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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Injured Agnes recalls horror of USA hit-and-run accident

MARTIN LAING
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AGNES MACKECHNIE, the Oban grandmother seriously injured in a road accident in the United States in October, has spoken movingly about what happened to her.

Agnes, who returned to her home earlier this month, said she had been overwhelmed by the kindness of people since her ordeal began.

The 55-year-old, who lives at Creag an Airm in Oban with her husband David, suffered multiple injuries in the hit-and-run accident at Hallowe'en in the city of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

She was violently thrown 25 feet into the air and 25 yards along the road, and was left with tyre marks across her stomach in addition to several fractures, lost teeth and internal injuries.

David said that immediately after the accident, the driver reversed back to see Agnes before racing away.

Agnes was unconscious for three days and spent almost five weeks in St Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem as a result.

However, she said she is thrilled to be home for Christmas and to be back in her own home – 'on my own sofa with a cup of tea'.

Speaking exclusively to *The Oban Times*, Agnes and David praised the medical teams in the United States, as well as the staff of Boots the Chemist in Oban, who organised emergency medication after their return on December 9.

Agnes and David had travelled

to the US on October 28 to visit her brother, James, a chef at the Sands casino in Bethlehem.

Of the accident itself, Agnes has no recollection though she spoke of how the evening went until it happened at about 9.45pm.

Agnes said: 'We had been out for a bit of shopping and to see what a mall was like before going for dinner. Then we got dressed up in our Hallowe'en costumes and went to a wee bar called Taps, which is a beer specialist that does quarter pints – but they were mingling!'

'We then went to another bar but it was quiet and I wanted to nip back to James's flat to change into my proper clothes.'

'I was half a foot in front of everyone else when the van came birling round the corner at speed and just took me out.'

'I don't remember anything about it at all. I was unconscious.'

'David was right there and was first on the scene.'

David said he was horrified by what had transpired but also by the voyeurs who gathered round to witness the accident.

He said: 'There was a loud bang and Agnes was gone. It took a minute for my mind to realise what had happened.'

'People who were there all just stood around. No-one wanted to get involved; they just stood in a circle and refused to help.'

Agnes said she had 12 major injuries as well as some minor ones, adding: 'I was lucky that the hospital had a major trauma unit and other facilities, including rehab. I had to have five or six operations, including a stent



Agnes and David MacKechnie are looking forward to being with their extended family this Christmas after their harrowing ordeal.

in my heart. I was in the hospital for 38 days.'

Agnes said the journey back to Oban left her exhausted: 'We left Bethlehem at 2pm on the Thursday and didn't get home until 5.30pm on the Saturday after having to stay overnight in Paisley because I had to go to the hospital there.'

'When we got back I didn't have the medication I needed but the pharmacist at Boots was

fantastic. She called a doctor at the hospital and sorted it all out even though it was closing time.'

Agnes and David are clearly delighted to be at home again.

'It was great to sit on my own sofa and get the kettle on,' Agnes said, resting in her living room with dozens of get well cards around her. 'It was great to see Karen and Gavin [her daughter and son] too.'

Now they are looking forward

to Christmas, although it will be a quiet one during which their other daughter Diane and her four children will visit, along with Karen and Gavin being there. 'They'll all be here,' said Agnes, 'though they won't be staying too long, but I'm looking forward to everyone popping in.'

Agnes, who works at Albany Stores in Oban, said she has been moved by people's thoughtfulness.

'I'm touched by everybody's kindness. I've seen how many decent people are out there and they do care about other people. It's nice to see.'

'Sometimes when you see the news you think, "What a world", and then I see how kind everyone has been and I realise there is decency out there. Everyone has been fantastic. I've had so many well-wishers and gifts. It's been lovely.'

INSIDE YOUR
OBAN TIMES
THIS WEEK

Fish farm scrapped

A CONTROVERSIAL plan to site the Sound of Jura's first fish farm at Dounie has been withdrawn by the Kilmelford-based applicant.

Full story – page two.

Fitting memorial

THE family of young Kayla MacDonald, who tragically died in an accident this summer, have installed a memorial bench at her favourite spot.

Full story – page three.

Parking charges

OBAN'S new parking charges have been given the nod by councillors, including drivers being charged on Sunday afternoons.

Full story – page four.

Chief exec quits

THE chief executive of an Argyll charity has resigned after 'one of the most challenging years' for its staff.

Full story – page five.

Jingles swells

OBAN High School's senior pupils partied and danced the night away last week at their annual festive season Jingles event.

Picture special – page 12.

Shinty rules

THE CAMANACHD Association's board of directors look set to introduce a number of byelaw changes for the 2018 shinty season.

Full story – page 26.



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Family terrified on 'race track' road

SANDY NEIL
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A FARMER whose family were 'nearly killed' in a collision on the B845 near Kilchrenan says villagers are in 'fear for their lives' owing to drivers using the road as a 'race track'.

The farmer, whose wife and two young children were involved in the crash on Wednesday last week, said there are frequent accidents at the 'highly dangerous' blackspot.

'My wife and two young children were nearly killed tonight,' Niall MacLeod told *The Oban Times*. 'Our children are in shock and were terrified by the incident.'

He said a contractor's truck, 'was driving so fast that [it] flew up in the air crashing down on to our old Land Rover, demolishing the front'.

His wife, he said, was 'driving at crawling pace but could do nothing on the narrow B845 single-track road to avoid the crash.'

'If I had not lent my wife my old Range Rover to get out of the farm track in the ice and snow, and she had been in her normal smaller efficient hatchback, she and the children would be dead now.'

The B845 is used as 'a race track', he said, terrifying resi-

dents, adding: 'This tiny B road is used by forestry contractors, wind turbine contractors and quarry trucks so frequently that we the villagers are in real fear for our lives. The point where the accident happened is highly dangerous, a steep drop on one side and a rocky outcrop on the other protruding into the road. There are frequent accidents and the road desperately needs widening, which would take a few hours with a rock picker.'

'The mothers who transport children, the pensioners going to Oban to shop, our tourist visitors bringing welcome business income are going to get killed.'

A resident of Inverinan, Ed Docherty, added his voice following the Glen Nant incident, saying: 'Traffic, particularly commercial vehicles, from Taynuilt to Kilchrenan and beyond has become increasingly horrendous over the past couple of years, resulting in numerous accidents and near-misses.'

'I have had several near-misses involving commercial vehicles in the past year and I believe we are not alone in this experience.'

'It concerns me that no matter how carefully I drive on these single-track roads, visitors and contractors not familiar with the conditions can present a very significant risk to other road users.'

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OT

Jura fish farm plan is scrapped

SANDY NEIL
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A CONTROVERSIAL plan to site the Sound of Jura's first fish farm at Dounie has been withdrawn by the applicant to preserve sea fans and sponges.

Kilmelford-based Kames Fish Farming Ltd submitted an application last November for a SEPA licence for 12 circular cages, each 100m in circumference, to rear a maximum of 2,500 tonnes of fish to meet demand, create six jobs and secure other positions in the family business operating in Loch Melfort for 45 years.

However, the fish farm, at Salen Mor Bay south of Ardnòe Point, drew strong objection, including a petition with more than 3,000 signatures, collected by the Friends of the Sound of Jura.

The protest group stated in November: 'Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has recommended to

SEPA that a fish farm at Dounie would "significantly harm marine features of global importance".

'SNH is a statutory public authority consultee and earlier this year advised SEPA [Scottish Environment Protection Agency] that a targeted seabed survey should be carried out by the fish farm applicants to record any presence of northern sea fan and sponge communities - both of which have Priority Marine Feature (PMF) status and a high sensitivity to organic enrichment and siltation associated with fish farms.

'Footage in the requested survey has since been confirmed by SNH to show the presence of both PMFs within the site.'

On Wednesday December 13 Kames Fish Farming's managing director Stuart Cannon confirmed it had now withdrawn its application. Mr Cannon wrote to SEPA: 'Kames Fish Farming has

stated throughout the application process that it considers all aspects of possible impact when seeking new sites, including this proposal for Dounie.

'Also if there is sound scientific evidence that suggests there would be significant or irreparable damage to the environment, it would, at that point, consider withdrawing the application.'

SNH raised three issues regarding common skate, harbour porpoise, and sea fan and sponge communities. Regarding skate and porpoise, Kames did 'not consider that farming operations would pose a detrimental impact to either of these highly mobile species found over a wide area.'

However, following consultation with SNH and SEPA, Kames employed specialists to survey the area's northern sea fans and sponges, which live on hard substrates such as a rocky reef.

SEPA allows faunal change

to occur in the soft sediment beneath a fish farm, within a designated zone. SNH stated there is little scientific publication on the impact on hard substrates outside this boundary, and that these species are 'highly sensitive to organic enrichment'. There is also little data on their distribution.

As a result, Kames Fish Farming said it had 'decided to take a precautionary approach and not continue with the Dounie project, thus preserving this area of established sea fan and sponge communities.'

Kames Fish Farming concluded it would continue to seek to expand production to meet growing demand for its rainbow trout, and employ local staff.

Mark Smith, speaking on behalf of the Friends of the Sound of Jura, said: 'We have always maintained that this industrial-sized fish farm should have no place within a Marine Protected Area.

'The wildlife of the Sound includes the rare Flapper Skate, Porpoises and Otters, as well as smaller rarities like the Northern Sea Fan. They have been spared being smothered in thousands of tonnes of fish faeces laced with pesticides every year.

'The wild salmon and sea trout which migrate to the River Add have been spared the catastrophic burden of sea lice associated with fish farms.

'We will continue to promote the Sound of Jura as an important resource for use by the local community, anglers, creel fishermen, scallop-divers, sailors, tourists and all of us who value and depend on the good health of the marine environment.'

Argyll and Bute MSP Michael Russell, a supporter of the protest group, said: 'I think the company has been wise and responsible in concluding that the latest environmental evidence, brought

forward by SEPA, suggests that permission would not have been granted for this site and withdrawing their plans in the light of that evidence.

'The community - particularly through the Friends of the Sound of Jura - has campaigned with vigour and intelligence and therefore credit is due on all sides, both to those local residents and individuals from further afield who have been proved right about this particular site and to the company for avoiding a long, drawn out and acrimonious formal planning process that would inevitably have ended in bad feelings on one side or the other.

'I am certainly not against aquaculture, having had ministerial responsibility for it when I held the environment post, but not all sites are suitable and establishing a fish farm in a Marine Protected Area seems to me a particularly bad and unacceptable idea.'

TIMESLINE

'Shock' over sale of Barra GP surgery

NA H-EILEANAN AN IAR MP Angus B MacNeil has reacted with shock and dismay upon hearing that Calagorm, the former GP surgery in Castlebay, on Barra, remains on the market despite community interest to purchase the building.

Calagorm was bequeathed to the people of Barra and Vatersay by a former GP and it was then passed to NHS Western Isles, which is now selling this property on the open market for £195,000.

Mr MacNeil said: 'I have been in correspondence with Scottish ministers and NHS Western Isles regarding Calagorm as the community in Barra has expressed an interest in this building as a community hub.

'It transpires Calagorm is on the market for £195,000 but was only valued at £120,000, so small wonder it is not selling. It is time NHS Western Isles took action and sold this building at a realistic price.'

RBS in U-turn on future of Barra ATM

WESTERN Isles MSP Alasdair Allan has hit out at the Royal Bank of Scotland for again U-turning on the issue of whether Barra will retain a cash machine after the summer of 2018.

RBS announced the Castlebay branch would close in the summer and that this would also involve withdrawing the cash machine.

The follow day, the MSP was given assurance from RBS that this was an error, and that the cash machine would be retained.

On Monday morning the MSP received a letter from RBS CEO of personal and business banking Les Matheson in response to his concerns about the effect the branch closure would have on the island community.

RBS stated that 'regrettably, we won't be retaining the ATM once the branch closes'.

Dr Allan said: 'This is an astonishing U-turn by RBS. In one part of their letter to me they say they will always consider what other banking services are available locally before closing a branch. Later

in that same paragraph they say they will be removing their cash machine - the only one on the island.

'This is a serious problem that is not being taken seriously by the bank.

'There is an unclear picture of what banking services on the island will look like after next summer.

'At no point in their letter have they given any indication that they have considered the effect of this closure on an island community. They don't seem to understand that the island will be left without any out of hours access to cash.

'I have now asked RBS to clarify whether their latest announcement is an error or whether they really intend to press ahead with removing the ATM.

'People in Barra will rightly be asking why they should continue to use a bank that clearly does not care for them or their community.'

RBS announced that it will close 62 of its branches across Scotland next year.



New memorial unveiled to vanished lighthouse keepers

A MEMORIAL commemorating three lighthouse keepers whose lives were so mysteriously lost on the Flannan Isles in 1900 was installed on Lewis on Friday.

A bronze wave sculpture set on Lewisian gneiss and sandstone has been built by the shore of Loch Roag, within sight of both the quay, which was the departure point

for the ill-fated crew and 'An Taigh Mhòr', the lighthouse station built and designed in 1899 by David Alan Stevenson to house the families of keepers serving on the island.

Designed by local stonemason James Crawford, the memorial will commemorate and reinforce the enduring connection between the Flannan Isles and the village of

Breasacle, where the ruins of the home of local man and relief-keeper Donald MacArthur still stand.

Central to the project will be a permanent exhibition in the local community centre, exploring through original archive material the events leading up to the tragedy and the enduring mystery of the circumstances.

Clothing grant income limit rises

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar's Education, Sport and Children's Services Committee is recommending an increase in the family income threshold for Clothing Grant applications from £16,105 to £20,000.

It is estimated this will increase the uptake of clothing grants by 20 per cent and help around 100 additional families with the cost of providing uniforms for their children.

The comhairle provides clothing grant for pupils as long as they are resident in the Western Isles and have enrolled in a school in the Western Isles.

Isles MP speaks during debate

THE UK government lost a key vote on Brexit in the House of Commons by 309 to 305 last week on Amendment 7, which was supported by Na -h-Eileanan an Iar MP Angus Brendan MacNeil.

The amendment now passed will ensure MPs will have a legal guarantee of a vote on the final Brexit deal struck with Brussels.

Mr MacNeil, who delivered a speech on Amendment 7, said: 'The actions of this Tory government is akin to setting sail on the Titanic and refusing to take a lifeboat. This is a Laurel and Hardy Brexit - it is a fine mess and all due to vanity.

'I was pleased to have had the opportunity to speak on Amendment 7 and to vote for the amendment.'

CalMac profits and passengers rise

PASSENGER numbers and revenue increased over the past year for ferry operator David MacBrayne Ltd (DML), according to the company's annual report and accounts.

The company posted a profit before tax of £4.8 million in

2017 reversing a loss of £4.8 million last year. Total revenue was £195 million, £5 million up on 2016.

Last year DML carried more than 5.3 million passengers, an increase of 300,000, and nearly 1.4 million vehicles.

Mull residents urged to use 'life-saving' app

A 'SUPER postcode' could help save lives and time on Mull, a councillor has said.

Mary-Jean Devon endorsed the use of an app that provides people with a more accurate postcode.

The app, what3words, has divided the world into three-metre-square grids, with each section being assigned three unique words.

These words can then be

entered into the app's map, providing a more accurate location.

This could be used by anyone from small businesses delivering goods to doctors trying to find patients.

Councillor Devon said: 'I think it's good. It's a personal or super postcode. If you live on a road, about 40 houses have the same postcode.

'So if you download the app,

what3words, you go into a map, you put it onto your house and it gives you three random words that are personal to you.

'It does not cost anything, so let's try it and see if it makes it more efficient.

'This could save time and save lives. The new doctor is very keen, and thinks it would be something that would attract other doctors to come.

'We have to try it - we have to try and attract doctors to come here.'

The what3words website states: 'The system uses a mathematical algorithm, held in a package around 12MB in size. As such, it will comfortably fit on a modern smartphone. It also means you can search for a three-word address online and offline, or where a data connection is unreliable.'

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Kayla's mum Karina, dad Ettie, and brothers Ruairidh and Ronnie cut the ribbon across the bench dedicated to her, and friends and family pay tribute to 'the most beautiful girl in the world'.



Family pledge, 'Kayla, we will never forget you'

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THE family of Kayla MacDonald installed a memorial bench at Dunstaffnage Castle on Friday, days before what would have been her ninth birthday on Wednesday December 20.

On behalf of Kayla's dad Ettie, mum Karina and two brothers Ruairidh and Ronnie, Kayla's gran, or 'gaga', Janice Ferguson thanked the hundred-strong crowd for joining them 'to celebrate the eight precious years we had with Kayla'. Ruairidh and Ronnie then cut the ribbon across the bench, before friends and family lit candles in remembrance.

Kayla Mary MacDonald died in a tragic accident in an Argyll forest on July 23. It was, said

Janice: 'The day that changed our lives forever. Without her, there is a huge gap in our lives, which brings us all so much sadness.'

'2017 has been undoubtedly the worst year of our lives, and although life will never be the same again, we hope and pray for a better 2018.'

'Ettie and Karina were so blessed with a beautiful girl, the best daughter and sister they could ever have hoped for. She was so loving towards her two brothers.'

'My first time babysitting for Kayla was when she was just five days old, Christmas night. I just couldn't get over this little bundle of perfection in her wee red dress.'

'I so often told Kayla that she was "the most beautiful girl in



Kayla MacDonald.

the world" and I am so glad I did. Every moment with her was so precious, much more than I ever realised.'

'Kayla loved her spells in

Tiree, spending precious times with her granny and grandpa.'

'The [bench] location could not be better, with Karina, Ettie and the boys living straight across the water, our family home next door where my mum and Peter still live, and my sister and her family living a few doors along.'

'She was such a thoughtful girl, cutting her hair off for charity because she wanted girls with no hair to have hers. There was never a dull moment when she was around.'

'We would like to give the people who knew Kayla the chance to take a seat and think about their times with her.'

More family and friends then stepped on the podium to share their memories. Kayla's aunt Lyn said 'she always thought

of others before herself', while her friend Emma Brown added: 'Kayla was always making friends, no matter where she was.'

Kayla's uncle William MacPherson, 10, then spoke on behalf of his sister Caitlin, 12, reading aloud: 'Kayla, we love you and miss you. We think about you every day. We will never forget you.'

Claire Jordan, who taught Kayla at Rockfield's Gaelic-medium unit, read her poetic tribute *Sleep Tight, Little Angel*, and a lone piper, and a cousin of Kayla, Kevin Rodgers, played his tune for her, *Port Do Kayla*, from atop Dunstaffnage's battlements. Others contributed their thoughts in a memory book later at a Soroba House reception.

POLICE FILES

with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

BETWEEN 7am and 3.50pm on Saturday December 9, at the car park near the Bonawe Pier, Tainuill, a red Jaguar car was damaged by having its bodywork scratched. Police are investigating and are appealing for information.

He was charged, the vehicle was seized and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT ABOUT 3.20am on Wednesday December 13, in Glencruiton Road, Oban, a black Vauxhall Corsa was damaged by having the bodywork dented. Two men in dark clothing were seen at the time. Police are investigating and are appealing for information.

AT ABOUT 11.45pm on Saturday December 16 on the A85 near Tainuill, an incident occurred in which a car collided with a hedge. Police attended and the 43-year-old man who was driving was arrested for being under the influence of alcohol. He was charged and a report has been submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT ABOUT 12.30am on Friday December 15, outside licensed premises in Oban, a man aged 43 behaved in a racially abusive manner and another man aged 40 behaved in an abusive manner. Police attended and both men were arrested and charged, and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT ABOUT 2.35am on Sunday December 17, on the A848 near Salen, an incident occurred in which a car left the road and came to rest on the shore. Police attended and the 29-year-old male driver was arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol. A report has been submitted to the procurator fiscal.

BETWEEN 5.30pm on Thursday December 14 and 8am on Friday December 15, the yard at Travis Perkins builders merchants, Soroba Road, Oban, was broken into and three Haemmerlin wheelbarrows were stolen. Police are investigating and are appealing for information.

AT ABOUT 8.30pm on Thursday December 14, in Knapdale Terrace, Ardrishaig, a man aged 39 was arrested on a court warrant. During the incident, the man assaulted a police officer and behaved in an abusive manner. The man was arrested and charged with the offences and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT ABOUT 3.15am on Saturday December 16, in Stevenson Street, Oban, a man aged 40 behaved in an abusive manner by shouting and swearing and attempting to fight with others. He was arrested and charged and later issued with a recordable police warning.

AT ABOUT 3pm on Thursday December 14, in Glenfyne Park, Ardrishaig, following a report of a man behaving in an abusive manner, a man aged 46 was arrested. The man was charged and held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

AT ABOUT 5.15pm on Saturday December 16, on the A85 in Tainuill, a motorist was stopped for exceeding the speed limit. The driver, a man aged 22, was also found to have no driving licence or insurance.

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.

Family who almost lost son organise CPR training

AFTER almost losing their newborn son last year, an Oban family are organising a CPR training day to take place in January.

The event, which will be held in the Rockfield Centre on January 27 from noon-4pm, will teach people how to give CPR to babies and is open to everyone.

Fearghas and Natalie Lafferty almost lost their son Murray last year when he stopped breathing.

Fearghas said: 'My son was really not well last year and he needed CPR.'

'When we told the story to friends and family, a lot of them said they wouldn't know how to do that. So Natalie had the idea of doing a training day to raise some money and to make sure that anyone who wanted to know could do [CPR].'

'One day he was crying in the back seat of the car, he didn't calm down and his crying changed, then he went quiet.'



Fearghas and Natalie Lafferty almost lost their son Murray.

'We pulled over, looked into the car seat and he had stopped breathing and had turned blue. I pulled him out of the seat and did CPR while Natalie drove to the hospital in Oban. When he got there, the nurses and

doctors took over and he was then flown to Glasgow.'

Luckily, Fearghas is a dentist and receives CPR training annually.

Since the incident, Murray, who is 13 months old now, has had a few episodes where he stopped breathing. One took place last December, which resulted in the family staying in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children over the festive period.

'He is quite a happy and healthy boy at the moment, so we are really lucky,' Fearghas added. 'Natalie and I wanted to thank a number of people for the care they have given Murray - without them he wouldn't be here today.'

There will be something for everyone at the event, with raffles taking place as well as games for children. All proceeds will go to the Glasgow children's hospital and the air ambulance.

Two die after fire rips through Cameron House Hotel

TWO people have died after a fire ripped through Cameron House Hotel on Loch Lomondside this week.

Police confirmed the double fatality following the blaze at the luxury hotel on Monday December 18.

Emergency services were called at around 6.40am following a report of a fire at the hotel. More than 200 guests were evacuated from the building, which was extensively damaged.

Emergency services remain at the scene and are working together to establish the exact circumstances of the incident.

One person was pronounced dead at the scene. Four people were taken to hospital, one to the Royal Alexandra Hospital at Paisley, who later died. The other three were taken to the Queen Elizabeth Univer-



Flames destroy the roof. Photograph: Daily Record

sity Hospital in Glasgow for treatment.

A message on the Cameron House website said: 'We would ask all guests and customers to remain patient as we work with the emergency services to establish

the extent of the damage and ascertain when we will be able to re-open.'

A Scottish Ambulance Service spokesperson said: 'We received a call at 6.44am today to attend an incident at the Cameron House Hotel. We dispatched four ambulances, our special operations response team and the trauma team to the scene.'

'Three patients, two adults and one child, were taken to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. A fourth patient was taken to the Royal Alexandra Hospital.'

A spokeswoman for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service said: 'The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was alerted at 6.41am on Monday December 18 to reports of a fire that had taken hold within Cameron House Hotel, Balloch. Operations control has mobilised a total of 12 appliances to the scene.'

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OT

Green light for parking charges

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

OBAN'S new parking charges have been given the nod by councillors, including drivers getting the first 30 minutes free, but also charged on Sunday afternoons.

Changes will also give the first two hours free in Ganavan, Longsdale and Lochavullin car parks, but all three will be year-round pay and display. New parking meters will also be installed where drivers will have to punch in their registration.

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee met on Wednesday to decide whether to implement Argyll and Bute Council's draft parking plans, called a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), in light of objec-

tions raised by the public in a consultation.

The council's proposals, for both on- and off-street parking in Oban, were passed by six votes to two, defeating SNP councillors Julie McKenzie and Jim Lynch's amendments to a local hearing of the objections in full. Plans for more disabled parking were also passed, with a slight amendment from councillor Elaine Robertson to move one bay on Croft Road defeated by five votes to three.

The changes include turning Ganavan car park from seasonal to all-year charging, and Longsdale and Lochavullin car parks from free to year-round pay and display. While the first two hours' stay will be free, Sunday charging will be introduced from 1pm to 6pm,

alongside the usual 9am to 6pm Monday to Saturday.

Blue badge holders do not need to pay for parking, and can park in any bay for an unrestricted period, apart from a marked disabled bay with a signed time restriction. The Corran Halls number one car park will remain seasonal. Mossfield remains free and, further afield, Fionnphort and Luss car parks would convert from seasonal to all-year charging.

The off-street changes received 32 objections, ranging from the cost of an off-street parking permit being 'too expensive' and the potential knock-on effect to residential streets, to urging the council to match the three hours free at supermarket car parks, and to use cashless parking and auto-

matic number plate recognition (ANPR).

The council responded that publicly-owned car parks are not allowed to use ANPR, and a cashless parking trial in Helensburgh, if successful, will be rolled out across other Oban and Dunoon, where there is data signal.

The draft TRO also proposed, for on-street parking, introducing the first 30 minutes free to bays on George Street, Corran Esplanade, William Street, Queens Park Place and Argyll Square, with standard charges applying thereafter.

But it also introduced parking charges on Gallanach Road (sailing club to Brandy Rock) and Ganavan Road (from Glenrigh to the war memorial), applying Monday to Saturday from 9am

to 6pm and on Sunday between 1pm and 6pm, which will also apply to all existing pay and display bays. Residents' permits will be available at a cost of £95 per year £35 per three months.

These proposals received 22 objections, including concerns that residents would have to pay for on-street parking which is currently free, and the 30-minute free period would be too difficult to enforce. Objections were sometimes contradictory, with one opposed to Sunday charging, and another that Sunday morning should be free.

The council stated there are no current plans to introduce business permits for on-street parking, but there will be a review of its parking management at the end of 2018. If there is an increase in parking on residential

streets, then further TROs could control any negative effect.

Committee chair councillor Elaine Robertson remarked there was a shortage of car parking in Oban, to which traffic and development manager Stuart Watson said officers were looking into turning the fire damaged Millpark depot into a car park.

The new parking meters, with a keypad to put in vehicle registrations, have been 'used successfully in an off-street car park in Helensburgh'. Argyll and Bute Council received requests to introduce new disabled bays on Drimvargie Road and Kerrera Terrace, which attracted no objections, and on Croft Road (Longsdale Crescent), which drew six, and 21 letters of support. This was passed five votes to three.

TIMESLINE

Festive changes to bin collections

CHANGES to bin collections There are changes to rubbish and recycling collection dates in Oban and Lorn over the Christmas and New Year period.

Rubbish and recycling collections due in week commencing Monday December 25 will be collected a day later than scheduled. Rubbish and recycling collections due in week commencing Monday January 1 will be collected a day later than scheduled.

Moleigh recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, December 25 and 26, and Monday and Tuesday, January 1 and 2.

Christmas crackers for Argyll schools

HOW many pigs in blankets do you think school catering staff in Argyll and Bute have to prepare to feed Christmas lunch to hungry pupils? The answer: a staggering 13,500.

This festive season, school dinners staff will also serve up more than 120 turkeys and almost 9,500 stuffing balls.

The youngsters will also enjoy 340kg of Brussels sprouts and 725kg of carrots – almost the same weight as five pianos. And together they will pull more than 19,500 crackers.

Change planned to childcare provision

ARGYLL and Bute Council is making progress in preparing for the Scottish Government's plans to increase funded early learning and childcare (ELC) from 600 hours to 1,140 hours per year by 2020.

At a meeting of the Community Services Committee on Thursday December 14, members heard how plans are being put in place by the council to prepare for the changes.

The roll-out of increased hours will begin on in 2018 and continue to 2020. Parents will be consulted in each area prior to the extension of hours.

Oban High reverses Advent calendar

OBAN High pupils are running a clan challenge for Hope Kitchen with a 'reverse' Advent calendar, in which gifts are given away to someone in need.

People put a donation aside as part of an Advent calendar in the run up to Christmas, and drop it off to the person or organisation.

Each clan will be competing to give items away to Oban's Hope Kitchen to win clan points to lift the clan shield at the end of the year.



Members of the board and friends of Oban Hospice greet those who have lost someone special.



Morag MacLean with Rotarians Tommy McQuade, Iain MacIntyre and Douglas Small.

People in Oban remember loved ones and Rotary donates £4,000 to young carers

THE Corran Halls were illuminated on Tuesday night as people remembered loved ones they had lost. Oban Hospice's annual Light Up A Life event allowed people the chance to remember someone special by sponsoring a light on the tree outside the venue.

During the ceremony, piper Ryan MacInnes played Highland Cathedral while the audience each lit up a small light.

Taynuilt Gaelic Choir then entertained the

packed hall with two songs they performed at this year's Mòd.

Iain MacIntyre from the Rotary Club also gave a reading and the Rev James Beaton said a prayer reflecting on Jesus saying: 'I am the light.'

David Entwistle, chairman of Oban Hospice, thanked Oban Electrical Services Ltd for putting up the lights free of charge, local people for their generosity over the years which had led to the opening of the Dove Centre in Stevenson Street.

YOUNG carers in Oban will benefit from a £4,000 donation from the Rotary Club of Oban.

This is the first instalment of a three-year agreement, which will see the club give North Argyll Carers Centre (NACC) £12,000 in total to support the work of the centre's young carers service.

Morgan MacLean from NACC attended the Rotary's monthly meeting in the Perle Hotel to receive the cheque.

The young carers service includes youngsters from eight to 18 years old who, for one reason or another, are responsible for looking after someone, be it a parent or a close relative.

The money from Oban Rotary, which will attract match funding, will go towards providing respite for the young carers through holidays, days away and training.

The Rotary Club of Oban is delighted to be assisting the North Argyll Carers Centre.



Kilniver Primary School janitor Lee McKillop was once again fundraising for the Sophie North Charitable Trust in her cookie monster onesie ... this time cleaning Oban's streets. Lee and three friends – Matt McKay, Iain Carmichael and Maggie Clayton – cleaned up the lane from Millpark to Aldi at the weekend, picking up more than 20 bags of rubbish. They also raised almost £350, in the first of four clean-ups for the charity, scheduled in January, February and March. The Sophie North Charitable Trust commemorates the Dunblane massacre 21 years ago, when 16 children, including five-year-old Sophie North, and their teacher, were killed by Thomas Hamilton.

Merry Christmas at this special time of year WHERE IS THIS?

THAT special time of year is almost upon us again and it's certainly been very eventful so far, writes Oban town ambassador Kay McDonald.

The wonderful Oban Winter Festival kicked it all off in great style and I feel my feet haven't touched the ground since.

Tomorrow night sees another chance to kick up your heels with Skipinnish in the Corran Halls for what promises to be a fantastic event and, with many of the local hostellers offering entertainment this weekend, there will be no shortage of festive feeling in the town.

If you'd rather calm things down a little, then Oban Phoenix Cinema has lots to offer



including a film called *The Man Who Invented Christmas* about Charles Dickens and what led him to write *A Christmas Carol*. There's also the chance to

reflect on the true meaning of the season with the local churches offering services which give a quiet space to reflect and breathe, something

some people find much needed in the midst of all the mayhem that Christmas brings.

Whatever you choose to do, I hope it brings you happiness and you have a wonderful Christmas.

Let's not forget all those who work on Christmas Day to make sure others are looked after. Thank you and merry Christmas.

The photo last week was of the wall around the war memorial, a beautiful place to walk along to, especially on the crisp clear days we've had lately. This week's photo is a bit more hidden but many of the people who went to school in Oban may recognise it.

It's Christmas

It's been 12 months since the Cairns moved in and what a transformation. Christmas couldn't be better and as Mike says Happy Wife, Happy Life. Merry Christmas everyone from the Cairns, and The Cairngorm Group



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Oban Rotary Club's Christmas carol concert played to a full house. The Oban Bach Orchestra, under the direction of Norman Nicholson, continues to be the cornerstone of the event in terms of the carol singing, ably supported by Dunbeg, Lochnell and Rockfield school choirs, the Sequence Choir, the Boogies, Oban and Lorne Strathspey and Reel Society, and Oban Community Singers. Prayers were led by the Reverend Chris Fulcher, with spiritual readings from Oban High School head boy Ruairidh Horn and head girl Mila Bicanova, plus two senior Rotarians. The event was warmly compered by Rotary president Tommy McQuade and the sum of £494.75 was raised by way of donations which will be distributed to nominated charities.

Argyll charity chief exec resigns after investigation

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

THE chief of an Argyll charity has resigned amid an investigation by its board after 'one of the most challenging years' for its staff.

Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface, which has offices in Oban, Bowmore, Lochgilphead, Campbeltown, Dunoon and Helensburgh, confirmed 'there have been ongoing investigations into some aspects of the management and governance

of the charity'. The statement added: 'As the board of a charity and one funded by public money, we had a responsibility to ensure that the findings of these investigations were comprehensively reviewed, and as a result Argyll and Bute TSI disciplinary procedures were instigated.'

'In mid-November, Ms Glenn Heritage resigned as CEO by letter. The board, after taking both HR and legal advice, have accepted Ms Heritage's resignation.

'To that end, the board of Argyll and Bute TSI want it known that Ms Glenn Heritage no longer works for, represents or has any dealings with Argyll and Bute TSI.'

Board member Peter McDill told *The Oban Times*: 'This was an internal investigation commissioned by the voluntary board. We have not found any financial irregularities.'

'We are asking a specialist charity CEO to parachute in. TSI is not going anywhere. TSI will change. TSI will now deliver

far better than it has in the past.'

The board's chairman, John Stevens, added: 'This has been one of the most challenging years for our staff and the fact that most groups have not recognised or mentioned a change in delivery of our services and output is of great credit to each and every one of those staff members who continue the important work that the TSI carries out across Argyll and Bute.'

'The way ahead for Argyll and Bute TSI is to learn from what

has happened over the past year which will ensure that it emerges a stronger organisation focused on supporting the needs of Argyll and Bute.'

Third sector interfaces provide a single point of access for support and advice for the third sector within the local area, including volunteering development, social enterprise development, supporting and developing a strong third sector, and building the third sector relationship with community planning.

Tidal platform at Connel

A TEMPORARY tidal energy system has been installed at Connel and is now operational. The PLAT-I platform, which consists of four turbines, is undergoing tests after being installed by Sustainable Marine Energy (SME) towards the end of last month.

The power take-off system comprises four SCHOTTEL Instream Turbines (SIT) and an accessible power conversion system hosted in an on-board container.

Within 48 hours of being installed, the system generated power and the platform has since 'demonstrated excellent stability throughout a range of tide and weather conditions'.

After testing concludes at Connel, PLAT-I will be disassembled and transported to Asia, where it will be redeployed.

Jason Hayman, managing



The platform is generating energy already.

director of SME, said: 'We have taken PLAT-I from drawing board to first power generation within a period of 15 months, a real achievement.'

'The support of the Scottish Government as well as our supply chain partners and investors has also been instrumental to this success. Now we are eagerly looking forward completing testing at Connel.'

Alfie wins Oban whisky

One lucky reader received a bottle of whisky after winning an Oban Times Christmas competition. Alfie Mackenzie, from Oban, received a bottle of Oban Little Bay for successfully answering the name of the distillery whisky bar: 1974 Whisky Bar. Alfie was handed the bottle by *The Oban Times*' deputy editor Martin Laing.

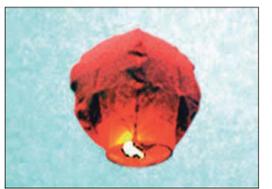


Connel man's lantern alert

OBAN TIMES reader Tony Hammock, from Connel, messaged the newspaper last week to warn of the dangers of people using sky lanterns.

He said: 'At 14.10 on December 14, someone launched this sky lantern from the Old Shore Road area of South Connel.'

'The lantern climbed rapidly and flew off eastwards, heading for Taynuilt. Where is it going to land? Will it be extinguished when it does? Who's going to pick it up and dispose of it?'



'Surely, this an act of littering. These things have caused fires. Farm animals have been injured by the wire frames snagging or being ingested.'

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OT

Mull, Iona, Tiree

RUBBISH and recycling collection dates over Christmas and New Year have been changed in Mull, Iona and Tiree.

In Mull and Iona, rubbish and recycling collections due week beginning Monday December 25 will be collected a day later than scheduled.

Rubbish and recycling collections due week beginning Monday January 1, 2018 will be collected two days later than scheduled.

Glengorm recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on Monday December 25, Tuesday December 26, Monday January 1 and Tuesday January 2.

In Tiree, green bin collections due on Monday January 1 2018 will be collected on Wednesday January 3.

Green bin collections due on Tuesday January 2 will be collected on Wednesday January 4.

Gott Bay recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on Monday December 25, Tuesday December 26, Monday January 1 and Tuesday January 2.

Mid Argyll

THE REFURBISHED ground floor of Mid Argyll Hospital was officially re-opened on Friday December 8.

Earlier this year, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) carried out the work to relocate inpatient mental health services.

Christina West, the HSCP's chief officer, opened the new service.

She said: 'Inpatient mental health services were previously provided from Argyll and Bute Hospital. While the staff and the care provided were of an excellent standard we knew we had to find a more suitable environment for the service.'

'When the wards within Mid Argyll Hospital were re-configured recently, it gave us an opportunity to develop an empty ward and refurbish it to create an environment we could specially adapt for the provision of inpatient mental health services.'

Kilchrenan



Adrienne Watson, winner of the Kilchrenan Art Group competition, with judges David and Vivienne Price.

ARTISTS from Dalavich, Kilchrenan and Taynuilt submitted a piece of work portraying autumn in the first Kilchrenan Art group competition.

The Hilary Cup for Art has been provided by June Raven of the art group, in memory of her dear friend and painting buddy Hilary Sargusson, from Lismore, who died in 2016.

David and Vivienne Price, members of the Three Wee Crows drama group, were invited to judge the art work, the criteria for the winner being 'the one they liked best'.

After careful consideration of the paintings, they chose the work of Adrienne Watson.

The art group meets weekly in Kilchrenan Village Hall for two hours, when they explore a wide range of techniques, media and topics.

They have worked with visiting artists George Stewart, Arthur Ker, Val MacFarlane and Ann Sawley, with the help of grant money from the Carraig Gheal Windfarm Trust.

In August, an exhibition of the group's work was displayed in the Robin's Nest Tea Room, thanks to Mairread and Murray Sim, as part of the Argyll Art Map event.

The subject for the next competition, to be judged in March 2018, is living creatures.



St Columba's youngsters shine on Nativity stage

Pupils at St Columba's Primary School, Oban, made their parents proud last Wednesday with their 'Superstar' production. Children from primary 1-7 took part, performing in front of friends and family. 'Everyone agreed it was fantastic,' a school spokesperson said.

Loch Lomond

A RENOWNED statue on Loch Lomondside that has been visited by more than 300,000 people is celebrating its third birthday.

The Tom Weir monument pays tribute to Scotland's 'most-loved mountain man'.

The statue site has continued to evolve since it was unveiled on December 29, 2014. It now boasts a mountain garden named after Tom and his late wife Rhona, a picnic area and storyboards.

Donation posts were also installed, with almost £4,500 collected for the

Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs conservation and heritage charity.

James Fraser, chairman of the 'Friends' said: 'The success of the site continues to exceed expectations. It has clearly captured the public's imagination, making it a top visitor attraction.'

'Sadly, Tom's wife Rhona passed away this year, but while she was alive she regularly visited the site and was delighted to see just how popular Tom's statue and the mountain garden were with residents and visitors.'



The Tom Weir memorial statue is preparing to mark its third birthday.

Skye arts group on awards shortlist

ATLAS Arts has been shortlisted for this year's Scottish Rural Awards in the conservation and the environment category.

The Skye-based arts organisation was selected as a finalist because of its ethos and commitment to exploring issues relating to the environment.

Its summer project Climavore: On Tidal Zones by artist duo Cooking Sections saw an oyster table constructed in the Bayfield area of Portree.

The project's aim was to promote environmental regeneration by promoting ingredients – bivalves and



ATLAS Arts' summer project Climavore: On Tidal Zones. Photograph: Colin Hattersley.

seaweeds – that proactively respond to the new ecological challenges of Scottish waters.

ATLAS arts director Emma Nicolson said: 'We

are delighted to be recognised by the Rural Scotland Awards. It shows our commitment to exploring rural issues and concerns through our work with artists.'

'Cooking Sections were great collaborators and enabled us to work with many local partners, including local restaurants and food suppliers.'

Killin

THE KILLIN branch of the Scottish Women's Institute raised £567 for Robin House Children's Hospice at its December meeting.

Michael Crowe, his wife Lynne and restaurant manager Jinny welcomed 25 ladies to the Courie Inn, Killin, and started the festive season off with an array of canapés.

The next meeting, on Saturday January 6, will be the branch's 94th birthday celebration. For more information, or to attend this event, contact Ann on 07796 491362.

Kilmore

THE KILMORE 100 Club winner for November was R Craig.

December winners were: £500, L Still; £300, P Bedford; £100, D MacKinnon.

A New Year ceilidh supper will be held in Kilmore Hall on January 6 2018 with Ceol an Aire providing the music. Everyone welcome. Admission £10.

Strathfillan

A POLICE report submitted to Strathfillan Community Council shows 24 calls were made in the area since the last meeting. The majority of calls were road accidents and weather-related. There was, however, a theft of tools from a van parked in Willow Square.

Western Isles

GETTING a polycrub in the Western Isles has become easier, as NortEnergy has agreed a deal with a local plant and construction company.

A polycrub is a strong, durable polytunnel, which prevents the elements from damaging plants.

The new arrangement with AMK Plant and Tipper Hire should make the process smoother as it removes the need to freight materials to and from Shetland.

Chairman of Nortenergy Drew Ratter said: 'I am delighted we have come to this agreement with Alec John and Jayne of AMK.'

Jayne Macdonald of AMK said: 'We were fascinated when we saw the first polycrubs in Lewis and keen to be involved. Our guys are now trained in constructing the kits and we are confident we can provide an excellent service.'

Those interested could benefit from a Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme, which supports funding for polycrubs.



A polycrub.

North Uist, Barra

WESTERN Isles MP Angus Brendan MacNeil is calling on Visit Scotland to reverse its decision to close tourist information centres.

Centres in Lochmaddy in North Uist and Castlebay on Barra are to be closed.

Mr MacNeil is also asking VisitScotland to re-open the Lochboisdale office, which closed last year.

The Na h-Eileanan an Iar MP said: 'I am very disappointed at VisitScotland's decision to close the tourist information centres in Lochmaddy and Castlebay, on the back of Lochboisdale closing last year.'

'I am calling on VisitScotland to stop these damaging closures.'

'It is all well and good for tourists to get information online in areas where connectivity is robust, however, this is quite often not the case in our islands.'

Tyndrum

TYNDRUM'S tourist information centre has closed down.

A proposal by Tyndrum Hall Committee to buy the building is being endorsed by Strathfillan Community Council and Strathfillan Community Development Trust.

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At Random

So many reasons to be cheerful

DON'T you just love the festive season? I do anyway.

This year, for me, there is added festivity from the sheer number of good news, positive stories we have been publishing.

First, there has been the return home of Agnes MacKechnie and Billy Irving.

Agnes is the Oban woman who was so badly hurt in an awful hit-and-run accident while on holiday in the United States at Hallowe'en. The poor soul has had to endure a whole series of surgical operations and still faces a long road back to full health.

However, her family have been brilliant in keeping us posted on her progress and I know from my contacts with them that they are thrilled to have her back in her own house.

I wish Agnes and her family all the best.

Billy is, of course, the Connel man who was jailed in an Indian prison and abandoned by his own government, despite the charges against him being spurious.

Billy is also thrilled to be back with his fiancée Yvonne MacHugh (an absolute star who fought so doggedly to win his freedom) and toddler son William.

I'm so pleased they will have Christmas together as a family.

Then there have been the numerous examples of local people



Rapunzel: A Tangled Tale entertained hundreds of people in Oban.

going way above and beyond to help those less fortunate than themselves.

The Rotary and Lions clubs have entertained countless people, brought Santa to town and donated money to good causes.

My colleague, the ever cheerful Nicky Murphy, organised the fantastic Pink Ladies Day for women who have experienced cancer. It gave more than 60 ladies a great day of pampering and fun.

And there have been so many people who have backed charitable causes in an unquantifiable number of ways. They are simply too numerous to mention.

Then there are the good folk behind Spotlight Musical Theatre Company who put on the brilliant panto *Rapunzel: A Tangled Tale* in Oban. They entertained many hundreds so well.

And let's not forget the very

many Christmas fairs, fetes and fundraisers.

I'm in awe of all these selfless souls who toil on behalf of others.

I hope all of you, our readers and advertisers, have a great holiday season.

Has VisitScotland forgotten its roots?

I WAS emailed last week by a PR executive on behalf of VisitScotland, the national tourism authority.

The message was from a lady requesting that we put a link for VisitScotland into a story we had published online (as well as in the newspaper) about the tourism boom in the Oban area.

The thing that jarred is that the 'senior creative strategist' works

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



for a PR agency called iProspect, and is based at its offices whose address is 117-119 Portland Street in Manchester.

Am I alone in wondering why a Scottish national organisation is using an English PR agency? Surely VisitScotland could find a company this side of the border to do its bidding.

Get into the Swing this Christmas

A MEMBER of Oban Music Society emailed us at The Oban Times last week to say: 'In March this year we had a wonderful jazz concert by Swing 2017 with Seonaid Aitken on vocals.'

'The concert was recorded in St John's Cathedral. Mike Hawke has a number of copies of this CD available for sale to members, and we thought it might be the perfect Christmas gift for jazz lovers.'

'The price is £10 if you collect but £13 if he has to post it to you. Collection can be from his home in Oban or at our next concert in January. Order by calling 01631 562734 or email mgrph@outlook.com.'

What do you think?

Write to me at mlaing@obantimes.co.uk or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4 HB.



The mermaid said: 'Well, Duncan, are your getting fish?' Photograph: Iain Thornber

Mythical tale of the Mull mermaid and the Princess

MORVERN LINES
IAIN THORNER
editor@obantimes.co.uk

WHEN John Campbell (1845-1914), Marquess of Lorne and later 9th Duke of Argyll, married Princess Louise, 6th daughter of Queen Victoria in 1871, the couple spent part of their honeymoon on the Argyll family estate on Mull.

The lodge they chose was on the shores of a secluded inland loch surrounded by hanging woods and high towering mountains. So taken were they by the grandeur of the neighbourhood and the welcome they received from the local folk that it became a favourite home to which they returned whenever their public duties allowed.

Both were accomplished artists and interested in Highland culture and, when in residence, they gathered around them many Gaelic scholars and folklorists of the day.

A frequent guest was John Francis Campbell (1822-85), a close friend and kinsman of Lorne, who was known in Gaelic as Iain Òg Ìle (Young John of Islay) as he was born there when it was owned by his family.

JFC gained a lot of his knowledge of the Highlands travelling around recording tales, songs, charms and anecdotes. He was proficient in Gaelic, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Lapp, Italian, Spanish and German, and visited many parts of the world, including Ceylon, or Sri Lanka as it is now known.

His most well-known published works are the bilingual *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (4 vols., 1860-62) and *The Celtic Dragon Myth*, published posthumously in 1911. Today he is referred to as the grandmaster of Highland folklore because, without him, much



Princess Louise at the time of her wedding (Photograph: The Royal Archives, Windsor) and Mamral of the seven-headed cobra painted by John Francis Campbell (Photograph: Iain Thornber) and, below, a silver medal presented to Malcolm MacDonald by Princess Louise and the Marquess of Lorne (Photograph: Iain Thornber)



of the oral traditions of Argyll would have been lost.

One of the stories JFC collected was about an old blacksmith named Duncan who lived in a little thatched house by the seashore. When his work was done, Duncan would go out in the evening to fish. He never caught much until one night a long-haired mermaid rose at the side of his boat and spoke to him. The saga is too convoluted to tell here in full so if you want to know the outcome you must read Campbell's *Celtic Dragon Myth*.

JFC must have enthralled his hosts with his stories of the Highlands and his adventures abroad because, on the walls of the drawing-room in the lodge, there are four interesting murals painted by him, Lord Archie (Lorne's brother) and Princess Louise. Those by Iain Òg Ìle are identified by his name or initials, and the princess's by her initials LCA (Louise Caroline Alberta). There used to be a fifth painting above the mantelpiece



but it was obliterated when, long after, the room was used for storing hay.

The largest and best is of the ugly mermaid holding onto the gunwale of the boat in which Duncan is sitting, looking at her in utter disbelief as she says: 'Well, Duncan, are you getting fish?'

Written across the stern of the boat are the words 'Duncan McPhie, Skye'. It is not recorded if this is Duncan's full name or that of the narrator of the tale. Immediately below, is a

Princess Louise presenting Malcolm with a white Highland pony used to pull the carriage in which she and Lorne travelled from Craignure to the lodge whenever they came to Mull.

Malcolm was very particular about its appearance and would be up half the night grooming it for the great day. On one occasion the pony did what ponies sometimes do in their stall during the night. Not to let his standards slip, Malcolm quickly found a bucket of lime-wash and painted out the offending marks on its hind quarters. All went well and the pony was duly admired as usual by the princess, until it began to rain. 'Your pony is changing colour, Malcolm,' she laughingly shouted, knowing why!

Princess Louise also painted murals on the walls of the green corridor outside the library at Inveraray Castle but they are less striking than those in the lodge on Mull.

Last year a project was launched by the present Duke and Duchess of Argyll to open up their centuries-old archive at Inveraray. We are fortunate to have one of the oldest and most outstanding collections of Highland history in Europe sitting on our own doorstep and, more importantly, the interest and will of their keepers to make it available to the public.

As the full-time archivist and The Friends of the Argyll Papers Project, painstakingly work their way through a mountain of boxes from the attics and cellars of Inveraray Castle, who knows how many more Gaelic tales they will find. No wonder an old Islay lady, on having some of Iain Òg Ìle's long-forgotten stories read to her, remarked in Gaelic: 'There is no joy without Clan Campbell.'

Iain Thornber
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Television station set to turn back the clock

STV will see out its special 60th anniversary year by turning back the clock for its Hogmanay show.

To tie in with the channel's commemorative programming during 2017, it has lined up a modern take on one of its most nostalgic programmes with a Thingummyjig Hogmanay Ceilidh.

Thingummyjig was one of STV's most-watched shows in the 1970s and 1980s, with its combination of traditional Scottish music and dance and top variety acts such as Andy Stewart, Fran and Anna, Alasdair Gillies, The Tartan Lads and The John Carmichael Band.

Host Jack McLaughlin - better known to millions as the



Jack McLaughlin and Jennifer Reoch will feature in the show.

Laird O' Coocaddens - fast became a household name and Thingummyjig's lively blend of varied entertainment and tongue-in-cheek tone turned it into a favourite. Subsequent stage shows proved so popular

that they sold out at venues across the country.

STV head of programmes Paul Hughes said: 'We know Hogmanay is about fun, family and traditions for our viewers, and nothing says that more

than a big ceilidh. Our 60th anniversary gave us the perfect opportunity to do just that in conjunction with one of STV's most loved shows.'

'I'm delighted Jack and the John Carmichael Band are joining us to provide the perfect Hogmanay soundtrack for viewers at home. They will be treated to a night of Scottish ceilidh classics and a host of well-kent faces, including Glen Michael, Eileen McCallum, Archie McPherson, Kris Commons, Lisa Hague and Jesse Rae, as well as many of STV's current stars.'

STV's Thingummyjig Hogmanay Ceilidh show, which will air for an hour from 11.30pm on Hogmanay, comes from the St

Andrew's in the Square in Glasgow. The splendid 18th-century A-listed former church is an appropriate venue for a traditional ceilidh as it is now the home of Glasgow's Centre for Scottish Culture, promoting Scottish music song and dance.

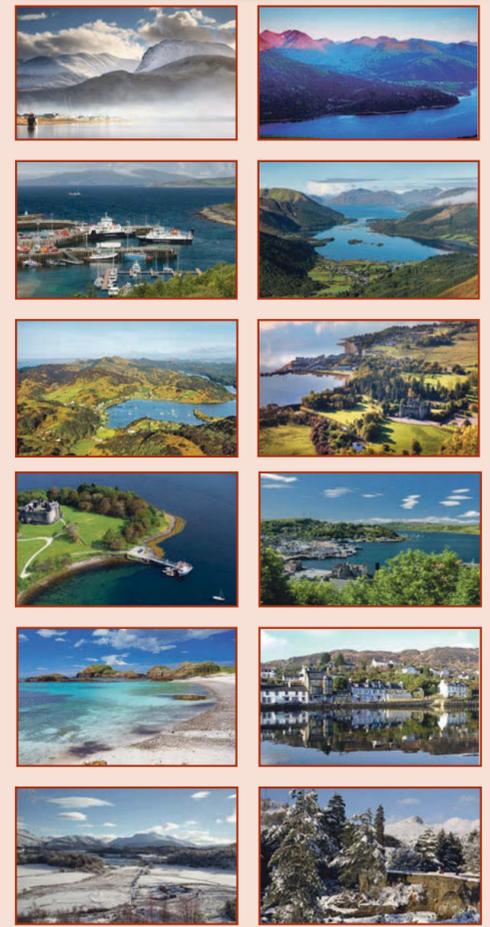
Jack McLaughlin said: 'I can't wait to meet up with a great bunch of hoochter teuchter pals at our very swanky sunny dunny for STV's Thingummyjig Hogmanay Ceilidh.'

'I'll be wagging my wallies once again and asking everyone to join me for a fun night of Scottish music and dance - so I hope everyone at home will be tuning in from their single ends and butts-and-bens as we see the old year out and bring in the new.'

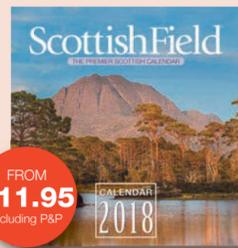
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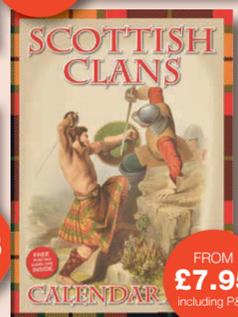
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Festive greetings to all our readers



**Michael Russell,
MSP for Argyll and Bute**

AFTER what has been one of the most confusing years on record – Brexit, Donald Trump, an unnecessary election and a (weather-wise at least) non-summer (though there were more tourists about in Argyll and Bute than ever) it is a saving grace that most of us can take a deep breath, wind down and look forward to a peaceful festive season with friends and family.

So I wish a very happy Christmas to everyone in the area but particularly to those who will be lonely or facing hardship even at this special time. May there be something good awaiting you as well and for all of us may there be a more caring, more considerate, more inclusive and more prosperous new year ahead.



**Chief Superintendent
Hazel Hendren,
Argyll and Dunbartonshire
Division**

THE FESTIVE season is in full swing and, while everyone enjoys getting into the Christmas spirit, it's also a time to reflect on the past 12 months and what we have all achieved.

I have been in post now for six months and I am delighted and honored to be the divisional commander serving our communities in Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire.

Christmas is a special time, hopefully filled with happiness and fun. However, I would urge everyone to take extra care of themselves and their homes over the festive period to avoid remembering it for the wrong reasons. We want everyone to enjoy the festivities, relax, visit family and socialise but please think ahead and keep yourself and others safe. Police Scotland's festive campaign provides a range of advice

regarding protecting yourself and your home, safety advice for shopping, using ATMs and looking after your property.

Please check this out on our social media pages or speak to one of my local officers who are out and about providing extra patrols at events, in shopping centres and pubs and clubs. If you see them, please pop over and say hello.

As we move into 2018, I look forward to the Year of Young People and celebrating all of their achievements. Along with our partners, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers and Youth Engagement Officers will be ready to get involved and maximise opportunities for our young people.

Have a fantastic time, stay safe and let's look forward to working together in 2018.



**Marri Malloy, convener of
Oban Community Council**

AS CONVENER of Oban Community Council I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all community councillors to wish the residents of Oban a very Happy Christmas and hopefully a prosperous and healthy 2018.

We have been very busy as usual, working with and on behalf of the local community – there has been issues in the town we have been asked to help residents with. We are limited in what we can do but we try our very best with the powers we have.



**Rev Dugald Cameron,
Kilmore and Oban, and
Moderator of the Presbytery
of Argyll**

ENJOY Christmas! Children, women and men are made to be full of life and hope. Our northern hemisphere celebration of Christmas falls in the darkest time of the year, so appreciate the lights, candles

and bright smiles around us. For the homeless or roofless, for the refugees or those beset by poverty or debt, for those fearing domestic violence, the darkness is of a different variety and magnitude.

In the reality of the world, this week, in the physical darkness of celebrating churches throughout the world these words from John's Gospel will be heard.

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. We also say the Word became flesh.'

This is the Christian way of saying that an idea of light and hope became real, living among us in Jesus of Nazareth.

'And Christ was loved by women, feared by men, befriended by the weak, despised by the strong, deserted by his listeners, betrayed by his friends, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, writing heaven's pardon over earth's mistakes.'

No matter our situation, however hopeless it may seem, there is forgiveness and new hope in following the light that shines in the person of Jesus. God does not batter us into submission. Rather, God comes to us as an infant; vulnerable as we are vulnerable. The child's cry draws out from us love and compassion. And the light is turned on in our hearts again and again.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Nollaig Chridheil Agus Bliadhna Mhath Ur.



Bishop Brian McGee

PERHAPS, like me, the idea of writing Christmas cards doesn't excite you. I usually put it off for as long as possible – partly because the list seems so big and some of the recipients I haven't seen for years. And yet every year when I actually start, I really enjoy it. As I write, I appreciate loving relationships from my entire life – my mum, my sister, aunts and uncles, cousins, friends, school friends, college friends, fellow priests and former parishioners.

Even if some now live thousands of miles away, they again feel close as I remember 52 years of happy times and how my life has been enriched. I remember them fondly and thank God for the gift of each one. One of the great gifts of

Christmas is that it opens our hearts to other people.

Should we be surprised at this? After all, isn't Christmas – at its most meaningful and beautiful level – all about God's open heart? At Christmas we celebrate that God loved every human being who has existed, so much that Jesus was born to redeem us. You are loved by Jesus. He came into the world to open our hearts to Him and to each other.

I wish each one of you and all your family and friends a most happy and holy Christmas.



Kay McDonald, BID4Oban
ON BEHALF of all of us at BID4Oban, I'd like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and joyful New Year.

It's been a really busy year for Oban with ups and downs like we all experience in life but I think on the whole Oban is looking fantastic and going from strength to strength.

The new year promises to continue on this path and I'm really looking forward to what 2018 will bring.

We have a lot to be happy about living here – the beauty of our surroundings, even on the dreichest day, the close community that supports so many charities offering help to those who need it and the fact that we're all striving together to make Oban the best place it can be for those of us who live here and all the visitors we welcome every year.



**Kieron Green, councillor for
Oban North and Lorn**

SO ANOTHER busy year for Oban and Lorn draws to a close. Despite a rather damp summer, we had large number of visitors coming to the area – and with the opening of the pontoons in the town I look

forward to even more next year. We have already had our first icy blast of the season during which workers were out keeping roads clear, and who, along with other council, NHS and emergency services, worked hard to deliver vital services in difficult conditions. While some of us are looking forward to a bit of time away from our jobs I want to give my special thanks to those who will be working over the holidays.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and all the best for 2018.



**Jim Lynch, councillor for Oban
South and the Isles**

WISHING everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.



**Patrick Stewart,
Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant
for Argyll and Bute**

AT THE end of the 224th year since it was permanently established, the Argyll and Bute Lieutenancy can look back with some considerable satisfaction. I, together with my 13 deputies, who are spread throughout the area, have been constantly busy in carrying out our duties on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen.

May 2017 saw a successful visit by the Princess Royal to East and West Lochfyneside. Among the many other duties carried out were attendance at citizenship ceremonies, investitures, local events and representation at Remembrance Day services.

Much time is spent preparing nominations for honours or assisting others in that task. We are constantly on the lookout for those involved in voluntary work with charity or the community. The Lieutenancy is delighted to visit those celebrating centenaries and diamond wedding anniversaries to

present the Queen's greetings.

Since 2014 the Lieutenancy has chaired the First World War Steering Group, which has delivered a respectable number of events commemorating the sacrifice of individuals, servicemen and civilians in the Great War. On May 4, 2018, a major commemorative event will be held on Islay to remember those lost in the troopships SS Tuscania and HMS Otranto 100 years ago.

I wish all the citizens in the Lieutenancy, particularly those who contributed so much to the success of all our events and projects, a very happy Christmas and a calm and prosperous new year.



**Councillor Len Scoullar,
Provost of Argyll and Bute**

THE CHRISTMAS season is with us once again and it is wonderful to see Argyll and Bute looking festive, colourful and vibrant.

Christmas is a truly joyous time filled with family, friends, fun and festivities and New Year is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and look forward to next with real excitement.

This is a time that means many things to many people and I'm happy to say it's when communities come together and celebrate with each other.

I am also aware that for many this time of year can be difficult and my thoughts are also with them. I know everyone is busy but I would ask you to please take some time to think about others.

As 2017 comes to an end, I wish everyone in Argyll and Bute a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous new year.



**Elaine Robertson, councillor
for Oban North and Lorn.**

CHRISTMAS is almost upon us, and the preparations are

almost complete. Happily, most families and friends will be looking forward to celebrating this very special event with excitement and joy. For others, however, it is a time for reflection and memories.

I simply wish everyone a very peaceful and happy Christmas, with my very best wishes for 2018.



**Brendan O'Hara,
MP for Argyll and Bute**

I'D LIKE to wish everyone across Argyll and Bute a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.

It is traditional at this time of year to look back and reflect on what we have come through over the past 12 months.

Such generalisations are of course fraught with danger as, for some, 2017 will be remembered as being the best year ever, perhaps with a wedding or the birth of a child, while for those who have endured tragedy, 2017 will always be the year to forget.

Personally, I'm somewhere in the middle. Yes, there have been highlights – retaining my seat after a bruising general election campaign being one of them.

But there have also been low points and every day we have to live with the fact that far too many of our fellow citizens are finding it harder to survive these tough economic times, particularly when so many of them are also struggling with the additional burden of welfare reform.

What has really struck me, above all this year, is the essential part volunteers play in our communities right across Argyll and Bute – those unpaid volunteers who go out of their way and give of their time to look after a friend or a relative; those who run and assist the multitude of groups and organisations dedicated to making their town or village a better place; and those who make sure that the poorest and the most vulnerable in our communities don't go hungry.

They are an essential part of Argyll and Bute, so this year I'd like to wish all of those people in particular a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and, on behalf of everyone in Argyll and Bute, say a huge thanks for all you do for so many individuals and for our communities.

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College students deliver festive cheer to the lonely

ARGYLL College care sector students have been working harder than Santa's elves this month collecting and wrapping around 500 Christmas gifts which will be distributed to elderly members of the community who may be vulnerable and living in isolation over the festive period.

The seasonal project is in support of the Campaign to End Loneliness. Students, staff and members of the public have been leaving donations of non-perishable food and drink, books, toiletries or any small gifts at any Argyll College Centre in the run up to Christmas.

The students wanted to find a way to show appreciation for older generations who have contributed to society and may now be without family at this festive time of year.



Hannah Hutchison with some of the Islay donations.

Local businesses have also been extremely supportive with donations of gifts from Purdies of Oban, and Labels Coffee Shop in Ballygrant on Islay, and Taynuilt-based Sequence Ladies Choir. Tesco and the Co-op have

supported the students by setting up a drop-off points in stores in Oban and on Islay.

Word of the students' activities has even spread as far as Dumfries, and when Hilda McAdam heard about the campaign she

sent a selection of hand-knitted hats, gloves and scarves.

Childhood practice tutor Kerry McGeachy said: 'The support has been outstanding and we are truly humbled by the generosity of staff, students and the wider community. We now quite literally have hundreds of gifts to be distributed throughout Argyll.'

Kerry's fellow tutor and curriculum lead for care and childcare, Kyla Steele, added: 'The activity links with many of the themes in a number of courses in the care sector and the students have taken this on wholeheartedly. Local businesses have also been supportive with donations and it's great to see this kind of community spirit.'

Social services tutor Allan MacDougall is co-ordinating gift distribution with numerous organisations across the region

to make sure the students' gifts make it to deserving elderly residents in time for Christmas.

According to Allan: 'All the local care organisations have been so enthusiastic about the project and so supportive which is great, especially at this time of the year when they are incredibly busy and have so much to contend with. The staff involved are really going the extra mile to help make this all possible.'

Denis McGlennon, a representative of Carers Direct, said: 'We are delighted that Argyll College students have decided to support the Campaign to End Loneliness, and the generosity of the businesses and communities of Argyll is extremely gratifying. These small gifts will help those older members of our community feel a little less isolated this Christmas.'



Helen MacDonald, from MICT, Scottish Government Housing Minister Kevin Stewart and Moray Finch, MICT general manager.

Ulva Ferry housing project wins award

A PROJECT to create affordable family housing and increase the school roll at Ulva Ferry has won the housing category in the prestigious 2017 SURF Awards.

