault.

In saying that, it's not an effort to use our local businesses. There is a fantastic range of goods available in Oban in premises that are a pleasure to visit and are staffed by our family and friends.

Take the time and effort to shop locally: honestly, it's worth it.

The entertainment available this week is also very eclectic, ranging from Tibetan monks this evening in St Columba's Cathedral, a piano recital

by Marek Kochmanski in Glencruitten Hall tomorrow afternoon, Light and Life in Costa Coffee on Saturday and Santa in Airds Crescent, also on Saturday.

All the details are, as usual, in Oban Town Diary.

The photograph from last week was the front of the Queen's Hotel on the Esplanade and, according to a reliable source, it's that shape to represent a pen nib as it was built by the gentleman responsible for Parker pens.

This week's photo is nearby and should be familiar to you.

# Learn something new in 2018

Get 2018 off to a flying start by learning something new. We have a number of short, full-time courses starting in January that can be a great first step into education and will get you started on the right track.



picture courtesy of Kevin McGlynn

### Access to HN Business, Administration and IT

Our brand new Access to HN Business, Administration and IT will prepare you for study in Business or Administration and IT at HNC level, and is ideal if you don't currently have the minimum entry requirements for these courses. We can tailor the course to your interests and even include some computing units which can set you on track for an NC Computing with Digital Media.

You'll learn lots of useful skills and we guarantee to interview you for one of these programmes if you complete the course successfully.

### Social Services SVQs

With the Scottish government's commitment to increasing free childcare to 1140 annual hours by 2020, there's never been a better time to think about a career in the childcare sector, as this

increasing entitlement will require a substantially larger workforce. Our range of SVQs in Social Services Children and Young People, will give you lots of practical experience in working with children and young people as well as a nationally recognised qualification. You'll attend college for 2 days each week and spend the rest of time in a work placement, where you can put your new skills into practice.

### Maritime Skills course

Our Maritime Skills course is available in Oban and Lochgilphead. This combines SQA and RYA / MCA certification so you'll receive a comprehensive introduction to the maritime industries, as well as gaining internationally recognised certificates.

### Part time courses

We also have a range part time cours-

es which can help improve your skills and enhance your chances of getting a job. You might want to brush up on your computer skills with the European Computer Driving Licence. You can study at home, online, at a time that fits around your other commitments, or join an evening class to take a more structured approach.

### Degree programmes

As an academic partner of the University of the Highlands Islands, Argyll College also gives you access to a wide range of part time and full time degree programmes many of which can be started at the end of January. Visit our website or call us to find out what's available at your local Argyll College centre and make 2018 the year you Learn, Achieve, and Advance towards your future.

## APPLY NOW FOR OUR COURSES STARTING IN JANUARY



Call us, visit our website or come down to your local centre to speak to our friendly staff and find out how we can help you to learn, achieve and advance towards your future.

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University of the Highlands and Islands  
Argyll College

Oban Centre,  
Glenshellach  
Business Park,  
Oban, PA34 4RY

## OAP hits out at Aldi over parking fine

AN ELDERLY islander with mobility problems on her way back from hospital has slammed 'unfair parking restrictions' at an Oban supermarket, after she faced a fine for exceeding its one-and-a-half hour time limit, writes Sandy Neil.

The 71-year-old resident of the Isle of Coll, who cannot walk without a stick, was visiting Glasgow to see her cancer consultant and stopped at Oban's Aldi store on the way back to stock up on goods she cannot buy on the island.

She recalled: 'The shelves in the store had changed and finding things was not easy. The bill came to £164.51. I packed everything into my vehicle which took me a good 20 minutes with the weather still against me. It is so lovely to get fresh fruit and vegetables, and so different to tinned food.'

'I received a parking charge notice from a company called ParkingEye for £70 for going over the one hour and 30 minutes you are allowed by 18 minutes. I have since found out that Lidl also has this policy for parking.'

'Perhaps these companies do not want customers, because one hour and 30 minutes is not enough time in a town where there are so many people coming from the islands to do their shopping.'

Aldi said the lady 'appealed the fine through ParkingEye and they are just waiting on her to provide a proof of purchase (ie, a receipt from Aldi). Once they've got this, they'll be more than happy to cancel the fine.'

Lidl said it had increased its car parking limit to three hours.

SANDY NEIL  
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

A CONTROVERSIAL bid to build a sand and gravel quarry at Glasdrum in Glen Creran, which was rejected by Argyll and Bute Council in August, could win a last-minute reprieve after the Argyll applicant lodged an appeal with the Scottish Government.

A&L McCrae argues the planning authority was 'inconsistent' and 'incorrect' in its considerations.

The proposal drew support from nine businesses and 1,359 objections, including from Appin, Ardchattan, and Duror and Kentallen community councils. Argyll and Bute Council's planning officers

recommended the application be turned down and its 13-strong planning committee unanimously agreed.

Planners argued the quarry failed to meet the Local Development Plan (LDP), because it 'would constitute a conspicuous and intrusive form of development within this settled rural landscape, to the detriment of landscape character, the scenic qualities of the Area of Panoramic Quality, and the experience of the adjoining Wild Land Area.'

'The less than satisfactory restoration scheme does not provide confidence [that] lasting adverse effects would be avoided.'

There was also 'a presumption against new mineral workings other than where

an exceptional local need can be demonstrated', planners explained, and they had found several quarries within a 30-mile radius producing sand and gravel, including Kilmartin, Clachan, North Connel, Benderloch and Dornie.

'The proposal will not meaningfully add to the available supply within the North Lorn market area,' they ruled, 'or address any anticipated serious shortfall in supply, and any contribution which it could make would be offset by adverse local environmental consequences.'

In its appeal, the agents for A&L McCrae, Dalgleish Associates Ltd, argue that the planning department 'had not been consistent in its consideration' and was 'incorrect in

its assertion that the proposal is contrary to the development plan. Other material considerations have not been properly factored into the decision. The vision of the LDP has largely been ignored.'

'The focus of the LDP is sustainable development, securing economic activity and optimising use of resources. In relation to local, high-quality mineral resources, this proposal directly addresses both the provision of essential building materials and also the minimisation of the carbon footprint of supply.'

'This development would not, in fact, be noticeable, for much of the time,' they added. 'The change to landform would not be clear from elevated viewpoints, and

certainly not conspicuous. The treatment of representations to the planning authority has been inconsistent; letters of support from several contractors, well placed to judge the local market, are termed "anecdotal", while the planning authority relies on representations which it sought to elicit from those who currently supply the local market in competition with the appellant.'

A Scottish Government reporter has been assigned and is seeking Argyll and Bute Council's response by December 14.

The appeal also re-awoke the anti-quarry protest group, which is inviting people to submit their views to the Scottish Government.

## Oban man receives President's Prize

AN OBAN man was honoured for 50 years' service to the Scottish National Party at its winter conference.

Ken MacColl received the prestigious President's Prize from Ian Hudghton MEP, president of the SNP. The prize is awarded annually to an individual who has served the party in an altruistic and loyal fashion over a long period.

Mr MacColl received a standing ovation from the 3,500 delegates. He thanked his many mentors, including Ian Hosack, the 'bedrock' of the SNP's Loch Goil branch, who, in his nineties, stood in the searing heat of South Africa's first democratic elections supporting Nelson Mandela.

'On my political journey, I came across the sons of "King" John McCormick. I participated in four

elections, two of them successful, with Ian in Argyll. I last saw him terminally ill and walking with the aid of oxygen to record his vote in the 2014 referendum, the day before he died.'

Ian's young brother, Professor Neil, also contested Argyll and Bute on several occasions before his election as an MEP from 1999 to 2004, where he gained kudos and friends for Scotland with his considerable charm, his prodigious wisdom and his selfless personality.

'My last nominee is Madame Ecosse herself, dear Winnie Ewing. I recall telling Winnie of an unsuccessful local election campaign and her upbeat response, "I take encouragement from this. We have tilled the soil this time round. We will win in future." And so we did.'



## Council meetings go paperless

PAPERLESS committee meetings are to be implemented by Argyll and Bute Council in order to save around £250,000.

The council says paperless committees alone will save around £40,000 per year with councillors and officers accessing reports for meetings online.

Councillor Rory Colville, Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for corporate services, said: 'These are difficult times for all councils. Our first priority, in making the savings we must to bridge our funding gap, is to look at what we can do within the council to work smarter.'

This step is about taking advantage of digital channels to make savings that will help protect front-line services.'

The council is carrying out a consultation on savings options and planning services, before the budget being set in February 2018.

## Mental health service review

THE ARGYLL and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is planning a review of its community mental health service to ensure it continues to provide effective and efficient services for local people.

Gillian Davies, consultant nurse for mental health, who will be leading the review, said: 'It is essential that we continually review these [community mental health services] on a regular basis to ensure they are providing the right level of care for those people who use the services.'

'Over the coming months, we will be working with stakeholders, practitioners, service users, carers, elected members and our wider communities to gather views and suggestions to help us further improve our community mental health services. I would encourage as many people as possible to take part.'

# Fancy eating out this Christmas?

*The Regent Hotel offers  
A festive feast for the senses*

**Book ahead  
for a further  
10%  
local discount off your  
total food bill!**

The Regent Hotel and Cellar Bar  
Esplanade, Oban, PA34 5PZ

### Christmas Day Menu

**2 COURSES £39.95**

**3 COURSES £45**

#### STARTERS

*Chicken Liver*

Clementine & Candied Cranberry Pate, House Chutney, Arran Oatcakes

*Confit Duck Spring Rolls*

Chilli and Cola Jam

*Trio Of Scottish Smoke Fish*

#### MID COURSE

*Cook-a-Leekie Soup or Sorbet*

#### MAIN COURSES

*Ballotine of Turkey*

Pigs in Blanket, Roast Potatoes, Sprouts, Honeyed Carrots, Spiced Parsnips and Red Wine Gravy.

*Roast Sirloin of Scottish Beef*

Herb Pudding, Glazed Carrots, Chateau Potatoes, Caramelised Button Onions, Parsnip Crisps, Green Peppercorn Sauce

*Fillet of Salmon*

Spinach and Kintyre Cheddar Sauce, Puff Pastry Fleurons

*Wild Mushroom & Stilton Wellington*

All accompanied with Roast Potatoes, Honeyed Carrots, Sprouts and Spiced Parsnips

#### DESSERTS

*Double Chocolate Brownie*

Vanilla Ice Cream and Honey Comb

*Gin & Elderflower*

Cheesecake and Raspberry Compote

*Christmas Pudding*

Brandy Sauce

Open 7 days a week from 5pm to 9pm

**BOOK NOW Tel: 01631 562341**

OT

**Loch Lomond**

THE Home on the Loch restaurant in Arrochar has been taken over by new owners.

The premises, which is surrounded by Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, was on the market for £275,000.

Christie and Co said: 'The Home on the Loch was sold in excess of the asking price.'

The new owners are Mario Gizi, Paul

Sloan, Tony Conetta and Calum MacLachlainn.

Mario and Tony own the Di Maggio's chain, which includes the Glasgow-based bar and restaurant the Anchor Line, among other businesses.

Paul and Calum founded the Diversity Leisure Group in 2006, a pubs and hotels operator based in Oban, which owned the Ranald Hotel, as well as the Waterfront Fishouse.

**Lerags**

The Kilbride Christmas star.

AROUND 70 people gathered at historic Kilbride Kirk, Lerags, on Saturday for the switch on of the Christmas star. The open day was run by Friends of Kilbride, who asked people to fill out a survey on the day – 'What does Kilbride mean to you?'

Those who couldn't make it for the switch-on can fill out the questionnaire online via [www.friendsofkilbride.scot](http://www.friendsofkilbride.scot)

Benderloch-based architect Shauna Cameron has developed a preservation plan which will ensure Kilbride can be safely accessed by coming generations of visitors.

Friends of Kilbride trustees expressed their gratitude for the input of all those who made it such a happy occasion, and look forward to the next time.

**Western Isles**

YOUNG people on the Isle of Lewis will have more of a say in decision-making.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's education, sport and children's services committee is aiming to increase young people's participation by establishing an Area Youth Forum.

The committee has agreed to launch the forum in order to cater to the community's needs.

Chairman of the committee, Angus McCormack, said: 'I am very pleased that

we are moving forward with a view to increasing young people's participation in the decision-making processes.

'After all many of the decisions we make will affect them. Young people have an important contribution to make to our communities and by increasing their participation I think we will all benefit.'

'It is particularly fitting that we are undertaking this as we approach 2018, which has been designated as the Year of Young People.'

**Rothesay**

THE multi-million-pound restoration of Rothesay Pavilion is moving forward with the £10.6 million contract for the works being awarded to the main contractor, CBC.

Work on renovating the iconic international modernist building started at the end of November.

Councillor Gary Mulvaney said: 'As a council, we are determined to make a real difference to the area by bringing both tourists and new jobs to the area and, with our partners, have

invested millions of pounds to bring our pavilion back to life.'

'We will be working closely with the main contractor, CBC, to ensure that wherever possible there are opportunities to provide jobs, apprenticeships and support to the local community.'

The grade A-listed building will be transformed into a hub for cultural and community use and is expected to employ more than 30 people and attract over 70,000 visitors per year.

**Open throughout the holidays**

**SCOTTISH SEA LIFE SANCTUARY**

**OPENING TIMES**

Friday 22nd December:	11am – 4pm	Friday 29th December:	11am – 4pm
Saturday 23rd December:	11am – 4pm	Saturday 30th December:	11am – 4pm
Sunday 24th December:	11am – 4pm	Sunday 31st December:	11am – 4pm
Monday 25th December:	CLOSED	Monday 1st January:	11am – 4pm

last admissions at 3pm each day

**Then open all winter from Friday – Monday (inclusive) from 11am – 4pm (last admission at 3pm)**

**Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE**

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**Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE**

10 (eight per cent) are unaware that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Sadly, I cannot see this as a trend that is likely to be reversed any time soon.

**Spare a thought for emergency workers**

SO WINTER arrived at the weekend with the aforementioned Storm Caroline and an icy blast.

We reported at the tail end of last week that thousands of homes, many of them in the Western Isles and north-west Highlands, lost their power as a result of the gale-force winds, and transport and other services were badly disrupted, with ferries and trains cancelled.

As ever, though, I was left in awe of the many emergency workers who went out in the freezing, blustery conditions to restore power and keep our roads open, among other things.

The majority of homes were reconnected pretty quickly and our main roads were all kept open by the hard-working teams who were out and about to ensure the rest of us had as little disruption as possible.

Keep up the good work.

**What do you think?**

WRITE to me at [mlaing@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:mlaing@obantimes.co.uk) or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB.

**Dunbeg**

Dunbeg Primary School was the first of only three schools in Argyll and Bute to be awarded a gold award recognising the achievement of pupils and staff in PE. 15\_T50\_DunbegPSSportsGold\_01

**Primary school achieves gold status**

DUNBEG Primary School was the first of only three schools in Argyll and Bute to be given a gold award recognising the achievement of pupils and staff in PE.

The School Sports Awards, run by Sport Scotland, encourages children to live an active life.

Lorna Jackson, from Sports Scotland,

said: 'You are now part of a really special bunch of schools in Scotland. You are the first to get your flag.'

The school won silver last year and was delighted to finally take gold, thanks to the year-long efforts of a pupil-led sports committee, teachers, parent coaches and Active Schools in Argyll.

Principal teacher Nicola Bichard, addressing the assembly room last week, added: 'We have waited a long time for this. It is all down to your hard work.'

The other primary schools achieving gold status for sport this year are Salen on Mull and Dalintober in Campbeltown.

**Connel**

Peter Barr, Gordon Cowan and Davie MacPherson raised money for testicular cancer awareness and NHS Highland.

**Retirement party boosts cancer charity**

A RETIREMENT party was held in the Falls of Lora Hotel in Connel earlier this year with all proceeds going towards testicular cancer awareness and battling the disease in Oban.

Peter Barr, Gordon Cowan and Davie MacPherson retired from SSE on June

30 of this year, with a combined 107 (and-a-half) years of service.

Instead of asking for leaving gifts, the three men asked colleagues to donate to testicular cancer awareness and the cancer ward in Oban, raising a total of £1,300 between them.

'The reason we have picked these two causes for our donations,' Peter said, 'is that we are all local to the Oban and Inveraray area, and there are not many families that have not been affected by cancer in one way or another.'

'As three men, testicular

cancer is very prominent in all our minds and it is an issue also very close to our hearts as Davie's son has experienced the downside of this illness.'

'We hope that contributing to this cause will in turn help raise awareness of testicular cancer.'

O2 HAS started work to bring 4G to Ardfern and Ormsary as well as improving 2G and 3G services.

O2 currently offers 4G in more than 16,000 cities, towns and villages across the Highlands and Islands this year and has plans to add more locations.

strengthening its network and increasing its reach.

This comes as the telecommunications company has launched 4G in more than 80 locations across the Highlands and Islands this year and has plans to add more locations.

**Grimsay**

CEANN na h-Àirigh and Grimsay Post Office will be closed for the Christmas holidays, from Friday December 22 until Monday January 8.

A traditional ceilidh of music and song by local musicians will be held at 7pm on Saturday January 13.

The first Grimsay weekly local produce market next year will be on January 17, and weekly thereafter.

**Helensburgh**

The 'cage' will protect Hill House.

CHARLES Rennie Mackintosh's renowned Hill House in Helensburgh is set to be covered in a 'colossal' cage.

The National Trust for Scotland plans to build the structure around the building to protect it from the elements.

The home was built between 1902 and 1904 as a 'home for the future' by Mackintosh.

He built the dwelling for publisher Walter Blackie. However, the material used allowed water to soak into the building since the day it was built.

The aim of the cage-like structure will be to shelter the house from the West Coast weather and allow a long-term solution to be

found. Simon Skinner, the National Trust for Scotland's chief executive, said: 'Not only will the structure allow us to keep the Hill House open to the public while our conservation teams are at work restoring the building to its original condition, it will become accessible to them like never before.'

'Within the enclosure, visitors will be able to climb stairs and gangways for a bird's eye view of Mackintosh's masterpiece and to get up close and personal to the genius of his design.'

'As a bonus, visitors can watch the restoration work as it progresses and then turn around to enjoy stunning views out over the Firth of Clyde.'

**Islay**

THE Mactaggart Community Cyber Cafe's latest addition – Castaways – Port Ellen's nearly new and craft shop, opened to popular acclaim last month and proved a great alternative to the Black Friday chaos, offering an opportunity to spend for community benefit, according to *The Heach*.

Now a survey, designed to solicit the views of the community, is seeking to establish support for

future developments, and asking which potential improvements should be considered for the cyber cafe, which celebrates its 20th birthday next year.

Ideas for improvements to the community space so far include: a community cinema, a birthday party space complete with bouncy castle, digital film-making and increasing the regularity of afternoon teas for older people.

**At Random****Ambitious initiative is to be welcomed**

AS WE report elsewhere in this week's paper, Argyll and Bute Council has drawn up a new set of guidelines which aim to encourage pavement cafe culture.

The guidelines hope to make it easier for the hospitality sector to get tables and chairs onto our pavements in towns and villages across the region.

The estimable councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'As a council, we are committed to encouraging a pavement cafe culture throughout Argyll and Bute as the trend for an al fresco eating and drinking is on the increase.'

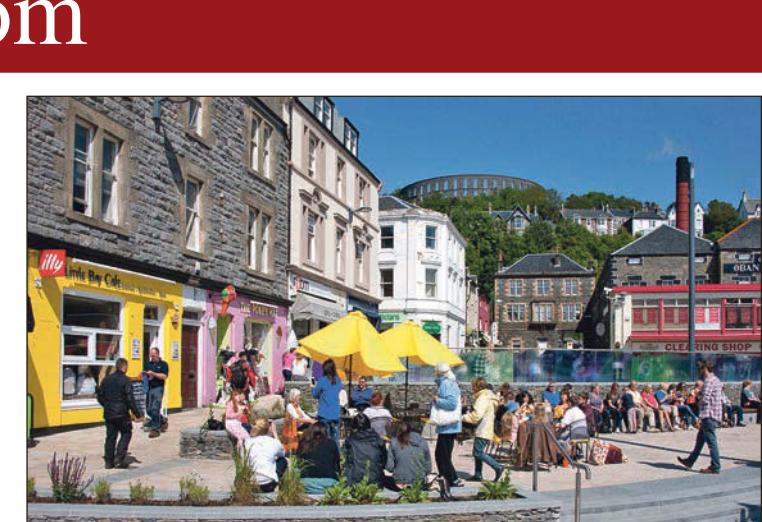
'It is our aim to make it as easy as possible to provide these facilities as without doubt it adds vibrancy to our town centres and helps to boost the local economy by making our town centres attractive places to visit and enjoy our hospitality.'

It's an admirable ambition but made me smile ruefully because the announcement arrived when hailstones were thumping off the windows of our office as Storm Caroline gusted in last week.

But on a serious note, our tourism industry has been booming in Argyll lately with huge numbers of visitors arriving during the high season.

Anything that makes their stay among us more memorable is to be applauded and welcomed.

We have, for the most part, a



The council is to be applauded for its pavement cafe culture initiative.

cracking hospitality sector. Removing some of the bureaucratic red tape that restricts our ability to entertain visitors is an excellent first step.

And remember: we might just get a bit of summer weather eventually that will allow us to sit outdoors enjoying some of the finest views anywhere as we enjoy a cold drink.

**Christmas message is being rapidly lost**

I NEVER cease to be surprised by what arrives in my email inbox these days.

There are countless press releases every week touting the latest frivolous research project that has, presumably, been carried out at some considerable expense to whomever commissioned it.

But I was struck by one such email a few days ago that summed up for me how the current festive season has changed utterly in recent years.

According to a study carried out for TV channel HISTORY®, the meaning of Christmas is well on the way to being lost completely – if it hasn't been already.

The research shows, evidently, that one fifth of Brits (20 per cent) do not believe Jesus was born on Christmas Day and nearly one in

10 (eight per cent) are unaware that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Sadly, I cannot see this as a trend that is likely to be reversed any time soon.

**What do you think?**

WRITE to me at [mlaing@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:mlaing@obantimes.co.uk) or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB.

# Ribald tales of excess and its consequences

MORVERN LINES  
IAIN THORNBER  
[editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)

IT LOOKS as though North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, knows a bit about Scotland's past because he has just banned all gatherings where drinking is likely to take place among the country's workers.

In 1608, when the tartan dictators of the Highlands and Islands were getting a bit uppity, King James VI threw a grand party aboard a warship anchored in Aros Bay near Salen on the Isle of Mull. Eleven chiefs turned up.

No sooner had they necked the first dram than the vessel weighed anchor and sailed for Edinburgh. There they were thrown into the castle prison for a year until agreeing to an Act of Parliament that they would behave themselves.

The problem was there was too much alcohol circulating, causing poverty and barbarity. Of course they paid no attention and it wasn't until some years later that the King really cracked the whip.

This time, in order not to lose their lands, the chiefs had to make their homes in one place, send their children south to be educated and, most importantly, limit the amount of alcohol they could store and consume.

Maclean of Duart and Macleod of Harris were each allowed 1,008 gallons; MacDonald of Clanranald, 756 gallons; Maclean of Coll, Lochbuie and Mackinnon, 252 gallons – and they were to see that none of their servants was to buy whisky or wine.

Making whisky was probably familiar to the Gaels from very early times. Often the brew was rank and people would say: 'Man yon was the stuff – when it touched your throat you thought you had been shot.'

In his Description of the Western Islands of Scotland, 1695, Martin Martin wrote that if anyone exceeded two spoonfuls: 'It would stop his breath and endanger his life.'

From old Gaelic manuscripts we know that the folk of the Highlands



Archibald MacAlister and his two sons from Campbeltown giving a demonstration of whisky making after they had been caught producing it illegally. One son spent nine months in jail for assaulting an Islay exciseman. He died in 1911 at the age of 98 as the result of falling down a flight of steps coming out of church. Photograph: Library and Museum, Campbeltown

and Islands were drinking wine and burning wax candles while Anglo Saxon kings slept on straw and bought wine as a cordial from the apothecaries.

At dinners, gatherings, weddings and funerals, everyone drank to excess because anyone who allowed his guests to leave the house sober was thought to be a poor host.

A report, written in 1838 about the evils of the time, blamed the clergy and went on to record: 'The quantity of raw spirits is quite incredible and were the effects not in a certain

degree neutralised by continuous exercise in the open air, the consequences could not fail to prove instantly fatal. As it is, this shocking practice, unless it meets with some powerful check, cannot fail to ruin the morals and destroy body and mind by which this interesting people [the Highlanders] have so long been distinguished.'

It concluded that the Scottish government was wrong to persist in raising a large portion of public revenue from the whisky trade and, as long as it did so, it had no right to complain

about the increase in crime brought about drunkenness.

What's new? On the one hand, Holyrood has pushed through a minimum pricing policy for alcohol to bring down the number of drink-related deaths and hospital admissions in Scotland but, on the other, encourages and supports dozens of new distilleries.

For a long time it was the custom in Argyll to give ale or 'drink money' in return for work or a service. If, for example, a mason had repaired the manse or the churchyard wall,

even the kirk session obliged. The clergy were not always teetotal. In 1733, a complaint against the Rev Archibald Campbell, minister of Morvern from 1729 to 1741, was made to the Mull presbytery by Alexander MacLachlan, tacksman of Laudale, accusing him with drinking to excess.

An inquiry followed and the witness statements, which are still extant, make interesting reading. It seems the minister was imbibing in the inn at Knock with four others, including MacLachlan. The licensing laws must

have been more relaxed then than they are today because they began drinking at 8am and didn't finish until six o'clock at night, by which time the clerk recorded that all five gentlemen were rather intoxicated.

Sometime during the day an argument began about politics which resulted in the minister taking a swipe at one of his companions and threatening to run him through with his sword. Eventually the party ended and the Rev Campbell was seen to stagger home with some difficulty.

There, apparently, he asked his wife for his supper to which she replied that she was in no great hurry to give him any as he must have had food wherever he was, upon which, it was reported, 'he kicked her several times'.

Campbell was found guilty and suspended for a year.

Gradually, across the Highlands, drinking to excess in public places was brought under control by the courts and moderated to a reasonably respectable level.

Cattle fairs were held in out of the way places where liberal quantities of whisky were still consumed by old friends.

Drowning accidents were put down to drunkenness and tales of intemperance found a niche in folk history. A crofter in Morvern by the name of Neil Fletcher spent many hours and what little money the family had in the local inn. His wife pleaded with him to stop but he paid no attention.

The situation became so desperate that she decided to give him a fright in the hope that he might see reason. One dark night, she dressed in a white shawl and hid behind a tombstone in the graveyard through which Neil would pass on his way home. When he appeared she jumped out wailing: 'Beware, Neil, I am the Devil. You'd better mend your ways.'

Her husband, not in the least bothered, stepped forward replying: 'Well met, lad. Let's shake hands. I'm married to your sister.'

Cheers!

Iain Thornber

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## Recorded wildlife crime down

MARTIN LAING

[mlaing@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:mlaing@obantimes.co.uk)

RECORDED wildlife crime has fallen by eight per cent, according to official figures.

The annual wildlife crime report shows reported offences have dropped from 284 in 2014/15 to 261 the following year.

Fish poaching, which remains the most prolific wildlife crime, was down by 26 per cent.

The report shows an increase in hunting with dogs to 44 – up 24 offences over the previous year.

The data in the report refers to recorded wildlife crime. It does not, for example, include satellite-tagged birds which may have disappeared in suspicious circumstances, as without a carcass or other hard evidence of criminal activity, Police Scotland are not able to record these incidents as crimes.

Cabinet Secretary for En-



The RSPB believes eagles are being killed.

vironment, Climate Change and Land Reform Roseanna Cunningham said: 'This fifth wildlife crime annual report provides useful data on the issues we face trying to protect Scotland's wildlife from illegal activity.'

'It shows a decrease in overall recorded wildlife crime, which is welcome.'

'However, there is no room for complacency. We know from the report published earlier this year that it is very likely that golden eagles and other raptors

are being illegally killed every year, but where there is no body or tag to be found, these losses do not make it into the recorded crime figures.'

Scottish SPCA Chief Superintendent Mike Flynn added: 'Although we are pleased to see the decrease, wildlife crime continues to cause us great concern.'

'The increase in hunting with dogs is very worrying and we will work with Police Scotland in any way to tackle wildlife crime in Scotland.'

Duncan Orr-Ewing, for RSPB Scotland, said: 'We welcome the publication of the report and the continued scrutiny by the Scottish Government of this issue.'

'Sadly, wildlife crime, including the illegal killing of our native birds of prey, remains a blight on the international reputation of Scotland and, in our view, stronger sanctions are required to act as a deterrent.'

'At the end of May 2017, an official report into the fate of satellite-tagged golden eagles showed that many of these birds were disappearing in suspicious circumstances, primarily on land managed for driven grouse shooting. As a result, an independent inquiry has now been launched by the Scottish Government into how grouse moors can be managed sustainably and within the law, including consideration of options for a licensing system.'

'We believe that an effective licensing system for driven grouse shooting, including sanctions to remove licences to operate where illegal activity is confirmed, could help tackle persistent criminality, and promote the required culture change in this sector. It would also provide safeguards for those land managers who operate responsibly.'

'The disappearing satellite-tagged golden eagles, along with other similar occurrences to hen harriers, give a strong indication that the wildlife criminals have not stopped their activities, and instead may have changed their methods in order to avoid detection.'

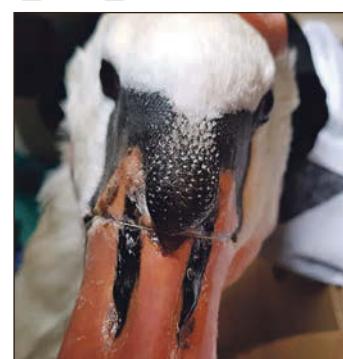
The Scottish Gamekeepers' Association responded: 'The SGA is once again pleased at continuing progress in terms of further substantive reductions in wildlife crime in Scotland, at a time when public scrutiny and awareness is at its peak.'