In 2010, Ulva Ferry on the west coast of Mull had an ageing and declining population and Ulva Primary School was facing closure. A key factor was the lack of affordable housing for young families.

The community formed the Ulva School Community Association in 2011 and, working with Mull and Iona Community Trust, instigated the Ulva Ferry Housing Project.

Six years later, the community has built two three-bedroom homes, delivering the first affordable rental housing to be built in the area for decades. They are now home to two families, each with three young children, which has helped secure a future for the school.

Local people have been involved at each stage of the project, with the interests of the wider community at the heart of each decision made.

The success of the project has strengthened the community's appetite for more affordable housing development to further secure the longer term future for Ulva Ferry.

Last week the project was recognised in the SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration.

The SURF Awards scheme is delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government, with additional support from Architecture & Design Scotland, Creative Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Scotland's Towns Partnership, and Skills Development Scotland.

Moray Finch, manager of Mull and Iona Community Trust, said: 'We are delighted that the impact of the Ulva Ferry housing project on the local community has been recognised by the SURF judging panel.'

'We could not have achieved this without the support of Highlands and Islands Enterprise which has funded our local development officer since 2011.'

Tiree harbours plan wins public backing

TREE Community Development Trust (TCDT) has released The Land Below the Waves - A Growth Plan for Tiree's Marine Sector, a plan to take ownership of two working harbours, at Milton and Scarinish, and transform them as a basis for economic development.

The trust's plans received 98 per cent backing at a recent community ballot.

Both harbours are in poor condition. Scarinish, which is all but condemned, currently berths two boats, with seven boats berthed in the small tidal harbour at Milton.

However, attracting funding

for a harbour development has proved difficult and the situation was brought sharply into focus last week when a boat moored at Milton sank in the harbour.

The boat was doubled up (tied outside another boat rather than alongside the harbour) and when the vessels took the bottom, the outside boat's keel sat in a hole resulting in it not listing against the inside boat but instead leaning in underneath and becoming trapped on the incoming tide.

TCDT is to lobby political representatives and funders for backing to ensure delivery of a development project in 2018.



Three-year-old Theodore Meldrum was one of many children who visited Santa's grotto in Oban, hosted by Oban and Lorn Lions Club in Airds Crescent on Saturday.

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Argyll and Bute Council

Christmas and New Year Refuse and Recycling Arrangements (Domestic and Commercial Premises)

Oban and Lorn
Refuse and recycling collections due over the festive period will be collected as follows:

- Collections due in week commencing 25th December will be collected a day later than published calendar i.e. due on 25th will be collected on 26th, due on 26th will be collected on 27th, due on 27th will be collected on 28th, due on 28th will be collected on 29th, due on 29th will be collected on 30th December.
- Collections due in week commencing 1st January will be collected a day later than published calendar i.e. due on 1st will be collected on 2nd, due on 2nd will be collected on 3rd, due on 3rd will be collected on 4th, due on 4th will be collected on 5th, due on 5th will be collected on 6th January.

Molough recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

Mull and Iona
Refuse and recycling collections due over the festive period will be collected as follows:

- Collections due in week commencing 25th December will be collected a day later than published calendar i.e. due on 25th will be collected on 26th, due on 26th will be collected on 27th, due on 27th will be collected on 28th, due on 28th will be collected on 29th December.
- Collections due in week commencing 1st January will be collected 2 days later than published calendar i.e. due on 1st will be collected on 3rd, due on 2nd will be collected on 4th, due on 3rd will be collected on 5th, due on 4th will be collected on 6th January.

Glenorm recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25/26th December and 1st/2nd January

Tiree
Refuse collections due on 1st January will instead be collected on 3rd January
Refuse collections due on 2nd January will instead be collected on 4th January

Gott Bay recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January

Information is also available from the Council website and from your local office.
To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

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Christmas Eve, 6.05pm

Dràma airson òigridh. Sgeulachd nighean òig aig a bheil miann a bhith air àrd-ùrlar.

A Gaelic drama for the younger audience. A young girl works behind the scenes in her Dad's theatre, but longs to be in the spotlight herself.

Guth ag Aithris: Christine Primrose

A Lone Voice: Christine Primrose

Là na Nollaige, 9f
Christmas Day, 9pm

Sgeulachd shònraichte mu Ghàidheal air leth. Tha Christine Primrose na tè de na seinneadairean Gàidhlig as cliùite a th' ann. Tha am prògram-sa ga leantainn à baile a h-àrach, Càrlabhagh an Eilean Leòdhais, gu ruige New York, air bliadhna air leth na beatha nuair a dh'fhoillsich i clàr airson a' chiad uair ann an iomadh bliadhna.

One of the great Gaelic singers, Christine Primrose remains prolific, with much she still wishes to achieve. This exclusive documentary follows her from her native Isle of Lewis to New York and back.

Lorient is Alba: HEBCELT

An Oidhche ron Nollaig, 9f
Christmas Eve, 9pm

A' comharrachadh Bliadhna Alba aig Fèis Chiùil Interceltique ann an Lorient, 2017. Air a libhrigeadh le Julie Fowlis agus Ailean Dòmhnallach.

A look back at the Year of Scotland at the Interceltic Music Festival, Lorient, 2017. Presented by Julie Fowlis and Allan MacDonald.

DIY Le Donnie: An Dùbhlán

Là na Nollaige, 10f
Christmas Day, 10pm

Anns an t-ògmhios chuir Donnie MacLeòid agus sgioba de luchd-togail bho air feadh Eilean Leòdhais dùbhlán romhpa fhèin: Retirement Centre Leòdhais a dhèanamh an àirde ann an còig latha.

It's June, and the Retirement Centre in Stornoway has become the focus of a team effort the like of which the town had never seen before, DIY Le Donnie hits town. His challenge; to renovate the centre in 5 days.

Oidhche Shèimh

A Christmas Celebration

An Oidhche ron Nollaig, 11f
Christmas Eve, 11pm

Ceòl Nollaige, leughaidhean is ùrnaighen à Eaglais Immaculate Conception ann an Glaschu.

BBC ALBA's Christmas Eve service comes from the Church of The Immaculate Conception in Glasgow.

Ceathrar air a' Chuiltheann

Four on the Cuillin

Là na Nollaige, 8.30f
Christmas Day, 8.30pm

A' chiad phrògram ann an sàr sreath spionnmhor ùr. Tha ceathrar a tha air an sgoil fhàgail a' tighinn à Glaschu chun an Eilean Sgìtheanaich gus feuchainn ri làmh an uachdair fhaighinn air a' Chuiltheann.

In this first episode of a new, visually spectacular series, four school leavers from Glasgow travel to Skye to take on the Cuillin Ridge in Skye.

Truinnsearan ar Sinnsearan

Past Tastes

Dimàirt 26 Dùbhlachd, 9f
Tuesday 26 December, 9pm

Bho cheann-croipaig gu bàirnich 's bunntà, chan eil leabhar còcaireachd eile ann coltach ris an 'Scots Kitchen' aig F. Marian NicNeill. Sa phrògram seo tha Fraoch Nic an Deòir à Ile a' rùrach ann an leabhar còcaireachd as fheàrr leatha.

With so many cookbooks on the market and recipes available, how do you choose a favourite, recipe source? For Islay's Heather Dewar, it's simple, you go to F. Marian McNeill's recipe book, The Scot's Kitchen.

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OT

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

It is remarkable how upbeat Agnes MacKechnie remains after the harrowing and horrific ordeal she has been through over the past few weeks.

Agnes, who lives in Creag an Airm in Oban, suffered extremely serious injuries when she was mown down by a pick-up truck in a hit-and-run accident in the United States at Hallowe'en.

However, despite having to endure numerous surgical procedures and spending weeks in St Luke's Hospital in the city of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Agnes is now home with her family – and is understandably thrilled to

be back. And it is testament to her strength of character that she had the grace to talk to *The Oban Times* this week about the events that occurred.

Agnes is an amazing woman who spoke openly and movingly about the positives she has taken from the incident, most particularly how it has reinforced her faith in the decency of the majority of people.

She is also deeply grateful to the medical staff who cared for her and whose skill has resulted in her being back for Christmas. *The Oban Times* hopes the MacKechnie family enjoy the festive season together.



Days gone by – 1980s

Oban Times reader Ruth Grant was kind enough to send us a number of photos of staff at the Royal Hotel between the years of 1971 and 1994. We are guessing this one was from the 1980s, given some of the ladies' hairstyles.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



TO MY friends and relations, it is well known that I am a lover of good food.

Enjoyment of sustenance is a strand of the human experience so deeply pleasurable that it feels like it is a gift from the universe and the higher powers of life that can allow our time on Earth to feel euphoric.

I have written in varying contexts in this column over the past two years about some of my favourite food experiences and in the last lap before Christmas, where food plays such an important role, I thought it fitting to indulge in extolling the virtues of a culinary contender for the heavyweight taste title, the match of which is hard to find. This is the great cloutie dumpling.

As regular readers will expect, this has been sparked by a recent event in the voyages of MacPhail, and it has a significant history dating back nearly 10 years.

As part of the Skipinnish winter tour, we were up in the wilds of Torridon last Thursday. After battling with icy roads and driving snow, travelling through some of the most ruggedly beautiful

scenery in the country, given particular presence by a covering of winter white, we arrived at the hall already feeling thankful just to have reached our destination.

Not long before we were about to go on stage, that feeling of gratitude was amplified when, through to the backstage area, came none other than Catherine MacKenzie from Gairloch to present us with one of her famous homemade cloutie dumplings.

Catherine has a gift for dumpling-making, is well known throughout the country for her skills and has won many prizes over the years for her baking, and in particular her cloutie dumplings. Catherine has made many dumplings for me over the years and receiving one is the highlight of any gig we do in Wester Ross.

It was at the Mòd in Oban in 2009 that Catherine first brought me a dumpling and it was nearly my last.

I vividly remember the moment she presented it to me outside the Ceilidh House. It was in the middle of probably the most excessive and intense week of work I have ever done in my life and it was right at the very pinnacle of that week's intensity that I was given this kind gift.

At that very moment, among a multitude of immediately pressing and unrelated issues involving boats, police, the council and the BBC, I was running out of the front door to get round the corner to rescue a delivery of Norman MacLean books and an essential drinks delivery. The drivers of both lorries were threatening to leave unless their respective cargos were received and signed for immediately.

In my very focused hurry, all I could do was say a quick thank you, apologise for being in a rush and run off at full speed round the corner with the dumpling.

Accordingly, Catherine very rightly thought I was an ignorant and ungrateful scallywag. Very shortly after that, though, we made contact and I apologised sincerely and profusely. After hearing the background to my haste, I was forgiven and we became firm friends. I have been given many dumplings since.

The story of Catherine and her kindness encapsulates much of what Christmas is about – the giving and receiving of gifts, the giving and receiving of forgiveness, and the enjoyment of merriment, friendship and good food. Thank you, Catherine.



Social media

Argyll and Bute Council's new parking regulations and the introduction of charges at previously free car parks in Oban drew widespread criticism.

Duncan Ferguson: 'Why not free parking for householders? I can't justify paying for a permit when I'm parked outside my house 1 day a week! It's a sham! I can drive 200 yards and get it for free! Surely there must be some give and go for the boys maintaining the town?'

Fergie McIver: 'So, I pay for my residents permit, if there's no spaces or if all the spaces are taken up by blue badge holders who may or may not live in the town but not in my street, I got to park in the car park not 50m from my house and I have to pay again, this is a disgrace, you will drive people

away from the town with this sort of nonsense.'

David MacLennan: 'Oban is dying as it is because of rates and parking charges, shops closing constantly, trying to do any joinery or maintenance work in town centre flats is a nightmare because you can't get a space anywhere near the job in question. A&B council is a shambles.'

Tom Hayward: 'Surely the answer is a multi storey car park? Or are the fines raised, due to a lack of adequate car parking too big a revenue raiser? No point in adding facilities, if the infrastructure is not provided as well.'

John DM Kerr: 'You Just killed of any chance for the high street shops. Who's gonna stop to buy something now.'

Colin Martin: 'Why don't you just ban people from coming to the town

completely. If they are getting a ferry we can stack them on the road out to Connel until their ferry is ready for loading!'

Kenny Vance: 'Am I still allowed to park in my driveway for free? Or will the council be round to charge me for that as well?'

Rebecca Barnham Smyth: 'What about free or reduced permits for council tax payers...so that workers (who live out of town) can park to come to work...or a park and ride.'

Norman Macnaughton: 'Bloody shambles but what do you expect from the council...NUMPTIES.'

Stuart McNaie: 'Are the councillors giving up their free park anywhere permits?'

Elizabeth Reive: 'A great way to keep visitors away.'

Great support from generous Colonsay

Sir, I have just arrived home from a night in the open air as part of the Sleep in the Park project by Social-Bite to highlight and combat the scourge of homelessness in Scotland.

Through *The Oban Times*, I would like to express my grateful thanks for all the support I received. Colonsay's contribution amounted to an outstanding £1,665 including Gift Aid. Best of all, we played our part in the national effort, which has reached an amazing £3.6 million to date.

Although those present enjoyed a calm, clear and midge-free night, one can barely imagine what it would be like for others who have no other option and who must face all weathers.

More power to the young people who have started this campaign, and to the many thousands who are lending their support; they are a credit to the nation.

Kevin Byrne,
Homefield, Isle of Colonsay.

Home needs to be repaired, not closed

Sir, I read with dismay, in *The Lochaber Times* of November 16, that the Dail Mhor Care Home at Strontian was to close, a decision made by a middle manager.

At the NHS board meeting on November 28, I successfully challenged this decision on the basis that:

1. It needed to be a decision taken by the Highland Health and Social Care Committee (HHSCC) and then by the NHS board. Closing a small rural care home has similar consequences locally to closing several small rural primary schools.

2. The HHSCC needed the full background information. This care home had been temporarily closed due to a flooded basement. Precise information on the repair costs were required. As the local councillor, some 15 years ago, I had been directly involved in a £1 million major refurbishment of the home. The six-bed home had been full, with a waiting list and a constant demand for respite beds. It also provided support for the Acharacle Resource Centre. Lochaber has half of the number of care home beds for the elderly compared to the rest of the Highlands. The loss of Dail Mhor has exacerbated an already deficient situation.

3. No Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. There will be a significant impact on the frail elderly and their families in the rural communities of Ardgour, Strontian, Morvern, Acharacle, Moidart and Ardnamurchan.

I received strong support from several board members, especially Robin Creelman of Argyll, because of the consequences of the frail elderly being cared for remotely from their family and friends.

The board agreed that this important issue would need to come before the HHSCC and then the board.

My view is that the care home needs

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



CIAMAR A THA DOL dhuibh a' taghadh thiodhlachan na Nollaige?

Feumaidh mi aideachadh nach toil leam fhin a bhith a' ruith nam bùthan idir, 's fhèarr leam fios ro-làimh air dè tha mi dol a cheannach agus a dhol dìreach ga fhaotainn. Bah, humbug! Chan aithne dhomh bheil Gàidhlig air sin, 's dòcha gun can cuid nach robh humbug riamh am measg nan Gàidheal!

Ach bha! Tha deagh chuimhne agam air fear anns a' bhaile nuair a bha mi òg a bhiodh tric ag ràdh "chan eil mi gu bhith air mo humbugaigeadh leis!"

A' coimhead nas fharsainghe na 'n teaghlach, agus gu sònraichte air luchd-lìbhrigidh sheirbheisean, tha e intinnneach beachdachadh air cò na buidhnean as airidh air tiodhlac am-bliadhna? An robh sibhe cho fortanach 's gun deach a-h-uile frithealadh mar a dh'iarradh sibh, gach rud air a chòileanadh aig an uair agus aig a' phrìs a chaidh a ghealltainn? Ma 's ann mar sin a bha, tha sibh anns a' bheag-chuid den t-sluagh agus mar a chanas an seanfhacal " 's ann dhuibh

to be repaired by the owner, Highland Council. It then needs to resume its vital function as a care home for the frail, vulnerable elderly who are unable to be cared for in their own homes or require admission to give a respite to their family and carers. Two to four units of extra care sheltered housing units could be built in the grounds – a proposal I made in the last local plan.

Dr Michael Foxley,
by email.

Perfect Christmas gift is available to all

Sir, The lyrics we hear in almost every shop do not allow us to forget what time of the year it is: 'So this is Christmas.'

Yes, in the midst of all the frenzied buying and selling, Christmas is once again upon us and shoppers everywhere are looking for that special gift. At this time of the year 'gifts and giving' go hand-in-hand in a very special way.

Few shoppers, however, will appreciate that the theme of giving is prominent throughout the Bible, with such words as give, gift and gave appearing more than 2,000 times. God's outstretched hand has been giving generously, and liberally ever since.

During the giving season, we all think about the gifts we want to give. It's been said that a gift must meet three criteria for it to be considered perfect. First, the gift should reflect the one who gives it. Secondly, the gift should reflect knowledge of the one who receives it, and, thirdly, the gift should be of a nature and quality that will hold its value as time goes on.

However, the Bible reminds us there is only one perfect gift. It gives more happiness than any other worldly gift. It is so deep that it endures through the worst of times. It has meaning for every age and in every situation. The perfect gift is a personal relationship with Jesus.

We know God gave mankind the perfect gift when He gave heaven's best – 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.' The gift of Jesus meets all of the criteria for being a perfect gift. All you and I have to do to receive this perfect gift is receive Him and believe in Him by faith.

I wish every *Oban Times* reader God's richly blessing during the busy holiday season and pray that 'old things will become new' in your heart and home, in 2018.

Donald J Morrison,
Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness.

Thanks for donations to Blythswood Care

Sir, On behalf of Blythswood Care, a huge thank you to all who contributed to the very successful 2017 Shoe Box Appeal. We were delighted to be able to send up to our depot at Deephaven 763 shoe boxes for onward distribution to Romania.

Your gifts contained in the shoe boxes are a vital contribution to this project delivering boxes to some of the poorest

people in Europe and Asia. Last winter the appeal delivered its two-millionth box to a boy with Down's syndrome in a remote village in Romania.

In reality, every box is significant, bringing practical aid and the touch of human kindness to children and adults facing all sorts of challenges in their day to day lives – disability, illness, unemployment, homelessness, addiction, loneliness, debt and war.

Your support for this appeal will touch the lives of many people in need. Thank you again for your kind gift.

Kenny and Barbara Matheson,
co-ordinators for Lochaber Blythswood Care.

U-turn on income tax pledge from the SNP

Sir, Despite the SNP manifesto promising not to increase taxes on basic rate payers, the party recently voted against that in support of higher taxes on ordinary workers.

Three of the four positions in the SNP's tax paper would hit basic rate payers with higher taxes. Two of these approaches would see tax increases on anyone earning over £24,000 and another on anyone earning over £27,000.

It's clear business and the public do not support higher taxes. A Federation of Small Businesses survey found 79 per cent of business owners do not want higher income tax and a Survation poll found only 22 per cent of respondents would support higher taxes.

In contrast, since 2010, Conservative-led governments have cut income tax by £1,005 for basic rate payers in Scotland. Since 2010/11, the personal allowance has increased from £6,475 to £11,500 in 2017/18.

The SNP government's own analysis found that increasing the additional rate of tax could result in lower revenues. The paper suggested that a 5p rise would lose £24 million under a high behavioural response model.

The SNP government's block grant will be protected in real terms next year – so any cuts are out of choice rather than necessity. The Scottish Government's budget will increase by £479 million in 2018/19 – a 0.1 per cent increase in real terms. Even the most radical of the SNP's tax policies would only increase income tax revenue by two per cent. Approach three would raise taxes on half of all taxpayers but raise only £255 million in additional public spending. The Scottish Government's draft budget 2017/18 projected income tax receipts of £12.3 billion in 2018/19.

Some 65 per cent of Scots voted in the 2016 election for the two parties that pledged not to increase the basic rate during the lifetime of the parliament. Now only the Conservatives are on the side of the majority of the Scottish people. The SNP has no democratic mandate to impose austere tax rises on low and middle earners in Scotland.

The SNP seems shockingly keen to make Scotland the most taxed part of the UK. Is this what the SNP means when it says it is stronger for Scotland? **Councillor Alastair Redman,** Islay.

Ailean Caimbeul

Press policy

WE AT The Oban Times endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please

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 timeous, 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.



For press freedom with responsibility

Your letters

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

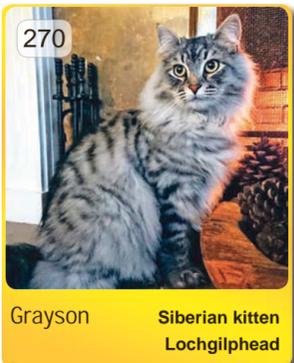
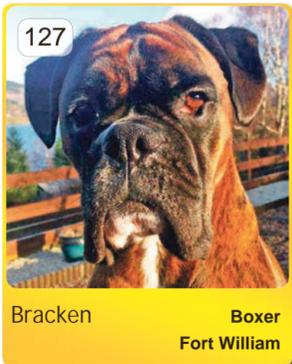
The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number

is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed.

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



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.

Arena

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

WHAT'S ON IN OBAN

In partnership with Oban Town Diary
bid4oban.co.uk



Thursday 21st December

Inverawe Smokery
Shop Open 10am-4pm
9th-24th December

Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

Friday 22nd December

Toy Cupboard
Glencruitten Church
10am-12pm

Inverawe Smokery
Shop Open 10am-4pm
9th-24th December

Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
George Noble DJ

Saturday 23rd December

Ganavan Sands Parkrun
9.30am-11am

Inverawe Smokery
Shop Open 10am-4pm
9th-24th December

WHAT'S ON IN OBAN

Saturday 23rd December

Cearcall Còmhraidh (Gaelic Conversation Group)
Furan Gaelic Centre,
12pm-1.30pm

Christmas Eve

Hill Walk Glen Nevis
Glen Nevis, Fort William
9am-2.15pm

Inverawe Smokery
Shop Open 10am-4pm
9th-24th December

Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

Sunday Roast @ The Regent Hotel
All Day

Christmas Day

Christmas Day Menu
Regent Hotel, Oban
5pm-9pm

Boxing Day

Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
George Noble DJ

Hundreds of Oban High pupils dance the night away



More than 400 Oban High pupils and staff attended Friday's Jingles at the Corran Halls. All pictures: Kevin McGlynn

Friday December 15 was the date for the 30th Oban High School Jingles.

More than 400 pupils and staff danced the night away in the Corran Halls, entertained by a variety of performers.

The evening began with the S6 pupils walking in to their anthem *Dancing in the Moonlight*, which was quickly followed by a few tracks played by the energetic DJ Audio Disciple to get the crowd going.

Ceol An Aire then took the evening to another level as almost all of the 400 party-goers twirled and jigged their way around the dance floor for a few ceilidh dances.

The Trueloves owned the stage, providing a mix of tracks from the past and present, with old favourites *500 Miles* and *Mr Brightside* proving to be massive hits with the crowd. As the temperature soared inside the Corran Halls, staff had to hastily refill jugs of iced water to keep them

cool. Another set from Ceol An Aire had the floor literally bouncing again with the Orcadian Strip *The Willow* too much for some.

DJ Audio Disciple then rounded off the evening with some Christmas crackers before the tired but happy crowd made their way home after locating their many missing kilt pins, bow ties and pairs of shoes.

The Jingles Committee – made up entirely of sixth-year pupils, who organised the event – would like to thank the staff of Oban High School who volunteered to manage the event, the team at the Corran Halls for all their support in making the event a success, especially Louis Barrow who provided the lighting and sound engineering on the night, and, last but certainly not least, the performers who provided top quality entertainment and music throughout the evening.

Roll on next year.



The young ladies were ready to party at Oban High's senior Jingles.



The brothers in arms enjoyed the Jingles.



James Divers sings with Ceol An Aire at the Jingles.



Two more friends posed for the Oban Times photographer at the Jingles.



The girls were looking so glamorous at the Jingles.



The Gay Gordon is always a popular dance.



Three young ladies strike a pose for the camera at the Jingles.

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

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



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

Oban Accordion & Fiddle Club
Hot Supper Dance with Charlie Kirkpatrick's Scottish Dance Band
Friday 12th January 2018
7.30pm - late
The Royal Hotel
Tickets: £15
Includes 2 course supper
For Tickets Contact
01631562077 or 07979520792

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.

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 TRIP FOR TWO TO SHETLAND OR ORKNEY



Scotland's Northern Isles are closer than you think. With their own unique culture, unrivalled wildlife and spectacular historical ruins, the islands are just waiting to be discovered.



Your journey begins with NorthLink Ferries, where you'll be able to enjoy many comforts on board before arriving at your destination feeling refreshed and ready to start your island adventure.



One lucky reader will win a prize that includes a return ticket on any route for two passengers including one car and a standard cabin on overnight sailings with NorthLink Ferries.

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN, just answer the following question:
Where is the town of Stromness? a. Orkney b. Shetland c. Stornoway

Package includes return travel on any route for two including car and standard cabin with NorthLink Ferries valid until 31 December 2018. Cabins are available on overnight sailings only. The prize is subject to availability, non-transferable or refundable and no cash alternative will be offered. Upgrades are available upon request.

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 Christmas Greetings

MRS JOAN REFFIN
would like to wish family, friends and neighbours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CHRISSE CARTER 'GLENVISTA'
would like to wish all family, friends & neighbours a happy Christmas & a healthy & Happy New Year.

Happy Christmas & good health in 2018
to my friends & neighbours in Mull & Oban from Greta MacFadyen, Oban.

BILL AND CHRISTINE MCKILLOP
will not be sending Christmas cards this year but would like to wish all relatives, friends and neighbours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

MARGARET PEARSON AND GORDON
wish Pearson cousins and families, friends and neighbours a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year
to all my neighbours, friends & carers from Jean MacVicar.

WILLIE AND MAREK
would like to wish family and friends & neighbours a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

WIN £200 WORTH OF SHOPPING

TROLLEY DASH

COURTESY OF TESCO OBAN

We all spend far too much money over Christmas and New Year, so how great would it be able to fill your shopping trolley **COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE** in January? Courtesy of our friends at Tesco in Oban, one lucky reader will win the chance to fill their trolley with up to £200 worth of goods

(see Ts&Cs for exclusions). All you have to do is collect four tokens over four weeks starting today (Thursday December 21), get them to us by 10am Tuesday January 16 and you will be entered into a prize draw to win this fantastic trolley dash PLUS get clubcard points while you shop.

What are you waiting for, banish those post-Christmas blues and start collecting your tokens!

All four tokens must be sent in a single envelope to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition Cran-nog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate Oban, PA34 4HB.

One token from each week is required, multiple entries are allowed, but must be submitted in separate envelopes. Photocopied tokens will not be accepted. Winners must agree to take part in publicity, Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate families are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final.



Terms & conditions: Winner must be at Tesco Lochside, Oban PA34 4HP for 9.30am 22nd January. Excludes tobacco, lottery, baby food, non food items, and alcohol. Quantity limited to two per item. The winner will be given a hand-held scanner to monitor spend to the value of £200.

Your local radio listings

OBAN FM Community Radio - your local radio station
Tune in to 103.3 or listen live at www.obanfm.com

For requests, competitions or questions please email: 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 McLuckie'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 - Len + Ken, 20.00 Country Meets Rock & Roll, 21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre

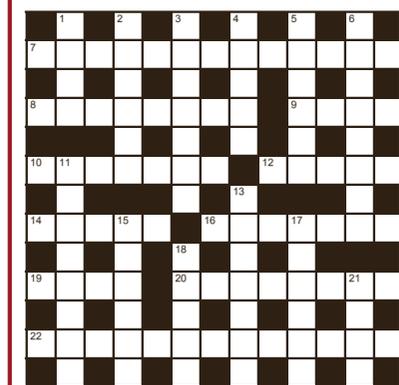
THURSDAY: 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13.00 Molly's Mix, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen, 17.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 18.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00 Christines Collection, 20.00 Christine's CD Collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00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

SATURDAY: 08.00 Breakfast Show with Stephen 10.00 Sat Morning Live, 11.00 Saturday Morning, 12.00 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowsher, 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

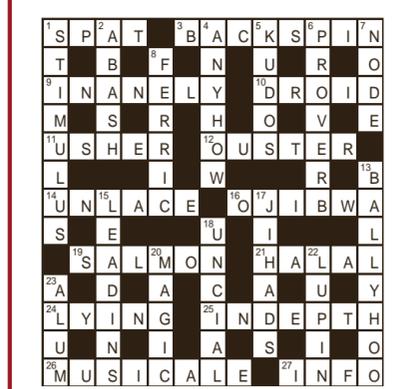
SUNDAY: 09.00 Sunday Morning With Breege, 10.00 Sunday Morning, 11.00 Sunday Brunch With Archie, 12.00 Sunday Brunch, 16.30 Archie Darling, 18.00 Ken's Friends - Ken Hunter, 19.00 New Country Show - David Entwistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass - Graham Scott, 23.00 Station Close Down

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 The ones to ask, not the monkeys! (5-8)
 - 8 Lens (8)
 - 9 Farm call (4)
 - 10 Moving (7)
 - 12 Corpulent (5)
 - 14 Religious belief through reason (5)
 - 16 Flag (7)
 - 19 Way off (4)
 - 20 Didn't look for it! (8)
 - 22 Where we went, when passing the 11 plus (7,6)

- Down**
- 1 Rowdy party (4)
 - 2 Wrist bone (6)
 - 3 Fiery (7)
 - 4 Era (5)
 - 5 Gather on the surface, chemically (6)
 - 6 Third male in line (8)
 - 11 Shoot! (4,4)
 - 13 Endure (7)
 - 15 Small crustacean (6)
 - 17 Before one (6)
 - 18 Not divine (5)
 - 21 Scoring basket (4)



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Oban Railway Station

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Email: ian.blackford.mp@parliament.uk
Twitter: @IBlackfordSNPMP
Facebook: [facebook.com/IanBlackford.SNP](https://www.facebook.com/IanBlackford.SNP)
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Arena

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

Oban Times Festive Book Reviews

If you were lucky enough to receive book tokens for Christmas and are considering what you might spend them on, here are a few of our picks for you to think about...

The Hebrides
Paul Murton
BIRLINN
£14.99
5 Stars

'This isn't just the story of the Hebrides as islands.'

The first thing that grabs you about Paul Murton's book is the stunning imagery; there's no getting away from that.

The presenter of the BBC's *Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands* explains from the word go that the islands are in

his blood, with his love affair having begun in the 1960s when he and his brother went with their parents to stay in a tent on a remote part of the Argyll coast.

The book's eight chapters cover Gigha to the Garvellachs, The Firth of Lorn and Mull, Skerryvore to Canna, Skye and Raasay, The Shiantas to Handa, Eriskay to Barr Head, South Uist to the Monach Islands, and Harris to St Kilda.

But it's the pictures that will initially sell this book to you. The

idea of looking at a grave slab from the 18th century may not sound so appealing, but when you see the attention to detail of the carving it's hard not to become engrossed. When looking at some of the pictures of the beaches, you could easily believe - aside from the grass - that they were of somewhere in the Canary Islands, with the rocky formations and clear blue waters. Scotland's hidden gems are kept secret no more. However, these aren't

the only surprises to be found in the book. The fascinating architecture of the isles is revealed, from the ruined cloisters of Oronsay Priory, to Kisimul Castle on Barra, and St Clement's Church on Rodel. And that's without mentioning any of the natural beauty, from the Old Man of Storr on Skye, to the Great Stack of Handa.

What makes this such an interesting read is the obvious love that Murton has for his subject matter. Written

in the first person, we see through his eyes just how much of Scotland is still unknown to the majority of its population, as he skilfully weaves together the history of the islands with his own memories and impressions of what he sees before him.

Fascinating, too, are the insights of the people. Scarp is a particularly interesting read, thanks to the recollections of Donald John MacInnes and Hugh Dan MacLennan, both of whom have

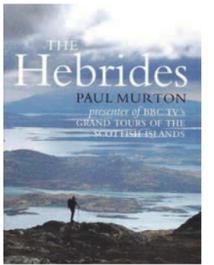
strong links to the island. They talk of the old all-male parliament (there were no female members as they 'had other things to do', like 'milking, collecting eggs, cleaning'), while Donald John remembers the teacher from the now-abandoned school, who encouraged the children to spread their wings and go to the mainland, using education as their ticket to leave.

On Tiree, Mabel McArthur recalls the arrival of the RAF. She

remembers how the previously dry island suddenly had alcohol when the NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institute) opened, which was followed by a cinema.

Locals were encouraged to use the NAAFI to mix with air force personnel - and several local girls flew the coup with their dashing young men.

This isn't just the story of The Hebrides as islands - it's an important social history of its people too.



Glasgow Letter

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



Glasgow Accordion and Fiddle Club signs off for Christmas

The Glasgow Accordion and Fiddle Club has been a fantastic new addition to the Glasgow social scene and its inception has been a real highlight of 2017.

The club recently held a Christmas special with two wonderful six-piece bands taking to the stage in the Scotstounhill Bowling Club: the Iain Cathcart Scottish Dance Band and Andrew Knight and the West Telferton Caledonian Scottish Dance Band. Andrew Knight on fiddle was joined on

drums by his son. On lead accordion was Richard Ross, Karen Ingram was on second box, and Russell Hunter was on piano.

Iain Cathcart's band was made up of Iain himself on lead accordion, Alasdair MacCulloch on fiddle, James Coutts on second box, Graham Berry on piano, and Scott Gordon on drums.

Neil MacMillan was a busy man all night playing double bass with both bands.

The club returns on January 8 with the David Bowen Trio as the guest artist.

Christmas releases

If you are bored of the same old Christmas hits on the radio every year, if you've had enough of Mariah

Carey or want a break from Slade and Wizard, then you will be glad to hear there is lots of fresh Christmas music from the Highlands and Islands to accompany your Christmas dinner.

It has been a particularly musical festive period this year with Christmas releases from Skipinnish and Mánran, among others. Wishing Well by Skipinnish and When You Go by Mánran are both great songs and well worth adding to your Christmas playlist.

There are also a few releases on the horizon for the start of the new year.

The Beinn Lee Cèilidh Band are going into the studio in Uist in January to set to work on their new album - produced by Ross Wilson. Beinn Lee have been

prominent on the scene down in Glasgow over the past year and went down a storm at the Lewis and Harris Association annual gathering a couple of months ago.

I heard them in the Park Bar recently and they had the place absolutely jumping, so I (for one) am very excited to hear their debut album.

The sheer musicality that is produced from the combination of Micheal Steele, Pádraig Morrison, and Mairi Thérèse Gilfedder as a front line of tune players is phenomenal. It's going to be an album to look out for in the New Year.

Merry Christmas!

I would like to wish all readers of my Glasgow Letter

a merry Christmas, and leave you with my favourite Highland twist on a classic Christmas rhyme:

'Twas the night before Christmas
And all through the house
Not a creature was stirring
Except a wee Grouse!
Slàinte mhath agus nollaig chridheil!

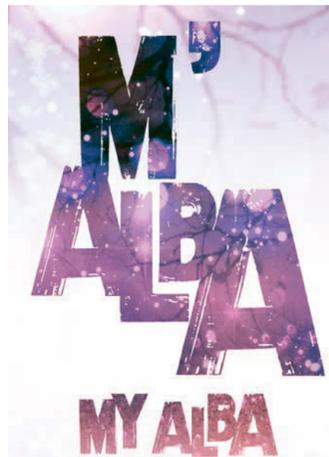
Pub scene

Islay Inn.
Friday December 22: Parting Glass.

Saturday December 23:
Twist of Fate.
Park Bar.

Friday December 22: Nicky McMichan.

Saturday December 23:
Gunna Sound.



DIARDAIN 21 DÙBHLEACHD
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 **Earran Eachdraidh** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là - News**
20.30 **UR | NEW: Eòrpa**
21.00 **Seòbhrach as a' Chloich** - the life and poetry of Professor Donald MacAulay (rpt)
21.45 **Torcull's Guide to Being a Gael: Ceòl**
22.00 **Fèis Chùil Thiriodh** - Highlights from 2016 (rpt)
22.25 **Còmhstri Scott & Amundsen** - challenging the most hostile territory to reach the South Pole (rpt)
23.20 **Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan** - Bella Hardy (rpt)
23.30 **Fonn Fonn Fonn** (rpt)
DIHAOINE 22 DÙBHLEACHD
FRIDAY 22 DECEMBER
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming

19.00 **An Là - News**
19.25 **Aibisidh** - Quiz Show (rpt)
20.00 **Togaidh Sinn Fonn** - a selection of Scotland's best musicians and singers (rpt)
20.25 **UR | NEW: Chrisella** - tribute about the life of the late Gaelic speaking writer Chrisella Ross
21.00 **An Lùib nam Boireannach** - light hearted romp through our favorite characters told through the eyes of the actor (rpt)
21.55 **Lorient is Alba: Scotland's Year** (rpt)
22.55 **Fonn Fonn Fonn** (rpt)
23.40 **Belladrum 2016: Tiggs Da Author** (rpt)
DISATHURAIN 23 DÙBHLEACHD
SATURDAY 23 DECEMBER
16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
17.00 **UR | NEW: Pro 14 Live Rugby** - Edinburgh v Glasgow
19.05 **Wallace & Gromit - A' Bhriogais Chearr** (rpt)
19.35 **UR | NEW: Quay Sessions** - The Little Kicks
20.00 **Eòrpa** (rpt)
20.30 **Air an Smùid** - the battle to save a rusting puffer

21.00 **Opry an Lùir** (rpt)
21.50 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)
22.00 **Còmhstri Scott & Amundsen** - challenging the most hostile territory to reach the South Pole (rpt)
22.55 **Pro 14 Live Rugby** - Edinburgh v Glasgow (rpt)
DIDOMHNAICH 24 DÙBHLEACHD
SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER
16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
18.25 **Seachd Là** - News review
19.25 **Alleluia** (rpt)
20.00 **UR | NEW: Spòrs na Bìladhna** 2017 - this year's sporting highlights
21.00 **UR | NEW: Lorient is Alba: HEBCELT** (rpt)
22.00 **Taigh Thorcuil - Nollaig** (rpt)
22.45 **UR | NEW: Oidhche Shàmhach** - Isle of Harris siblings share silent Christmas memories
22.50 **UR | NEW: Oidhche Shèimh** - Christmas Eve service from the Church of The Immaculate Conception in Glasgow
DILUAIN 25 DÙBHLEACHD
MONDAY 25 DECEMBER
17.00 **Oidhche Shèimh** - Christmas Eve

service from the Church of The Immaculate Conception in Glasgow (rpt)
18.05 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.00 **An Là - News**
19.05 **UR | NEW: Briseadh na Cloiche** - drama following the progression of a post-war romance to its harrowing conclusion
19.30 **Mod na Cloinne 2017** - successful performers from the Lochaber Mod
20.30 **Ceathrar air a' Chuiltheann** - four school leavers tackle the Cullin Ridge
21.00 **Guth Ag Aithris** - Christine Primrose - profile of the internationally respected singer of traditional Gaelic song
22.00 **DIY le Donnie** - An Dùbhlann (rpt)
23.00 **Linn de Dhealbhan** - unique archive showing over a century of Highland history
DIMÀIRT 26 DÙBHLEACHD
TUESDAY 26 DECEMBER
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
17.55 **Mod na Cloinne 2017** - successful performers from the Lochaber Mod
19.00 **An Là - News**
19.05 **Oir a' Chuain Shìair** - the wildlife and landscape of the Western coast of Europe (rpt)

20.00 **Geamannan nan Eilean 2017** - a review of the island games in Gotland, Sweden
20.30 **UR | NEW: Ceathrar air a' Chuiltheann** - the battle to save a rusting old puffer
21.00 **UR | NEW: Truinsearan ar Sinnsrean** - recipes and lore from The Scots Kitchen
22.00 **UR | NEW: Opry an Lùir** - The Three Amigos
22.55 **Oidhche Shàmhach** - Isle of Harris siblings share silent Christmas memories (rpt)
23.00 **Guth Ag Aithris** - Christine Primrose - profile of the internationally respected singer of traditional Gaelic song (rpt)
DICIADAIN 27 DÙBHLEACHD
WEDNESDAY 27 DECEMBER
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
18.55 **UR | NEW: Binneas - Hogmanay** (Julie Fowells)
19.00 **An Là - News** (rpt)
19.05 **Oir a' Chuain Shìair** - the wildlife and landscape of the Coast of Europe (rpt)
20.00 **UR | NEW: Thuige Seo** - Chrissie Lawson in conversation with Donald Morrison about her work in genealogy

20.30 **UR | NEW: Ceathrar air a' Chuiltheann** - four school leavers tackle the Cullin Ridge
21.00 **UR | NEW: An Dara Teud: Na Trads** - Highlights from the Trad Awards 2017 (rpt)
21.55 **UR | NEW: Scottish Premiership** - Hamilton Academical v Kilmarnock
DIARDAIN 28 DÙBHLEACHD
THURSDAY 28 DECEMBER
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
18.00 **UR | NEW: Dè a-nis?** - the team look back over their highlights from the current series
19.00 **An Là - News**
19.05 **Oir a' Chuain** - the wildlife and landscape of the Coast of Europe (rpt)
19.55 **UR | NEW: Binneas - Hogmanay** - Blue Rose Code performing at the Hogmanay Show 2016 (rpt)
20.00 **UR | NEW: Reiteach** - two island weddings 50 years apart
20.30 **Mod nan Còisirean 2017** - successful choirs from the Lochaber Mod
22.00 **DIY le Donnie** - An Dùbhlann (rpt)
23.00 **Lorient is Alba: HEBCELT** (rpt)

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FOR CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR HOLIDAY RE-OPENING TO THE PUBLIC ON WED 4TH JAN 2017.
WISHING EVERYONE MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

Giants of the Clyde

By Robert Jeffrey
£9.99
4 Stars

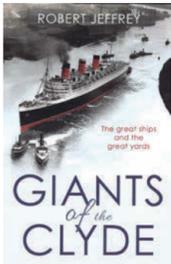
Glasgow's proud and famous shipbuilding history features in this interesting and well-researched insight by Robert Jeffrey.

It is fascinating to read contemporary newspaper reports from the time of the launches describing the great ships, such as the original smoking room on the Queen Mary: 'a real coal fire blazes cheerfully in the grate'.

It's another world away, and Robert Jeffrey's text intertwines his own memories and love of the era with the stories of others.

Famous entries included in the photographic section are the Lusitania, HMS Hood and the QE2, but this isn't their story – this is the history of the yards and what happened to the vessels after they had sailed down the Clyde.

Some are tragic, some are amusing, but all are fascinating.



Scotland's Secret History

By Charles Maclean and Daniel Maccannell
£14.99
4 Stars

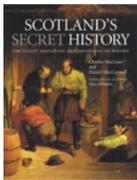
In the 21st century, we're used to being able to head to the shops or pop online to order some whisky.

This eye-opening look at the illicit distilling and smuggling of the drink turns back the clock, starting in the mid-1600s and continues until the early years of the 20th century.

Forget the romantic notions that this was a fun existence, as detailed research from official records shows how far people

in the Cabrach in Aberdeenshire went to evade customs, as their whisky made its way to France. Even then, it provided a vital source of income for the people of Scotland.

It is beautifully illustrated throughout with period paintings, graphics from a 1681 book, photographs of illicit stills being discovered, and a current picture of the remains of one of the ruined distilleries.



Cycling Climbs of Scotland

By Simon Warren
£8.99
3 Stars

Don't go thinking this is a fun wee book for the weekend biker.

Simon Warren's book is aimed at the serious cyclist

(his hill ratings start at one for 'hard'), and covers rides the length and breadth of Scotland. It's done with wit and a genuine passion for cycling, which comes across strongly, accompanied by images of the relevant routes. There's also a

handy checklist at the end if you're keen on completing all of the challenges in this book.



High voltage: The life of Angus young

By Jeff Apter
£16.99
3 Stars

One of Scotland's most famous musical exports is Angus Young, who left Cranhill in Glasgow and moved to Aus-

tralia, before later forming legendary rock group AC/DC.

He has fronted the group for more than 40 years, and this biography charts his life from a Scottish housing estate to international chart success, as well as the heartache of his brother and fellow

band member Malcolm, who was diagnosed with dementia.



Places in the Darkness

By Chris Brookmyre
£13.99
4 Stars

The acclaimed thriller writer looks to the skies for his latest novel, set aboard a spaceship designed to take humanity to the stars.

Intended as a colony ship, the murder of a criminal leads to a pair of investigators being assigned to find the killer, as the eyes of the world are upon them.

An engrossing read, which the many fans of Brookmyre will love – his usual eye

for detail shines through – as the mismatched Blake and Freeman become the next targets of the murderer.



The Passion of Harry Bingo

By Peter Ross
£8.99
5 Stars

Scottish people always know larger-than-life characters in their communities, and this book celebrates many of them.

There are laughs and tragedies to be had, from the Partick Thistle-daft antics of 97-year-old Harry Bingo, to Nessie hunting, and the band that played at the Clutha in Glasgow on the night of the helicopter tragedy.

Tales of the Sikh Pipe Band and grouse shooting in Stirling bring home the real life and true colours of Scotland in the 21st century.

The Scottish Wildcat

By Christopher Clegg
£20
3 Stars

Christopher Clegg's look at Britain's most endangered mammal is a fascinating insight into the Felis Silvestris.

Looking at the history of the European wildcat and its arrival in Britain, it follows accounts of the animal and sightings of it all over Scotland, their importance to the clans and heraldic crests, as well as their current habitats and diet.

The chapter on swimming – once noted by Gavin Maxwell – is a real highlight.

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year To All Our Customers

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Faithful



A full guide to your local church services this festive season.

*O Come All Ye Faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

*O Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.
Give to our Father glory in the Highest;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

*All Hail! Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
O Jesus! for evermore be Thy name adored.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Christmas Services in Fort William & Lochaber



St Mary's Fort William

Mass of Christmas Night
Christmas Eve 10pm
(carol service 9.45pm)
(No Midnight Mass)

Christmas Morning
Mass 10.30am

ST ANDREWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

High Street, Fort William

Sunday 24th December
11.45pm Midnight Mass
And Blessing Of Crib

Monday 25th December
10.45am Family Eucharist

All Are Welcome

Christmas Services in Oban & Lorn



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followed by midnight mass

25th December
10.30 a.m. Christmas Mass

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NB. There will be no Worship Service on Dec 31st.

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Christmas Services

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Christmas Eve
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9.00pm Kilmore
Watchnight 11.30pm
Monday 25 December
Christmas Day 10.30am

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St. Columba's Cathedral Oban

Monsignor James L MacNeil
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5.00pm (Sunday)**

**Carol Service followed
by Midnight Mass:**

11.30pm

**Christmas Day Mass:
10.30am**

All Welcome



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Roadshows help 'sharpen' union's priorities on Brexit

NFU Scotland says it has sharpened its focus on key Brexit priorities after a 'hugely successful' series of roadshows across Scotland in November.

Feedback from the workshops at the 12 Brexit events is in addition to discussions at on-going branch AGMs round the country and the NFU Scotland autumn conference held at the end of October.

The objectives of the roadshows were to set out the current Brexit process, make clear NFU Scotland's continuous lobbying priorities, check those priorities with the membership and accelerate the enrolment of members in the development of potential future support options.

The first major opportunity to influence will come in early 2018 when the UK government is expected to publish an agriculture White Paper ahead of draft legislation.

NFU Scotland president Andrew McCornick said: 'Next year will present a host of challenges in securing the best Brexit deal possible for farmers and crofters but their valuable engagement in the past few months has only strengthened our resolve and focused our priorities.'

'A real change in mindset was evident at all the Brexit roadshows. Members across Scotland appreciate that change



Andrew McCornick called for a seasonal agricultural workers scheme.

is inevitable. More importantly, members backed NFU Scotland's intent and commitment to initiate and influence the many changes that the industry faces. Our engagement with politicians at UK and Scottish government level has never been higher and that will build as we enter 2018.

'There was clear support from members for the NFU Scotland vision set out in our CHANGE document, launched at the Highland Show and agreement that the opportunity exists to develop a prosperous future for Scottish agriculture.'

'There was overwhelming

recognition that future support must incentivise action and that, beyond the CAP, there should be a clear departure from area-based payments that have often resulted in inertia, thwarted innovation and stifled restructuring.

'While budget challenges were recognised, all agreed that NFU Scotland must press for an adequately-funded, fairly-allocated and ring-fenced budget for future agricultural and rural development support in Scotland.'

'The clear majority also backed the development of a commonly agreed regulatory framework

for UK-wide standards, if only to preserve the functioning of the UK internal market.'

'And it was supported without dissent that there must be fully devolved delivery of schemes and measures that fit Scotland's needs.'

'While significant uncertainty surrounds what a transition period might mean or involve, there was a clear view that any sort of "cliff edge" must be avoided - especially in the absence of certainty over the future operating environment of Scottish agriculture.'

'The clear majority backed the union's calls for friction-free

trade and the protection of Scottish provenance. There were significant concerns over the potential of cheaper imports, produced under very different cost structures, that could displace Scottish products in domestic markets.'

'There was also a lack of belief in the UK and/or Scotland's ability to develop new export opportunities through new trade deals, making our job in influencing trade talks in the year ahead absolutely vital.'

'There was a clear view that success should be built on the provenance of farming, food and drink, and the story behind the very high animal health and welfare and environmental standards adhered to by Scotland's farmers and crofters.'

'The unanimous opinion was that Scottish agriculture, and the food processing sector, must have continued access to skilled and competent labour. While this is a very real and present threat to certain high value sectors, it was agreed by all that Scotland's farming, food and drinks industry is wholly dependent on on-farm and off-farm, seasonal and permanent labour from the EU and beyond.'

'Action must be taken sooner to resolve many current labour issues through, for example, a revised seasonal agricultural workers scheme.'

New statistics show rise in cereal harvest

FIGURES published last week show Scotland's 2017 cereal harvest is estimated to have increased four per cent over 2016.

The latest data, released by the Scottish Government's chief statistician, are on a par with the longer-trend 10-year average.

Scottish farms produced 2.9 million tonnes of cereals this year, including 1.8 million tonnes of barley and 900,000 tonnes of wheat.

This year's increase in production is due to an 11 per cent increase in barley which offset a four per cent fall in wheat. The overall area of land sown has increased by one per cent, with 433,000 hectares of cereal grown in 2017. Overall yields averaged around 6.6 tonnes per hectare, ranging from 5.7 tonnes per hectare for oats to 8.1 for wheat.

Spring barley, Scotland's most important cereal crop, increased by 0.14 million tonnes to 1.43 million tonnes, but was still below the 10-year average.

Winter barley likewise saw a seven per cent increase of 23,000 tonnes to 352,000 tonnes, but the wheat harvest has dropped since 2016 by 37,000 tonnes to 889,000 tonnes. Oats also saw a fall, with an eight per cent drop to 185,000 tonnes, though this was still the third highest in the past decade.

Oilseed rape yields have performed above the longer-term trend, averaging around 4.2 tonnes per hectare with a total production of 144,000 tonnes.

Those farms that harvested early were able to benefit from the higher yields resulting from the wet summer. This was particularly true for barley. Those harvesting later found it increasingly difficult to find a window of a few good days to dry out the crop and get the combine into the fields. This meant that often substantial amounts of crop were lost.

This differing experience also explains why the final results are lower than those originally estimated at the start of October. At the time of the discussions which produced the initial estimates, those cereal farmers normally harvesting in August and September had been affected by the wet weather, but they had nevertheless been able to get the harvest in.

These results are based on data from 386 cereal farms across Scotland. The initial results are based on data from more than 250 farms.

The figures were produced by independent statistical staff in accordance with professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

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Around the markets

STIRLING - United Auctions on Thursday December 14 sold 4260 prime sheep comprising 2447 lambs selling to an average of 174.9ppk and 1814 ewes and rams. Including 200 lambs for the annual Christmas show and sale judged by Mr L Armstrong who awarded Champion pen to WJ & EC Stevenson, Coilavoulin, realising £140 to Donald Butchers, Uddingston. Lambs (2447) Coilavoulin (BTex) £140; Errol Enterprises (Tex) £108; Forebank of Canterland (Suff) £88; Monzie Farms (Chev) £87; Carrat (Mule) £83.50; Parks of Garden (X) £80.50; Viewmount (BF) £78. Lambs (2447) Coilavoulin

(BTex) 299p; Errol Enterprises (Tex) 217p; Knowhead (Suff) 185p; Loanhead of Duchally (Chev) 185p; North Amulree (X) 181p; Merkins (BF) 181p; Sauchrie Mains (Mule) 165p. Ewes (1814)- Craigdhu (Tex) £123; Penston (Suff) £104; Monzie (Chev) £95; Highholm (Char) £94; Rossie (Romney Marsh) £87; Assloss (BFL) £86; Sunnyside (X) £84; Highholm (Mule) £75; Glenhead (BF) £55. Rams - Broadleys (Char) £140; Hill of Errol (Tex) £137; West Lethans (Lley) £98; East Scryne (Chev) £88.

STIRLING - Caledonian Marts on Thursday December 14 sold 247

cattle, comprising 144 prime bullocks, heifers and young bulls, 103 cast cows and bulls. A good show of cattle for numbers would be ever so slightly cheaper on the week. Bullocks averaged 224p Heifers averaged 219p Young bulls averaged 184p Beef cows averaged 123p Dairy cows averaged 90p Bullocks sold to 250ppkg (twice) both for Limousins from Learielaw, Broxburn, purchased by Thomas Johnston Butchers, Falkirk, and to £1630 from the same farm. Heifers sold to 250ppkg for a Limousin from Balquharrage, Lennoxton to A. Gray Butchers, Upper Craigs, Stirling and to £1539 from Learielaw.

Bulls sold to 212ppkg for a Limousin from Cairnbog, Kilsyth and to £1710 for a Charolais from Allanfauld, Kilsyth. Leading prices Bullocks ppkg; 248p Faskine, Balquharrage & Learielaw 245p Easter Ochtermuthill 242p Learielaw 240p Easter Ochtermuthill (twice), Mains of Throsk & Allanfauld 238p Brockwoodlees (Twice) & Faskine 235p & 232p Faskine & Meadowend 230p Moorfield 228p Dulloumair (Tice) Heifers ppkg; 248p Faskine (three times) 245p Easter Ochtermuthill (twice) 242p Shields (Crawford), Faskine, Learielaw & Brockwoodlees 240p

& 238p South Woodlane, Brockwoodlees & Meadowend 235p Shields (three times), South Woodlane & Spittal (Gardner) 232p & 230p Moorfield, Shields & South Woodlane Young bulls ppkg; 210p Airthrey Kerse 205p Mains of Throsk 200p South Hourat & Hardiston Also forward were 103 cast cows and bulls. Beef cows averaged 123ppkg selling to 162p for a Limousin from I W Brisbane & Son, South Woodlane, Blairdrummond and to £1220 from Mains of Throsk. OTM Males & Bulls averaged 119ppkg selling to 135p from W & M Wylie, Broompark, Torphichen and

to £1230 for the same beast. Dairy cows averaged 90p selling to 116p from W Waugh, North Bankhead, Avonbridge and to £1000 from R Nelson, Blairmains, Culross. Other leading prices Beef cows per head £1200 Balkaithly £1180 Meadowend £1070 Redhouse £1060 Kircton Beef cows per kilo 150p Mains of Throsk 144p South Woodlane 143p Mains of Throsk 140p Meadowend & Pirnhall Dairy cows per head £910 North Bankhead £850 Broompark £790 Glenrigg Dairy cows per kilo 115.5p Glenrigg 112.5p Broompark 111.5p North Bankhead 111p Blairmains

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TOP 12 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR HOME SECURE THIS CHRISTMAS

It's the time of year when we shop the most, filling our homes with the latest gadgets, designer goods, expensive wines and spirits and jewellery for our loved ones and there's a higher chance of us being out and about visiting friends and family. It's the perfect time for burglars to break in.

While the numbers of reported burglaries were at their lowest last year, 650,000 incidents of domestic burglary still occurred. So you don't get caught out this Christmas, follow these helpful tips from NHBC, the UK's leading warranty and insurance provider for new homes.

Keep presents and gift packaging away from view

Make sure to leave your presents out of sight, away from a window. Remembering rubbish collections over the Christmas and New Year period are normally at different times, so ensure you only put your bins out just before the collection and break apart boxes so that they don't act as an advertisement of your new presents to burglars!

Burglars use social media to gain information

Studies have shown that burglars use social media to seek out potential targets. Although you may not be intentionally inviting burglars to your home, publishing enough information on your whereabouts and your new presents and not having the correct privacy tools in place could put you as a target. So, be wary of what you post and regularly check your safety settings.

Improve the security potential of your doors

It is important to have robust locks on both the front and back doors. Ensure entrance doors to your home are fitted with secure locks or a multi-point locking system with at least 1,000 differs (the number of possible keys for a given lock). You will already have this if you live in a newly built property.

Do you have sliding back doors?

These should be secured by way of a multi-point locking system and have an anti-lift device fitted so that doors cannot be lifted from their frame from the outside.

Check your window locking systems

Ground floor windows and any others that are easily reached by climbing are recommended to be fitted with lockable devices/handles which cannot be released without a key. If you own a home built in the last 10 years, they should already be there.

Be secure, but also safe

If your doors can be locked from the inside using a key, make sure you keep a key in a convenient place nearby, so that you can get out quickly in an emergency.

View outside

Ensure that you have a wide angle view of the area immediately outside the main entrance door to check on callers. Newer properties may already have a through-door viewer or clear glazing either to part of the door or a convenient window which provides a view of the main entrance.

Consider a light sensor...

Crime can be prevented by external detection security lighting that switches on after dark when someone is nearby, illuminating the general area. It's highly effective in deterring potential intruders and therefore definitely worth considering if your home doesn't already have one installed.

...and alarm systems

A house alarm system acts in two ways - to deter intruders, and detect the opening of a window or a door. Some systems can also be linked up to a mobile phone number, letting the owner know the alarm has been triggered.

Lock rear entry gates

Make sure your back garden is as private and secure as possible. Many burglaries start at the back, where no-one can see them taking place.

Keep ladders and other equipment safe

Do not leave ladders, steps etc. visible in the garden, as they attract the keen eye of the burglar and makes things easy for them, so always ensure that

they are kept out of sight, ideally in a locked shed or garage.

If you're away - try to make your home look occupied!

Leave the lights on in the evening or when you go out to your Christmas parties (but not just hall or landing lights) or use an automatic time switch or smartphone-controlled device. But, if you're away for a length of time, arrange for a neighbour to generally keep an eye on your home while you are away.

Neil Smith, NHBC Head of Standards, Innovation and Research, said: "There are a number of simple steps people can take to ensure they don't fall victim to this disturbing crime. From burglar alarms to security lights, these measures can improve security and offer residents peace of mind in helping to make sure their homes and belongings are well protected.

"People, who live in newer properties, may already have security locks, burglar alarms and security lighting included as standard. But there are also a number of simple measures people can take to keep their homes and property safe from burglars."



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TOP FIVE MOST COMMON WINTER HOME PROBLEMS



Boiler breakdowns

Boilers never seem to break down throughout the year, but when winter comes and people need them most, they always seem to decide that it's time for a little TLC and a repair. This can be infuriating and frustrating for tenants, but as a landlord, you can help by having someone qualified on call to help them get their heating back in working order as soon as possible.

Frozen pipes

The biggest issue with frozen pipes is that they have the potential to lead to much larger problems when they thaw, exposing cracks caused by the ice and leaving homes flooded. The best course of action is to advise tenants how having the heating on regularly can help to avoid this issue in advance.

Roof problems

Another problem that is exacerbated by winter weather is loose roof tiles. When leaks occur, it's absolutely vital to get them patched as soon as possible.

Trees

It's always a good idea around winter to just trim trees back a little and make sure they are in good condition for withstanding some of the worst weather.

Landlords can often find that winter is the busiest period of the year, largely because tenants may experience the most problems. Many of the problems that will arise at this time of the year will be quick fixes, or even things you can deal with in advance, but as a landlord, it's important to know what's likely to go wrong. Here, we take a look at the five most common problems that tenants might face in the colder weather.

Draughts

Draughts are particularly problematic in the winter months thanks to the wind chill factor, and the fact that tenants will see their heating bills creep up, so it can be a good idea in advance to put insulating strips around the windows and doors before the cold weather really kicks in.

PROPERTIES FOR SALE & TO LET

KONADISH BLACKCROFTS, OBAN

- Spacious Detached House
- 6 Bedrooms/2 Bathrooms
- Lively family home
- Popular location
- Bed & Breakfast potential
- EPC Rating - C

£340,000

Konadish would make the ideal family home or potential B&B. The property is situated in North Connel, along side Loch Etive in a small residential area. The central entrance hall leads to a bright living room which is connected to the dining room. Across the hall is a double bedroom that could be easily used for Air B&B or as a snug/study with a separate downstairs WC. At the end of the hallway is a large family kitchen with plentiful wall and floor units with built in appliances.

PLOTS 4/5 ERRAY ROAD, TOBERMORY

- 2 Plots Available
- Full Planning Permission
- Long Term Let
- Fully Serviced
- Within walking distance of Tobermory
- Build package available

£70,000

Plot 4 5 are situated in a sought after area of Mull on the edge of Tobermory town and within walking distance of the golf course, these two plots come with full planning permission for two good sized properties. The plots are being sold fully serviced one also with a septic tank already installed and with Septa registration and both with the option for a build package and project management from a renowned Mull based local builder.

PLOT AT CREICH

- Overlooking Loch Pottle on the Ross of Mull
- Plot with full planning permission
- 0.3 acre
- Stunning loch views
- Rural situation
- Close to village & Isle of Jona

£65,000

Building plot with FULL PLANNING PERMISSION set in a stunning location overlooking Loch Pottle on the Ross of Mull. This plot at Creich is unique in that there is a quaint ruined house with Ross of Mull Granite sitting on site. The old granite quarry, is located not far away. This plot is approximately 0.3acre and allows for a generous garden following the new home build. This is a fantastic opportunity to build a bespoke home in a pretty, rural situation.

PLOTS 1/2 LAND EAST OF ACHAMORE, BUENESSAN

- Picturesque site close to Buenessan
- Quiet location on popular island with beaches close-by
- Planning permission in principle
- Services close by
- Plot 1 - 0.32 acres
- Plot 2 - 0.37 acres

OIRO £50,000

Close to Achamore Farm, the two neighbouring plots lie in a most delightful, secluded hamlet of detached houses close to Buenessan, one of two villages on the Ross of Mull. Plot 1 (ref 13/01720/PPP) which is 0.32 acres and plot 2 (ref 13/01721/PPP), 0.37 acres offer an unspoilt, tranquil location from which to enjoy far reaching views over open countryside.

LAND FOR SALE, CONNEL VILLAGE

- Building Plot situated within the heart of Connel Village
- Highly desirable location, just five miles from Oban
- Planning Permission in Principle
- Convenient for local amenities

OIRO £70,000

This desirable plot is situated in the centre of the village, less than 100 metres from Connel Village Store and Post Office. As well as offering restaurants, pubs, primary school, church, large medical practice and a village hall, Connel benefits from a railway station and regular bus services to Oban, Glasgow and beyond.

THE LODGE, OBAN

- Detached Lodge
- 1 Bed/1 Bath
- Long Term Let
- Furnished
- EPC Rating - (G)10
- LL REG: 447744/130/21381
- -447748/130/21381

PCM £490

The property is a detached lodge located in Connel on the outskirts of Oban. The property comprises living room, double bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. The property is fully furnished and enjoys 1.3 acres of land shared with the neighbouring property. Available January 2018.

1 BELLVUE APARTMENTS, OBAN

- 1 bed/1 bathroom
- Ground Floor Flat
- Long Term Let
- Part Furnished
- LL REG: 43971/130/10230 & 143974/130/10390
- EPC Rating - F-25

PCM £480

One bedroom ground floor flat, with bright modern decor, located in Oban town centre. The accommodation comprises of a large open plan kitchen and sitting room with bay window, 1 double bedroom, separate WC and shower room. Available January 2018

4 STEVENSON ST, OBAN

- 1 Bed/1 Bath
- Unfurnished
- First Floor Flat
- Long Term Let
- EPC Rating - D
- LL REG 91986/130/31040

PCM £450

One bedroom, first floor flat in Oban Town Centre. A bright flat comprising of lounge/kitchen area, bedroom and bathroom. Freshly decorated in neutral colours and has laminate flooring throughout. Available January 2018.

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North Road Fort William PH33 6PP
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Office hours: Mon - Thurs 9- 5pm, Fri 9 - 4pm

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Black/Black leather interior, heated seats, 6 CD multi changer, MOT end March 2018. Great car, lovely drive, very good condition.

£3,500_{ONO}

Tel 07900 542531 Fort William

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This truck is in immaculate cond inside/out. 122,000 mls, MOT Jan 2018, drives very well, for Williams canopy, alloy wheels, good tyres, delivery can be arranged, trade in welcome.

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First reg (65 plate), 198,000 mls, full years MOT, fully converted motor caravan. Sleeps 2-4, 3 seats front, toilet /wash basin, gas cooker, grill & hob, sink with hot/cold water, tv, dvd & extras. Vg cond, well worth viewing.

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All 4 x 4s, old or new Toyota Hilux, land cruiser, all pickups single or double cabs, any condition, runner or not, high miles no problem.

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All types of motor homes and caravanettes. Any age or condition. We also buy water damaged or in need of repair. Also all types of touring caravans from 95 onwards.