'We have a strict code regarding wildlife crime which is fully understood by our membership.'

'The SGA advocates and seeks only legal and adaptive solutions to resolving species conflicts.'

'We note Scottish Government's intention to hold a review of grouse shooting in Scotland and will participate fully in what we hope will deliver sound evidence and not implication or speculation.'

## Anglers urged to take care with equipment



THE Scottish SPCA is urging fishing enthusiasts across Scotland to ensure all fishing equipment is cleared away after a swan was discovered at Lanark Loch with a fishing line around its beak.

Scotland's animal welfare charity was originally alerted last month about a swan with a fishing line around its legs and the animal rescue officer discovered another swan with the line wrapped around its beak.

Animal rescue officer Sian Robertson said: 'I was called out to a swan with a fishing line around its legs but when I arrived at the loch I noticed a swan out of the water and was alarmed when it let me get close and lift it.'

'Upon closer inspection I noticed an unusual smell and saw that the swan actually had a piece of fishing line wrapped tightly around its beak.'

'I wouldn't have been able to spot the wire from a distance, which highlights how important it is for all fishing equipment to be cleared away. The swan was already very lethargic and dehydrated as it was likely he

hadn't been able to eat or drink for a few days.'

'The swan was taken to our national wildlife rescue centre where the line was cut and pain relief was provided. Thankfully, he made a full recovery and was released back into the wild on December 1 with three other cygnets.'

'We urge the public to be more careful with their fishing hooks and line when disposing of them as we deal with so many incidents which are very similar on a weekly basis.'

'Anyone concerned about the welfare of an animal should contact the Scottish SPCA animal helpline on 03000 999 999.'

## Funding will improve access for Skye hides



The view from the otter hide at Kylerhea on Skye.

MORE visitors will now be able to enjoy the wildlife they can see from two hides at Kylerhea on Skye thanks to a £37,000 car park upgrade.

Forest Enterprise Scotland's otter hide, and the smaller eagle hide, which is run in partnership with RSPB Scotland, are served by the same car park and, like many places on Skye, have struggled to cope with the number of visitors.

The upgrade means that the newly landscaped car park has doubled in size and can now accommodate 19 cars including two 'blue badge' spaces, making the hides much more accessible.

Additional picnic tables and upgraded signs have also been put in place.

Jack Mackay, visitor services manager for the FES team in the area, said: 'The otter hide is a hugely popular spot all year round and we welcome hundreds of visitors every year, but when the eagle hide is also open in the summer things can get a bit hectic on a busy day.'

'There is a stunning array of wildlife to see – anything from golden eagles, white-tailed sea eagles, to seals and porpoises.'

'Extending the car parking facilities will certainly improve access and let more people enjoy this amazing site, especially less mobile visitors. The works will not only benefit visitors but, by helping to cut roadside parking, will also improve traffic flow for all road users.'

The otter hide is unstaffed and is open all year round, while the eagle hide is open in the summer months and is staffed

by RSPB Scotland guides. Alison MacLennan, RSPB Scotland's senior conservation officer on Skye, said: 'Both of the hides are really popular in the summer months and parking has been a bit of a bug-bear, especially when the sun's out and the visitors all come at once. It used to be quite frustrating for visitors.'

'Improving the car parking improves the access for visitors who will now be able to arrive in the best frame of mind to appreciate the superb wildlife spectacles that are a daily occurrence at Kylerhea.'

As well as giving visitors a fantastic opportunity to view the behaviour of animals and birds in the wild – particularly white-tailed sea eagles – the eagle hide staff also run activity days and guided evening walks in the summer.

## THIS WEEK'S WALKS

### LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

THE WALK leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy. Further information at [www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk](http://www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk). Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers Group can be contacted by email on [info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk](mailto:info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk).

Thursday December 14

Kinlochleven to Callert

A valley walk between some im-

pressive hills and a descent with grand views across Loch Leven to Glencoe and Ballachulish

Start from the Grey Mare's Tail CP at NN187622. Head NW along the back street to the B863 and follow it W for 200m. Fork right on to the footpath way-marked WHW and follow it up to a track at 250m alt. Continue W up gradually to the watershed at 330m.

Two kilometres further on at Lairigmor, NN122640 turn left on to a path, which crosses the Ailt na Lairige Mòire and climbs SW up to a col to the W of Mam na

Gualainn at NN100623. Descend S down the hillside to reach the road E of Callert House to the west. Transport required.

Grade: M; Distance: 11km; Height to climb: 500m; Map(s): LR41, EX384. Meet at N Ballachulish Primary School at 9.10am for start of walk at 9.30am. Leader: Graham Innes 01631 562290 or 07767 714503.

Sunday December 17  
Glen Fintaig land-slip and Leana Mhor, Glen Gloy

A short walk, rough and steep in

places, taking in some interesting post-glacial landforms and affording good views of Glen Roy.

Start at Upper Glenfintaig, NN257887 where limited parking is available. Head E on the track across the River Gloy. It rises up the side of Glen Fintaig and levels at about NN268884, altitude 280m.

Climb N up the steep hillside to explore around the land-slip area (Glenfintaig Cave). Head E to the confluence of two burns at NN275887, cross them and climb SE directly to the summit of Léan-

na Mhòr at 684m. Descend SW at first, then curving N down to the foot of Glen Fintaig. Cross the Fintaig Water where convenient and regain the track back to the start.

Grade: M+; Distance: 8km; Height to climb: 600m; Map(s): LR34, EX400. Meet at Fort William Woollen Mill at 9.20am for start of walk at 10am. Leader: Trevor Jones 07831 437454.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB  
Please see full walk details at [www.nevishillwalking.club](http://www.nevishillwalking.club).

If anyone would like to go out on the walk please contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email [enquiries@nevishillwalking.club](mailto:enquiries@nevishillwalking.club).

### Saturday December 16 Sgurr Croabh a'Chàorainn, Glenfinnan

Park by the Callop River at NM923792. Take the track S past the power station and farm buildings. The track ends at a small dam after about 2½km. Shortly before the dam, take the footpath forking right and follow it up S to

pass through a gate in the fence to reach the foot of the NE ridge of Sgurr Croabh a'Chàorainn at NM915765. Climb the ridge, over the small summit of Meall na Cuartaig, 566m, to reach the main summit at 775m. Descend N and follow the undulating ridge to Meall Doire na Mnatha, then NE to Sgurr nan Cearc, 668m. Descend the E ridge to meet the hydro track back in the glen.

Distance: 16km; Height to climb: 1000m. Suggested by Gavin Theobald; coordinated by Liz Stevenson.



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Donald Cameron MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Highlands and Islands region

Constituent Surgery

Friday 15th December 2017

Parliamentary Office,  
108 George Street, Oban

12.00 - 13.00

No appointment necessary

If you are unable to make this time but want a meeting, please email [Donald.Cameron.MSP@parliament.scot](mailto:Donald.Cameron.MSP@parliament.scot)

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Listen for the song of the wren

DURING the past few weeks on the Isle of Mull, I've spent quite a bit of time at higher altitudes monitoring the upland ecology at this hostile time of the year, writes Ewan Miles of Nature Scotland.

Only the hardiest of species survive in these conditions and you can go for an hour without seeing any sign of bird life.

Winter mode is starting to set in, with increased snow cover in the mountainous setting and a chilly Atlantic air-stream powering in off the sea.

Most of the small birds which attempted to breed on these moors in the summer have left for more hospitable conditions.

The wheatears head for Africa and some Scottish meadow pipits could follow them.

But there is one little bird I am seeing withstand the harshest winter environments in Scotland – the wren.

Their Latin name is troglodytes troglodytes (cave dweller), as they manage to find suitable cover in the bracken, heather, rocky crags, cliff crevices and scree slopes.

Wrens are among Scotland's most numerous birds, with a predicted 1.5 million pairs. Weighing the same as a pound coin, they cover a range of other habitats including woodland, farmland and offshore Scottish islands, which support five sub-species.

The iconic Christmas robin is famous for singing all year round, throughout the winter months, but they aren't solo and are joined by the wrens' explosive singing voice with a sound to size ratio 10 times louder than a jumbo jet. Surely it is one of the most impressive Christmas songs of all time.

Listen out for them around your home this Christmas, protecting their winter territories, with those powerful cascading songs.

Another spectacle to look out for is a communal roost of wrens at dusk. They huddle together to keep warm and in recent years an astonishing 62 were counted going into a single nest box.

# Ladies are in the pink for a day of pampering

THE Pink Ladies Day was held at the Loch Fyne Hotel in Inveraray on Friday December 8, says founder Nicky Murphy.

Having been diagnosed with breast cancer four years ago, I wanted to create something really special for other women who have been through the same thing.

Things get a bit crazy during treatment and it can be an extremely challenging time – all of life's pressures are still there on top of dealing with a life-threatening illness that requires an extreme programme of treatment.

Living in a rural area, there is also extensive travel involved which is incredibly tiring.

Add that to the physical and emotional impact that hits often after treatment and it all equates to really needing, deserving and craving a day of complete self-indulgence and relaxation, where the vibe is

very positive, fun and supportive.

The Pink Ladies Day is now in its fourth year – and it was a huge success despite such awful weather.

Sixty-six women came along to the day – women who have experienced breast cancer first-hand, and their plus ones.

We invite our Pink Ladies to come along with a special friend or family member to be preened and pampered by our amazing stylists, beauty therapists and make-up artists, all giving their time and expertise voluntarily.

The day offers a choice of treatments, including hair, make-up, nails, massage, facials, reiki and yoga. They also had a delicious three-course lunch, morning and afternoon coffee, along with a listening ear and advice from a breast care nurse and a representative from Macmillan.

The day is about friendship, pampering, laughter, relaxation and meeting like-minded women.

The Pink Ladies Day is a free day for women who really deserve some pampering.

This year to cover the costs of the day, all fundraising was organised by myself and my team with help from hundreds of people who attended afternoon teas, bought raffle tickets, tombola tickets and sponsored a team to walk 16km. We raised more than £4,500, which was fantastic.

There are so many local people and businesses to thank for their fundraising contributions and contribution on the day itself, including D and A Munn for providing a surprise chauffeur-driven luxury car to transport five women to Inveraray from Oban.

See the personals page in this issue of *The Oban Times* for a full run down of thank yous.

Here are some quotes posted on Facebook:

**Kathleen Murgatroyd, Oban:** Pink Ladies Day. Swim, reiki, hairstyle, makeup. A lovely day of pampering. Thanks.

**Gillian Stewart, Oban:** Had an amazing day at the Pink Ladies Day with Elizabeth Maclean! Great company, excellent food, beautiful views and wonderful treatments.

**Jan Ferguson:** The best Pink Ladies Day yet.



The Pink Ladies receive a warm welcome at the beginning of the day.



Cheers! From ladies who lunch.



LeeAnne Fraser gives Caroline Brown of Strachur a make-over.



Breast care nurse Suzy Hazarika chats to Claire Filler.



Kathleen Murgatroyd of Oban looking fabulous.



Claire Bruce of Oban, glowing after a massage and make-over.



Rie Emmers, specialist cancer masseuse, greets the ladies.



Joanne Coleman does make-up for Shirley Pullen of Dunoon.



## Christmas fair draws a crowd

Dunbeg Primary was a hub of activity on Saturday for the school's annual Christmas craft fair. A variety of stalls lined the hall, selling everything from Christmas baubles to next year's calendars. Residents and stall-holders alike were entertained by pipers and fuelled by a cuppa and a selection of cakes. Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara, right, who brought his family along for the day, including his dog, Hamish, said: 'We were here last year and had a great time. We said we would definitely be back. It's a really good school and they do really good work.'



## Santas are cutting a dash with Oban run

Fitness enthusiasts looked out their festive clothing on Sunday to take part in the annual Fit With You Santa Dash. Starting at the Station Square at 9am, the runners embarked on the five-kilometre event, raising £85 for Oban Hospice in the process. A special mention was given to Ciaran, right, 'the little elf' who ran to the war memorial and back in under 20 minutes.



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# Viewpoint



**Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB**

## The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

One item has dominated the news schedules across the country and in all media this week – and, not surprisingly, it has been the weather. As the mercury plummeted and the icy conditions settled in, we had reports of deep snow, chill winds and temperatures in some parts of Britain as low as -15C. In Argyll and the Isles it was routinely down to around -7C. So it should not come as a shock that people living in West Highland Housing Association homes behind Lorn and the Islands Hospital in Oban were upset that they were left without heating or hot water, some of

them for up to three days. What was shocking, however, was the claim that WHHA's Biomass Energy Centre at Glenshelleach 'is not coping with cold weather'.

It is a fundamental expectation that a heating system should be able to operate during a cold snap. Indeed, it is unthinkable that it should not.

WHHA has apologised – as it should have – and issued tenants with temporary heaters, which is the very least it could have done.

However, it is not enough. The tenants are paying good money to WHHA and deserve far better.



## Days gone by – 1997

We go back to the 1997 Glenfinnan Games this week. Fort William piper Anna Macdonald played for the dancers who took part in the local competitions.

### MacPhail



ANGUS MACPHAIL  
angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk

WEDDINGS are one of the most frequent events of celebration in our lives and a good one is a truly magical occasion to enjoy.

Last weekend, I attended one of the best I have experienced and it prompted me to ponder on the attributes that come together to create a day befitting of the significance of the bond being made. The bride and groom are both good friends of mine and I was honoured to play a small part in the ceremony.

As a musician, I've been to many hundreds of weddings over the past 20 years and, in attending so many, it is easy to become a bit jaded about marriage and the events surrounding it. However, when the right conditions combine, there is nothing quite like good wedding, and last Friday's was one to remember.

There are certainly no hard and fast rules that must be followed and factors to be included can be wide and varied.

Venues can range from a grand

church to a beach, couples can be young or old, numbers attending can be a handful to hundreds, food can be a few sausage rolls to a five-course dinner, they can take place in winter, summer, hail, rain or shine, but all can give joy and set a couple off on the road of life together.

There were certain ingredients in last Friday's wedding that set it apart from most and there were factors that definitely helped to allow the event to deliver on all expectations of what a wedding should be.

The following is a brief summary of these.

The setting in a 19th-century estate house in rural Perthshire with panoramic views of the River Tay gave a strong sense of romance, excitement and novelty.

The piper who played as the guests arrived chose the perfect tunes and performed them impeccably.

The ceremony was conducted by a friend of the groom's family and, in a manner that can only come with experience, he put everyone at ease with just the right combination of gravitas, humour and authority.

The weather was that of the perfect

crisp winter's day with bright sunshine reflecting from the snow-covered slopes of the surrounding countryside.

The warmth and welcome of the huge log fires in the house were accentuated by the freezing conditions outside.

The canapés, the drinks, the meal, the speeches, the ceilidh band, the bar, the buffet, the best man, the bridesmaids and all the guests united to create what felt like being part of a film set where the aim of portraying a dreamlike wedding was achieved with perfection.

The most important factor involved in any wedding is, of course, the couple being married.

When two young amazing people, from two strong and amazing families come together for the very best of reasons and in the happiest of circumstances in the way we were celebrating last week, it epitomises the very best of the essence of what love, life and marriage are about.

The stars aligned when Camilla and Ben met and that was felt in the air last Friday when they became Mr and Mrs Wilson.



I have been in, their prices for clothes were silly, same as Outside edge, way over what you'd expect to pay, so not surprised!

Ian Clayton: 'Used to get all my sailing gear from here when I was a teenager. They were so helpful. We were so lucky to have access to a wide range of boats at OHS when I was there, before some twit got rid of them for windsurfers. If I didn't have a part it'd be down to Nancy Blacks for a block, bung or a fairlead. Very sad to see the shop go.'

Alexander McDonald: 'End of an Era alright, great for sailing gear, good quality clothing, for shooting fishing and warm winter gear, I will miss it.'

Bert Benton: 'Always sad to see independent shops close, and this was a great shop to visit when I was in town.'

Sarah Clarke: 'Nooooo!'

Des Ballantyne: 'I've tried several times to buy stuff in there and they only keep like one item of anything. If its not by chance that the pair of shoes/boots that you are wanting to buy, are in your size, then you aint getting them. I've tried a fair few times to buy stuff with no luck.'

Colin Martin: 'Most wee businesses in town don't have the capital to have a large stock holding and need to order stock in if they don't have it! That is if you don't need instant gratification.' Online stores have far fewer overheads and can therefore offer items cheaper, one of the choices you are making is whether or not you want to support local businesses or see them disappear.'

Pamela Crosbie: 'Very sad, loved shopping here when I visit.'

David Crawford: 'A shame but when

let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin estate, Oban, PA34 4HB.'

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with

our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

### Road Safety Unit provides vital service

Sir,

I write on behalf of Lochgilphead High School's Parent Council regarding one of Argyll and Bute Council's proposed budget savings for 2018/19.

Option TB16-3, which comes under the 'Economic Development – Strategic Transportation' heading, reads: 'Reduce road safety materials budget and remove the Road Safety Unit.'

This short sentence has major implications not just for every parent in Argyll and Bute but for every resident, regardless of age.

The Road Safety Unit provides a vital service to the 12,000 primary and secondary pupils spread right across the council area. It also works with our Early Years bases.

From initiatives including 'Street-feet' pedestrian training, the Road Safety Magic Show, Streetsense2 and the 'iCycle' cycle training in the primary sector to 'Your Call', 'Crash Magnets' and presentations by the Baldy Bane Theatre Company in secondary schools, the Road Safety Unit challenges all pupils to take responsibility not just for their own safety but for the safety of others.

These are not just the young pedestrians, cyclists and passengers of today – they are Argyll and Bute's drivers of tomorrow.

The Road Safety Unit was also the first in Scotland to introduce a grant to new drivers to encourage participation in Plus Plus training. Many other Scottish local authorities now do the same.

Argyll and Bute Council's Road Safety Unit is at the forefront of road safety education in Scotland. We are shocked its existence is now hanging in the balance.

The 1988 Road Traffic Act stipulates that it is the responsibility of the local authority to 'prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety'. It also states that local authorities should 'take measures to prevent accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, and the giving of practical training to any class of road user'.

Removing the Road Safety Unit would render Argyll and Bute Council incapable of fulfilling these responsibilities. The apparent attempt at justifying the saving by stating 'road safety information available through other organisations' is, at best, misleading.

There is no 'other organisation' which can teach road safety to young people across Argyll and Bute. And if the inference is that the police will take up the slack, our understanding is that Police Scotland now very much concentrates on enforcement rather than education.

The Scottish Government has set ambitious road casualty reduction targets, and the Road Safety Unit liaises closely with Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue in working to achieve these targets across Argyll and Bute.

Road safety is an issue which affects everyone. As well as being traumatic and often tragic, accidents are very expensive. Transport Scotland's Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2016

reminds us that £350 million per year is spent on road casualties.

It is also extraordinary and disturbing to see the very different ways in which the two sets of fraudsters referred to have been treated. The anonymous

### Beachd Ailein



ALLAN CAMPBELL  
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

IS MATH AN RUD A thig ri mhithich! The firinn san t-seanfhacal agus nì sinn toileachas ri toradh ràithean àraid trion bhliadhna, ach tha cuideachd rudan a bhios a' nochdadh a dh'fhiarramaid a leasachadh.

Aig an àm seo gach bliadhna tha mise dualach a bhith a' tilleadh gu cuspair araig, agus e' sin gòraiche dhráibhearan a bhios a' siubhal le carbada

làn sneachda 's gun iad ach air oisean beag den uinneag a ghlanadh. 'S e fior adhbhar dratha g a th' ann nach eil na daoine sin a réir choltais a' tuigseann a' chunnairt sam bheil iad gan cur fhein agus dhaoinne eile muair nach eil làn-lèirsinn aca tro uinneagan an cuiad.

Mura biodh feum air na h-uinneagan cha bhiodh uimhir aca ann ach tha cùs dhráibhearan le dith smaointinn, neo direach ri linn leisge, den bheachd gum bheil e ionchadh siubhal 's iad a' didearachd tro bheagan dirleach den glaibhne. Tha seo neo-chùramach agus cunnartach agus na mo bheachd bu

chòir am peanasachadh fon lagh, agus theagamh gum fágadh eisimpleirean

den t-sòrsa sin a' mhòr-chuid nas mothachaille agus nas ciallaiche air na ceart a dhéanamh. Mar a thà fior anns a h-uile sòrsa suidheachadh co-cheangailte ri sàbhailteachd, tha còir stad a chur air droch chleachadh mus tacair tubaist a dh'fhaodadh beathas a chur an cunnart!

Aglas a' bruidhinn air sàbhailteachd a bhith a' bhith a' dion dhaoine bho chunnartan, bha mi a' beachdachadh a-ritisth bho chionn bheagan láithean air seargadh-inntinn, cuspair a' bhagam an seo bho chionn ghoirid. Gu

cinn teachtha an tinneas oilteil seo a' fás naibhtheann agus tha barrachd is

barrachd theaghlaichean a' fulang bròn agus call ri linn, agus e' b'ualadh shean

agus òg a-nise a réir coltais. Nuair a bha mi a' sgrìobhadh mi dheidhinn, bha mi a' togail air an amharas a' th' aig cuid de

dh'eolaichean-sláinte agus spòrs gum

faodadh na builleann mun cheann a tha

cleasaichean ann auid eil spòrs a'

faotainn, cur ris a' chunnart gun tig an

tinneas seo orra uaireigin. Tha iomairt

rannsachaidh a' tòiseachadh feuch an gabh a' cheist dearbhadh taobh seach

report

put the average cost of a fatality at £2,161,725 and of a serious injury at £245,144.

At the budget meeting, councillors will be asked to agree to remove Argyll and Bute's Road Safety Unit for a saving of just £84,000.

The work this unit does is vital to the current and future safety of Argyll and Bute's population. We urge councillors in the strongest possible terms to reject this proposal.

Amanda Hampton,  
Lochgilphead High School  
Parent Council.

### Brexit claim was a clear case of fraud

Sir,

I recently received a letter informing me that I was a lucky winner in the International Postcode Online Lottery. 'Congratulations, Mr Macdonald,' it read. 'You have won a 4th prize tax-free payout of £900,000.'

Part of me wanted to believe the news, but another part of me was more dubious. So I googled the names and addresses of the various parties mentioned in the letter, and to my pleasant surprise, they were all genuine and well-regarded companies. There was even a telephone number and a named person who I was to contact at the London address of this authentic financial services company which was handling the prize payment.

My pulse quickened. I reached for the phone, already mulling over a colour choice for the Jaguar Roadster I could now easily afford, but noticed in red letters at the bottom on my PC screen the words 'Fraud Alert'. I read on to discover that Hampshire Police were warning the public of a financial scam involving one of the names I had googled. They strongly advised not to contact the named person who would then ask for a processing fee and never be heard from again.

Alas, my dreams of cruising along the Pacific highways in a new mimosa-yellow Jaguar convertible with a highly attractive female passenger were fast receding. Returning to dull reality, I shrugged off the lottery letter as a very disappointing but minor inconvenience in the wider scheme of things.

This attempted fraud reminded me of the many similarities between it and the Brexiteers' June 2016 EU referendum 'leave' campaign. We will recall campaign leaders claiming the NHS would have an extra £350 million per week available to spend on patient care if we voted to leave the EU. This was presented as a fact by Brexiteers who were given every opportunity to spread their message in all the different media. It was only after the referendum result was announced that we learned the £350 million extra weekly for the NHS was an undeliverable, fraudulent deception. Making a written promise to pay a sum of money in the full knowledge that you are unable to fulfill that commitment is a clear case of fraud.

It also extraordinary and disturbing to see the very different ways in which the two sets of fraudsters referred to have been treated. The anonymous

lottery fraudsters are rightly regarded as criminals who are currently being hunted by the forces of law and order. Meanwhile, the EU referendum fraudsters are feted by many as the heroes who saved us from the grasping clutches of these nasty EU foreigners.

Iain M Macdonald,  
Miavaig, Uig, Isle Of Lewis.

### Furious over high delivery surcharges

Sir,  
At this time of year many people will be shopping online for presents for loved ones and friends.

As broadband continues to be rolled out across the Highlands and Islands, people want to take advantage of the choice and bargains offered online. I am a big supporter of supporting our local shops which should always be our first port of call but I know in many rural areas we can't always find the goods we want locally.

So often when ordering goods, the sky high parcel delivery surcharges are completely shocking. So many companies charge consumers in the Highlands so much more than they charge consumers in the rest of the UK. For instance, it's outrageous that some retailers don't include mainland Scotland in their definition of 'mainland UK', meaning we lose out on many retailers' offers of free or low-cost delivery charges. Some of the delivery surcharges imposed on local homes and businesses I've heard about are staggering.

That's why I am working with my MSP colleague Richard Lochhead, who has a campaign website www.fair-deliverycharges.scot where the public can support the call for action to stop retailers and courier companies who want our custom ripping us off.

I can also be contacted at kate.forbes.msp@parliament.scot if anyone wishes to let me know about their experiences.

Kate Forbes MSP,  
12 High Street, Dingwall.

### Thanks for building memorial cairn

Sir,  
I have recently been sent a copy of your paper dated July 20, with the article about the cairn marking the crash of the 206 Squadron Shackleton in 1967.



During the interval dance instructor Claire Hutchison led a conga line around the hall. 17\_T50\_Danceshow08



One of the Born to Move dancers was sporting an Oban Times Christmas hat. 17\_T50\_Danceshow03



Hands up for the Atlantis Leisure's Winter Dance Show. 17\_T50\_Danceshow08

## 100 dancers step out for winter show

MORE than 100 children performed at Atlantis Leisure's Winter Dance Show on Friday night.

Over the past few months, the youngsters have been working hard to perfect their routines in time for the annual event.

All proceeds from the show will go into the 25th anniversary fund that aims to upgrade the changing rooms and toilets in the leisure centre.

Before the event, the fund was sitting at £3,000. Additional fundraising events will take place throughout the year.

A special mention goes out to Atlantis instructors Rebecca Sims, Jade Brown, Claire Hutchison, Kelly Lamont, Kirsty Kennedy, Sophie MacInnes and Stewart Twort, as well as Oban High School's Cara Potts and Louis Barrow for providing lights and curtains.

All the teachers would like to say well done to all the fantastic performers, and how proud they are of all the hard work that has been put in over the past few months.



More than 100 children took part in Atlantis Leisure's Winter Dance Show. 17\_T50\_Danceshow08



Children copy Rebecca Sims and Claire Hutchison for a Born To Move dance session. 17\_T50\_Danceshow07



Streamers were much in evidence in this routine. 17\_T50\_Danceshow08



Jade Brown leads her young dancers who opened the show. 17\_T50\_Danceshow01

## Last chance to visit Santa in Oban

Saturday will be the last chance for children to receive a present from Santa in his Oban grotto. Father Christmas will be located next to the TSB Bank on Airds Crescent, Oban, from 11am until 4pm. He was there last week handing out gifts to youngsters, including twins Jorgia and Jemma MacDonald, thanks to the Oban and Lorn Lions Club, who 'beg and borrow' to make the annual event happen.

'It's been great,' the club said. 'Everyone who has been here is happy to see Santa. We are very grateful to the owners for letting us have this for two days. It's an ideal spot. A lot of people come together to make it work – and the children get really good presents.'

Joining Santa for the day will be Mrs Claus, an elf, a lion, a turkey, and there will also be a number of craft stalls.

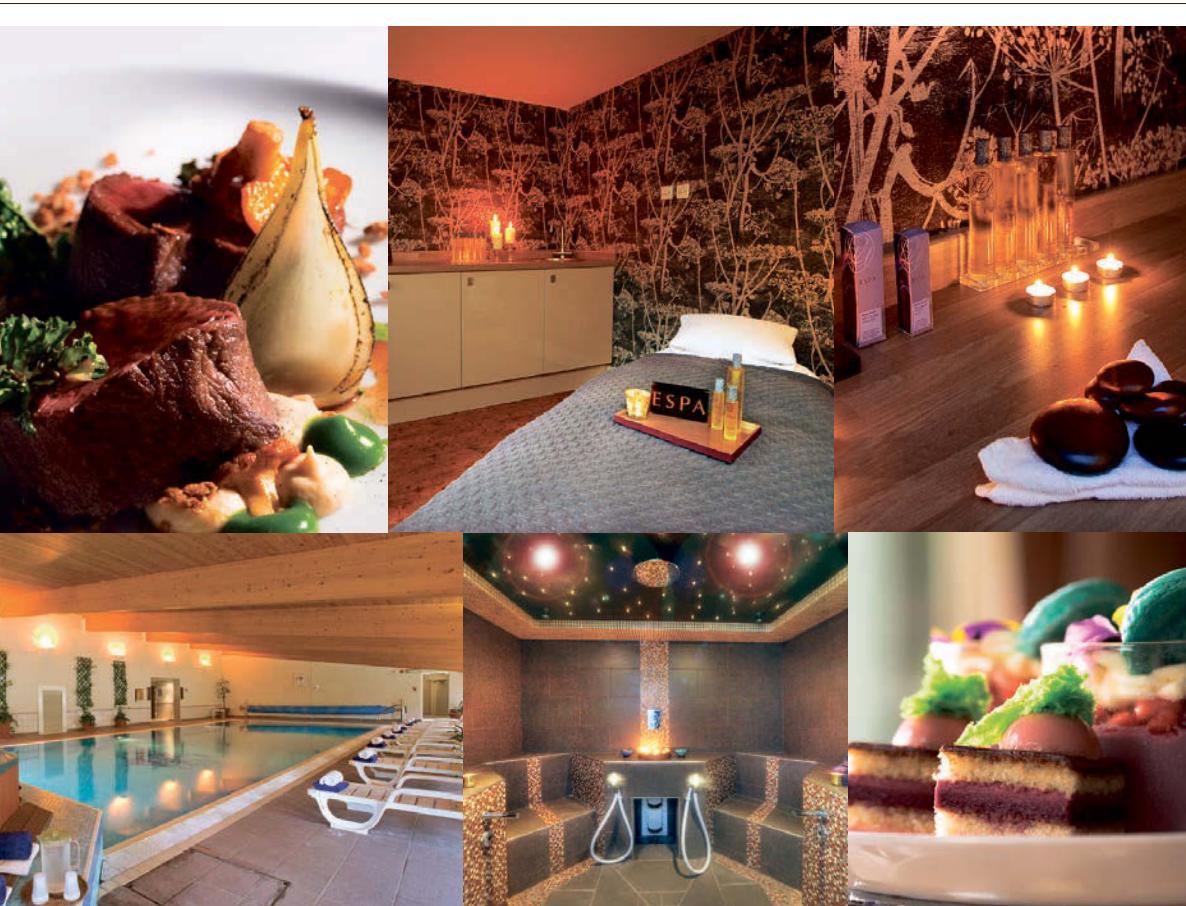


## Santa helps to raise £286 at Soroba grotto

Santa and Mrs Claus visited Soroba last weekend and helped to raise £286. The Soroba Santa's grotto featured various activities, such as children's face painting, raffles, games and other competitions. The youngsters also had the chance to meet and give a letter to Santa. The money raised will be used to help build an Oban community centre in Soroba.