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DAECIA
W.D. Sample www.wd-sample.com Inveraray Shore Street Tel: 01469 302150 Lochgilphead Highbank Park Tel: 01546 606707/606272

ISUZU
S & S Services Old Bridge Road, Heathfield, Ayr Tel: 01292 880080 01292 880440

Great Wall
S & S Services Old Bridge Road, Heathfield, Ayr Tel: 01292 880080 01292 880440

SUBARU
S & S Services Old Bridge Road, Heathfield, Ayr Tel: 01292 880080/880440

TO PROMOTE YOUR NEW CAR DEALERSHIP PLEASE CALL: 01631 568000

S&S SERVICES

ALL ROADS LEAD TO S&S

John, Brian, Matthew and the team at S&S Services would like to wish all their customers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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Commercial Vehicles

Lomond Motors Ltd are brokers and not lenders and can introduce you to a limited number of lenders, who may pay us for introducing you to them. *Offer available on Caddy Life SWB 1-2 TSI Petrol Manual. Subject to availability, while stocks last. *On the road price incl. delivery to Van Centre, number plates and vehicles excise duty first year.

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Subaru Forester



Subaru Outback and Forester have picked up a quartet of awards from Driver Power, the UK's Number 1 car ownership survey. In the best family car category, Subaru Outback picked up a Silver Award with a score of 91.18 per cent. Subaru Forester won gold awards for ride and handling and safety features with Outback also picking up a silver award for practicality and boot space. Steve Fowler, editor-in-chief, Auto Express, commented: 'This is an outstanding result for Subaru, with the Outback making its owners very happy. Topping the ride and handling and safety categories is hugely impressive, while second place in practicality



and in the family car class confirms how highly owners rate their cars.' Forester is a large SUV designed around the concept of 'do anything, go anywhere', whilst Outback is the world's first crossover, successfully combining the benefits of a passenger estate car with the all-road capabilities of an SUV. Both Subaru Forester and Outback have 5* Euro NCAP safety ratings, Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive and Outback comes equipped with EyeSight, Subaru's advanced collision avoidance technology. To keep up to date with Subaru news, please follow Helensburgh Subaru on Twitter and Facebook or give us a call on 01436 672779.



Subaru Outback

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our customers. Look forward to seeing you in 2018.

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01631 566880

Merry Christmas

from your local business!

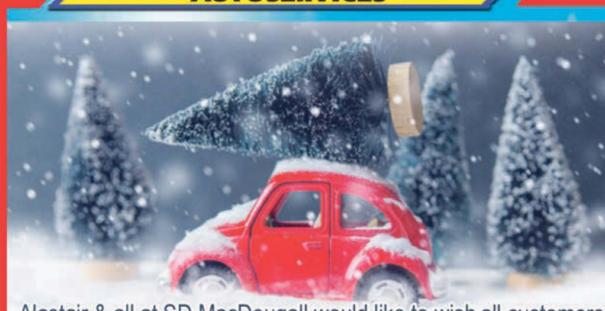
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Accident Repairs

- Car & Light Van Body Repairs
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Wishes all customers a very Happy Christmas & prosperous New Year.
Thank you for all your support.

Tel: 01631 569441 Quarry Road, Oban, PA34 4DP

S.D. MacDougall
AUTOSERVICES



Alastair & all at SD MacDougall would like to wish all customers and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Thank you for your continued support throughout 2017.

Safe motoring to all throughout 2018.

RIVERSIDE FILLING STATION
Festive Opening Hours

Christmas Eve 6am-9pm	Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our customers
Christmas Day Closed	
Boxing Day 9am - 6pm	
New Years Day Closed	
27th - 31st December 7am - 9pm	
January 2nd 9am - 6pm	
As normal from 3rd January 6am - 11pm	

There for you Riverside Filling Station
Oban Rd, Lochgilphead. Tel 01546 603858

Kerrie's Tyre Service
ATV • CAR • VAN • TRUCK • AGRICULTURAL • MOTORCYCLE

NO TYRE TOO BIG OR SMALL WE FIT THEM ALL

Quarry Road, Oban Tel/Fax: (01631) 570000

Kerrie and team would like to thank everyone for their support this year and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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From Cars to Light Commercials



Flit Self Drive would like to wish all their customers a merry Christmas and all the best for 2018

Tel: 01631 566553

Helensburgh Subaru

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our customers



101-103 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh, G84 7PJ
Telephone: 01436 584326
helensburgh-subaru.co.uk

@HBurghSubaru
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Malcolm and staff would like to wish all their customers and friends a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year



Argyll Commercials Ltd

For all types of commercial, H.G.V. repairs, servicing and maintenance to D.o.T. standard

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Gunns Garage
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For all your servicing and mechanical needs.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Contact us on 01631 730279



Campbeltown Motor Company

The Management and Staff of Campbeltown Motor Company wish all customers the compliments of the season. Thank you for supporting us and we hope to be of service to you during 2018.

Tel: 01586 552030 / 553200

Campbeltown Motor Company
Snipefield, Drumore, Campbeltown

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Merry Xmas & Happy New Year to all our customers

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Due to an expanding portfolio of products in both print and online, we are looking for sales staff to join our busy and successful team at Wyvex Media, the parent company of the Oban Times, Campbeltown Courier, Argyllshire Advertiser and Arran Banner.

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

We are looking for our next shining star and will offer flexible working patterns and working location for the right person. A hardworking, committed work ethic is essential, along with the desire to develop long term relationships with existing and new clients.

Experience in advertising sales is not necessary, as full training will be given.

We offer excellent pay and real career progression and benefits including BUPA, holidays to 35 days (Scale), realistic targets and achievable bonus.

You will benefit from on-going training, first class support, job stability and the opportunity to work for a professional company that believes in rewarding success and effort. A full driving licence is essential.

Please submit CV and covering letter to ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk

WYVEX MEDIA



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Petersport and Greanamul, Benbecula

Salary: £competitive

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a Site Manager to manage the operations of our production sites in Petersport and Greanamul.

The role will have direct responsibility for the operations at the marine site which will include; ensuring adherence to all Standard Operating Procedures and Health and Safety requirements along with proactively managing fish health and welfare, stock containment, biosecurity, grading and treatment plans, net washing and management of diving operations, and the efficient allocation of resources including staff and equipment utilisation.

The successful candidate will have extensive experience on an aquaculture marine site with proven capability for motivating, developing and leading small teams. In addition to this they will have the ability to accumulate and interpret statistical information for fish growth and health. A full clean driving licence is also essential, along with a flexible and independent approach.

To apply and/or request a detailed job specification please use the contact details below. Please note applications are requested by CV and covering letter.

Rhian Chamberlain
The Scottish Salmon Company
Marybank Estate, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0DB
Tel: 01499 600 601
Northrecruitment@scottishsalmon.com
Closing date: 15 December 2017
www.scottishsalmon.com

KAMES FISH FARMING LIMITED

Require
Freshwater and Marine Fish Husbandry Persons

Kames Fish Farming Limited, a family company established in 1972, is expanding its production. We are currently recruiting for Marine Fish Husbandry Persons at our sea and fresh water sites in Argyll, close to Oban, where we produce selected sea strain Rainbow Trout. This is a great opportunity to contribute to a successful and growing team which is producing fish of the highest quality.

The successful applicant should have good, practical, stockmanship skills and experience, with an understanding of mechanics. Fork lift, crane, boat and first aid qualifications would be an advantage. Candidates must be enthusiastic, self-motivated and able to work effectively within a small team. Duties include fish welfare, sampling, grading, treating, harvesting and other general fish farm tasks.

Applicants should also have a full driving licence. Competitive remuneration package dependent on experience, skills and knowledge (£17-£24K).

Closing date 22nd of December 2017

Please send your CV with qualifications and accompanying letter to:-

Jamie McAndrew
Kames Fish Farming Limited
Kilmelford, Oban PA34 4XA
fish@kames.co.uk

Community Support Assistant MacDougall Place, Mull
£9.11 - £10.71 per hour 4 hours per week (Sat-Sun)
Permanent

Community Support Assistant Oban and Benderloch
£9.11 - £10.71 per hour 14 hours per week
Week 1 - Saturday and Sunday
Week 2 - Thursday and Friday
Permanent

These posts require

- Protection of Vulnerable Adult Group (PVG) membership in relation to working with Vulnerable Adults
- Registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

For more information, please contact Brian Murphy on 01546 605932 or email brian.murphy@acha.co.uk
Interviews will be held on 24th January 2018 in Oban.

Customer Services Assistant Oban
£16,574 - £19,498 pro rata 21 hours
Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 09:00 - 17:00
12 month fixed term contract. This post requires basic Disclosure Scotland check.

For more information, please contact Amanda MacKenzie on 01546 605931 or email amanda.mackenzie@acha.co.uk
Interviews will be held on 19th January 2018 in Oban

AHFA Contract Administrator Oban
£19,717 - £23,197 35 hours per week
Mon - Fri 09:00 - 17:00 Permanent

For more information please contact Lee Holness on 01546 605 815 or email lee.holness@ahfa.co.uk

This post requires:

- Basic Disclosure Scotland check

Interviews will be held on 16th January 2018 in Oban.

AHFA 2 x Electricians 1 x Argyll-wide, 1 x Cowal and Bute
£25,519 - £30,023 37.5 hours per week
Mon - Fri 08:30 - 16:30 Permanent

For more information please contact Gary Breeden on 01546 605 856 or email gary.breeden@ahfa.co.uk

These posts require:

- Basic Disclosure Scotland check
- Full UK driver's license

Interviews will be held on 23 January 2018 in Inveraray.
To apply visit the recruitment section of our website at www.acha.co.uk
If you cannot access the website, please contact the recruitment team:
01546 605 817 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk
CVs are not accepted.
Closing date for all posts: 12 noon on Friday 5th January 2018

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CalMac Ferries Limited has a requirement for:

Senior Port Assistant

Kennacraig Permanent Ref: 1079-SB
£12.13 per hour 40 hours per week
Closing Date: 29 December 2017

Applications are invited for the position of Senior Port Assistant based at Kennacraig. Reporting to the Port Manager, you will need a flexible approach to your day-to-day responsibilities. Your duties will include;

- Supervision of Port Staff
- Deputizing for Port Manager
- Sale of passenger and vehicle tickets
- Cash handling
- Banking duties
- Controlling petty cash and change floats
- Completing timesheets
- Daily statistics reconciliation
- Disruption management
- Rostering of staff
- Stock management
- Dealing with customer complaints
- Good understanding of the CalMac Services
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Good practical experience of customer services
- Ability to work with initiative as self-starter, with/ut supervision
- Willingness to be a team player in a dynamic, proactive, high tension environment
- Liaise with other port staff to ensure that there is a high level of proactive communication and coordination of activity
- Processing verbal and written feedback
- All duties connected with vessel movements and berthing arrangements
- Customer enquiries
- Use of VHF and PA systems
- Liaising with third party clients and contractors
- Control of passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking from vessels
- Providing clear and concise direction to all passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking the vessels
- Overseeing the operations for up to 6 vessels
- Cleaning and light maintenance
- Any other duties required by the Port Manager

The successful candidates must be able to commute to Kennacraig on a daily basis.
If you are interested in this vacancy please apply online at <https://www.calmac.co.uk/article/5737/Ref-1079-SB-Senior-Port-Assistant---Kennacraig> no later than 29 December 2017.

David MacBrayne HR (UK) Limited is an equal opportunities employer.

CalMac Ferries Limited has a requirement for:

Port Assistant (Maternity Cover)

Rothsay Fixed Term until 31 August 2018 Ref: 1078-SB
£10.06 per hour 20 hours per week

Applications are invited for the position of Port Assistant (Maternity Cover) based at Kennacraig until 31 August 2018.

Reporting to the Port Manager, you will need a flexible approach to your day-to-day responsibilities. Your duties will include;

- All duties connected with ship movements, gangways and securing of vessels.
- Customer enquiries.
- Sales/collection of passenger/vehicle tickets.
- Cash handling.
- Use of VHF and PA Systems.
- Control of passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking from vessels.

You must be computer literate, with excellent verbal and written communication skills.
You must have the ability to work with initiative as a self-starter, with minimum supervision.
You are expected to have a flexible approach to working, as shift and weekend work will be involved.
You must be customer focused, with a clear understanding of the customer interface and have a proactive approach to customer care.
The successful candidates must be able to commute to Kennacraig Ferry Terminal on a daily basis.
If you are interested in this vacancy, please apply by applying online at: <https://www.calmac.co.uk/article/5736/Ref-1078-SB-Port-Assistant-Kennacraig-Maternity-Cover> no later than 29 December 2017.

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HIJOBS

First Registration of a Croft
 Ian Campbell has registered their croft Brolas, Ardchattan and Muchaidn 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 31st August 2018. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C4563.

First Registration of a Croft
 Malcolm James MacLean has registered their croft 61 Ormsaigbeg, Coire Buidhe in the parish of Ardnamurchan and Sunart on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 27 July 2018. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C4546.

CROFTING COMMISSION COMIISEAN NA CROITEARACHAID DECROFTING DIRECTION ISSUED
 J C MacLachlan
 2 Unachan, Kilmonivaig
 76677
 2.237 ha
 Reason – General Purpose
 Full details at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk

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 the Council's website at www.argyll-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
17/03115/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse (amended position relative to planning permission reference 13/02239/PP)	Land East Of Winterton Balvicar Isle Of Seil Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Balvicar
17/03095/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Land East Of 5 Orchy Cottages Dalmally Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Dalmally
17/03050/PP	Erection of four dwellinghouses, installation of treatment plant and formation of access	Land West Of Gleneven Pennyghael Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Bunnassan Isle of Mull
17/03126/PP	Erection of 5 terraced dwellinghouses	Land North Of 2 Struan Crescent Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Tobermory Area Office
17/02886/PP	Erection of 6 metres high mast, installation of cabinet and associated works	Land North East Of Coire Arle House Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JS	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
17/03129/PP	Formation of new window openings and formation of patio doors in existing window opening	The Island Bear Shore Street Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA43 7LB	Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay
17/03068/PP	Erection of 7 dwellinghouses comprising two terraces, installation of air source heat pumps, sewage treatment plant and formation of access.	Land North East Of Kilbowie House Galanach Road Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
17/03029/PP	Erection of 14 dwellinghouses, installation of sewage treatment plant, air source heat pumps and formation of vehicular access	Land North West Of Bridge Cottage Lochdon Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Craignure
17/03094/PP	Installation of new roof covering to existing ground floor reception and dining area	Portsonachan Hotel Portsonachan Dalmally Argyll And Bute PA33 1BJ	Sub Post Office Dalmally
17/03121/LIB	Internal and external alterations and erection of extensions	Tigh An Truigh Hotel Clachan Seil Isle Of Seil Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4QZ	Sub Post Office Balvicar
17/03092/PP	Erection of cattle shed and store shed	Land Adjacent To Kintour Farm Kildalton Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA42 7EF	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
17/03064/PP	Demolition of dwellinghouse	Barr Bheag Taynuilt Argyll And Bute PA35 1HY	Sub Post Office Taynuilt

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-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 Council's website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
 Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE
 Mandy Watson trading as Ben Nevis Motors Ltd of Unit 1, North Road, Fort William, PH33 6PP is applying for a licence to use Unit 1, North Road, Fort William, PH33 6PP as an operating centre for 6 goods vehicles and 2 trailers. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.



Source: Business Choice II, The Newspaper Society



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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

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
17/05652/FUL	Caravan Croft 17, Anahelt, Strontian, Acharacle	Erection of house and formation of access (amendment to 16/03159/FUL)
17/05505/FUL	Westcourt, Achintore Road, Fort William	Erect garage with letting unit above
17/05369/FUL	Land 100M NE of Craigard, Isle of Eigg	Erection of holiday letting unit

Time period for comments is 22 days
 ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
 Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

First Registration of a Croft
 Mr J A MacLeod has registered their croft 1 Kinlochell, Kinlochell 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 05 Sept 2018
 Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C4730

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. The croft registration number is 17282.

THE YOT SPOT (ARGYLL) LTD
 Company No: SC440954
 (In Creditors Voluntary Liquidation)
 Kenneth W Patullo and Kenneth R Craig
 Begbies Traynor, 3rd Floor, Finlay House, 10-14 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PP hereby give notice that we were appointed Joint Liquidators of The Yot Spot (Argyll) Ltd by Resolution of a meeting of members held pursuant to Section 84 of the Insolvency Act 1986 on 14 December 2017. Furthermore, notice is also hereby given pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of creditors of the above named Company will be held at the offices of Begbies Traynor (Central) LLP, 3rd Floor, Finlay House, 10-14 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PP, on 22 December 2017, at 11.00 am for the purposes mentioned in Sections 99 to 101 of the Insolvency Act 1986. A list of the names and addresses of the Company's creditors will be available for inspection, free of charge, within the offices of Begbies Traynor (Central) LLP, 3rd Floor, Finlay House, 10-14 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PP, during the two business days preceding the above meeting.
 Further details contact:
 The Joint Liquidators, Tel: 0141 222 2230.
 M Forbes, Director
 14 December 2017

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dition - Lochgilphead town centre, £85 Telephone 07766 991987.

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RETIREMENT NOTICE

I, Alister MacNeill, T/A S.D. MacDougall Auto Services, Crannog Lane, Oban would like to thank my staff and customers for their loyalty throughout my years in business, and would like to take this opportunity to wish Mr Lachie Strathern every success on the takeover of the above business on the 5th January 2018.

Your sincerely Mr Alister MacNeill

Unit 6, Lochavullin Ind. Est., Oban
 Tel: 01631 566502 01631 566470

GRADUATION

MICHAEL JAMES LEPLAR
 Graduated as "Master of Engineering" with Electronic and Electrical Engineering (2:1) from Edinburgh Napier University. Congratulations from his parents Roger and Helen Leplar from Bunness, Isle of Mull, his brother Ryan and all the rest of his family. Michael would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported him to obtain this achievement.

ENGAGEMENTS

BROWN - HILL - The engagement is announced between David and Kirsty Shona. David is the eldest son of Sally and David Brown, Perth, Australia and Kirsty Shona, the second daughter of Dennis and Shona Hill, Fort William.

DEATHS

CAMERON - At Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on December 14, 2017, in her 91st year, Margaret née MacKinnon, beloved wife of the late Murdie Cameron, sister of the late Annag, Angus and Sam.

CLARK - Peacefully, with family around him, David Alexander Clark, son of the late Dannie and Agnes of Moleigh Farm, brother to Jean and the late Danny and Ina. A favourite uncle to Mora, Kirsteen and Donald; and Sheena, Donald and Robert. Funeral at 1pm in Kilmore Church on Friday December 22. By David's request - no black please.

CORSON - Very peacefully in the tender loving care of The Mackintosh Centre, with her family by her side on Friday December 15, 2017, Jessie Corson MBE, loving wife, mum and gran. Funeral Service will be held on Friday December 29, 2017 at 1pm in St. Columba's Parish Church, Mallaig; thereafter to Beoraid Cemetery. All friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired to River Fund, Mackintosh Centre and Belford Hospital can be given at the Church door or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William. Grateful thanks to the local community for all the support that you have given to Jessie and Bobby during these last few months.

GILFILLAN - Peacefully at Eadar Glinn Care Home, Oban, surrounded by her children on December 12, 2017, aged 64, Mairi Louise Gilfillan (MacDonald), dearly loved mum to Andrew, Marliese and Elaina, an amazing gran, sister and auntie. Darling daughter of the late David and Louise Gilfillan. Rest in Peace.

LAMONT - Peacefully at the Mull and Iona Community Hospital on December 15, 2017, aged 94 years, with his wife and daughters by his side, Peter Lamont, Lochdon, Isle of Mull. Loving husband of Jean, dear dad of Fiona and Alison, loving grampa of five. Always in our hearts. Funeral service was held at Torosay Parish Church on Wednesday December 20, 2017 at 11.30 am thereafter to Kilpatrick Duart Cemetery.

MACGILLIVRAY - Peacefully, on Thursday December 14, 2017, Wilma MacGillivray, Muirshearich, aged 95 years. Loving wife of the late Fachie, a much-loved mum of Alistair, Elspeth and Dan, also a devoted granny to Heather and Lynsey. Funeral Service will be held tomorrow (Friday) December 22, 2017 at 12 noon in Kilmallie Free Church of Scotland; thereafter to Kilmallie Cemetery. All friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Inverness Residents' Fund can be given at the Church door or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

MACINTOSH - Peacefully at Eadar Glinn Care Home on December 13, 2017, Angus, aged 85 years, son of the late John and Sarah MacIntosh and much loved by his late brothers Ian, his twin Archie, Peter and his sole surviving brother Neil of Katikati, Bay of Plenty, NZ and his sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews. May he Rest In Peace.

MACKENZIE - Peacefully, after a short illness, in Belford Hospital on Saturday December 16, 2017, Donnie MacKenzie, late of Inverloch Castle Farm, aged 85 years. Loving husband of the late Dymna, also a loving father of Donald. Funeral service will be held on Thursday December 28, 2017 at 1pm in Kilmoinvaig Parish Church, Spean Bridge; thereafter to Blaruar Cemetery. Family flowers only please. All friends respectfully invited. Enquiries to John McLellan Funeral Directors, 01397 702128.

MORRISON - (Knoyd and Harris) - Mary Ann passed away peacefully at Belford Hospital on December 11 after a short illness. Well cared for by staff of Ward 1. - Morrison family.

STODDART - Peacefully, at Belford Hospital on Sunday December 17, 2017, Donald John Beaton Stoddart, aged 77 years. Loving father to Mhairi, Neil, Margaret, Kenny, Donald, Christine and Scott. Doting Papa to his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A much loved father-in-law and beloved partner of the late Rosie. Funeral Service will be held today (Thursday) December 21, 2017 at 10am in Caol Church of Scotland; thereafter to Broadford Cemetery. All friends respectfully invited.

Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Ward 1, Belford Hospital and Lochaber Macmillan Nurses can be given at the Church door. Enquiries to John McLellan Funeral Directors, 01397 702128.

THOMSON - Molly Euphemia, (nee McTavish), (Edinburgh). Peacefully, on December 18, 2017, Molly, loving wife of the late Rev Thomas Thomson and dear mother of Richard. Funeral at St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, January 3 at 10.30am, thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery, Oban, on Thursday, January 4 at 1.00pm to which all friends are invited. Family flowers only.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BLACK - The family of the late Charlotte Black would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many kind expressions of sympathy received following their recent sad loss. Grateful thanks to the staff of Ardenlee Care Home, Dumoon for their kindness, care and compassion shown Charlotte. Special thanks to Rev David Carruthers for a most comforting and personal service; to Donald MacDonald Funeral Directors for their guidance and efficient services; and to Rosslea Hall Hotel, Rhu, for excellent purvey. Finally, our thanks to all who attended at crematorium to pay their respects.

KENNEDY - Caroline, Michael and David, daughters-in-law Marion and Lisbeth and son-in-law Allan wish to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for their kindness following the sad loss of our mum, nana and great gran Marjory (Madge). Thanks to all the staff who cared for mum at Belford Hospital during her short illness. To Fr MacKinnon for his wonderful support and his kindness to mum and all the family. Thanks to Mike McFall Funeral Directors and thanks to all who came to the service at St Mary's. The collection raised £475.60 for Heartstart (Lochaber). To Meg Corrigan and Railway Club staff - thank you.

KNOWLES - To doctors and nurses at Lorn and Islands Hospital, staff at Torosay Court, Cancer Research shop and Hamish Hoey Funeral Directors, your kind expression of sympathy and friendship will always remain in our memories, thank you for your thoughtfulness. The family of Edwina Knowles (Eddie).

MACDONALD - (Ballachulish) - The family of Mary would like to express their heartfelt thanks for all the kindness and support we have been shown during her short illness. To Rev Sandy Stoddart for a lovely service, Rose the organist for the beautifully played music, Mike McFall funeral directors for efficient and sympathetic funeral arrangements and the ladies of Duror Parish for the fabulous spread provided in the hall, Allan Milton for providing bar and Dave Chrystal for being barman. To everyone who came to say goodbye, and those who weren't able to, we thank you all. Sum raised for charities was £1,295. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

MACFARLANE - Deirdre and family would like to thank sincerely everyone for kind expressions of love, sympathy and support, cards letters, phone calls and offers of help on the devastating loss of Sandy. Also for visits during those last few weeks which meant so much to Sandy. Many thanks to Dr McElroy, district nurses and staff at Taynult Surgery, Macmillan nurses Aeltse and Gaynor, Lucy Hunt of the Dove Centre, Marie Curie nurses Andrea and Bridget. Special thanks to Rev Dr George Whyte for making the journey to take the service and giving such a fitting tribute to Sandy, to Rev Brian Wilkinson and Donald Harrison for readings, Alison Pringle organist and Piper Ewan MacKintosh. Thanks also to Ian MacInnes at D&A Munn for help and guidance and Moreen Gracie for flowers. Grateful thanks to Mairead Sim and team of helpers for providing such a warm welcome and refreshments at the village hall. Finally heartfelt thanks to all who came to pay their last respects at Muckkairn Church and to all who have donated so generously. The sum of £1400 has been collected to date in memory of Sandy for the June Hancock Mesothelioma Research Fund.

MACLEAN - Allan and Katy would like to express their heartfelt thanks to all relatives, friends and colleagues for their expressions of sympathy extended to them in their recent sad loss of Margaret. Grateful thanks to Dr. Calder and Dr. Wilmington and the staff of Ballachulish Medical Practice for their care. Special thanks to Rev. Amanda Fairclough for her comforting service and to Scott Greenlees and all at John McLellan Funeral Directors for their care and compassion with the funeral arrangements. Thank you to Gwen McTaggart for her flower arrangements in the Church and to The Laroch for providing the funeral tea. Finally, thank you to those who attended the funeral service and donated so generously the amount of £455.65 to Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland.

MEMORIAMS

BEATON - Fond memories of my mother, Bella, who passed away on December 19, 2016. Also remembered my father, Veek, who passed away on March 6, 1999, much loved Granny and Grampa. - Hugh, Mary, Lorna and David.

BIRRELL - Precious memories of Al who passed away on December 26, 2010. For as long as I live, you will live, you will be remembered, you will be loved. Always in my heart Dad. - Lisa, DI, Annie and Flora xxx

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of my dear wife Liz, who died so suddenly on December 26, 1998 aged 43. Loved and remembered always. - Cammie.

CAMPBELL - Remembering Liz who died so suddenly on December 26, 1998. Gone but never forgotten. - Love Simmo. x

CARMICHAEL - Very special memories of Kate who died December 20, 2013. Always in our thoughts. Forever in our hearts. - All the family x

CLARK - In loving memory of a dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather Alexander (Tom), who passed away December 26, 2012. - Sadly missed by all the family.

CLARK - Kirsty. This Christmas we quietly remember a wonderful mum and granny who passed away on December 22, 2012. Also Graham, a beloved dad and grandpa who passed away on August 7, 2006. So greatly missed by us all. Such happy memories. - Alison, Rhuaridh, Katie and Coll.

CLARK - In loving memory of a dear sister, Kirsteen Clark, who passed away December 22, 2012. Loved and remembered. - Sister Alice and brother-in-law John, Dumfries-shire.

GILLESPIE - Thomas (Tam) died July, 2002. Missing you at Christmas. Every day without you since you had to go. It's like summer without sunshine and Christmas without snow. I wish that I could talk to you there's so much I would say. Life has changed so very much since you went away. I miss the bond between us and I miss your kind support. You're in my mind and in my heart and every Christmas thought I'll always feel you close to me. And though you're far from sight I'll search for you among the stars that shine on Christmas night. - Missed by his wife Betty and family.

GRANT - In loving memory of my dear mother and our granny, Morag, who died on December 25, 1999. Today, tomorrow, our whole life through. We will always love and remember you. - Elizabeth, Julie and Steven, Keeper's Cottage, Dalmally.

HOWE - In loving memory of Betty Howe, who died on December 18, 2014. Gone but not forgotten. - Love always from the family x

JACKSON - Remembering on this the first anniversary of his death, James, beloved husband, father and grandfather. - Inserted by Betty and family.

MACALLISTER - In loving memory of David Mercer MacAllister (Tobermory), who died December 21, 2004. - Fondly remembered by Rosemary, Fiona, Alex and David.

MACCOLL - Archie (Kilmonivaig). Nam chridhe GU Siorraidh - June Anne and David xx Love and miss you grandpa - Archie, Jessie, Kate and Freddie xxxx

MACGILLIVRAY - In loving memory of Christina (Christie) a much loved mum and gran who passed away December 24, 2009. I miss you so much and always think about you. Also remembering my mother Katherine (Kathy) MacGillivray, who passed away August 19, 2014. Mum you were my best friend. You have left me with so many happy memories and laughs. Words can never describe how much I miss you. I know you and gran are always with me. - Paul.

MACKECHNIE - John and Donald. Many a day your names are spoken. Many an hour you are in our thoughts. Two links in a family chain are broken. You are gone from our home but not from our hearts. - Love Christine, Allan, Graeme and families.

MACKINNON - Treasured memories of a dear mum, granny and great-granny Flora, who passed away on December 21, 2015. The rolling stream of life goes on. But still the empty chair. Reminds us of the face, the smile. Of one who once sat there. Mum, you are not forgotten. Though on earth you are no more. Still in memory you are with us. As you always were before. - Angus, Lachie, Margaret, Christine, Fiona, Linda, Alastair and all their families.

MACPHAIL - Treasured memories of a dear husband, dad and 'Shesh', John, 'Armday', Tzee, who passed away December 26, 2004 and loved ones gone before and after. My thoughts are always with you. Your place no one can fill. In life I loved you dearly. In death I love you still. - Jean xx

Loves greatest gift 'rememberance' - May, Irene and families, Oban and Tiree.

MAITLAND - In memory of James, a much loved husband, father and shenair who passed away December 23, 2012. James you were so special, you'll be loved and missed forever and never forgotten. - All my love Teeny. Together life was bright and gay. A parting seemed so far away. You left a place no one can fill. We miss you dad and always will. - Marie, Ross and families.

MAITLAND - In loving memory of James, a dear brother who passed away on December 23, 2012. Loved and remembered every day. - Catherine and Alasdair

MCKIERNAN - In loving memory of a special dad, Jim, who died December 21, 2007. Always in our hearts, with love from Catherine, Diane and Alan.

McTAGGART - Special and loving memories of our dear parents and grandparents, John who died December 25, 2005 and Mary (née Nicolson), who died August 23, 2011. Always remembered and dearly missed. - Love Ian, Philiina, Christina and families.

Obituary - Kenny MacIntyre

June 25, 1927 - November 23, 2017

A eulogy given by councillor Roddy McCuish at Oban Parish Church, November 30.

KENNY was born in Portobello in Edinburgh to Alexander and Margaret on June 25, 1927.

Along with his two sisters Francie and Eilidh, the family moved from Edinburgh to Glen Orchy where they lived with his grandfather Sam, who became a great influence on his life. He remembered fondly delivering the mail with his grandfather by boat on Loch Etive.

The family moved to Oban when his father became the gardener at Dunollie House and they lived at the lodge opposite the War Memorial. Kenny always remembered he was swimming in the sea when war was declared in 1939.

Only a few years later he left school at 15 to work for London Midland and Scottish Railway Company. He did this as his father had become ill and was bed ridden and no longer able to work. The MacDougalls were very kind to the family and allowed them to stay at the lodge. When his father died the family moved to Dalintart. By this time he had a younger brother Alisdair, and as well as becoming the main breadwinner for the family, Kenny became like a father figure to his younger brother.

Around this time, he met a young 16-year-old girl at the Connel dances. Jessie Henderson lived at Connel and Kenny used to run home from there back to Oban along the railway line. They married in 1951 at the Duror Hotel and many years later when the hotel burned down he teased Jessie wondering if that meant they were still married.

In 1952 their eldest son Kenneth was born, followed two years later by Gordon. Kenny announced the birth by saying: 'You are now looking at the proud father of two sons.' In 1957 Myrette was born followed by June in 1960.

While raising his family Kenny worked two jobs. Over the years he became involved in many other activities and organisations. He worked

tirelessly for the Labour party and for many years was the NUR branch secretary in Oban. He was made a Justice of the Peace which got him involved in the courts, and on many committees.

He helped to get a youth club started in Oban, organising fundraising events such as sponsored walks. Dunollie benefited, when he started the Dunollie Residents Association.

For many years very successful discos were held, which raised money that was put back in to the community with Christmas parties and nights held for the elderly as well as trips to Glasgow to the pantomime.

He joined the community council and through his involvement he worked tirelessly for his community. Anybody who has ever used the steps in the avenue by the Corran Halls up to Dunollie has Kenny to thank. He also helped in the realisation of the Oban War and Peace Museum.

His family grew when Kenneth married Jane. Then June married Eric and Myrette met Charles. During this time Kenny was blessed with the arrival of grandchildren. Mandy being first in 1981, then Joni in 1986, Martin in 1987 and Lamal in 1993. He enjoyed his grandchildren very much and through their involvement in swimming classes he became involved in Lifesavers at the pool. A keen swimmer all his life he enjoyed teaching the children of Oban. But as usual he ended up running the whole show, from the classes to making sure all involved had a Christmas night out.