**Isle of Eriska**  
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Part of the ICMI Collection

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Argyll, PA37 1SD  
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e: office@eriska-hotel.co.uk



*Indulge...*

...in our Spa. Open to non-residents.  
(SPA, Gym, Pool, Jacuzzi, Sauna & Steam Room)

£40 for day use of leisure facilities  
£59 for day use of leisure facilities with Afternoon Tea  
£65 for day use of leisure facilities with 3 Course Lunch

*Advance booking required. Please note treatments are additional and need to be booked direct with the SPA*  
*(excludes 23rd December to 3rd January)*

# Arena

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

## WHAT'S ON IN O B A N

In partnership with Oban Town Diary

[bid4oban.co.uk](http://bid4oban.co.uk)



Thursday	Sunday
14th December	17th December
Lochaber's Christmas Carol Extravaganza Nevis Centre, Fort William 7pm	Inverawe Smokery Shop Open 10am-4pm 9th-24th December
Inverawe Smokery Shop Open 10am-4pm 9th-24th December	Craftwork Makers Meet Up The Rockfield Centre 1pm-4pm
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Pool table Big Screen live sports	Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Pool table Big Screen live sports
Friday	Christmas Coffee Afternoon (Men's Shed) Rockfield Centre 2pm-4pm
15th December	Monday
Toy Cupboard Glencruitten Church 10am-12pm	18th December
Inverawe Smokery Shop Open 10am-4pm 9th-24th December	Inverawe Smokery Shop Open 10am-4pm 9th-24th December
Boys Brigade Oban Congregational Church 6pm-9pm	Oban Photographic Club Meeting Regent Hotel 7.15pm-9.30pm
Blether - Christmas in Oban The Rockfield Centre 2pm-4pm	Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Pool table Big Screen live sports
Scratch Choir #15 The Rockfield Centre 8pm-10pm	Tuesday
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Party Night With George Noble 9pm till late	19th December
Saturday	Inverawe Smokery Shop Open 10am-4pm 9th-24th December
16th December	Ganavan Sands Parkrun 9.30am-11am
Hill Walk Glenfinnan Glenfinnan, Highland All day	Gaelic Toy Cupboard Undercroft Church Centre 1.30pm-3.30pm
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Party night with Still Water 9pm till late	Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Pool table Big Screen live sports
Inverawe Smokery Shop Open 10am-4pm 9th-24th December	The Messiah (A Shortened Version) Oban Parish Church 7.30pm-9pm
Wednesday	Wednesday
Visit Santa Airds Crescent (next to TSB Bank) 11am - 4pm	20th December
Cearcall Comhraidh (Gaelic Conversation Group) Furan Gaelic Centre, 12pm-1.30pm	Toy Cupboard Undercroft Church Centre, 10am-12pm
Christmas Exhibition Kilmore Hall 12pm-5pm	Cancer Support Services - Drop in Wednesday Oban Library, 2.15pm-4.15pm
Taynuilt Christmas Ceilidh Taynuilt Village Hall 7pm, Adults £4, children £2	Inverawe Smokery Shop Open 10am-4pm 9th-24th December
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Pool table Big Screen live sports	Entertainment@ Coasters Bar Pool table Big Screen live sports

Events may charge. Please visit [www.obanwhatson.co.uk](http://www.obanwhatson.co.uk) for more details.

To list your event, please call 01631 568000

### The Oban Times supports local charities and not-for-profit event organisers.

Let us know about your forthcoming event to appear for free in our listings, in association with Oban Town Diary.

We have reduced our community noticeboard box adverts to just £10 plus VAT (where VAT is applicable)

Put your event in front of 25,000 readers and also see what we can offer you by promoting your event online - we have over 11,000 followers on Facebook and 36,000 monthly visitors to [www.obantimes.co.uk](http://www.obantimes.co.uk)

It pay to advertise with The Oban Times - first for community news, business news and events throughout Oban, Lochaber and the West Highlands.

Contact Nadine or Rhona on 01631 568000

**The Oban Times**  
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

## Glittering show at Rockfield Nativity

Rockfield Primary School, or Bun Sgoil Achadh na Creige, performed a magnificent Nativity play to a packed assembly hall of proud parents on Tuesday morning.

The spectacular half hour show delighted the audience, featuring a sparkling Bethlehem set, cheerful Christmas songs, and pupils

dressed in costume as angels, kings, wise men, sheep and cows.

After the play, head teacher Caroline Fothergill took to the stage to thank all the

children and their teachers for all their hard work, and the parents for their support.

The morning, she added, made her feel like she had the best job in the world.



## Last minute Christmas Gift Guide

Dual language fully illustrated story books for learners of Gaelic ~ with audio  
and now a learner's dictionary/phrasebook

[www.lexusforlanguages.co.uk](http://www.lexusforlanguages.co.uk)  
0141 556 0440

**Barra Gin**

Barra Gin showcases a perfect balance of floral and herbal on the nose, leading to juniper, citrus and dulcet carrageen rolling across the tongue like mighty Atlantic surf breaking on Barra shores.

Refreshing and clean, with a long, gratifyingly warm spice finish that opens out like the vast vista surrounding our beautifully remote home.

Buy now at [www.isleofbarradistillers.com](http://www.isleofbarradistillers.com) £37.00 70cl Bottle Free Postage from Sunday the 10th December to Sunday the 17th December.

## Your Christmas Greetings

IAN & SHEILA CAMPBELL & FAMILY, ARDENLEE, PULPIT HILL would like to wish all their relatives, friends & neighbours a Merry Christmas.

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to all our friends & neighbours from George & Isabel Cormack, Oban

IAN & MOIRA MACINNES GlenInnes, Croft Road, Oban Would like to wish all relatives, friends and loyal supportive neighbours a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Peaceful and very Happy New Year.

Merry Christmas & a Happy & healthy New Year to family, friends & neighbours from Catherine Ferguson, Connel.

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to all my relatives, friends and neighbours from Alex Fletcher, Mull

RHODA GROSS, OBAN would like to wish all her relatives, friends and neighbours a merry Christmas.

HELEN HOPE wishes you all a happy and peaceful Christmas & New Year XXX  
New Address: 9 Dochas Place Lochgilphead

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year From The Lord MacLean of Bentalla

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to all my friends & relations in Lismore, Appin, Benderloch, Connel, Taynuilt, Lochawe, Dalmally and Oban. All the best for 2018. James MacArthur

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Elizabeth MacCallum, North Argyll Care Home.

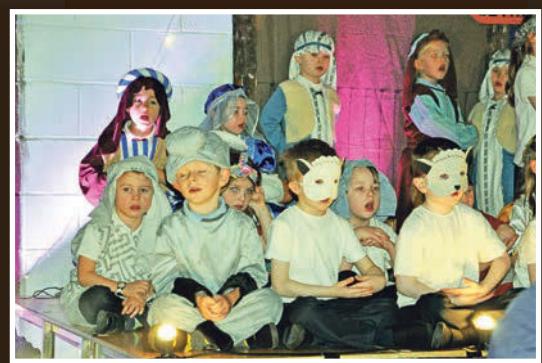
Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to all my relatives, friends & neighbours from Maureen MacIntyre, Oban

JESSIE AND GLEN MACKELLAR would like to wish all relatives, friends and customers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to all my friends & neighbours best wishes from Hamish MacMillan, Appin.

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to all my friends & neighbours best wishes from Helen McEwan, Oban.





## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

If you would like to advertise in the Oban Times Community Noticeboard please call 01631 568000

**Christmas Coffee Afternoon**  
In Aid of Oban's Men Shed  
Sunday 17th December 2017, 2-4pm  
@ The Rockfield Centre  
Crafts, Scarves, Knitwear,  
Children's Clothing  
Tea, Coffee and Home Baking  
Everyone Welcome

AnComunnGàidhealach - MeurChruachain  
**Taynuilt Christmas Ceilidh**  
Mary Catherine MacNeil  
John Joe MacNeil  
Taynuilt Primary School Choir  
Plus Full supporting programme  
Saturday 16th December  
Taynuilt Village Hall, 7.00pm\*  
\*Please note ceilidh start time  
Stovies Supper and Hamper Raffle  
Adults - £4 Children £2

**Inverawe Smokery Shop & Café**  
**OPEN December 9th – 24th**  
10am - 4pm, 7 days a week  
For the best Smoked Salmon & Christmas Terrines  
Enjoy the café and walks  
Taynuilt, PA35 1HU Tel 01866 822808

## JOIN US AT THE BIGGEST AND BEST HOGMANAY SHOW IN THE NEVIS CENTRE



Hogmanay at the Nevis Centre is as much a Lochaber tradition as bringing in the New Year with the bells and Auld Lang Syne – except this year it is going to be very much better!

Doors will be open from 8.00pm on December 31st, with entertainment from award winning local band 'Wonderland' starting at 9.00pm. Then at 10.30pm the world-renowned Fergie Macdonald takes the stage to see you through the bells and into 2018 with his own brand of rip-roaring ceilidh music. With "Wonderland" coming back on stage at 12.30am to take us through until the close of the night.

Tickets are £25 each with tables of 8 available. Tickets can be bought over the phone with a card or pop in and see us.



find us on facebook  
www.facebook.com/obantimes

## OFFERS & competitions

To enter, send separate entries (in the same envelope) with your name, address, telephone number and email address to Scottish Field Competitions, Fettes Park, 496 Ferry Road, Edinburgh EH5 2DL or enter at www.scottishfield.co.uk. Closing date, unless otherwise stated, is 31 January 2018. Winners drawn from all competitions also enter a prize draw to win a bottle of Berry Bros. & Rudd Islay Reserve whisky.

### WIN

A PAIR OF FAIRFAX AND FAVOR REGINA BOOTS WORTH £329

A Hume Country Clothing, a lifestyle country clothing retailer based in Kelso in the heart of the Scottish Borders, are offering one lucky reader the opportunity to win a pair of Fairfax and Favor Regina Boots.

Fairfax and Favor were founded in 2013 with the aim of bridging the gap between smart and casual. Whether you are required to dress up for an occasion – or down, Fairfax and Favor can provide you with the perfect blend of traditional British style and modern contemporary elegance.

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN, just answer the following question: In what year was Fairfax and Favor established?



### WIN

AN EPICUREAN INDULGENCE AND STAY FOR TWO AT THE PEAT INN BY ST ANDREWS



Relax in your suite before a beautifully crafted six course tasting menu. In the morning, indulge in breakfast in your suite. The Peat Inn, by St Andrews is a luxury 5-star Restaurant with Rooms in peaceful surroundings. Michelin Star Chef Proprietor, Geoffrey Smeddle, uses the finest Scottish ingredients to create delicious and contemporary cuisine. The Residence provides eight luxurious suites with views over the countryside – heavenly for a quiet getaway.

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN, just answer the following question: How many suites does The Peat Inn have?

Valid Tuesday – Thursday, subject to availability, based on two people sharing a twin or double room for one night. Drinks are not included. Must be taken by 21st May 2018.

Entrants must be 18 or over. Employees of Scottish Field, the competition promoters, and their direct families are ineligible to enter. No purchase necessary. The winner will be first correct entry drawn after closing date. No cash alternative is available. The winner will be informed by telephone. Promoter reserves the right to request post publicity. Indicate if you do not wish to receive further information from promoter. Usual Scottish Field rules apply. Information will be shared with promoters and sponsors.

## Your local radio listings

**OBAN FM**

Community Radio -  
your local radio station  
Tune in to 103.3 or listen  
live at [www.obanfm.com](http://www.obanfm.com)

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

**MONDAY:** 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 9.00 Monday Morning with Stephen, 11.00 Ian Simmonds on Monday, 17.00 Drivetime, 19.00 Rosie's Highland Fling with Rosie Macoll, 20.00 John McCullie's Show, 21.00 David Cullen show, 23.00 Station close down

**TUESDAY:** 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 10.00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday Morning, 13.00 Macky on FM, 17.00 Drivetime Jim Lynch, 19.00 Highest Praise - Stuart Chalmers, 20.00 Archie Darlings's Mix, 22.00 Clyde 2

**WEDNESDAY:** 08.00 AM on FM, 08.10 Breakfast Show, 09.00 Sound Scottish Repeat, 10.00 Comfort Zone, Doug Carmichael, 11.00 Comfort Zone, 12.00 Comfort Zone, 15.00 The Wednesday Jukebox with Michelle 17.00 Drivetime with Campbell, 19.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll - Lee + Ken, 20.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll, 21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre

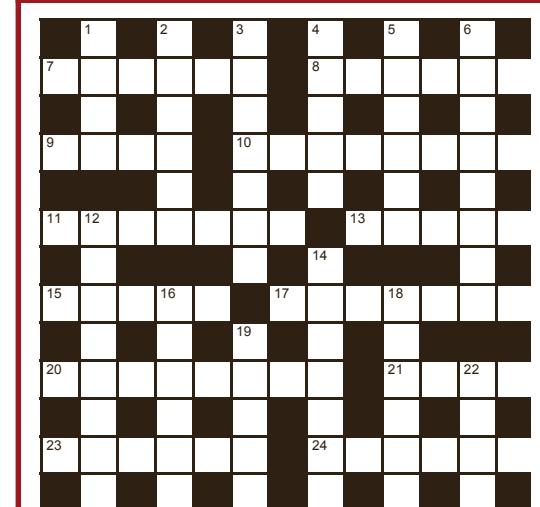
**THURSDAY:** 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13.00 Molly's Mix, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen, 17.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 18.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00 Christines Collection, 20.00 Christine's CD Collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight, 11.00 Margo Till Midnight

**FRIDAY:** 08.00 Breakfast Show with Laura, 10.00 Teeny and Tiny, 17.00 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 17.30 Drive Show, 18.45 Sports View, 19.00 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 20.00 Lewis Bingham, 21.00 Peter Rannnie

**SATURDAY:** 08.00 Breakfast Show with Stephen 10.00 Sat Morning Live, 11.00 Saturday Morning, 12.00 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowther, 12.03 Sat Morning Live, 12.05 Saturday Morning Live, 13.30 Clyde, 18.00 Sports View - Dream Team, 19.00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20.00 Dave Lewis, 22.00 Margo Till Midnight

**SUNDAY:** 09.00 Sunday Morning With Breege, 10.00 Sunday Morning, 11.00 Sunday Brunch With Archie, 12.00 Sunday Brunch, 16.30 Archie Darling, 18.00 Ken's Friends - Ken Hunter, 19.00 New Country Show - David Entwhistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass - Graham Scott, 23.00 Station Close Down

## THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



This weeks Main Course is bought to you by Kenny Meldrum, head chef at The Regent Hotel



### *Stewed Featherblade of Beef with Anchovy Scones*

Serves 4

**Method**  
Rub the butter and flour until breadcrumbs, add pepper and Anchovy. Add Rosemary, egg and milk. Roll into scones. Use a casserole dish and preheat the oven to 170°C.

Fry beef until sealed all sides. Place in the dish then add the onion, carrots, Thyme, Bay leaf and Peppercorns. Cook for about 4 minutes, add wine and reduce by half, then add stock and cook for 1hour and 15mins. Remove from oven and add the scones, return to the oven and turn up to 180°C for 30mins. Serve with seasonal veg.

Open 7 days a week from 5pm-9pm  
Book Now Tel: 01631 562341



**Across**  
7 Skill (6)  
8 Madly (6)  
9 One after (4)  
10 Bad turnout for planned do (8)

11 Pray (7)  
13 Skirt fold (5)  
15 Last word in fats (5)

17 Part of a board (7)

20 Mechanically putting to paper (8)

21 Dapper man (4)

23 One hundred percent (6)

24 Indigenous (6)

**Down**  
1 Cloak (4)

2 Drive up the wall (6)

3 College goer (7)

4 Lowlife (5)

5 Old English exam (1,5)

6 Stretch (8)

12 Many (8)

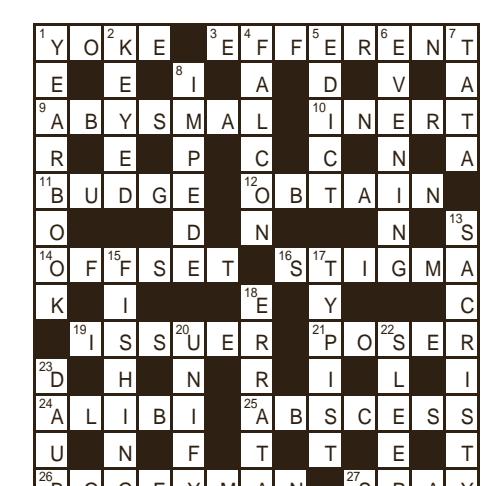
14 Herb (7)

16 Greedy bird (6)

18 Unruffled (6)

19 Witch (5)

22 Prima donna (4)



# Arena

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

## Spotlight's Rapunzel went down a treat with pantomime-goers



The cast of Rapunzel at the Corran Halls last week. T50\_Rapunzel. Pictures: Debbie Day

MORE than 1,500 pantomime-goers let their hair down last week and watched Rapunzel in the Corran Halls.

The tangled tale was produced by Spotlight Musical Theatre Group, and it proved to be a hair-raising production.

After everyone had parted ways, Spotlight Musical Theatre Group said on its social media page: 'Thank you all for visiting the kingdom of Bouffant this week.'

'We've had a magical time entertaining you for this year's Oban panto.'

'Merry Christmas from the cast and crew of Rapunzel –'

A Tangled Tale.' The sheer scale of the production was head and shoulders above the rest, with something for everyone.

It featured a beautiful princess, a wicked witch, a bunch of fairies, the King and Queen, some clueless cronies, an overbearing nurse, a royal gofer and a handsome prince.

There was plenty of romance, slapstick and laughs along with some great musical numbers thrown in for good measure.

To stay up to date with future shows, search Spotlight Musical Theatre Group on social media.



## Oban High School Pipe Band to play at Oban Live this year



Oban High School Pipe Band achieve amazing success at the Scottish Championships.

Oban Live announced that Oban High School Pipe band will perform at next year's festival following their success this year.

This news comes as part of Oban Live's 10-day campaign, which sees the festival declare one act every day for 10 days, with the OHS Pipe

Band being the sixth announcement.

Other bands playing will be Skerryvore, Heron Valley and Hermitage Green.

Also announced was that the Oban Unsigned competition will be back for another year, in collaboration with The Oban Times.

Throughout the campaign, which ran until Sunday December 10, people could receive a 10 per cent discount on tickets – which went back on sale at their full price from Monday December 11.

Oban Live 2018 festival will take place on June 8 and 9.

## Glasgow Letter

### Looking for a Christmas present?

Nowadays, it seems people start buying their Christmas presents in August and are generally finished long before the first snow falls on the hills and the John Lewis advert reaches our televisions.

If, however, you are like me and run about at the last minute looking for presents, then look no further than the winter festival held in For Fika Sake - an

artisan cafe on Keith Street, Partick.

This is a two-week event featuring live music along with cocktails, craft beers and mulled wine - running until Thursday December 21. There are more details on the venue's website and it is well worth a look.

Two perfect Christmas presents for west coasters which will be available for tasting in the cafe are Tyree Gin and Wester Rum.

(both from Ardnachurchan) - all talented musicians and driven businessmen.

Tyree Gin but it occurred to me recently that I had neglected to write an equivalent article about Wester Rum.

Both spirits are produced by friends of mine: Tyree Gin by Ian Smith and Alain Campbell and Wester Rum by Allan Nairn and Zander MacGregor

(both from Ardnachurchan) - all talented musicians and driven businessmen.

Wester Rum takes its name from the Wester Sugar House Company

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



which was established in Glasgow's Candleriggs in 1667. For more than a century it built a reputation for refining sugar and distilling rum.

As well as being a lovely tipple, rum is a spirit with many practical purposes. Legend has it that the body of Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson was preserved in a cask of rum before being shipped back to England after the battle of Trafalgar.

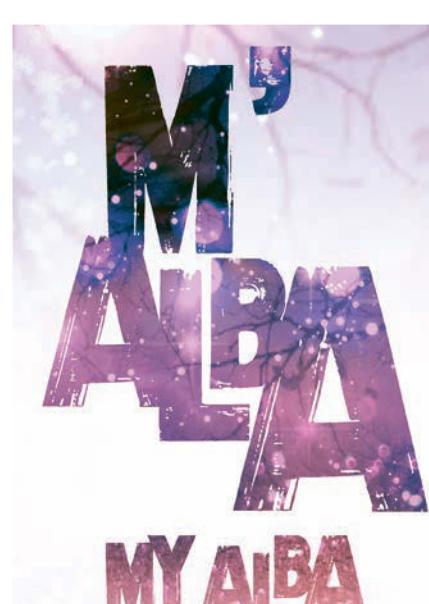
Later, it was discovered that a hole had been drilled into the bottom of the cask so that all the sailors could drink the rum during the journey.

Rum, of course, was thought to keep away scurvy but, with the benefit of modern science, we now know that it was actually the accompanying lime provided by the British navy that boosted vitamin C levels.

In the 1800s, rum was highly revered as a beauty product for its ability to clean hair and strengthen its roots. So, the moral behind my series of rum facts is as follows: if you are coming down to Glasgow for a Christmas night out and want to avoid sea-sickness and scurvy, or if you want to keep your hair beautifully conditioned for your annual trip to the teuchter triangle - it's time for rum (with or without lime)!

### Pub scene

Islay Inn.  
Friday December 15: Crooked Reel.  
Saturday December 16: The Raggaels.  
Sunday December 17: Calum Macphail.



### DIARDAOIN 14 DÙBLACHD

THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

18.35 Dè a-nis?

19.05 Tàthadh - Doune (rpt)

19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)

19.55 Binneas - Na Trads - The Shee

20.00 An Lá - News

20.30 ÚR|NEW! Eòra

21.00 A' Fagail Bharraigh - personal stories of historical and family links between Barra and Canada (rpt)

21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Cànan (rpt)

22.00 Feis Chùil Thriodh - Highlights from 2016 (rpt)

22.30 ÚR|NEW!: The Equalizer - Na

Geamannan Co-ionnan - Athletes competing with old-school ways (rpt)

23.20 Dhan Uisge - Loch Lomond (rpt)

23.30 Fonn Fonn (rpt)

DIHAOINE 15 DÙBLACHD

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

19.00 An Lá - News

19.25 Earrann Eachdraidh - History

### SHOTS (rpt)

19.30 Alibisidh - Quiz Show (rpt)

20.00 Togaidh Sinn Fonn - a selection of Scotland's best musicians and singers (rpt)

20.25 Binneas - Na Trads - The Shee (rpt)

20.30 Bannan: Air Cùl a' Chamara (rpt)

21.00 Peter Manuel - Deireadh an Ulc - Questioning the mental state of the notorious serial killer 50 years after he was hanged (rpt)

22.00 Lorient is Alba: Scotland's Year (rpt)

22.30 Dhan Uisge (rpt)

23.00 The Equalizer - Na Geamannan Co-ionnan - Athletes competing with old-school ways (rpt)

23.30 Fonn Fonn (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 16 DÙBLACHD

SATURDAY 16 DECEMBER

16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

18.00 ÚR|NEW! Scottish Premiership - Dundee v Partick Thistle

20.00 Alibisidh - Quiz show (rpt)

20.30 Eòra (rpt)

21.00 ÚR|NEW!: Lorient is Alba:

Scotland's Year

22.00 An Lùib nam Boireannach - light hearted romp through our favorite characters told through the eyes of the actor (rpt)

DILUAIN 18 DÙBLACHD

MONDAY 18 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

19.00 Insean an lar - Hebrides (rpt)

19.25 Dhan Uisge - Loch Coruisk (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 19 DÙBLACHD

TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

19.00 Tàthadh - Achnacarry (rpt)

19.25 Binneas - Na Trads - Kathleen MacInnes (rpt)

19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)

19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh - History shorts (rpt)

20.00 An Lá - News

20.30 Air an Smùid - the battle to save a rusting old puffer (rpt)

21.00 Opry an lùir (rpt)

21.55 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan - White

22.00 Cuimh @ Celtic - Le Vent du Nord (rpt)

22.30 Fùine na Nollaig - Mairi MacCrimie (rpt)

23.00 Feis Chùil Thriodh - Highlights from 2016 (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 20 DÙBLACHD

WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

18.30 ÚR|NEW!: Dè a-nis? (rpt)

19.00 Insean an lar - Hebrides (rpt)

19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)

19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh - history shorts (rpt)

20.00 An Lá - News

20.30 ÚR|NEW!: Thugue Seo - Donald MacLean

21.00 Fionn Fonn (rpt)

22.30 Cuimh @ Celtic - Mairi Nic a Ghobhainn (rpt)

23.00 A' Fagail Bharraigh - personal stories of historical and family links between Barra and Canada (rpt)

23.30 Fionn Fonn (rpt)

### 22.55 Scottish Premiership - Dundee v Partick Thistle (rpt)

19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh - History shorts (rpt)

20.00 An Lá - News

20.30 Peigi Wood - Na Bannan (rpt)

21.00 ÚR|NEW!: Trusadh - An Aird - Gallan Head Community Trust on Lewis are on a mission to purchase an abandoned cold water radar base (rpt)

22.00 ÚR|NEW!: Quay Sessions - Lucy Spraggan

23.25 Alleluia (rpt)

DICIADAIN 21 DÙBLACHD

THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

18.30 Dè a-nis? (rpt)

19.00 Tàthadh - Achnacarry (rpt)

19.25 Binneas - Na Trads - Kathleen MacInnes (rpt)

19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)

19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh - history shorts (rpt)

20.00 An Lá - News

20.30 ÚR|NEW!: Linn de Dhealbhán - Bella Hardy (rpt)

22.25 Comhstri Scott & Amundsen - challenging the most hostile territory to reach the South Pole (rpt)

23.20 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan - Bella Hardy (rpt)

23.30 Fionn Fonn (rpt)</p



## I'll Sing On



Catriona Maclean Mackinnon.

The 'feisty' Skye choir-master who taught Sabhal Mor Ostaig's founder to speak Gaelic and told him to burn his scruffy jacket is the subject of a new book raising money to help cure the cancer that ended her life early.

*I'll Sing On*, which launched at the Skye Book Festival, tells the story of a girl of Lewis and Skye parentage, Catriona Maclean Mackinnon. Catriona, an enthusiastic singer, harpist and Gaelic choirmaster, who developed Hodgkin lymphoma while still a young wife and mother.

*I'll Sing On* tells the story of her feisty personality, her passion for music and her struggles with health and faith. It relates her happy childhood in Glasgow, family tragedy and then success at the RSAMD, now the Royal Conservatoire.

Married and living in Skye, she revived the Broadford Gaelic choir. The first outing to the Inverness Mòd was an uproarious but successful occasion. She also sang successfully at Mòds, the Pan Celtic Festival and other venues including the BBC.

The author Gilbert McKinnon wrote: 'Still a young wife and mother, she was diagnosed with the shocking news that she was suffering from a life-threatening illness. Showing impressive strength of character, she decided to press on with her commitment to music and her struggle for perfection.'

In the midst of this, she unexpectedly found Christian faith and showed ongoing commitment in trying to reach an understanding of her faith and in determining how to live out that faith in the context of her music culture. Her many letters reveal her spiritual journey in those days.

'Loved by many, she was an inspiration to others. As one of her friends said, "Somehow, she worried her way into your affection, like a little terrier. All the time, you knew that whatever mood she wore on the surface, underneath it all a deadly fight was going on. She never lowered the flag".'

She and her husband Neil were friends of Sir Iain Noble, and Catriona helped to teach him Gaelic while his plans for Sabhal Mor Ostaig were still formulating.

Sir Iain would arrive at their mobile home for a Gaelic lesson, often wearing an old sports jacket which he found familiar and comfortable. Catriona would mischievously tease him about the worn elbows and cuffs and tell him to throw the jacket in the waste bin. Neil later scolded her for being cheeky but she responded: 'He knows perfectly well he shouldn't go around with a scruffy jacket like that.'

Graciously, Iain never took offence. Instead, he arrived one day still wearing the jacket but with new leather elbow patches and leather cuffs that had been carefully added by an Edinburgh tailor.

In the midst of this,

Mor, including the first fairly informal concert there in the early days of the college. The Noble family of Ardkinglas, Argyll, had long been supportive of the arts at the RSAMD.

When she next spoke to Neil, she said: 'You should have heard the speech that he made. It really shook me and I thought of the abuse I had given him in the caravan when I told him to go and burn his jacket.' Neil said: 'I told you time and again to be careful what you said to him.' But Iain did not mind. He would never take offence; he just laughed.

He encouraged her musically and she played several times at Sabhal



Catriona Maclean Mackinnon, right, and her big sister Catriona at the Mòd in Largs, 1956.

Taylor, wrote a poem for Catriona, *Leac a' Clàrsair, The Rock of the Harper*. This is the name given to a stone on the hillside some distance from the road between Harrapool, Broadford, and the village of Heaste.