In 1992 Kenny retired from the railway after 50 years, but he continued his work in the community. In 2001 Kenny and Jessie celebrated 50 years of marriage. They decided to go on a cruise and on return to London, at their daughter Myrette's home, Jessie became unwell. Very sadly she passed away. Kenny stood strong for his family and became even busier within the community.

Kenny received an award from the local council for his work in the community, presented to him by Princess Anne during the 200 year celebrations in Oban in 2001.

When he met Princess Anne he quipped: 'Maybe we will make you our Queen if we get Independence in Scotland.' To which she replied: 'Maybe we need to check the constitution on that.'

In 2014 he was awarded a long service medal by the Labour party. He received that award in the Corran Halls in Oban at the Scottish Conference.

Attending the local sports awards in Oban one night he was surprised when he received an award for his work with Lifesavers.

In 2015 Kenny suffered a stroke which left him needing 24-hour care, and so he went to live at the Lynn of Lorne. In 2015 his first great grandchild Sam was born. Sam gave Kenny much pleasure. His eyes lit up whenever Sam was around.

Many lovely tributes have been paid to the family. One spoke of Kenny being part of the generation that gave us the mental furniture of our lives and his influence and example will live on.

I'd like to finish with a story from Kenneth, a memory from his childhood. One Sunday morning, when the family lived in Alma Crescent, Kenny, Gordon and June came across a boy at the top of High Street who had been sent to get the Sunday papers, but he had dropped them and pages were flying all around.

The poor boy was most upset, sure he would get into trouble. Kenny stopped and gathered up all the pages, put them back in order for him, folded the newspapers neatly and handed them to the boy - I don't know who he was - he went on his way happy that he hadn't let his mum and dad down.

Now this is a small thing and Kenny would say he did what any decent person would do. But that was typical of him - always ready to help in any way he could. For him, his family and his community came first, and we are all his beneficiaries.

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Thought for the week
St Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter eight, verse 35.
'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword.'
As we progress through the Advent season, we look forward to the celebrations of Christ's birth and all that this means for us on earth. The world can seem a troubled place and all of us, at times, can encounter danger, hardship and sorrow.
The way of God is to provide the ability to cope with them. God's influence is all around us providing inspiration, enlightenment, healing and love.
St Paul's strength lay in the fact that instead of asking 'Why does God allow the world to treat us so badly?', he allowed God spiritual gifts to supply the strength and wisdom to cope with whatever situation confronted him.
The same loving support is available to all of us. Millions of people around the world have followed the advice of St Paul and allowed it to transform their lives.
Geoff and Janet Fairbairn

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SHINTY

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Shinty rule changes on the horizon

THE CAMANACHD Association's board of directors look set to introduce a number of bylaw changes for the 2018 shinty season.

Changes under consideration include:

Sin bins

The most radical change looks set to see the introduction of sin bins from the start of the 2018 shinty season.

At present, each booking listed in bylaw 1.13 results in five penalty points recorded against the player.

However, in response to feedback received at the 2017 area consultation meetings, it is proposed each booking listed in bylaw 1.13 results in three penalty points.

In addition, on immediate receipt of the caution, the player will be sent from the field of play to the touchline for 10 minutes or until the end of the game, whichever is the lesser. No substitute player will be permitted to replace the player sent to the touchline as a consequence of a cautionable offence.

Glenurquhart and Newtonmore submitted proposals for changes to the sanctions imposed on players as a consequence of cautionable offences. The Camanachd Association executive believes the changes proposed go at least some way towards meeting concerns whilst also bringing additional benefits.

The sanctions imposed in the event of committing two cautionable offences in one game, sending off offences and points accumulation remain unchanged.

The justifications for introducing this change include:

□ A more immediate punishment has a greater impact on the offending individual and their team.

□ Greater peer pressure will be brought on individuals to control their words and actions.

□ An immediate spell of touchline confinement provides an enforced cooling-off period.

□ There will be a greater benefit to the opposing team which may have suffered from the cautionable offence as they will have the benefit of an extra player on the field for a period of time in addition to the free-hit which they currently receive.

□ There was a prevailing view from members, which was expressed clearly at the summer consultation meetings, that a full game ban for three offences, which could be relatively minor in nature, was excessive. The proposed change will mean that five such offences will need to be committed before a full game ban is imposed.

The Camanachd Association is of the view that receiving five such cautions is unlikely to be as a consequence of simply bad luck.

A draft bylaw change has been prepared and issued to member clubs who have been asked forward any representations to the Camanachd Association chief executive officer by Monday January 8 2018.

Failure to play

At present, when a club opts not to play a scheduled fixture in Marine Harvest North Division 2 or Marine Harvest South Division 2, the match is declared won by the team not responsible for the failure and that team has two points added to its total league points.

In response to representation by Lewis Camanachd, any call-off in the same circumstances shall result in the match being declared won by the team not responsible for the failure and that team shall have two points added to its total league points. In addition, the offending team shall be penalised by the deduction of one point from

its total league points. The justifications for introducing this change include:

□ Teams willing to play regularly and fulfil their fixtures, irrespective of travel difficulties, are frustrated that some teams who regularly default can finish the season higher placed in their respective league table.

□ This change may provide more encouragement for teams who are keen to participate week in, week out.

Referees' expenses

The Camanachd Association intends clarifying that when a match is postponed, match officials' travel expenses incurred up to the point they are contacted by the home club should be reimbursed. The referee's match fee should also be paid if they have started their journey before being contacted by the home club.

Should there be no club representative on site to settle the expenses, the Camanachd Association will make payment to the official on receipt of a claim form and recover payment from the responsible home club by invoice.

This clarification comes following representation by the Camanachd Referees' Association.

Helmets

There is likely to be a tightening of the rules in relation to the helmets worn by youths prescribing that neither the ball nor the swinging camanachd be able to pass through the faceguard.

This proposal is in response to representation from the Camanachd Association Youth Committee as modified faceguards have become increasingly common.

Whilst clubs are encouraged to make provisions to comply with this bylaw for the start of the 2018 shinty season, it is likely the bylaw will not be rigorously applied until July 1 2018.

Helmets do not have to be worn at First Shinty events because of differing sticks and balls.

Ardnamurchan on the up

It has not been an overnight success, but Ardnamurchan Ladies have just completed their most successful season to date.

The squad, many of whom have played together since 2011, romped to a seven point triumph over second placed Cowal & Bute in Marine Harvest South Division 2 last season, maintaining a 100 per cent record.

They scored 67 goals, conceding only seven times, to confirm their place as the division's outstanding team.

There is plenty for head coach Lyndsay Bradley to be pleased about. 'The girls have done really well,' she said. 'It's been a long time coming and this young squad has grown up together, benefiting from the experience of a couple of older heads.'

The secret is hard work. The Ardnamurchan squad trains every Tuesday with the players at university doing their own thing and travelling back for games at the weekend. The club is based at Ardnamurchan High School, which boasts both grass and astro pitches.

'We've always had too many players available for each fixture,' said Lyndsay, 'which just shows the commitment.'

The season's only disappointment was a 7-1 Marine Harvest Challenge Cup Final defeat to a more experienced Glengarry side.

Lyndsay points to a few factors that day which worked



Ardnamurchan Ladies at their end of season prizegiving where they were presented with the Marine Harvest South Division Two league winners trophy.

against her side. 'Perhaps the pressure of the day got to us. We were underdogs last time we played in the Challenge Cup Final, but this time we were hyped up with many people fancying us to do well. That, coupled with the big crowd and the bad start when we conceded a controversial penalty, went against us. But take nothing away from Glengarry, they are a more experienced club than us and they have good players. We can still take a lot from our run to the final.'

'We played every round - no byes - and it was a positive and difficult cup run with some great results along the way including a penalty shoot-out win over Strathglass so we'll be better for the experience. We made up for it 100 per cent when we clinched the league title.'

More honours followed as Lyndsay Bradley was named Marine Harvest South Division 2 Coach of the Year at the annual Marine Harvest Awards, having been named Marine Harvest Development Coach of the Year and Marine Harvest Volunteer of the Year 12 months earlier.

Lucy MacMillan collected the Marine Harvest South Division 2 player of the year award to complete a player and coach double for the 2015 club of the year winners.

'Lucy co-captained the team with Kate Bradley and the dual role worked well. Lucy travelled from Glasgow to play for the side and whether she was asked to play in midfield or defence, she has been fantastic. Kate looked after things on the home front so they both played their part.'

'We have players from across the peninsula and there have been other top performers too. Eilidh Ross, Marine Harvest South Division 2 player of the year in 2016, is our top scorer with more than 20 goals, whilst Annie MacDonald has been a mainstay in midfield. Joanne Ford and Claire Ford have been excellent in defence. Rachel Ford, who was 13 years old at the start of the season, has done really well to move up from our development squad during the season whilst a fourth Ford sister, Lisa, a first year pupil, made an appearance from the bench towards the end of the season.'

'Iona Cameron and Rachel Ford received the improved player of the year awards for South 2, Kirsty Campbell was development player of the year whilst Jean Campbell was the most improved development player.'

Shinty is on the up in Ardnamurchan. The club's development programme sees

40 players regularly playing at primary school level, more than 20 players taking part at U14 level whilst 15 to 18 ladies also regularly take the field. This is a massive proportion of young ladies in the area with 50 per cent of Ardnamurchan High School girls playing.

The Ardnamurchan men's side is trying to rebuild and there will be a meeting soon to look at the options for next season. It might be too soon to re-join the league, but cup participation is a possibility.

Many of the Ardnamurchan players from last season's successful U14 side are now too old for that particular age group so the club will also field an U17 side in 2018.

This sustainable model of building from a strong youth base has worked well for the ladies with their pathway providing 35 registered players for next season.

Lyndsay Bradley goes on to explain how you accommodate such a large pool of players. 'Next season, for the first time, we will field three ladies teams. Our senior squad will play in Marine Harvest National Division 1. We will continue with our development team but we will also field a reserve side in South Division 2.'

'In effect, our development team from last season will move up to be our second team but we are certainly not expecting the same success in South 2 next season. It's all about progression.'

'The younger school-age players will be introduced into our development side, so again the pathway is clear.'

'I expect next season to be quite different, a very difficult season. I'm very proud of the girls and how they have made the step up.'

'We know it will be tough, but the step up is the only way we will improve. It wouldn't do us any good to stay put and we can learn from how well Skye and Lochaber have done in recent seasons. It's all about positive influences. 'They make such a difference and you have to keep developing and moving forward. There



Ardnamurchan Ladies before a recent game.

is no point resting on recent successes but, to be realistic, scoring a goal next season will be an achievement. I recall the celebration when we scored our first goal in the early days so I'd almost liken it to that.'

The commitment from the club is clear but they need help behind the scenes to continue their development. 'Colm O'Rua and I talk about our plans for going forward. We are lucky to have a number of parents who regularly help, driving their children, but they are just not confident enough to get involved on the coaching side.'

Off the field support is crucial too and the club is grateful to main sponsors Strontian Stores. However, with three teams to maintain next season, the club is ideally looking for a couple more sponsors so that all three sides can be kitted out.

'It's a big deal for the area to have three shinty teams and for them to be doing so well. It's something the community can recognise and support. Fund-raising is always a challenge and travel costs will also be high because of our location.'

'I'd like to thank everyone who has stuck with us on the journey so far and the support from parents and other volunteers has helped make this all possible.'

Ardnamurchan are lucky to have Lyndsay Bradley and the most striking thing about talking shinty with her is her desire for the squad to continue to improve.

There will be tough challenges ahead competing at national shinty level but there will be no resting on laurels and that's an attitude that will surely serve Ardnamurchan well.

Daniel Madej continues as Oban Celtic skipper

Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon has confirmed Daniel Madej will continue as his captain for the 2018 shinty season.

Kenny said: 'Daniel Madej has been my captain since the

2016 season and he thrives on the extra responsibility. I'm not one for switching captains each season and Daniel is the best player for the job.'

'He might be younger than some of the other players, but he's such a good guy to have around the place and he's a quality player.'

'It's also great that Neil Carmichael continues in his role as vice captain.'

Oban Celtic Player of the Year awards

The Oban Celtic player of the year will be named at an evening event after the Young Guns v Oldies match on Boxing Day.

The player of the year award is the choice of manager Kenny Wotherspoon who scores the players on the team sheet each week.

Kenny said: 'We've had a lot of good performers. Andy MacDonald, Ally McKerracher - who was a huge miss for us when he was out of the team through injury - Ross MacMillan, although he needs to cut out the silly bookings, and Daniel Madej for his goals. Daniel is only 22 but he seems to have been around for a long time.'

Ballachulish awards

Ballachulish have announced their 2017 player of the year winners.

Duncan MacDonald was named senior player of the year for the Marine Harvest South Division 1 side, whilst Ross Maclean won the U21 prize.

The club has yet to appoint their new manager.

Taynuilt prizegiving

Taynuilt recently held their 2017 player of the year awards ceremony at Taynuilt Golf Club.

The Marine Harvest South Division 1's prizewinners were:

Player of the Year - Ryan Gilles

Young Player of the Year - Robbie Brown

Players' Player of the Year - Jamie MacFarlane

Most Improved Player of the Year - Zander Kilmurray

Double boost for Taynuilt

Taynuilt received two pieces of good news ahead of the start of the new shinty season.

Firstly Dawnfresh, a local fish farm company, has agreed a three-year sponsorship deal which will ensure the club remains on a sound financial footing for the foreseeable future.

The sponsorship deal will also help the club's development plans.

Secondly, former player Billy Irving has returned home after being released from prison in India after four years.

The Taynuilt club members wish to express their delight at Billy's release and wish him and his family a very happy Christmas.

Taynuilt hope to welcome Billy back into the fold next season once he has recovered from his ordeal.

Skye Camanachd Ladies new team

Skye Camanachd Ladies have entered a reserve team in Marine Harvest North Division 2 for the 2018 shinty season.

The number of players coming along to the weekly training sessions have been such that the club, who won the Marine Harvest National Division 1 title and the Marine Harvest Valerie Fraser Cup double last season, will field a reserve team in North 2 for the first time as well as continuing with their development squad, thus giving players a co-ordinated pathway to the senior side.

Mackenzie takes over competitions portfolio

Steven MacKenzie will take over the competitions director portfolio, previously held by Keith Loades, following the latter's election as Camanachd Association President.

The Camanachd Association confirmed the switch following their recent annual general meeting.

Jack Asher Sixes

The Jack Asher Sixes will take place at the Garscube Sports Complex on Saturday January 20 2018.

Strathclyde Police are the current holders, defeating the 1990s Glasgow University side 3-2 in last year's final.

The event remembers Jack Asher, a Glasgow University honorary president, former club captain (1958-59) and a renowned shinty player and referee.

MacLeod stays on at Glenurquhart

Iain MacLeod will stay on in charge at Marine Harvest Premiership side Glenurquhart for the 2018 shinty season.

He led the side to a seventh place finish in the Marine Harvest Premiership last season, despite losing the services of several key players.

MacLeod will be assisted again by Steven Henderson, whilst Ally MacKintosh, who was the Albert Smith man of the match in Glenurquhart's 1988 Camanachd Cup Final defeat to Kingussie in Inverness, joins the management team.



MARTIAL ARTS
WITH IAIN RODGER

David Sellick, Charlie McLaughlin, Artur Aniolowski, Daryll McLaughlin and Donna Whyte at the grading tests. Photos: Wullie Rodger

Successful grading tests

Kyokushinkai Karate

End of year grading tests took place last weekend with good results for the clubs. Almost everyone passed to the next level with some new high grades and black belts.

Young Charlie McLaughlin passed his 1st Kyu (Brown belt with black stripe) which means his next test is for the coveted black belt.

Charlie's older brother Darryl was testing for his shodan (first degree black belt) and passed. Congratulations Darryl.

Caledonia members from other clubs were also testing for black belt grades. David Sellick and Artur Aniolowski from the Stirling clubs both passed their shodan tests and Donna Whyte, originally from Oban and now the IKKU club instructor in Perth, passed her nidan (second degree black belt).

The guys all did exceptionally well as at the end of the three hour technical test they all had various numbers of full contact fights to complete. These fights are only for those who have

passed the technical section and have to be completed with the candidate still standing to obtain the pass.

Thanks go to the Kyokushin Karate and Senshi Do Kickboxing high grades who came in to 'help' with the fights.

Beginners are always welcome at the club so why not try something new for the New Year that could make a real difference in your life.

For club details contact Iain Rodger on 07584 166542 or iain@ikku.co.uk

Kickboxing

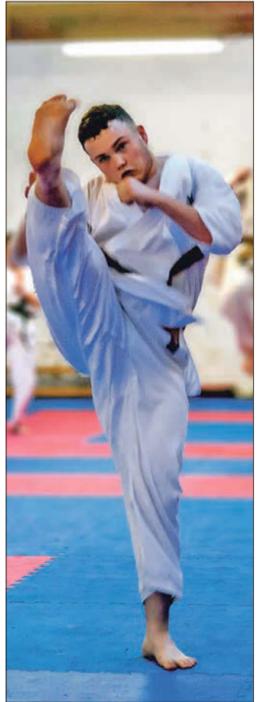
For club details contact Wullie Rodger on shihanwill@gmail.com or 07588 513618.

Shukokai Karate

For club details contact Kenny Gray on kenni.gray@btinternet.com.

BJJ

Anyone looking for more information about BJJ or MMA classes should contact club coach Iain (Coogie) Potter on coogiepots@gmail.com



Daryll McLaughlin.



Father and son Daryll and Daryll McLaughlin in action.



Rory Fleming and Donna Whyte.

Prizes hooked at Stag presentation

Angling

LOCHGILPHEAD and District Angling Club recently held its annual dinner and presentation of prizes at the Stag Hotel.

Dugald MacGill - who has won the award 25 times since 1973 - was club champion again and was presented with the Roy Clarke Cup.

The Ronnie Reid Cup was awarded to Neil Ward who came second in this season's competitions.

James Montgomery, who finished in third place, also won the Coillebar Cup as a result of catching the heaviest trout this season, weighing an impressive three pounds and six ounces. The club is still trying to get it out of him which loch he caught the trout in.

It wasn't just individual awards club members received, however, as the Lochgilphead club won this year's inter-club trophies after beating Oban and Campbeltown in home and away legs.

The club also held a charity



Dugald MacGill with his haul of trophies.

competition, which raised £200 in aid of mental health. James Livingstone won the competition and the club thanks everyone who participated or donated prizes.

Oban Otters celebrate success at annual gala

OBAN Otters hosted its annual club gala recently with the following results:

Small Pool Winner - Innes Russell. 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.

Widths: Girls 7 and under: front crawl and back-crawl - 1 Isla Muir; 2 Emily Moreland. Boys 7 and under: front crawl - 1 Elio MacGregor; 2 Alexander MacEwan; 3 Kai MacMillan; 4 Felix Hughes. Back crawl - 1 Felix Hughes; 2 Kai MacMillan; 3 Alexander MacEwan; 4 Elio MacGregor.

Girls 8 years: front crawl - 1 Louise Welsh; 2 Esme Tosh; 3 Ruth Joss; 4 Alyss MacDonald. Back crawl - 1 Esme Tosh; 2 Ruth Joss; 3 Alyss MacDonald; 4 Louise Welsh.

Boys 8 years: front crawl - 1 Alfie MacIntyre; 2 Ben Docherty; 3 Callum Russell; 4 Dean Boyle. Back crawl - 1 Alfie MacIntyre; 2 Ben Docherty; 3

Dean Boyle; 4 Callum Russell. Boys 9/10 years: front crawl - 1 Marco MacGregor; 2 Rufus Hughes; 3 Euan Tosh. Back crawl - 1 Marco MacGregor; 2 Euan Tosh; 3 Rufus Hughes.

Non-championship events: (length swimmers, not squad) Maclean cup - Girls 8 and under: 25m back crawl, breaststroke and front crawl - Charlotte Moreland.

Mackay Cup - boys 8 and under: 25m back crawl - 1 Finn MacKechnie; 2 Alfie MacIntyre; 3 Jonah Berry, 4 Ben Docherty. 25m breast stroke - 1 Finn MacKechnie; 2 Callum Russell; 3 Alfie MacIntyre; 4 Ben Docherty. 25m front crawl - 1 Alfie MacIntyre; 2 Ben Docherty; 3 Finn MacKechnie; 4 Jonah Berry.

Spence Shield - Girls 9/10 years: 25m back crawl - 1 Molly Gilchrist; 2 Alex Elliott; 3 Megan Carre; 4 Ceitidh Garvin. 25m Breast stroke - 1 Molly Gilchrist; 2 Juliette Main; 3 Alex Elliott; 4 Megan Carre. 25m front crawl - 1 Molly Gilchrist; 2 Megan Carre; 3 Ceitidh Garvin; 4 Katie MacLennan. Hutchison cup - Boys 9/10 years:

25m back crawl - 1 George Pagan; 2 Marco MacGregor; 3 James Muir; 4 Kyle Gibson. 25m breast stroke - 1 Rowen Moreland; 2 Jacques Coates; 3 George Pagan; 4 Lucas MacLeod. 25m front crawl - 1 Jacques Coates; 2 George Pagan; 3 James Muir; 4 Connor MacAulay.

Achnacreebeag Trophy - Girls 11 years and over: 50m back crawl, breaststroke and front crawl - 1 Lauren Gibson; 2 Caitlin MacPherson; 3 Islay Berry.

Larchfield Trophy - Boys 11 years and over: 50m back crawl, breaststroke and front crawl - Alex MacPherson.

Squad events: McCracken Cup - Boys 10 years: 50m butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle - Kai MacKechnie.

Tyndrum Cup Girls - 11 years: 50m butterfly - 1 Tayler Robinson; 2 Rachel Carre; 3 Kay Logan. 50m backstroke - 1 Tayler Robinson; 2 Rachel Carre; 3 Lauren Robinson. 50m breaststroke - 1 Rachel Carre; 2 Tayler Robinson; 3 Kay Logan. 50m freestyle - 1 Tayler Robinson; 2 Rachel Carre; 3 Lauren Robinson; 2 Rachel Carre, 2 Lauren

Robinson. 100m IM - 1 Tayler Robinson; 2 Rachel Carre; 3 Kay Logan.

Bank of Scotland Cup - Boys 11 years: 50m butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle - Ewan Dowd.

Intermediate Shield - Girls 12 years: 50m butterfly - 1 Jessica Main; 2 Edie Elliott; 2 Jessica Main, 50m breaststroke - 1 Jessica Main; 2 Edie Elliott; 50m freestyle - 1 Edie Elliott; 2 Jessica Main.

Iona Shop Cup - Boys 12 years: 100m butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle - Andrew Boyle.

Gateway Cup - Girls 13 years: 50m butterfly - 1 Rowan Drummond; 2 Jordan MacIntyre; 3 Mo Inall. 100m backstroke - 1 Jordan MacIntyre; 2 Rowan Drummond, 3 Mo Inall. 100m breaststroke - 1 Jordan MacIntyre; 2 Rowan Drummond; 3 Mo Inall. 100m freestyle - 1 Jordan MacIntyre; 2 Rowan Drummond; 3 Mo Inall.

Hannah's Shield - Boys 13 years: 50m butterfly, 100m backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle - 1 Callum MacInnes.

Fortieth Cup - Girls 14 and over: 50m butterfly: 1 Ella MacKechnie; 2 Evie

Swimming

Turner; 3 Freya MacKechnie. 100m backstroke - 1 Ella MacKechnie; 2 Evie Turner; 3 Ailsa Dowd. 100m breaststroke - 1 Ella MacKechnie; 2 Evie Turner; 3 Ailsa Dowd. 100m freestyle - 1 Ella MacKechnie; 2 Evie Turner; 3 Emily Hunter.

Hunter Cup - Boys 14 years and over: 100m butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle - 1 Sam Coates; 2 Jamie Jordan.

Individual Medleys: Boys 10 years: 100m IM - Kai MacKechnie. Girls - 11 years: 100m IM - 1 Tayler Robinson; 2 Rachel Carre; 3 Kay Logan. Boys 11 years: 100m IM - Ewan Dowd. Girls 12 years: 100m IM - 1 Edie Elliott; 2 Jessica Main. Boys 12 years: 200m IM - Andrew Boyle. Girls 13 years: 200m IM - 1 Rowan Drummond; 2 Jordan MacIntyre; 3 Mo Inall. Boys 13 years: 200 IM - Callum MacInnes. Girls 14 years: 200m IM - 1 Ella MacKechnie; 2 Evie Turner; 3 Ailsa Dowd. Boys 14 years: 200m IM - 1 Sam Coates; 2 Jamie Jordan.



Brothers Kai and Finn MacKechnie with their haul of trophies at the recent Oban Otters swimming gala. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL
THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £3200

To allow for disruption to the postal service over the festive period we will run spot the ball for 2 weeks. Please make sure your entries are in before noon, Friday 29th December.

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter
Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Friday 29th December 2017. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules
No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

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Week 1 of 2

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...

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Young Pupils taught scoring lesson by seven-goal Saints

Oban Saints 7
Campbeltown Pupils 0
DFDL Under-16 League

WITH the frozen pitch at Glencruitten forcing a second postponement of Oban Saints' Scottish Amateur Cup fourth round replay against Greenock High School Former Pupils, the only football in town last Saturday was the Dunbartonshire Football Development League clash between Oban Saints Under 16s and their local rivals Campbeltown Pupils.

The temperature lingered above freezing just long enough for referee John Scott to declare the 'all weather' surface at Oban High School playable giving football starved locals some action.

The visitors, with six under 15s and one under 14 in their small squad, kicked off attacking the school end but it was Saints who were first to threaten with Aaron McKay forcing a corner kick on the right inside the first minute. McKay sent over a teasing cross from the corner flag, which Daniel Sloss headed just over from the six-yard line.

Pupils responded with a third minute free kick which the combined efforts of Jude Bain and Jordan Norman could only clear as far as Elliot Gemmill who flashed a first time right foot effort inches wide of Saints' keeper Jake Weir's right hand post.

The Saints' midfield began to gain the upper hand against their less experienced opponents and were soon opening up the Campbeltown defence. Sent through by Cameron Clark in the seventh minute, Lennon Campbell attempted to chip Campbeltown keeper Archie McKellar from 25 yards with the stranded net minder relieved to see the ball clear the crossbar.

Sixty seconds later, Aaron McKay's run through the inside right channel was inches away

from connecting with Euan Finlay's threaded through ball. The little winger did, however, connect with another Finlay through ball in the 11th minute after good work by Gavin Forgrieve, but his finish from the corner of the six-yard box across the face of goal slipped wide of the far post.

From Archie McKellar's goal kick, Saints came forward again with Gavin Forgrieve testing McKellar's handling from 25 yards.

Pupils briefly threatened to break through with Saints defenders Blair MacFarlane and Jude Bain combining well to force out Matthew Lang. The home side quickly turned defence into attack where a strong run on the left wing by Lennon Campbell won a corner kick. Gavin Forgrieve's delivery from the left found the head of Jordan Norman who climbed well but sent his header from four yards over the crossbar.

Skinned

Saints made the breakthrough in the 16th minute when Aaron McKay skinned youngest man on the pitch, Campbeltown's Euan Dott, on the right before sending a cut-back from the byeline to Lennon Campbell who fired a right foot finish from 12 yards into the top corner.

The visitors responded well to falling behind and came close through Elliot Gemmill, who had a close range effort deflected into the side netting by Blair MacFarlane and Fraser MacBrayne who made a real nuisance of himself from a long punt from Archie McKellar in the 26th minute. The big centre forward forced his way into the Saints box and, from the corner of the six-yard box, sent a low shot across Jake Weir and inches wide of the far post.

Lennon Campbell had the opportunity to double his tally after Craig Millar was tripped inside the Pupils' penalty box



Jordan Norman, No 18, heads over the bar during the first half against Campbeltown Pupils last Saturday. Match report and photos: Derek Black

Youth football

after a good 28th minute break on the left. However, Archie McKellar guessed correctly, getting down well to his left to stop Campbeltown's effort from the penalty mark.

Unfortunately for the visitors, keeper McKellar wasn't quite so assured with his handling two minutes later allowing a speculative Jordan Norman effort from 25-yards to slip from his grasp and squirm into the net to double Saints' advantage.

Gavin Forgrieve tried his luck from distance five minutes before the interval, sending a thumping right foot drive from 30 yards just wide of the junction of post and bar.

Campbeltown lifted themselves again and ended the first 40 minutes camped in the Saints' half forcing a succession of corner kicks and finding themselves on the wrong end of a tight offside call from referee John Scott as Elliot Gemmill threatened to break clear.

Despite having the upper hand for the majority of the first half, Saints could count themselves slightly fortunate to go into the interval two goals to the good as



Campbeltown Pupils' Elliot Gemmill shoots wide.

with better finishing the visitors could have been on level terms. A heavy challenge from Daniel Sloss brought the only booking of the match in the first minute of the second half. The free kick from the edge of centre circle carried all the way to Jake Weir who could only palm the ball out to Pupils' central defender Calum Cook who headed a good chance wide of Weir's left hand post.

In the 45th minute, Jordan Norman linked up well with Aidan MacPhee to create a shooting opportunity for Gavin Forgrieve who saw his curling effort from the corner of the 18-yard box pushed round his left hand post by Archie McKellar.

Impressed

The keeper couldn't keep out Forgrieve's next attempt in the 52nd minute though. After a neat turn on the edge of the box, Forgrieve, who has already impressed with the senior Saints team and has an Argyll and Bute Cup winners medal in his trophy cabinet, celebrated his 15th birthday with a shot that was too hot for McKellar to handle and ended up in the back of the net.

Forgrieve was in the thick of the action again four minutes later, teeing up Andrew Law for a left foot volley from 12-yards which flew wide of McKellar's left hand post.

The more experienced Saints were now in complete control and tightened the screw further with a storming 57th minute run and left foot finish from Aidan MacPhee. Just 60 seconds later Saints notched their fifth from a 25-yard Craig Millar shot which flew past the static keeper to nestle in the back of the net.

Jordan Norman's afternoon



The two captains, Campbeltown's Ross Brown and Saints' Lennon Campbell, with referee John Scott at the start of the match.

came to a premature end in the 64th minute after a typically powerful run was halted by a perfectly timed tackle from Calum Cook.

The Saints man came off second best and after treatment left the field badly winded and nursing a nasty burn from the hardening artificial turf.

Saints notched another quick-fire double in the 68th and 69th minutes with birthday boy Gavin Forgrieve having a hand in both. Euan Finlay latched onto Forgrieve's ball through the inside right channel and tucked a low finish across Pupils' keeper McKellar and into the bottom corner for Saints' sixth goal.

Sixty seconds later Forgrieve sent Aidan MacPhee racing into the left hand side of the box but he was thwarted at his near post by McKellar.

The rebound fell kindly for

Andrew Law who lofted the ball into the six yard box where Cameron Clark stooped to head home for Saints' seventh.

With the temperature plummeting and the match long since over as a contest experienced whistler John Scott, now retired from the Scottish Amateur Football League but still keeping his hand in on the youth scene, wisely decided to blow slightly early for full time giving the Argyll derby spoils to Saints.

Despite being outplayed for long spells in what was a good advert for youth football in Argyll, Campbeltown Pupils will be pleased with the showing of their young players against the more experienced Oban side.

Everybody at Oban Saints Football Club would like to wish their loyal supporters and sponsors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Saints manager Alex Craik.

Frozen pitch sees Scottish Cup tie postponed

Football

LIKE the majority of amateur games, last Saturday's Scottish Cup fourth round replay between Oban Saints and Greenock HSFP fell victim to the cold weather.

It was to have been played at Glencruitten, but an inspection found the pitch frozen.

The game will now take place on Saturday January 6 with a 1.30pm kick-off. In charge is Greater Glasgow AFL referee Tommy Lacy.

The Oban side are trying to organise a friendly match on Saturday December 30 and are hopeful South Lochaber Thistle will be the opponents.

Club secretary David Buchanan said: 'We need to get a game under our belts before the Scottish Cup replay otherwise it will be a month since we played our last competitive match and that is too long a break before such an important cup tie.'

'It is always difficult to train at this time of year with the 3G pitch at Oban High School closed, but I'm sure the manager will have something up his sleeve to keep the boys ticking over.'

Scottish Amateur FL results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Scottish Amateur Cup, fourth round replay - Oban Saints v Greenock HSFP postponed; Premier Division 1 - Campbeltown Pupils no game; Port Glasgow 0, Dunoon 1; Premier Division Two - Cardross v Tarbert; postponed; FC Argyll v Lochgilphead Red Star postponed.

The teams will take a well-earned festive break and return to action on Saturday January 6.