The stone lies on the shore of a hillside loch, beside a hazel copse near some outcrops of limestone in an area where some rare flowers are found and blue butterflies can be seen, a species found only near limestone. A beautiful spot in spring, it may have been a place where a harpist had long ago played in solitude; it may also have been so named because the flat slab of rock itself looked like the shape of a harp.

*Leac a' Clàrsair, The Rock of the Harper*

A lady living in Broadford, Lucy Sanderson

### LEAC A' CLÀRSAIR

(for Catriona Maclean)

The air was vibrant round the hills,  
As if myriad strings  
Moved varied wave beats,  
Merging and rebounding,  
Sounding,  
Across the piles of peats,  
The tones and overtones the sea flings  
In broken chords on shelves and sills,  
Far distant, far below  
That field where moorland flowers grow,  
And faint remembrance of sweet music stirred  
By Leac a' Clàrsair.  
Time to forget had filled my days  
With crowded sense and thought,  
Till, in the hour of ceilidh,  
Suddenly chords were ringing,  
Singing  
Sweetly, passionately, gaily,  
In cadence and theme so finely you caught  
The rapture, the love, the pity, the praise.  
Once more they overflow  
That field where moorland flowers grow,  
And living presence of sweet music stirs  
By Leac a' Clàrsair.

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ADVERTORIAL

## Will your pension go to the wrong person?

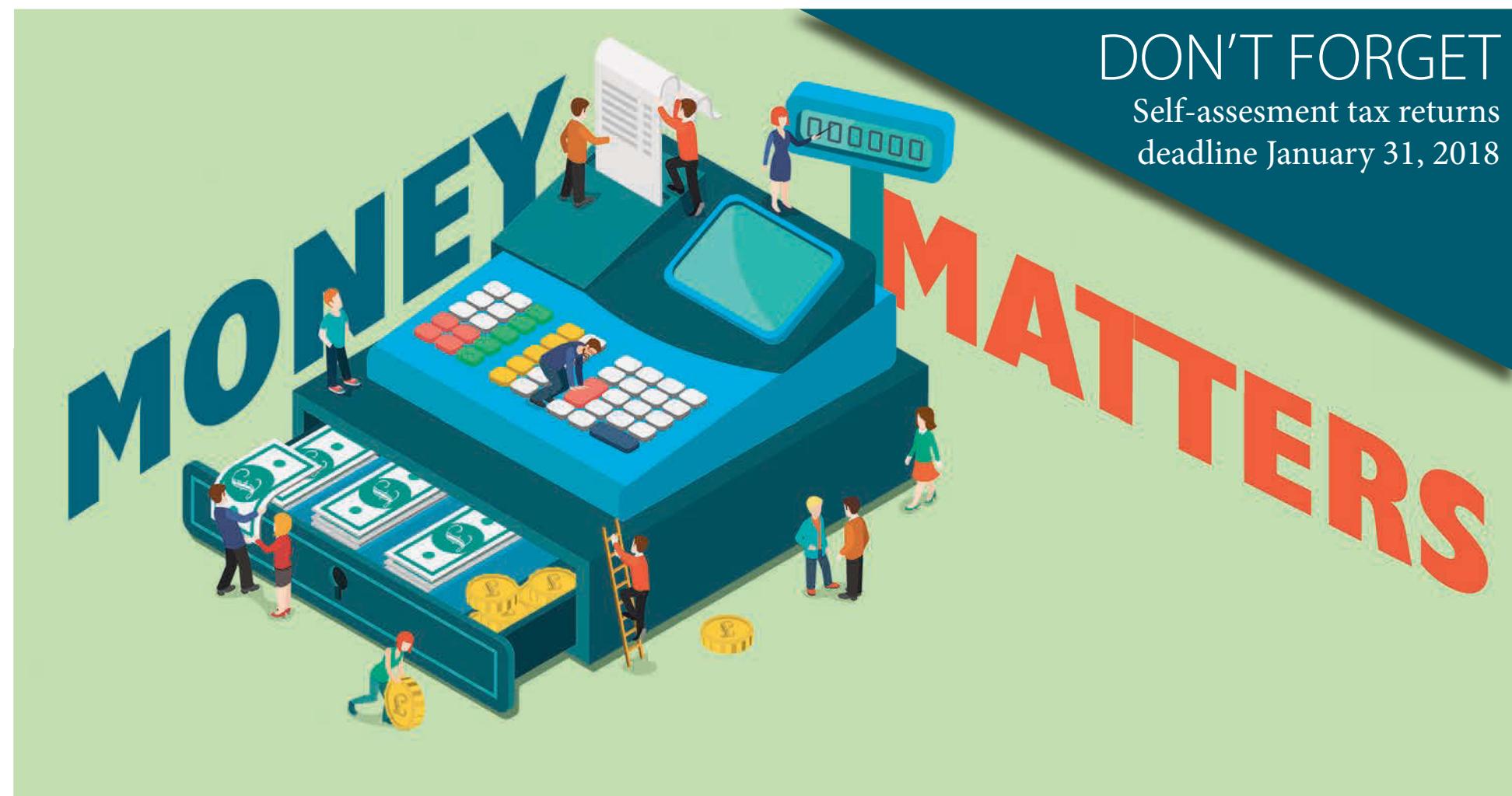
It can come as a surprise to many people to learn that their pension doesn't form part of their estate on death. Unlike property, savings and investments which can all be dealt with under the terms of your will, who gets your pension savings depends on who you nominated when you were asked to complete an 'expression of wishes' form by your pension provider.

As it isn't compulsory to provide beneficiary details and return the form, some people overlook this important step. This can mean a considerable delay in the payment of pension benefits to dependants.

Other complications can arise. If you nominated a previous spouse to receive your pension benefits but subsequently remarry and don't update the form, then this could mean that your ex-spouse would end up benefiting instead. It could also mean that children and stepchildren may not be provided for. Making life easy for those you leave behind.

When completing the nomination form, it's a good idea to provide the full names of all your intended beneficiaries, so, rather than just nominating your children, for example, it makes sense to name them individually.

Make sure you have a current copy of your nomination form and keep it in a safe place with your will and other important documents.



## BUSINESS

New data protection laws just around the corner

WHILE it is easy to focus on the obvious financial tasks looming towards the end of the year – tax and VAT returns – the new year will bring a significant change in data protection law which could have financial implications if not implemented properly.

On May 25, 2018, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into being and will operate alongside the UK's own data protection laws.

Although in the process of extracting itself from the EU, the UK is likely to transfer GDPR into domestic law post-Brexit.

And now is the time to start looking at how the new law will affect your business.

GDPR has been introduced to give individuals more rights over information held about them, including the right to be forgotten, to access their data and to ask questions as required – with a few exceptions.

Businesses of any size that process data, even on paper, will need to keep stringent records of how that data is handled, where it is stored, whether it is shared with a third party and whether it is actually needed – and if they don't the fines can be up to a maximum of £20million or four per cent of global turnover.

When gathering personal data, businesses are required to tell people who they are and what they are going to use that information for but under the new law this privacy notice will include further requirements.

A recommended first step is for a business to map all the personal data that it holds.

What constitutes personal data can be something of a grey area but in its simplest form refers to anything that could lead to the identification of a person – not just names, addresses and phone numbers but photos, IP addresses and email addresses.

For example, while many people may not know the names of their neighbours, they would be able to identify them.

The advice is to err on the side of caution by making sure any data stored is secure, using data encryption and cyber security where it is digitally stored and under lock and key when on paper; it is not stored for longer than it is needed; and steps are taken to reduce the amount of data stored.

Any security breach, which the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO\*) defines as anything that leads to the destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data must be notified to the ICO within 72 hours of a business being aware of it.

While companies employing more than 250 people must appoint a data protection officer, it is worth electing someone to be responsible to oversee how data is handled and processed, who keeps up-to-date with GDPR developments, handles any breach and acts as a point of contact for employees.

\* The ICO has a 12-step guide to preparing for the new regulations available at its website <https://ico.org.uk/media/1624219/preparing-for-the-gdpr-12-steps.pdf>

Make a list and work out what you can realistically afford to spend on each person – and stick to that budget.

Don't forget about your day-to-day, monthly or even annual bills. Is your car insurance due in December or even January? Are you planning a long trip to see relatives and need to fill your car with fuel several times? Are you playing host to a large number of friends and family at Christmas? Make sure you set aside the money you need for these things too.

If this kind of budgeting is too late for you this year and you have already hit the limit, there are things you can do to mitigate your debts if you have no savings to fall back on.

Don't take out any credit agreements without first checking how much you have to repay in total – there may be cheaper ways of borrowing – and make sure you can afford the repayments in the time given.

Talk to your bank about an overdraft before you run one up – there can often be high penalties for getting overdrawn without first having an agreement with your bank.

If you have to use a credit card, shop around for the best terms and interest rates but budget for repayments and make a diary note of the end of any interest-free agreements.

Taking just one credit card, with the lowest interest rate, shopping can help keep things manageable. Try to pay off your credit card debt as soon as possible, to avoid accruing interest.

If in the new year everything seems to be spiralling out of control, there are a number of agencies that offer free advice on how to manage your finances and get everything back under control.

These include, but are not limited to, Citizens' Advice Scotland, StepChange Debt Charity (formerly the Consumer Credit Counselling Service), National Debtline and Money Advice Scotland.

Most organisations will also offer help in managing repayments of debts owed, including banks, housing associations and councils, so don't feel they cannot be approached.

Here's hoping you have a happy, debt-free Christmas.

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## Workshops

### PRACTICAL BASIC BOOK-KEEPING

Book-keeping is a core business skill and, even if someone else does it for you, you still need to understand and value the process. Learn how to keep accurate financial records, understand the key components of book-keeping, produce a bank reconciliation and understand VAT.

Oban, 17th January 2018

### BUSINESS START-UP WORKSHOP

A one and a half day business start-up workshop designed to help you move into self-employment. The workshop covers business planning, finance, marketing and market research helping you turn your ideas into a practical and effective plan.

Lochgilphead, 23rd and 24th January 2018

To book on a workshop contact Business Gateway

**01546 604030** or

email **bg@argyll-bute.gov.uk**



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**A reminder that tax returns should be submitted to HMRC by January 31st 2018**

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## DON'T FORGET

Self-assessment tax returns deadline January 31, 2018

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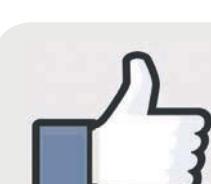
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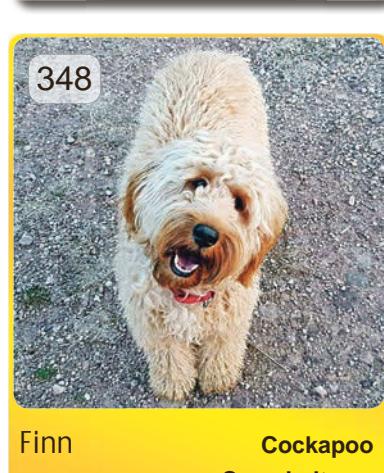
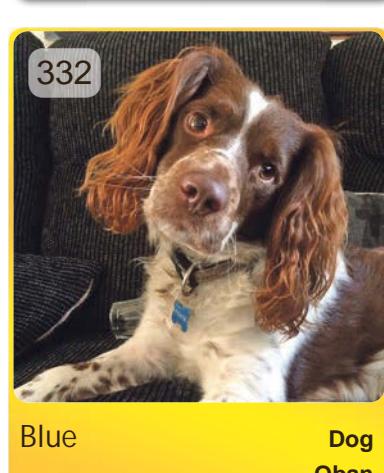
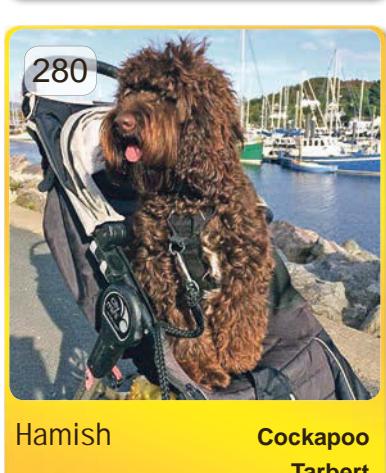
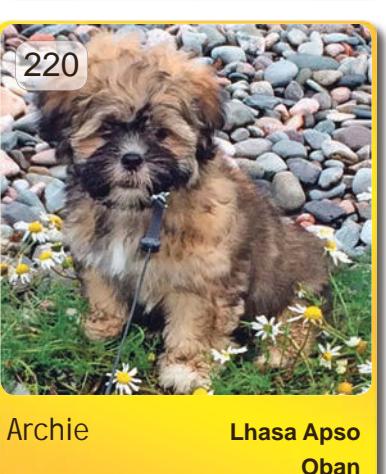
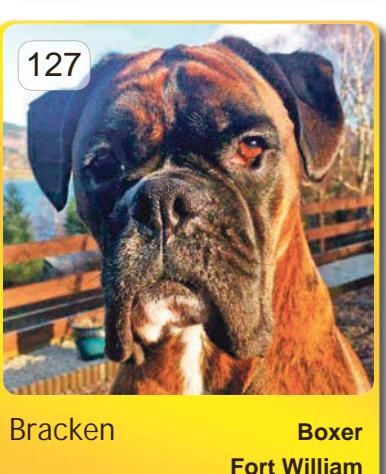
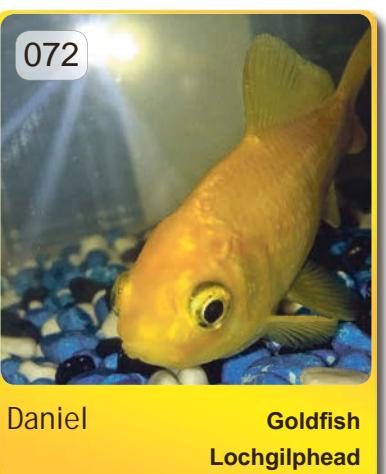
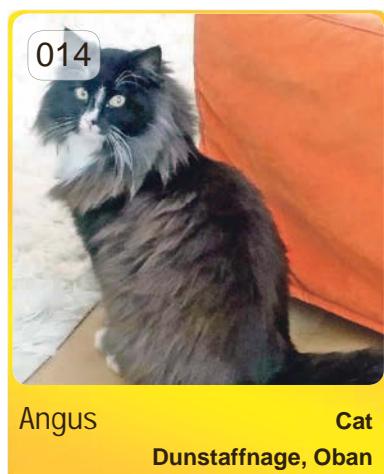
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# Time to vote for your **FINALISTS!**



## Time to vote for your **TOP TEN!**

The votes just keep pouring in...  
We have been completely overwhelmed by the sheer volume of votes since we launched Pet Idol. Our readers truly love their pets.

We have now reached the top 20 and voting is now open for our final ten. Because of the Christmas festivities and the pressure on the postal service we will allow votes to be cast into the new year.

The closing date for entries is 10am on Monday 8th January and a voting coupon will appear in every issue between now and then.

### VOTING COUPON

Round 4

I would like to vote for:

Pet number\*:.....

Pet's name: .....

Please post to Wyvex Media, Pet Idol VOTE, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or votes can also be handed in to our offices in Oban, Fort William, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown.

\*Pet number must be supplied. This can be found at the top left of each pet photograph.

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

You may send in multiple voting coupons in one envelope.

Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 8th January.

**The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES** **LOCHABER TIMES & Oban Times** **Argyllshire Advertiser** **Campbeltown Courier**

**Votes must be received by 10am, Monday 8th January.**

You can vote for as many pets as many times as you like. Only one pet can be voted for on each voting form. Just make sure you use the number quoted on the pet's photograph when voting. Photocopied coupons will not be accepted. One coupon counts as one vote. We will also accept multiple vote coupons in one envelope. Good luck to the 20 hopefuls.

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## Around the markets



Champion Limousin calf from Home Farm, Barcaldine, at the Christmas sale at Oban Livestock Centre. Picture: Kevin McGlynn

### OBAN SALE – Tuesday December 5.

United Auctions held their Annual Christmas Show and Sale of all classes Cattle at Oban Livestock Centre when 808 head was sold. The show was judged by James Nisbet, Sorn Mains Farm who made the following awards. Mainland Bullock Calf: 1 st M/s MacGillivray, Barcaldine HF - Limousin Cross, £32k £1350 to Mr. T. Barcaldine, 2nd Mr. D MacDonald, Tyree - Limousin Cross - 334k £1300 to M/s Morton, Lochend. 3rd R Currie, Low Dunassherie. Mainland Heifer Calf: 1 st Mr. R Currie. 2 nd and 3 rd M/s Semple, Dippen. Island Bullock Calf: 1 st Mr. R Cunningham, Nerbry. 2 nd Mr. C MacKinnon, Braeside. 3 rd M/s MacInnes, Ruaidh. Island Heifer Calf: 1 st 2 nd and 3 rd M/s Carmichael, Fiart. 3 rd Mr. R Wainwright, Clad. Pens of four: 1 st and 2 nd Mr. Cunningham. Overall Champion: M/s MacGillivray, Barcaldine HF. Reserve Overall: Mr. D MacDonald, Tyree. The Sale averages for the Bullocks levelled out at 237.96p per kilo and £662.29 per head whilst the Heifers averaged 214.29p per kilo and £599.87 per head. The centre experienced the presence of the largest ever following of buyers representing all corners of the country.

### PRINCIPAL LOTS AND PRICES TOP PRICES PER HEAD BULLOCKS

AAx: £950 - Ballochgair. BRBx: £1000 - Tyree : £990(2) - Rhoin : £960(2) - Barcaldine HF : £920 - Tyree.

CHARx: £980(2) - Dippen : £950(4)

- Ballochgair : £950(3) - Saddle HF :

£900 - Aoradh, Islay.

GALX: £880 - Inverglen.

LIMx: £1350 - Barcaldine HF :

£1300 - Tyree : £1060(5) - Nerbry

: £1050 - Barcaldine HF : £1040 -

Tyree : £1020 - Balligarve : £1010 -

Kilwhipnach : £990 - Achnares

Bay : £970 - Low Dunashery

and Achnaba : £960 - Braeside,

Tiree and Barcaldine HF :

£950 - Achnares Bay and Low

Dunashery : £940 - Strongorm :

£910 - Achnares and Low Dunashery : £900 - Achnares

Bay.

LÜING: £890 - Camoqoholm.

SALx: £920 - Feall, Coll: £860 - 19

East Hynish, Tiree : £810 - Feall,

Coll.

SHx: £840 - Turnault.

SIMx: £940 and £810(4) - Ballard,

Coll.

HEIFERS

BSHx: £760 - Tayvallich Estates.

BRBx: £1380 - Creagan : £1060

- Tyree : £890 - Pairc A Chlassan,

Islay.

CHARx: £1280 - 4 Kilkenneth,

Tiree : £1220 - Braeside, Tiree :

£1010 - Dippen : £920 - 4 Kilken-

neth and Braeside : £890 - Dippen.

LIMx: £1220 - Low Dunashery :

- Nerbry : £940 and £890 - 3

Balligrundle : £850 - Ruaidh, Tiree.

LRx: £1010, £980 and £910 - Siethan,

Tobermory.

SALx: £850 - Feall, Coll.

SHx: £740(6) - Camoqoholm.

SHx: £850(3) - Feall, Coll.

### TOP PRICES PER KILO BULLLOCKS

AAx: 275p(5) - Dalrannoch :

255p(3) - Blarachaig : 253p -

Tayvallich Estates.

BSHx: 248p - Tayvallich Estates.

BRBx: 282p(2) - Tyree : 274p - Low

Dunashery : 271p(6), 264p(2) -

Nerbry : 259p(2) - Barcaldine

HF: 257p(2) - Kilwhipnach : 257p

and 253p - Tyree : 252p(4) - Nerbry :

252p(2) - 13 Moss,

Tiree.

CHARx:

319p - Aoradh, Islay : 309p(4) -

Ballochgair : 301p(2) - Dippen :

280p(2) and 267p(3) - Saddle

HF: 257p(2) - Ballochgair : 256p -

Aoradh, Islay : 253p - Shenavallie,

LIMx: 407p - Barcaldine HF : 389p

- Tyree : 328p - Achuaran : 324p(4)

- Ardachy : 308p - Low Dunashery :

289p - Ruaidh, Tiree : 301p - Low

Dunashery : 289p - Ruaidh, Tiree :

293p - Kilwhipnach : 291p - Tyree :

290p(5) - Nerbry : 287p - Braeside :

287p(2) and 286p(3) - Ardachy : 274p -

Low Dunashery : 273p - Balligarve :

271p - Nerbry and Poltalloch.

LÜING: 257p(4) - Cliad, Coll.

SALx: 267p(3) - Nerbry : 260p(3) -

Feall, Coll : 251p - 13 Moss, Tiree.

SHx: 251p - Turnault.

SIMx: 273p(10) - Cliad, Coll :

273p(3) - Torloisk : 260p(4) - Feall, Coll.

SDx: 262p(2) - Achnaclach, Islay.

HEIFERS

BSHx: 254p - Turnault : 250p -

Tayvallich Estates.

BRBx: 351p and 297p - Tyree :

264p(8) - Nerbry : 262p - Barcaldine

HF: 261p - 19 East Hynish,

Tiree : 252p(3) - Nerbry.

CHARx: 347p - Braeside, Tiree :

335p and 279p(4) - Kilkenneth,

Tiree : 277p(5) - Ballochgair : 275p -

Braeside, Tiree : 272p - Dippen :

271p and 266p - Saddle HF : 263p

- Aoradh, Islay : 263p(3) -

Dippen.

LIMx: 377p - Low Dunashery :

304p - Ruaidh, Tiree : 293p -

Ardachy : 277p - Ruaidh, Tiree :

273p(2) and 272p(3) - Ardachy : 272p -

Braeside, Tiree : 272p - Dippen :

271p and 266p - Saddle HF : 263p

- Aoradh, Islay : 263p(3) -

Dippen.

LIMx: 377p - Low Dunashery :

304p - Ruaidh, Tiree : 293p -

Ardachy : 277p - Ruaidh, Tiree :

273p(2) and 272p(3) - Ardachy : 272p -

Braeside, Tiree : 272p - Dippen :

271p and 266p - Saddle HF : 263p

- Aoradh, Islay : 263p(3) -

Dippen.

LIMx: 377p - Low Dunashery :

304p - Ruaidh, Tiree : 293p -

Ardachy : 277p - Ruaidh, Tiree :

273p(2) and 272p(3) - Ardachy : 272p -

Braeside, Tiree : 272p - Dippen :

271p and 266p - Saddle HF : 263p

- Aoradh, Islay : 263p(3) -

Dippen.

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- Aoradh, Islay : 263p(3) -

Dippen.

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273p(2) and 272p(3) - Ardachy : 272p -

Braeside, Tiree : 272p - Dippen :

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- Aoradh, Islay : 263p(3) -

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**- THERE IS SOMETHING WE CAN DO ...**

IAM RoadSmart brings you expert advice on driving in snow from its head of driving and riding advice, Richard Gladman.

Best advice is to avoid travelling in extreme weather. If no one is moving, you just add to the problem – so listen to travel advice.

If you do have to travel in bad weather, plan your journey thoroughly. Think about where you are going and what it will be like all the way along the journey. If you can, avoid travelling on less-used roads or country lanes as these are less likely to be gritted.

Before setting off, clear all your windows and mirrors fully. Clear off snow piled on the roof of your car and the bonnet too, as it can fall and blow on to the windscreen. Don't leave anything obscured.

Start your car gently from stationary and avoid high revs. If road conditions are extremely icy and you drive a manual car, you should move off in a higher gear rather than first gear. You should stay in a higher gear to avoid wheel-spin.

It's important you get your speed right when travelling in snow. Never drive so fast that you risk losing control, and don't drive so slowly that you risk losing momentum for getting up a slope.

Increase your following distance from the vehicle in front of you. It may take up to 10 times as long to stop on snow or ice so build this into your following distance – this will give you more time to slow down using engine braking which is less likely to induce a skid.

Make sure you slow down sufficiently before reaching a bend so you have enough time to react to any hazards that appear as you go round it – and so you do not skid as well. You should have finished slowing down before you start to turn the steering wheel.

If you break down or have to pull over on a motorway or dual carriageway, you should leave your vehicle and stand to the safe side of it – ideally well over the armco to the nearside of the road, but not in front of it, when waiting for help.

Richard said: 'Many of the problems associated with travelling during snow could be avoided if people planned in advance.'

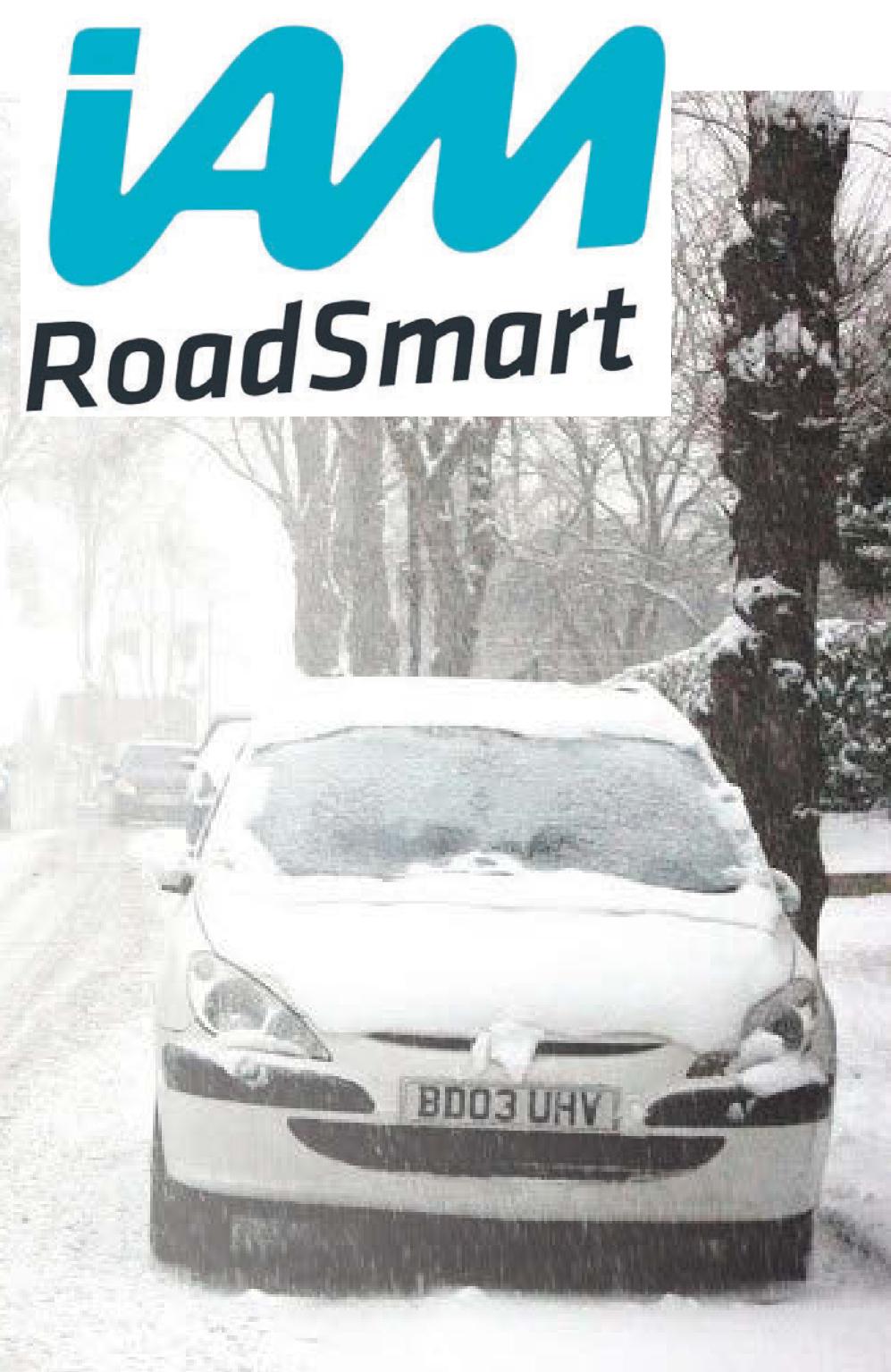
'People routinely travel with only the minimum of safety equipment, without realising their journey could be a lot longer than expected.'

'At the very least, you should have a shovel, torch, blanket, jump-leads and tow rope.'

'You should ensure your mobile phone is fully charged, and the number of your recovery organisation is saved into it.'

'A bottle of water and a snack may also prove useful, and don't set out without knowing the locations of petrol stations on your way.'

'This all might sound obvious, but too many of us forget to do any of this. Don't be one of the ill-prepared, and listen to the weather forecast for the whole length of a winter journey to help you prepare for it.'



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We also publish a plethora of lifestyle magazines, tourist maps, holiday publications and business directories covering the west coast of Scotland and beyond.

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Full training will be given for this role – Good admin skills are required with the ability to manage our bespoke Help desk system, familiarity with Microsoft office applications and attention to detail is key to the success of this position. Salary negotiable.

**FM - Multi skilled Operative**

Operatives with a strong trade background are required – Roofer's – joiner's- plasterer's etc, to work along side our existing team on long term housing/commercial FM contracts, both reactive and planned maintenance tasks.

The ability to work to a planned schedule and use initiative to complete tasks as required. Training will be given to the right candidates to continue their development within the role. Competitive hourly rate

**FM - Trainee Building Services Engineer**

Great opportunity to join our existing team to work on long term FM contracts throughout Argyll. Full on site training will be given and the opportunity to join our Modern Apprenticeship Program at Forth Valley college

A wide variety of skills will be gained including electrical, mechanical, plumbing & air-conditioning. Hourly rate increasing through apprenticeship.

**FM - Maintenance Electricians**

Operatives with a strong electrical background are required to work along side our existing team on long term housing/commercial FM contracts, both reactive and planned maintenance tasks.

The ability to work to a planned schedule and use initiative to complete tasks as required. Training will be given to the right candidates to continue their development within the role.

Competitive hourly rate

**Contracting – Approved Electricians**

17th Edition Electricians & Approved Electricians are required for a variety of projects, commercial/industrial experience preferred.