Oban Saints youths' results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Kilbowie Union v Under 13s postponed; Gtlytan Thistle v Under 14s postponed; Under 15s v Clyde OSF postponed; Under 16s 7, Campbeltown Pupils 0. Scoring for Saints were Aaron McKay, Jordan Norman, Gavin Forgrieve, Aidan MacPhee, Craig Millar, Euan Finlay and Cameron Clark. Under 17s no game.

Like their senior counterparts, the Saints youth teams will take a break and return to action when the school resumes after the Christmas and New Year holidays.



Gavin Forgrieve nets Saints' sixth goal.



Cammy Clark heads home goal number seven.

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WEATHER

Thursday	Cloudy Winds moderate West South Westerly Temperatures 5°C to 9°C.
Friday	Cloudy with light rain Winds moderate South South Westerly Temperatures 8°C to 9°C.
Weekend Outlook	Heavy rain on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds strong West South Westerly Temperatures 8°C to 11°C.

FRIDAY

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday December 21, 2017** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Thur	01.25 1.3 07.18 3.9 13.44 1.5 19.27 3.7	Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55	
Fri	01.59 1.4 07.53 3.8 14.20 1.6 19.59 3.6	Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16	
Sat	02.30 1.5 08.28 3.7 14.56 1.7 20.32 3.5	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30	
Sun	03.02 1.6 09.06 3.6 15.36 1.8 21.11 3.3	Lochboisdale	+0.30			
Mon	03.42 1.7 09.51 3.4 16.27 1.9 21.59 3.2					
Tues	04.34 1.8 10.48 3.3 17.32 1.9 23.01 3.1					
Wed	05.39 1.8 12.06 3.3 18.41 1.8 *** **					

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

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Baxter: 'categoric assurance' given over school janitor hours

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

“The new council offices are not receiving janitorial time at the expense of our schools”

THE SENIOR councillor for Lochaber says he has been given a 'categoric assurance' schools' janitorial hours will not be allocated to Highland Council's new offices in Fort William.

Councillor Andrew Baxter, chairman of Highland Council's Lochaber Area Committee, told the *Lochaber Times* this week the assurance had come after he raised concerns following the council decision to transfer all catering, cleaning, facilities management (CCFM) janitorial staff to a new in-house service.

Mr Baxter says the worries were flagged up to him recently by a head teacher and the chairman of a local parent council.

There has been growing concern schools are to lose out on janitor hours generally, with some of these allocated for the cleaning and maintenance of new council accommodation in the Charles Kennedy Building, but also to allow Highland Council to offer them on a commercial basis to generate additional income.

One example was the Gaelic School at Caol, which was said to be having its janitor hours cut to just six a week.

In October last year, Highland Council agreed to retain CCFM/janitorial services as part of a re-design of the £20 million service.

The objective is to deliver a local, co-ordinated and integrated service, leading to improvements and efficiencies.

The decision to retain the provision of these services in-house was widely welcomed at the time. But since then there

have been worries over what this would mean, not just for schools, but for the after-hours use of schools by community groups.

But Mr Baxter said: 'Councillors agreed some time ago to review facilities management arrangements in all council buildings across the Highlands.

'I am hoping the changes causing concern in some Lochaber schools are simply the initial unintended consequences of that review and can be easily changed when councillors meet with managers early in the New Year.

'I've received a categoric assurance the new council offices are not receiving janitorial time at the expense of our schools. To do so would be unacceptable and if that was the case I would demand change.'

Asked to comment, Highland Council said the information given to the *Lochaber Times* was 'not an accurate reflection of the situation'.

The local authority told the *Lochaber Times*: 'Prior to transfer, a number of school establishments had no facilities management/janitorial service provision and under the former allocation, model schools were only entitled



Youngsters at Lundavra Primary School in Fort William get in the festive mood at their annual Christmas show.

It's the most wonderful time of the year

Youngsters at schools across Lochaber have been having great fun staging Christmas shows and pantomimes for family and friends. Our photographers have been out at many of the events and in next week's edition, Thursday December 28, we will publish a colour photograph special with a wide selection of fantastic images in our print edition and online. Until then, however, you can get a taste of all the fun and excitement from some amazing performances on our website at www.obantimes.co.uk

to receive a full-time janitor if the school roll was 146-plus. In regards to the Gaelic School, Fort William, (school roll of less than 100) the arrangements put in place for janitorial cover

were a temporary measure while Highland Council decided the future of the CCFM/Janitorial Service.

'Under the new allocation model, the Gaelic School will

receive an FM service provision for six hours in 2018/19. In the meantime the current provision continues.

'As for the new council offices, Charles Kennedy Building will

be cleaned by cleaning staff transferring from closure of Fullton House and Lochaber House, so what you have been told about janitors doing this work is again not accurate.'

NHS 'disrespectful' over Strontian care home

NHS HIGHLAND has been accused of being 'disrespectful' to communities across Ardgour, Sunart, Morvern and West Ardnarnach after health officials failed to provide any updates on the current and remaining building works at Strontian's Dail Mhor care home.

The six-bed care home, owned by Highland Council and managed by NHS Highland since 2012, closed in August this year for urgent plumbing repairs, with residents forced to relocate.

But repairs to the 45-year-old building - initially expected to be completed by the end of October - uncovered asbestos in the heating system control room, delaying the projected completion date until December.

At a public meeting in November, it was agreed to form a working group of public

and community representatives with the inaugural meeting on December 12.

But after that meeting in Strontian last week, 18 residents and community councillors who had gathered to hear an update from four senior NHS Highland staff regarding Dail Mhor, say they left frustrated and angry they had travelled long distances to be told nothing.

NHS Highland deputy director Tracy Ligema apologised to the meeting saying she was disappointed at being unable to update people with details about the work done or give a breakdown of the cost of restoring Dail Mhor so it was 'fit for purpose' as a care home.

However, she said she would provide this information as soon as possible, and certainly prior to the next meeting.

Given the constraints of the current

premises, she said it would perhaps be better to invest in more permanent solutions. However, she said no decision has been made yet and any proposal on a permanent closure would be looked at by the Highland Health and Social Care Committee.

But the meeting ended with the overwhelming feeling from the majority of those in attendance that Dail Mhor should be re-opened.

An unhappy Sunart Community Council chairwoman Denise Anderson told the *Lochaber Times*: 'I am thoroughly disappointed representatives couldn't tell us what work has been done, what still needs to be completed and any detail on why the NHS feels the building is allegedly 'not fit for purpose'. It's not only unhelpful, it's disrespectful.'

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Festive greetings to all Lochaber Times readers



Rhoda Grant and David Stewart, Labour MSPs for Highlands and Islands

‘WE ARE proud to represent the Highlands and Islands which is no small task given the area is approximately the size of Belgium.

‘Much of this area is rural with scattered communities, which brings different and varying issues, especially in relation to transport links and connectivity.

‘Good broadband and mobile phone signals are essential for every community tackling depopulation. Local businesses need good connectivity to survive, colleges need it to deliver remote learning, health boards need it to deliver a good service and emergency services need it for dealing with all kinds of emergencies.

‘On this one issue alone, we have been working hard for many years and when constituents contact us about this particular issue and the lack of clarity on the next phase of the roll out, we push the Scottish Government for answers in order that communities can decide whether to proceed with their own solutions.

‘We have been working on many other issues including the farm payments shambles, the government’s continued drive to remove local jobs to the central belt, falling standards of educa-

tion, transport links and health provision.

‘We have also been active on road safety. Over the years we have initiated many campaigns, more than 24 at the last count, related to making our roads safer for all users. One of the most recent campaigns was the single track Roads initiative, supported by Tesco and VisitScotland, which comprised an educational leaflet advising motorists on how best to drive on single track roads, highlighting proper use of passing places to permit overtaking as well as allowing other vehicles to pass.

‘Rest assured we will continue to work and deliver for our constituents and fight for alternative approaches that funds and improves services.

‘We wish all constituents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.’

Donald Cameron MSP, Highlands and Islands

‘AS ADVENT comes to a close and Christmas draws nearer, it is a good opportunity to look back on what has been an eventful year.

‘In the Scottish Parliament, I have been honoured to serve my first full calendar year as an MSP for the Highlands and Islands, working hard to raise issues I know are important to local communities including securing better broadband, reversing depopulation and ensuring the Highlands and Islands reap the same benefits as other parts of Scotland.

‘We saw the unanimous passing of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill, something which we hope will deliver real change to children right across Scotland. It is right we do all we can to ensure every child gets an equal chance in life to achieve their full potential.

‘As a father of three children, I feel that this time of year, the time of Jesus’ birth, is when we should reflect on all children and young people and a reminder that as a politician, it is my duty to do all I can to ensure they are not forgotten about, particularly at a time when domestic and international politics is so turbulent and volatile.

‘I look forward to celebrating this special time of year and look forward to dealing with the challenges that face us over the coming year.

‘I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2018.’



Donald Cameron, MSP for Highlands and Islands. Photograph: Wullie Marr/Deadline News



Ian Blackford MP.

Ian Blackford MP, Ross, Skye and Lochaber

‘I WOULD like to wish everyone in Ross, Skye and Lochaber a wonderful Christmas and, when it comes, a good New Year.

‘Christmas is a time when families come together not only to enjoy the festivities, but also to reflect on past times with those who may no longer be with us.

While this may bring some sadness, we should take comfort by remembering the happiness we shared with them over the years.

‘Over the festive period, of course, many people have to be at work and I hope they also have time to enjoy the celebrations. I would particularly like to thank members of the emergency services who are on duty every day of the year to ensure we are kept safe.

‘At this time, too, we should remember those without homes in our own country and people across the world who have been driven from their own lands, especially the young children whose families may have been split up and face an uncertain future.

‘Despite all the troubles of the world, Christmas is still a time of wonder when we celebrate the

birth of Jesus and look forward to all the fun the festive season brings. I know every school will have a had a show and I hope you enjoyed watching the performances of the youngsters, joining in their excitement and counting down the days until ‘Santa’ visits.

‘May you find peace and joy this Christmas.’

Maree Todd MSP, Highlands and Islands

‘NOLLAIG Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr/ Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

‘It’s a real pleasure and a privilege to represent the Highlands and Islands in the Scottish Parliament. In November I was also made Minister for Childcare and Early Years – or the Baby Box Minister as one dad said to me! I think it’s the best job in government – I get to cuddle babies, play with toddlers and meet lots of inspiring young folk.

It has been a great year for positive progress throughout Scotland, thanks to bills introduced or passed at Holyrood and a court victory for the Scottish Government.

Highlights included the child poverty bill and the fracking ban as well as the public apology to gay men, convicted of now abolished offences.

Scotland has proven to be bold when it comes to public health policy. I was absolutely delighted by the strong and decisive ruling by the Supreme Court that minimum unit pricing has been upheld. I’ve long been aware of the potentially destructive nature of problem drinking in Scotland and, being a health professional, I know what an incredible difference this pioneering and life-saving alcohol pricing policy will have.

There is much to look forward to, including the Social Security

Bill and progressive tax reforms. There is a real appetite for bold progressive change in Scotland and next year another global first – our ‘Year of Young People’. They are our greatest asset and they’re worth celebrating.



Maree Todd MSP.

Donald Cameron of Lochiel, Lord Lieutenant of Inverness

‘THESE are exciting times for Lochaber and we will see many changes in the coming years.

‘Liberty’s purchase of the smelter in Fort William is an exciting venture and will bring employment to the area. A new hospital will hopefully be built soon, new shops are opening and businesses appear to be prospering.

‘There would seem to be a vibrancy afoot, the like of which we have not seen for a very long time.

‘Increased activity will, of course, need to be handled with care as there may well be strains on our infrastructure but I am sure we will cope with any difficulties that arise, such as the traffic problem.

‘We are lucky we live in an area of outstanding natural beauty and that we are regarded as the Outdoor Capital of the UK. Let us make sure the changes that occur do not detract from our status as one of the finest places to live and to visit in the country.

‘I wish you all a very happy festive season and I hope 2018 brings you health, happiness and prosperity.’



Kate Forbes MSP.

Kate Forbes MSP Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch

‘I LEARNED a new carol this Christmas.

‘It is entitled *Fullness of Grace in Man’s Human Frailty* and really captures the reason why I’m in politics and why I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

‘I see the frailty of humanity every day of the week – the homeless gentleman sleeping on the station platform, the hard-pressed mum working three jobs to keep a roof over her head or the trafficked teenager at the mercy of evil men and women. So where is the fullness of grace – because even the best politicians and the most compassionate ideologies don’t solve the problem once and for all?’

‘Sure, I see political and economic greed wreaking havoc across the world, and certainly in the UK.

‘And it is easy to stand up in parliament and talk about eradicating homelessness. It is quite another thing to offer my spare room to a woman who would otherwise be sleeping in sub-zero temperatures or to give up my holidays to work with vulnerable refugees in eastern Europe.

‘At its heart, Christmas is not a celebration of nice words and happy smiles. Instead, it is all about someone who was willing, in the words of the carol, to swap power, glory and comfort for scandal, homelessness and hunger.

‘And all of this for a purpose – to give hope.

‘So this Christmas, while you may feel hopeless as you consider the frailty of our common humanity, may you know and share enduring peace and hope.’

View from the Chamber

THE THREE words ‘employment law seminar’ may not set your heart racing but they did add up to an enjoyable and enlightening breakfast seminar with Kirk Tudhope LLP of Ledingham Chalmers Solicitors last week.

Kirk heads Ledingham Chalmers’ employment team and is the only Law Society accredited specialist in employment law based in the Highlands.

Our business breakfast seminar with Kirk covered all aspects of employment law in an accessible and engaging way.

Staff from a wide variety of local busi-

nesses at the fully-booked event also enjoyed a delicious buffet breakfast at the fantastic new venue and Chamber member ‘Garrison West’ public house & kitchen in Cameron Square, Fort William. Because employment law is such a fast-changing and vital area for all businesses, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce holds regular seminars to help ensure member businesses are kept up-to-date with current workplace legislation.

Kirk provided clear and pragmatic guidance on a wide variety of topics,

including harassment in the workplace, privacy at work, discipline, holiday pay and the biggest change of all that is looming large on the horizon – the far-reaching changes that will come into effect with the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regime (GDPR) on May 25 2018.

Thanks so much to Kirk for another incredibly useful and engaging seminar and to Garrison West for their great hospitality. Kirk will join us again for a seminar focusing exclusively on preparing your business for GDPR on

February 15. Check out www.lochaberchamber.co.uk for details.

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.

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Fears over expansion of loch hydro scheme



The deteriorating road surface of the A82 as it approaches the new roundabout adjacent to the new M&S store in Fort William. JP F51 Rough Roads 01

Potholes left A82 road like 'surface of moon'

TRUNK roads operator BEAR Scotland says it has repaired the growing number of potholes that had rendered sections of the A82 like the crater-strewn 'surface of the moon' according to one local driver.

A spokesperson for BEAR Scotland told the *Lochaber Times* this week: 'Cold and wet winter weather and particularly the freeze and thaw cycle can have a serious impact on road surfaces leading to the rapid development of potholes.

'We're aware of the recent deterioration of the road surface on sections of the A82

near Lochybridge and Nevis Bridge, Fort William, and our teams carried out temporary repairs overnight last night [Monday] to address these defects.

'Our teams are in the process of designing a permanent repair to resurface over 1km of the route in this area in March.

'Consultation for these larger permanent repairs will soon be carried out as some overnight road closures will be required for safety.

'Until then our teams will monitor the temporary repairs until the road can be permanently fixed in March.'



Repairs have been carried out along the road by BEAR. JP F51 Rough Roads 02

MARK ENTWISTLE

mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

IF MILLIONS more tons of rock were excavated and transported off site to build a huge new hydro-electric scheme close to Loch Lochy, there could be major disruption to local communities and tourism.

Those fears were among concerns highlighted by community councillors following a briefing last week by staff from electricity firm SSE which now wants to more than double the capacity of its pumped storage scheme earmarked for Coire Glas.

SSE was granted planning consent for a 600MW pumped storage scheme at Coire Glas costing £800million in 2013. But the company now intends submitting a revised application for a 1500MW project to make it more commercially attractive.

SSE staff delivered a briefing to this month's meeting of Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council, on the latest developments.

Pumped storage schemes involve two reservoirs of water at different heights. When demand for electricity is low, power is used to pump water from the lower loch to the upper reservoir.

The water is then released to create energy at a time when demand is high.

The major change to the scheme would be the excavation of a larger underground space to house bigger turbines.

The size of the previously consented upper reservoir and associated 92m-high dam would remain the same.

At last week's community council presentation, project manager Andy Gregory ex-

plained the 600MW scheme would have required a million tons of rock to be blasted and dug out.

The hope is the revised planning application will be submitted early next year. And as larger turbines and tunnels would be needed, more rock would need to be excavated,' he explained.

SSE is looking at using the Caledonian Canal to transport much of the rock, but some would still need to go by road.

That revelation sparked concern among some community councillors, including council chairman John Fotheringham.

'You're talking about increasing the amount of rock needing removed from one million tons to more than two and half times that,' he said.

'Local roads have already been significantly damaged by large

lorries transporting components for wind farms. Our roads are starting to deteriorate and this would increase damage to our roads even more. We are not opposed to schemes like this in principle but this is a big thing for our small community. Traffic has already grown by 15 per cent this year.'

Mr Fotheringham then asked about financial community benefit.

'I don't want to see SSE ruin our villages for no community benefit,' he said grimly.

SSE's Corinna Scholes replied that the company does not discuss community benefits along with applications, adding: 'We talk separately about community benefit as the application is a stand alone element.'

Mr Fotheringham said the communities which stood to face most disruption were Glen-

garry and Spean Bridge: 'So we need to make sure we are not forgotten in all of this inevitable disruption.'

'You cannot expect to have all that construction work run through our community council area and its impact on tourism for no community benefit.'

When contacted by the *Lochaber Times*, SSE said: 'Since submitting the scoping report for the Coire Glas Pumped Hydro Scheme in May 2017, SSE has received invaluable feedback from the local community that has shaped many aspects of the design work.'

'SSE is committed to exploring all options available to the project to minimise disruption to the communities surrounding the project and will continue to engage closely with the community as plans for the project progress.'

Fort William tenant's dismay over TV service

A HIGHLIGHT of the festive season is when that special bumper double edition copy of the *Radio Times* hits the news stands and you can get your holiday TV viewing planned.

So spare a thought for one resident of the recently refurbished Tweeddale Apartments in Fort William who, while forking out money every month for a subscription to Sky television and eagerly anticipating the Christmas television schedules, has discovered her new home has issues with satellite television reception.

Jacqueline Duncanson says despite paying £24 per month for a Sky subscription, the service she gets is not

what it should be because of a lack of cable feeds taken from the building's communal satellite dish.

'There is only one feed from the aerial coming into each apartment and that causes problems,' said Ms Duncanson, who claims at least another four or five other fellow Tweeddale residents have also been forced to call out television engineers.

'It means I can only record a programme if I am already watching something I have previously recorded - not when I am watching live broadcasts,' she added. 'I phoned Sky and it said there was nothing it could do.'

Tenants moved into new homes in the

£2.9 million Tweeddale Apartments development in the town centre in August.

The development provides a mixture of 22 one and two bedroomed flats, which are for affordable rent, owned and managed by Highland Council.

The project was funded by Highland Council as a part of the agreed Council House Build Programme with grant assistance from the Scottish Government.

Ms Duncanson says she has also contacted her landlord Highland Council on several occasions but has received no help in resolving the issue.

Asked if it was aware of any such

problems, a Highland Council spokesperson told us this week: 'The specification for new build properties includes a digital cable that will support basic digital TV.'

'If tenants want additions to this service they need to arrange that with the provider themselves.'

But Ms Duncanson added: 'The engineer says there needs to be two cable feeds coming into my home, but the council won't let me have another one installed.'

'It's really disappointing, especially as it is coming up to Christmas and after paying money to have Sky and not getting the whole benefit.'

Glencoe volunteer wins national award

DAVID BAKER has made a significant contribution to the care of Glencoe's beautiful landscapes over the last decade, often carrying out difficult and tiring tasks in all kinds of weather.

Now his determination to look after this unique landscape, hopefully ensuring the protection of Glencoe's much-loved wild open spaces for many years to come, has won the intrepid volunteer a national award.

David was honoured with a National Trust for Scotland Volunteer of the Year award at a ceremony in Perth.

Awards were presented in categories including gardens, groups, outdoor conservation and built property, representing the breadth of volunteer work for the National Trust for Scotland across the country.

David's voluntary work has included management of the people counter system. Although time consuming to collect, this data is invaluable in assessing footfall on the paths and securing funding to repair them.

His practical role in caring for this precious historical landscape - including rubbish clearing and tidying - is of immense value to the Glencoe team and the many walkers and tourists who come to this site.



David receives his award.

David received his award from the trust's chief executive Simon Skinner, who said: 'Volunteers are a vital force in protecting Scotland's heritage, devoting their time and talent to our charity and the wonderful places in our care.'

'I want to say thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers who play such an important role at Glencoe and at every National Trust for Scotland site across the country.'

The National Trust for Scotland has around 3,500 volunteers who play a key role in keeping Scotland's heritage alive at properties and offices all over Scotland.

Throughout Scotland, dedicated groups of outdoor conservation volunteers carry out practical work to ensure the protection of precious landscapes for people to experience now and for the benefit of future generations.

Hogmanay dip in Loch Linnhe

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.

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Rescue sparks West Coast tug return call

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar leader councillor Roddie Mackay has called on the UK government to re-instate the West Coast-based tug after another incident last Thursday night.

An emergency tug had to make a 12-hour voyage from Orkney to help a cargo ship that lost power off the island of Taransay in the Western Isles. The Fame, with five people on board, reported the loss at about 5.30pm. Two lifeboats and the Stornoway Coastguard helicopter were called out to help the stricken vessel which was carrying salmon feed.

The coastguard agency's emergency towing vessel (ETV), based in Orkney, eventually arrived at the scene.

Councillor Mackay said: 'Last night we had an incident off the West Coast which could have seriously impacted marine wildlife and the coastal environment,' he said.

'These incidents are all too frequent and we remain very concerned about the current situation. We will once again be making the case to the UK Government for a second ETV based on the West Coast to address this serious issue.'

'We are also raising the matter of deployment of the ETV with the MCA [Maritime and Coastguard Agency] as the lifeboats from Leverburgh and Stornoway have had to assist the freight ship until the ETV from Orkney arrives more than 12 hours later. It is unacceptable.'

Skye arts group on awards shortlist

ATLAS Arts has been short-listed for a 2018 Scottish Rural Award in the conservation and the environment category.

The Skye-based arts organisation was selected as a finalist because of its ethos and commitment to exploring issues relating to the environment.

Its artistic programme focuses on pressing issues of contemporary and rural life to help create a stronger sense of identity and to foster cultural well-being. The organisation's summer project, Climavore: On Tidal Zones by artist-duo Cooking Sections, saw an oyster table constructed in the Bayfield area of Portree in September to promote ingredients (bivalves and seaweeds) that proactively respond to the new ecological challenges of Scottish waters.

Health chiefs agree 24/7 nursing cover for Raasay is top priority

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

NHS HIGHLAND agrees with MSP Rhoda Grant that a third party agreement is needed as a 'matter of urgency' to enable the health board to provide 24-hour-a-day nursing cover on Raasay.

Frustrated and annoyed about the lack of progress in securing out-of-hours nursing cover on the island, Mrs Grant wrote to NHS Highland chief executive Elaine Mead and Scottish Ambulance chief executive Pauline Howie after Raasay Community

Council contacted her complaining of 'interminable delays'. Raasay residents told her their community is now exposed to greater risk than at any time in the last 80 years because there is no nursing cover at nights and weekends.

Mrs Grant met community representatives on Raasay in January this year and has been supporting its campaign to have a professional nursing presence 24/7.

'Now, after a year of prevarication, we are no further forward, despite the community making a concession to try to get the cover

they deserve,' said Mrs Grant. 'It is not acceptable and the public is getting weary of this. The health service needs more investment and more staff.'

'It is all coming apart at the seams in the Highlands and Islands.'

In June, the community conceded that, rather than insisting it must be a nurse, it would be acceptable if health and social care support workers filled the role, on condition they were given Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) emergency responder training.

But Mrs Grant says she has

been told by NHS Highland that because there is no third-party agreement in place with the ambulance service, it cannot insist individuals carry out this training.

'I agree with the community that a third party agreement is needed as a matter of urgency between NHS Highland and SAS,' added Mrs Grant.

However, NHS Highland told the *Lochaber Times* it is currently working on setting up a third party agreement.

'As part of their job description, the support workers are to receive additional emergency

training so that – following calls to NHS 24 – they can be called out to provide unscheduled care by rural practitioners based in Broadford or by advanced nurse practitioners,' NHS Highland explained.

'The mechanism to enable this additional training to happen is dependent on a third party agreement and that is what we are currently progressing.'

'Once the agreement is in place, and our staff are in receipt of the necessary training, we will be able to provide a strengthened out-of-hours service for residents on Raasay.'



Rhoda Grant MSP.

Point school pupils get new sports kit thanks to trust

COMMUNITY wind farm charity Point and Sandwick Trust (PST) has kitted Sgoil an Rubha (Point School) pupils out in new football strips.

The trust sponsored two sets of strips for the school after its principal teacher, Anne Macphail, told PST general manager Donald John MacSween the school's strips had dwindled to the point where they no longer had a full set - and those they did have were in poor condition.

Parents had begun to ask questions about why Sgoil an Rubha did not have strips, when so many other schools did, and the parent council had begun looking into where they could find money for replacements.

Now the children have new ones from Sportsworld in Stornoway, funded by £700 from PST, and are looking forward to wearing them in competitions. It also means the parent council can buy educational resources for the school instead.

Point and Sandwick's donation to the school follows on their sponsorship in the sum-



Point pupils and staff with their new sports kit.

mer of strips for Point Football Club's Under-18 squad.

Those strips brought the footballers luck right away as they won a local cup on their first

outing. They also benefited youngsters in villages in Tanzania as their old strips were taken out to Africa by Alasdair Nicholson on a trip there to do

voluntary work. The strips for Sgoil an Rubha mark the second time PST has supported the school directly, following last year's donation of Lego

sets for use in play therapy. Ms Macphail said: 'The parent council were looking at it but then Point and Sandwick gave us £700 for strips. I'm totally blown away.'

Ms Macphail said it was important the pupils are kitted out. 'It makes them proud of their school. They feel part of the team and feel part of Point. It makes them feel good and if they feel good, they play better,' she said.

Mr MacSween added: 'Point and Sandwick Trust is delighted to sponsor sports strips for Sgoil an Rubha, following our sponsorship of the Point U18 football strips. Sport and team work is an important part of the school experience. Inspirational teachers, such as Anne Macphail in Sgoil an Rubha follow a fine tradition of giving pupils access to all kinds of team sports. A well-run school, with happy pupils, is a credit to any community and PST is happy to support the school in this way and look forward to further joint projects in the future.'

Helpline launched after death of teenager

A 24-HOUR confidential support line and counselling service has been set up for anyone affected by the death of a 15-year-old pupil at The Nicolson Institute in Stornoway.

Emergency services were called to the school on Tuesday afternoon last week following concerns for Anton Michael, who later died at Western Isles Hospital. In a statement, the school said Anton was a 'lovely young man who was well regarded by staff and pupils'. Police Scotland say there were no suspicious circumstances and a report would be sent to the procurator fiscal.

Announcing the support line (01851 705600) the Outer Hebrides chief officer's group for public protection issued the following statement: 'The members of the chief officer's group wish to convey their heartfelt sympathies to the family of Anton Michael at this sad time and would ask that their privacy be respected as they come to terms with their loss. The exceptional work done by staff from all agencies, especially school staff, is greatly appreciated. The staff were met with very difficult circumstances, but did everything humanly possible to save Anton.'

'The death of a young person is felt throughout the whole of the islands and beyond and our thoughts are with the pupils at the school and the wider community.'

Writer Ian Rankin heaps praise on Skye Book Festival

REBUS creator Ian Rankin has hailed this year's Skye Book Festival a great event.

Held in September in Portree, the success of this year's event has added weight to the view that literary events in Scotland are increasing in popularity. Organisers of the Skye event say the plaudits from their guest writers are welcome and confirm the major sponsors of book festivals throughout Scotland can continue to get good returns for their support. Headlining Skye's 2017 festival, Fife-born Rankin drew a full house in

Portree when he spoke about the origins of his character, Detective John Rebus.

Speaking warmly about the rapidly-growing event, Rankin said: 'What a great festival – well-run and welcoming with a passionate audience. Lovely location, too.'

Similar sentiments have been expressed by another best-seller, Kilmarnock-born Graeme Macrae Burnet, whose book *His Bloody Project*, the story of a 17-year-old Highland boy named Roddy Macrae who committed a triple homicide around 1869, proved highly popular with the

Skye audience. 'I was thrilled to be invited to take part in this year's Skye Book Festival.'

'The audience was knowledgeable and enthusiastic and I received a very warm welcome from everyone involved in organising the event. And, of course, it takes place among the spectacular scenery of the isle of Skye. I'd thoroughly recommend it to fellow writers and readers.'

Managing director of host organisation The Aros Centre, Donald MacDonald, says the growing range of sponsors this

year is proof that well-organised events can bring valuable endorsements. 'Creative Scotland has been very supportive from the beginning and we have been encouraged by the support of local backers for the festival,' he said.

Mr MacDonald added he felt the balance of poetry and press in both Gaelic and English was one of the real strengths of the festival.

The 2018 Skye Book Festival will be held from September 6 to 8 and internationally-known authors are already showing interest in attending.

It's Christmas

It's been 12 months since the Cairns moved in and what a transformation. Christmas couldn't be better and as Mike says Happy Wife, Happy Life. Merry Christmas everyone from the Cairns, and The Cairngorm Group



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Government urged to halt bank closures

HIGHLANDS and Islands Labour MSP Rhoda Grant has called on the Westminster Government to step in and stop the proposed closure of 62 Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) branches, 13 of which are in the Highlands and Islands.

Mrs Grant has already called on the chief executive of the RBS to revisit the decision, which includes plans to axe branches in Mallaig, Kyle and Barra.

After speaking in the debate in Holyrood on Thursday, Mrs Grant said the planned closures

would have a devastating impact on all of Scotland, but especially in the Highlands and Islands.

'The reasons used in justification are cynical. We have the worst broadband in Scotland, indeed in the UK, and therefore the ability to bank online is a distant dream rather than a reality,' she said.

'Possibly the worst of these proposals is the closure of the branch in Castlebay on Barra. This means people have a 20-mile drive and a ferry to catch just to get to the bank, then they need to get back again! This will

probably mean it will take the best part of a day to access the bank, not to mention the added cost of fuel and ferry travel. What makes all of this worse is that we all own this bank.'

Mrs Grant said it should also not be forgotten that the staff who work in these branches are losing their jobs.

'The distance they would have to travel to alternative branches will make relocation impossible. Neither do they have a hope of gaining a similar job in these rural communities, where jobs are scarce.

'These are closures that are being directed by the bank we bailed out. The people making these decisions owe their own jobs to the communities they are now riding rough shod over. This has to stop. This bank belongs to the people and the bank must make the people its priority.'

'The Westminster Government could intervene to stop this on behalf of all us, the shareholders. They must, because it was them who changed the way pensions were paid forcing people to put their pension straight into their bank account and now, because

of that, they will be unable to access it.'

Another local MSP also spoke in Thursday's debate. Kate Forbes told fellow MSPs that rural communities across the Highlands feel 'powerless' in the face of the proposed branch closures. The MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch called for a reversal of the decision and greater consultation with people living in rural areas so that customers' needs helped shape future banking provision.

'So many people across Scotland feel powerless as national

banks close branches at a faster rate than ever before, withdrawing from communities, leaving many customers behind,' said Ms Forbes. 'I believe they should reverse that decision, not least because in 2008, we collectively bailed out the Royal Bank of Scotland at a cost of £45 billion and we, the taxpayers, are still the majority shareholder.'

'The very customers who feel powerless and the very customers who will be most disadvantaged are the very customers whose taxes funded that bailout.'

Lochaber sites on new volcanic driving tour

EVEN more tourists could be heading towards Lochaber if a new driving route proves popular.

Ben Nevis, Ardnamurchan, Skye and Glencoe are all part of 10 UK and Irish volcanic locations selected as stops on the new route.

The 10 locations are all volcanic ranges and have been curated by TV historian Dr Michael Scott to shed light on the little known volcanic history of our country.

The KONA 10 route was created by car manufacturer Hyundai to celebrate the launch of the company's new compact SUV the KONA.

The journey starts at Mount Snowdon in Wales, before heading across the sea to the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland, via a trip to Croghan Hill. It then crosses to Scafell Pike, England's highest elevation, then on to Scotland to North Berwick Law in East Lothian. From there it is to Edinburgh and Castle Rock and Arthur's Seat. Glencoe is next before reaching Ben Nevis.