We require experienced operatives due to a full order book for 2018 SJIB rates paid.

**Apprentice electricians**

We welcome CV's for our 2018 intake, these roles are for an anticipated college start of August 2018. Good opportunity for candidates to gain on site experience prior to this.

All applications including CV's and covering letter to be e-mailed for the attention of;  
**Angus MacPherson, Managing Director, OES Ltd**  
amacpherson@es-group.co.uk

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For more information please call or text Isabella Thomson on 07889465173, call into our local office at McLeod Buildings, Lochavullin Road, or complete an online application form via our website.

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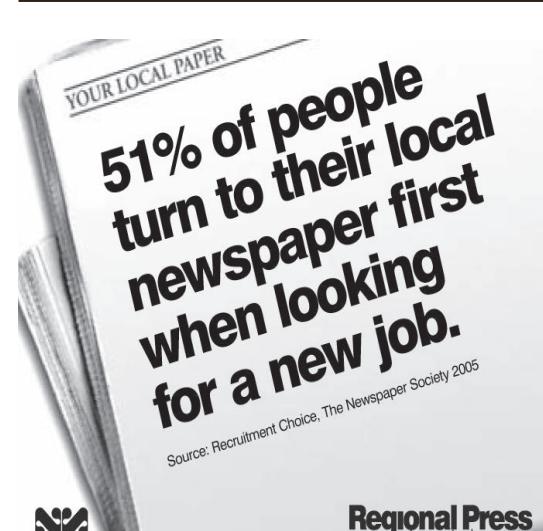


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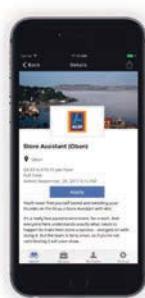


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**HIJOBS**

**SCOTTISH HYDRO ELECTRIC  
TRANSMISSION PLC**  
**ELECTRICITY ACT 1989**  
**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND)  
ACT 1997**  
**THE ELECTRICITY (APPLICATIONS FOR  
CONSENT) REGULATIONS 1990**

Notice is hereby given that Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc, (company registration number SC213461) and whose registered office is situated at Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 3AQ has applied to the Scottish Ministers for consent under Section 37 of The Electricity Act 1989 to install and keep installed for a temporary period (of no more than two years) approximately 627m of 132kV wood pole trident overhead line (including one section of underground cable) between existing Tower FF87 (Grid Reference NN 2392 8942) and Tower FF90 (Grid Reference NN 2308 8899) situated on the Fort William to Fort Augustus 132kV Overhead Line near Invergloy, Fort William, Inverness-shire. The proposal will provide a temporary diversion whilst the existing Fort William to Fort Augustus Overhead Line is reconducted. Within a period of no more than two years from its installation, the temporary overhead line referred to above, would be removed.

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc has also applied for planning permission to be deemed to be granted under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

A copy of the application, with a plan showing the land to which it is available for inspection, free of charge, during normal opening hours at:

Highland Council Service Point	Highland Council Planning & Development Glenurquhart Road Inverness PH33 6EL
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(The application can also be viewed at Scottish Government Library at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ; or at [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot))

Any representations to the application may be submitted via the Energy Consents Unit website at [www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx](http://www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx); by email to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit mailbox at [representations@gov.scot](mailto:representations@gov.scot); or by post to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds for representation.

Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations. Only representations sent by email to [representations@gov.scot](mailto:representations@gov.scot) will receive acknowledgement.

All representations should be received not later than 14th January 2018, although Ministers may consider representations received after this date.

Any subsequent additional information which is submitted by the developer will be subject to further public notice in this manner, and representations to such information will be accepted as per this notice.

As a result of a statutory objection from the relevant planning authority, or where Scottish Ministers decide to exercise their discretion to do so, Scottish Ministers can also cause a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) to be held. Following examination of the environmental information, Scottish Ministers will determine the application for consent in two ways:

- Consent the proposal, with or without conditions attached; or
- Reject the proposal

**Fair Processing Notice**

The Scottish Government Local Energy & Consents processes consent applications and consultation representations under The Electricity Act 1989. During the process, to support transparency in decision making, the Scottish Government publishes online at [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot). When making an email or paper representation you will automatically be opted in to its publication unless you choose to mark it as confidential. We may share your personal data with DPEA and local Planning Authorities but will not publish your personal data (e.g. your name and address) as this is removed beforehand in compliance with the Data Protection Act. Should you choose not to provide your personal data in an electronic or paper representation then your representation will only be considered by Scottish Ministers and will not be shared for consideration with any other party. If you have any concerns about how your personal data is handled, please email us at: [Econsents\\_admin@gov.scot](mailto:Econsents_admin@gov.scot) or write to Local Energy & Consents, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU

**First Registration of a Croft**

Andrew Dewar has registered their croft 3 Inchree (share), Kilmallie on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by September 14, 2018.

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C4546.

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**PLANNING**

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 -13:30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to Council's website at [www.arryl-bute.gov.uk](http://www.arryl-bute.gov.uk)

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND)  
REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING  
(LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
17/02922/PP	Erection of servery/storeroom building with extension to existing outdoor seating area above	Land Adjacent To Jura Hotel Craighouse Isle Of Jura Argyll And Bute PA60 7XU	Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura
17/02939/LIB	Temporary removal with future re-instatement of section of stone dyke for duration of Iona Abbey works to allow site access to temporary compound	Iona Abbey Isle Of Iona Argyll And Bute PA76 6SQ	Sub Post Office Isle of Iona
17/02853/PP	Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 12 metre high pole and associated works	Land North East Of Coillabus Farm The Oa Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA42 7AX	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
17/02910/PP	Erection of single storey extensions to form entrance porch and outhouse to facilitate boiler and water tank.	Showroom Pier Road Scarinish Isle Of Tiree Argyll And Bute PA77 6TN	Tiree Area Office
17/02582/PP	Siting of 4 camping pods, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land South Of Clachaig Gruline Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA71 6HR	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.arryl-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-apply/planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Councils website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: [www.arryl-bute.gov.uk](http://www.arryl-bute.gov.uk)

Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

[www.hIGHLAND.GOV.UK](http://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 online at <http://wam.hIGHLAND.GOV.UK> or electronically at your nearest Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link [https://www.hIGHLAND.GOV.UK/directory/16/a\\_to\\_z](https://www.hIGHLAND.GOV.UK/directory/16/a_to_z)

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**

17/05204/FUL	Land 250M North East Of Old Pines, Gairloch Spean Bridge	Erection of House with siting of temporary mobile caravan
16/05283/FUL	Land 50M NW Of Mehalah Tirindish, Spean Bridge	Erect 9(no) dwellings (including affordable houses) and farm shop/ café (revised plans submitted)
17/05491/FUL	In Garden Ground At Beinn Bhan, West Laroach Ballachulish	Erection of house
17/05565/FUL	Land 110M SW Of Achintee Farm Guest House, Achintee Fort William	Erection of tearoom
17/05530/LBC	High Land, 1 New Buildings, Arisaig	Erection of garden room (retrospective)
17/05611/LBC	6 High Street Fort William	Removal of counter position, install Full height anti-bandit partition & new automation machine
17/05559/FUL	Glensanda Quarry Glensanda Morvern, Oban	Extension to the existing filter cake disposal site for the continued disposal of filter cake
17/05592/FUL	Tanglewood Poultry Invergarry	Erection of house and garage, formation of access, installation of treatment plant and ground source heat pump

Time period for comments is 14 days & 21 days

for 17/05611/LBC and 17/05530/LBC

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX

Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @ [www.arryl-bute.gov.uk](http://www.arryl-bute.gov.uk)

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



**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 704000). 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 2018 should be sent to the Executive Director of Community Services, Education Offices, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 704000) by 16 March 2018 for primary and secondary schools.

**Gaelic Medium Education**

Gaelic Medium Education is available in the following schools:- Bowmore Primary School, Islay; Tiree Primary School, Tiree; Salen Primary School, Mull; Bunessan Primary School, Mull; Rockfield Primary School, Oban; Strata of Appin Primary School, By Oban and Sandbank Primary School, Dunoon. For further information on Gaelic Medium Education please contact Catriona Garvin, Education Support Officer: [gaelic.catriona.garvin2@arryl-bute.gov.uk](mailto:gaelic.catriona.garvin2@arryl-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 1 January 2018.

Parents of children due to start school in August 2018, 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 1 January 2018.

ANN MARIE KNOWLES

Acting Executive Director - Community Services



# West Coast PROPERTY GUIDE

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## TAX ISSUES FORCE HALF OF LANDLORDS INTO RETHINK



intend to invest and 63 per cent of this group said the changes had no effect on their plans.

The National Landlords' Association estimates that the initial loss in tax relief this year alone would push more than 440,000 lower rate taxpayers, around 22 per cent of the market, into a higher tax bracket.

The research also found that 38 per cent of landlords owning at least two properties would consider forming a limited company, trust, limited liability partnership or a combination of these to lessen the impact of the tax reforms.

Landlords will face additional challenges in 2018, including proposed new requirements for HMO licensing, and new requirements for energy performance which will come into effect for new lets and renewals on 01 April.

'We know that landlords are adapting to the changes in the market, and are willing to embrace the challenges and find opportunities to develop more profitable and sustainable portfolios,' said Alex Huntley, head of operations at Simple Landlords.

'There is no one solution or route, and landlords need to get expert advice tailored to their individual circumstances. But it's heartening to see the majority of landlords remaining undeterred, and thinking about how to change with the market,' she added.



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### DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

CHEST FREEZER small, square. Down-sizing, £35 Telephone 01646 600045.

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DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

CHEST FREEZER small, square. Down-sizing, £35 Telephone 01646 600045.

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### KITCHEN AND BATHROOM

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### HEATING

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### LEISURE AND LIFESTYLE

HOT STICKS by Babyliss, in carry case and in excellent condition, £25 Telephone 01631 562834 or 07514 466297.

### HEATING, FIRES AND FIREPLACES

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FIRE COMPANION SET black, downsizing, £5 Telephone 01546 600045.

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custom made hard case with wheels, to fit Casio CTK4400 Keyboard. Purchased October 2017. Lochgilphead area, £85.00 Telephone 01546 321050 or 07768 393036.

### PRINTING AND STATIONERY

PROM

## ENGAGEMENTS

**FACCENDA - MACCUISH**  
Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Natalie, elder daughter of Fiona and the late Noel Faccenda and Kenny, elder son of Dougie and the late Peggy MacCuish.

## DEATHS

**ISAACSON** - née Christie, Christine Mitchell, born July 22, 1921, in East Laroch, Ballachulish, passed away peacefully on December 1, 2017, aged 96 years. Wife of the late Sqn Ldr A Isaacson, much loved mother of Patricia, Dorothy, Fiona and John, and dearly loved Grandma of Anna, Drew, Steven, Alastair, James and Catrina. The service and interment of her ashes at St John's Church, Ballachulish, will follow in the new year.

**MACKENZIE** - Suddenly but peacefully, at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow, on December 5, 2017, Iain George (Taylor), aged 84 years, beloved husband of the late Robina, much loved dad of Kay, Joyce, Sarah and James, adored brother, uncle, father-in-law and grandpa to his five grandchildren. Thank you to all friends, family and staff at the QEUH at this sad time. He will be sadly missed. Funeral service will take place at Kilchattan Parish Church, Isle of Luing, on Tuesday, December 19 at 1.00 p.m.

**MACLEAN** - Peacefully at the Smiddy Dervaig on December 7, 2017 aged 76 years, Tommy Maclean. Loving son of the late Calum and Betty, dear brother and uncle, sadly missed. Funeral service to be held at Kilmore Parish Church, Dervaig on Friday December 15, 2017 at 11.30am, thereafter to Kilmore Cemetery.

**MACLEAN** - Peacefully at home, on Monday, December 11, 2017, Margaret Cameron MacLean. Beloved wife of the late Duncan, loving mum of Allan and Katy, doting gran of Kerr, Jane and Enzo. Funeral Service will be held on Saturday, December 16, 2017 at 1pm in St. John's Episcopal Church, Ballachulish; thereafter to Duror Cemetery. All friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland can be given at the Church door.

**MACLEOD** - Catherine Turner (Katie) on December 9, 2017. Dear loved wife of Donald, Portnahaven, Isle of Islay. Adored mother of Alasdair, Jane and Fiona. Special grandmother (grankins) to Eilidh, Ciara, Donald and "Katie" to Calum. Funeral service at Portnahaven Parish Church 11.30am on Saturday December 16, 2017 to which all friends are respectfully invited. No flowers please, donations if desired to the Royal Hospital for Children Glasgow.

**MACNICHOL** - Peacefully, at the Lynn of Lorne Nursing Home, Benderloch, on December 8, 2017, Mr Jimmy MacNichol, formerly of Barrmor View, Kilmartin and of Kilbride Farm, beloved husband of the late Anne Carson, much loved father of Janet, Linda and Anne, a devoted seafar of Julie, Caroline, James, Douglas, Neil, Kirsty and Emma and adored great grandfather. A dear brother, uncle and cousin to all the family, and a good neighbour and very dear friend to many. Funeral service will be held in Kilmartin Parish Church, today Thursday, December 14, 2017, thereafter to Achinbreac Cemetery. All friends are respectfully invited to attend.

**MILLER** - Peacefully in her sleep after a short illness and despite all the wonderful care given by the doctors and nurses of Ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on Saturday December 9, 2017, Maureen Audrey Miller, loving wife of Geoff, sister of Sue, sister-in-law to Allan, auntie to Ben and Abigail and great auntie to their respective families in New Zealand and Australia. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her, especially all the animals she

## MEMORIALS

**MACRAIL** - Irene, Malcolm and family would like to convey their sincerest thanks to all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them following their recent sad loss of Neil. Special thanks to all staff at Belford Hospital and the Macmillan nurses for their kindness and support. Grateful thanks to Rev Richard Baxter for his comforting service, to John McLellans for their efficient handling of the funeral arrangements and The West End Hotel for the catering. Lastly, thanks to those who came to pay their last respects at the church and to those who gave generously, raising £525.15 in aid of Belford and Macmillan Nurses.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**BUDGE** - Following the death of our beloved brother Billy on November 24, 2017, Valerie, Evan, Cameron and Bruce wish to thank all relatives and friends who extended the hand of fellowship and joined with us in the celebration of his life. Our thanks go to Janet MacIntyre, Kinlochleven Salvation Army, for her beautiful words, Mike McFall for immaculate funeral arrangements and David and Lizzie for their musical tribute to Billy's life. Our special thanks goes to Abbeyfield, Ballachulish, whose care of Billy over the past 9 years was simply exemplary. The caring professionalism of all staff members has resulted in the recent award of Scottish Care Home of the Year 2017 - a title which is well deserved, and the family wish to add their congratulations to this achievement. The sum of £600 has been donated to Abbeyfield Ballachulish, and we thank all who gave so generously.

**MACLEAN** - Chrissie would like to thank all friends and neighbours for flowers, cards and all the caring gestures shown to her following the loss of Archie. Special thanks are due to the home carers for their long term support and care. The district nurses and doctors and staff at the Salen surgery, the local ambulance crews and Archie's friends who visited him at home. Sincere thanks to the Rev Johnny Paton for the very personal service and Mrs Elizabeth Jack for playing Archie's tunes. To Mr Billy McClymont for caring and sensitive funeral arrangements and the Salen Hotel for the catering. Finally thank you to all who came to pay their respects at the church and graveside and for donating the sum of £510 for the Fire Fighters Charity in Archie's memory. Morven View, Salen.

**MACLEOD** - Kenny, Jane and their families would like to thank sincerely all of Murdo's relatives, friends and colleagues who have sent so many messages of support, flowers and baking. Thank you to all of those who attended Murdo's funeral. Special thanks are due to Rev Dr Roderick Campbell for his comforting and uplifting service in celebration of Murdo's life. Grateful thanks to Dr Phillips, Dr Romans and the ambulance crew who attended on the night. Thanks also to the Stag Hotel in Lochgilphead for lunch arrangements, and finally to Fiona McLeod and Roddy MacDonald of Donald MacDonald Funeral Directors for their efficient and professional services. The retiring collection raised over £1,800 for Lochgilphead Parish Church, Mid Argyll Hospital and WestLochfynesside Parish Churches.

**MCALPIN** - In loving memory of my dear brother, brother-in-law and uncle Joe, who died December 11, 2004.

Always in our thoughts  
- John, Teenie, Peter and family.

**MACQUARIE** - In loving memory of my dear mother Agnes, who died December 14, 2008.

Remembering also my dearly loved husband Cameron who died July 24, 2014 and loved ones gone before.

Remembered every day  
- Inserted by her loving daughter Ann, Erskine.

**MCLEWAN** - In loving memory of Jean, much loved sister, sister-in-law and aunt, died December 16, 2016.

Miss you every day.  
- Janet, Charlie and family.

**HAY** - Precious memories of our brother and uncle Robert, who died on December 13, 1998, aged 23.

We miss your smile, your tricky ways Those feelings will never go away  
- Kate, Elaine and families.

**MACCOLL** - Charlie. Remembering with love my husband and our dad who passed away December 16, 2015.

Sadly missed but cherished forever in our hearts.  
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Marine Harvest Media Award winners 2016

# SHINTY

Best for all shinty news, results and fixtures

## Kenny Wotherspoon on Oban Celtic

WHEN Oban Celtic won Marine Harvest South Division 1 at the end of the 2016 shinty season, they took the decision to make the step up to the Marine Harvest National Division.

This not only provided a greater test on the field of play against tougher opposition but also presented the logistical challenge of playing shinty at a national rather than regional level.

Despite starting the season as many people's tip for relegation, Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon had other ideas. 'The boys showed during the 2016 shinty season the potential was there,' he said, taking time away from his plumbing and heating business to reflect on last season's campaign.

'Our aim was to still playing National Division shinty in 2018. Many said we would do well to stay up as some South 1 teams had struggled in the past when making the step up. It was always going to be a challenge, especially being a one-team club, but we did it with a bit to spare and gave a few teams a fright along the way.'

It's fair to say Oban Celtic took time to settle into their new surroundings, starting the season with four league defeats. Wotherspoon remembers the opening day defeat against Fort Williams at Mossfield well. 'The Fort William team at that time included Daniel Stewart and Niall MacPhee and we lost 2-1 to a late goal. It was so frustrating to come away from that match with nothing – a huge disappointment.'

'We created chances against champions Skye at Ganavan but they were too strong and whilst we also lost to Fort William again and Caberfeidh, who we led twice, these three teams would go on to battle it out at the top of the table.'

In-between times there was a Gregor Cameron Glasgow Celtic Society Cup defeat to Bute in a tie which went all the way to a penalty shoot-out. 'We made hard work of that one. A number of Bute cup ties have gone to penalties over the last few years and you have to admire the role played by Bute keeper Kevin Queen. He is fantastic in the shoot-outs and was the difference once again.'

A couple of cup successes boosted Oban Celtic's confidence as they beat Kilmory in the Balliemore and Inveraray in the Artemis Macaulay Cup and they only lost to Fort William in the Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup after a replay.

'Our performance of the season was against Inveraray in the Macaulay,' said Kenny. 'We came from 3-1 down to win at the Winterton, which is never easy. Photographer Stephen Lawson caught a great picture at the end of that tie and you can see the joy in the players' faces. We did really well that day.'

Oban Celtic, with a spring in their step, returned to league action, beating Inverness and drawing with Strathglass, either side of cup losses to Inveraray in the Balliemore and Oban Camanachd in the Macaulay.

'Connor Howe and Robert Alexander made their Oban Celtic debuts against Inverness. I think it was significant these guys joined us from Oban Camanachd, as Ross MacMillan did at the start of the season, because the more usual pattern in recent years was for players to move in the opposite direction.'

'Gary McKerracher was the most recent to leave us for Camanachd. He is a player I admire very much and he has been excellent for Camanachd since signing for them. We went behind against Inverness before going 5-1 up, eventually winning 5-3. Connor Howe got

a debut goal.' Kenny points out the cup draws were unkind to his side.

'We obviously had a lot of travel in the National Division anyway but the initial cup draws gave us four away ties. However the players showed a never-say-die attitude and perhaps we had that wee bit of luck that we didn't have in the league games.'

Toad (Graham MacPherson) was in goal for Inveraray in the Balliemore tie and he had a great game, whilst we competed well against Oban Camanachd during the first 35 minutes, hitting the frame of the goal twice, but their fitness told and our heads dropped a bit when they went in front. I sent Haybo (Oban Camanachd manager Iain Hay) a text after that match wishing his side all the best in the semi-finals.'

As the season progressed, it became evident Oban Celtic were involved in a mini-league in the lower half of the National with Beauly, Strathglass and Inverness. Once more, the narrow margins between success and failure were evident as Celtic first drew 2-2 with Strathglass before losing 4-3 to Beauly.

'It's unbelievable how we never won the Strathglass game. We led twice before losing a late goal and that draw felt like a defeat. Against Beauly, our forward line was superb and we led 2-0 at half-time but it was a classic game of two halves with Beauly eventually winning 4-3. A draw would have been a fair result.'

Oban Celtic picked up all four of the next available four points, beating Inverness and Strathglass. 'I missed the Inverness win as I was at Wimbledon. It was a game I always felt we could win and a Daniel Madej hat-trick helped us to a 6-4 victory.'

'Games against Strathglass at Cannich are always

up early in the game against Inveraray but David MacInnes was sent off after 13 minutes. But this time we won the game 2-1 despite relentless Inveraray pressure. I remember we had to pull Andy MacDonald back as an extra defender so we were in effect playing with just two forwards.'

Oban Celtic had secured National shinty for another season and they finished off their campaign with a draw against Beauly and a defeat to Inveraray.

'Beauly boss Alan MacRae, who is also Scotland U21 head coach, phoned me the morning after their game to ask if Andy MacDonald could join that day's Scotland U21 training.'

'Unfortunately it was too short notice for Andy but it shows what an impression we made during the match. There was little between the sides over our two matches with Beauly. I missed the Inveraray game so Davie Hamilton took the side and he said it was an even game.'

'We've come a long way over the last couple years but last season could have been even better because, when you analyse our games, we left a lot of the points on the pitch. However I expect next season will be the same battle with the same teams.'

'The guys themselves know when a game's gone wrong. I tell them how I feel at half time and full time and they listen and show respect. If I didn't get that from them, I wouldn't do the job.'

Kenny's one wish for next season is consistency when it comes to player availability. 'Discipline is something I want us to improve on next season. We only picked up a couple

of bookings in South

1 in 2016 but we had more than 20 bookings last season. Perhaps the National is a bit more physical but we need to cut out the stupid bookings and that's something I'll be addressing next season.'

The best thing for a manager is being able to select the same 15-17 players each week and whilst you will always have players unavailable on certain weeks, say through work or attending weddings, it's frustrating to lose players through suspension.'

'I only missed two matches last season and I want that same commitment from the players. I want them all to be available for 80 per cent of our matches and if we can get that, we'll secure another respectable league finish. Guys need to commit for the season as unavailability kills the team. We can get better next season and I'd love to have a good cup run too with some kind draws after failing to get a home draw in 2017.'

There will be changes next season. 'David MacInnes and keeper Stephen Davidson won't play whilst Connor Howe is playing football in Glasgow although he will help us out if he is at home.'

'We will have Robert Alexander though and we will hopefully have Andy Hunt back after he missed the latter part of last season through injury. Andy is a strong and committed player and we'll see how he trains in the New Year.'

Kenny is also working on adding a couple of new players to strengthen his squad. The National campaign was a success and the team's survival



The Macaulay Cup draw was made live on Oban FM last Saturday evening. In attendance were, left to right, David Hamilton, secretary of the Macaulay Association; Ian Hay, manager of Oban Camanachd; Jim Lynch, Oban FM; Kenny Wotherspoon, Oban Celtic manager; Les Kinzig, Camanachd Association committee member and, front, Oban FM's Duncan MacKinnon.

## Artemis Macaulay Cup draw

THE DRAW for the 2018 Artemis Macaulay Cup was made live on Oban FM, last Saturday by Kenny Wotherspoon, Oban Celtic manager and Ian Hay, Oban Camanachd manager.

The final will take place at Mossfield Park, Oban, on Saturday August 18.

### Round 1 – Saturday May 5:

South: Oban Celtic v Bute.

Kyles Athletic v Inveraray.

Ballachulish v Aberdour.

Oban Camanachd v Glasgow Mid Argyll.

North: Kinlochshiel v Newtonmore.

Lovat v Lochaber.

Glenurquhart v Caberfeidh.

Kingussie v Skye.

### Round 2 – Saturdays June 16 and 30

South: Saturday June 16 - Oban Camanachd / Glasgow Mid Argyll v Ballachulish / Aberdour. Oban Celtic / Bute v Kyles Athletic / Inveraray.

North: Saturday June 30 - Lovat / Lochaber v Glenurquhart / Caberfeidh. Kinlochshiel / Newtonmore v Kingussie / Skye.

### Semi Finals – Saturday July 21

South: Oban Camanachd / Glasgow Mid Argyll / Ballachulish / Aberdour v Oban Celtic / Bute / Kyles Athletic / Inveraray.

North: Lovat / Lochaber v Glenurquhart / Caberfeidh v Kinlochshiel / Newtonmore v Kingussie / Skye.

Park.

The pick of the ties is the North meeting between Kinlochshiel and Newtonmore on the west coast. The winners will meet whoever comes out on top in the tie between Kinrossie and Skye. Camanachd at the Dell so there are the possibilities of either west coast or Badenoch derbies in the quarter-finals.

Lovat welcome Lochaber to Balgate and the prize for the victors is home advantage against Glenurquhart or Caberfeidh who meet at Blairbeg.

## Oban Celtic pre-season friendlies

Oban Celtic have been quick off the mark in organising their pre-season friendlies ahead of the start of the 2018 shinty season.

Kenny Wotherspoon's side have set the following schedule which includes a derby against Oban Camanachd:

Saturday January 27 - Oban Celtic v Kilmory at Mossfield

Saturday February 3 - Taynuilt v Oban Celtic at the Taynuilt Sports Field

Saturday February 10 - Oban Camanachd v Oban Celtic at Mossfield

Saturday February 17 - Oban Celtic v Glengarry at Mossfield

Saturday February 24 - Oban Celtic v Ballachulish at Mossfield (Robert Wylie Memorial Cup)

## Taynuilt AGM

Taynuilt's annual general meeting takes place at Taynuilt Sports Pavilion tonight (Thursday December 14) at 7.30pm.

## Change of manager at Strathglass

Strathglass have made a managerial change ahead of the start of the 2018 shinty season.

David Balharry has stepped down as first team manager of the Marine Harvest National Division side to be replaced by Bruce Douglas, assisted by Roy MacKenzie.

Charlie Hall will continue with the Strathglass second team who play in Marine Harvest North Division 2.

## Lochaber EGM

Lochaber will hold an emergency general meeting at Spean Bridge Hall on Friday December 15.

The meeting will discuss the chairman's position, the first team manager's position and the Lochaber U17 coach for the 2018 shinty season. All players are asked to attend.

## Oban Camanachd Superball

Oban Camanachd have opted to wind down their weekly lottery and will instead focus on their monthly Superball draw.

The Superball was inspired by the late Neil 'Nonny' MacInnes and for a contribution of £10 each month, subscribers have the chance to win a guaranteed £500 each month.

With the recent success of the Superball, the club decided at their recent AGM to wind down the lottery and, if it isn't won beforehand, there will be a definite winner on Monday December 18.

It was always Oban Camanachd's long-term plan to pursue the Superball and anyone willing to support the club in this way is asked to contact any player, coach or committee member for entry details and direct debit forms.

# Saints on Scottish Cup replay duty

Cup holders Colville Park crash out of national competition

**Oban Saints**  
**Greenock HSFP**  
**Scottish Cup - 4th Round Replay**

FOLLOWING the postponement of last Saturday's replay because of an unplayable pitch, Oban Saints and Greenock High School Former Pupils are scheduled to meet this Saturday at Glencruitten to decide who will advance to the fifth round of the Scottish Amateur Cup.

The winner will face an away tie against either Rolls Royce East Kilbride or St Joseph's FP from Duntocher.

The Rolls Royce v St Joseph's game was also called off at the weekend.



Matty Kelly shields the ball from Michael O'Donoghue.

## Oban Otters take to the water

OBAN OTTERS held their small pool gala on Thursday November 30 in the town's Atlantis Leisure centre.

It was lots of fun, with Innes Russell the overall winner.

Isla MacLean, Callie Dunn, Dylan Welsh, Seoras Neil, Ally Campbell, Laila Lopez,

Donald Hodge, Kara Scott and Laina McHardy also took part in the small pool gala.

The club championships were held on December 3.

There was some fantastic swimming and some well-contested races, especially in the Squad Girls 13 years category,



Willie Gemmell's equaliser goes straight into the net direct from a corner kick during the 2-2 draw at Battery Park two weeks ago. Report and photos: Derek Black

The D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side came from behind twice to gain a creditable draw at Battery Park two weeks ago.

After a goal-less first half, Greenock took the lead in the 52nd minute when Ryan McCorkindale's run into the box was forced left by Alex Craik. The Greenock striker dug out a cross from the bye-line which looped over Graham Douglas to be poked home at the back post by Ryan Corr who held off the attentions of Scott Maitland to open the scoring.

Saints struck back almost immediately with Scott Maitland and Shaun MacIver combining to force a corner on the left straight from the re-start.

So often chipping in with vital strikes already this season, Willie Gemmell added to his growing list of telling contributions, curling an equaliser direct from the corner flag just inside the far post.

The thrills and spills kept coming and three minutes after the equaliser Harry Donaldson was felled in the Saints box by Craig Campbell while Mr Caldwell pointing to the penalty spot.

The visitors were relieved to see Kevin Brown strike the crossbar with his spot kick with Alex Craik heading the rebound clear.

The home side regained the lead in controversial circumstances after 72 minutes. After a tussle with Daniel McCuish on the Greenock right, Chris McAllister sent a long ball into the box which Craig Boyd appeared to handle under pressure from David McPhee.