The route then heads to Ardnamurchan before finally, Skye and the Cuillin Ridge.

Dr Scott commented: 'There is the most incredible yet surprising volcanic history in the UK and at Ardnamurchan. This never before attempted route will take people on a journey through a rich and incredible tapestry of human history and achievement.'

First to complete the KONA 10 challenge was adventurer Sophie Radcliffe, who recently visited all 10 sites in just 69 hours. She drove as far as possible at each location before running, walking, climbing or cycling to the top.



Lochaber high pupils help spread festive parcel cheer

AN ARMY of pupils and staff from Lochaber High School has been wrapping and delivering 450 Christmas parcels to elderly or disabled people in the community.

The project, funded by a 'Dress Down Day' in October and a generous donation from

the Rotary Club of Lochaber, involved S1 pupils wrapping, and S6 pupils delivering, packages of Christmas treats with cards designed by S1 art pupils.

The project was co-ordinated by Elizabeth Gow, deputy head teacher, who is pictured receiving a donation from Flora

McKee, accompanied by Geoff Heathcote of the Lochaber Rotary Club and some of the pupils involved.

Miss Gow told the *Lochaber Times*: 'Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this project to bring Christmas cheer to vulnerable people in Lochaber.'

Kyle lifeboat rescues lone kayaker after paddle snaps

A SNAPPED paddle led to a lone kayaker being rescued by Kyle of Lochalsh RNLI's volunteer crew on Saturday morning.

The Kyle RNLI crew was alerted just before 10am on Saturday to help the paddler, who was reported drifting between the Crowlin and Longay islands.

Kyle lifeboat Spirit of Fred Olsen launched just minutes later and made best speed towards the last known location of the casualty close to Longay island.

The crew arrived on scene shortly afterwards and after making radio contact with him, began a search of the area.

They located the casualty at 10.26am and after a quick assessment to confirm he was not injured, transferred him on board the lifeboat. The lifeboat then took the kayaker and his kayak back to Broadford where he was dropped off half an hour later.

A Kyle RNLI spokesperson said: 'The kayaker had left Broadford this morning and was making his way to the Uags area of the Applecross peninsula



The kayaker and his kayak on board the lifeboat on the way in to Broadford. Photograph: Kyle RNLI

when his paddle snapped in half. He sensibly turned around and began trying to make his way back towards the shelter of Longay island, where we located him uninjured but very cold.'

Nether Lochaber Village Hall ceilidh

NETHER Lochaber Village Hall will host a family ceilidh on Friday December 29 from 7-11pm.

The Midgies Ceilidh Band will provide the music and there will also be a piper, good craic and dancing. This is a family event, bring your own bottle, with traditional fare available for a small donation.

Entry and a local minibus service are by donation - no tickets. Booking is advisable as places are limited. To reserve your place, text/call 07767 318857 or email netherlochaberca@btinternet.com

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FW



Campbell MacKintosh from Onich with his vouchers after winning the Christmas card competition. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.

Campbell tops the draw in Christmas card competition

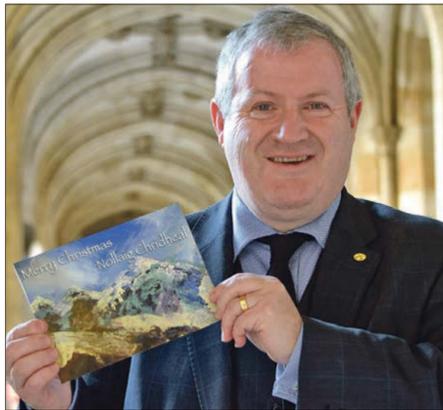
A PAINTING inspired by the hills around South Lochaber will be on display in the Houses of Parliament, 10 Downing Street and perhaps even in a Royal residence as it was the winning design in the Christmas card competition for MP Ian Blackford.

Each of the four high schools in Lochaber were invited to take part, attracting a large number of entries from which the spectacular artwork of 12-year-old Kinlochleven High School pupil Campbell MacKintosh from Onich was chosen.

At a presentation during this week's school assembly, he received the prize of £45 worth of vouchers for a local mountain biking shop – the perfect choice for keen biker Campbell. Each school also gets a box of House of Commons handmade chocolates.

Due to parliamentary business, Ian Blackford was unable to present the prize himself, but in a letter to Campbell said: 'May I congratulate you on winning the competition to design my Christmas card. Everyone has been very impressed at the quality of the picture and commented on the fact it was produced by such a young artist. I know you are a very keen sportsman and mountain biker so I hope you enjoy using your prize.'

Costs of the card were met by Lochaber companies Ferguson Transport, Corpach Boatbuilders, Nevis Range, Mallaig Harbour Authority and Liberty British Aluminium, with all donations being deposited with Claggan-based Highland Communities Credit Union.



Ian Blackford with Campbell's winning artwork – a painting of Lochaber mountains – for his Christmas cards this year. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, the Write Image.



Ballachulish residents of all ages took part in the Santa Dash on Saturday.



Event organiser Merriol Baldwin presents Rona Yard with her prize of a Fitbit2.

Santa Dash cash donated to Balla groups

DOZENS of people took part in the fifth annual Ballachulish Santa Dash on Saturday December 9.

Thanks to the number of entries and a raffle, the team raised £335 for local organisations.

The money will be divided between Ballachulish Village Hall, 4th Lochaber Scouts and Ballachulish playpark.

Two top prizes – a Fitbit2 and whisky from Highland Titles worth more than £100 – meant there was a huge demand for raffle tickets. Other prizes included five personal training sessions from Jonathan McCook, worth £100, a £15 Co-op voucher, wine, chocolates and comic books.

After the event, everyone who entered received a free warm drink in the Quarry Cafe.



The Lundavra pupils with their collected donations for Lochaber Foodbank. Photograph: A Brightside Photography.

Lundavra children bring festive cheer to food bank

PRIMARY seven pupils from Lundavra Primary School organised a reverse advent calendar in the school in aid of Lochaber Foodbank.

Children from primary four to seven each brought in a single item of food

for the food bank, meaning each day in November at least four items were donated.

Primary seven teacher Mrs Stephen said: 'We did this last year but in November which meant the food didn't go

to the food bank until two days before Christmas. This year we thought we would do it a month earlier allowing the people who use the foodbank the opportunity to actually choose their items in plenty time for Christmas.'



The woodwind pupils achieved outstanding results in their Trinity College exams.

Woodwind pupils hit the high notes

NINE young Lochaber woodwind musicians have achieved impressive scores in their musical exams.

The pupils, from Lochaber High School and Ardnarnach High School, recently took Trinity College grade exams with outstanding results – two gained merit awards and seven achieved a distinction mark, the highest being 97 per cent.

All the pupils receive music lessons from woodwind instructor Karen Thomson

at the school and several are current members of Highland youth wind band.

The students also take part in group music locally, in either Lochaber High School junior wind band, senior wind band or the 'big' band.

The Lochaber winter bands' concert took place on Wednesday evening with a packed audience enjoying musical offerings prepared and conducted by music instructors Karen Thomson and Mark Reynolds.

Council music development officer Norman Bolton said: 'Young people in Lochaber are lucky to have many options for weekly tuition and additional group music-making thanks to the efforts of council music instructors throughout the area.'

'These opportunities high quality music education and social and life skills which allow those involved to leave school with life-long skills which stand them in good stead for their futures.'

RETRO Roamer

A few items going back 30 years

☐ Aye well, that's Kennedy's shop closed after a 63-year sojourn in the High Street. However, Kennedy's did see and hear an echo of its halcyon days. On Sunday afternoon, just before closing time, an impromptu ceilidh took place in the back shop. Fiddles, accordions, Gaelic singers, buffet, you name it. This, of course, was all happening inside part of the former Caledonian Hotel, so there were drams as well. The Kennedy Caley Ceilidh Band – specially named for the occasion and largely made up of members of the Kennedy Clan – gave the shop a memorable farewell.

☐ Minibus full of pre-Christmas French visitors pulls into the Belford car park, no doubt baffled by the A82 signs. They made themselves understood at reception, however, that they wished to spend a franc apiece. They were, of course, directed to the Viewforth toilets, which just happened to be shut! So instead of 'oui, oui' this Entente Cordiale group got 'non, non' from Lochaber.

☐ If you blinked last week you'd have missed the demolition of the BA's carbon factory, that well-known local landmark which arose from the peat. A south-based contractor engineered its downfall in no time. Another outfit had a go at it last year but hardly put a dent on it. Meanwhile, 'speedy' is the word for the steel erection of the Marine Harvest plant on the Blar.

☐ 'That carpet will cost you £10 a square yard, madam,' said Wee Donald. 'But if you'd prefer a less expensive one, seeing it's for the bedroom, perhaps I can interest you in this one at £5? And so it went on, with 'madam' still unhappy about the price. Donald, soul of discretion and salesmanship, remained unruffled. Eventually the price tag came down to the point where Donald was offering a £1.50 per square yard version. And even that was too expensive! 'Well, madam,' concluded Donald, 'all I can suggest is that you get a few old copies of The Oban Times and put them on the floor – with the Extra for underlay.'

☐ Here's some hot news. On Tuesday morning, while working in her counting house, a local cashier got her 50 pence pieces mixed up with the buttons of the office fire alarm. Two fire engines sped to the scene – right on the button, so to speak. All was well that ended well, apart from her colleagues singing 'On Top of Old Smokey' to our heroine. You'll be pleased to know she was neither cashiered or fired.

☐ Some of the lads in the Mill re-arranged their shifts so they could leave work in time for the kick-off in the televised match between Aberdeen and Celtic. But a generator failure at Torosay, on Mull, scuppered that. So several of the Mill team made a mad dash to the British Legion Club in Fort Augustus to view the game. Meanwhile there was an anguished call from Mallaig. 'Have you got TV reception in the Fort? Because we haven't'. The long-suffering but brief response was: 'All four channels are blanked out.' Back came the irrepressible caller from Seagull City: 'Oh, we're better off than you, then. We've only got three channels off the air.' It took a wee while for the penny to drop. They don't have Channel 4 in Mallaig.

☐ The old order changeth, yet again. That's the Lochaber maltings and warehouses cleared/cleaned out. Sic Transit gloria uisge-beatha. There are still a few souvenirs from the premises kicking about. Not in cask or bottle form, right enough, but the old gates have been re-hung at Ben Nevis Distillery and the former office door with the DP MacDonald crest, has been installed at the home of a latter-day clansman in Fort William.

☐ If you look closely enough at the current destination board of one of the Gaelic buses what do you see? Corpach? Upper Achintore? No! It reads 'Merry Christmas'. No doubt there will be another use for the roller a week later. 'Bladhna Mhath Ur'. No prizes for guessing that one.

☐ Henrijk Madej was right. The Fort William FC manager said at the start of the season Fort would appear on the pools coupon. And there they were last Saturday – Fort William v Stirling Albion in the Scottish Cup. Henrijk made another prediction – that the attendance at Claggan Park would be around the 1,000 mark. The crowd numbered 1,500!

☐ Fort William Round Tablers have been carrying out their hardy-annual mission of bringing Christmas cheer to Claggan. 'Funny,' said one staunch member, 'all the house lights are on in Carn Dearg but no-one's answering.' It was gently explained to the Snowman/Knight of the Round Table that that was because he was knocking on the door of the close. Ho, ho, ho!

☐ Did you notice Mamore Cottage is scheduled for demolition to make way for the new access road to Viewforth car park? Would that have happened had it become a listed building at the same time as Parade House next door? That would have made life very interesting for planners and their roads and transport colleagues.

☐ And finally. I know it's old hat/hair, but it was actually noted on the Inverloch bus on Monday. One housewife said to another, 'Your hair's looking really lovely this morning.' Came the modest reply: 'Well, you'd never guess why. I was in such a rush to come out that I mistook the Pledge for the hairspray and just scooshed it on!'



The mail must get through to Blarmafodach - and it did courtesy of Jim MacDougall, Claggan, UK Postman of the Year in 1983.

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Viewpoint



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LOCHABER TIMES & Oban Times

The row over the closure of Royal Bank of Scotland branches continues to gather pace, with Highlands and Islands Labour MSP Rhoda Grant calling on Westminster to step in and stop the proposed closures, 13 of which are in the Highlands and Islands.

Mrs Grant has already called on RBS's chief executive to revisit the decision, which includes plans to axe branches in Mallaig, Kyle and Barra.

She has rightly pointed out that we have the worst broadband in Scotland and therefore the ability to bank online is not a viable option for many people. The closure

of the Barra branch is particularly difficult, given that it will mean a 20-mile drive and a ferry journey just to get to the bank. It also means a return visit will probably take someone the best part of a day, not to mention the added cost of fuel and ferry travel. The fact that we own the bank just adds to the anger and frustration.

Local MP Ian Blackford, the leader of the SNP group in Westminster, has launched a petition to pressurise the RBS into reversing its decision to close local branches. Copies of the petition are available from Mr Blackford's constituency offices and local businesses.



Days gone by – 1980s

Oban Times reader Ruth Grant was kind enough to send us a number of photos of staff at the Royal Hotel between the years of 1971 and 1994. We are guessing this one was from the 1980s, given some of the ladies' hairstyles.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



TO MY friends and relations, it is well known that I am a lover of good food.

Enjoyment of sustenance is a strand of the human experience so deeply pleasurable that it feels like it is a gift from the universe and the higher powers of life that can allow our time on Earth to feel euphoric.

I have written in varying contexts in this column over the past two years about some of my favourite food experiences and in the last lap before Christmas, where food plays such an important role, I thought it fitting to indulge in extolling the virtues of a culinary contender for the heavyweight taste title, the match of which is hard to find. This is the great cloutie dumpling.

As regular readers will expect, this has been sparked by a recent event in the voyages of MacPhail, and it has a significant history dating back nearly 10 years.

As part of the Skipinnish winter tour, we were up in the wilds of Torridon last Thursday. After battling with icy roads and driving snow, travelling through some of the most ruggedly beautiful

scenery in the country, given particular presence by a covering of winter white, we arrived at the hall already feeling thankful just to have reached our destination.

Not long before we were about to go on stage, that feeling of gratitude was amplified when, through to the backstage area, came none other than Catherine MacKenzie from Gairloch to present us with one of her famous homemade cloutie dumplings.

Catherine has a gift for dumpling-making, is well known throughout the country for her skills and has won many prizes over the years for her baking, and in particular her cloutie dumplings. Catherine has made many dumplings for me over the years and receiving one is the highlight of any gig we do in Wester Ross.

It was at the Mòd in Oban in 2009 that Catherine first brought me a dumpling and it was nearly my last.

I vividly remember the moment she presented it to me outside the Ceilidh House. It was in the middle of probably the most excessive and intense week of work I have ever done in my life and it was right at the very pinnacle of that week's intensity that I was given this kind gift.

At that very moment, among a multitude of immediately pressing and unrelated issues involving boats, police, the council and the BBC, I was running out of the front door to get round the corner to rescue a delivery of Norman MacLean books and an essential drinks delivery. The drivers of both lorries were threatening to leave unless their respective cargos were received and signed for immediately.

In my very focused hurry, all I could do was say a quick thank you, apologise for being in a rush and run off at full speed round the corner with the dumpling.

Accordingly, Catherine very rightly thought I was an ignorant and ungrateful scallywag. Very shortly after that, though, we made contact and I apologised sincerely and profusely. After hearing the background to my haste, I was forgiven and we became firm friends. I have been given many dumplings since.

The story of Catherine and her kindness encapsulates much of what Christmas is about – the giving and receiving of gifts, the giving and receiving of forgiveness, and the enjoyment of merriment, friendship and good food. Thank you, Catherine.



Social media

Argyll and Bute Council's new parking regulations and the introduction of charges at previously free car parks in Oban drew widespread criticism.

Duncan Ferguson: 'Why not free parking for householders? I can't justify paying for a permit when I'm parked outside my house 1 day a week! It's a sham! I can drive 200 yards and get it for free! Surely there must be some give and go for the boys maintaining the town?'

Fergie McIver: 'So, I pay for my residents permit, if there's no spaces or if all the spaces are taken up by blue badge holders who may or may not live in the town but not in my street, I got to park in the car park not 50m from my house and I have to pay again, this is a disgrace, you will drive people

away from the town with this sort of nonsense.'

David MacLennan: 'Oban is dying as it is because of rates and parking charges, shops closing constantly, trying to do any joinery or maintenance work in town centre flats is a nightmare because you can't get a space anywhere near the job in question. A&B council is a shambles.'

Tom Hayward: 'Surely the answer is a multi storey car park? Or are the fines raised, due to a lack of adequate car parking too big a revenue raiser? No point in adding facilities, if the infrastructure is not provided as well.'

John DM Kerr: 'You Just killed of any chance for the high street shops. Who's gonna stop to buy something now.'

Colin Martin: 'Why don't we just ban people from coming to the town

completely. If they are getting a ferry we can stack them on the road out to Connel until their ferry is ready for loading!'

Kenny Vance: 'Am I still allowed to park in my driveway for free? Or will the council be round to charge me for that as well?'

Rebecca Barnham Smyth: 'What about free or reduced permits for council tax payers...so that workers (who live out of town) can park to come to work...or a park and ride.'

Norman Macnaughton: 'Bloody shambles but what do you expect from the council...NUMPTIES.'

Stuart McNaie: 'Are the councillors giving up their free park anywhere permits?'

Elizabeth Reive: 'A great way to keep visitors away.'

Great support from generous Colonsay

Sir,
I have just arrived home from a night in the open air as part of the Sleep in the Park project by Social-Bite to highlight and combat the scourge of homelessness in Scotland.

Through *The Oban Times*, I would like express my grateful thanks for all the support I received. Colonsay's contribution amounted to an outstanding £1,665 including Gift Aid. Best of all, we played our part in the national effort, which has reached an amazing £3.6 million to date.

Although those present enjoyed a calm, clear and midge-free night, one can barely imagine what it would be like for others who have no other option and who must face all weathers.

More power to the young people who have started this campaign, and to the many thousands who are lending their support; they are a credit to the nation.

Kevin Byrne,
Homefield, Isle of Colonsay.

Home needs to be repaired, not closed

Sir,
I read with dismay, in *The Lochaber Times* of November 16, that the Dail Mhor Care Home at Strontian was to close, a decision made by a middle manager.

At the NHS board meeting on November 28, I successfully challenged this decision on the basis that:

1. It needed to be a decision taken by the Highland Health and Social Care Committee (HHSCC) and then by the NHS board. Closing a small rural care home has similar consequences locally to closing several small rural primary schools.

2. The HHSCC needed the full background information. This care home had been temporarily closed due to a flooded basement. Precise information on the repair costs were required. As the local councillor, some 15 years ago, I had been directly involved in a £1 million major refurbishment of the home. The six-bed home had been full, with a waiting list and a constant demand for respite beds. It also provided support for the Acharacle Resource Centre. Lochaber has half of the number of care home beds for the elderly compared to the rest of the Highlands. The loss of Dail Mhor has exacerbated an already deficient situation.

3. No Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. There will be a significant impact on the frail elderly and their families in the rural communities of Ardgour, Strontian, Morvern, Acharacle, Moidart and Ardnamurchan.

I received strong support from several board members, especially Robin Creelman of Argyll, because of the consequences of the frail elderly being cared for remotely from their family and friends.

The board agreed that this important issue would need to come before the HHSCC and then the board.

My view is that the care home needs

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



CIAMAR A THA DOL dhuibh a' taghadh thiodhlacan na Nollaige?

Feumaidh mi aideachadh nach toil leam fhìn a bhith a' ruith nam bùthan idir, 's fhèarr leam fios ro-làimh air dè tha mi dol a cheannach agus a dhol dìreach ga fhaotainn. Bah, humbug! Chan aithne dhomh bheil Gàidhlig air sin, 's dòcha gun can cuid nach robh humbug riamh am measg nan Gàidheal!

Ach bha! Tha deagh chuimhne agam air fear anns a' bhaile nuair a bha mi òg a bhiodh tric ag ràdh "chan eil mi gu bhith air mo humbugaigeadh leis!"

A' coimhead nas fharsainghe na 'n teaghlach, agus gu sònraichte air luchd-lìbhrigidh sheirbheisean, tha e intinneach beachdachadh air cò na buidhnean as airidh air tiodhlac am-bliadhna? An robh sibhe cho fortanach 's gun deach a-h-uile frithealadh mar a dh'iarradh sibh, gach rud air a chòileanadh aig an uair agus aig a' phrìs a chaidh a ghealltainn? Ma 's ann mar sin a bha, tha sibh anns a' bheag-chuid den t-sluagh agus mar a chanas an seanfhacal " 's ann dhuibh

to be repaired by the owner, Highland Council. It then needs to resume its vital function as a care home for the frail, vulnerable elderly who are unable to be cared for in their own homes or require admission to give a respite to their family and carers. Two to four units of extra care sheltered housing units could be built in the grounds – a proposal I made in the last local plan.

Dr Michael Foxley,
by email.

Perfect Christmas gift is available to all

Sir,
The lyrics we hear in almost every shop do not allow us to forget what time of the year it is: 'So this is Christmas.'

Yes, in the midst of all the frenzied buying and selling, Christmas is once again upon us and shoppers everywhere are looking for that special gift. At this time of the year 'gifts and giving' go hand-in-hand in a very special way.

Few shoppers, however, will appreciate that the theme of giving is prominent throughout the Bible, with such words as give, gift and gave appearing more than 2,000 times. God's outstretched hand has been giving generously, and liberally ever since.

During the giving season, we all think about the gifts we want to give. It's been said that a gift must meet three criteria for it to be considered perfect. First, the gift should reflect the one who gives it. Secondly, the gift should reflect knowledge of the one who receives it, and, thirdly, the gift should be of a nature and quality that will hold its value as time goes on.

However, the Bible reminds us there is only one perfect gift. It gives more happiness than any other worldly gift. It is so deep that it endures through the worst of times. It has meaning for every age and in every situation. The perfect gift is a personal relationship with Jesus.

We know God gave mankind the perfect gift when He gave heaven's best – 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.' The gift of Jesus meets all of the criteria for being a perfect gift. All you and I have to do to receive this perfect gift is receive Him and believe in Him by faith.

I wish every *Oban Times* reader God's richly blessing during the busy holiday season and pray that 'old things will become new' in your heart and home, in 2018.

Donald J Morrison,
Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness.

Thanks for donations to Blythswood Care

Sir,
On behalf of Blythswood Care, a huge thank you to all who contributed to the very successful 2017 Shoe Box Appeal. We were delighted to be able to send up to our depot at Deephaven 763 shoe boxes for onward distribution to Romania.

Your gifts contained in the shoe boxes are a vital contribution to this project delivering boxes to some of the poorest

people in Europe and Asia. Last winter the appeal delivered its two-millionth box to a boy with Down's syndrome in a remote village in Romania.

In reality, every box is significant, bringing practical aid and the touch of human kindness to children and adults facing all sorts of challenges in their day to day lives – disability, illness, unemployment, homelessness, addiction, loneliness, debt and war.

Your support for this appeal will touch the lives of many people in need.

Thank you again for your kind gift.
Kenny and Barbara Matheson,
co-ordinators for Lochaber Blythswood Care.

U-turn on income tax pledge from the SNP

Sir,
Despite the SNP manifesto promising not to increase taxes on basic rate payers, the party recently voted against that in support of higher taxes on ordinary workers.

Three of the four positions in the SNP's tax paper would hit basic rate payers with higher taxes. Two of these approaches would see tax increases on anyone earning over £24,000 and another on anyone earning over £27,000.

It's clear business and the public do not support higher taxes. A Federation of Small Businesses survey found 79 per cent of business owners do not want higher income tax and a Survation poll found only 22 per cent of respondents would support higher taxes.

In contrast, since 2010, Conservative-led governments have cut income tax by £1,005 for basic rate payers in Scotland. Since 2010/11, the personal allowance has increased from £6,475 to £11,500 in 2017/18.

The SNP government's own analysis found that increasing the additional rate of tax could result in lower revenues. The paper suggested that a 5p rise would lose £24 million under a high behavioural response model.

The SNP government's block grant will be protected in real terms next year – so any cuts are out of choice rather than necessity. The Scottish Government's budget will increase by £479 million in 2018/19 – a 0.1 per cent increase in real terms. Even the most radical of the SNP's tax policies would only increase income tax revenue by two per cent. Approach three would raise taxes on half of all taxpayers but raise only £255 million in additional public spending. The Scottish Government's draft budget 2017/18 projected income tax receipts of £12.3 billion in 2018/19.

Some 65 per cent of Scots voted in the 2016 election for the two parties that pledged not to increase the basic rate during the lifetime of the parliament. Now only the Conservatives are on the side of the majority of the Scottish people. The SNP has no democratic mandate to impose austere tax rises on low and middle earners in Scotland.

The SNP seems shockingly keen to make Scotland the most taxed part of the UK. Is this what the SNP means when it says it is stronger for Scotland? **Councillor Alastair Redman,** Islay.

Ailean Caimbeul

Press policy

WE AT The Oban Times endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please

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 timeous, 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.



For press freedom with responsibility

Your letters

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

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

is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed.

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

Jack Frost scuppers rugby and football matches

Rugby/football

JACK Frost was the villain at the weekend when Fort William rugby and football fans lost out on seeing their teams in action.

Lochaber RFC were due to take on Bishoptown at home but the Banavie pitch was frozen and the game had to be called off.

The next scheduled home game is the Boxing Day match when a President's XV will take on the Club Captain's XV. Kick-off, 2pm.

Football fans didn't fare any better, with anyone planning to travel to Strathspey having to postpone their visit because of snow and frost on the Strathspey pitch.

Saturday sees the next home game for Fort, with Lossiemouth due to visit Claggan Park for what should be a good match. Kick-off, 3pm.

South Lochaber Thistle's away game against Bosswell in the Greater Glasgow League was also called off because of a frozen pitch.

Saints looking for friendly match

Football

OBAN Saints hope South Lochaber Thistle will play them in a friendly match in Oban on Saturday December 30. Saints have a Scottish Cup fourth round replay the following Saturday and with the Scottish AFL in a two-week winter shutdown, the Oban side is keen for a game before the cup clash.

Lochaber club lottery draws

Lottery

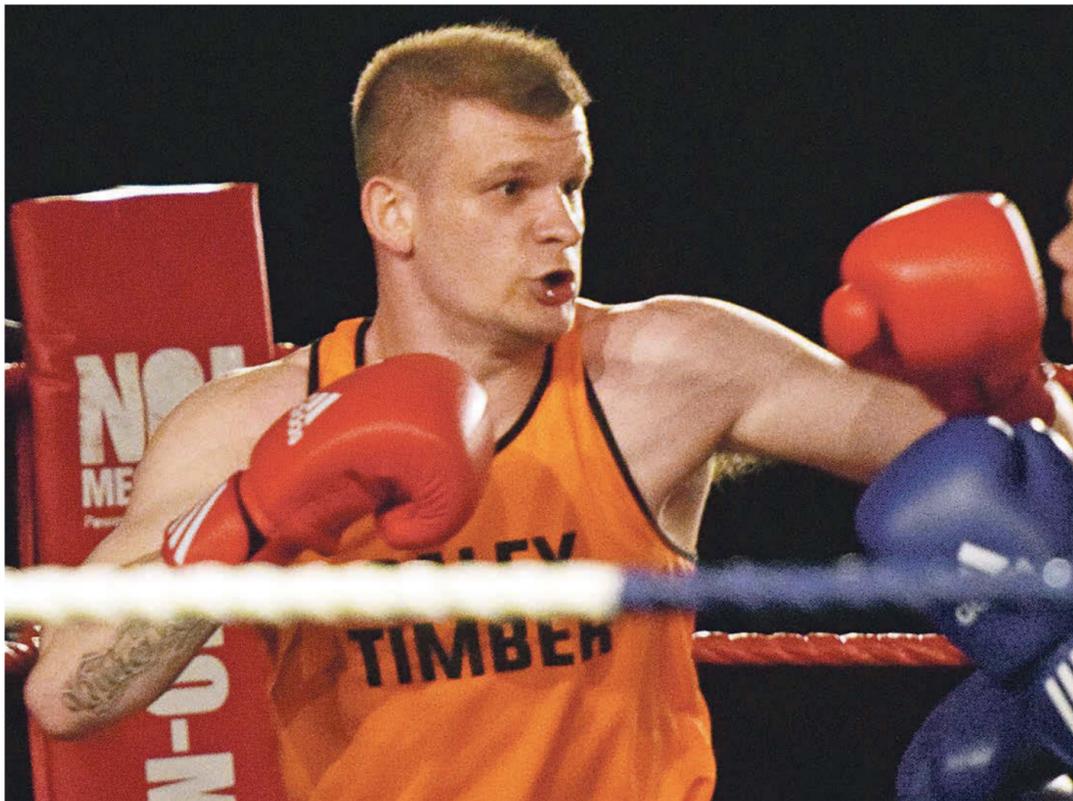
THIS week's Ballachulish shinty lottery numbers were 1, 9 and 19. There were no winners again this week, so the Christmas Eve draw will have a jackpot of £1,000.

Numbers in the Caol Regeneration Lotto were 6, 9 and 15.

No winners, so a £900 jackpot will be up for grabs in the next draw tonight (Thursday December 21).

And there was no winner in the Fort William Golf Club lotto, drawn last Thursday. Numbers were 9, 11 and 20. It means there will be £500 in the jackpot for the draw tonight (Thursday).

Lochaber fighters finish the year with quality displays



David Jarzab in action. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club finished the year with a pair of quality performances from two of their senior boxers in Edinburgh last Sunday, at a show hosted by Leith Victoria Boxing Club.

Welterweight Dawid Jarzab topped the bill against the host club's Graham Jamieson.

After losing his unbeaten record in his last bout in the semi-final of the Scottish Novice Championships, Jarzab has worked hard in the gym on improving and this was a stern test against his most accomplished opponent.

Combinations

Jarzab came out confidently firing combinations against his southpaw opponent. Jamieson was equally at ease in front of a hugely vociferous home support.

After a very even opening round, Jarzab started to switch his area of attack and targeted Jamieson's body. This tactic began to pay dividends towards the end of the round as the Edinburgh boxer began to visibly tire.

Round three was only 20 seconds in when Jarzab cleverly feinted to the body and unleashed a perfect one-two to dump Jamieson heavily on the canvas.

Jamieson rose to beat the count but Jarzab would not be denied and pinned Jamieson to

Boxing

the ropes. The referee had no option but to stop the contest and Jarzab had picked up a great victory.

Light heavyweight Nathan McDade faced the host club's Brian Hogg in a bout that was great preparation for next month's intermediate championships.

Hogg is too experienced to be eligible for these championships so he was always going to be a stern test for McDade.

McDade showed tactical nous to try and take control of the centre of the ring and keep Hogg at arm's length.

This contest turned into a real chess match as both boxers vied for supremacy for the three rounds. Both showed a lot of endeavour in a match where very few quality punches landed as while defences were tight at long range, the action was very scrappy at close range.

In a contest so tight, this came down to a toss of the coin and McDade was unfortunately on the wrong side of the coin and the split decision went to Hogg.

Both boxers were back in the gym this week continuing their preparation for next month's championships. The quest for championship success continues.

Festive fun as athletics club holds Santa Run



Junior members of Lochaber Athletic Club and their coaches took to the streets of Caol recently for their annual Santa Run. The club meets every Thursday at the Caol Centre.



The runners set off.



Spean Bridge Spar shop's £1,000 cheque to shinty club

The Spar shop in Spean Bridge handed over a £1,000 cheque to Lochaber Camanachd Club on Friday. The money was raised through the sale of five pence carrier bags. From left: Spar manager Steven MacLeod and club players Stuart Callison, Barry MacDonald and Grant Matheson. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.



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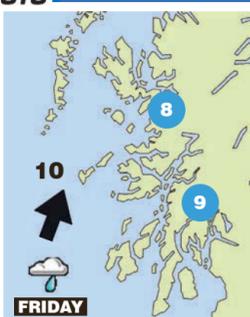
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Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban

WEATHER

Thursday	Cloudy Winds moderate West South Westerly Temperatures 5°C to 9°C.
Friday	Cloudy with light rain Winds moderate South South Westerly Temperatures 8°C to 9°C.
Weekend Outlook	Heavy rain on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds strong West South Westerly Temperatures 8°C to 11°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 21, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	Ardrihaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Thur	01.25 1.3 07.18 3.9 13.44 1.5 19.27 3.7		Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Fri	01.59 1.4 07.53 3.8 14.20 1.6 19.59 3.6		Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Sat	02.30 1.5 08.28 3.7 14.56 1.7 20.32 3.5		Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Sun	03.02 1.6 09.06 3.6 15.36 1.8 21.11 3.3		Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mon	03.42 1.7 09.51 3.4 16.27 1.9 21.59 3.2					
Tues	04.34 1.8 10.48 3.3 17.32 1.9 23.01 3.1					
Wed	05.39 1.8 12.06 3.3 18.41 1.8 *** **					

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)