**Ignored**

Referee Caldwell saw nothing wrong and ignored the loud Saints appeals allowing Ryan Corr on the edge of the box to lob the loose ball back towards goal.

A back-peddling Steven MacLeod got his head to the ball, but only succeeded in sending it back to Boyd who, from six yards, beat the combined efforts of Graham Douglas and Alex Craik to find the bottom corner.

Not to be denied, the visitors kept pushing forward and the extra endeavour from the players paid dividends with ten minutes remaining. Daniel McCuish, making his debut for the senior team, slipped a

perfect ball through the inside left channel for the overlapping run of Scott Maitland who beat the advancing Neil Flack with a low left foot finish drilled into the bottom corner to make the final score 2-2.

Saints and Greenock High enjoy a healthy rivalry, having crossed swords on many occasions over the years since Saints gained entry to the Scottish Amateur Football League in 1976.

At that time Greenock, who last month held their 110th anniversary celebrations, had already been members of Scotland's oldest surviving amateur football league for 52 years. During that golden period, they clinched four Division One titles, three West of Scotland Cups and two Scottish Amateur Cups to cement their place as one of Scotland's top amateur clubs.

Greenock High's progress to the Scottish Amateur Cup fourth round has seen them put seven without reply past Troon Dundonald of the Ayrshire Amateur Football Association First Division in round two following a first round bye. In the third round, AS Airdrie of the

Strathclyde Saturday Morning Amateur Football League Premier Division proved a harder nut to crack with Greenock edging out the Lanarkshire men thanks to a successfully converted first half penalty kick from central midfielder Kevin Brown.

Saints started their Scottish Cup campaign with a 4-0 home win over Mauchline United in the first round thanks to goals from Craig MacEwan (3) and Shaun MacIver.

This was followed by a convincing 6-0 home win against Plains in round two. Donald Campbell (3), Fraser Macfarlane, Scott Maitland and Paul Carmichael were on target for the Oban side.

It took Saints two hard games to get past an impressive Falkirk side in round three, the first game ending in a 3-3 draw at Alva Academy. Donald Campbell (2) and Craig MacEwan were Saints' scorers. The replay in Oban a week later saw Saints edge through 3-2 thanks to goals from Craig MacEwan, Willie Gemmell and Myles McAuley.

With both Saints and Greenock off the pace in their respective league title races, extending their interest in the national cup competition beyond the festive shutdown would be a welcome boost. An enthralling afternoon's entertainment is therefore in store at Glencruitten where the Saints faithful will enjoy their fifth home cup tie of the season and their second replay in this cup competition.

The two old rivals must slug it out to a finish on the day with extra time and penalty kicks coming into the reckoning if a winner can't be found after 90 minutes. Kick-off at Glencruitten is 1.30pm with referee Peter Owens from Helensburgh in charge.

The Oban outfit are also still in the West of Scotland Cup where they have been drawn at home in the fifth round to Caledonian League side Woodhall Thistle from Holytown. This game is scheduled for Oban on Saturday January 20.

They also have a home tie against Argyll rivals Lochgilphead Red Star in the Jimmy Marshall Trophy with a date for this game still to be allocated.

### Swimming

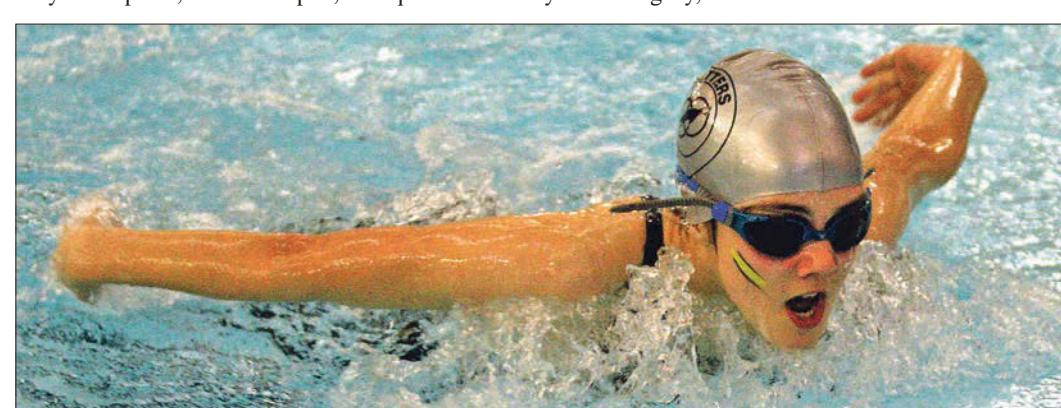
with Jordan MacIntyre winning the 100m freestyle in 1:18.34 and Rowan Drummond coming a close second with a time of 1:18.39.

The 9/10 year-old-age group, both boys and girls, was also well-contested, with some close races.

Overall it was a fantastic day with some superb swimming on show. Trophy winners: MacLean Cup: Girls 8 and under - Charlotte Moreland; MacKay Cup: Boys 8 and under - Finn MacKechnie; Spence Shield: Girls 9/10 years - Molly Gilchrist; Hutchison Cup: Boys 9/10 years - George Pagan; Acnacreebeag Trophy: Girls 11 years and over - Lauren Gibson; Larchfield Trophy: Boys 11 years and over - Alex MacPherson.

Squad Trophy winners: McCracken Cup - Boys 10 years - Kai MacKechnie; Tyndrum Cup: Girls 11 years - Tayler Robinson; Bank of Scotland: Boys 11 years - Ewan Dowd; Intermediate Shield: Girls 12

years - Jessica Main and Edie Elliott; Iona Shop Cup: Boys 12 years - Andrew Boyle; Gateway Cup: Girls 13 years - Jordan MacIntyre; Hannah's Shield: Boys 13 years - Callum MacInnes; Forteith Cup: Girls 14 years and over - Ella MacKechnie; Hunter Cup: Boys 14 years and over - Sam Coates; Beaver Timber shield: Senior girls - Ella MacKechnie; Beaver Timber shield: Senior boys - Sam Coates.



Rowan Drummond powers ahead in the 13 years girls' butterfly.



Rachel Carre in the girls' 12 years 50m freestyle.



Gateway Cup winner Jordan MacIntyre.

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Competition rules

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competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

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## Oban High School pipped at the post in Murrayfield final

Losing the game was a bitter blow to the players but the team can take pride in their overall performance that contributed to a fantastic game of rugby

**Auchinleck Academy** 24  
**Oban High School** 21  
**Under 16 National Bowl final**

OBAN High Schools U16 rugby team made the trip to BT Murrayfield on Wednesday December 6 to take part in the National U16 Bowl final against Auchinleck Academy from East Ayrshire.

The Bowl final appearance was a massive achievement for players and coaches from the team who have performed extremely well in previous rounds of the competition.

A large group of supporters from both schools made the trip through to the home of Scottish rugby with the game being played on the stadium's back pitches.

Auchinleck started the game strongly with some good play from their number eight Jamie Drummond and stand-off Andrew Houston, which would be a familiar theme for Oban's opponents as the game wore on.

After weathering the early Auchinleck attacks, Oban made some progress into the game and were retaining the ball well. Some good carries from captain Tommy McQuade and fellow prop Ross McCaskill gave the team good field position to attack from.

After five minutes Oban were awarded a penalty attempt from 40 metres out. Stand-off Angus Neil stepped up and fielded a fantastic kick into blustery wind to give Oban a 3-0 lead.

Auchinleck looked to hit back after Oban took the lead and launched several attacks wide to their outside backs who were undone with some good Oban cover tackles. The increasingly impressive Angus Neil fielded a fantastic clearing kick to keep the opposition at bay.

Oban had their best spell of the first half around the 20-minute mark. Back row

Aaron McCall had a good run down the right wing that could have brought an opening score but was halted with a well-timed tackle. The first try of the day arrived from this phase of play as Oban reacted to a penalty that was tapped quickly and touched down over the line by winger Finbar Dunne. It was 8-0 to Oban with a narrowly missed Neil conversion.

Things were going well with most aspects of the game for Oban, who were unlucky not to increase their lead having knocked the ball on close to the line after some more good phases of play.

The Oban side were dealt a huge blow after 30 minutes when talismanic stand-off Neil was forced off with a head injury. This meant a few positional changes for the team with Fergus Ritchie coming off the bench.

Auchinleck had the better of the remainder of the half as Oban were falling on the wrong side of the referee's whistle. The impressive Jamie Drummond narrowed the score to 8-7 with a well-taken try just before half-time.

The second half started as the first half ended with Auchinleck controlling most of the play, mainly due to Oban's ill-discipline at the breakdown. A try from Kevin Van Der Leest gave his side the lead with a conversion from Ross Watson taking the score to 14-8.

Both teams matched each other in the set piece on the day, making for an extremely close and physical encounter. Oban's efforts were aided with Auchinleck's number eight being sin-binned midway through the half.

With the outcome of the game in the balance, Oban capitalised on their man advantage, racing into a 18-14 lead with tries from Tommy McQuade and a second from Finbar Dunne.



Oban High School pictured after their narrow defeat in the Under-16 National Bowl final at Murrayfield. Photos: Scottish Rugby Union

Auchinleck, though, regained the lead with another try, this time from Lewis Young as Oban failed to regain possession from the kick-off.

At 18-19 in Auchinleck's favour the game sat on a knife edge going into the closing stages of play. Oban were reduced to 14 players with the sin-binning of centre Blair MacFarlane after a high number of penalties given away by his side.

Despite being down on numbers, Oban surged upfield and were awarded a penalty in front of the posts with only two minutes remaining. Ellis Hunter kept his cool and gave Oban a 21-19 lead going into the last play of the game.

As was the case throughout the game, Oban failed to maintain possession as Auchinleck were awarded a five-metre scrum from the kick-off. Jamie Drummond picked and went from the set piece, powering over the line and winning the game for Auchinleck with the last phase of play.

Losing the game in such circumstances was a bitter blow to the players but the team can take so much pride in their overall performance that contributed to a fantastic game of U16 rugby.

Many congratulations must to Auchinleck Academy, who dug deep to win a game that could easily have gone either way.

The appearance in the final was a huge testament to the U16 players and their coaches, Murray McCaskill, Robert McCall, Greg Fairbairn and Lewis

MacFarlane, who have worked superbly well with the squad over the course of the season. Oban High School, along with Oban Lorne RFC, would also like to thank the large group of supporters who travelled for the game.

The team's attention now turns to the West U16 league cup and friendly fixtures that will take place in from the start of 2018.

Oban High School: Tommy McQuade, John MacLeod, Ross McCaskill, Harry Johnston, Nathan McCulloch, Aaron McCall, Kenni Gray, Connor Dott, Ben Findlay, Angus Neil, Connor Taylor, Blair MacFarlane, Ellis Hunter, Finbar Dunne, Jordan Norman, Murray MacKay, Fergus Ritchie, Gregor MacDonald, Charlie Campbell Roberts, Jenson Binnie, Aidan MacKay.

### BT West Division 1 Garnock P Oban Lorne P

Oban Lorne's visit to Garnock was postponed at the weekend due to a frozen playing surface at Garnock's Lochshore playing grounds. The game has been rearranged to Saturday February 3.

Oban Lorne's attention now turns to the visit to Glencruitten ten of promotion-chasing Kilmarnock RFC this Saturday. The teams met earlier in the season with an understrength Oban Lorne going down 106-13 in a record club defeat.

The Oban squad will be hop-



Oban High School scrum-half Ben Findlay on the charge with Connor Taylor in support.

### Rugby

ing for an improved scoreline this week that will build on the recent 23-17 win away to Argyll rivals Helensburgh.

Saturday's game at Glencruitten will kick off at 2pm – weather permitting.

### BT National Women's League 2 Aberdeenshire Quines P Oban Lorne Ladies P

In keeping with the theme of the weekend, Oban Lorne Ladies' long trip to take on Aberdeenshire Quines was postponed on

Sunday due to a frozen pitch. This was a blow for the Oban team who had a strong squad available for the match and were hoping to extend their winning run in the league to eight consecutive games.

Oban Lorne Ladies have no further games in 2017 and are back in action on Sunday January 14 when they face the league's bottom-placed side Ardrossan RFC.

Robert makes the cut in first professional tournament

### Golf



Robert MacIntyre.

OBAN golfer Robert MacIntyre picked up his first pay cheque as a professional golfer on the European Tour when he made the cut at the Joburg Open played at Randpark Golf Club, Johannesburg last week.

The Joburg Open – South Africa – is part of the Open qualifying series where three players who are not already exempt and who finish in the top 10 secure places in The Open Championship to be held at Carnoustie from July 19-22 next year.

Robert, the only Scot to make the cut, carded an excellent seven under par 280 with rounds of 72, 67, 71 and 70 to finish in joint 42nd place in a field which started with 240 competitors.

The winner of the tournament was Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma with a score of 264 – 23 under par.

### Scottish Amateur FL results and fixtures

#### Football

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Cup fourth round replay – Oban Saints v Greenock HSF; Premier Division One – Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division Two – Port Glasgow OBU v Lochgilphead Red Star; Tarbert v Duncanrig.

All games were postponed due to the weather.

This Saturday's fixtures: Scottish Amateur Cup, fourth round replay – Oban Saints v Greenock HSF; Glencruitten, kick-off 1.30pm; Premier Division 1 – Campbeltown Pupils no game; Premier Division Two – Cardross v Tarbert; FC Argyle v Lochgilphead Red Star.

### Oban Saints youths' results and fixtures

#### Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Under 13s v Lasswade; Under 14s v Ardencaple; Westercommon Star v Under 15s; Baljaffray v Under 16s; Ardencaple v Under 17s.

All games were off due to the weather.

This weekend's fixtures: Kilbowie Union v Under 13s; Glentyan Thistle v Under 14s; Under 15s v Clyde OSF; Under 16s v Campbeltown Pupils; Under 17s no game.

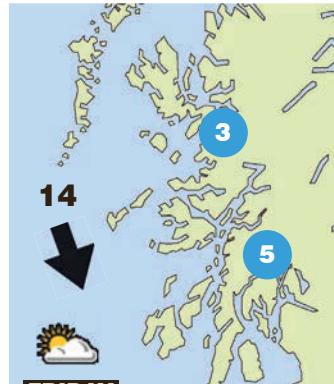


Stand-off Angus Neil slots over a penalty during the final.

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#### WEATHER

Thursday	Sunshine and showers Winds light South Easterly Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.
Friday	Sunny Winds moderate North North Westerly Temperatures 0°C to 5°C.
Weekend Outlook	Sunny intervals on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds light North North Westerly Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.



#### TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday December 14, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	
Thur	03.09	3.2	09.03
Fri	03.46	3.4	09.56
Sat	04.22	3.6	10.38
Sun	04.57	3.8	11.17
Mon	05.33	3.9	11.54
Tues	00.14	1.2	06.08
Wed	00.50	1.2	06.43
			1.5
			15.24
			3.4
			21.59
			1.5
			22.35
			1.4
			16.33
			3.7
			23.07
			1.3
			17.08
			3.8
			23.40
			1.2
			17.43
			3.9
			**.**
			**.**
			18.18
			3.9
			18.53
			3.8

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)



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			1.5
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			16.33
			3.7
			23.07
		</	

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## Council slated in Christmas party cash row

MARK ENTWISTLE

mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

SPEAN Bridge senior citizens group has opted not to buy presents for elderly residents this year, instead choosing to use the cash to help fund Christmas events for primary and nursery youngsters, after Highland Council was slammed for playing 'Scrooge' by refusing to fund the events.

The local pensioners' festive season generosity emerged during a discussion at the recent December meeting of Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council.

For the last few years, the community council has successfully applied for £1,000 under Highland Council's ward discretionary fund which it then distributed to smaller local groups. But despite there being no problem with the community council obtaining the cash in previous years, this year Highland Council has said 'bah, humbug' and refused the community council's application.

As well as Spean Bridge Senior Citizens, other groups losing out on the £100 or £200 festive cash gifts are Roy Bridge Senior Citizens, ABC Group, Spean Bridge Primary School and Nursery, Braes Beavers and Spean Bridge Toddlers Group.

At the community council's December meeting last week,

chairman John Fotheringham did not hold back in his condemnation of Highland Council.

'Every year for the last four years, the community council has applied for, and received, money to give to small local groups for Christmas parties,' said Mr Fotheringham.

'Our treasurer Brian Donald has faithfully kept every receipt from all these events, but when he offered these to Highland Council, he was told it did not need to see them.'

'Now we are being told that because these small groups and organisations aren't constituted or don't have bank accounts, Highland Council won't give us the money to pass on to them.'

Highland Council's position is that, because the community council had been applying on behalf of others, it meant the local authority was unable to scrutinise the spend effectively.

'If groups are unconstituted then it does raise a concern in terms of how the money is being paid out, as to have a bank account most groups would require a constitution,' a Highland Council official informed community councillors last month.

'The advice we have received from our finance section is quite clear that this does not allow effective scrutiny of public money.'

But community councillors were incensed that it appeared Highland Council no longer trusted them. Mr Fotheringham

pointed out that while the Spean Bridge area has 18 per cent of the population in the Caol and Mallaig ward, it only received £1,200 last year out of the £33,000 available in the ward discretionary fund.

'It seems like there is one rule for one community and one rule for another. It is totally unfair,' he said. 'The fund mechanism is clearly broken and it's high time they did something about it. I think we need to formally write and lodge a complaint with Audit Scotland.'

Mr Fotheringham's comments were echoed by other community councillors, including secretary Dana MacLennan and treasurer Brian Donald.

'We as the community council have a constitution. So, basically, this is Highland Council saying it doesn't trust us,' said Ms MacLennan.

Mr Donald added: 'We're talking about hundreds of people and kids here. I just can't get my head around the fact Highland Council expects us to go back to these small groups and say "sorry, but it's been turned down."

Mr Fotheringham concluded:

'I have to say people in this village have put Highland Council to shame. The senior citizens have decided to give money they received to the nursery and primary school rather than buy Christmas presents for elderly residents because the "Scrooge" council turned us down.'



Graeme Tait and his fiancee, Sophie Irwin, got engaged at Glenfinnan Viaduct.

## Hogwarts Express delivers magic moment for couple

THERE was magic in the air, thanks to a little help from the famous 'Hogwarts Express', better known as The Jacobite steam train, when Graeme Tait recently got down on one knee to propose to girlfriend Sophie Irwin.

Graeme had secretly arranged for the

locomotive, made even more famous by the Harry Potter movies, to carry a special name plate bearing his proposal of marriage - much to the delight of Sophie and passengers on board.

See page 3 for full story.

Great value for money

THE LOCHABER TIMES has been bringing all the news, events and sport to the people of Lochaber and beyond for the past 156 years.

Our hard-working team produces the weekly print edition while keeping the newspaper's new website ([www.lochabertimes.co.uk](http://www.lochabertimes.co.uk)) and social media channels up to date seven days a week. And it all happens right at the heart of the community in Fort William.

But as the costs involved in printing a newspaper, such as newspaper and delivery charges, have risen in recent years, the *Lochaber Times* and our sister titles have taken the difficult decision to increase our cover price to help with these added costs.

The increase in price - the first in years - is just 5p, meaning the print edition costs 90p, still offering great value for money. At the *Lochaber Times*, we value the loyalty of our readers - print and online - and look forward to your continued support. And don't forget, you can subscribe to the online edition from as little as 56p a week.

MP's fossil fuel pension plea

IAN BLACKFORD, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, has joined an increasing number of cross-party politicians to call for their parliamentary pension fund to move its £612 million of assets away from fossil fuels. The move comes as constituency members across the country are urging their local MPs to show they care about climate change.



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## Green light for fish farm expansion

PLANS to expand a fish farm in Loch Leven have been approved by Highland Council, despite opposition from Lochaber councillors and local organisations, writes Neill Bo Finlayson.

All three Lochaber councillors who attended the south planning committee meeting on Tuesday supported a motion to refuse Marine Harvest's application to upgrade and expand its site near north Ballachulish to a 16-cage farm.

Their attempts to block the expansion were unsuccessful, however, as they were out-voted by fellow south planning committee members.

Councillor Andrew Baxter, who lodged the motion for refusal, said he was 'disappointed' with the final result, saying: 'It is now vital council officers make sure the

environmental management plan is adhered to and know that local communities won't accept a breach of that plan.'

The application had objections from two local fishery bodies, Nether Lochaber Community Council (NLCC) and the National Trust for Scotland. The main concern for them all was the environmental impact of the expanded fish farm.

Iain Jenner, chairman of NLCC, said:

'As a community we don't doubt the good intentions of the local fish farm manager but we are well aware of concern in south Lochaber about the damage to fish stocks. We have missed an opportunity to establish a community partnership here. Precautionary principles applied to fish farms on the East Coast are being ignored on the West Coast. The planning

committee has let us down. Lochaber councillors tried their best. The councillors who voted in favour of the application are all from the East Coast where the precautionary principles apply, so there's never a problem there.'

Lochaber District Salmon Fishery Board, a statutory consultee, and Lochaber Fisheries Trust (LFT), also objected to the application on the basis the proposal will have a significant impact on wild salmonids, particularly in the rivers Coe, Leven and Laroch, as well as other small burns that enter the sea loch.

The LFT outlined that the rivers surrounding the fish farm site are in poor health and 'do not have the resilience to cope with the increased risks posed by the expansion of the farm'.

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**WHAT'S ON**

**KILMALLIE** Singers' annual Christmas concert is on Saturday December 16 in Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church at 7.30pm. Tickets, priced £5 for adults, concessions £4, children £1, are available at the church door on the evening or from choir members.

**LOCHABER** Music School is holding its 31st annual Christmas concert on Sunday December 17 in St Margaret's Church, Roy Bridge, at 3pm. The audience will be treated to a variety of seasonal music featuring choral, orchestral, ensemble and solo items performed by talented young local musicians and singers. There will also be a raffle featuring hamper baskets filled with donated prizes. The raffle will be drawn before the final Christmas carol. All money raised will help fund classes for the music school's pupils. Admission is £6 for adults but free for school-aged children.

**THE MOORINGS** Hotel, Ba-naive, is hosting a Christmas fair on Sunday December 17 from noon to 3pm. As well the chance to buy Christmas gifts, there will be a chance to visit Santa in his grotto.

**BRING** in the new year with a dip in Loch Linnhe during the Hogmanay Open Water Swim at The Old Fort, Fort William, at 2pm. For more information, visit Off Beat Bikes or call 01397 704008.

**Council services are on the move**

A NUMBER of Highland Council services are moving to the new Charles Kennedy Building in Fort William after the closure of Fulton House.

Environment, development and infrastructure (planning and building standards); community services (environmental health) and finance (business support staff) are switching. All services should be fully operational by tomorrow, Friday December 15.

**Extra rural postal charges blasted**

**HIGHLAND** MSP Donald Cameron has spoken out against 'crippling' rural postage penalties.

In a speech to the Scottish Parliament last week, the Lochaber-based politician said: 'People in the Highlands and Islands and other rural areas should not be subject to exceedingly high surcharges based on where they live. This is fundamentally unjust.'



The new bronze Model T Ford taking shape next to an original model at Powderhall Foundry. F50 Bronze Ford 01



Students look on intently as they are shown the casting process during their foundry tour. F50 Bronze Ford 03



Lochaber High School students enjoyed a tour of Powderhill foundry. F50 Bronze Ford 02

# 'Bronze Ford' hits production line ahead of spring unveiling

A NEW statute commemorating Henry Alexander's famous feat of driving a Model T Ford car to the top of Ben Nevis is nearing completion.

'The Bronze Ford', a full-size replica of a Model T, is being cast at Powderhall Foundry, Edinburgh.

Twenty eight students and three staff from Lochaber High School's design and manufacturing and metalwork departments

visited Edinburgh recently to see the bronze monument being made.

The car will become a permanent feature in Cameron Square, Fort William, marking Henry Alexander's ascent of Ben Nevis in a Model T Ford in 1911.

Mr Alexander will be at the wheel of the car which will be placed close to the West Highland Museum near the spot from where Henry left for the Ben in

1911 – an epic ascent of the Ben which was described at the time as 'motor mountaineering'.

The students learned about the lost wax process being used to build the car and saw the completed rear axle, seats, doors and some of the wheels.

They showed great interest in the project and the foundry closed its workshops to demonstrate the production process in detail.

A real Model T Ford, which was carried up Ben Nevis in 2011 by 77 stalwarts to mark the centenary of Mr Alexander's achievement, is being used as the template for casting the car parts.

One of those 2011 enthusiasts was Bill Cameron, metalwork teacher at Lochaber High and member of the 'Bronze Ford' local team.

The trip was made possible

through the generosity of Shiel Buses and Mark Stoddart, international designer from Turnberry, who has shown enthusiasm for the project.

The Ben Nevis Model T Ford Project group has raised £89,000 in the last four years to enable the contract to be placed by the Highland Council with Powderhall Foundry.

Fifty Model T cars will be following the new bronze Model T to Fort William to mark the event.

up the £55,000 raised privately. Many local people and businesses have contributed to the project as well as many Model T Ford car enthusiasts up and down the country.

The 'Bronze Ford' will be ready for the official unveiling at 11am on Saturday May 19, 2018.

Fifty Model T cars will be following the new bronze Model T to Fort William to mark the event.

## Lochaber duo recognised at Highland Council awards

TWO LOCHABER council workers have had their hard work rewarded at Highland Council's 2017 Quality Awards.

Emma Tayler, assistant ward manager for Lochaber, won a community award after being nominated by Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL).

Company secretary of VAL Flora McKee said: 'Emma goes the extra mile to support our board and her support has greatly helped many of us. She is organised, knowledgeable,

empathetic, friendly and has a good sense of humour. We class ourselves as lucky to have someone with her qualities in a key role in Lochaber. She is a true ambassador for Highland Council.'

The 2017 Trainee of the Year award went to mechanic Kyle Dempster from the council's workshop in Fort William where he works as part of a team keeping the fleet of heavy vehicles on the road.

Kyle's enthusiasm and po-

tential has impressed his colleagues.

Speaking on behalf of everyone in the Fort William workshop, foreman Sandy MacDonald, who himself started as an apprentice mechanic with the council 39 years ago, said: 'We all enjoy training Kyle as he is eager to learn and practise his new skills.'

'He is a real asset to us and we wish him well for the rest of his apprentice training.'



Emma Tayler receives her award from Provost of Inverness Helen Carmichael, left, and award host Nicola McAlley.



Trainee of the year Kyle Dempster and his workshop foreman Sandy MacDonald celebrate Kyle's success.



Kinlochleven first responders Anna Stephen, left, and Katie Small and Rhona Lawson, right, accept the defibrillators from Peter White and Pam Gowrie from Lucky 2B Here. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

**“**  
A huge  
thank you  
to all the  
fundraisers  
**”**  
Katie Small

## Defibrillators presented to team of Kinlochleven first responders

KINLOCHLEVEN has three new defibrillators thanks to the fundraising efforts of local residents and businesses.

Peter White and Pam Gowrie from charity Lucky 2B Here presented the equipment to Kinlochleven's community first responders group last Thursday.

Kinlochleven first responder Katie Small said: 'Thanks to Lucky 2B Here for presenting the two defibrillators, three cabinets and life support training, and to Marcus and Martine Spence for the donation of a third defibrillator.'

A huge thank you to all the fundraisers, especially Co-op staff, Keiron and John who shaved their heads, Kinlochleven.

en Community Council, Rotary Club Lochaber, Pre-65 Scottish committee, South Lochaber Bowmen, Heatherlee residents and Kinlochleven High School.'

A number of Kinlochleven residents have completed emergency life support training and it is planned to locate the defibrillators outside the Co-op and the GP's surgery. Donation boxes for the first responders group can be found in the MacDonald Hotel and the Highland Getaway.

People can also donate to the group online through its Justgiving website.

The group has raised £2,900 of its £3,500 target, so donations are still welcome.

## View from the Chamber

### Shop local this Christmas for a chance to win £100

LOCHABER Chamber of Commerce represents businesses throughout Lochaber with a focus on encouraging economic growth, job creation and promoting Lochaber as a great place to live, work, study and visit.

We've all heard the phrase 'shop local' and at this festive time when most of us are doing more shopping than usual it is a great time to support our wide range of fantastic local businesses.

That's why we're launching our Shop Local festive prize draw. Spend at a

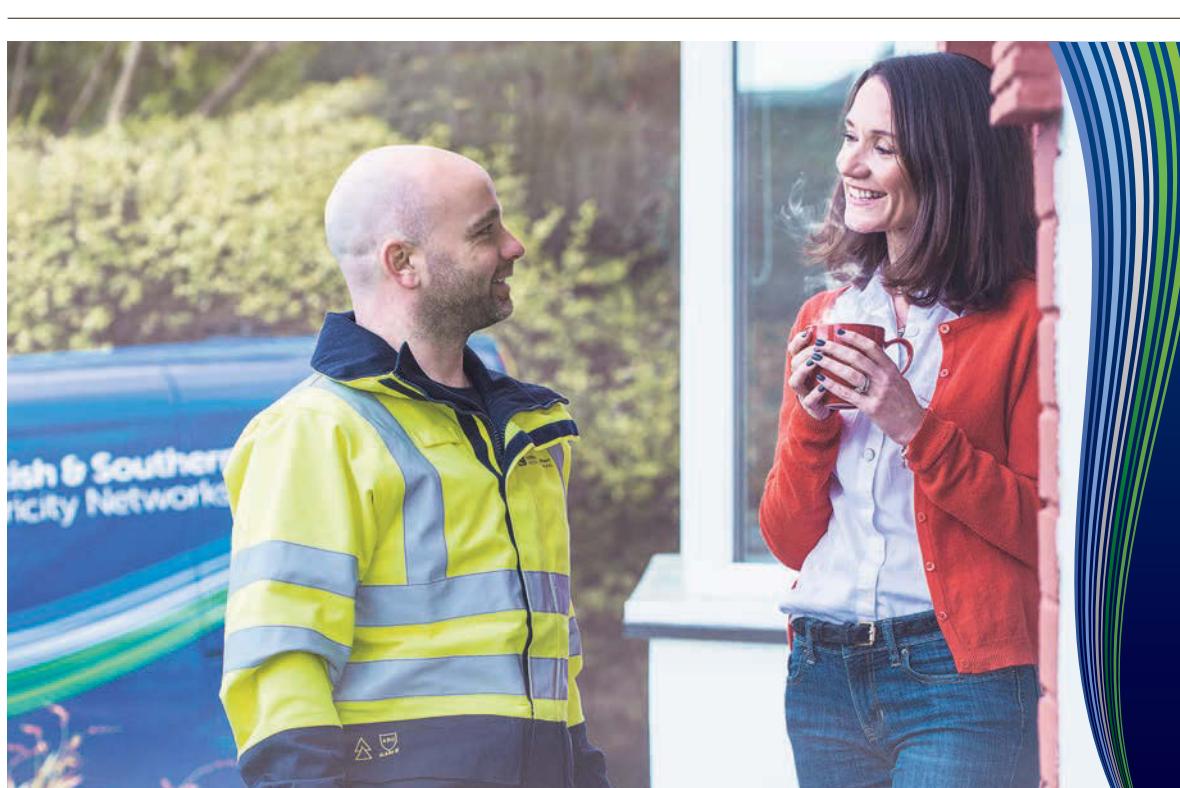
business that's a member of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce between Thursday December 14 and Friday December 22 to be in with a chance of winning £100.

Simply bring your valid dated receipt into the Lochaber Chamber of Commerce office at 15 High Street, Fort William, and fill in an entry form for your chance to win the cash prize. The office is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Entries close at 5pm on Friday December 22. The winner will be

drawn on Monday January 8, 2018. To check whether a business is a member of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, visit the members' pages on www.lochaber-chamber.co.uk

Enjoy your Christmas shopping and good luck.

We're committed to helping our members achieve their business goals. If you'd like to join our thriving Chamber of Commerce, which includes the Outdoor Capital of the UK destination group, give us a call on 01397 705765.



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# 'Hogwarts Express' delivers magical proposal for Sophie

**MARK ENTWISTLE**

mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

EVEN Hogwarts headmaster Professor Dumbledore could not have made it a more magical moment for one young couple who got engaged recently with a little help from the The Jacobite steam train.

Immortalised as the 'Hogwarts Express' in the Harry Potter movies, a trip on the train had long been on Sophie Irwin's bucket list.

So it was a dream come true for Sophie when her boyfriend suggested visiting Glenfinnan's famous viaduct to see The Jacobite.

A big Harry Potter fan, Sophie has always loved the romance of travelling by steam after reading Enid Blyton's books and visiting steam train railways in England.

But little did the London hospital anaesthetist know that her partner, Graeme Tait, had a magical railway-themed surprise in store for their visit to the viaduct in October.

Sophie and Graeme, a radiographer from Earlston in the Scottish Borders, started dating in 2015 after meeting at Frimley Park Hospital in Surrey.

The couple were on a touring holiday of the Highlands and

stopped off in Fort William with a view to enjoying a trip aboard The Jacobite.

Sophie told the *Lochaber Times* it had been Graeme who suggested that the day before getting on the train they should watch it cross the viaduct.

Sophie took up the story: 'We had arrived with plenty of time to find the right spot to take photos. Graeme seemed to be acting a little bit odd and wasn't smiling naturally for the photos – he must have been nervous!'

'The train then signalled its arrival onto the viaduct with a sound of its horn and went very slowly across the viaduct. Prior to the train's arrival, Graeme asked what I thought the front of the train would say. I said it would say The Jacobite, like normal.'

But much to Sophie's surprise, there was a special message on the head plate attached to the front of The Jacobite's boiler.

Instead of it bearing the locomotive's name, it bore Graeme's proposal: 'Sophie Marry Me'.

Sophie continued: 'I turned around to find Graeme on one knee with a beautiful ring. The passengers on the train were hanging out the windows shouting congratulations. They had made an announcement on



Sophie and Graeme with the specially commissioned locomotive name plate.

the train just before it passed us.' The special plate stayed on the locomotive all the way to Mallaig and back to Fort William.

And on the following day's trip on The Jacobite, the couple were presented with the name plate which Graeme had had secretly

commissioned from a company in Yorkshire with the help of West Coast Railways which operates The Jacobite.

Two months on, this happy tale has a mystery that still needs solved, as Sophie explained: 'Prior to boarding the train,



The Jacobite carrying Graeme's marriage proposal.

we were presented with some photos.'

'There had been a professional photographer on the line and he had noticed the special head board. He managed to take some spectacular photos of the train on the viaduct and going along the line.'

'He printed them and handed them to Florence [Florence MacLean from West Coast Railways, who had helped Graeme arrange the engagement surprise] on the morning of the train's departure.'

'He left his name, Bernie, and a contact number. Unfortunately the number doesn't work and we have tried a variety of number combinations. It appears to have Fort Williams area code.'

'We were wondering if the *Lochaber Times* might be able to help us find our photographer, as we want to say a massive thank you to him for the photos which we will cherish forever. We also want to get a digital copy of the photos.'

'So if anyone can help us track down Bernie the photographer for Sophie and Graeme, please let us know at fort@obantimes.co.uk and we will pass on contact details.'



Lorna after hearing the news of her successful appeal.

## Pupil Lorna's exam success

LORNA Jamieson has never let being registered blind stop her from achieving her ambitions.

Her determination to succeed means she has never let this be a barrier to her learning.

Lorna, an S6 pupil at Kinlochleven High School, has an impressive school record. Not only has she put 100 per cent effort in to her courses, but she has now achieved five As at Higher after a successful appeal in her English exam.

'It is amazing,' said Lorna. 'I was happy with four A's and a B at Higher when I got my results in August, but everyone said I should appeal as I was predicted an A in English. I am very happy I have it now. I am so delighted.'

From the beginning, Lorna has had a clear goal of what she wants to do when she leaves school. Maths has always been her dream and she would ideally like to study for a degree in mathematics at St Andrews.

Head teacher Rebecca Machin said: 'Lorna likes to problem solve, investigate and explore different types of maths, but in every subject she does her best, completing her work to the highest possible standard and often beyond the scope of the course. She is an exemplary student and thoroughly deserves this added success.'

## MSP to raise RBS closures for second time

THE SHOCK closure of banks in Mallaig and Kyle will be raised today (Thursday) for the second consecutive week in the Scottish Parliament chamber by Kate Forbes.

The MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch has secured a member's debate on the closures through a motion that has been

overwhelmingly backed by more than 40 cross-party MSPs.

In her constituency, branches in Aviemore, Beauly, Kyle and Mallaig have been earmarked by the Royal Bank of Scotland for closure, but Ms Forbes is keen to increase pressure on RBS.

Last week she raised the matter in a question to Business Minister Paul Wheelhouse. Ms Forbes said she understands many people are choosing to bank online, but it still remained the case that these branch closures will hit the Highlands hard.

'In particular, cash-based businesses, vulnerable customers and remote customers will all be facing the challenge of changing

their practices,' she said. 'I have visited three of the four branches which RBS intends to close in my constituency. The staff are incredible, with a single focus on customers' interests.'

She continued: 'Of course, there are lots of regular customers who will no doubt be feeling worried and anxious about the

future and I was keen to find out what alternatives RBS is putting in place for customers.'

'There is an arrangement with the Post Office and also a mobile bank.'

'It is important I can raise issues in the parliament which are making people worried and anxious and these branch closures

are doing exactly that. That is why I will be leading a debate in the Scottish Parliament today (Thursday December 14) to highlight the particular challenges for customers in Mallaig, Kyle, Beauly and Aviemore.'

'Ultimately, I would like RBS to reverse its decision to close these branches.'

## Lochaber firms inspire Mallaig students

MALLAIG High School pupils recently visited two of Lochaber's biggest employers as part of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

The 11 youngsters toured The Underwater Centre, Fort William, the world's leading sub-sea training and testing company, and BSW Timber Limited, Corpach, the most technologically advanced forest product company in the UK.

The Underwater Centre gave the group a tour of its unique training environment and explained a wide range of careers from commercial diving to ROV pilots.

Commenting on the trip, S6 pupil Kristers Tridubs said: 'Trying out the ROV simulator was a highlight, as was seeing a dive. I am now really keen on pursuing diving as a career. The staff were friendly and welcoming. It was a really enjoyable visit.'

Ewen Smith, engineering manager, BSW Timber Ltd, said

after the site tour: 'It is always a pleasure to work with Developing the Young Workforce West Highland to hopefully spark ideas in young people's heads about their future careers.'

'We hope to see some of the pupils next year at our apprentice interviews.'

Organised by DYW West Highland, the excursions gave the young students an insight into the workplace and showed them the career opportunities available in Lochaber.

A DYW spokesperson said: 'No matter what a young person's academic background is, both employers reiterated a good work ethic is what they look for the most from young people.'

'Support from employers is invaluable to retaining young talent in the area.'

'It can help provide that light bulb moment that encourages a young person into seeking a positive destination after they leave education.'



The students outside BSW's site at Corpach.



Mallaig High School students are shown around one of the diving barges at The Underwater Centre by instructor Ali MacLeod. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

## Ex-cop fined for threatening behaviour

A FORMER police officer has been fined £600 for behaving in a threatening or abusive manner towards a local primary school head teacher.

Thomas Kirsop, 77, of North Ballachulish, was found guilty last month after a trial at Fort William Sheriff Court heard how he had stood in a road near his home, just along from the local school, and had adopted an intimidating and confrontational stance, staring directly at the woman when she arrived at the school on August 16 this year.

Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald had deferred sentence on Kirsop until last Thursday for preparation of a criminal justice social work report.

Fining Kirsop, Sheriff MacDonald said: 'This would have been extremely unpleasant and it was criminal. And I am aware of the context of all this. However, I am persuaded that I can deal with this by way of a financial penalty and that will be a fine of £600.'

Earlier the same day, Kirsop had gone on trial after pleading not guilty to a charge that on the morning of November 17 this year, he had behaved in a threatening manner likely to place a reasonable person in a state of fear or alarm when he stared repeatedly at a woman and

her young son, walked towards them and made an abusive gesture while standing at the edge of his garden.

The woman had video-recorded Kirsop's behaviour when she and her son walked past his driveway and garden on the way to the local school shortly before 9am and it was at this point the pensioner, who is currently electronically tagged due to other harassment convictions, had stuck two fingers up at her.

'I was very upset and my son was very upset,' she told the court. About 15 minutes later, Kirsop drove past the woman 'extremely slowly' and stared at her while she was talking to two other parents outside the school.

'I was quite upset and shaken by it all,' she told Fiscal Depute Robert Weir.

Defence agent John McCall suggested to the woman that it was her action of filming his client that had provoked him.

'I suggest to you that you will do almost anything to get this man in trouble. Is that not correct?' he asked.

The woman denied the accusation and said all she wanted to do was to walk her son to school without feeling terrified. 'I don't want any trouble with Mr Kirsop,' she added.

Summing up, Mr McCall argued his

client had no case to answer because, while both sides had agreed to accept the video footage as genuine and that the conduct described had occurred, it was not criminal conduct.

'Spoken profanity is not a criminal act and giving someone the 'Vs' is also not a criminal act,' said Mr McCall.

After deliberations, Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald rejected Mr McCall's argument there was no case to answer.

Summing up the Crown case, Mr Weir commented: 'Walking towards someone and giving them the 'Vs' can be considered abusive.'

Concluding the defence's arguments, Mr McCall said what the case amounted to was a 77-year-old man standing in his own garden, with his hands in his cardigan pockets and some behaviour that was perhaps rude, unpleasant and unbecoming, but not criminal.'

Passing sentence, Sheriff MacDonald found Kirsop not guilty.

'It is clear you were standing in your garden and that you gave the 'V' sign to this lady. Although rude, horrible and unnecessary, I am not satisfied this meets the objective test [necessary to convict someone of threatening or abusive behaviour],' she told him.

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**GORDONS CHEMISTS**

FW

## Body of missing fisherman found

THE BODY of a missing Applecross man was discovered on the shore at Staffin Bay, Skye, on Saturday December 9. Police Scotland confirmed the family of missing fisherman Alasdair Macleod, who was reported missing on Monday November 20, have been informed.

In a statement on Mr Macleod's blog, Applecrosslife, the family said: 'This wasn't where it was expected to find him and there had been no official search in that area. Although official ID will have to be carried out by DNA tests, there is no doubt in our minds this is Ali, from descriptions of clothing remaining on his body.'

Concern was raised for Mr Macleod after his boat 'Varuna' was seen on rocks north of Applecross Bay with its engine running. Searches for the father-of-four were made by the RNLI, police and coastguard teams. Enquiries remain ongoing, however there are not thought to be any suspicious circumstances. A report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

## Police appeal for crash witnesses

POLICE are appealing for witnesses following a crash on the A890 at Strathcarron on Sunday December 10.

The collision happened at 7.20pm near the Strathcarron Hotel and involved a grey Audi A3 saloon. The 42-year-old driver of the Audi died at the scene.

The A890 was closed for the duration of the incident, re-opening again at 1.30am on Monday morning.

Sergeant Gregor Hay is appealing to anyone who witnessed the collision to contact police on 101, quoting incident number NP-11215-17.

# Trust supports organic fish farm plans amid objections

PROPOSALS to build two fish farms on Skye would be 'game-changing' for the island's economy, according to a community group.

The board of Staffin Community Trust (SCT) is urging Highland Council to approve Organic Sea Harvest's (OSH) planning applications for fish farms at Invertote and Culnacnoc near Staffin.

The Portree company want to build 12 cages at each site to organically farm Atlantic salmon in line with organic aquaculture standards.

A letter from the SCT board

said: 'The firm intends to create more than 50 new, well-paid jobs which we recognise as being strategically important for the economy of Skye and particularly this fragile community.'

'OSH is a company which has a strong record of working closely with SCT and keeping the board and community fully informed about its objectives and plans.'

Two formal objections have been lodged against OSH's application. Most notably, Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum (SLEF) has called on the council to reject plans on environmental grounds. Increased

pollution in the surrounding waters and contamination of wild salmon with sea lice are main points of contention for the environmental group.

SLEF says 'no increases in solid matter or dissolved nutrients should be considered acceptable anywhere in the sea' and that 'it is no longer a matter of contention that sea lice generated within fish farm cages are a threat to wild populations'.

Dr James Merryweather of Scottish Salmon Think Tank has also objected to the proposal, citing the pollution of surrounding waters and the spread of disease as a reason to reject the application.

and restaurants as well as the supply chain and transportation. If housing can be made available locally it will also add to the school roll which has declined in recent years.

'We would encourage Highland Council to consider these applications positively and empower this community to achieve its untapped potential, in the spirit of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act,' the board added.

SCT says it is looking to develop Staffin slipway to create opportunities for marine tourism, fishing and the leisure industry.

## Stornoway gets Christmas lights

COMMUNITY OWNED wind farm charity Point and Sandwick Trust has, along with Tesco and the Western Isles Lottery, stepped into the breach left by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's withdrawal of funds to ensure Stornoway can have Christmas lights after all this year.

The comhairle's decision to pull the plug on funding completely this year, after a number of years reducing its grant to Stornoway Amenity Trust for the festivities, had been met with dismay – but the community rallied round and the switch on took place on Friday. The trust donated nearly £2,000, with £2,000 coming from Tesco and £6,000 from Western Isles Lottery.

## MSP to meet RBS on bank closures

HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP Donald Cameron has arranged to meet with the Royal Bank of Scotland this week to discuss the recent announcement that 62 branches will be closed across Scotland. Barra's sole bank is being axed with the Mallaig and Kyle branches also set to go.

## Sports council funding boost

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar's Education, Sport and Children's Services has agreed to continue funding two local sports councils by devolving £13,000 to the Lewis and Harris Sports Council and £8,500 to Uist and Barra Sports Council.

The sports councils operate a grant aid programme for their members and work with Western Isles Development Trust to distribute the £60,000 donated by Transocean following the oil rig incident near Dalbeg in 2016.



## Ballachulish care home celebrates national award

STAFF and residents at Abbeyfield Ballachulish Care Home gathered this week to celebrate being named the best care home service in Scotland.

The Lochaber care home won the Care Home Service of the Year Award at the Scottish Care Awards and were presented with their prize at an awards cere-

mony in Glasgow on Friday November 17. Abbeyfield Ballachulish is the first service from the Highland area to win the award. Based in the centre of Ballachulish, the care home is an independent charity reliant on the business it generates on site.

It provides residential care to 30 clients as well as a

day care centre for 10 and a daily lunch club for the wider community. Eleven years ago the home faced closure because of poor performance and financial difficulties before a new manager and board appointed the current award-winning team. IF F50 Abbeyfield 01. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

# Learn something new in 2018

Get 2018 off to a flying start by learning something new. We have a number of short, full-time courses starting in January that can be a great first step into education and are will get you started on the right track.



picture courtesy of Kevin McGlynn

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increasing entitlement will require a substantially larger workforce. Our range of SVQs in Social Services Children and Young People, will give you lots of practical experience in working with children and young people as well as a nationally recognised qualification. You'll attend college for 2 days each week and spend the rest of time in a work placement, where you can put your new skills into practice.

### Maritime Skills course

Our Maritime Skills course is available in Oban and Lochgilphead. This combines SQA and RYA / MCA certification so you'll receive a comprehensive introduction to the maritime industries, as well as gaining internationally recognised certificates.

### Part time courses

We also have a range part time cours-

es which can help improve your skills and enhance your chances of getting a job. You might want to brush up on your computer skills with the European Computer Driving Licence. You can study at home, online, at a time that fits around your other commitments, or join an evening class to take a more structured approach.

### Degree programmes

As an academic partner of the University of the Highlands Islands, Argyll College also gives you access to a wide range of part time and full time degree programmes many of which can be started at the end of January. Visit our website or call us to find out what's available at your local Argyll College centre and make 2018 the year you Learn, Achieve, and Advance towards your future.

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Man admits producing cannabis at home

A KINLOCHLEVEN man who had nine cannabis plants and quantities of the drug in his home was ordered to do 160 hours of unpaid work in the community after admitting producing the drug.

Grieg Aitken, of Garbhein Crescent, had pleaded guilty to a charge of producing cannabis at his home on January 27 this year.

Fiscal Depute Robert Weir told Fort William Sheriff Court last week that when police searched Aitken's home they found nine plants, with a value of between £250 and £900, and two quantities of cannabis worth a total of £400.

'The accused said the cannabis plants and drug were for his own personal use and would last him about four to five months,' said Mr Weir.

'Officers also found a dehumidifier, a light, fan, hydroponic equipment, scales and trays.'

Defence agent Gerard Sweeney stressed there was no 'supplying' element in the crime his client was charged with. Sheriff MacDonald interjected: 'What would he have needed the scales for if this was all for his personal use?'

Mr Sweeney replied that nearly every household in the country would probably have scales. Mr Sweeney said his client was 'a decent chap' and used cannabis to help alleviate pain from neck and back problems.

Sentencing Aitken, 38, Sheriff MacDonald said it was a serious offence. 'I am persuaded I can deal with this by way of a community payback order as a direct alternative to custody and this will be 160 hours of unpaid work.'

# Man jailed after sparking Fort William armed seige

A SHERIFF jailed a man for 18 months last week for sparking an armed siege days after the Manchester Arena terrorist atrocity.

On Wednesday December 6, Inverness Sheriff Court heard Czechoslovakian national Michael Kucera had already been arrested for stealing a 30ft sailing vessel from moorings in Fort William, then consuming a bottle of rum before running it aground and refusing to be rescued.

After the west coast drama at sea, Kucera was treated in hospital for mental health issues before returning to Fort William and walking into the local library wearing a rucksack, holding a replica gun and terrifying staff.

At an earlier hearing at Inverness Sheriff Court, Kucera admitted theft by shipbreaking, culpable and reckless conduct, possessing offensive weapons and behaving in a threatening manner.

Fiscal depute Michelle Molley told Sheriff Gordon Fleetwood the alarm was raised on March 29 when a witness saw a distress flare being set off from the vessel. Coastguard and the Oban lifeboat crew raced to the scene but Kucera had already started the engine and sailed off down Loch Linnhe.

The court heard he was naked, apart from a waterproof jacket. He later ran the boat aground near Lochaber Yacht Club and tried to push it back into deeper

water himself. Kucera refused to be rescued from the icy waters by the coastguard and made his own way ashore where he was arrested by police.

A doctor examined him and it was decided he needed psychiatric help. But the court was told that the day after his release from New Craigs Hospital in Inverness, on May 25, Kucera returned to Fort William.

He walked down the High Street brandishing what appeared to be a semi-automatic pistol and entered the local library where terrified staff locked themselves in.

He had placed the gun, which turned out to be a replica BB gun, on the counter and when

asked if it was real, he told an employee: 'What do you think?'

Kucera remained in the building for around half an hour before armed police surrounded the library.

When 26-year-old Kucera emerged from the front door, he was bundled to the ground and his rucksack cut from his back and taken away a safe distance in case it contained explosives.

His solicitor advocate Shahid Latif said: 'A firearms officer said: 'It was realistically styled and to someone inexperienced in firearms or observing it from a distance, it could have appeared a genuine and viable firearm.'

The firearms officer added: 'Had it been pointed at me from

a distance, I may have been forced to take decisive action.'

Police also found a knife and lighter fuel in the backpack. Kucera later claimed to police he knew how to make 'napalm' from the liquid.

Kucera, who was living rough in the area, has been on remand since the incident. His sentence was backdated to May 29.

His solicitor advocate Shahid Latif said: 'Given what occurred elsewhere in the UK a few days earlier, he is acutely embarrassed. He has come to realise the enormity of how his behaviour was perceived that day and he apologises. It had an air of stupidity, idiocy and was infantile.'

Caol joiner fined £600 for drugs offences

AN APPRENTICE joiner from Caol was fined £600 at Fort William Sheriff Court last week after admitting possessing cocaine and ecstasy.

Jordan Blackmore, of Glenpane Street, Caol, plead guilty to having the drugs at Viewforth car park, Fort William, on March 18 this year.

Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald was told Blackmore, 21, had no previous convictions but warned him: 'But both of these are Class A drugs, so this is a matter I take quite seriously.'

She fined Blackmore £300 on the charge of cocaine possession and another £300 for possession of ecstasy.

**Man, 26, admits stealing £1,500**

A FORMER employee of Morrisons supermarket at An Aird, Fort William, was fined £360 at the town's sheriff court last week after admitting embezzling £1,500 from his ex-employer.

Jamie Bonnett, whose address was given as Glasgow, but who previously lived in Ballachulish, pleaded guilty to the offence at a previous court hearing.

Bonnett, 26, took the money between May 5, 2015 and July 23, 2015.

Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald heard Bonnett had now repaid the money in full and was now working as a sales assistant in Glasgow.

## Caol pupils hit all the right note with album

PUPILS at Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar (Lochaber Gaelic Primary School) are promoting their new album, *Air Oidhche Nollaig*, which is available now.

The album is part of a project to raise money for school funds, with partial funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and features new Gaelic Christmas material, produced by famous Scottish traditional musicians.

The CD has been available to pre-order since the start of December but physical copies are now available from the school office or by ordering online at bsgla.co.uk.



The new album, recorded in Glenfinnan, features the voices of young Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar pupils. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

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FW

## Spean Bridge

SPEAN Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achtnacarry Community Council held its December meeting at Kilmonivaig Parish Church hall last week.

■ Presentation by Andy Gregory of SSE about plans for a Coire Glas pump storage scheme (see page three).

■ In a reply to Kate Forbes MSP, BEAR has agreed to carry out a speed survey on the A86 at Inverroy, which it is hoped will be a first step to getting the required traffic calming measures requested.

BEAR is actively pursuing the 20mph warning light repair at Spean Bridge School; the carriageway repairs at the A82/A86 junction; the drainage issues at the bridge over the A86 and the deletion of reference to toilets on road signs. They have escalated verge repairs to Category 2, issued a works notice to remove the 20mph signs in Roy Bridge and permanently repaired the carriageway on the A82.

■ Highland Council – Temporary repairs have been carried out on the B8004 at the Commando Memorial with permanent resurfacing to be undertaken as a priority in the next financial year.

Grit boxes have been installed at Braeroy Road and Kilmonivaig Church and the roads department is examining measures to restrict parking at the junction of Altour Road and Morrison Avenue.

■ Ward discretionary funding – The chairman outlined the correspondence between Highland Council over its refusal to accept the application for funds for seven Christmas parties (see page one for full story).

■ Affordable housing – The SCIO has held a preliminary meeting with John Macdonald of HIE to discuss community land purchase. The chairman has corresponded with the development planning team to determine what level of development would be permitted outwith the local development plan. He will pass the correspondence to the SCIO for their information.

■ Resilience committee – Ian Langley produced an exploratory document, and he, Amy, and the chairman had met to discuss it and decide on priorities. The absence of a community council area website was considered a drawback that we should seek to address. Further work will be undertaken before the next meeting early in the new year followed by a community consultation.

■ Rik Eppens has identified a Christmas tree for Spean Bridge and the fire and rescue service will assist with erection. Roy Bridge is making its own arrangements.

■ Staff at the Spar shop are endeavouring to keep the area around the shop tidy, but their efforts are hampered by coaches depositing rubbish in their bins.

■ Liz Fotheringham discussed recent developments on the Lochaber Health and Social Care redesign including plans for the new Belford Hospital.

■ Correspondence – A complaint about fly-tipping and litter adjacent to the Brackletter travellers' site had been passed to Highland councillors, and in turn to the housing manager, but no permanent solution to the problem appeared likely in the short term.

■ Sgt Deborah McCartney said Police Scotland was aware of the increasing impact that large and wide loads were having on the infrastructure, and other road users. The roads unit is active in tackling speeding motorists.

■ The next meeting will be moved from January 2 to January 9. It was agreed that if Liz would provide catering for future meetings at Kilmonivaig Church Hall, the community council would make a small donation to Lochaber Foodbank.

## Plockton

SIXTY senior citizens attended the annual dinner and ceilidh in Plockton Hall on Friday December 1. They were piped in by young Alistair Sharp and, after an excellent meal, dancing followed to the Glenelg dance band. Santa Claus was there and many received a gift. Charlie M MacRae proposed the vote of thanks.

■ The AGM of the Lochalsh branch of British Legion Scotland was held in the Lochalsh Hotel, Kyle on November 27, with the usual attendance. Terry Grant submitted a satisfactory treasurer's report. All office bearers were re-elected with Richard Talbot added to the committee. The branch will distribute parcels at Christmas.

■ At Plockton in November there were seven inches of rain with only two dry days. Last year there was four inches. So far there has been 52 inches this year, which is exactly the same as last year. The warmest temp was 11C and coldest was -0.5C.

CM MacRae

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Saturday 23rd December:	11am – 4pm	Saturday 30th December:	11am – 4pm
Sunday 24th December:	11am – 4pm	Sunday 31st December:	11am – 4pm
Monday 25th December:	CLOSED	Monday 1st January:	11am – 4pm

last admissions at 3pm each day

Then open all winter from Friday – Monday (inclusive) from 11am – 4pm (last admission at 3pm)

Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE

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Then open all winter from Friday – Monday (inclusive) from 11am – 4pm (last admission at 3pm)

Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE



Pupils from Glencoe and Duror primary schools with their donations to Lochaber Foodbank.

## Glencoe and Duror youngsters support foodbank

GLENCOE and Duror primary schools have been working together to support their local foodbank.

The pupils gathered food and toiletries kindly donated by their school communities and delivered all the items to the Lochaber Foodbank, situated in the former Hydro Shop in Fort William.

They met Alex and Pat, two volunteer foodbank helpers, who explained the purpose of the foodbank and showed the children how the donated items were stored and made ready for distribution. The children were also made aware of local businesses and organisations that support the foodbank.

The Lochaber Foodbank, at the time of the visit, held enough food to feed local needy families for up to three months. Alex and Pat were amazed at the amount of items the children brought from their two small schools.

Both Glencoe and Duror primary schools will continue to support the Lochaber Foodbank.

## Poolewe

A COMMUNITY swimming pool in Wester Ross has received support from Highland Council in ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Members of the council's people committee agreed to transfer £45,911 for Poolewe Pool to the budget for services commissioned from High Life Highland.

High Life Highland has worked with Poolewe and District Swimming Pool Association to secure external funding for a significant renovation project which will include a modernised plant and equipment, contributing to the longer term future of the facility.

Transferring the budget for Poolewe Pool to High Life Highland will help strengthen these development plans and any applications for funding.

Earlier this year, following concerns over the future viability of the community asset, and at the request of the board of Poolewe and District Swimming Pool Association, the management of Poolewe Pool transferred to High Life Highland in June.



More than 30 people turned up to swap unwanted clothes for some new outfits.

## Clothes swap success for green Lochaber group

LOCHABER Environmental Group hosted clothes swap in November as part of the ninth annual Christmas Festival in Fort William.

More than 30 people came along to swap clothes they no longer wanted for something 'new'.

Through their Lochaber Energy and Waste project, which is supported by the Scottish Government's climate challenge fund, Lochaber Environmental Group is promoting reuse and sharing in Lochaber.

The clothes swap, held in Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church, provided an opportunity for people

to get some new clothes without spending a penny and give some unloved clothes a new lease of life. People brought along a total 80kg of clothes, 30kg of which was swapped on the night. The rest of the clothes were donated to local charities – Lochaber Supports Refugees and the British Heart Foundation shop.

People loved the idea of a clothes swap, with attendees expressing their love of the idea, with some delighted to find a couple of nice items in exchange for things they didn't want anymore.

Energy and waste officer Christine

Rolin said: 'According to sustainability experts WRAP, "clothes have the fourth largest environmental impact after housing, transport and food".

'We need to wear clothes longer and, at the end of their life, recycle them to be made into new clothes. Currently, only one per cent of new clothes are made from recycled fibres.'

The next clothes swaps will be on January 16 at 6pm in the Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church, Fort William. Spring clean your wardrobe and bring your clothes along in the new year.



Entertaining parents at book day in Caol Primary School last week, pupils (left-right) Kaci Hatch, Calvin Symmers, Carla Donaldson, Aimee Conn, Jacob Garwood and Kayleigh DuPlessis with teacher Kerry Lamont and Edinburgh Book Trust representatives, Jennifer Harwood and Antonia Clark. IF F50 Book Week 02. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

## Caol schools celebrate book week

PRIMARY schools in Caol marked Book Week Scotland by celebrating characters and stories from their favourite books.

St Columba's RC Primary School and Caol Primary School embraced the week-long festival, celebrating with pupils dressing up as their favourite characters. They also gave readings of their favourite books and told stories to each other – even entertaining some parents, too.

With the aim of promoting reading, during Book Week Scotland people of all ages and walks of life came together in libraries, schools, community venues and workplaces to share and enjoy books and reading.



Pupils and staff at St Columba's RC Primary School in Caol dressed up as their favourite characters from a book and secret judges chose the winners.

JP F50 Book Week 01. Picture: Abrightside Photography.

## RETRO Roamer

### More Roamerisms from the 1980s

■ No wonder the driver of the Salen Shellfish delivery van was taking his time on the way to Inverness last Friday. In front of him was a large scale model of the Loch Ness Monster. Looking ravenous, Nessie was hanging over the back of a wide-load lorry. In addition, the monster could have been forgiven for being in an agitated state, having apparently lost a front foot claw. But the thought of shellfish by the vanload appeared to perk Nessie up until, fortunately, the wide-load lorry stopped at Drum and the Salen Shellfish driver was able to speed by – with a sigh of relief – and with a tale/tail to tell when he returned to the Peninsula.

■ Traveller called at a local petrol station. Fills a full tank and then proffers an American Express card. 'We don't take American Express,' the operator advises him. 'Well, I haven't that amount of money on me,' traveller replies. 'So what are we going to do?' It all got a bit fractious for a while. Even the police were called in. The upshot was that the customer was asked to leave something as surely until a financial agreement could be reached. It was then that the traveller must have remembered whom he travelled for – a firm making novelty toys. So he went out to his motor and came back with a clockwork monkey, which he then proceeded to wind up and let loose on the counter. The monkey pranced up and down, and clapped its hands. And the monkey business worked. 'That'll do nicely,' said the filling station attendant.

■ Wednesday of last week was the Day of the Dumper. And Thursday was the Day of the Digger. The dumper won 25-24. The yellow peril managed to gather 25 cars, vans and lorries behind it en route from Claggan Road End to Lochy Bridge. At 8.45am. The runner-up had two dozen assorted vehicles in its wake next day, over the same stretch of road. At the same time in the morning, I believe that a steamroller will be challenging them both at some inconvenient time.

■ Meanwhile, I noted that a yacht was going through the canal at 8.45am on Monday. While it was able to 'save' seven minutes of prime time, the same cannot be said for the 30 cars, vans, lorries and buses waiting on the Banavie side of the canal. Nor for the several score of motors on the Fort William side. Never mind the 10 vehicles held up as they tried to exit from Caol onto the A830. So, all you local companies, council departments and schools, if any of your staff/pupils were late in on Monday, that was the reason why. The canal has the right of way over road and rail traffic. But at 8.45am, it's a wee bit much.

■ You must like the school! That was the comment passed on to quite a few youngsters on Monday. Several of them had turned up for lessons as usual at Lochaber High on what was a teachers' in-service day. And, therefore, a day off for the pupils.

■ War veteran, Jim 'Pasha' Rodger came face to face with the Africa Star at last weekend's Cameron Highlanders reunion. Pasha, who had previously been awarded the medal, had somehow contrived to lose it after an earlier Camerons get-together and was very upset about it. So he was as pleased as Pasha when, at a special ceremony at the reunion, he was presented with a replacement Africa Star.

■ This one is for the parents of children at Lochaber High. The current issue of the School News reports that the office is holding an accumulation of lost property. Watches, calculators, jewellery, purses, keys – you name it. All that is required is for the pupils to give a description of the items, and they can be claimed. In this throw-away society, the youngsters haven't exactly been flocking to retrieve their property. Maybe the Bank of Mum and Dad can remonstrate with them?

■ The word went out from the team captain: 'No drinking on Friday night, lads. We all need to be fit for the fray on Saturday afternoon.' However, not exactly leading by example, the beloved leader blotted his own copybook and scooped up a few on the quiet after work on Friday. The 'result' came at the away match next day. Everybody turned up bright eyed and bushy tailed. The captain was comparatively okay, too ... except that he had forgotten his boots!

■ The local bookies were in an unaccustomed sweat last Friday. Royalist and parliamentary punters had spotted the classic 'mug's double' that day. Premier Princess at Leicester and Wearegrandmother at Sedgefield. Premier Princess won at 6-1, but Wearegrandmother lost the lead in the run-in to take second place at 14-1. So the bookies only had to pay out to each-way backers.

■ Toto got an early Christmas box. As he put it, it contained 'a new scissors, and clippers and combs'. No doubt, by the time the festive season is upon us, Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team will be called out to search for one or two of these items after Toto mislays them in some forgotten location.

■ Duncan Ferguson MacDonald of Clanranald was in town from Mingarry last week. The heater wasn't working in his official Highland Health Board motor. Expert advice indicated the replacement of the thermostat. So Fergie phoned HHB for authorisation to purchase it. 'Gee whizz, I'm freezing down here,' Fergie advised the admin lassie. 'The heater in the car has packed in because it needs a new thermostat. What can you do for me?' The admin lassie obviously had a sense of humour. She responded: 'I can't do anything for you over the phone. But why not go along to Peter MacLennan's and kit yourself out with some thermal underwear till tomorrow and I'll contact our admin garage in the meantime.'

■ Pre-Christmas fare. The spokesman for one group dining out at a local hotel complained to the waiting staff about there being a 'teabag in among the tatties'. Placatory noises were made and it was explained to the party that it was 'a herb bag, actually'. Peace and calm were restored.



Fort William Fire Brigade in the 1920s.

# Viewpoint



**Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB**

## The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

There will no doubt be many people who read our front page story and were lost for words.

Despite Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council having successfully applied to Highland Council for money to pay for food for Christmas parties and to buy small presents for the children at the nursery, this year the council has refused their application with the excuse that the recipient groups are not constituted.

Despite nothing having changed from last year, the fact that the community council is constituted and faithfully

keeps all receipts for some reason hasn't been accepted by the council. So, putting the council to shame, Spean Bridge senior citizens group has opted not to buy presents for elderly residents this year, instead agreeing to use the cash to help pay for Christmas events so that local primary and nursery youngsters don't miss out.

We all know the council is strapped for cash, but to deprive children and pensioners of a little Christmas cheer seems petty.

And where were local councillors when this decision was being made? Shame on them.



## Days gone by – 1997

We go back to the 1997 Glenfinnan Games this week. Fort William piper Anna Macdonald played for the dancers who took part in the local competitions.

### MacPhail



ANGUS MACPHAIL  
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WEDDINGS are one of the most frequent events of celebration in our lives and a good one is a truly magical occasion to enjoy.

Last weekend, I attended one of the best I have experienced and it prompted me to ponder on the attributes that come together to create a day befitting of the significance of the bond being made. The bride and groom are both good friends of mine and I was honoured to play a small part in the ceremony.

As a musician, I've been to many hundreds of weddings over the past 20 years and, in attending so many, it is easy to become a bit jaded about marriage and the events surrounding it. However, when the right conditions combine, there is nothing quite like good wedding, and last Friday's was one to remember.

There are certainly no hard and fast rules that must be followed and factors to be included can be wide and varied.

Venues can range from a grand

church to a beach, couples can be young or old, numbers attending can be a handful to hundreds, food can be a few sausage rolls to a five-course dinner, they can take place in winter, summer, hail, rain or shine, but all can give joy and set a couple off on the road of life together.

There were certain ingredients in last Friday's wedding that set it apart from most and there were factors that definitely helped to allow the event to deliver on all expectations of what a wedding should be.

The following is a brief summary of these.

The setting in a 19th-century estate house in rural Perthshire with panoramic views of the River Tay gave a strong sense of romance, excitement and novelty.

The piper who played as the guests arrived chose the perfect tunes and performed them impeccably.

The ceremony was conducted by a friend of the groom's family and, in a manner that can only come with experience, he put everyone at ease with just the right combination of gravitas, humour and authority.

The weather was that of the perfect

crisp winter's day with bright sunshine reflecting from the snow-covered slopes of the surrounding countryside.

The warmth and welcome of the huge log fires in the house were accentuated by the freezing conditions outside.

The canapés, the drinks, the meal, the speeches, the ceilidh band, the bar, the buffet, the best man, the bridesmaids and all the guests united to create what felt like being part of a film set where the aim of portraying a dreamlike wedding was achieved with perfection.

The most important factor involved in any wedding is, of course, the couple being married.

When two young amazing people, from two strong and amazing families come together for the very best of reasons and in the happiest of circumstances in the way we were celebrating last week, it epitomises the very best of the essence of what love, life and marriage are about.

The stars aligned when Camilla and Ben met and that was felt in the air last Friday when they became Mr and Mrs Wilson.

I have been in, their prices for clothes were silly, same as Outside edge, way over what you'd expect to pay, so not surprised.'

Ian Clayton: 'Used to get all my sailing gear from here when I was a teenager. They were so helpful. We were so lucky to have access to a wide range of boats at OHS when I was there, before some twit got rid of them for windsurfers. If I didn't have a part it'd be down to Nancy Blacks for a block, bung or a fairlead. Very sad to see the shop go.'

Alexander McDonald: 'End of an era alright, great for sailing gear, good quality clothing, for shooting fishing and warm winter gear, I will miss it.'

Bert Benton: 'Always sad to see independent shops close, and this was a great shop to visit when I was in town.'

Sarah Clarke: 'Nooooo!'

Des Ballantyne: 'I've tried several times to buy stuff in there and they only keep like one item of anything. If its not by chance that the pair of shoes/boots that you are wanting to buy, are in your size, then you aint getting them. I've tried a fair few times to buy stuff with no luck.'

Colin Martin: 'Most wee businesses in town don't have the capital to have a large stock holding and need to order stock in if they don't have it! That is if you don't need instant gratification.' Online stores have far fewer overheads and can therefore offer items cheaper, one of the choices you are making is whether or not you want to support local businesses or see them disappear.'

Pamela Crosbie: 'Very sad, loved shopping here when I visit.'

David Crawford: 'A shame but when

I have been in, their prices for clothes were silly, same as Outside edge, way over what you'd expect to pay, so not surprised.'

Ian Clayton: 'Used to get all my sailing gear from here when I was a teenager. They were so helpful. We were so lucky to have access to a wide range of boats at OHS when I was there, before some twit got rid of them for windsurfers. If I didn't have a part it'd be down to Nancy Blacks for a block, bung or a fairlead. Very sad to see the shop go.'

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Bert Benton: 'Always sad to see independent shops close, and this was a great shop to visit when I was in town.'

Sarah Clarke: 'Nooooo!'

### Road Safety Unit provides vital service

Sir,

I write on behalf of Lochgilphead High School's Parent Council regarding one of Argyll and Bute Council's proposed budget savings for 2018/19.

Option TB16-3, which comes under the 'Economic Development – Strategic Transportation' heading, reads: 'Reduce road safety materials budget and remove the Road Safety Unit.'

This short sentence has major implications not just for every parent in Argyll and Bute but for every resident, regardless of age.

The Road Safety Unit provides a vital service to the 12,000 primary and secondary pupils spread right across the council area. It also works with our Early Years bases.

From initiatives including 'Street-feet' pedestrian training, the Road Safety Magic Show, Streetsense2 and the 'icycle' cycle training in the primary sector to 'Your Call', 'Crash Magnets' and presentations by the Baldy Bane Theatre Company in secondary schools, the Road Safety Unit challenges all pupils to take responsibility not just for their own safety but for the safety of others.

These are not just the young pedestrians, cyclists and passengers of today – they are Argyll and Bute's drivers of tomorrow.

The Road Safety Unit was also the first in Scotland to introduce a grant to new drivers to encourage participation in Plus Plus training. Many other Scottish local authorities now do the same.

Argyll and Bute Council's Road Safety Unit is at the forefront of road safety education in Scotland. We are shocked its existence is now hanging in the balance.

The 1988 Road Traffic Act stipulates that it is the responsibility of the local authority to 'prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety'. It also states that local authorities should 'take measures to prevent accidents, including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, and the giving of practical training to any class of road user'.

Removing the Road Safety Unit would render Argyll and Bute Council incapable of fulfilling these responsibilities. The apparent attempt at justifying the saving by stating 'road safety information available through other organisations' is, at best, misleading.

There is no 'other organisation' which can teach road safety to young people across Argyll and Bute. And if the inference is that the police will take up the slack, our understanding is that Police Scotland now very much concentrates on enforcement rather than education.

The Scottish Government has set ambitious road casualty reduction targets, and the Road Safety Unit liaises closely with Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue in working to achieve these targets across Argyll and Bute.

Road safety is an issue which affects everyone. As well as being traumatic and often tragic, accidents are very expensive. Transport Scotland's Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2016

reminds us that £350 million per week is available to spend on patient care if we voted to leave the EU. This was presented as a fact by Brexiteers who were given every opportunity to spread their message in all the different media.

It was only after the referendum result was announced that we learned the £350 million extra weekly for the NHS was an undeliverable, fraudulent deception.

Making a written promise to pay a sum of money in the full knowledge that you are unable to fulfill that commitment is a clear case of fraud.

It also extraordinary and disturbing to see the very different ways in which the two sets of fraudsters referred to have been treated. The anonymous

### Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL  
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

IS MATH AN RUD A thig ri mhithich! The firinn san t-seanfhacal agus nìnn sinn toileachas ri toradh ràithean àraid trion bhliadhna, ach tha cuideachd rudan a bhios a' nochdadh a dh'fhirrampaid a leasachadh.

Aig an àm seo gach bliadhna tha mise dualach a bhith a' tilleadh gu cuspair araig, agus e' sin gòraiche dhràibhearan a bhios a' siubhal le carbann làrn sneachda 's gun iad ach air oisean beag den uinneag a ghlanadh. 'S e fior adhbhar dratha g a th' ann nach eil na daoine sin a réir choltais a' tuigseann a' chunnairt sam bheil iad gan cur fhéin agus dhaoinne eile muair nach eil làrn-lèirsinn aca tro uinneagan an cuid

leasachadh.

Mura biodh feum air na h-uinneagan cha bhiodh uimhir aca ann ach tha cus dhràibhearan le dith smaointinn, neo direach ri linn leisge, den bheachd gum bheil e ionmhaid siubhal 's iad a' didearachd tro bheagan dirleach den glaianne. Tha seo neo-chùramach agus cunnartach agus na mo bheachd bu

chòir am peanasachadh fion lagh, agus theagamh gum fágadh eisimpleirean

den t-sòrsa sin a' mhòr-chuid nas mothachaille agus nas ciallaiche air na ceart a dhéanamh. Mar a thà fior anns a h-uile sòrsa suidheachadh co-cheangailte ri sàbhailteachd, tha còir stad a chur air droch chleachadh mus tacair tubaist a dh'fhaodadh beathas a chur an cunnart!

Aglas a' bruidhinn air sàbhailteachd a

agus a' bhith a' dion daingin bho chunnartan, bha mi a' beachdachadh a-ritisth bho chionn bheagan làithean air seargadh-inntinn, cuspair a' bh' agam an seo bho chionn ghoirid. Gu

cinn teachtha an tinneas oilteil seo a' fás naibhreann agus tha barrachd is

barrachd theaghlaichean a' fulang bròn agus call ri linn, agus e' bualadh shean agus òg a-nise a réir coltais. Nuair a bha mi a' sgrìobhadh mi dheidhinn, bha mi a' togail air an amharas a th' aig cuid de dh'eolaichean-slàinte agus spòrs gum

faodadh na builleann mun cheann a tha cleasaichean ann auid eil spòrs a' faotainn, cur ris a' chunnart gun tig an

tinneas seo orra uaireigin. Tha iomairt rannsachaidh a' tòiseachadh feuch an gabh a' cheist dearbhadh taobh seach

report put the average cost of a fatality at £2,161,725 and of a serious injury at £245,144.

At the budget meeting, councillors will be asked to agree to remove Argyll and Bute's Road Safety Unit for a saving of just £84,000.

The work this unit does is vital to the current and future safety of Argyll and Bute's population. We urge councillors in the strongest possible terms to reject this proposal.

Amanda Hampton,  
Lochgilphead High School  
Parent Council.

### Brexit claim was a clear case of fraud

Sir,

I recently received a letter informing me that I was a lucky winner in the International Postcode Online Lottery. 'Congratulations, Mr Macdonald,' it read. 'You have won a 4th prize tax-free payout of £900,000.'

Part of me wanted to believe the news, but another part of me was more dubious. So I googled the names and addresses of the various parties mentioned in the letter, and to my pleasant surprise, they were all genuine and well-regarded companies. There was even a telephone number and a named person who I was to contact at the London address of this authentic financial services company which was handling the prize payment.

My pulse quickened. I reached for the phone, already mulling over a colour choice for the Jaguar Roadster I could now easily afford, but noticed in red letters at the bottom on my PC screen the words 'Fraud Alert'. I read on to discover that Hampshire Police were warning the public of a financial scam involving one of the names I had googled. They strongly advised not to contact the named person who would then ask for a processing fee and never be heard from again.

Alas, my dreams of cruising along the Pacific highways in a new mimosa-yellow Jaguar convertible with a highly attractive female passenger were fast receding. Returning to dull reality, I shrugged off the lottery letter as a very disappointing but minor inconvenience in the wider scheme of things.

This attempted fraud reminded me of the many similarities between it and the Brexiteers' June 2016 EU referendum 'leave' campaign. We will recall campaign leaders claiming the NHS would have an extra £350 million per week available to spend on patient care if we voted to leave the EU. This was presented as a fact by Brexiteers who were given every opportunity to spread their message in all the different media.

It was only after the referendum result was announced that we learned the £350 million extra weekly for the NHS was an undeliverable, fraudulent deception. Making a written promise to pay a sum of money in the full knowledge that you are unable to fulfill that commitment is a clear case of fraud.

It also extraordinary and disturbing to see the very different ways in which the two sets of fraudsters referred to have been treated. The anonymous

lottery fraudsters are rightly regarded as criminals who are currently being hunted by the forces of law and order. Meanwhile, the EU referendum fraudsters are feted by many as the heroes who saved us from the grasping clutches of these nasty EU foreigners.

Iain M Macdonald,  
Miavaig, Uig, Isle Of Lewis.

### Furious over high delivery surcharges

Sir,  
At this time of year many people will be shopping online for presents for loved ones and friends.

As broadband continues to be rolled out across the Highlands and Islands, people want to take advantage of the choice and bargains offered online. I am a big supporter of supporting our local shops which should always be our first port of call but I know in many rural areas we can't always find the goods we want locally.

So often when ordering goods, the sky high parcel delivery surcharges are completely shocking. So many companies charge consumers in the Highlands so much more than they charge consumers in the rest of the UK. For instance, it's outrageous that some retailers don't include mainland Scotland in their definition of 'mainland UK', meaning we lose out on many retailers' offers of free or low-cost delivery charges. Some of the delivery surcharges imposed on local homes and businesses I've heard about are staggering.

That's why I am working with my MSP colleague Richard Lochhead, who has a campaign website www.fair-deliverycharges.scot where the public can support the call for action to stop retailers and courier companies who want our custom ripping us off.

I can also be contacted at kate.forbes.msp@parliament.scot if anyone wishes to let me know about their experiences.

Kate Forbes MSP,  
12 High Street, Dingwall.

### Thanks for building memorial cairn

Sir,  
I have recently been sent a copy of your paper dated July 20, with the article about the cairn marking the crash of the 206 Squadron Shackleton in 1967.

## Cour Loop race runners defy snowy Lochaber conditions

### Athletics

ICY ROADS and ankle-deep snow didn't stop runners clocking up impressive times in the Nevis Range Cour Loop race last weekend.

Beautiful blue skies and a temperature of -9°C met the 31 runners who finished Sunday's race on Aonach Mor.

First lady home was Caroline Marwick, Inverness Harriers Amateur Athletics Club (AAC) in 01:27:12, followed by Lisette Walter, Lochaber Athletic Club (AC) in 01:33:15. Coming home in third place was Joanne McDonough in 01:38:30.

First gent home was John Yells, Lochaber AC, in 01:17:10 followed by Gregor Davidson, Lochaber AC, in 01:21:06. Steven Traill, Lochaber AC, was third in 01:24:12.

Congratulations go to all the finishers and thanks go to Peter, Margaret, Markus, Corrina and Ian for marshalling.

The next Lochaber Athletic Club race is on Tuesday December 26 – Crum Leacain – medium, six to nine miles.

For full race results, visit [lochaberae.co.uk](http://lochaberae.co.uk).

### Oban golfer makes the cut in Joburg

### Golf

OBAN golfer Robert MacIntyre picked up his first pay cheque as a professional golfer on the European Tour when he made the cut at the Joburg Open played at Randpark Golf Club, Johannesburg, last week.

The Joburg Open – The Open Qualifying Series - South Africa sees three players, who are not already exempt and who finish in the top ten, secure places in The Open Championship to be held at Carnoustie from July 19 to 22 next year.

Robert, the only Scot to make the cut, carded an excellent seven under par 280 with rounds of 72, 67, 71 and 70 to finish in joint 42nd place out of a field of 240 competitors.

### Winter league

#### Indoor football

LATEST results from week eight of Sammy's Indoor Winter League: Doghouse Thistle 7, Balla 3; Borussia Fortmund 3, The Goon Squad 0; Arse N All 2, Fiorentina Turner 21; Expected Toulouse 2, Portowcy 10; HW Energy 2, The Young Team 5; Snorting Lisbon 4, Gozo 7.

After eight rounds of competition, Doghouse Thistle sit three points clear at the top of the table with 21 points, three ahead of Fiorentina who are sitting comfortably in second spot.

The rest of the league is cut adrift, with third-placed Fortmund on 15 points, along with the Goon Squad.

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### COURT REPORTER

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c/o Police Scotland, were not disputed.

The player suffered two fractures around his left eye socket and needed surgery to have a titanium plate inserted.

Mr Dignan told the court he could remember little about the collision which had occurred about 15 minutes into the first half of the match when a free hit was awarded to Kingussie.

Defender Mr Dignan was marking Munro. 'He [Munro] ran towards me, then we turned together, ran for a yard or so and the next thing I remember is lying on the deck with an injury to my left eye,' Mr Dignan said.

Mr Dignan, who only returned to playing shinty in July, was treated at the Belford Hospital, Fort William, before being transferred to a hospital in Glasgow.

'The bone had been shattered in the eye socket,' he said. Mr Dignan's vision has since improved but he still suffers from problems.

The extent of the injuries to Mr Dignan, an electrician, whose address was given as



Not guilty – Fraser Munro.

Under cross examination by defence solicitor David Bell, Mr Dignan had denied deliberately trying to foul Munro.

Mr Dignan confirmed it was he who had reported the matter to the police. 'I felt the Camanachd Association had not dealt with it in the proper manner and that it was wrong. I felt the association did not do right by me. I wanted justice,' he told the court.

Match referee Evan MacRae witnessed the incident and submitted a misconduct report to the Camanachd Association.

'Jack was blocking Fraser with his stick, more like an ice hockey move than shinty, and Fraser's elbow had come up and made contact with Jack,' said Mr MacRae.

'I saw it clearly and it was a straight red card and Fraser was sent off. I saw contact by the elbow to the head. You just don't do that in shinty.'

Munro told the court that as the free hit was about to be taken, he took a couple of steps before feinting one way and then trying to sprint past Mr Dignan at speed for a possible shot at goal.

'He ran across and put what was like an ice hockey check into me. It threw me completely off balance and I was hit up here, on the shoulder,' said Munro.

'I don't know which part of me hit him. Next thing was I turned round and saw him on the ground,' added Munro.

Munro had sent Mr Dignan a Facebook message apologising for the accident and wishing him a speedy recovery.

Munro told the court he would never go out to deliberately injure someone. 'I never want anyone to end up in hospital from a collision.'

'I'm sorry he ended up having to go through all those hospital procedures.'

'I accept my part in his injury but I don't accept I assaulted him.'

Munro told the court he, too, had since stopped playing shinty as a result of the incident.

'I just thought it the best thing that I step away from shinty as I didn't know what would happen with the police,' he said.

Munro admitted he didn't know if he would ever return to the game he has played for most of his life.

'I don't know if I can bring myself to go back yet,' he said.

Newtonmore shinty legend Norman MacArthur was called



Lochaber player Jack Dignan. Photograph: Neil Paterson.

as an expert witness by the defence and told the court facial injuries were some of the most common suffered in the sport.

Summing up, Fiscal Deputy Robert Weir said Mr Dignan's evidence had been credible, as was that of Mr MacRae and the other Crown witnesses.

But Mr Bell argued the Crown had failed to prove its case.

'This was an accidental coming together, at speed, with an instinctive reaction from Mr Munro to protect himself. I suggest the Crown has failed to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt,' Mr Bell said.

Giving her verdict, Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald said she fully appreciated how important shinty was to Highland communities, but that she was not there to review either the referee's report or the Camanachd Association's decision, but to determine whether the criminal offence of assault, as covered by the law of Scotland, had been committed.

'I am not satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that this was done with evil intent and I give you the benefit of the doubt and find you not guilty of the charge,' she told Munro.

## Mallaig Santa Dash raises cash for leisure centre

### Santa dash

DOZENS of runners donned Santa outfits to walk, jog and run five kilometres on Saturday in Mallaig Pool and Leisure's annual festive Santa Dash.

The starting gun fired at Morar train station and the 'Santas' made their way along to Mallaig – spurred on by cold, snowy conditions.

The competitors were rewarded with mulled wine and mince pies at finish line at the Steam Inn.

'The weather was kind as it was dry and sometimes the sun even came out.'

'Everyone was in good spirits. We had runners, walkers and even a cyclist.'

A spokesperson from Mallaig



The Santa Dash was embraced by competitors of all ages.



Helpers and members of Mallaig Pool and Leisure raised more than £600 for the centre's refurbishment programme. Photographs: Abrightside Photography.



Henrik Chart smiles as he makes his way to the finish line.



Santa and one of his elves.

## 10-pin bowling league results

### 10-pin bowling

AFTER week five of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, the scratch and handicap divisions are still close at the top.

The Empire still lead the scratch division with 20 points. Alleycats move into second place on 19 points followed by Council and British Legion Fort William on 17 points. The Fillies Plus Gillie are still on top of the handicap division with 18 points, followed by Council and Alleycats on 17 points.

Individually, the best scratch game of the week came from Ben Weller (The Empire) with 184. Ben also had the week's top two game scratch series of 339. The week's high handicap game of 243 and the top two game handicap series of 465 went to Jim Bell, British Legion Fort William, - both season highs.

The best team scores of the week came from a close match between the Empire and Council. The Empire had the top scratch game of 631 and the top two-game scratch series of 1,211. The top handicap game of 836 and the top two-game handicap series of 1,584 went to Council. All four of these scores were season highs. The top scratch average is held by Ben Weller (The Empire) with 165 followed by Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with 152 and Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 150.

### Lottery numbers

#### Lottery

THIS week's Fort William Golf Club lotto numbers were 8, 12 and 14.

There was no winner so the jackpot for the draw today (Thursday December 14) is £400.

Numbers drawn in the Caol Regeneration lotto were 10, 11 and 15. There were no winning tickets which means the jackpot for next Thursday's draw is £800.

Caol Community Centre's bingo lotto numbers for this week were 8, 9 and 13. There were no winners. Next week's jackpot stands at £500.

Ballachulish Shinty Club's lottery numbers for this week were 6, 13 and 19. There were no winners.

Next week's draw will have a jackpot of £800.

### Weather wins

#### Football

FORT William's Highland League match against Huntly, due to be played at Claggan Park, was postponed last Saturday because the pitch was covered in snow and ice.

This Saturday, Fort William are due to play Strathspey Thistle in Grantown on Spey.

South Lochaber Thistle's home game in the Greater Glasgow League against Bellaire also fell foul of the weather last weekend.

They are due to host Helensburgh at Kinlochleven on Saturday.

### SPONSORS OF THE OBAN TIMES WEATHER AND TIDES

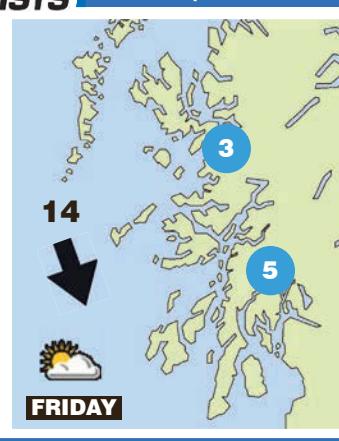
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Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban

WEATHER	
Thursday	Sunshine and showers Winds light South Easterly Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.
Friday	Sunny Winds moderate North North Westerly Temperatures 0°C to 5°C.
Weekend Outlook	Sunny intervals on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds light North North Westerly Temperatures -1°C to 5°C.



**Stop Press:** New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

**TIDAL INFORMATION**

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday December 14, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm								
Thur	03.09	3.2	09.03	1.5	15.24	3.4	21.59	1.5	Ardrishaig	-5.35
Fri	03.46	3.4	09.56	1.4	15.59	3.6	22.35	1.4	Campbeltown	-5.30
Sat	04.22	3.6	10.38	1.3	16.33	3.7	23.07	1.3	Crinan	-0.47
Sun	04.57	3.8	11.17	1.3	17.08	3.8	23.40	1.2	Islay Port Ellen	2.00
Mon	05.33	3.9	11.54	1.3	17.43	3.9	** **	* *	Dover	+5.30
Tues	00.14	1.2	06.08	4.0	12.30	1.3	18.18	3.9	Lochboisdale	+0.30
Wed	00.50	1.2	06.43	4.0	13.07	1.4	18.53	3.8	Ferry Crossings/Sea States	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate