

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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TO ALL OUR READERS AND ADVERTISERS

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INSIDE THIS WEEK
Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary reader offer



Hope and a Christmas dinner for those in need

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

AS THE need for food and donations rises this winter, Oban's Hope Kitchen hosted its biggest Christmas dinner to date, with new hope for its first wedding in the new year.

The charity, which provides food, shelter and companionship to vulnerable and marginalised people living in Oban and Lorn, squeezed 38 diners into its new, larger premises on Soroba Road on Wednesday last week, before hosting a lunch on Christmas Day.

'Everyone who wanted to come was here,' service manager Lorraine McCormick said. 'We have never been able to do that before.'

Eight volunteers – four cooking and four serving – provided a three-course dinner of turkey soup, a roast 8.2kg turkey (donated by one supporter), and trifle or clootie dumpling.

'A lot of them will not have a Christmas dinner,' Lorraine said. 'A lot of them are on their own. People are lonely. They have no-one in the world. They will not even get a Christmas present. People see us as their family. That is lovely but also quite sad.'

'We wrapped presents for everyone. It was just a wee daft thing. Even then people were touched by them. We had four children here last night. There was a man with dementia who came. We know he got a three-course dinner. He is coming in on Christmas Day [for lunch]. He has no family. What would

they be doing if we were not open?'

'How amazing are our volunteers? They worked all day, peeling tatties, clearing up. They stayed until all the work was done. They really are worth their weight in gold. We are very lucky. We are always looking for volunteers. People move on because their lives get back on track.'

The team has been even busier packing food parcels this Christmas, because the need is greater.

'Last year we delivered to 50 people,' Lorraine explained. 'We are past the 50 already.'

'We do not ask, we are not pushy, but people seem to come. Everything we needed, we have been given. Someone said they would like to provide a Christmas dinner, and I thought about this family. She came in with four bags of food. Everything she thought they would need. I was on the verge of tears. It is quite spooky at times. People say it is God.'

'People get in touch saying, "This family are struggling. Can you help them?" There are a lot of people in the community who could do with our help but are too proud to ask. We can all land on hard times.'

'I see it getting worse. The cost of living has gone up and the benefits haven't. People are more desperate for things like sanitary products and toiletries. The basics in life people cannot afford. That is a new thing. We never had people coming in before asking for toilet rolls. A woman from Coll sent us sanitary towels. She said she could



A record number of people have been treated to Christmas dinner at Hope Kitchen this year, including 'wee Richard', inset.

not give much. We are supporting people who have jobs, people who have zero-hour contracts or are sick and cannot go to work. People saying they cannot cope. We get lots of tears. A man came in here and just burst into tears. Men do not cry.'

'When people come in desperate and crying, I feel their pain. You have to help rather than cry along with them. It does get to you sometimes, the stories. We see everything: domestic abuse, dementia, people with learning difficulties, people with mental health problems.'

'It is our job to be happy. They

have misery out there. They do not need to come in here for misery. We do not have time to counsel people, but we can help by giving people a dinner, a bag of food, a bowl of soup. A lot of people come in here for the warmth.'

'Food parcels always go up in winter. There's a funny thing with food banks. People are really generous at Christmas, but forget in January, February and March.'

'We ran out of food at the beginning of last year. We had to tell people we are doing our best but people are always grateful.'

'We have had a lot of food donations, so I do not think we will run out of food now in January, February or March.'

'People are very generous to us, unbelievably generous.'

'We have got a wedding in January. Two of our volunteers met here, on our beach clean. I will be crying that day.'

'We had a Christmas in here. We had a wake in here. We see the whole of life.'

'I'd like to thank people for what they do for us. People



thank us, but we could not do the job without the support of the community and the volunteers.'

INSIDE YOUR
OBAN TIMES
THIS WEEK

Oh yes it was!

TOBERMORY'S annual pantomime was a roaring success with packed out audiences for the performance of Aladdin in the Aros Hall. Full story and photos – page two.

University town

AMBITIOUS plans to build on Oban's growing credentials as a university town are set to be launched early next year. Oban is already home to 800 students. Full story – page three.

Festive fun

IT'S been a busy week for Oban High School, performing many concerts. Pupils entertained senior citizens with a pensioners' treat concert. Full story and photos – page four.

Health 'crisis'

Mull and Iona's 'severely over-stretched' health and home care services are 'close to crisis point' this winter. Staff are being begged to work extra hours. Full story – page five.

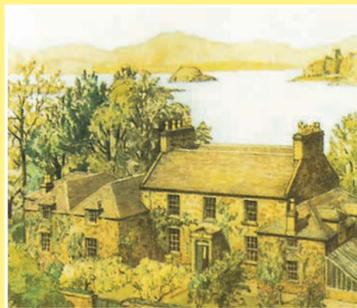


Jingles swells

THE Junior Jingles provided the setting for some spectacular dance moves and festive fun. Picture special – page 10.



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Cammy wins the lights fantastic

RETIRED handyman Cammy Dempster shone brightest in *The Oban Times*' best decorated house competition this Christmas.

Mr Dempster's spectacular lights display, which he has built up over 15 to 20 years, features a majestic scene of grazing deer, a sparkling multi-colour rose bed and trees up to 15ft high all lit up, and a new gadget this year – a laser show of 'star bursts' on the gable end.

'I just top them up every year,' he said.

Now he has won a £150 Homebase gift card to spend on more decorations if he wishes.

The family is used to drivers



stopping to marvel at the house on Lochnell Road, Dunbeg. 'There's folk come round with their cars, have a look, then go away again,' he said.

Mr Dempster starts decorating in mid-November, in a waterproof onesie, to get everything ready for December 12.

His electricity bill is unknown.



Cammy Dempster is congratulated by Alex MacCallum.

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OT

Tobermory panto packs out hall

TOBERMORY'S Main Street always looks fantastic with the Christmas lights and the decorations in the houses and shops, but it wouldn't be Christmas in Tobermory without the annual pantomime, writes AJ MacLeod.

The story of Aladdin was played out by the North of Mull Amateur Dramatic Society, the stage sets of Peking and Egypt displaying a much warmer climate than what was outside the Aros Hall last week.

With a full house every night, the usual comedy prevailed.

Director Ryan Lowe said: 'The cast and crew this year have been fantastic - committed, motivated and enthusiastic.'

'The panto has been a great collaboration and the cast gave polished performances every night.'

Princess Pomegranate, played by Rebecca Gallier, added: 'It was a huge amount of fun with a great cast and crew behind it.'

'It was amazing to see it so well supported by the island as well.'

Several new faces were present, as well as pantomime stalwarts, and there was a change to the house band, with Ros Haywood, Gordon MacLean and Corrie Mackenzie.

Veteran of 35 performances, Barbara Weir chose to make this her final year - bowing out to much applause.

This huge community effort has been running almost continuously since 1981 and the town at Christmas time wouldn't be the same without the pantomime.



The cast of Aladdin were 'fantastic - committed, motivated and enthusiastic'.



TIMESLINE

Mull ex-teacher given supervision

A RETIRED teacher from Mull who sexually abused two schoolboys more than 40 years ago has been made the subject of a three-year supervision and medical treatment order.

John Pringle, 90, was unable to stand trial for the offences because he suffers from Alzheimer's and is unable to understand the legal process.

At the High Court in Glasgow in October, Judge John Morris QC heard evidence of the assaults during proceedings called an examination of the facts. After hearing the evidence, Judge Morris concluded that Pringle had committed the offences against the two youths.

On Tuesday December 19, Judge Morris concluded that the most suitable disposal available to him was to impose a supervision and treatment order.

Fisherman safe after boat sinks

PORTREE lifeboat was dispatched to aid a fishing vessel which foundered on Loch Gairloch on Monday.

The Adelphi, a 24ft creel fishing boat, suffered transmission problems on the loch before foundering on the north shore of Strath Bay.

The RNLI said: 'About 2.48pm on Monday December 18, Portree RNLI lifeboat Stanley Watson Barker was launched on request from Stornoway Coastguard to assist a 24ft creel fishing boat.'

'The fisherman was forced to abandon his boat and made his way safely to the shore. The boat was damaged and was lost in the incoming tide.'

Ferry contracts could be direct

THE Scottish Government intends to award ferry contracts directly to public sector operators in the future if certain criteria can be met and subject to the views of local communities, the Minister for Transport and the Islands has told MSPs.

An update on the on-going procurement policy review indicates that a direct award to an in-house provider, such as CalMac Ferries Ltd, would be possible if they are compliant with the Teckal exemption and EU state aid rules.

MP calls for tourist centres to be kept

WESTERN Isles MP Angus Brendan MacNeil is calling on Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism, to reverse VisitScotland's decision to close the tourist information centres in Lochmaddy and Castlebay and to reopen the Lochboisdale centre which was closed last year.

Last month Mr MacNeil accused VisitScotland of 'relinquishing its responsibilities to rural areas' following the announcement to close centres.

Hugh Smith's letter from Islay

Seasonal celebrations

CHRISTMAS has been a particularly busy time on the island with a host of activities taking place over the festive period.

All local churches celebrated the real significance of the festival with a series of carol services and concerts, nativity presentations and watch night worship which welcomed the arrival of the Christ child in Bethlehem's stable on Christmas morn.

Island schools also joined in the merriment with Islay High School mounting a Christmas concert which attracted a large group of supporters who lapped up a varied programme which left all with a song in their hearts.

Primary school pantomimes played to packed houses and all enjoyed the 'new look' slant on established favourites.

Also providing another full house event was the Bowmore primary school's 'carols by candlelight' performed in a suitably decorated Round Church.

The switching on of the Christmas lights in both Bowmore and Port Ellen created a carnival mood and open-air carol singing added to the yuletide atmosphere in a number of the villages.

Staff parties kept up the jollity, eating places reported brisk trade as did the local distilleries Christmas-themed events.

Children's parties in village halls made for much exuberance while a number of Christmas discos pleased



Bowmore primary school pupils book launch.

the very young in heart. There is little rest for the Ileach revellers as preparations are now well in hand for the ne'erday celebrations.

Katie Turner MacLeod

ALL were greatly saddened to learn of the death on December 9 of Katie Turner MacLeod, wife of the celebrated veteran Mòd gold medallist Donald MacLeod of Portnahaven. She was 86 years of age and died in the local hospital following a short illness.

Katie was a member of a well-known

local family and a Rhinns girl through and through.

She trained as a nurse at Yorkhill Hospital in Glasgow and in due course became the youngest nursing sister at the city hospital at that time.

She married joiner and crofter Donald 58 years ago and they went on to have a family of three - son Alasdair and daughters Fiona and Jane. When the children grew up, Katie returned to nursing and for 19 years was a valued member of the night staff at the hospital at Bowmore.

Katie was a vivacious and friendly person with a caring heart, and her

popularity was evidenced by the large number of mourners from all parts of the island who celebrated her life at her funeral service at the Portnahaven Parish Church on December 16.

The eulogy was delivered by the Rev Valerie Watson, the parish minister, who described Katie as 'friendly, elegant, dignified and dedicated' and as one who 'found pleasure in living and giving'.

Interment took place at Nerabus cemetery and the community extends its sympathy to Donald, Alasdair, Fiona and Jane. They also remember Katie's devoted grandchildren, Eilidh,

Ciara, Donald and Calum, of whom she was justly proud.

Goodbye Katie and rest in peace.

Pupils' poetry

MEMBERS of the Bowmore Primary School Parent Council are to be congratulated on producing a book of poems and art work, all created by the village pupils.

The poetry content, featuring both Gaelic and English submissions, encompasses Islay life, the changing seasons and the appeal of sea and shore.

The book cover is the work of photographer and designer Ben Shakespeare and is illustrated with amalgamated group photographs of the Bowmore pupils.

The publication costs £8 and can be purchased from the school, or at the Islay Pharmacy in Bowmore and at Ionad Chalum Chille Ile. Proceeds will go to providing further resources at the school.

Good wishes

AS WE stand at the cusp of another year, I wish you all health and happiness in 2018 and in all the days that lie ahead. Bliadhna Mhath Ur.

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. 01496 810658.

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.

Moleigh 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.

Glengorm 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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Merry Christmas at village ceilidh

AT TAYNUILT'S annual Christmas ceilidh, a large audience was treated to a highly entertaining evening which had a bit of everything. Dancer Mabel Rodwell gave excellent displays of Highland dancing, while piper Emma Hill, the All Strings Attached group led by Ann Barlow, Ukelady On The Ukelele (aka Helen Watt) and Becky Hill on the clarsach all provided a wide variety of enjoyable music. Taynuilt Primary School choir (conducted by Ann Barlow), young singer Minnie Bonniwell and Mòd gold medallists Mary Catherine MacNeil and John Joe MacNeil all gave terrific vocal performances, with John Joe regularly being called upon to play keyboard accompaniment. Fear an Taighe for the evening was Duncan MacNeil, who kept the ceilidh flowing smoothly with several amusing anecdotes. Stovies, mince pies, shortbread and tea were served at the interval and there was even a welcome appearance from Bodach na Nollaig (Santa Claus).



Taynuilt Primary School choir sang at the Christmas ceilidh.

Connel bridge closed



The A828 Connel Bridge was closed for a number of hours on December 20 after being struck by a lorry. The bridge was closed in both directions for most of the afternoon to allow engineers to check the structure. Drivers were advised to use an alternative route, meaning a two-hour, 90-mile detour via Glencoe.

Oban to build on university town foundations

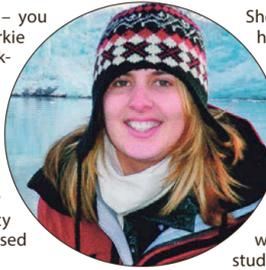
SUSAN WINDRAM
swindram@obantimes.co.uk

AMBITIOUS plans to build on Oban's growing credentials as a university town are set to be launched early next year. Oban is already home to more than 800 students from around the world who are studying at three leading further and higher education institutions – the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), Ballet West and Argyll College UHI. The project, in partnership with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS UHI), Argyll College UHI and Ballet West, as well as Oban High School, BID4Oban, Argyll and Bute Council, Skills Development Scotland, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, will focus on the area's

distinctive assets and job opportunities to provide an outstanding experience in terms of teaching, practical work, enterprise, leisure and cultural activities, and community engagement. The project also aims to contribute to the economic and population growth of the area, enhancing creativity and innovation, and encouraging local businesses. Professor Donald MacLean, chairman of Oban University Town steering group, said: 'It is fantastic to be involved in such an exciting project at this early stage. As a local resident myself, a key priority is to work closely with local people, businesses, community groups and other organisations. It is an ambitious project, but I feel confident that we have strong foundations in place and look forward to all that is ahead in the coming years.'

Studying in Oban let Jill explore the world

JILL MCCOLL is an Oban girl – you might have seen her in Markie Dans, where she has been working for many years. And she is an Oban girl with a great education who has seen the world and is going places – thanks to the university town. Jill left Oban High School in 2006 and enrolled to study marine science at the University of the Highlands and Islands based at SAMS.



She graduated in 2011 with first class honours and the unusual qualification of a BSc (Hons) Marine Science with Arctic Studies. Her excellent training in Oban made Jill an ideal candidate for a doctorate position at the University of Glasgow. There she spent four years reconstructing how the climate has changed in the north-west Pacific which included a three-month study visit to Japan. Dr McColl couldn't wait to return to Oban and is now working with Scottish Water.

During the first two years she passed her modules but then she discovered her adventurous side and applied for an exchange to study in the high Arctic at the University Centre in Svalbard for a semester. The international experience, surrounded by glaciers and polar bears, boosted Jill's confidence and she returned full of energy and ambition.

Jill said: 'I love Oban and wanted to settle back here – but I also wanted to explore the world. Studying at SAMS set me up. I think developing the university town even further would be really good for Oban because it will allow more people to reach their potential without having to leave.'

Dr Anuschka Miller, head of communications at SAMS, added: 'This region has suffered a brain drain where many of our bright young people left the area to gain education elsewhere. Through the UHI and other education providers, local youngsters now have a real choice: many may still want to spread their wings and leave but they can now stay here and gain as good an education in a growing number of disciplines. 'They are joined by students who chose to come here for their education and bring in new ideas and interests from all over the world. This makes the town younger, more dynamic and ensures we remain busier outside the tourist season.'

Peter Bain, head teacher of Oban High School, said: 'Oban High School appreciates being invited onto the Oban as a university town project. Our involvement allows us to contribute to developing a fantastic educational experience for future generations of our youngsters. 'Throughout the early development of the project we have sought the views of our school community and examined our recent higher education statistics to help inform the project. This is an exciting journey to be part of and I am certain the destination will be one of great benefit to our community.' The project will be officially launched in February, with an all-day open event in the Corran Halls. This will be an opportunity for anyone who would like to find out more, contribute ideas and actively engage to help Oban achieve its full potential as a university town.

OT

Man walking the coast of Britain receives warm welcome in Oban

A MAN walking the coast of Britain arrived in Oban last week and received a warm welcome at Oban's Community Fire Station.

After losing his home, Sam Doyle set off from Blackpool seven months ago in a bid to raise money for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

So far the 30-year-old has raised more than £5,700 for PTSD Resolution.

When he arrived in Oban, he was treated to a bed and breakfast by firefighters in Oban.

Speaking to *The Oban Times*, he said: 'I suffer from PTSD myself, having served in Afghanistan.'

'I served in the army for eight years. I suffered when I came back in 2009, but I didn't really

I suffer from PTSD, having served in Afghanistan. I was in the army for eight years

recognise it. So I went and joined the Foreign Legion, but left in 2010.'

Upon leaving, Sam bounced between jobs and eventually became addicted to drugs. This

led to him losing his house: 'I just posted the keys through the door and set off walking,' he said.

After walking for four months, Sam was gifted a former working dog, Jess, who has accompanied him since.

Sam, who finds walking therapeutic, said: 'It's been fantastic. The help I have received from people is unbelievable.'

The 30-year-old, who averages between 10 and 15 miles each day, anticipates that it will take him around three years to complete the 7,700-mile trek.

Following his stay in Oban, Sam walked along the cycle route to Appin, where he was welcomed by the village's fire and rescue service, who had a 'massive' homemade shepherd's pie waiting for him.



Sam Doyle with the Oban firefighters who put him up for the night.

TIMESLINE

Drivers charged after A85 accident

AN ACCIDENT involving two cars at Pennyfuir closed the A85 on Tuesday evening (December 19). The accident occurred at 10.30pm, closing both lanes between Connell and Oban before the main trunk road was re-opened to traffic an hour later. One person suffered minor injuries. Both drivers have been charged with careless driving.

Green awards are handed out

ENVIRONMENTAL charity Keep Scotland Beautiful has accredited CalMac and Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited with 26 Environmental Awards, including 14 in Argyll and Bute.

The awards acknowledge both companies' commitment to improving environmental quality. The accolades recognise the organisations' achievements in maintaining buildings, cleanliness waste management and engagement with the local community at the harbours and ports owned by CMAL and operated by CalMac.

Creative chances for young Gaels

BÒRD na Gàidhlig, in partnership with Creative Scotland, is supporting the Year of Young People 2018 through a scheme which offers funding for groups working in the creative, arts or screen industries to create 12-month traineeships for two Gaelic speakers aged between 16 and 24.

The support from the Creative Traineeship Fund is open to any creative organisation or business with a track record in delivering high-quality arts activity. Two traineeships will be targeted at fluent Gaelic speakers who are looking to work in the creative, arts or screen industries but who may be facing obstacles in their efforts to develop their careers.

Applications and further information can be found on <http://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/targeted-funding/year-of-young-people-creative-traineeships>. Applications must be submitted by January 15, 2018.

Broadband rollout for rural areas

THE first phase of the £600 million 'Reaching 100%' broadband programme will focus on delivering superfast broadband access to Scotland's rural and island communities, to provide a national fibre network.

The procurement will be made up of three regional lots (north, central and south), with each containing a mix of the commercially attractive rural areas and harder-to-reach communities.

'Tourist tax' plan is finally ruled out

THE Scottish Government has confirmed any plans for a 'tourist tax' are off the table.

The British Hospitality Association said it is delighted.

This comes in the wake of proposals from Edinburgh City Council and other local authorities to explore the viability of such a tax on visitors, typically charged on a nightly basis for anyone staying overnight.

Song and dance at high school



Oban High School's choral group lead the audience in Christmas carols school concert. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn



The girls enjoying mince pies and waiting to see if they have won anything in the raffle.

EUAN CARR
editor@obantimes.co.uk

IT HAS been a busy week for Oban High School, performing many concerts in the run up to Christmas.

Pupils entertained senior citizens with a pensioners' concert in the Assembly Hall on Tuesday last week.

Students played a number of instruments and sang songs, including *Caledonia* and traditional ceilidh music. The school's pipe band and Rockfield Choir also entertained the OAPs.

That evening the school hosted an evening Christmas

concert, featuring the wind band, soloists, pipe band, string group and other guests.

On Wednesday, junior students danced the night away decorated with glitter designs by the Pathway pupils at a very busy Jingles.

The senior Jingles, on Friday December 15, had 420 pupils dancing the dashing white sergeant and other reels, and hearing, for the first time in Oban, The Trueloves, described as a 'brilliant band' on the school's Facebook page.

At the weekend, pupils took part in the Rotary Club of Oban's carol concert in the Corran Halls, joining a 'super

choir' of Dunbeg, Rockfield and Lochnell primary schools.

The school's Learning in the Outdoors Senior Group also received an early Christmas present in reaching the finals of the Youth Environment Award. The award is one of the eight categories within the Argyll and Bute awards which aim to recognise and celebrate young people's achievements in the area.

The group have foraged in Glencruitten Woods, hunted for signs of beavers in Knapdale woods, learned how to put up tents and use camping stoves, created beach art, climbed and learned how to read maps.

Oban's Rockfield Gaelic unit features in Gaelic film

ROCKFIELD Primary School in Oban has been invited to create a Gaelic film for Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub, as a leading example to others.

The National Improvement Hub is a gateway to educational improvement resources and support. It provides access to resources to help schools improve practice, increasing the quality of learners' experiences and their outcomes.

The film features interviews with staff and parents, and shows children taking part in Gaelic Bookbug and a Read,

Write and Count session. Argyll and Bute Councillor Yvonne McNeilly said: 'Well done to everyone at Rockfield Primary. It is a great honour for the school to be selected as an exemplar on the National Improvement Hub and I wish everyone involved continued success.'

Councillor Robin Currie added: 'This is wonderful news for Gaelic education and Gaelic as a whole in Argyll and Bute. Well done to all involved.'

The video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/QqKR13Mb-tQ8>

New year is the perfect time to get active

I HOPE everyone enjoyed the festivities and is raring to go for 2018, writes *Oban town ambassador Kay McDonald*.

I know I always start off with the best of intentions for the new year but they never last that long, so hopefully 2018 will be different.

For one thing, I've not made any resolutions and I'm only aiming to make one change and that's to walk more and slightly faster.

I do have to walk a lot with my job during the summer but it's at a leisurely pace and I tend to be lazy and jump in the car when I'm not working with the excuse that it'll save time. So my

one small change is to do one less car journey a day and walk instead.

If you're inspired to make changes yourself then there are groups that can help motivate you such as Ganavan Parkrun on a Saturday at 9.30am where you can complete the course at the pace that suits you.

Then there's the Thursday Walking Group from outside the Congregational Church on Argyll Street which I believe is about 10am or 10.30am.

If you'd rather be indoors for your exercise, then Atlantis Leisure is the place for you, as it has something for everyone no matter your age or experience,

and friendly experienced staff to get you started.

There are also lots of other classes around the town offering Zumba, Scottish country dancing, martial arts and more, and many of them are in Oban Town Diary. This is as good a time as any to take the first step.

Often the best part of joining in a group activity is the opportunity to socialise and make new friends, and that's always a good way to start the new year.

Last week's photo was of a window at Oban Distillery, which is distinctive with the black and white so I hope you recognised it. This week's requires a wee walk, but it is a very pretty one.

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Mull health care near 'crisis point'

Oban mum admits assault

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

MULL and Iona's 'severely over-stretched' health and home care services are 'close to crisis point' this winter.

Staff are being begged to work extra hours to fill 'gaps across home care, practice nursing, district nursing and community hospital cover'.

According to an email seen by *The Oban Times*, staff were told: 'As you know, many of the services on Mull (and Iona) are currently severely over-stretched and [we] had hoped to meet with you all to discuss the current pressures.'

'However, with leave, sickness and impending Christmas peri-

od, this has not been possible. [We] are working to look at ways we can improve the current situation and do ask that you work with us to make things better both for staff and patients.'

'However, we are close to crisis point and hope all staff will be willing to work outside of usual working practice in order for people to get the care they need.'

'This may involve for example assisting home carers with double-ups, covering community hospital shifts and working outside of your usual locations.'

'We hope this will be minimal, however we would ask that all staff support us over the next few weeks while we try to

address all the current issues. There are gaps across home care, practice nursing, district nursing and community hospital cover at present. If anyone who is currently part-time or interested in extra hours/work across these areas please let [us] know.'

'Thanks to everyone for pulling together to date. The services could not have run without you.'

A spokesperson for the Health and Social Care Partnership responded: 'We recognise there have been challenges both locally and across the HSCP generally and our operational managers have been working closely with the senior management team and our other key

partners to ensure that services continue to be delivered effectively, safely and efficiently for all residents of Argyll and Bute.'

'We would also like to thank all of our staff and partners for their continuing hard work and dedication to delivering a high standard of health and social care services for the local communities across Argyll and Bute.'

Earlier this month the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) union in Scotland revealed nurses are under 'immense pressure' from 'financial worries and workload stress', and are being 'stretched to breaking by the demands of their job'.

Three-quarters of nursing staff surveyed by RCN said they

were worse off than they did five years ago, and pressure on personal finances has meant that only 38 per cent said they would recommend nursing as a career.

According to the survey, 61 per cent of members said 'they were too busy to provide the level of care they would like', while '40 per cent say money worries are making them lose sleep', and '36 per cent say they are looking for a new job'.

Theresa Fyffe, director of RCN Scotland, said: 'Given the prolonged pay freeze and soaring nursing vacancies left unfilled, it is no surprise that our survey highlights that the morale of nurses and health care support workers in our NHS is plummeting.'

'It shouldn't be the case that nurses and health care support workers are taking on a second job or leaving a job that they love because they are struggling to make ends meet.'

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: 'We value the demanding work carried out by all NHS staff incredibly highly. A qualified nurse in Scotland is already paid up to £312 more than counterparts in England and Wales.'

'However, we have gone further by committing to lift the pay cap which will benefit thousands of nurses and healthcare staff, guaranteeing a minimum increase of three per cent for staff who earn up to £30,000.'

A FALLING out over a Facebook message ended with a 23-year-old mother in the dock at Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday.

Lindsay MacDougall, of 22 Catalina Avenue, Oban, admitted assaulting a former schoolmate by seizing her by the hair.

Sheriff Thomas Ward was told the victim had lost a clump of hair from the front of her head during the incident, which happened in the town's Station Square on September 10 this year.

Procurator fiscal David Glancy said the situation arose after MacDougall took exception to something the other woman had written about her on Facebook. She asked for this falsehood to be removed from the social media platform but it had not.

The two young women then met by chance at the taxi rank on their way home and a confrontation ensued.

'A number of people separated them,' said Mr Glancy, adding that the victim only went to the police after MacDougall then posted a Facebook message about her.

MacDougall admitted sending the offensive message.

Her solicitor, Laura MacManus, said MacDougall suffered from bipolar disorder and was being treated for this but at the time had not taken her medication.

'This would not have happened if she had not been drinking and was taking her medication,' she said.

Sheriff Thomas Ward ordered MacDougall to take part in a community payback order which included 100 hours of unpaid work in the community to be completed in the next three months.

Zumbathon raises £868 for charities

A WINTER warm-up Zumbathon in the Corran Halls during Oban's Winter Festival raised £868 to be split between Hope Kitchen and Home-Start Lorn.

More than 80 people took time out of their weekend to go along and spend the afternoon smiling, laughing and having fun while dancing to rhythms from around the world, with four local instructors – Dorah Mothae-Hall, Karen Banaghan, Magdalena Sadlik and Sam Ford – to raise money for the two local charities.

Pictured are the happy gang who did the Zumbathon in November and, inset, left to right, Lorraine McCormick of Hope Kitchen, Magdalena Sadlik, Sam Ford and Aileen Binner of Home-Start Lorn.



Argyll and Bute's IJB asks for 'vital' £900,000

ARGYLL and Bute Council's Integrated Joint Board (IJB) has now written to NHS Highland to ask for more than £900,000 to halt spiralling waiting times.

This comes as people who haven't received an outpatient appointment in Argyll and Bute within the 12-week waiting period is set to soar by 320 per cent next year.

Councillor Kieron Green of the IJB, and policy lead for health and social care, says it is vital that this money is passed on to Argyll and Bute.

There were 1,120 'breaches' in 2016/17, up from 532 the previous year, and it is forecast to rise again threefold to 4,719 in 2017/18, a meeting of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) of the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership heard on November 29.

The board said it was 'inequitable and unacceptable' the £3.2 million allocated to the NHS Highland board should be only spent on the Highland Council population.

Its chief executive has written to the NHS Highland board

requesting the 'NRAC allocation of funding (£925,000) be released to Argyll and Bute'.

Councillor Green said: 'Regarding the funding for waiting times, I welcome the allocation by the government of resources to reduce waiting times but it is vital that our share of this is passed onto Argyll and Bute by NHS Highland so that we can deliver improvements for people living here.'

On top of that, the IJB could face a budget gap of £11.4 million next year.

Councillor Green added:

'Demand for health and social care services is increasing year on year – while government funding is extremely pressured.'

'Along with recruitment issues linked to Scottish-wide shortages in staff in a number of specialities, this means we must look to redesign services to best meet the needs of our population.'

'This will involve significant changes and challenges, and the IJB and officers are fully focused on ensuring that we can work with communities throughout this process.'



Pupils at Lochdonhead and Ulva Primary Schools have taken part in the 90kg Challenge to help raise funds for children in Africa. The 90kg Challenge sees children selling bags of Fairtrade Kilombo rice to raise enough money to help young people in Malawi to get an education. Just 90kg of the rice, priced at £3 per bag, enables a farmer to send their child to secondary school for a year.



Cabbie just avoids driving ban

A TAXI driver was warned he was 'on the cusp of being banned', when he appeared before Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday.

Kevin MacGregor, of Polbeath Road, West Calder, admitted speeding at 99mph on the Arrivain straight on the A85 on August 27 this year.

He was off duty and by himself in his own car when his speed was recorded by traffic police.

His defence agent, Richard Freeman, said MacGregor has worked as a taxi driver for 15 years, had a clean licence and presented a testimonial of good character to Sheriff Thomas Ward.

The sheriff said that the high speed meant he was considering a ban, but he ordered six points to be added to MacGregor's driving licence and fined him £360.

Gaels of laughter caused by mis-spelled road signs

TRANSPORT Scotland had to replace 17 Gaelic road signs in Argyll and the Highlands because a contractor failed to use a translation service.

According to a Freedom of Information request, the signs on the Great Glen Cycle Route from Fort William to Inverness cost £1,725 to be corrected.

One sign directed drivers to Baile an Fhraoich amar – meaning 'heather bath' – when it meant to say Acarsaid Bhaile an Fhraoich – 'Muirtown Basin'. Another mistake, repeated on seven signs, read Baile mor ionad, which translates a 'big town unit'. The signs have since been corrected to Meadhan a' Bhaile, meaning 'city centre'.

The Caledonian Canal was mis-spelled on five signs, reading An Canal Cailleannach instead of An Canal Cailleannach.

Due to a single missing 'e', two signs had to be replaced directing drivers to the Slighe a'

Ghlinn Mhóir, the Great Glen Way, which should be spelled Slighe a' Ghlinne Mhóir.

A spokesperson explained: 'A number of signs on the Great Glen Cycle Way had to be replaced in 2015 after incorrect translations were brought to our attention by a member of the public.'

'Our contractor failed to use the services of our translator, Ainmean-Aite na h-Alba and the signs were corrected as quickly as possible after the mistakes were drawn to our attention.'

One apostrophe, or a lack of one, landed Argyll and Bute Council in hot water in 2015, when it was noticed visitors to Rothesay were unwittingly welcomed to 'Penis Island' for nearly a decade.

The large sign, which greeted ferry passengers as they stepped on to the Isle of Bute, had been in place for nearly nine years.

Driver shocked firefighters

FIREFIGHTERS were so shocked by a driver's actions in the 30mph speed limit at Taynuilt that they contacted the police.

The crew were returning to Oban in a fire engine on May 9 this year when they were overtaken at speed by a car driven by Richard Knight, 50, of Ayr.

Knight admitted driving at speed when he appeared at Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday.

His defence agent, Richard Freeman said: 'The fire appliance was travelling very slowly, less than 30 mph.'

He added that the offence was one which could have been dealt with by a fixed penalty notice.

Sheriff Thomas Ward fined Knight £180 and ordered that three penalty points be added to his driving licence.

An Nollaig is a' Bhliadhn' Ùr

Christmas and New Year

M'ALBA | MY ALBA

Benny
Dihaoine 29 Dùbhlachd, 9f
Friday 29 December, 9pm

The Benny ag innse sgeulachd iongantach a' chiad cheatharnaich sabaid-dùrn chruinneil a bh' aig Alba a-riamh, Benny Lynch - sgeulachd a tha an dà chuid togarrach agus tiamaidh, le soirbheachas agus àmhghar na cois. Tha am film na chuimhneachan bhliath, iomchaidh air fear a bha aithneach mar churaidh nan daoine, le agallamhan le eòlaichean bogsaidh aig a chridhe.

Benny tells the remarkable story of Scotland's first boxing world champion boxer, Benny Lynch.

Cèilidh Na Bliadhn' Ùire 2017
Live Hogmanay Ceilidh
Didòmhnaich 31 Dùbhlachd, 11.30f
Sunday 31 December, 11.30pm

Beò à Sléite, san Eilean Sgitheanach le aighean, cèol agus craic gu leòr! Cuide ri Cathy NicDhòmhnaill agus Niall Iain MacDhòmhnaill.

A host of well-known musicians and singers bring in the bells with Cathy MacDonald and Neil Iain MacDonald live from Sleat, on the island of Skye.

Skipinnish agus Caraidean
Skippinish and Friends
Disathairne 30 Dùbhlachd, 11.30f
Saturday 30 December, 11.30pm

Air a chlàradh aig a' chuirn aig Skipinnish anns a' Bharrowland Ballroom. Chithear taisbeanadh sònraichte bhon oidhche air a mheasgachadh le agallamhan agus seanachas bho na cluicheadairean fhèin. Le taic bhon t-seinneadair Rachel Walker, Malcolm Jones agus Archie McAllister.

Filed live at Skipinnish's gig at the renowned Glasgow Barrowland Ballroom. This programme features highlights from the concert and interviews with the musicians.

Kerry is Kirsty: A' Chomraich
Diluain 1 Faoilleach, 8.30f
Monday 1 January, 8.30pm

Tha na peathraichean Kerry is Kirsty Nic a' Phi air a bhith air na meadhanan sòisealta, feuch an torg iad sliogean ùra baidhsagal airson a shìubhal. Cuide ri Calum MacLleathain, tha iad a' falbh on Cheann Mhòr air Loch Thoirbheartan, agus a' gabhail tro ghleann na Comraich. Tha Calum 's dòcha nas eòlaiche anns an uisge, dè mar a thèid dha thar an rathaid is na mòintich air baidhsagal còmhla ris na dìithis seo?

Having taken to social media to discover fresh cycling horizons, sisters Kerry and Kirsty MacPhee from South Uist are ready to explore in this new series.

Frances: A' Stri ri M.S
Didòmhnaich 31 Dùbhlachd, 9f
Sunday 31 December, 9pm

Tha an tinnas MS air a bhith na chompanach fad iomadh bliadhna do Frances O'Connell. A-nise tha i a' toirt an aghaidh air agus càirdean, luchd-eòlais agus cuid ris nach do choinnich i a-riamh air a cuideachadh gus na mìltean de dh'airgead a chruinneachadh airson a dhot a Mhexico an tòir air cùram loc-shlàinteach. Tha an cùram seo fhathast aig ìre deuchainn ann am Breatainn agus tha fios aig Frances nach bi slighe fhurasta roimpe.

For over 20 years Frances O'Connell has suffered from multiple sclerosis - a condition that's gradually eroded her quality of life. But in early 2016, a pioneering new treatment for MS hit the headlines, Frances dared to dream that a cure might be within her reach.

Sùlaisgeir: an t-Sealg
Sùlaisgeir: The Hunt
Diluain 1 Faoilleach, 9f
Monday 1 January, 9pm

Fad linnnean, tha fir sgìre Nis ann an Eilean Leòdhais sna h-Eileanan an Iar air seòladh gu eilean beag 40 mìle gu tuath air Eilean Leòdhais, gach samhraidh son na tha ceadaichte dhaibh de dh'èoin-mhara shònraichte a chruinneachadh. Tha Dods MacPhàrlain air ceumanna a chuid shìnsirean a leantainn airson còrr air 40 bliadhna. Ach am-bliadhna bidh e os cionn turas sealg a' ghuga airson an uair mu dheireadh agus thug e cead an turas sin a chlàradh.

For centuries, men from Ness in the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles have sailed to a tiny island, 40 miles North of Lewis each Summer to collect their harvest of seabirds.

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OT

Arrochar, Kilmun and Drimnin

COMMUNITY groups in Arrochar, Kilmun and Drimnin will benefit from a share of almost £12,000, thanks to the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) Resilient Communities Fund.

The Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team will receive £3,678 to purchase two monoculars to aid in the search for missing persons.

Kilmun Community Council is receiving £5,040 to provide a defibrillator and changeover switch.

Drimnin Village Hall is receiving £3,159 to enable it to become an emergency response hub.

Mike Bignall, team leader at Arrochar Mountain Rescue, said: 'Arrochar Mountain Rescue operate in a huge area from Dunbartonshire to Arrochar, up to Bridge of Orchy and down to Campbeltown. We are a team of 33 volunteers who cover this area on a 24/7 basis.

'Anything that we can have at our disposal that will help us to save lives in a quick and timely manner will be of huge benefit to both us and the people we aim to help. This technical equipment will aid us in locating lost and injured parties in the remote areas that we cover.

'This will, hopefully, increase our efficiency, save time, energy and lives. I would like to thank the SSEN Resilient Communities Fund for its donation to the team.'

Graeme Stewart, head of region for South Caledonia at SSEN, said: 'Our Resilient Communities Fund is vital to help our communities better prepare and improve their own resilience plans to respond to whatever Mother Nature throws our way.

'As a responsible operator, by proactively supporting local resilience projects we can truly make a difference to the communities we serve and this collaborative approach is essential to support our customers during network outages.'

SSEN's Resilient Communities Fund will re-open for applications in 2018. To find out more about the fund, and for future announcements on the opening date of the next round, please visit ssen.co.uk/Resiliencefund.

Highlands and Islands

HIGHLANDS and Islands communities are being reminded to stay flood prepared over the festive period. More than 8,140 homes are at risk from flooding across the region.

With the festive season fast approaching, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is reminding these communities to stay prepared in case flooding occurs.

Stewart Prodder, from SEPA's Flood Unit, said: 'Being flooded can be a life-changing event, and with so many Scottish homes at risk of flooding, especially during the winter months, it's important to have the appropriate measures in place to protect yourself and your loved ones.

'Some 60 per cent of Scottish homeowners surveyed know it's their responsibility to protect their own property, and more than half know to contact SEPA for flood warning information.

'Our Floodline service provides live flood updates and advice on how to prepare for and cope with the impacts of flooding 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

'Registering with Floodline is free and means you'll be able to get flooding information direct to your phone for the areas you're interested in.'

Register online at www.floodlinescotland.org.uk or call 0345 988 1188.

Western Isles

A CONSULTATION has been launched including proposals to enable remote island wind projects to apply for a Contract for Difference (CfD) in the next competitive auction for less established renewable technologies (subject to state aid approval).

Wind projects on remote islands have great potential due to the strong winds and the opportunity to bring employment and benefit local supply chains. However, they also face higher costs due to their location and transmission requirements, which set them apart from onshore wind projects elsewhere in Great Britain.

The government announced up to £557 million for future auctions in its Clean Growth Strategy and intends for these changes to be implemented, so that island wind projects can compete in the next auction, planned for spring 2019. The consultation will also seek views on how island communities can benefit from these projects.

The last auction proved the benefits of the government's competitive approach and saw the cost of new offshore wind fall by as much as 50 per cent.

Oban



Parents, family and friends were entertained on a lovely starry night to an outside performance of the nativity by the boys and girls of Stramash Nursery.

Oban



Dr Ian Oliver (St Andrews University), Sir Peter Lambert (Chairman of the British Museum), Marri Morrison (CEUT), Peter Cooper (CEUT), Sir Brian Marsh (Chairman of the Marsh Trust).

Volunteers project is resounding success

OVER the past four years, Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath (CEUT), North Uist Historical Society, has developed a team of 50 enthusiastic volunteers, who perform welcoming and information duties in the museum at Taigh Chearsabhagh.

This takes place over the summer months, and the volunteers also help by offering outreach work in local schools.

This year the society received a cheque for £500 and a certificate from

the Marsh Trust district of Scotland.

Two volunteers went to the British Museum with Dr Ian Oliver from St Andrews University to collect the prize and they had a most memorable day.

Marri Morrison, a member of the Comann Eachdraidh, said: 'It was interesting to meet so many other volunteers from across the country and learn about the immense contribution they make to heritage projects.'

The Smart History group from St Andrews University, between May and September 2016, provided a range of stimulating and interesting training workshops for volunteers as part of their involvement in Heritage Lottery Fund and HIE-funded projects with CEUT at Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre.

The volunteers, many of whom had never used 360 degree photography or Xbox controls, took to the new technology with extraordinary skill and enterprise, and were then able to demonstrate and train visitors to explore the digital archaeological installation with considerable expertise.

This memorable installation for 2016's North Uist archaeology exhibition, From Stone to Bone and Wool was projected onto a wall in gallery two for five weeks throughout May and early June.

It attracted almost 3,000 visitors, and since then has been shown on a smaller screen in the museum.

Islay

PORT ELLEN Primary School on Islay has become the first school in Argyll and Bute to gain Digital School Award status.

The Digital Schools Awards are recognised by Education Scotland and are designed to promote, encourage and reward schools that make the best use of digital technology in the classroom.

Schools that receive Digital School status demonstrate, among other things, the presence of a digital strategy, evidence of how digital technology is being used to enhance learning and a commitment to ongoing professional learning for teachers.

Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for education, Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, said: 'Well done to Port Ellen Primary School. Digital School Award status will enable pupils to take full advantage of the digital opportunities that are available to them.

'We want to equip our young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life. Digital technology is all around us and it is important that young people are encouraged to become creators of digital content rather than just being consumers of technology.'

The programme has already highlighted some very innovative and collaborative approaches from schools and teachers regarding the integration of digital technology in teaching and learning.



THE Fraser Shaw Trust would like to say a big warm thank you to everybody who has supported them in 2017, particularly event sponsors: The Port Charlotte Hotel, Bruichladdich, and Ardbeg, and also Natalie Somerville who raised an amazing £1,700 running the London Marathon.

The trust had an action-packed year with the launches of Mac Ille: The Music of Fraser Shaw – both album and tune book, as well as the annual festival Shawfest.

It is also extremely pleased to be making a donation of £5,000 to the Multiple Sclerosis Centre Mid Argyll, which will go towards a complete renovation of the facility in Lochgilphead.

The Fraser Shaw Trust was set up in memory of a wonderful musician who died in May 2015 after battling with MS and eventually PML.

Fraser had been intent on donating the proceeds of his book to his local MS centre, a place he received a great deal of support from during his illness, so it means a lot to the trust to be able to make this donation on his behalf.

A donation of £1,000 will also be made to MS Society Scotland, a charity which funds research on treatment of the illness as well as working with MS sufferers, helping them manage their symptoms.

As well as supporting these charities, the trust aims to promote the arts and culture of Scotland (particularly on the Isle of Islay), along with helping with the advancement of education of young Ileaich residents by encouraging and enabling participation in, and the study of, all forms of traditional music.

For this, the trust has set aside £4,000 for 2018.



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At Random

MARTIN LAING
 mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

A85 campaign is still going on

WE HAVE campaigned consistently all this year for safety improvements on the A85. Our Stay Alive on the A85 campaign has been driven by the large number of accidents on the road, particularly between Oban and Connel.

We had at least one more last week, which caused considerable disruption though thankfully no-one was seriously injured.

What we have asked for in our campaign is in three parts and is simple. We want the speed limit reduced to 50mph, double white lines all along the stretch between Oban and Connel, and a proper layby created at Pennyfuir cemetery (where there is already space available).

The campaign included a petition that was signed by hundreds of concerned people and which I handed to Scottish Transport Minister Humza Yousaf some weeks ago.

Last week I emailed Mr Yousaf to point out that a number of further accidents have occurred since we met. I also asked him if he had yet had the opportunity to examine the issue and if there is any action being planned to address it.

This road and the frequency of accidents on it remains a serious problem that requires action. We have not featured the issue often in recent weeks because Mr Yousaf promised us he would look at it and get back to us.

Mr Yousaf should be in no doubt that we are not going away and will continue to press for the three-pronged safety measures already mentioned.

Farmer's family had a lucky escape

ANOTHER road causing concern is the B845 between Taynuilt and Kilchrean.

As we reported last week, farmer Niall MacLeod's wife and two children were lucky to escape when the Land Rover in which they were travelling was smashed into by a contractor's truck.

Niall said his wife was 'driving at crawling pace but could do nothing on the narrow B845 single-track road to avoid the crash'. He added: '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 at this point and the road desperately needs widening, which would take a few hours with a rock picker.'

Widening the route there would be an eminently sensible course of action and should be considered with urgency.

However, it is difficult to know what action to take on this single-track road in general other than to urge all drivers who use it to exercise greater care and to adopt a safety-first attitude.

Bank must rethink its branch closures

THE Royal Bank of Scotland has deserved every one of the brickbats hurled in its direction over the swingeing number of planned branch closures.

That a state-owned financial institution should so callously abandon the remote and rural communities that rely on it is nothing short of shocking.

The bank's board appears to be in complete ignorance of the geographical location of the many communities it seems so desperate to divest itself of with such brutal impunity.

There have been stories of customers who have complained being told to use internet banking or that their next nearest branch is only whatever number of miles away.

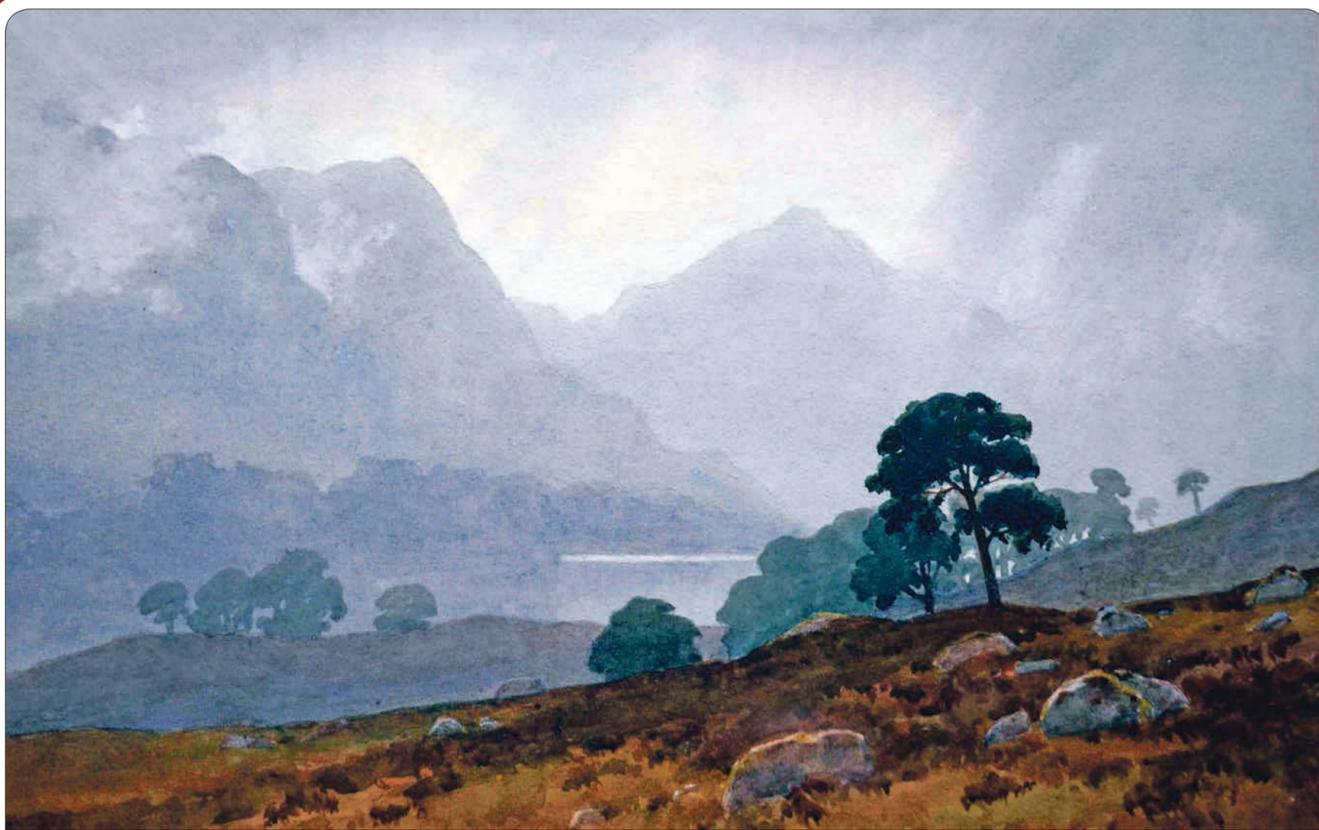
Have they any inkling of the broadband problems faced in the Highlands and Islands and how it makes internet banking impossible?

And to tell someone on Barra that they can use their next nearest branch in Fort William (or wherever) is useless.

They must rethink these ludicrous and damaging closures.

What do you think?

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



Glen Affric, reckoned to be one of the best examples of a Caledonian landscape in Scotland. It comes from a water colour by George Drummond-Fish painted circa 1920.

Final thoughts as another year draws to a close ...

MORVERN LINES
IAIN THORNER
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Caledonia by an enthusiast:

Land of chivalry and freedom; land of old historic fame, may your noble sons and daughters, long, preserve their honoured name.

Land where foreign foe ne'er ventured; land where dastard slave ne'er trod, land whose sons are ever foremost, treading nobly life's long road.

Land of simple-hearted kindness; land of patriotic worth, may your virtues ever flourish, hardy clansmen of the North. Land where rest in silent slumber ashes of our honoured sires; may their virtues long be cherished round our humble cottage fires.

And by a critic:

Land of ancient bloody tyrants! Sneaking traitors, deep and sly.

Land of thieving Heilan' deevils, kilted rogues and stolen kye. Land of Bibles, kirks and b*****ds! Saints and lassies awfu' frail! Drunkards, shee-beens, Godly deacons, parrich, whisky, brose and kail!

Land of cunning' carefu' bodies, foes to all ungodly fun; those who sum up man's whole duty - heaven, Hell, and number one!

Land of psalms and drowsy sermons, pawky wits and snuffy bores, faurgau chieils sae fond of Scotland, that they leave it fast, in scores!
(Author unknown.)

Duart Castle

My dear Sir Fitzroy.
As the day draws near for you to formally hoist your banner



Duart Castle on the Sound of Mull.

on the Castle of Duart, so long the property of your ancestors, I feel strongly that I ought to change the name of my house and estate to what I believe it was formally called - ie, TOROSAY.

I wish to leave the name of Duart to you alone, who certainly have the senior right to it. My husband and I loved the old buildings, and have been proud to act as guardians for the past 15 years. Now it remains for me to wish you long life and all happiness in its possession and to express the sincere hope that as long as the tides meet and swirl round the Lady's Rock, Duart Castle will remain in the keeping of the Chief of the Macleans.

(Letter received by Sir Fitzroy Maclean, 26th Clan Chief, from Mrs Olive Guthrie at a gathering at Duart Castle on August 24, 1912, to celebrate its restoration.)

Death

On the day when death will knock at my door, what shall I offer him, either in the closing minutes of this life or in the opening minutes of my new birth in the life beyond?

Oh, I will set before him all the lovely things that I have seen, all the love that I have received and given, all the insights of truth that I have gathered, all the things that I have valued and enjoyed, all the tasks completed or left for others, all my gratitude and love for the past, all my content in the present and my hope for the future.

(Words inspired by Rabindranath Tagore 1861-1941. Bengali polymath who reshaped Indian literature, music and art. He also wrote, 'I slept and dreamed life was joy. I awoke and saw life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy'.)

Hospitality

The tradition of Hebridean hospitality has happily retained living substance so that, soon after approaching the little croft at the head of the bay [Finsbay, Isle of Lewis] with my request for a gallon of water, I was seated by the fire at the kitchen table of Mrs Catherine Ross.

Her 'you'll be staying for a cup of tea' was more of a forceful suggestion than a statement of 'second sight', but Hebridean 'tea' equally deserves a place in immortal folklore and is not to be missed, for the reference of the word is far wider than on the mainland.

Within minutes I was tucking into homemade scones, oatcakes and several mugs of strong, hot brew.

The homely chat and kitchen warmth began to make me

drowsy and I was concerned that the kayak should be hauled securely above the incoming tide; but I was only able to leave that croft by accepting a bag of fresh scones and butter and promising to let Mrs Ross know when my journey was safely completed, for until that time she would not sleep for worry.

'It's a good thing you're not married and it's sorry I am for your poor mother!'

Smiling, I made my way back to the tent, my hands warmed by the scones only slightly less than her kindness had warmed my heart; but it was not 'kindness' that I ate so gratefully for breakfast next morning.

(Blazing Paddles - A Scottish Coastal Odyssey, by Brian Wilson, conservationist and author 1988.)

On the beach and on the mountain

I am forever walking upon these shores, betwixt the sand and the foam. The high tide will erase my footprints, and the wind will blow away the foam. But the sea and the shore will remain forever.

(Kahlil Gibran 1883-1931. Lebanese writer and poet.)

In Coire a' Ghrunnda this May day, at a height of 1,700 feet above sea-level, I passed the nest of a wren.

Domed, compactly built, and newly finished, it was placed in a cranny of a great boulder, and I wondered what had induced its owners to set their home thus high.

(The Charm of Skye by Seton Gordon 1886-1977.)

Iain Thorne
iain.thorne@btinternet.com

Take a trip back in time on Scotland's canals

THE public will soon be able to delve into the 250-year-old tales of Scotland's inland waterways as Scottish Canals' historic records are transferred to the National Records of Scotland for the first time.

The archive features an array of hand-drawn plans, maps and other records stretching back to when the canals were industrial highways carrying coal, goods and people across the heart and Highlands of Scotland.

Among the collection's items of national significance are the diagram for the Monkland Canal's Blackhill Inclined Plane, a precursor to the Falkirk Wheel, which carried boats over a height difference of almost 100 feet via a rail system, and a notice from the British Office of the



Records show the Crinan Canal was told to keep the lights off.

Admiralty ordering the Crinan Canal to 'extinguish all lights' at the outbreak of the Second World War.

The collection contains thousands of records dating from 1790 to the present day. The his-

toric material initially accepted by National Records of Scotland amounts to around 20 per cent of the records currently held by Scottish Canals. It will see NRS take on responsibility for their storage, conservation and care.

The project means that the records will be publicly accessible for the first time and cared for by a group of highly qualified experts, safeguarding the history of Scotland's canals for generations to come.

Angharad Stockwell, records manager at Scottish Canals, said: 'Our records stores hold some incredible documents that give a real insight into the elegant engineering and unforgettable stories of Scotland's canals.'

'From the notice to extinguish the lights of the Crinan Canal at the outbreak of the Second World War to the original designs for the ingenious Blackhill Inclined Plane, our collections provide a snapshot of pivotal moments in both the history of our canals and Scotland itself.

'We're delighted that National Records of Scotland will be caring for these historic documents, safeguarding them for generations to come and, for the first time, allowing the public to explore them.'

Some of the more recent documents in Scottish Canals' collections will also be cared for by National Records of Scotland.

Scottish Canals is also seeking oral histories from anyone who worked, played or lived on Scotland's canals in the recent past. Contact enquiries@scottishcanals.co.uk.

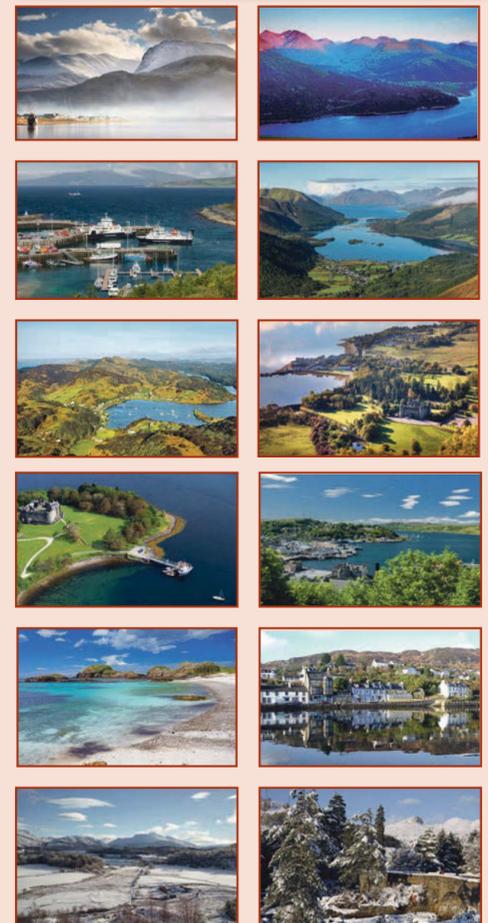
Anyone wishing to view the Scottish Canals records deposited with National Records of Scotland can do so by contacting the inquiries team at National Records of Scotland.

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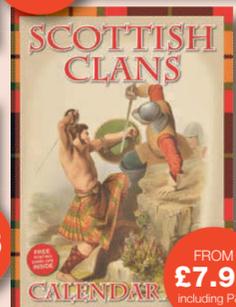
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Viewpoint



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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

The year coming to its conclusion in just a few days has, as ever, been one of contrasts: for some people, it has been a good year, whereas for others it has been one they will be glad to put behind them.

There have been very many high points and positives but 2017 has also been a year marked with tragedies and sudden loss.

We have had to report on dreadful events such as the appalling suicide bomb attack at the Manchester Arena that claimed the life of Eilidh MacLeod from Barra and badly injured her best friend, Laura MacIntyre.

Thankfully, Laura is now back on Barra and returned to school at Castlebay.

Similarly, we had to report on the death of eight-year-old Kayla MacDonald, who was killed following a logging accident near Benderloch.

However, by contrast, it has also been our pleasure throughout the year to chronicle the very many positive events that marked 2017.

So what will 2018 hold? It is, of course, impossible to know but we wish all our readers and advertisers the very best for the coming year.



Days gone by – 1995

Celebrating their double wedding in December 1995 at Oban's Registry Office were Colin and Katrina Law and Elizabeth and Iain MacDonald.

MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk

DESPITE the obvious shortcomings of mankind has a tremendous amount of good to share.

Yes, we are reminded in the media every day of the world's man-made problems, the results of selfishness, short-sightedness, jealousy, prejudice, greed, and the general lack of empathy that has developed since we emerged from the mud. Conflict, war and destruction, and the poverty, hunger, death and misery they cause are the self-inflicted results of these flaws.

However, in a balance that is reflective of the inexplicable wonder of the world, there is equally a power of goodness running through humanity that shows itself just as strongly in selflessness, kindness, forgiveness, love, healing and a natural willingness and instinct to help our fellow human beings.

The ongoing battle between these two opposing forces and all the complicated grey areas in between is, of

course, one of the age old anomalies of life and is in the backbone of religion and philosophy throughout the world.

In our everyday lives, it is valuable to note when we are the recipients of the ingrained goodness of humanity.

During the festive season especially, with Christmas just past and with the New Year on the near horizon, when we are all thinking of new beginnings and of slightly realigning our lives to create a brighter future, it is particularly pertinent to be aware of the value of human kindness.

In a very localised and simple way, the intrinsic goodness in mankind was displayed beautifully in the music world of the West Coast in the lead-up to Christmas and Skipinnish was privileged to have been one of the recipients of this natural and genuine reflex of goodwill and support.

Very sadly, our lead singer Norrie MacIver suffered a close and sudden family bereavement the week before Christmas, which meant he had to get home to Lewis and was going to miss gigs on each of the four consecutive

days after he received the bad news.

The immediate willingness to help from the lead singers of other bands and their colleagues was humbling.

Complicated busy schedules were changed, new repertoire learned at breakneck speed, important family time missed, and sacrifices to their own bands' timetables were made in order to assist in an emergency.

Not all the help made available was needed in the end but the offers were appreciated.

In other industries, or with different individuals involved, this reflex to help would not have occurred.

At worst, in the ways reflective of the flaws of humanity discussed at the beginning of this piece, disinterest would have been shown in our unfortunate situation and the perceived short-term advantage over a 'rival' might even have been relished.

That is not how bands operate in this part of the world and it was heartening to see that being shown by example last week.

This outlook of unquestioning help to others when in need is a very pow-

erful 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.

Council needs to help firms to innovate

Sir,

The recent Holyrood budget was disappointing. It ignores modern economics and the Laffer Curve and will thus push up the already high recruitment costs for doctors and teachers in the Highlands.

Sadly, although the budget aimed to increase growth, the independent Scottish Fiscal Commission is forecasting the economy will continue flatlining for years to come.

Along with slashing government waste, Scotland needs more people earning more money as that will boost the tax take from households and companies. Using common sense, though, will require massive work in upskilling people and investing to increase productivity.

Councils and the NHS must work with colleges, the University of the Highlands and Islands, the Workers' Education Authority and others to help staff move to today's efficient 'click and swipe' business systems.

Nurses must use tablets, not just give them to patients.

Many of the computer server farms that support Bitcoin trading and other businesses are based in Outer Mongolia. These use polluting coal-fired electricity so a second Cruachan power station and other pumped hydro schemes offer cleaner, greener and cheaper alternatives.

Argyll is a much better place to work but civil servants, as well as Highlands and Islands Enterprise, need to extract a finger from the hydroelectric dam and catch up with the 21st century.

So, given that our politicians are unable to organise a drinking party in a distillery, please can they put their hatred of successful people to one side and encourage the Highlands to thrive and innovate. This will help rich and poor alike, as well as basic rate taxpayers like me.

Mike Foster,
Crannaig a Mhinister, Oban.

What is council income from fares?

Sir,

Argyll and Bute Council claims that its four ferry services are 'unsustainable' without £500,000 additional funding from the Scottish Government (The Oban Times, December 14).

Currently, the Scottish Government 'only' gives a grant of £675,000 towards the average yearly running costs of £1,176,578. Nowhere in the article does the council mention the income it raises from ferry ticket sales (how much is this per year?), or how it might generate more income other than charging island residents even more than they pay already.

So, basically, this is another council whinge about the Scottish Government.

As an island resident and user of the Seil-Luing ferry, I would like to say

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

A' LEUGHADH seo is deireadh bhliadhna a' teannadh agus cha b' iongnadh dhuinn sealltainn air ais air na thachair troimhe, agus cuideachd beachdachadh air rudan nach do thachair mar a dh'iarramaid. Mar a tha seanfhacal ga chur "is ann an ceann bliadhna a dh'innseas iasgair athuiteamas".

Tha e nàdarra dhan a h-uile duine rùintean a bhith aca aig àm bliadhna' ùir, agus tha leithid sin a' toirt togail ann am meadhan a' gheamhraidh. Gach soirbheachadh dhuibh le bhur cuid dòchais airson 2018, tha mi a' guidhe gum tig co-dhùil cuid aca gu buil dhuibh!

Ach mar a tha daonnan fìor a thaobh dhòchais, bidh mòran den bhuil an urra ri ìre na saothrach a chuireas sinn fhìn an sàs gus na h-amasan a choileanadh. Bidh mòran rùintean againn cuideachd air nach eil cus smachd neo buaidh gu bhith againn fhìn, ged a bhios sinn gam meas air leth chudromach.

Dè na rùintean a dh'iarramaid gus cor a' chinne-daonna agus an t-saoghail a leasachadh?

that a fantastic service is provided by the ferry staff, and the recent introduction of a Sunday vehicle service is much appreciated. This has brought more day visitors to the island, and is of enormous benefit to the island community and economy.

I hope that the council's plan to have 'full responsibility' for the ferry service from June next year brings further improvements.

It must, however, take a more open and positive attitude to its main funder, the Scottish Government, and find ways of generating more income without placing further burdens on island residents.

Mary Braithwaite,
Cullipool, Isle of Luing.

Did SNP tell truth in referendum?

Sir,

In response to Iain Macdonald's letter ('Brexit claim was a clear case of fraud', The Oban Times, December 14), we could also claim that much of what was promised by the SNP in the lead up to their 2014 independence referendum was fraudulent.

Nicola Sturgeon, our present First Minister said in 2013: 'The reality, though, is that people are not stupid. An independent Scotland would be one of the richest countries in the world.'

Cyril Bonnett,
Ballachulish.

Lismore's second ferry is a luxury

Sir,

The majority of residents of Argyll and Bute who will lose services and facilities as the council makes cuts to balance its budget need to hear from the 192 residents of Lismore what justification can be provided for having two ferries serving the island, especially given that the island draws only modest amounts of tourism and this can easily be provided for by the CalMac service from Oban to Achnacroish (Council ferries 'unsustainable' without extra £500,000 a year', The Oban Times, December 14).

Without an adequate justification, the council-funded passenger ferry from Port Appin looks like 'nice-to-have' rather than 'need-to-have'.

Professor Emeritus Ian Reid,
Ardconnel Road, Oban.

President deserves to be shown respect

Sir,

Further to the article in *The Scotsman* on December 14 headlined 'Islanders plan Mexican protest if Donald Trump visits Hebrides', I pray this is not the attitude of the majority of the islanders.

If it is not, I hope their voices as well as their prayers will be raised in opposition and not hushed in compliance.

Unfortunately, it is the voice of the

self-important, unelected, liberals which so often seems to drown out the voice of the conservative godly man.

Men of God, this country is looking for leadership. We can show solidarity with the anti-abortion laws which President Trump supports. We can show solidarity with the anti-LGBT lobby which the President supports. We can show solidarity with freedom of religion which the President supports.

We can show solidarity with the President's support of Israel against Islamic terrorism. We can show solidarity with the President's exposure of the global warming fraud which is being used to tax the multitudes.

We can show some respect for the President of the US and for all that he has accomplished against the deep state in his first year in office, in spite of every failed attempt to demonise him.

He supports the polar opposite of the amoral governments we have in Westminster and Holyrood who legislate for abortion, same-sex marriage, curtailing of religious freedom and freedom of speech and every other anti-biblical view possible.

We are called to be courteous to all men and to show respect where that is possible. May we never think of ourselves so highly that we are unable to fulfil this calling.

Surely it is the same in every walk of life; even in the gospel ministry itself – there are those we cannot respect but we can always respect the office they hold and act accordingly.

How deeply offensive to the people of Scotland that a once bastion of Christianity, the Isle of Lewis, should contemplate and threaten to treat any visitor in this way.

Jesus said unto them: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone' – (John 8:7).

Susan Wallace,
Corpach, Fort William.

Royal Bank is being disloyal to Scotland

Sir,

I have been a bank customer for more than 60 years starting with the National Bank of Scotland, then the National Commercial Bank of Scotland and latterly with the Royal Bank of Scotland.

At present, I have my main accounts with the Royal Bank of Scotland at Pitlochry and have been told by letter that my accounts will be transferred to Blairgowrie as of May 31, 2018. I also have an account at Fort William and use the sub-office at Mallaig which is also closing on May 31, 2018. If I transfer all my accounts to Fort William, I will have a round trip of 70 miles to get my banking done instead of the 15 miles I have at present.

I have been a loyal customer of the Royal Bank for 60 years and my late wife was a Royal Bank pensioner. I feel that the Royal Bank, which is still owned by the nation, is being very disloyal to its customers and should change their name to Royal Bank PLC as it is also being disloyal to Scotland.

Colin Lynn,
Strathview, Arisaig.

Ailean Caimbeul

Social media

Our story about the ambitious plans to build on Oban's growing credentials as a university town, to be launched early next year, prompted a number of comments.

Hamish Kirk: "Local young people" ? And then the marketisation of higher education will come to Oban and you will be selling these university places to the sons and daughters of the Chinese elite ! Their first duty of a university is to provide for the education of the local population. I would submit that many institutions in Scotland have lost sight of that. Visit the universities of St Andrews, Edinburgh and Glasgow and think about that."

Aadm Bbarclay: 'This is great for Oban. Love how the first comment is negative. Can you guys get him to do public relations? So only people in Oban can go to university in Oban? Or people that live in St Andrews go to St Andrews? I'm not familiar with that rule. It baffles me how negative local people are.'

Steven Fletcher: 'Yeah Adam and then when the university becomes financially unviable it closes down and then folk can moan about that. Sounds a brilliant idea and a mixture of talented local folk and those from further afield will be positive for the future of the area, including businesses.'

Derek Grier: 'So what if they market

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

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

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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.

Killin youngsters sparkle in nativity



The young stars from Killin Primary School dressed up and sang and danced as they staged a colourful nativity extravaganza.



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- Thursday**
28th December
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports
- Friday**
29th December
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports
- Saturday**
30th December
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports
- Ganavan Sands Parkrun**
9.30am-11am
- Cearcall Còmhraidh (Gaelic Conversation Group)**
Furan Gaelic Centre, 12pm-1.30pm
- Hill Walk Kinlochleven**
Kinlochleven, Share Petrol All Day
- New Years Eve**
Hogmanay Fireworks bought to you by BID4OBAN
From McCaigs Tower Starts Midnight
- New Years Day**
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
George Noble DJ
- Tuesday**
2nd January 2018
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports
- Irish Dancing Classes**
St Columba's Cathedral Hall
4.15pm-5.45pm
- Wednesday**
3rd January 2018
Entertainment@ Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

Oban High juniors Jingle the night away

Arranged by a committee of sixth-year pupils, the Jingles provided the setting for some spectacular dance moves and festive fun.

Glittery faces were provided by senior pupils raising money for Mary's Meals and the school technicians were taking photos of the party-goers. DJ Audio

Disciple played music to suit all tastes, with YMCA proving to be particularly popular with the pupils and Mr Walker.

There was also some enthusiastic ceilidh dancing, resulting in an array of high heels at the side of the hall that would put any high street shoe shop to shame.



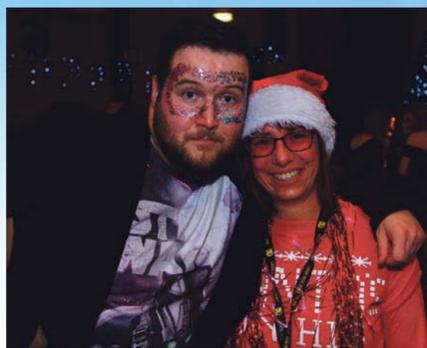
The YMCA proved one of the most popular dances of the night.



The Orcadian strip the willow was a hit with the young dancers.



The Canadian barn dance went down well.



Dave Duncan and Tanya Robertson joined in the fun.



Lots of energy was needed for the dashing white sergeant.

BURNS SUPPER on Friday 26th January



Tickets for Burns Club Of Oban Annual Supper will be on sale in Regent Hotel on Tues 9th, Wed 10th and Mon 15th Jan between 6pm till 7.30pm.

Alternatively contact John MacLean on 01631 565519
New Members Welcome



Glasgow Letter

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

2018 approaches

I hope everyone has had a fulfilling Christmas and that you are ready to bring in the New Year,

however you intend to do so.

2017 has been another busy year in Glasgow.

Attendances for association dances are generally rising, there have been some wonderful concerts and individual events throughout the year, and let's not forget the unplanned gatherings and ceilidhs that often arise spontaneously among friends and are frequently the best nights.

I am hoping for more of the same next year. The start of 2018 will herald the 25th Celtic Connections Festival which I will bring details of at the beginning of January.

To all readers of the Glasgow Letter, I wish you whatever you would wish for yourself in 2018.

Mull and Iona Association plans for 2018

The Mull and Iona Association has announced plans for its gathering weekend early next year.

An excerpt from a press release from the association reads: 'In line with recent years, the Mull and Iona gathering will again be held on the third Friday in February. The 2018 gathering falls on

February 16 and the venue is the Glasgow University Union debating chamber.

The evening will follow the traditional structure of a concert and then a dance into the small hours to the music of West Coast favourites and 2016 Scottish dance band of the year, Trail West.

'We have endeavoured to produce a programme of varied and esteemed performers for this year's concert. Our first Gaelic singer is Rachel Walker. Rachel won the female Mòd gold medal at the 2017 Lochaber Mòd but has been up there with the best of the best since she released her first album in 2004.

'To add a bit of variety, Fiona Hunter will be entertaining us with some Scots song. Fiona is part of the well-travelled folk band, Malinky, who won the Folk Band category at the 2010 Scots Trad Awards.

'Joining them, and warming up his fingers for the dance, will be Ian Smith of Tìree. A first class accordion player with Trail West, Ian cemented his position as one of the West Coast's finest musicians by recording a highly praised BBC Take The Floor broadcast in early 2017.

'The Mull and Iona Association looks to nurture and promote local talent and, to that end, Shannon Maclean from Tobermory will be singing for us this year. Shannon made her mark on the senior competitions at the National Mòd in Lochaber by making it through to the gold medal final.

'Shannon has previously won many junior and choral competitions as well as being awarded for her film-making. She is a great ambassador for Mull and is currently studying Gaelic at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye.

'Also performing on the evening will be Emma Deans with her winning song from the Sarah Weir Memorial trophy at the Mòd - a competition that the association sponsors annually.

'The concert would not be complete without Iain Donaldson's assembly of local pipers who will open and close proceedings under the title: The Mull and Iona Pipers.'



Rachel Walker with her gold medal.

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- 100g Mascapone
- 500ml Double cream
- 1 Vanilla pod

Method

Divide the Raspberries into 6 ramekins.
Whisk Caster sugar, yolks and Mascapone together.
Pour the double cream and

vanilla pod into a pan and bring to the boil, remove from the heat and add the egg mixture and mix well. Return pan to the heat and cook over gentle heat until mixture thickens. Take care not to let the mixture boil again. Strain and pour into the Ramekins. Allow to cool for 4 hours or overnight. Sprinkle with Demerara sugar and glaze under a hot grill until sugar caramelises, chill for 5 minutes and serve.

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DIARDAIN 28 DÙBHLACHD
THURSDAY 28 DECEMBER
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
18.00 ÙR/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 Shair - the wildlife and landscape of the Coast of Europe (rpt)
19.55 Binneas - Hogmanay - Blue Rose Code performing at the Hogmanay Show 2016 (rpt)
20.00 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 Dùbhlachd (rpt)
23.00 Lorient is Alba: HEBCEL (rpt)

DIHAOINE 29 DÙBHLACHD
FRIDAY 29 DECEMBER
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
18.00 De a-nis? (rpt)
19.00 An Là - News
19.05 Binneas - Hogmanay (Julie Fowlis)
19.10 Briseadh na Cloiche - drama following the progression of a post-war

romance to its harrowing conclusion (rpt)
19.30 Mod nan Còisirean 2017 - successful choirs from the Lochaber Mod (rpt)
21.00 ÙR/NEW: Benny - the remarkable story of Scotland's first boxing world champion boxer
22.00 Opry an lùir - The Three Amigos (rpt)
22.55 Binneas - Hogmanay (Fiona Kennedy)
23.00 Slàinte Mhath - songs about drinking culture (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 30 DÙBHLACHD
SATURDAY 30 DECEMBER
16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
18.00 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership - Aberdeen v Heart of Midlothian
20.00 Spòrs na Bliadhna 2017 (rpt)
21.00 Nathan Carter (rpt)
22.25 ÙR/NEW: Binneas - Hogmanay (Julie Fowlis)
22.30 Benny - the remarkable story of Scotland's first boxing world champion boxer (rpt)
23.30 ÙR/NEW: Skipinnish agus Caraidéan - Skipinnish and musical friends at Barrowland

24.00 Slàinte Mhath - songs about drinking culture (rpt)

DIDÒMHAICH 31 DÙBHLACHD
UNDAY 31 DECEMBER
16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
18.30 ÙR/NEW: A' Bhliadhna 2017 - a look back at news stories featured on An Là in 2017
19.30 ÙR/NEW: Sin Thu Fhèin - Finlay MacLeod in conversation with John Alick MacPherson
20.00 Truinsearan ar Sinnsrean - recipes and lore from the 'The Scots Kitchen' (rpt)
21.00 ÙR/NEW: Frances: A' Strì ri MS - Frances O'Connell's struggle with MS
22.00 ÙR/NEW: Lorient is Alba: Tidelines
23.00 ÙR/NEW: Tormod air Telly - a classic Norman MacLean programme from the 70's
23.30 ÙR/NEW: Ceilidh na Bliadh' Ùire - bringing in the bells live from Sleat, Isle of Skye

DILUAIN 01 FOILTEACH
MONDAY 01 JANUARY
17.00 Ceilidh na Bliadh' Ùire - Gaelic musicians and singers bring in the bells with

Cathy MacDonald and Neil Iain MacDonald (rpt)
19.00 An Là - News
19.05 ÙR/NEW: Quay Sessions - C Macleod
19.30 An Dara Teud: Na Trads (rpt)
20.30 ÙR/NEW: Kerry is Kirsty: A' Chomraich - cyclists Kerry and Kirsty are in Applecross
21.00 ÙR/NEW: Sùlaisgeir: an t-Sealg - the last guga hunt for one of Ness' men
22.00 ÙR/NEW: Rocky Ros Muc - the story of Sean Mannion's life and boxing career
23.30 Ceathar air a' Chuiltheann - four school leavers tackle the Cuillin Ridge (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 02 FOILTEACH
TUESDAY 02 JANUARY
14.50 ÙR/NEW: Scottish Premiership - Greenock Morton v St Mirren
17.05 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 An Là - News
19.05 ÙR/NEW: Quay Sessions - Sam Outlaw
19.30 Thuige Seo - writer and poet Iain Crichton Smith (rpt)
20.00 Cleas Feasgair - drama with Tony Kearney (rpt)

20.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
20.30 ÙR/NEW: Leugh Mi
21.00 ÙR/NEW: Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach
22.00 Frances: A' Strì ri MS - Frances O'Connell's struggle with MS (rpt)
23.00 Slàinte Mhath - songs about whisky (rpt)
23.25 Ceathar air a' Chuiltheann - four school leavers tackle the Cuillin Ridge (rpt)

DIADAIN 03 FOILTEACH
WEDNESDAY 03 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 An Lot (rpt)
19.30 Druthag na Hearadh - the first year at the Harris Distillery (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.15 Cèol bho Perthshire Amber - Tunebook with Mairead Green and Ross Ainslie (rpt)
20.30 Quay Sessions - C Macleod (rpt)
20.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
21.00 Rocky Ros Muc - the story of Sean Mannion's life and boxing career (rpt)
22.30 Lorient is Alba: Tidelines (rpt)
23.30 Ceathar air a' Chuiltheann - four school leavers tackle the Cuillin Ridge (rpt)

DIARDAIN 04 FOILTEACH
THURSDAY 04 JANUARY
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
19.00 Eileanan Fraoich - Scalpay
19.30 Druthag na Hearadh - the first year at the Harris Distillery (rpt)
20.00 An Là - News
20.15 Cèol bho Perthshire Amber - Dougie MacLean (rpt)
20.30 Balaich a' Bhiobail - students in training for ministry in the Free Church of Scotland (rpt)
21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
21.45 Torcuil's Guide to Being a Gael: Canan (rpt)
22.00 Sùlaisgeir: an t-Sealg - the last guga hunt for one of Ness' men (rpt)
23.00 ÙR/NEW: Fleasgaich an lasgaich - competitive fishing around the world
23.45 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
23.50 Dhan Uisge - River Douchary (rpt)

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 Crannog 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 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

Pet Idol

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*:

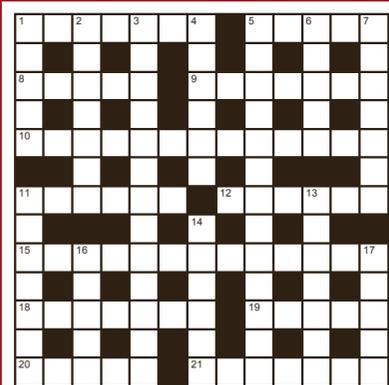
Pet's name:

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 LOCHABER TIMES argyllshire advertiser campbeltown courier

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

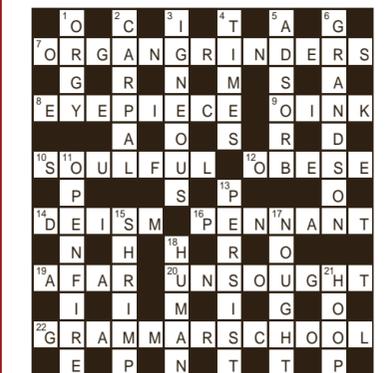


Across

- 1 Naps (7)
- 5 Dried coconut meat (5)
- 8 Underworld family (5)
- 9 Small yellow fruit (7)
- 10 Requiring intelligence (6,7)
- 11 Overseas (6)
- 12 Thick skinned fruit (6)
- 15 Preliminary performance (7,6)
- 18 Structure supported by columns (7)
- 19 Speck in the ocean (5)
- 20 Offspring (5)
- 21 Under (7)

Down

- 1 Object (5)
- 2 Policeman (7)
- 3 Directing (5-8)
- 4 Thinly spread (6)
- 5 Authorisation (13)
- 6 Nut (5)
- 7 She portrays another (7)
- 11 Receives with approval (7)
- 13 Parakeet (7)
- 14 Put away underground (6)
- 16 Not so common (5)
- 17 Throat sound (5)



OFFERS & competitions

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

WIN

A PAIR OF FAIRFAX AND FAVOR REGINA BOOTS WORTH £329

A Hume Country Clothing, a lifestyle country clothing retailer based in Kelso in the heart of the Scottish Borders, are offering one lucky reader the opportunity



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

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

WIN

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



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

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

Valid Tuesday - Thursday, subject to availability, based on two people sharing a twin or double room for one night. Prizes are not included. Must be 18 or over. 21.12.2017

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.

HOGMANAY FIREWORKS!

The display starts at midnight, from McCaigs Tower.

Where will you watch it from? GREAT VIEWPOINTS... The Harbour, Station Square, Tesco Car Park, North and South Piers.

STAY SAFE AND HAVE FUN!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at BID4OBAN



OT

Review of the year

January

Oban's Susie Wolff races into honours list

ALMOST 1,200 people received an award in this year's New Year Honours list, including Oban's Susie Wolff, writes David McPhee.

Oban's Susie received an MBE for her services to women in sport. The 34-year-old racing driver retired from the sport last year, but not before she established a Dare to be Different initiative, which aims to increase female participation in all areas of racing.

She said: 'I am humbled to receive an MBE in recognition of my service to women in sport.'

'Like any female competitor, I simply aspired to compete on a level playing field and was able to chase that dream thanks to the never-ending support of my family and all those who backed me along the way.'

'This is a recognition of their efforts as much as my own. Now my focus is on passing that support and belief to the next generations of young women who dare to be different in chasing their motorsport dreams.'

Three women from Argyll were honoured with a BEM.

Margaret Ann Worsley from



Susie Wolff.

Tiree received the honour for her voluntary service to the community of the island.

Sheila McCallum from Lochgilphead also received a BEM for her service to music in Mid Argyll, as did Marjory Mackenzie Jagger, the manager of Skye and Lochalsh Young

Carers Service, for her service to young people and the community in the Inner Hebrides.

John Campbell of Glenrath Farms, who is originally from Strachur, received a knighthood for his services to farming and charitable service to entrepreneurship.



Members of Laura Campbell's family and fundraising team present their cheques totalling £21,200.

North Connel family inspired by brave teenager to raise £21,200 for charity

A CHARITY auction and ceilidh at North Connel Hall raised £20,000 for CLIC Sargent and the Antony Nolan Trust, plus £1,200 more for the Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity.

The inspiration behind the event is local teenager Laura Campbell, who was diagnosed with leukemia for the third time in her life. But thanks to a stem cell donor, she underwent a bone marrow transplant in October.

Last year Laura and her friends began a campaign to recruit more lifesaving blood donors to enlist on the Anthony Nolan stem cell register, and many fundraised

for CLIC Sargent, which supports young cancer sufferers.

John Sweeney, watch manager for Oban's Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, said an incredible 212 people had joined the register as a result of the campaign, and, with each entry costing £70, the ceilidh will cover the costs.

Everything at the event was donated for free, including the hall, food and music.

Raffle gifts raised £4,000, while the auction raised more than £5,000. Local primary school children also baked cakes to sell around North Connel, raising £150, and an anonymous

benefactor posted organisers a £5,000 cheque.

A raffle earlier in the month at Poppies Garden Centre, organised by owners Gary and Marion McPherson, also raised £640 towards the total.

'We started off aiming for £5,000,' said fundraiser Archie Cameron, 'then we got a donation of £5,000, which set us up for £10,000, and it just kept going. We didn't know where to stop.'

Laura's grandfather, Ronnie Campbell, thanked all those who donated and fundraised, in particular Archie, without whom, he said, the 'amazing' event would not have happened.

Making women Look Good Feel Better

THE national cancer support charity Look Good Feel Better (LGFB) is now running free skincare and make-up workshops at the Macmillan Day Unit in Oban's Lorn and Islands Hospital.

These are held throughout the UK and are led by volunteer beauty professionals who take cancer patients through specially designed skincare and make-up sessions, which include instructions on how to look after changes to the skin and to help them define their best features with make-up. The aim is to improve the wellbeing and confidence of people undergoing treatment for any type of cancer.

The workshops started last year at Lorn and Islands Hospital with Clare Abbott, a qualified Colour Me Beautiful consultant, who has previously worked with Look Good Feel Better in its Glasgow-based workshops. Clare is joined by



Clare Abbott, left, and Donna MacKenzie will help women being treated for cancer at Oban's hospital.

Donna MacKenzie, a Macmillan clinical nurse specialist at the Macmillan Day Unit within the hospital.

This local service is tailored to each patient, who is also given a special gift bag full of luxury beauty products. These gift bags

are kindly supplied by LGFB and its extensive list of sponsors within the beauty industry.

This service is open to any patient who is undergoing cancer treatment with the Lorn and Islands Hospital.

Call 01631 789050 for details.

February

Andy's fundraising idea is one in a million

TEN Oban Times staff members collectively will walk one million steps to raise money for Cancer Research UK.

The challenge, which begins just a few days ahead of World Cancer Day on Saturday February 4, will be measured using step-counter devices such as Fitbits. The OT team chose Cancer Research UK after

realising how much cancer has affected staff and their friends and family.

Oban Times production manager Andy Bruce, who came up with challenge idea, said: 'With constantly improving treatments available, Cancer Research UK is making a real difference to cancer sufferers and their families. Our aim is



to raise £1,000 for the cause. It should be a lot of fun too.'

The Fitbit team taking part are, left to right, Andy Bruce, Louise Glen, Nicky Murphy,

Susan Windram, Louise Steele, Carolyn Buchanan, Lorna Scott, Rhona McKillop, Kevin McCubbin and Stephanie Dunstaffnage.



Dunbeg Primary School's eco committee proudly show off the school's sixth green flag. 15_145dunbeg01

Sixth green flag for Dunbeg Primary School

DUNBEG Primary School pupils have earned their sixth green flag. The school's eco committee has been focusing on litter, energy, food and the environment. This involved ensuring the school grounds were litter free, taking part in litter picking throughout the village as part of the National

Spring Clean initiative. They also took part in Beachwatch beach clean and recorded all the litter they found and constructed graphs.

The children learned to grow their own food and made shortbread and soup for the school harvest lunch for senior citizens.

Oban's TV fame thanks to Loose Women's Jane

A NEW television programme that saw *Loose Women* presenter and former cruise ship singer Jane McDonald visit Oban is being aired on Channel 5, writes David McPhee.

Jane McDonald took a mini-cruise around the Inner Hebrides and the Isle of Mull before arriving in the town to be matched up with her family tartan in Chalmers of Oban.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* back in May, Ms McDonald

said: 'I've loved this trip to Scotland. It's the best thing I could have done.'

'I love Oban ... I just took a cruise on the Majestic Line around Mull, which was the best cruise I have ever been on. We went to Tobermory, Mull, Iona, Lunga, Staffa and Oban, and we have loved everywhere.'

The 53-year-old first hit our screens in 1998 in a reality television show called *The Cruise*.



Jane McDonald with staff from Chalmers of Oban and two members of Oban High School Pipe Band.

March



Connel's Kate is named top doc

CONNEL doctor Kate MacGregor has been named Scotland's GP of the Year.

Dr MacGregor, who has worked at the practice since 2008, was unanimously judged top of 19 shortlisted nominees, and picked up a trophy at Edinburgh's Assembly Rooms in February.

Dr MacGregor was nominated by a patient's family last year after, she said, offering them out-of-hours support when necessary, including seeking out secondary care.

Dr MacGregor said: 'She was a relatively young woman who had a progressive

neurological disease. After she died, it was her partner who nominated me.'

The Royal College of General Practitioners runs three awards each year, including GP of the Year, in which doctors are nominated for 'high quality care that goes above and beyond the call of duty'.

GPs working in rural practices enjoy a different role than their town or city counterparts, she explained, saying: 'You have to provide more support to the patient and family. More people are being looked after in the community, so community services are quite stretched.'

Children – and grans – turn back time

Dunbeg Primary pupils pretending to be Second World War evacuees took the train from Oban to Taynuilt on Tuesday, where they were met by, left to right, Granny Mary, Nanny D and Granny Wilma from their 'host families'. The costumed children sang songs, carried gas masks, ID cards and Spam sandwiches as part of the study project, which culminates in a trip to the Oban War and Peace Museum.



Tears of joy as missing dog Rowan found after 10 days

A WEE dog that was missing for more than 10 days was found safe and well last week at Ganavan beach.

Rowan's owner, Sandra Muir, said she was 'beyond delighted' to get her Jack Russell/Patterdale cross back.

Sandra explained: 'For 10 days we were out looking for her and that morning was the first morning I was late getting to the beach.'

'When I arrived, Karen Delaney [who has helped search

for 10 days] stopped my car. I just knew she had been found.'

A quick visit to Oban Veterinary Surgery and Rowan was given a clean bill of health.

Sandra continued: 'Rowan has lost around a kilogramme in weight and must have lost some of her size to get out of the rabbit warren she was stuck in.' Sandra is pictured with daughter Mirren, who was very emotional about finding Rowan. She said: 'It is the best news.'

Review of the year

April

Saving the world 'one bottle at a time'

AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD boy from Soroba is doing his part to tackle Oban's rubbish problem.

Ryan Cain has come up with a solution to reduce the amount of clear glass placed in the communal bins – and make some money for himself at the same time.

The Colonsay Terrace youngster collects glass from his neighbours and takes it to be recycled at Tesco every week.

He created a number of hand-made leaflets, and posted them through his neighbours' doors, which read: 'Do you have clean glass for recycling? Help the planet. I would like to collect it from you for 50p. I can come round every Thursday.'

Ryan, who now has 10 'clients', told *The Oban Times*: 'I do it to save the world one bottle at a time.' He is currently saving any money he makes for his holiday to Turkey in July.

Ryan's mum, Diane Maxwell, helps him with his rounds. She ensures he doesn't touch the glass until he is placing it into the recycling bins – after she has checked it.



Ryan Cain has been recycling ... and making some holiday money for himself on the side.

She said: 'I don't go near the doors. He goes and chaps them. He does not touch the glass apart from putting it in the

bin after I've checked it. All it takes is for the children to do it and the generation to come will follow.'

RNLI crew honoured for gallantry during rescue

A HEROIC Islay lifeboat crew have been honoured after saving a sailor's life during a severe storm.

The coxswain of the Islay lifeboat, David MacLellan, 46, and his crew of four were presented with the RNLI bronze medal for gallantry for their display of great skill and seamanship in saving a yachtman in a very challenging environment.

The award, one of the charity's highest accolades, was presented in front of a crowd of more than 120 at Bowmore Village Hall, Islay, on Saturday March 25. The rescue operation which, lasted more than 18 hours, took place on February 16 last year.

David, who has been with the charity since 1990, thanked his volunteer crew and fundraisers.

He said: 'I might have been the one making the decisions and helming the boat, but this was undoubtedly a fantastic team effort with the crew on the deck doing the hard work.'

'We have a good team here on Islay with the crew,



The gallant Islay lifeboat crew were honoured at Bowmore, with coxswain David MacLellan, second right, receiving the bronze medal.

operations and fundraisers. The fundraisers do a fantastic job every year raising funds to provide the community with the best possible boat and equipment.'

RNLI chief executive Paul Bossier, who presented the award, said: 'The medal is

awarded in recognition of your personal courage, your leadership and your remarkable seamanship on that night. You fully deserve this medal and I know that you will wear it with pride for years to come.'

David's team – mechanic David McArthur, 42, navigator

Thomas Coope, 31, and crew members Duncan MacGillvray, 32, and Peter Thomas, 38 – all received framed letters of thanks from the RNLI chairman. Captain Martin Porter, 62, of the Deep Energy pipelaying vessel, was also given a framed letter of thanks.

May



Family of charity hero Nonny hand over cheques in aid of cancer support

CHEQUES for £7,000 were handed over to cancer support charities from the organisers of a fundraising football and family fun day for We Will Walk This Road Together.

Karen MacInnes, right, alongside daughter Jenna, left, handed over the cheques, with John Scott, centre, the main organiser of the event, over-

seeing the exchange. Lillian Kermode accepted the cheque on behalf of Marie Curie while June Pearson accepted the Cancer Research UK donation.

A further donation will be made to Oban Hospice once the accounts are finalised.

Townfolk were shocked earlier this year when one of

the founding members of the charity, Nonny MacInnes, died after a battle with cancer.

Nonny, Karen, Jenna, Kirsty and Rhoda MacInnes, and a team of volunteers and musicians, ran a number of hugely successful concerts in the Corran Halls, supporting Cancer Research, Oban Hospice and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Families pay tribute to Barra girls caught up in bombing

'EILIDH MACLEOD was our beautiful, intelligent, popular and talented daughter as well as a loving sister and we are at a loss without her.'

'Eilidh loved nothing more than spending time with those she loved, both family and friends alike. She loved socialising whether through social media or spending time with them down on the beaches of both Barra and Vatersay.'

'Her love of music was unsurpassed and she enjoyed her time playing, travelling and competing in the pipe bands immensely.'

'We would like to thank the emergency services who did everything in their power to help following the explosion. Sincere thanks also go to all who have supported us through this terrible time,

including the people of Manchester, Scotland and well-wishers worldwide.'

'Specific thanks to all those in our Western Isles communities and, in particular, our home islands of Barra and Vatersay, for everything they have done and continue to do for us.'

'Messages and tributes to

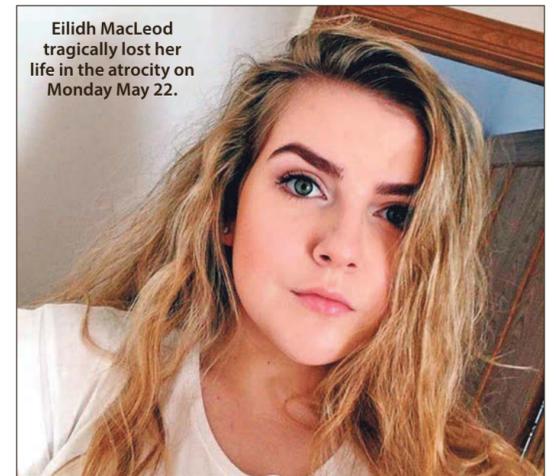


Laura MacIntyre.

our Eilidh by her friends have given us great comfort and we wish to thank you all. The offers of help and support have been truly overwhelming and greatly appreciated.'

'Eilidh and Laura were so excited about going to the concert together but what should have been the perfect ending to a fantastic trip ended so tragically.'

'We continue to have Laura and her family in our thoughts and pray that she makes a full recovery. As a family, we would also like to offer our support and condolences to all the other innocent victims who have been needlessly killed in this attack.'



Eilidh MacLeod tragically lost her life in the atrocity on Monday May 22.

Laura MacIntyre's parents said in a statement last week: 'Our daughter Laura is a funny and witty young girl who excels at everything she does.'

'She and Eilidh were so looking forward to the concert but that night has now ended in tragedy.'

'Eilidh has lost her life and Laura is in a critical condition.'

'Our hearts and minds have been with Eilidh's family since we heard their news.'

'We want to thank everybody for their support, including the emergency services for all they have done and continue to do.'

'We know Laura is in the best possible place and receiving the best care she can. She is strong-willed and a fighter.'

June

The Bonniest Baby of them all

More than 200 wee tots were entered into *The Oban Times'* annual bonnie babies competition, but in the end it all came down to one happy chap – wee Calum Brown from Tobermory.



Dunbeg's Sine MacVicar goes to top of the class

SELFLESS, exceptional and committed were three words used to describe Dunbeg Primary School's outgoing head-teacher Sine MacVicar, who won a lifetime achievement award last week, writes David McPhee.

Mrs MacVicar has devoted 44 years to the school and her hard work was recognised at the Times Educational Supplement (TES) School Awards 2017.

She was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award after being nominated by her colleagues.

The judges of the category described Mrs MacVicar's entry as 'absolutely stunning,' saying: 'She has put the school at the heart of the community and the time, energy and commitment that she has dedicated is extraordinary.'

Speaking after being presented with the award, Mrs

MacVicar told the crowd: 'Tonight I think I am nearly speechless. I cannot tell you how proud I am, but how proud of what a wonderful profession to be a part of, having a wonderful team of staff behind me and I am just privileged and honoured.'

'Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the judging. I will take this proudly back to Dunbeg Primary on the West Coast of Scotland and I think they will be very proud as well.'

Right: TES editor Ann Mroz with Sine MacVicar and Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Education.





Is it time to choose an Independent school?

An experience that will last a lifetime

INDEPENDENT education is one of the most important decisions you will make for your family.

Where and what kind of home you buy and choosing your career path are the only family decisions you will make which will be bigger than whether to take your child out of main stream public education and into the fee-paying independent sector.

There are as many reasons for independent education as there are children; perhaps it is a family tradition. It could be that you know your career is going to lead to relocation after relocation and boarding is the best way to provide the stability needed during vital times in your children's education.

No matter how excellent a state school might be, it will always have a 'one-size-fits-all' approach towards some aspects of school life. This is fine for most of the time but if, for some reason, your son or daughter

is the one who is finding it hard to make that fit you cannot help but wonder if they would be better off in the independent sector.

Is your child just not thriving? Are there areas where they need extra help or is it that they are not being stretched enough to realise their full potential.

Would they benefit from the smaller class sizes that the independents offer? This can often be a key point for children from remote or rural areas like the West Highlands who have attended state primary schools with small class sizes who find themselves overwhelmed by the size of secondary schools.

With state school budgets being ever tightened do the extra-curricular activities and enhanced pastoral care of the independent sector look like money well spent in proving for you child's future?

The last 50 years have seen an unprecedented rise in consumer culture with families near brain-washed into believing that buying bigger, better, faster, newer is best. We are moving away from this mindset and a realisation is dawning that experience, not possessions, is what binds us and creates stronger, happier families. Would your children benefit from experiencing independent education?



Independent education IS affordable

PERHAPS one of the biggest mistakes people make about private education is that they cannot afford it and never even consider the idea. They couldn't be more wrong.

The golden rule is that it is never too early to start planning.

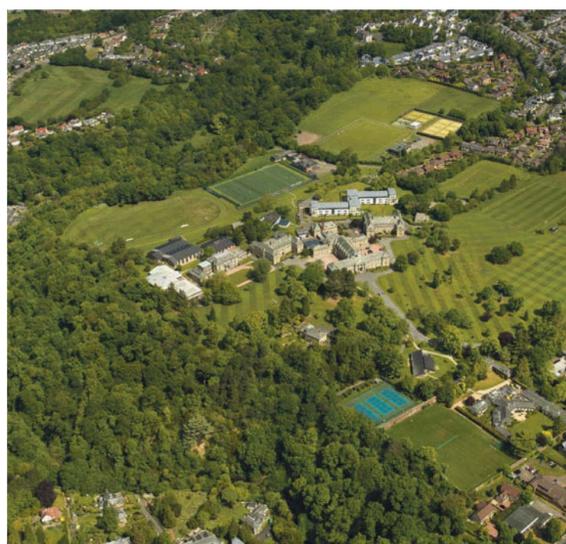
Good financial advice, prudence, plus parents and grandparents

working together over savings and any inheritance all make independent education achievable.

At least £349 million is given annually in fee assistance in the independent education sector in Scotland; with just under 27 per cent of all pupils receiving some form of assistance. To date, Scotland has

treated private schools as charities in terms of business rates, and the schools return this in the form of pro bono work through bursaries and scholarships for pupils and allowing local communities to use their facilities.

This year's Scottish budget is debating this issue.



Merchiston Edinburgh

Merchiston is the only boys' independent boarding school in Scotland, offers the English curriculum, and has a global, outward-looking dimension. The School takes pride in specialising in the education of boys and preparing them for the world, developing aspirational, and sensitive, yet gentle-men! Think about a wonderfully caring and nurturing family environment, where boys learn to like learning more.

With an ethos based on traditional values, Merchiston encourages self-reliance and independence, as well as respect for and tolerance of others. The main objective is to motivate pupils to try their hardest and to strive to achieve the highest levels possible in all areas – firstly academic, then cultural, sporting, leadership, and simply living together as part of a community.

Another aspect of the boys-only philosophy is that time is regularly set aside to meet girls from our sister schools. This allows the boys to focus on study in school time, but also to have plenty of opportunities to socialize and make friends through curricular, co-curricular, and social links.

Outstanding off the field...*

- 47% of pupils achieved A*/A grades at A Level
- 82% of pupils gained places at their first or second choice university
- 64% of pupils went to UK Russell Group Universities, Bath, St Andrews and leading international institutions
- 92% A*/A/B pass rate in Further Mathematics at A Level
- SAT support clinics for applicants for American Universities held weekly. Students have gained admission to Ivy League Universities, such as Cornell and Brown
- 62% of pupils achieved A*/A grades at GCSE
- 18 pupils achieved nine or more A*/A GCSE grades
- Best Head of Public School (runner-up), Tatler School Guide 2015 and 2018
- Gradual progression to secondary teaching from Primary six
- Full boarding with a varied weekend activity programme specifically suited to age and stage

* Academic Results 2016/17

And on the field...

- No.1 UK Junior Ranking Golf School (ISGA, 2014/15, 2015/16 & 2016/17)
- No.2 UK Senior Golf School (ISGA, as of November 2017)
- No.2 World Tennis School (ISF, 2017)
- No.2 UK Tennis School (LTA, 2017)
- Representation in all of the 2017/18 Scottish National Rugby Teams
- In 2016/17, 89% of all pupils, from 7-18, represented the School in sport.
- In 2016/17, there were 73 different teams, of all abilities, playing competitive fixtures across 16 sports: a total of 539 fixtures.
- Wide range of sports available, such as athletics, cricket and hockey, suitable for boys of all abilities

Personal tours and tasters available all year.

A range of scholarships are available at 10+. Mean-tested financial assistance may be available subject to application.



MERCHISTON STORY

EVERY BOY IS AN INDIVIDUAL. EVERY BOY HAS A STORY. LET US SHAPE HIS FUTURE STORY.

Open Day - Saturday 3 February Open Evening - Thursday 8 March

MERCHISTON EDINBURGH | Boys first



A BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS AGED 7-18

MERCHISTON.CO.UK admissions@merchiston.co.uk 0131 312 2201

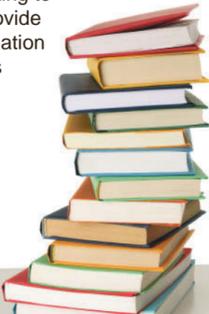
Recognised by the Inland Revenue as a Charity, number SC016580

Did you know?

- There are just fewer than 30,000 pupils in 73 independent schools in Scotland. That is 4.1 per cent of pupils nationwide
- Scotland has 19 mainstream boarding schools with 3,072 pupils and nearly half, 46.5 per cent, are from overseas. That is the equivalent to the Scottish economy of more than £30million in exports
- The Scottish Council of Independent Schools has 73 members; 52 are main stream, 21 offer additional support. Boarding schools account for 19 of them
- Within the senior independent schools 93 per cent of pupils who sat Highers passed.

Find out more

THE schools and services featured here are waiting to hear from you and provide you with all the information you need to make this important choice. The website of the Scottish Council of Independent Schools is a good place to start. Visit www.scis.org.uk.



• Statistics quoted in this advertising feature come from the Scottish Council of Independent Schools annual survey, 2016.

Strathallan School



Where learning comes to life

Welcome to our world

Our aim at Strathallan is to expand our pupils' horizons and broaden their experiences, nurturing their skills and talents in a positive, supportive environment that welcomes young people, boarders and day alike, from the UK and all over the world.

GENERAL INFORMATION MORNING
10th March 2018

Welcoming boys and girls aged 9 to 18 years

Scholarship Dates
Junior 27th January
Third Form 26th February - 1st March

Bursaries also available

Call 01738 815003 to register or visit strathallan.co.uk



STRATHALLAN SCHOOL

Opportunities for all to excel

Welcome to our world

Set in 153 acres of magnificent rural Perthshire, yet easily accessible from elsewhere in Scotland, Strathallan School is an outstanding place to learn with some of the finest facilities of any school in Scotland.

The School has a great blend of local, national and international pupils and celebrates the different interests and cultures our international pupils bring.

Where learning comes to life

As well as achieving exceptional academic standards, we foster a lifelong enjoyment of learning. Our highly committed teachers are also involved in sports coaching and other activities and the bonds built outside the classroom have profound educational benefits. It's no surprise that many of our pupils move

on to top universities like Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh.

Where everyone's involved in the life of the school

More than 60% of our pupils are boarders so there's always a lot going on. That's a big advantage for day pupils who stay well into the evening and are fully involved in the myriad of activities available.

Where talent turns to achievement

Champions - Strathallan's 1st XV made history winning the U18 Scottish Rugby Schools' Cup for the first time. The nurturing environment and comprehensive development programme created by our Director of Rugby and the coaches has put Strathallan firmly on the map as one of the top development schools for rugby in Scotland.

All pupils regularly take part in a variety of sports. We also run a comprehensive programme for elite athletes.

In the Expressive Arts, there are many opportunities to develop creative talents in a variety of musical ensembles, in our theatre and in our state-of-the-art dance and drama studio.

Where belonging is forever

Strathallan provides an exceptional educational experience for boys and girls aged 9 to 18. It's a school where effort is rewarded and where pupils are given the time and encouragement to grow into capable, confident young men and women who are ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

Interested in being part of our world?

Why not come along and meet the pupils, staff and parents at our next Information Morning, register now at strathallan.co.uk



Inspiring Potential

Lomond School
Helensburgh

Lomond School invites applications for August 2018 entry from P1 to S6.

If you would like to visit the school and see what Lomond has to offer or find out more about the application process, please contact the Admissions Office.

Application deadline: 12th January 2018

10 Stafford Street, Helensburgh G84 9JX | Phone: +44 (0)1436 672476
e-mail: admissions@lomondschool.com | lomondschool.com

Lomond School – A Great Place to Live and Learn

'At all stages of the school, children and young people are highly motivated and actively involved in their learning. They are respectful, hard-working and respond very well to the overall high-quality learning experiences'. Education Scotland

Located in the picturesque coastal town of Helensburgh with its safe community environment and excellent transport links, Lomond School has a long tradition of boarders from the West Highlands and Islands.

Lomond offers a wide-ranging curriculum including eight National Fives as S3/S4 and the traditional five Highers in S5. Extracurricular activities include hockey, rugby, sailing, skiing and canoeing. The Duke of Edinburgh Award is another significant feature and Lomond has enjoyed great success carrying out expeditions both locally and abroad.

Boarders at Lomond benefit from excellent facilities with the new Burnbrae boarding house, built in 2003, offering comfortable lounges, a gym and mostly twin en-suite study bedrooms. Lomond also allows male and female siblings the opportunity to live together in the same boarding house and families are also offered the flexibility of weekly boarding.

Lomond School Principal, Johanna Urquhart said: 'Here at Lomond we pride ourselves on taking an individual approach to the education and care of each and every pupil. Boarding provides a particularly rewarding experience thanks to our family ethos, excellent facilities and professional, dedicated staff.'

Families interested in finding out more about the admissions process, booking a tour or arranging a taster session can contact our admissions office: admissions@lomondschool.com



Kilgraston is a leading Catholic boarding and day school for girls aged 5-18.

Offering day and boarding education, Kilgraston has something to inspire every young woman. We are a school with traditional values but with a modern and forward-looking perspective on education. Education is not just about exam success; developing interest and talents, nurturing an understanding of different cultures, and emphasising our personal responsibility as global citizens are vital. As such, a Kilgraston girl benefits from a wealth of opportunities to extend and enrich her educational experience. We offer over 50 extra-curricular activities and enjoy modern, state of the art facilities including a Science Centre, Sixth Form Study Centre, excellent boarding accommodation, 25m swimming pool, all-weather astro-turf pitches and Scotland's only school equestrian centre.

Having been named 'top performing independent school for Advanced Highers' by best-schools.co.uk in 2015, Kilgraston girls routinely achieve outstanding sets of results. At Advanced Higher, 90.5% of grades were A-B against a national average of 59.3%. In 2018, 64% of girls are applying to study a STEM undergraduate course and in 2017, 100% of girls were accepted into their choice of university. Kilgraston has an exceptional reputation for girls gaining entry into top Scottish universities.

When Kilgraston girls leave us to go on to further studies, we are certain that they will continue to channel their talents and become leaders for tomorrow. Our girls leave Kilgraston with an embedded sense of individualism, confidence, humility and a desire to achieve the very best she can, in her own chosen field. Our girls don't compromise on success, they inspire it.

You are invited to join us at our Open Day on Saturday February 3, 2018 from 11am-2pm. The staff and pupils would be delighted to meet you and show you our outstanding facilities. Please do let us know you are coming so that we can have your personalised welcome pack ready for your arrival.

For further information or to book a visit, please contact Mrs Amanda Johnstone: admissions@kilgraston.com | 01738 815523



KILGRASTON
JUNIOR YEARS · SENIOR · SIXTH FORM

A leading independent boarding and day school for girls aged 5 - 18



Open Day
3rd February 2018
11am - 2pm

admissions@kilgraston.com
Kilgraston School, Bridge of Eam, Perth, PH2 9BQ
01738 812 257

More than good grades.



Co-educational day, weekly and full boarding; 5 to 18 years

Arrange a visit or find out more:
T: 01259 742511 | E: registrar@dollaracademy.org.uk

Entrance assessments: Sat 27 Jan 2018
Means-tested bursaries available
Dollar FK14 7DU www.dollaracademy.org.uk



The Governors of Dollar Academy Trust is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SC009888

Dollar Academy

As Dollar prepares to launch its bicentenary year in June 2018, it remains one of Scotland's best performing independent schools, highly regarded by parents.

Dollar was recently named *The Sunday Times* Scottish Independent Secondary School of the Year, having moved up the academic league tables* to third in Scotland. Pupils study the Scottish curriculum and benefit from the widest choice of Highers anywhere in the country. In 2017, pupils set a new school record with a 98% pass rate at Higher level and almost a third of the year group achieved five or more A-grades. Results at National 5 level were just as excellent, with an A-grade pass rate of 72.5%.

The 70-plus activities cater for all interests and abilities – from sport and the arts to academic clubs, volunteering, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Combined Cadet Force and world championship-winning pipe band. And high-level sports coaching has seen many pupils go on to compete at national and international levels.

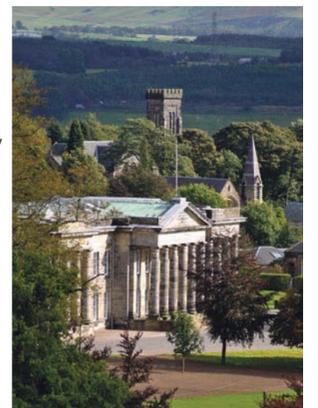
The Care Inspectorate describes the school as having a 'sector-leading' standard of care for its boarders. The focus is on creating a home-from-home environment with small family-style boarding houses. Tutors help with homework and boarders enjoy excellent campus facilities and a wide choice of activities in the evenings and at weekends. And with several hundred day pupils living locally, they have a wide circle of friends both in and out of the boarding house.

Dollar is in a uniquely stunning location and the strong sense of community amongst pupils is one of the great strengths of the school.

*The Sunday Times Schools Guide 2018

To arrange a visit or for more information:

E: registrar@dollaracademy.org.uk
T: 01259 742511



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Search for nation's finest woods

THE contest has begun to find and celebrate Scotland's finest and most inspiring woodlands.

Applications have opened for Scotland's Finest Woods Awards, an annual opportunity to reward and showcase the contribution of our woods and forests to the health and wealth of communities across Scotland. Last year's winners came from a huge geographical area, from the Borders Forest Trust Carrifran Wildwood Group in the south to the Aior Common Grazings in Knoydart in the north-west.

There was also an enormous

spread in the types of winners, from Scotland's largest productive planting scheme of the modern era (at Jerah, Clackmannanshire) to a primary school in South Lanarkshire.

There are seven awards in four categories:

The Quality Timber Awards focus on growing timber of a high standard in three categories covering everything from a 'stand' or small group of trees right through to a whole forest or estate, with trophies and £3,000 in total prize money.

The New Native Woods Award is awarded for the skilled

delivery of high-quality young native woods.

The Crown Estate Schools Trophy rewards projects that increase young people's understanding and appreciation of the environmental, social and economic potential of trees, woodlands and forests and the link between trees and wooden products.

The Large Community Woodland Award is for community and urban woodlands or other social projects which demonstrate sustainable development.

To enter, go to www.sfwa.co.uk.

Crackdown on mountain bike trails

PROBLEMS created by the unauthorised construction of mountain bike trails in Scotland is being highlighted in a new awareness campaign.

Care for the Countryside, an initiative organised by Scottish Land and Estates, is warning of the safety risks posed by poorly constructed, self-built trails.

The past decade has witnessed the popularity of mountain biking in Scotland reach an all-time high, with purpose-built facilities such as Glentress and 7stanes, alongside Scotland's liberal access laws contributing to a boom in interest from riders

of all ages. However, this period has also seen an increase in the number of unauthorised trails, obstacles and jumps being built by riders themselves on rural estates and farmland, with limited knowledge of how this might affect other users, the potential environmental damage and the range of mountain bikers who might use the trail.

As well as potentially proving dangerous for riders and other users, unauthorised trails present a liability for businesses and landowners, who are duty-bound to risk assess the trail and develop a management

strategy, which could involve removing any inappropriately dangerous obstacles from their land once discovered.

Without following a due process landowners or managers could face the risk of being held liable should an accident occur. Building trails, even if it is only using hand tools, is not covered in either the Land Reform Act or the Scottish Outdoor Access Code – and cannot be considered as responsible access.

To read more about the Care for the Countryside initiative, visit www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk.

Festival of Winter Walks

THE cold, crisp days of winter are a magical time to go walking, with transformed scenery and spectacular early sunsets.

And getting out into the great outdoors is a wonderful way to escape the demands of the festive season for a few hours.

Luckily, the Ramblers' annual Festival of Winter Walks is back, from December 23 to January 7, with 60 free walks in Scotland.

The Festival of Winter Walks, supported this year by players of People's Postcode Lottery, is now in its 30th year – so the Ramblers know a thing or two about the joys of getting out and about in the colder weather.

Also, a number of local Ramblers Routes are available at ramblers.org.uk/winter for walkers who prefer to walk with friends or family.

All group walks during the Festival of Winter Walks are free to attend, but if you're inspired to keep walking, why not join the Ramblers?

Your membership will give you access to hundreds of group walks every year, an online library of over 2,500 Ramblers Routes, as well as many other benefits, which also makes Ramblers gift membership the perfect Christmas present.

Visit ramblers.org.uk/winter for details of hundreds of free group walks taking place across the country.

Also, a number of local Ramblers Routes are available at ramblers.org.uk/winter for walkers who prefer to walk with friends or family.

Visitors urged to 'bag' a castle

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

WITH research revealing that almost half of Brits have never visited a Scottish castle, VisitScotland is encouraging visitors to 'bag' as many as they can.

Boasting more than 80 castles, the national tourism organisation believes Argyll and the Isles is a fantastic region for visitors to start their castle trail as the 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology comes to a close.

Located on the shores of Loch Fyne, Inveraray Castle is one of Scotland's finest stately homes and considered to be one of the most romantic places in Argyll.

Offering beautifully maintained gardens and an expansive estate, the attraction has a four-star grading from VisitScotland's Quality Assurance Scheme. Visitors can also

enjoy the famous Armoury Hall as well as the Tapestry drawing room containing magnificent French tapestries which were woven especially for the castle.

For those who prefer a ruined castle, Carnasserie in Kilmartin Glen offers an excellent alternative. The former home of the first Protestant Bishop of the Isles, the 16th-century castle boasts beautiful Renaissance masonry including moulded string-courses, corbelled angle-turrets, ornate rainwater spouts, gunloops and an impressive armorial panel above the entrance.

The survey also found that seven out of 10 people said they would like to stay overnight in a castle while on holiday in Scotland and Glengorm Castle on the Isle of Mull offers just that. A four-star bed and breakfast, it was built in 1860 and is set in dramatic scenery on the headland of a vast area of coastline,



Inveraray Castle dates from the 18th century.

forestry, lochs and hills. Other castles in the region include Duart, the ancestral home of Clan Maclean, and Dunollie in

Oban. All three have a four-star grading and are excellent examples of Argyll and the Isles' rich heritage and fascinating history.

In total, Scotland is thought to have around 3,000 standing castles, ruins and documented sites. Of these, about 1,050 are merely sites, including those where a house has been built on the location of a previous castle and about 825 are standing ruins. At the last count, around 660 were in use (private houses, hotels or wedding venues) and around 469 were open to the public, though some only for a couple of weeks each year.

From World Heritage Sites to listed buildings, cultural traditions to myths, stories and legends, the 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology has celebrated 270 events across Scotland and a wealth of activity including workshops, competitions and new products developed in celebration of the year.

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland regional director, said: 'Castles are an iconic

and integral part of Scotland's history and culture.

From the grand Inveraray Castle to the magnificent ruins of Carnasserie, there is something unique and special about every one and each has its own significant story to tell.

'Scotland's history and culture is one of the top reasons for visiting the country. The 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology has shone a spotlight some of our greatest assets and icons as well as our hidden gems.'

'Everyone should have the opportunity to experience a Scottish castle in their lifetime, and, with so many options, Argyll and the Isles offers the perfect place to start. I encourage everyone to make it their mission to bag a Scottish castle on their visit here.'

To discover more about Scotland's castles, visit: <https://www.visitscotland.com/blog/attractions/top-scottish-castles/>

Mountains project celebrates success

CELEBRATIONS are being held at The Mountains and The People, a unique five-year landscape scale project which promises to Respect the natural heritage of our mountain landscapes, Reskill the conservation workforce of tomorrow and Repair the damage to our nations fragile upland landscapes.

The high spirits and merriment of the team are not actually down to the time of year but are as a result of the resounding success of the latest cohort of trainees, with around 80 per cent of them already in gainful employment.

With environmental conservation at the heart of The Mountains and The People project, a significant part of the activity to date has been to offer a range of paid, six-month

training opportunities at both the Balloch and Aboyne training centres.

Delivered by the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS), candidates have been offered the opportunity to complete an SVQ level 2 in Environmental Conservation, working on a variety of sites in both of Scotland's national parks.

A first of its kind in Scotland – and with project partners from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund – this high profile £5.2m project is just over half way through its five-year duration and has already made a huge impact,

not just on our mountain landscapes but on people's lives helping them to enjoy our great outdoors.

Ross McGowan, managing director of McGowan Ltd who is now employing five of the project trainees said: 'The quality of training OATS has delivered to its trainees in upland path construction techniques, mountain awareness, habitat management and environmental good practices is second to none. Each of the former trainees is now a valued member of the McGowan's team.'

The recruitment process for the next intake of trainees will be starting in January 2018 so if you fancy working in the great Scottish outdoors, log onto: www.themountainsandthepeople.org.uk



The 2017 Lomond trainees after receiving their certificates.

THIS WEEK'S WALKS

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

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

Thursday December 28

Beinn Odhar, Tyndrum
A steep but short walk up this prominent hill, familiar to the

many travellers on the A82 N of Tyndrum. The route passes an adit of an old lead mine high up on the shoulder of the hill.

Start on the A82 at NN330318 where there is parking opposite the bridge over the railway. Cross the bridge and make for the S ridge of the hill.

Follow this to the summit, passing the adit of a disused lead mine and a small lochan. Descend SE, past another small lochan, then S down the broad ridge to Meall Buidhe, 653m.

Continue the descent over another small summit, 534m, then SE to join the track leading

under the railway to Auchtertyre Fm. Transport required.

Grade: M+; Distance: 9km; Height to climb: 650m; Map(s): LR50, EX 377; Meeting times: Longsdale CP Oban NM862307 at 0840, Glencoe CP NN 098587 at 0900. Start of walk at 0940.

Leader: Toril Frantzen 07788 264007

Sunday December 31

Ardsheal Peninsular Circuit, Duror

A quiet walk away from the main road that offers wide open views of the spectacular landscape around Loch Linnhe.

Start from the Duror Village Hall NN002563, where ample parking is available.

Cross the A828 and take the cycle track a short distance SE to a junction and turn left. Follow the cycle track NE to a point nearly opposite the church at Kentallen.

Step over the fence, cross the A828 and take the estate road around the NE end of the Peninsula until it diverges from the coast.

Step over the fence and descend to the beach. Follow the coast WSW on an indistinct path for about 5Km to reach Cuil Bay.

Take the public road to its

junction with the A828, cross the road on to the cycle track and follow its route back to the start.

Grade: L; Distance: 11km; Height to climb: 55m; Map(s): LR41/49, EX376/384. Meet at: Longsdale CP Oban NM862307 at 0915, N. Ballachulish Sch NN053603 at 0945, start of walk at 1000.

Leader: Ronnie Forbes 01866 822611 or 07525 782929.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

Please see full walk details at www.nevishillwalking.club.

If anyone would like to go out on the walk please contact club

secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email enquiries@nevishillwalking.club.

Sunday December 30

Kinlochleven, Glas Bheinn

This hill is situated between the Mamores and the Blackwater Reservoir.

From the Grey Mare Waterfall car park, take the path for the Mamores, steeply at first. Turn right on reaching the track from Mamore Lodge to Loch Eilde Mor.

Turn right again after about 500m on to a path which goes round the end of the loch.

Alternatively, follow the track

for another 100m and take the new track on the right for a new hydro scheme.

Both will bring you to the dam at the outlet for the loch. Cross the dam (no problems) and turn left on to a path (muddy at first) to Meall na Cruaidhe. Leave the path at the high point and head NE on the broad ridge to the summit.

There are several alternatives to returning by the same route, but all are longer, so daylight hours would determine if they were possible. (18km, 900m ascent)

Suggested by and coordinated by John Burton.

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Looking back over 20 years since devolution in Scotland

As a wide-eyed eight-year-old, NFU Scotland's political affairs manager **CLARE SLIPPER** recalls watching the official opening of the new Scottish Parliament in 1999.

I STILL recall the words of the late Donald Dewar which opened the Scottish Parliament on July 1, 1999, and would shape the landscape of Scottish politics.

'There shall be a Scottish Parliament.'

'Through long years, those words were first a hope, then a belief, then a promise. Now they are a reality.'

I watched this speech while sitting cross-legged on the floor of my primary five classroom in Edinburgh. Aged eight, I was yet to discover a keen interest in politics which would later lead to my employment at NFU Scotland and the world of agricultural politics. But I do strongly recall an understanding that it was an important moment (possibly because we were enticed with juice and biscuits to up the intrigue).

Two decades have now passed since the 1997 referendum on the creation of the Scottish Parliament and the country is once again at a crossroads as we collectively try to make sense

of the result of the European referendum. Now seems like a fitting moment to examine what the Scottish Parliament has achieved in its (relatively) short life – and, importantly, what it has achieved for agriculture in Scotland.

The Scotland Act that followed the 1997 referendum established the founding principles of devolution and transferred powers over the implementation of agricultural policy to Scottish ministers.

In that time, the Scottish Parliament has had a couple of shots at land reform legislation and crofting law reform (an issue which will return during this parliament); it has legislated to enshrine climate change targets and established a new food standards body.

Rightly or wrongly, Scottish ministers have also legislated in some areas of agricultural policy that has taken Scotland in a different direction to the rest of the UK. Ruling out the cultivation of GM crops in Scotland is one example. Another is the highly successful work that has been undertaken to eradicate disease and improve the health status of animals in Scotland – an accolade which might not have been achieved without a strong,



Clare Slipper is political affairs manager for the NFUS.

devolved focus on animal health as a priority area.

Since 1999, Scottish ministers have also had the discretion to implement the Common Agricultural Policy within Scotland, meaning that Scottish farmers and crofters have retained the option to make use of coupled support and Less Favoured Area payments where their English counterparts have not.

On balance, it is fair to surmise that overall the devolution of agriculture to the Scottish

Parliament has worked well for Scottish food producers in allowing decisions that impact them to be made closer to home.

Of course, it would be remiss not to mention another significant referendum which has taken place between 1997 and now – the 2014 referendum on independence. Scottish independence was an issue which split opinions between NFU Scotland members down the middle, and the union took a neutral stance towards it. Rather

than taking one side, our role was instead to furnish members with arguments from both sides of the debate to help them to make an informed decision. The engagement of NFUS members at that time was remarkable. With more than 1,500 members attending debates organised by the union up and down the country, it sparked a real interest among members on how their priorities are represented and catered for politically.

As the Scottish Parliament has matured, so too has the relationship between the agricultural industry and its political representatives. In the four years I have worked for NFU Scotland, I have witnessed a significant upscale in the interest of Scottish parliamentarians in the priorities of food producers. They realise that, for the Brexit negotiations in particular, the stakes are high for our industry.

And this is where the nuance of the current debate over future agriculture policy frameworks lies.

Leaving the EU is the first opportunity we've had in more than 40 years to implement real, effective change to agricultural policy and devise a system which fits and is genuinely sensitive to the vast range of landscapes,

farm types and land uses that make up Scotland's patchwork agricultural industry. Our diversity and provenance are our unique selling points, and we can't afford to lose this opportunity. We must be ambitious, but also ensure that change is managed and not chaotic.

Scottish farmers and crofters are up for this challenge, but only if the UK government recognises that the devolved administrations require significant latitude and flexibility to devise and implement policy tools that fit their needs. And, ultimately, that requires respect for the Scotland Act and the founding principles of devolution.

The Scottish agricultural industry must not become a political football, but equally it is vital that devolved and UK ministers find a way new way of working together to attain meaningful consensus on this crucial issue. Otherwise, the great opportunity of Brexit could be lost.

I finish with another quote from Donald Dewar. To critics of the Scottish Parliament, he was known to say: 'Cynicism, together with unrealistic expectation, are the two great bugbears of politics.'

One can't help but draw a parallel.

Crofters welcome budget

THE Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has welcomed the Scottish Government draft budget in which the Crofting Commission is due to see an increase in its available resource for 2018/19.

'Crofting very clearly provides for rural Scotland,' said Russell Smith, chairman of the SCF, 'and it is heartening to see the Scottish Government recognise this and the importance of resourcing the Crofting Commission to do its job in administering crofting.'

'In the recently announced Scottish Government draft budget, allocation to the Crofting Commission for the coming financial year 2018/19 has increased by £0.3 million. Furthermore it has also been announced that the Less Favoured Areas will be supported to 100 per cent for 2018 after all, following a change in policy in Brussels.'

'In these times marked with uncertainty, austerity and frugality,' continued Mr Smith, 'it is even the more gratifying that, following the SCF response to the recent consultation in which we emphasised the necessity to fund the commission appropriately, the Scottish Government has chosen to maintain and, indeed, increase spending on the regulation and development of this essential sector. We are also very pleased that Scottish Government has delayed the reduction of LEASS to 80 per cent for the coming year.'

Around the markets

STIRLING – Caledonian Marts Ltd on Tuesday December 19 sold 2397 prime lambs, ewes and tups.

All classes of lambs (52kg & under) slightly dearer trade to last week, a good show of heavy lambs 52kg+ would be £10 up on the week to average £91.16. Overall sale average for 1788 Lambs was 175ppkg (-0.6p on the week).

Top price of the day went to W M Bell & Son, Craigend and Doune Farms, West Lundy at £103. Top price per kg went to Craigend for a pair of cracking 42.5kg Beltex at £97 or 228ppkg.

Leading prices
Lambs pounds per head:-
Texel £102 Easter Garden
Beltex £102 Easter Ochtermuthill
Beltex X £100 Craigend
Texel X £100 Shielhill
Cont £99 West Lundy
Cont X £99 Easter Ochtermuthill
Suff £95 Ayton

Char £95 South Flanders
Mule £81 Meikle Seggie
BF £75.50 Home Farm (Arniston)
Lambs per kilo:-
Beltex 220p West Lundy
Beltex X 215p Cuiltburn & Meikle Seggie
Texel 214p Meikle Seggie (twice)
Texel X 213p & 212p (Three Times) Craigend
Char 196p Victoria
Suff 179p Whitehouse
Suff X 178p Pitcairnie
Mule 164p Pitcairn
Mule X 162p Cherryfield
BF 169p West Lundy
Also forward were 609 cast ewes and tups.
237 heavy ewes averaged £87.95 selling to £141 from M Jack, Carriston, Star of Markinch.
155 export ewes averaged £43.75

Other leading prices
Texel £140 Kinninmonth
£136 Craigend (Bell) & South Flanders
£130 Shielhill & Letter
£123 Easter Coates
£120 South Flanders
BF £59 Townhead
£55 Coulshill
£53 Home Farm (Cameron)
£51 Craignafeoch
£50 Craigend (Willison)
Suff £109 Kinninmonth
£98 Easter Coates
£90 Tullygarth
£87 Whiterigg
Chev £116, £91.50 & £89 Ballinloan



Dingwall's champion Texel – Milnbank.

BFL £96 Dollarbank £93 & £89 Wester Bowhouse £87 Dollarbank
Zwarble £93 Baldastard
Beltex £110 & £99 Cuiltburn
Mules £88 South Flanders £78
Whiterigg £73.50 Mains of Strageath
Cross £107 South Flanders
£94 Dechmont £91 Letter £88
Tullygarth
Tups sold to £116 for a pen of Texels from C Rimmer, Shielhill, Braco.
Other leading prices:
£108 Shielhill - Texel
£85 Dyke (MacGregor)

DINGWALL – Dingwall & Highland Marts Ltd on Tuesday December sold 41 prime cattle.
Prime bullocks (one) sold to 233.0p (+18.0p) and £1,328.10 gross for a 570kg British Blue from Easter Sheep Park, Balblair.
Prime heifers (40) averaged 219.2p (+7.2p) and sold to 239p per kg for a 565kg Limousin cross from Easter Strath, Killen and £1,404.00 gross for a 675kg Charolais cross from Mountrich Farm, Dingwall.
Other leading prices per kg:
Bullocks:
Heifers: Easter Strath, (BRB), 235.0p; Easter Sheep Park, (LimX), 233.0p; Easter Hardmuir, Nairn and Moun-

trich Farm, (LimX), 231.0p.
Other leading prices per head:
Heifers: Bridgend Farm, (LimX), £1,382.60; Mountgerald, Dingwall, (LimX), £1,372.50; Bridgend Farm, (CharX), £1,368.95.
Dingwall & Highland Marts also sold 661 prime sheep.
New season lambs (581) averaged 165.5p (-0.2p) and sold to 195.9p per kg and £95.00 gross for a pen of 48.5kg Beltex crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge to Messrs Fraser Brothers Butchers, Dingwall.
SQQ 36.5kg to 45.5kg (430) averaged 167.0p (-3.1p) per kg.
Feeding sheep (80) sold to £130 gross for a pen of Texel cross ewes from Bunchrew Farm, Inverness.
Other leading prices per head and per kg:
New season lambs: Cross – Torgorm and Inshes Farm, Inverness, £81.00, Balvaird Farm, Muir of Ord, 171.4p; BeltX – Torgorm, £80.00, 182.1p; TexX – Glebe Farm, Kiltarlity, £80.00, Clune Farm, Dore, 179.6p; Chev – 91/92 Achviach, Dornoch, £79.00, South Cuidreach, Portree, 174.3p; SuffX – Ankerville, Nigg Station, £79.00, 172.7p; CharX – Ankerville, £76.00, 176.7p; BF – Inshes Farm, £72.50, 164.8p; DSX – Balvaird Farm, £69.80, 174.5p; Feeding

sheep: Chev ewe – Clune Farm, Dore, £114.00; TexX ewe – Bunchrew Farm, £109.00; SuffX ewe – 5 Tomich, Beauly, £108.00; ZwbX ewe – Garguston, Muir of Ord, £86.00.

DINGWALL – Dingwall & Highland Marts Ltd on December 13 sold 114 MV accredited pedigree females at its annual show and sale.

The judges, Mr I. Green & Miss G Green, Corskie Farm, Garmouth, awarded the Texel champion to a Glenside Willy Nilly sired gimmer, carrying a single to Strathbogie Yes Sir, from Mr R. H. Wilson, (Milnbank), North Dorlathers, Turriff, realising 2,000gns to the judge. Reserve in the Texel section went to a Tamnamony Tuborg Gold sired gimmer carrying a pair to Milnbank Apache, consigned from Messrs R. E. & R. F. Scott, Drum Park, Holm, Orkney, realising 1,500gns.

In the Suffolk section, champion went to a Thurston Fergie sired ewe, carrying twins to Cloontagh Chieftain, from Mr J. Douglas, Cairness, Fraserburgh, realising 500gns. The reserve award went to a Whitestone Firestar sired gimmer carrying twins to Cloontagh Chieftain also consigned by Mr J. Douglas, Cairness realising 500gns.

In lamb gimmers: Texel sold to 2,000gns from (Milnbank) North Dorlathers. Suffolk sold to 580gns from East Murkle, Thurso.

In lamb ewes: Texel sold to 520gns from the dispersal Oldfield, Thurso. Suffolk sold to 500gns from Cairness, Fraserburgh.

Ewe lambs: Suffolk sold to 200gns from Ashton Farm Cottage, Inverness.
Other leading prices:
Texel: In-lamb gimmers – Milnbank, 1,100gns; Haddo, Fyvie, 700gns; Deveronvale, Inchbruech, 500gns.
Texel: In-lamb ewes – Oldfield, 400gns.
Suffolk In-lamb gimmers – East Murkle, 500gns, Cairness, 300gns; Skail, Forss, 220gns
Suffolk In-lamb ewes – Skail, 350gns, Whitecairns, Roadside, 250gns.
Suffolk ewe lambs – Ashton, 200gns (twice).
Flock Type Top price (Gns)

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Well 2017 is drawing to a close and I hope you have all had a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas with friends and loved ones. This is also a time when many of us look ahead to the New Year. What will 2018 bring? A big move, buy your first home or purchase that holiday home you've always wanted? For these reasons New Year can be a busy time for us at West Property here's a few reasons why...

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Internet traffic is up on the winter nights as people spend more time inside their homes due to the dark, damp weather. With the majority of buyers beginning their search online. Statistics show that there is an overall 20% increase in people looking for their dream home between Christmas Eve and the New Year, with Boxing Day being the peak

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First Registration of a Croft

Ian Campbell has registered their croft Broilas, 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.

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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
17/05311/FUL	Land 525M NW of Coiletter, Glenetive		Proposed 15m High Hutchinson Telegraph pole on new concrete base
17/05724/FUL	13A Mallaig Point Industrial Estate Road, Mallaig		Erection of a Marine Learning Centre comprising 4no classrooms with associated support facilities, siteworks and RYA Store
17/05785/FUL	The Laird's Retreat, Duror, Appin		Construction of a new section of cycle path
17/05799/FUL	Land at The Old Forge, Knoydart, Mallaig		Erection of office building
17/05801/FUL	Laggan Raineach, Achnaha, Kilchoan, Acharaclie		Erection of house and installation of private drainage system
17/05812/FUL	Lochailort Inn, Lochailort		Siting of caravan for staff accommodation
17/05830/LBC	Railway Station, Corroul		Installation of a new double screen customer information screen on a new column
17/05834/FUL	Site at Achabobane, Spean Bridge		Erection of house

Time period for comments is 17 days, 17/05830/LBC is 24 days, due to holiday period
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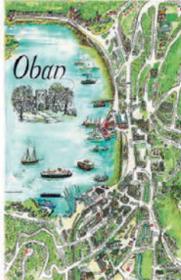
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MARRIAGES

HUGHES - MURANGIRI - Fiona Hughes, Oban and Frankline Murangiri, Nairobi were united in marriage on St. Andrew's Day, November 30, 2017 at Lavington United Church, Nairobi, Kenya.

DEATHS

GILLIES - Suddenly at home Beachview Cottage, North Ballachulish on December 19, 2017, Ronnie, aged 79. Dearly loved and sadly missed.

GILMOUR - It is with great sorrow that the family of Archie Gilmour intimate his passing on Friday, December 15, 2017. He was born in Clydebank in 1926, son of Archibald Gilmour and Margaret (née Campbell). He was evacuated to Kilmore during the war, living at Dalnacabaig, Glen Feochan. He is survived by his loving family; his devoted wife Ann, son Iain, daughter-in-law Edna, granddaughters Sarah and Emma. Funerals has already taken place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LAMONT - Jean, Fiona and Alison and families would like to thank all relatives and friends for the many kind expressions of sympathy received in the days since Peter passed away. It was a comfort to see so many old and new friends at his funeral service. Many thanks to all medical staff in Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban and the Mull and Iona Community Hospital, Craignure for their exceptional care over the years. Heartfelt thanks to Rev. Johnny Paton for his kind words and friendship to Peter. Thank you also to Billy McClymont, Funeral Director, for his help and support at this sad time. Thanks also to the management and staff at the Isle of Mull hotel. It was Peter's wish that any donations given following the service were divided between Torosay Church, where he was an elder for many years and the Mull and Iona Community Hospital, Craignure.

MEMORIAMS

BUNTING - In loving memory of my dear mother Jessie, my stepfather Willie, my brother Arthur and my son Gordon, who tragically died aged 49 on January 2, 2017. Miss you always - Alasdair and family

CAMERON - Cherished memories of my dear sister and our loving Aunt Morag, who passed away December 25, 2013. Time passes

Silent thoughts, memories dear
Treasured more each passing year.

- Inserted by Chrissie and family, Caalmojo, Kilmory.

CAMPBELL - With many precious memories of our much loved and missed son, brother and uncle Iain, who died December 16, 2007, aged 29 years.

Iain is now at peace with our sadly missed precious husband, dad, and gen, who died December 27, 1994, aged 49 years.

Always in our thoughts, forever in our hearts
- Seonaid, Anmarie, Marion and families.

HAY - In loving memory of our mum and gran Mary, who died December 31, 2014, aged 64.

A special person, a special face
Someone we loved and cannot replace
Never selfish, always kind
These are the memories you left behind
- Kate, Elaine and families

JAMIESON - In memory of my friend Helen, who died December 28, 1999. Always remembered.
- Marleen.

MACCALLUM - In loving memory of Henrietta (Babs), who died December 30, 2010. Forever in our hearts.
- Love Roberta and family.

MACQUARIE - In loving memory of my dear wife Jessie, passed away December 28, 2013. Always in my thoughts.
- Adie.

MCKINNON - Treasured memories of my dear husband Charles McKinnon, who died suddenly on December 28, 2005, also my dear mother Catherine Brown, who died July 26, 2001. Sadly missed and cherished forever
- Mary, Colonsay.

WOOD - George (Podger). 35th anniversary. Died January 3, 1985, age 55. When the high tides of September

Reflect the evening sun
On every wave we feel your smile as we go from day to day.
Love always.
- Freda and Jim.

Move starts to link Kintyre and Columba walking routes

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

RON'S RAMBLERS from Port Ban have raised £2,000 so far for Mary's Meals by walking 100 miles along the Columba Way (Slí Cholmille/Moluag) from Tarbert to Lismore.

The group says the walk demonstrates that a long-distance pilgrimage route linking the Kintyre Way with Oban is feasible.

Jonathan Sheldrick said: 'Well, we did it! On Saturday September 16 we ended our 100-mile Pilgrimage Walk on Lismore.'

'A group of walkers known as Ron's Ramblers from Port Ban

completed a 100-mile sponsored walk in aid of Mary's Meals linking Tarbert, Loch Fyne, with Oban and Lismore.

'Lismore was chosen as the end destination in preference to Iona for time reasons and as it was the base for the Bishops of Argyll, and St Moluag, the patron saint of Argyll, who had arguably a larger role than Columba in the conversion of the Picts to Christianity.'

'The pilgrimage route included several churches, three islands and ferry/boat crossings, three heritage centres (Kilmartin, Luig and Lismore), four castles (Tarbert, Castle Sween, Carnaserie and Dunstaffnage), small

detours to the Beaver Trail, the Heart of Argyll Wildlife Centre and Dunadd, and the Cathedral of Trees at Glenruitten House.'

'Highlights were holy communion at St Columba's Cave and St Moluag's Cathedral with the Rev David Carruthers and the Rev Ian Barclay respectively, and being guided around Lismore by Dr Robert Hay (author of Lismore, the Great Garden).'

'The walk was made almost completely through areas of breathtaking beauty and historical significance - the so-called 'thin places' where Heaven and Earth meet - on existing tracks and quiet B roads.

'And the route has a choice of alternative routes depending on personal sightseeing preferences, restrictions of time, weather and other circumstances.'

'Accommodation is no problem as there is an excellent bunkhouse as well as B&B and hotel provision along the way.'

'The walk demonstrates that a long-distance pilgrimage route linking the Kintyre Way with Oban is feasible.'

'The next step is to set up an organisation capable of being a partner of the Slí Cholmille/Slighe Chalium Chille/St Columba Trail Project, supported by the Heart of Argyll Tourism Alliance

and the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum, and, of course, to seek funding to further develop the route.'

'Argyll Countryside Trust has already contacted us with a view to submitting a joint application. A website <https://columbapilgrimswalk.com> and route maps are being prepared.'

Anyone wishing to help sponsor the route should contact Jonathan Sheldrick at 01880 770224 or email chairman@heartofargyll.com or jonathan@portban.com

'It is still possible to donate to Mary's Meals - including cash donations we have raised about £2,000 so far.'

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Lochavullin Industrial Estate,
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PA34 4HB
Tel: 01631 568000
Fax: 01631 568001
www.obantimes.co.uk

Editorial

Editor
Susan Windram
swindram@obantimes.co.uk

Deputy editor
Martin Laing
mrlaing@obantimes.co.uk

Senior reporter
Sandy Neil
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

Senior reporter
Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
David McPhee
dmcphoe@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
Neill Bo Finlayson
nfinlayson@obantimes.co.uk

Newsdesk
Oban 01631 568060
Fort William 01397 703003
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising

Director of Advertising
Nicky Murphy
nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising supervisor
Nadine Ross
nross@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising executive
Rhona McKillop
adverts@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising executive
Stephanie Dunstaffnage
sdunstaffnage@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising executive
Julie Baird
jbaird@obantimes.co.uk

Branch Offices

Fort William
Tel 01397 703003

Lochgilhead
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SWI lay on a festive treat with party for Killin Primary School



Killin Primary School had a wonderful Christmas Party on Wednesday December 20, in the McLaren Hall, courtesy of the ladies of the SWI. Everyone took part in some traditional Scottish dancing including the Gay Gordons, military two-step, Virginia reel and Canadian barn dance. They also played party games and were provided with a fantastic buffet which included sausage rolls, crispy cake and ice-cream. At the end there was a very special guest ... Santa!

Thought for the week

This week in the year might be thought of as an in between time! Christmas celebrations are fading. You are still wishing you had made a list of who sent what to whom. The turkey has been through all the culinary options imaginable. The debris of packaging so lovingly applied is nothing but a pile of coloured pa-

per having been gleefully ripped asunder with little thought other than 'What's in here?'. Then, before we know where we are, New Year has arrived. For many it is the time when their loneliness is eased by visits from and to family or friends - the annual get together that reminds us of community and sharing.

Some however, will have been on their own and loved it, others will have hated it. Some will have been wreathed in sickness and wondered if they will ever feel better again. Still others will be 'Knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door.' The whole rich tapestry of life and death has continued to un-

fold - and yet there is something special that has been going on. It's as though heaven and earth held their breath as they heard the new born cry of a baby 2000 years ago echoing down through the millennia from the beginning of time to the end of all things. A cry of vulnerability that 33 years later would turn to a cry of triumph - 'It is finished!' The

work to enable the repair of human brokenness had been accomplished. You can read about it in the Bible. It is a wonderful story. Why not start the New Year reading the greatest book in the world?

Rev Ian McFarlane,
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SHINTY

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Shinty review of the season - part one

WITH the curtain drawn on another shinty season and the current year drawing to a close, it's a chance to look back on the shinty stories making the news in 2017.

January 2017

Lovat retain Lovat Cup

Lovat retained the 2017 Lovat Cup with a convincing 5-2 victory over Beaulay at Braeview Park.

Lovat made a whirlwind start to the game, scoring four goals through Graeme MacMillan (2), Lorne MacKay and Greg Matheson in a blistering opening 16 minute spell.

Sandy Elrick before the break and Jack MacDonald, after a 22-yard Conor Ross strike was saved by teenage stand-in Lovat keeper Ronan MacMillan, reduced the deficit early in the second half.

Kevin Bartlett made it 5-2 and captain Drew Howie was presented with the Lovat Cup by the 16th Lord Lovat, Simon Fraser.

The win was a final match in charge for Lovat's Camanachd Cup winning manager John MacRitchie.

Oban Camanachd mark the New Year

Oban Camanachd marked the New Year at Mossfield.

There was a change of format as the usual youngsters v oldies' clash was replaced by a mixed match with players from the club's U17 side, Lochside Rovers, Oban Camanachd and ex-players.

A Fraser Inglis double had the Red & Blacks 2-0 ahead but Michael MacQueen pulled a goal back for the Whites before Willie Neilson made it 3-1.

The Whites went on to level through an Andrew MacCuish goal and a superb 30-yard effort from Daniel Cameron which made it 3-3.

The Whites led for the first time through Conner Howe, but there was last minute drama as the Red & Blacks were awarded a penalty.

Whites' keeper Beano Logan did well to save Brian MacCallum's well-struck spot-hit but Fraser Inglis sent the rebound into the top corner of the net from the angle and his hat-trick goal made it 4-4.

The match went to a penalty shoot-out and some great goal-keeping from Des MacMillan and Beano Logan meant it was all-square after the first ten penalties so it went to sudden death with Daniel Cameron netting the crucial penalty to win it for the Whites who lifted the John Collie Trophy.

Oldies still golden at MacKinnon sixes

The Golden Oldies won the John MacKinnon Memorial Shinty Sixes for the third successive year at Portree High School's astro pitch.

This was the fourth year of the event which remembers Skye Camanachd vice president John MacKinnon who died in December 2011 following a tragic accident at work.

Eight teams - six Skye teams and sides from Kinlochshiel and Lochcarron - took part.

The final was a tense affair. A turn and shot from John Gillies put the Golden Oldies ahead, but there was an immediate response from the Storr Troopers as Abby McLean made it 1-1.

The winning goal came when Ewen MacKinnon sprayed a pass to his son William MacK-

innon who thumped the ball home. It was fitting that John MacKinnon's grandson would net the winner.

Managerial merry go round in shinty's top flight

A busy managerial merry go round over the close season meant that only three managers from the 2016 Marine Harvest Premiership remained in a top flight post.

Ally Ferguson, Paul John MacKintosh and Iain Hay were the only survivors from their previous term.

Iain MacLeod replaced co-managers Billy MacLean and Dave Menzies at Glenurquhart, whilst Lovat appointed Fraser Gallacher in place of John MacRitchie.

Long-term trainer James Perlich took over from Norman MacDonald at Kyles Athletic, whilst the most surprising switch was at Kirkton where Johnston Gill was voted in over Colin Fraser.

Kingussie appointed Dallas Young as their first team boss, replacing co-managers Russell Jones and Davie Anderson.

Kilmallie and Glasgow Mid Argyll won promotion from the previous season's Marine Harvest National Division and, not surprisingly, Mark MacPherson and George Hay stayed in charge at their respective clubs.

Oban Celtic add to squad

Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon added two new signings to his squad ahead of the club's national shinty campaign.

The experienced Andrew Hunt joined from Strachur and defender Fulton Ronald signed from Glenorchy.

On the field action

The pre-season friendlies began and Jack MacDonald's double helped Beaulay draw 3-3 with Aberdeen University.

Kinlochshiel defeated Inverness 8-0 with John MacRae getting a hat-trick.

Oban Celtic defeated Taynuilt 4-0 with new signings Andrew Hunt and Fulton Ronald given a run out. Ally McKerracher, Iain MacKechnie, Scott Burnett and Daniel Madej got the goals in what was a good work-out for Kenny Wotherspoon's side.

Badenoch & Strathspey lift Johnstone Rose Bowl

Badenoch & Strathspey Ladies lifted the Johnstone Rose Bowl at the Nevis Centre, Fort William.

Badenoch eventually ran out 7-6 extra-time victors over holders Skye in the final. Badenoch's Kirsty Deans was named player of the tournament.

February 2017

Transfer latest

Highly-rated goalie Cameron Sutherland has joined Lochside Rovers from Ballachulish, whilst Ewan MacCorquodale moved to Oban Lorn from Oban Celtic.

Kilmallie were boosted by Peter McIntyre's return after a spell abroad and then with Inveraray, whilst Fraser MacMillan returned to Taynuilt from Oban Celtic.

Glasgow Mid Argyll added Lochside Rovers goalie Robert Dunning, ex-Glenurquhart defender Stuart Reid and

Kinlochshiel pair John Don MacKenzie and Duncan 'Ach' MacRae to their squad.

Tulloch Homes to sponsor Camanachd Cup

The Camanachd Association announced that national house builders Tulloch Homes are the new sponsor of the prestigious Camanachd Cup competition, signing a lucrative four-year deal.

Portree and Inverloch are National First Shinty winners

Portree Primary School and Inverloch Primary School were the winners at the Gilmour Sports National First Shinty tournaments in Fort William.

Inverloch beat Balnain in the final of the Primary 5 and under tournament, whilst Portree Primary School overcame Dingwall Primary School in the Primary 7 and under final.

Bute withdraw from National Division

Bute withdrew their first team from the Marine Harvest National Division to play in Marine Harvest South Division 1.

Bute advised: 'The players are unable to commit to our first team due to family and work commitments combined with the additional travel involved with the current National League set up. We consider that if we do take part in that league we will be unable to complete the fixture list and will have to withdraw during the season. This would be unfair on the other teams. It would also result in the loss of playing members of our club.'

Bute were deducted eight points when they started their Marine Harvest South Division 1 campaign.

On the field action

The pre-season friendlies continued with Oban Camanachd playing three times during the month. Iain Hay's side lost 2-1 to Inveraray at the Oban High School 3G pitch before beating Kyles Athletic 4-2 at Ganavan with Matt Rippon scoring twice.

Oban Camanachd then beat Strathglass 3-0 at Cannich to lift the Murdo MacKenzie Memorial Cup. Daniel Cameron, Matt Rippon and a superb 25-yard shot from Malcolm Clark made the difference. The win came at a cost though as defender Garry Lord would miss the start of the season after suffering an ankle injury in the game.

Oban Celtic set themselves a tough pre-season, playing twice against Marine Harvest Premiership sides. Glasgow Mid Argyll proved tough opponents as they beat the Oban side 7-1 at Mossfield. Craig Anderson opened his account for the new term with a hat-trick whilst Duncan 'Ach' MacRae scored twice.

A powerful second half display gave Kilmallie a 6-1 win over Oban Celtic at Mossfield. Oban Celtic took the lead thanks to a cracking Daniel Madej effort and that's the way it stayed until the break.

Kenny Wotherspoon's side could have been further ahead had it not been for some fine goalkeeping from Shane Gillies in the Kilmallie goal whilst an Ally McKerracher shot came back off the post. The second

half belonged to the Canal Parks side though and they went on to score six times without reply. Ryan Stewart, Mark Graham's brace, Bryan MacKay, Michael Rodger and Duncan Rodger all netted.

Lochside Rovers beat Oban Lorn 2-1 at the Oban High School 3G pitch. Calum Kirsop and Michael McQueen scored for Lochside with Drew Walker countering.

Lochside then drew 1-1 with the Kyles Athletic second team at Ganavan. Iain MacMillan netted for the home side, whilst youngster Paddy Mulholland was the Kyles scorer.

Glenorchy beat Oban Lorn from the league below 2-1 at Mart Park. Findlay Ross scored both goals with Drew Walker replying for Oban Lorn.

Alex Cunningham's brace helped Kilmory beat Ballachulish 5-0 in their match at Jubilee Park.

Col Glen defeated Bute 2-0 at Otter Ferry with Conor Kennedy and Lorne Marshall scoring.

Kinlochshiel made it 14 goals in two pre-season outings when they beat Inveraray 6-2 at the Winterton, with Jordan Fraser grabbing a hat-trick.

Kilmallie beat Inverness 2-0 at the Bught Park outside pitch. Ryan Stewart and Craig MacIsaac got the goals that made the difference.

Fort William lifted the Glen Mhor Cup when they beat an under-strength Lochaber side 6-0 at Spear Bridge. Arran MacPhee, Calum Shepherd and Lewis Clark all bagged doubles. Fort William then lost 4-0 at Lovat with Craig Mainland, Lorne MacKay (2) and Martin Bell on target.

Iain Robinson's double helped Newtonmore beat Lochaber 5-1 at the Eilan.

A late Ryan Gillies goal gave Taynuilt a 1-0 win over Glasgow Mid Argyll's second team at Taynuilt Sports Field.

Glengarry had two big wins. They beat the Inverness second team 10-0 at Craigard, with Raymond Robertson scoring four times. Glengarry then beat the Lovat second team 7-1 at Balgate but four-goal Nick Dalgety helped Ewen Cameron's side to victory.

March 2017

Camanachd Association appoint new chief

Derek Keir was appointed Camanachd Association chief executive officer but won't take office until May.

After an initial round of interviews failed to identify a suitable candidate, shinty's governing body will be pleased to have replaced Torquil Macleod who left in November.

Lochaber High School are Donella Crawford winners

Lochaber High School were crowned Donella Crawford sixes winners at the annual tournament in Ardnarnachan.

After an exciting day's shinty, Lochaber beat Portree 1-0 in the final.

On the field action

The new shinty season got underway on Saturday March 4.

Marine Harvest Premiership: Kingussie were the early pace-setters after beating Glasgow Mid Argyll and Glenurquhart either side of a draw with Kilmallie.

Oban Camanachd were second courtesy of wins over Lochaber and Newtonmore, although they did lose to eventual title challengers Kinlochshiel and Kyles Athletic.

Marine Harvest National Division: Skye made their early intentions clear as wins over Inverness and Oban Celtic, either side of a draw with Caberfeidh, left them top of the table.

Marine Harvest North Division 1: Aberdeen University won both their opening matches against the Kingussie seconds and the Glenurquhart seconds. That was enough to leave them top of the table at the end of the month.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: Aberdour suffered a heavy opening day defeat to Lochside Rovers, but victories over Col Glen and the Kyles Athletic seconds left them early league leaders.

Marine Harvest North Division 2: Glengarry scored 18 goals against Lewis, the Caberfeidh colts and Strathspey Camanachd to give an indication what was to come from them throughout the season.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: Strachur won both their opening fixtures against Dunoon and Aberdour seconds to top South 2.

RBS MacTavish Cup: Caberfeidh, Glenurquhart, Kinlochshiel, Lovat and Newtonmore all progressed in the MacTavish Cup.

Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Cup: There were opening round wins for Glenorchy, Kilmory and Tayforth, whilst it took penalties for Bute to get past Oban Celtic.

April 2017

On the field action

Marine Harvest Premiership: A perfect five wins out of five took Kyles Athletic to the top of the Marine Harvest Premiership. Kinlochshiel also had a 100 per cent record and they were only two points behind with a game in hand.

Marine Harvest National Division: League wins over Beaulay and Strathglass kept Skye out in front in shinty's second tier, with Caberfeidh and Fort William just a point behind.

Marine Harvest North Division 1: The Kingussie seconds ended the month in top spot, ahead of their Newtonmore counterparts who had played a game fewer. The sides drew 2-2 towards the end of the month.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: Aberdour stayed a point in front of Lochside Rovers and Tayforth although they had played two games more than both clubs.

Marine Harvest North Division 2: Glengarry were already the team to beat in North 2 with ten points from five matches. The Caberfeidh reserves had the same points total but they had played a game more and had an inferior goal difference.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: Home wins over Dunoon, Aberdour seconds and Strachur took the Inveraray second team to the top of the table.

Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup: Skye Camanachd, Caberfeidh and Kilmory safely negotiated their preliminary round ties to reach the first round of the Camanachd Cup.

Artemis Macaulay Cup: Despite their good league run, Kinlochshiel exited the Macaulay at the hands of a Stuart MacDonald inspired Lovat side. Oban Celtic recorded an excellent 5-4 win at Inveraray.

Balliemore Cup: The opening Balliemore Cup rounds went to form with Caberfeidh the biggest winners defeating Aberdeen University 11-0.

Aberdeen Considine Sutherland Cup: Teams from Kingussie, Newtonmore, Lochside Rovers and Glengarry all had good second round wins.

May 2017

Reid names Scotland shinty/camogie squad

Scotland ladies head coach Stuart Reid named his Scotland squad for the shinty/camogie international against Dublin in July. Skye's Rhianna Kirk was given a first cap as were Zoe Reid from Badenoch, Glasgow Mid Argyll pair Lucy McNulty and Lyndsay Michie and Shannon Wilson from Fort William.

Connor Howe makes Oban switch

Oban Celtic signed forward Connor Howe from Oban Camanachd.

Howe hadn't featured for Oban Camanachd in recent weeks and became the second promising youngster to join Kenny Wotherspoon's squad from their Oban rivals with Ross MacMillan making the same switch ahead of the start of the season.

On the field action

Marine Harvest Premiership: Despite dropping their first point of the season in a draw with Oban Camanachd, Kyles Athletic stayed top of the division. Bottom side Lochaber picked up their first points of the term, defeating Glenurquhart 3-2.

Marine Harvest National Division: Skye remained a point clear in shinty's second tier, with Inverness becoming isolated with only two points at the bottom of the table.

Marine Harvest North Division 1: Two wins and a draw sent Newtonmore reserves three points clear of second-placed Kingussie reserves.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: Four league wins took Lochside Rovers a point clear of Aberdour with a game in hand as the championship race heated up.

Marine Harvest North Division 2: With maximum points from seven games played, and 43 goals scored and only four conceded, Glengarry stayed top of the table.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: The Inveraray second team opened up a five point gap at top of the South 2 summit.

Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup: Inveraray, Kilmallie, Kyles Athletic, Lovat, Newtonmore, Oban Camanachd, Skye Camanachd and Strathglass made it through to the Scottish quarter-finals.

MacTavish Cup: Kilmallie and Newtonmore won through to the MacTavish Cup Final. Newtonmore defeated Glenurquhart 3-1 with Kilmallie beating Kinlochshiel 3-2.

Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Society Cup: A Daniel Cameron goal gave Oban Camanachd a 1-0 semi-final win over Inveraray, whilst Kyles Athletic beat Glasgow Mid Argyll 3-0 in the other last four tie.

Balliemore Cup: Beaulay, Caberfeidh, Fort William and Inveraray all enjoyed quarter-final victories in shinty's intermediate competition.

June 2017

Kingussie U17 win Strathdearn sixes

Kingussie U17 retained the Strathdearn Sixes at The Bught Park, Inverness.

Kingussie beat Skye 2-1 after extra-time in the final of this round-robin tournament.

Lochaber high dedicate win in memory of former players

Lochaber High School dedicated their MacPherson Cup success to the memory of 2002 winning captain, Duncan Rodger, and Donald Lamont, who played in the Banavie School team which lifted the cup in 1960.

Both men passed away recently and both were in the thoughts of the Lochaber squad that travelled to The Dell for this year's event, a triangular tournament in which they finished ahead of Dunoon and hosts Kingussie.

On the field action

Marine Harvest Premiership: A win over Kingussie was enough to maintain Kyles Athletic's league lead. After some cup disappointments, Kinlochshiel also stuttered in the league, losing to Glenurquhart, drawing with Lochaber but recovering to beat Kingussie. Bottom side Lochaber rallied, taking three points out of four against Glasgow Mid Argyll and Kinlochshiel.

Marine Harvest National Division: Caberfeidh took advantage of Skye's league inactivity to leap-frog the islanders as league leaders.

Marine Harvest North Division 1: Reigning champions Newtonmore seconds opened up a four point lead, but second-placed Aberdeen University had two games in hand.

Marine Harvest South Division 1: With Lochside Rovers not in league action, Aberdour regained the lead in the title race. However, they had played three games more than their Oban rivals.

Marine Harvest Division 2: Glengarry's romp to the league title continued throughout June with big wins over the Lovat seconds and Lewis Camanachd.

Marine Harvest South Division 2: The Inveraray reserves stay top of the table despite only playing one league match during the month.

Artemis Macaulay Cup: Kyles Athletic, Oban Camanachd, Lovat and Newtonmore reached the last four of the Artemis Macaulay Cup.

RBS MacTavish Cup: Newtonmore lifted the MacTavish Cup after beating Kilmallie 3-2 in the final at The Bught Park. Steven MacDonald, Drew MacDonald and Fraser MacKintosh had Newtonmore 3-0 ahead, but Michael Rodger and man of the match Calum MacDougall cut the deficit to a single goal, setting up a tense finish.

Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Society Cup: Kyles Athletic overcame Oban Camanachd 3-1 to win the Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Society Cup at The Taynuilt Sports Field. A Dunkie Kerr double and Roddy MacDonald had Kyles in control before Daniel Cameron's late counter.

Balliemore Cup: Caberfeidh and Fort William will contest the Balliemore Cup Final after both won their semi-final ties. Caberfeidh edged out Beaulay 4-3, whilst Fort William beat Inveraray 3-1.

2018 Lovat Cup

The 2018 Lovat Cup match between Lovat and Beaulay will take place at Balgate on Tuesday January 2 2018. Throw-up is at 1pm.

See next week's Oban Times for review of the season - part two

January: Oban's Abi selected for international duty



Abi Evans was selected for Scotland's 2017 Women's Six Nations Championship squad.

FORMER Oban High School pupil Abigail Evans has been named in Scotland's 2017 Women's Six Nations Championship squad.

Abigail made her debut for Scotland in the 2015 Six Nations opener against France. She will feature alongside 31 other

players, including teammate and Scottish Rugby's first full-time female player Jade Konkel.

April: Saints crash out in Scottish Cup semis

DESPITE taking a deserved first-half lead, Oban Saints couldn't hold out against Coville Park in the semi-final of the Scottish Amateur Cup.

Saints lost out 3-1 in the end, marking the second year in a row that the Oban side have ended their cup run at this stage.

The match was played at New Douglas Park, Hamilton, with Paul Carmichael scoring for Saints.



Brian Mackay and Donald Campbell congratulate Paul Carmichael on his goal.



February: Billy Forteith was awarded the RYA Scotland Volunteer of the Year Award.

February: Billy named volunteer of the year

BILLY Forteith of Oban Sailing Club (OSC) has been awarded the RYA Scotland Volunteer of the Year Award, sponsored by Clyde Challenger.

He was presented with the award at the annual dinner, held in Glasgow Science Centre.

Billy has been a stalwart volunteer at OSC for nearly 40 years, helping, organising and supporting the calendar of activities and showing remarkable commitment to the club.



Oban Camanachd will play Kyles in the Celtic Society Cup.

May: Camanachd reach Celtic Society Cup final

OBAN Camanachd will play Kyles Athletic in the Gregor Cameron Glasgow Celtic Society Cup Final after they beat Inveraray 1-0 at The Winterton.

Oban Camanachd made the breakthrough on 35 minutes. There was a melee inside the 'D' following a corner.

Inveraray keeper Scott MacLachlan made a save but Daniel Cameron tapped the rebound home from close range to score the only goal of the match.

March: Oban public Play the Game Together



Oban sports stars united against cancer and raised more than £15,000 at a charity football event.

OBAN sports stars united against cancer and raised more than £15,000 at a charity football event.

Around 500 spectators made their way to a sun-kissed rugby club last Sunday to watch the three 'We'll Play This Game Together' matches.

The name of the event comes from We'll Walk This Road

Together – a traditional music concert that has raised more than £40,000 in three years for DMI Cancer Trust.

However, due to serious ill-health, Neil 'Nonny' MacInnes was unable to organise his annual sell-out concert.

This led Coasters football player and referee John Scott to arrange the charity event.

JUNE: Podium place for John McPhee in Holland



JOHN McPhee had a barnstorming Dutch GP for the British Talent Team, staging an awesome comeback from 19th on the grid to fight for the win – eventually finishing third.

From 19th position on the grid to the podium, this was a gain of an incredible 16 places.

John McPhee came from 19th place to finish third in the Dutch Grand Prix.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £3200

Week 2 of 2

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.

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

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
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Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB



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Oban Celtic's Golden Oldies and Young Guns line up before the annual Boxing Day fixture for the Carnie and Pearson Memorial Trophy. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.



Saints manager Alex Craik.

Oban Saints prepare for vital Scottish Cup replay

Football

IN AN effort to get some much needed game time before their Scottish Amateur Cup replay against Greenock HSFP due to be played on Saturday January 6 at Glencruitten, Oban Saints tried to organise a friendly match for Saturday but were unable to find opposition.

Instead, manager Alex Craik has organised a practice match with the first team squad and some players from the club's younger teams.

This game will take place at Glencruitten on Saturday with a 9.45am kick-off to allow the boys to watch the Old Firm game later in the day.

Club secretary David Buchanan said: 'We needed to get a game under our belts before the Scottish Cup replay otherwise it would have been a month since we played our last competitive match and that is far too long a break before such an important cup tie.

'It's unfortunate the preparations aren't what we were wanting but at least the players will get some valuable game time before the cup tie against Greenock.'

Young guns pay the penalty

Golden Oldies	3
Young Guns	3
Carnie and Pearson Trophy	

Golden Oldies won 2-1 on penalties
OBAN Celtic held their annual Boxing Day day challenge match at Mossfield Stadium between the Golden Oldies (over 30s) and the Young Guns for the Carnie and Pearson Memorial Trophy.

It was a slow start for the Oldies as quick play among the Young Guns' forwards created several opportunities leading to a 2-0 advantage at half time through two well-taken Daniel Madej finishes.

A tactical change at half time



Stephen Davidson, captain of the Golden Oldies' team.

saw a positional switch from full back to full forward for John Hill which unsettled the youngsters.

The make-shift full forward forced an error from keeper MacFarlane following a mazy run resulting in an own goal.

The Young Guns struck back though with a 30-yard top corner effort from Daniel MacMillan which left keeper Jack Hill with no chance.

The Oldies fought back again though and Hill slotted home from a lofted corner and the revival continued as Turnbull scrambled home a late equaliser.

The game moved onto penalties to decide the contest. It was a tense affair with it all coming down to Scott Burnet following successful efforts from Andy MacDonald for the youngsters and Donald Campbell for the veterans. Burnet managed to withstand the pressure and slotted into the bottom corner for an unlikely victory for the Golden Oldies.

After the match both teams and club officials retired to the Masonic Lodge where the various trophies were handed over by Catherine Carnie and June Pearson.



Oban Celtic Player of the Season - Michael MacKinnon.



Les Kinvig was voted Man of the Match. Photographs: David Hamilton.



Some stout defending from Golden Oldies' John MacCormick.



George Reid with some battle scars from the game.

North Connel angler rewarded for leviathan salmon

THE 2017 winner of the Malloch Trophy – for one of the largest salmon caught by an angler on a fly and safely returned during the year in Scottish waters – has been announced.

The successful angler is Tom Bonniwell, a guide for Fishin-guide Scotland, who caught the fish of a lifetime in the River Awe on September 2. The cock salmon was 47 inches long and estimated at more than 40lbs.

The River Awe has a long-standing reputation for heavy salmon. It has been aptly termed 'the big fish river' on the basis of the landing by anglers of several salmon of over 50lbs, mainly in the early 1900s.

Tom, from North Connel, said: 'I had been fishing to remove escaped rainbow trout from the lower reaches of the Awe.

'Late in the afternoon, I wanted to show my visiting friend from Zambia, Brett Saunders, a salmon, so we moved to the Huntingdon syndicate beat at the head of the river, where I am a part-time ghillie. I did not

bother to change my tackle as I did not anticipate encountering anything bigger than a grilse.

'On my fifth cast in the tail of the Barrage pool, where a couple of grilse were showing, I had a very gentle take. The fish moved steadily up the pool. As I applied some pressure in anticipation of landing what I imagined was a smallish grilse, I quickly realised this was no grilse.

'The fish woke up with a vengeance, sped across the pool and thrashed on the surface, creating a maelstrom of white water and waves as if a seal was on the move.'

Mr Bonniwell continued: 'After 40 minutes of attritional battle, which included some powerful heart-stopping long runs, the light was fading fast. I managed to bring the fish carefully towards the bank, evading the underwater boulders.

'We had no net, so I handed the rod to Brett so I could manhandle the salmon into the side. There we quickly measured and

photographed it before gently letting it swim away.

'If I had lost the fish early on, I would have had no idea of its size.'

Tom was using a 14ft Greys GR50 rod, an old Greys reel, a Hardy Mach 55 fly line, 12lb breaking strain nylon, a 1cm micro-cone Snaelda tube fly (supplied by Frances Flies in Iceland) and a tiny size 16 Partridge Outpoint treble hook.

In the same pool in May, Alan Kettle-White, senior biologist for Argyll Fisheries Trust, came desperately close to catching an enormous fish. He was on his own and, in his struggle to bring it to the bank, the hook caught on a rock and dislodged, allowing the salmon to slip away. It seems likely this was the same fish.

The Malloch Trophy Committee meeting on December 14 considered a shortlist of six contenders. Tom's entry, which fulfilled the relevant criteria including best evidence, was endorsed as the winner for 2017.

Angling

He will be presented with the trophy at the official Tay opening ceremony at Meikleour on January 15. His name will be engraved on the Tay Foundation's trophy, joining an illustrious list of previous winners which stretches back four decades. He will also receive a replica Malloch Trophy and fishing tackle.

John Wood, chairman of the Tay Foundation and a member of the judging committee, said: 'Tom Bonniwell's achievement, landing such a huge fish on very light terminal tackle, is remarkable. For the second consecutive year, the winning entry is for a salmon caught in a west coast river.

It is encouraging the genetics that produce leviathan salmon are still present in the West Highlands.'

Tom Bonniwell with his leviathan River Awe salmon.



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TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday December 28, 2017** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm							
Thu	00.20	3.1	06.51	1.6	13.42	3.4	19.47	1.7	Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Fri	01.54	3.2	08.05	1.6	14.50	3.6	20.48	1.4	Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Sat	03.01	3.4	09.13	1.4	15.42	3.8	21.43	1.2	Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Sun	03.53	3.7	10.13	1.1	16.29	4.0	22.33	0.9	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Mon	04.40	3.9	11.08	0.9	17.14	4.1	23.21	0.7	Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Tues	05.26	4.1	11.59	0.7	17.58	4.1	***	**	Ferry Crossings/Sea States			
Wed	00.88	0.5	06.10	4.2	12.49	0.6	18.41	4.1	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)

FRIDAY

WEATHER

Thursday	Sunny Winds moderate North North Westerly Temperatures -1°C to 4°C.
Friday	Cloudy Winds light East South Easterly Temperatures 1°C to 3°C.
Weekend Outlook	Heavy rain showers on Saturday Heavy rain showers on Sunday Winds strong South South Easterly Temperatures 4°C to 7°C.

LOCHABER TIMES

& Oban Times

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Thursday 28 December, 2017

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2018

happy new year

TO ALL OUR READERS AND ADVERTISERS



Collect token 2 INSIDE

INSIDE THIS WEEK
Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary reader offer



Festive fun on Jacobite for Fort youth group

THE AHA Futures group hopped on board the Jacobite steam train to Mallaig on Monday December 18 for their big Christmas day out, writes Neill Bo Finlayson.

The trip, courtesy of West Coast Railways, who generously gifted the group tickets worth £500, was organised by AHA Futures member Helen MacRae.

During the picturesque journey, the group were able to sit together and take photos, sing Christmas songs, pull crackers and eat cake – a fun-filled journey which everyone loved.

The group even had time for fish and chips and a wander round Mallaig harbour in the afternoon.

AHA Futures is a transition project for young people mov-

ing on from school into adult life. The group meet one day a week and activities have included running a pop-up café, looking after animals, learning woodwork skills and bush craft skills, plus a host of life skills.

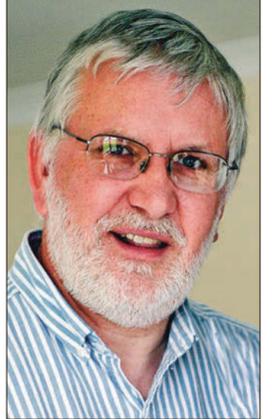
The project, which has been running for two years, supports 10 young people in the community who have autism or similar communication disabilities. As a direct result of the project, the young people will be better placed to move onto volunteering in the community which will hopefully lead to employment.

The project is moving into the final phase with funding being granted for nine more weeks until the end of March.

If you can help, contact Lochaber Rural Education Trust at info@lret.org.



The AHA Futures group had a fun-filled afternoon on the Jacobite steam train as part of their Christmas day out. JP F52 - AHA on the Festive Jacobite train_3. Photo: Abridside Photography.



Jim Sutherland is retiring.

Lochaber High new head teacher named

THE NEXT head teacher of Lochaber High School will be Scott Steele, a current deputy head at Berwickshire High School in Duns, in the Scottish Borders.

Mr Steele will replace Jim Sutherland, who is retiring in mid-February after 10 years at the helm of Fort William's secondary school.

Highland Council says Mr Steele's start date is still to be confirmed.

Originally from Shetland, Mr Sutherland taught at Lerwick, Berwick and Thurso High before moving to Kinlochleven in 2001. He became acting head teacher at Lochaber High in May 2006, before being confirmed as the school's new head in December of the following year.

Fungicidal agents to tackle stained walls on Fort homes

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

LOCHABER Housing Association has confirmed it plans to tackle the problem of stained walls at some of the properties in Fort William's Plantation housing estate.

Some of the houses are showing dark staining and algal growth to their exterior walls, so the housing body says it is drawing up an action plan to deal with the issue after New Year.

The association was responding to inquiries by the Lochaber Times, after

the issue was brought to our attention by local Henderson Row resident, John Davidson.

Mr Davidson told us his home, which he now owns, was one of a number of houses which had undergone insulation works four years ago.

But he told us: 'The paint has been coming off the outside walls and there's big black stains appearing – it looks terrible.'

'When the work was done in 2013, we were told there was a 10-year guarantee to cover it all. But when I spoke to Lochaber Housing Association, they just don't seem to

want to take responsibility for doing something about it.

'I did speak to a local solicitor but they advised me to contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau, which is what I intend doing – though I am hoping a story in the paper might prod them to do something about it.'

Asked to comment, Sean Doherty, Lochaber Housing Association's head of asset management, told us the organisation was well aware of the issue and was hoping to resolve the problems.

Mr Doherty told us: 'We do own properties in Henderson Row, as well

as other areas within the Plantation. Lochaber Housing Association, together with private owners and the Highland Council, successfully accessed CESP [Community Energy Saving Programme] funding to apply external wall insulation to the properties in 2013.

'We are aware of algae growth and staining to some wall surfaces and have met with the manufacturers to discuss the options to remove these.'

'As a result, some trials of fungicidal products have been completed with a view to commencing works in the new year.'



The staining on a wall of a house in Henderson Row is clearly visible. JP F52 Henderson row houses exterior-2



Nevis radio to resolve signal issue

NEILL BO FINLAYSON
nfinlayson@obantimes.co.uk

NEVIS Radio is working to fix a fault in its transmission equipment which has left some listeners in Lochaber without a signal.

Listeners in Ballachulish, Onich and Kinlochleven were left disappointed after being unable to tune in to the Fort William station after an item of equipment unexpectedly failed.

Although the exact reasons behind the failure are still unknown, management at the station is hoping to resolve the issue in the new year.

Simon Abberley, sustainability and business development manager at Nevis Radio, explained: 'We have had a piece of equipment break which has affected a chain of other parts of our network. Sadly, it's not a cheap fix and required engineers from across the country who have to abide by Ofcom regulations in terms of setting up and commissioning. So it's not an overnight fix.'

'We had hoped last Monday's repairs would resolve things a little better than they have but we are working to resolve the current issues we have as best we can.'

In April this year, the main

transmission site responsible for the signal in Fort William and the surrounding area was relocated from Treslaig to the surge chamber on top of the water pipes above the GFG Alliance aluminium smelter.

Mr Abberley said that, as a result, the radio station's service now reaches as far as Invermoriston to the north and Mallaig and Arisaig to the west.

The recent malfunction has, however, affected the signal in the Ballachulish and Kinlochleven area.

'I'd say the odds of bringing Ballachulish – which is the only site which isn't functioning

properly – back online in the coming weeks are slim to none. All other areas we serve have not been affected as much. The resolution will be assessed once we understand why it has failed in the first instance,' added Mr Abberley.

Earlier this year a similar transmission fault was detected and repaired swiftly, so the team is confident of finding a resolution to the current issues with the signal. The work required to fix the fault demands a lot of planning and co-operation from engineers, volunteers and staff at the transmission site to ensure the signal is returned to normal.

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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.

FW

Youngsters sparkle in festive shows

There were shepherds, wise men, kings, cats, singers and a host of other characters in this year's fantastic series of Christmas shows and pantomimes by local primary schools in the Fort William area.

Our photographers came back with hundreds of wonderful images and today we publish a selection of the best.

Turn to page 9 for more photographs.

Photographs: Abrightside Photography



Banavie's angelic choir.



One of Santa's elves enjoys the Banavie show; while a shepherd and three kings bring their gifts.



Banavie youngsters provided the music for the festive event.



Caol youngsters opted for a tradition nativity show.



The Gaelic school's festive show was hugely atmospheric and the youngsters' thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the day's events.



This youngster's outfit is particularly Caol!



Inverlochy youngsters bring a Country and Western vibe to their festive show, as well as offering the usual traditional elements.



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.

Moleigh 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.

Glengorm 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.

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MSP speaks out over high delivery charges

KATE FORBES MSP has joined the protest against the higher delivery charges, saying enough is enough and urging the UK Government to act and end rip-off charges for Highlanders.

New figures reveal that Lochaber, Skye and Badenoch residents are thought to be paying almost £4 million extra a year in delivery charges compared to the rest of the UK.

According to new research from the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), those living in the Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency – which also includes Dingwall, the Black Isle and the Great Glen – pay an estimated £3.8 million more, and the figure for the entire Highlands and Islands is a whopping £33.4 million.

Ms Forbes said: 'The scandal of retailers charging almost £4 million to customers in Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch has never looked like such a rip-off. That means that customers who have purchased goods online this Christmas have paid over the odds and lined the pockets of retailers and delivery firms who think nothing of over-charging Highland consumers.'

'It is, and always has been, an absolute disgrace and it is long overdue for the UK Government to act.'

'If the Scottish Government had the powers to do something about surcharges, they would have long ago and it is really only public pressure that has pushed the UK Government into lifting a finger about this.'

'Almost £4 million across Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch could have been spent in the local economy and made an enormous difference.'

Banavie says farewell to head Maxean

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

AFTER guiding the education of hundreds of children who have come through Banavie Primary School's doors during her 17 years in charge as head teacher, Maxean Dunham called it a day on Friday with a special assembly marking her retirement.

Mrs Dunham admits the past few days had been quite emotional, but with plenty of fun, laughs and great memories mixed in with the sadness at leaving.

'We had a really lovely special assembly this morning, and it was really nice seeing everyone,' Mrs Dunham told us during a break on her last day.

Asked what stand out as high-



lights during her tenure at the helm of Banavie Primary, Mrs Dunham said the pupils had made it an amazing experience.

'I've loved working with all of the children over the years, watching them come through the doors on their very first day

when they are tiny, to leaving seven years later as confident learners.

'And, of course, there's been

Maxean Dunham and the youngsters of Banavie Primary.
IF F52 Maxean retreat

fantastic members of staff to work with in that time as well. Two of the staff here have been with me for between 12 and 14 years.'

Mrs Dunham said two new black labrador puppies recently acquired by her and husband Mike will keep her busy in retirement.

'And we have the B&B as well, so there will be plenty to keep me occupied,' she added.

A native of Montrose, Mrs Dunham had been living and working in Luton prior to making the move back to Scotland and the position at Banavie Primary.

'I came back to Scotland because my parents were getting older and the 800-mile round trip to visit them was getting too much.'

'And I can honestly say I've had no regrets about coming here – it has been a wonderful school to work at. I have been so very lucky to have worked at such a lovely school.'

Asked about the unusual spelling of her first name, Maxean, Mrs Dunham explained that her father was called Maxwell, while her mother's first name was Jean.

'So they stuck them together and that was that!' she laughed.

Mrs Dunham's replacement has been confirmed as Kerry Young, who will take up her new post in the spring, at a date to be confirmed.

Lochaber seniors dance night away at Christmas bash



Lochaber seniors enjoy their Christmas bash. Sixth-year students at Lochaber High School dusted off their glad rags for their annual Christmas dance last week and by all accounts it was a great night, enjoyed by everyone.

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Community 'heroes' celebrated at Eilean a' Cheò Civic Awards 2017

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

THE seventh year of the Eilean a' Cheò Civic Awards has seen individuals and schools from Skye and Raasay recognised for the important contribution they have made to their communities over the past year.

Held in Portree on Monday, the awards are organised by the Ward 10 Eilean a' Cheò councillors in order to recognise people from all age groups and walks of life.

The 2017 awards were presented as follows.

Arts/Music Award: Dinah Rankin from Kilmaluag, who was nominated by Kilmuir Community Council.

They said: 'Dinah is totally committed to the Trotternish area, and works tirelessly to support and encourage the children of the area, specifically over the past year when she has run an after-school club to prepare children for the local and National Mòds.

'Clann Thronairnis enjoyed huge success in Fort William at the National Mòd with the children winning a huge haul of medals for group and individual performances – a great achievement for a small community. This is all thanks to Dinah, who coached and encouraged the children and co-ordinated a massive voluntary endeavour from a number of people within the community.'

Community Award: Roddy Murray from Tarskavaig.

Roddy has been in public office nearly all his working life. His early years were spent in the Western Isles where he undertook many roles in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, including Trading Standards, as a councillor, and as vice-convenor. After moving back to Skye, he has been tireless in a range of roles, including those in Sleat Community Trust and the Sleat Community Council of which he is currently chairman.

Roddy has never been afraid to champion issues that affect the community that he has given so much time and energy to. One of the 'highlights' of his recent years has been the chairmanship of the Sleat Transport Forum, a sub-group of the community council that was established to champion public transport to, from and within the Sleat peninsula.

Aside from his roles in the community trust and community council, he continues to contribute in his own home village of Tarskavaig where he is clerk of the common grazings and on the Communities Hall management committee.

His fellow community councillors who nominated him said: 'His lifelong service to communities can only be described as exemplary, and he is the perfect example of dedication, passion and commitment.'

Enterprise Award: Kyleakin Connections and Marrion Grant, nominated by Kyleakin and Kylerhea Community Council.

The Nice Café and Book-



Roddy Murray, left, receives the Community Award from Councillor Ronald MacDonald.



Representatives of Kyleakin Connections and Marrion Grant receive the Enterprise Award from Councillor John Finlayson.



The team of Portree Primary School coaches receive the Sport Award from Councillor John Finlayson.



Dinah Rankin receives the Arts/Music Award from Councillor John Gordon.



Ingrid Bruce receives the Environment Award from Councillor John Gordon.



Andrew Grieve receives the Young People Award from Councillor Roddy MacDonald.

shop enterprise is run by the attenders, staff and volunteers of Kyleakin Connections, Skye and Lochalsh Association for Disability, which is the day care centre that encourages and supports independent living and life skills for local people with learning and physical disabilities in the old school Kyleakin.

Each Wednesday since 2008 they have run the café and bookshop to enable attenders access to training for work as well as to enhance and improve their social skills.

On offer are beverages, filled rolls, homebaking, a calendar and some crafts. All profits go towards paying for outings and various activities chosen by the attenders themselves. The café is popular and well supported by locals in Skye and Lochalsh, and they are certainly worthy of the Enterprise Award for all they achieve.

Marrion has been a volunteer for Skye and Lochalsh Association for Disability (SLAD) for

more than eight years. Through her volunteering, Marrion has been involved with the café from the beginning and has attended dutifully every week supporting the service users to gain confidence, promoting independence, equality and ensuring a real sense of achievement and self-worth.

Marrion has brought her knowledge of cooking skills to the café and uses her very supportive manner to empower each individual to work independently, be part of a team, bake, cook and serve the public. Marrion's contribution has played a big part in the café's success and the development of the service users.

Environment Award: Ingrid Bruce from Portree. For the past few years, Ingrid has worked tirelessly to support the Eco Committee at Portree Primary School. Ingrid has given of her time to offer a weekly gardening club after school which pupils have benefited greatly from.

Pupils, who had previously been reluctant to participate

in out-of-school activities, enthusiastically attended Ingrid's informative and practical sessions and took great pride in the space they were creating.

Regardless of the weather, Ingrid showed great dedication to inspiring the young people to care for their environment and work together to create spaces that the whole school could be proud of.

Last session, Ingrid campaigned tirelessly through Tesco Bags to acquire funding which allowed the creation of a beautiful nature walk at school.

The nature walk is made up of several outdoor activity stations along a path that runs behind the existing playground. All pupils at the school have benefited significantly from this additional outdoor space and indeed from all of the many environmental initiatives that Ingrid introduced during her time at Portree Primary.

2017 Sport Award: The team of coaches at Portree Primary who were nominated by staff and pupils.

Collectively the coaches run an extensive calendar of extra-curricular activities. The pupils of Portree Primary School have access to a calendar of activities, unrivalled at even much more urban schools.

The volunteers give of their time freely weekly for regular training sessions and also to accompany groups of children to events across the country. This often means rescheduling their own families and jobs to support the young people.

The school has achieved many successes over the years. However, this term they were informed they had achieved their second gold award from SportScotland, which recognises and celebrates success in school sporting communities.

Portree Primary is the first school to achieve a second gold award and this would not be possible if it were not for the dedication and support of all of the coaches and volunteers.

Young People Award: Andrew Grieve from Broadford, nominated by Nicholas Kelly,

Youth Worker with High Life Highland.

Andrew moved to Broadford last year while in his sixth year at high school and started his volunteering with a small after-school dodgeball session for primary-aged children.

He has now finished school and has continued his volunteering with a regular Monday afternoon session. For a year now he has delivered and managed these weekly term sessions as a High Life Highland Young Leader, and has completed a Sports Leaders UK course, clocking up well in excess of the 25 hours volunteering required.

Nicholas Kelly said: 'He has a brilliant way of delivering these activity sessions, which the children love and it will be a loss when he heads off to university next year.'

Andrew volunteers not only for after-school activities – he volunteers almost every Saturday at the Crossroads Shop in Portree and he also volunteers his time on a Sunday at the old folks home at An Acarsaid in

Broadford where he helps out and talks to the residents.

During the ceremony Councillors John Finlayson, John Gordon and Ronald MacDonald presented the winners with their awards and thanked everyone for taking part.

Chairman of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee, Councillor Gordon said: 'It is great that we have had this opportunity to thank people for the terrific work they do in our communities. Sitting on the judging panel was challenging as we received so many strong nominations.'

'Every one of this year's winners certainly deserve public recognition for their work. Often such people work quietly behind the scenes without a fuss, just keen to get on with their work.'

'However, the awards are about celebrating the hard work and voluntary effort that goes on across Skye and Raasay, so on behalf of all my fellow ward councillors, I say thank you and well done. Keep up the good work.'

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Funeral director retires after 46 years



Jamie Manson, Mike McFall and Beth Macbeath outside the funeral director's in Inverlochty. JP F52 McFall Retire 01. Abridgtside Photography.

NEILL BO FINLAYSON
nfinlayson@obantimes.co.uk

AFTER almost half a century of service, one of Lochaber's best known funeral directors is stepping down and retiring.

Mike McFall has announced his retirement after 46 years of arranging and conducting funerals for the communities of Fort William and Lochaber.

Mike began his career as a funeral director in Fort William after getting a job as a joiner with John MacLellan at the age of 17, having previously worked in the old Milton Hotel.

'I went to go for a job as an apprentice joiner with MacLellan's, who had an undertaker service,' Mike recalled. 'I

thought to myself, "That's maybe something I can do one day" and after a few years I worked my way up to taking funeral services.'

After more than two decades at MacLellan Funeral Directors, Mike started his own company, Mike McFall Funeral Directors, in Inverlochty, which he has been operating for 10 years. And having finished his final shift last Wednesday, Mike said he's looking forward to a relaxing start to this retirement.

'I haven't really thought about what I'll do yet but I will be going away for a bit of sun and get away from the cold weather. I need some time off - it is a 24/7 job.

'I've done an awful lot of services over the years. I'd say I've

probably done over a hundred a year, so it's difficult to put an exact number on it.'

The company has been sold to Jamie Manson and Beth Macbeath who have both been employees of Mike's over the past 10 years.

Jamie has worked under Mike for nearly eight years and has, in that time, become Lochaber's only accredited and qualified funeral director after studying with the Independent Funeral Directors College. Having earned himself a reputation directing funerals in the town he grew up in, Jamie will now become the principal funeral director of the Fort William company.

Beth is also local to Fort

William and has worked for Mike for 10 years, running his office, working on-call and helping out with other practical duties around the funeral home. With her experience in funeral services and the business, she will continue to work the same roles within the company as a director.

Mike added: 'The business is in safe hands. I didn't want to sell out to a big firm from the city because they might completely change things. I've handed it to Jamie and he's doing the same as I did, so not much will change.'

Mike expressed his sincere thanks for all the support, kindness and friendship over the years.

First gin distillery opens in Lochaber

HOTELIERS Craig and Noru Innes have opened the first craft gin distillery in Lochaber after two years' work to get the project off the ground.

The distillery, operated by their company Pixel Spirits, is the first gin distillery in the area and it has named its first two releases after local landmarks - Devil's Staircase and Neptune's Staircase.

The labels for the two gins were designed by Scottish illustrator Iain McIntosh, best known for



his illustrations for books by author Alexander McCall Smith.

Along with the distillery, the couple are establishing The Gin School. Sessions at the school will include a five-hour experience teaching the art of distilling using individual copper mini stills with participants developing their bespoke personal recipe. At the end of the class, each student will take a full bottle of their own unique creation home with them with the recipe saved in a database for future re-ordering.

Mr and Mrs Innes run the Loch Leven Hotel in North Ballachulish where the idea for starting their own craft distillery came to them when they couldn't source a gin branded for their hotel at a reasonable price.

Converted from old farm byres on land at the hotel, the distillery was self-built and constructed with the help of friends and family members.

West Ardnamurchan gets new minibus

THIS month saw a new community minibus for West Ardnamurchan delivered to Kilchoan Primary School. More than £44,000 was raised to buy the bus and help cover maintenance and running costs for the first few years.

The fundraising kicked off in 2016 when Marc MacMaster, Niall MacKelvie and Bert Cameron took on the Three Peaks Challenge (Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis) in 24 hours - Marc and Niall doing the running and Bert the driver, between them raising in excess of £5,500 towards a new bus for the school.

Since then numerous fundraising efforts have contributed, including Nicky Docherty and Justin Cameron taking on an east coast to west coast cycle in 2017, raising almost £4,000 and, more recently, a Miss Ardnamurchan contest for most beautiful man making almost £800.

Thanks to the assistance of the West Ardnamurchan Community Development Company, local fundraising was matched by the Big Lottery Awards for All, the Robertson Trust and the Hugh Fraser Foundation.

The Ardnamurchan Trust has also agreed to provide a new garage to house the bus. Kilchoan Primary School will have priority use of the bus and it will also be available for local groups to hire.

The first big trip for the school will be for skiing lessons at Nevis Range in January.



The new minibus is welcomed with a 'thumbs-up' seal of approval.

College music single hits heights in iTunes

MARK ENTWISTLE
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

WEST Highland College UHI's HNC Music Student of the Year Mark Lawrie caused quite a stir at their graduation ceremony last October by writing lyrics and music for a graduation song *Star You Are*.

However, not content with a fabulous performance of the piece, course leader and well-known Gaelic singer Rachel Walker put together a surprise flash mob performance from college staff and students which delighted the whole audience.

It was greeted with such enthusiasm that the students decided to release the track as a download for Christmas with an accompanying video.

All profits from the download will go to additional course field trips for students. A special performance to mark the release of the track was held at the college in Fort William last week.

Rachel commented: 'It's



Mark Lawrie, who composed and performed the West Highland College Christmas song *Star You Are*.
Picture: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

great to see both staff and students from all areas of the college joining together in this way.

'We had great fun and have produced what we think is an excellent track at the same time. I'm really thankful to our sound production lecturer, Alasdair Murray, who handled the recording process and

mixed the track. He's done a brilliant job.'

Mark added: 'I'm delighted to have the chance to release the song as a single.

'I had such a good experience during my time studying at West Highland College, so I'm really happy to be able to support the college in this way. Hearing the track come to-

gether has been so exciting, so thanks to everyone involved.'

The track is now available to download on iTunes and other digital platforms and, by Tuesday of last week, it had rocketed up to number five in the singer/songwriter download chart ahead of Ralph McTell's *Streets of London* and Hozier's *Take Me To Church*.

Museum aims for 55,000 visitors

THE West Highland Museum in Fort William is hoping that, with just two days to go, it can reach the magical figure of 55,000 visitors for the year.

The free entry museum is open between Christmas and New Year and hopes are high there will be plenty of faces coming through the doors during the last week of 2017.

Some of the wonderful reviews the museum has received from visitors via the Trip Advisor website, include:

'Fabulous collection of artefacts.'

'This museum has a wonderful collection which covers not just the Fort William area, but the whole of the West Highlands. There is a particularly rich collection of Jacobite artefacts. There are also some wonderful textiles, and some very unusual items, such as the cottars' models, which I had not seen before.'

'Lovely Museum!'



Colleen Barker at the museum.

'Lovely museum. Well situated in Fort William, just off the main High Street. I didn't expect the Museum to be so big in the inside, as the building looks fairly small. It's a very well set out Museum, and includes very informative exhibits, and a wide variety of exhibits too! And the volunteers are very welcoming too. They rely on public donations, so donate generously for a good cause!'

Museum manager Colleen Barker told us: 'We are the most popular indoor attraction about Fort William but realise it's difficult to compete against Ben Nevis and Steall waterfall, which occupy first and second slots. But we think we can claim to be the second jewel in Lochaber's crown.'

'Six times as many visitors came in compared to six years ago and many comment on the friendliness of our volunteer receptionists.'

However, although shop sales and donations are up, the museum remains vulnerable with reducing grants which contribute only 10 per cent of the museum's income.

'We continue to need your support,' added Ms Barker. 'Why not reconnect with your local museum - perhaps to feel the experience of another local visitor, again recorded on Trip Advisor', who said:

'I've lived in Fort William nearly all my life. Didn't realise the museum had so much to offer! Would highly recommend.'

Recycle Christmas cards for charity

KATH JOHNSTON is once again encouraging people to recycle and donate their used Christmas cards and support her project to adapt and redesign them into gift tags to raise funds for the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

She had a huge quantity of used cards donated last year and created nearly 15,000 tags that were distributed to 14 BHF shops, including the Fort William shop. It is hoped they will raise more than £1,500 for this very worthwhile charity.

You can bring your old cards to the reception desk at the Alex or to Kath direct at 119 Lochaber Road, Upper Achintore, Fort William, PH33 6TX or Kath can arrange to pick them up.

Kath can be contacted at 01397 703689 or at kathken-johnston@aol.com.

An Nollaig is a' Bhliadhn' Ùr Christmas and New Year

M'ALBA MY ALBA

Benny
Dihaoine 29 Dùbhlachd, 9f
Friday 29 December, 9pm

The Benny ag innse sgeulachd iongantach a' chaid cheatharnaich sabaid-diùrn chruinneil a bh' aig Alba a-riamh, Benny Lynch - sgeulachd a tha an dà chuid togarrach agus tiamaid, le soirbheachas agus àmhghar na cois. Tha am film na chuimhneachadh bhliath, iomchaidh air fear a bha aithneach mar churaidh nan daoine, le agallamhan le eòlaichean bogsaich aig a chridhe.

Benny tells the remarkable story of Scotland's first boxing world champion boxer, Benny Lynch.

Cèilidh Na Bliadhn' Ùire 2017
Live Hogmanay Ceilidh
Didòmhnaich 31 Dùbhlachd, 11.30f
Sunday 31 December, 11.30pm

Beò à Sèite, san Eilean Sgitheanach le aoighean, cèol agus craic gu leòr! Cuide ri Cathy NicDhòmhnaill agus Niall Iain MacDhòmhnaill.

A host of well-known musicians and singers bring in the bells with Cathy MacDonald and Neil Iain MacDonalld live from Sleat, on the island of Skye.

Skipinnish agus Caraidean
Skipinish and Friends
Disathairne 30 Dùbhlachd, 11.30f
Saturday 30 December, 11.30pm

Air a chlàradh aig a' chuirn aig Skipinnish anns a' Bharrowland Ballroom. Chithear taisbeanadh sònraichte bhon oidhche air a mheasgachadh le agallamhan agus seanachas bho na cluicheadairean fhèin. Le taic bhon t-seinneadair Rachel Walker, Malcolm Jones agus Archie McAllister.

Filmed live at Skipinnish's gig at the renowned Glasgow Barrowland Ballroom. This programme features highlights from the concert and interviews with the musicians.

Kerry is Kirsty: A' Chomraich
Diluain 1 Faoilleach, 8.30f
Monday 1 January, 8.30pm

Tha na peathraichean Kerry is Kirsty Nic a' Phi air a bhith air na meadhanan sòisealta, feuch an iarg iad slighean ùra baidhsagal air a shiubhal. Cuide ri Calum MacLleathain, tha iad a' falbh on Cheann Mhòr air Loch Thoirbheartan, agus a' gabhail tro ghleann na Comraich. Tha Calum 's dòcha nas eòlaiche anns an uisge, dè mar a thèid dha thar an rathaid is na mòintich air baidhsagal còmhla ris na dìthhis seo?

Having taken to social media to discover fresh cycling horizons, sisters Kerry and Kirsty MacPhee from South Uist are ready to explore in this new series.

Frances: A' Stri ri M.S
Didòmhnaich 31 Dùbhlachd, 9f
Sunday 31 December, 9pm

Tha an tinnas MS air a bhith na chompanach fad iomadh bliadhna do Frances O'Connell. A-nise tha i a' toirt an aghaidh air agus càirdean, luchd-eòlais agus cuid ris nach do choinnich i a-riamh air a cuideachadh gus na mìltean de dh'airgead a chruinneachadh airson a dhol a Mhexico an tìr air cùram ioc-shlàinteach. Tha an cùram seo fhathast aig ìre deuchainn ann am Breatainn agus tha fios aig Frances nach bi slighe fhurasta roimpe.

For over 20 years Frances O'Connell has suffered from multiple sclerosis - a condition that's gradually eroded her quality of life. But in early 2016, a pioneering new treatment for MS hit the headlines, Frances dared to dream that a cure might be within her reach.

Sùlaisgeir: an t-Sealg
Sùlaisgeir: The Hunt
Diluain 1 Faoilleach, 9f
Monday 1 January, 9pm

Fad linn, tha fir sgìre Nis ann an Eilean Leòdhais sna h-Eileanan an Iar air seòladh gu eilean beag 40 mìle gu tuath air Eilean Leòdhais, gach samhraidh son na ceadaichte dhaibh de dh'òin-mhara shònraichte a chruinneachadh. Tha Dods MacPhàrlain air ceumanna a chuid shìnsirean a leantainn airson còrr air 40 bliadhna. Ach am-bliadhna bidh e os cionn turas sealg a' ghuga airson an uair mu dheireadh agus thug e cead an turas sin a chlàradh.

For centuries, men from Ness in the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles have sailed to a tiny island, 40 miles North of Lewis each Summer to collect their harvest of seabirds.

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FW

Kilmallie

ITEMS discussed at the November meeting of Kilmallie Community Council included:

Complaints of bad smells from Duisky:

KCC had received a complaint of bad smells from a Loch Eil resident that were attributed to the Duisky landfill site. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency will carry out a routine inspection of the site in January. No-one was at the meeting to provide further information but it is something that could be investigated by environmental health. KCC had stressed the need to collect information in the form of a bad smell diary, including wind conditions, so that the source can be accurately identified. Environmental health are also more likely to respond if there is more than one complaint.

Update on pedestrian crossings of A830:

KCC had provided comments to Transport Scotland regarding the crossing options for Banavie and Corpach. Discussions are ongoing with Transport Scotland to try and find acceptable designs and locations for the crossings. The first step towards improving safety would be to reduce traffic speeds at both locations.

Update on noise from Annat:

Graeme Corner, environmental health, provided an update on the planned works by BSW to reduce noise from the mill feed. One resident had noted that moving the mobile chipper had reduced the noise from that source, at least for some residents. KCC is planning to meet Mr Corner and planning officials. Environmental health are investigating complaints of noise from other operators at Annat.

Litter on A830 at entrance to old sawmill in Corpach:

KCC had received complaints of large amounts of litter alongside the A830 beside the entrance to the old saw mill and Ferguson's depot. It was agreed to contact the community warden to ask them to investigate this.

Planning:

Scottish Canals planning application for pods at Gairloch Scottish Canals' plans for large structures as camping pods in a number of locations have caused concern for several communities along the canal. The latest application has been objected to by Spean, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council and there are plans for similar developments at Moy and Banavie. KCC wrote in support of the objection on the grounds the pods are unnecessarily large and intrusive on the landscape and that Scottish Canals has disused buildings that should be renovated before any further developments are considered.

Wheelchair access between Caol and Corpach across lock gates:

There is currently no easy access between Caol and Corpach for wheelchair/mobility scooter users. KCC has received a number of requests to try and address this situation. It would be easy to rectify with small modifications to one set of lock gates at the sea lock at Corpach to provide a ramp at each end.

KCC met with John Stafford, Scottish Canals Waterway Supervisor West-Harbourmaster, Corpach, and discussed possible designs for the ramps. KCC will contact Scottish Canals to ask them to fund this.

Request for comments on proposed alloy wheel plant planning application:

Comments were sought from community councils in Fort William regarding the large industrial development proposed next to the aluminium smelter. This could have implications for Kilmallie in terms of increased lorry traffic to Annat, increased road congestion and pressure for housing.

Proposals for increased rail services on West Highland Line:

The Friends of the West Highland Line have developed detailed proposals to increase the number of trains between Glasgow and Fort William to five a day. These include a full analysis of the timetable and rolling stock requirements. The Community Rail Partnership has written to MSP Kate Forbes to request help in progressing these proposals through parliamentary questions. It was agreed KCC should also contact Ms Forbes to highlight the benefits of better rail services to the community.

Christmas lights:

The Christmas lights switch on event had been a great success and KCC complemented the group on its work.

Banavie war memorial:

KCC thanked Jim Ramsay for all the work he had done to clear vegetation from around the memorial and install a new bench.

Next meeting:

The next meeting of KCC will be at 7.15pm on Monday, January 22, 2018 at Kilmallie Community Centre.



Caroline MacLeod receives flowers and a gift from club members.

Friends Together Club presentation to founder

THERE was a special presentation recently by members of the Friends Together club at the Montrose Centre in Inverloch.

Flowers and a gift were presented to Caroline MacLeod, who started

the club 15 years ago on behalf of her mother Phyllis Bennett.

The club has around 25 members who meet every Monday to hear a guest speaker.

They also go out for meals and

attend shows and all this has been organised by Caroline.

The presentation marked the end of an era and Caroline will be a big miss, but it is hoped the other ladies will keep it going.

Plantation senior citizens enjoy festive fare



Plantation Community Association recently held its annual Christmas lunch for senior citizens in Fort William.

JP F52 Plantation Xmas lunch

Cloutie dumpling session proves a tasty hit



The session on making cloutie dumplings proved popular.

JP F52 Cloutie making

HOW TO make a cloutie dumpling was the subject of a recent session of the Sustainable Spean Bridge project.

A number of workshops have been held at the premises of Lochaber Rural Education Trust, near the auction mart, in November and December.

Sustainable Spean Bridge is a friendly, informal group of local people which meets for activities, ideas and conversation on how everyone can help reduce their impact on the environment.

RETRO Roamer

A few items going back 30 years

Licensing board chairman Catriona Maclean of Ardgour always has a barbed comment to make at meetings when licensees are fending for themselves in submitting and speaking to the reasons for their particular application. 'You're not represented by one of these people, then?', is her usual introduction, in referring to the serried ranks of solicitors present in the chambers on behalf of many of the applicants.

As you'd expect, there is a lot of local comment about the effects of the current NUPE selective strike action. Quite a few folk have complained about not getting their bins lifted despite the fact they live in the 'untargeted areas'. Others have marvelled at having their bins emptied although they do reside in 'targeted areas'.

One of the incidents struck me as being quite humorous. A housewife of my acquaintance was sounding off about the binmen's actions and non-actions and how she'd soon sort them out. Her husband, very much of my acquaintance (we played in the same football team) is a staunch union man. However, someone told him of the pronouncements by his missus and since then their bin hasn't been emptied. The reason I'm quite tickled by it all is because the husband, no mean 'striker' in his playing days in the Welfare League, used to tell us how he trained on 'plates of carpet tacks and dustbin lids'.

In connection with the above I received the following lines the other day:

*'When laden dustbins clart the street,
And council ne'er wi' dustmen meet,
Then should the wifes o' the Fort
Pit a' their rubbish in a caurt
And wheel it chuntering down the street
Tae tip it at Lochaber House feet.
And there a heap o' it let bide
Until the councillors deign to decide'.*

It is interesting to reflect on the fact the dustmen's dispute also had the effect of putting a new Highland town on the map.

On the STV map, at any rate. According to last Wednesday's evening news bulletin, 'Dustmen in the West Highland town of Lochaber went back to work this morning'. Honestly!

What on earth is it meant to be? That's the question on lots of Lochaber lips with regard to the structure, currently under wraps outside Kilmallie Hall in Corpach, the Queen of Suburbia. Is it a bus shelter? An electronic notice board? Can it be a bicycle shed? A horse box? Well, I can advise you that all of these conjectures are wide of the mark. When they started to build it, I was told what it was going to be. But that was a long time ago and now I've forgotten.

I note the Court House clock is an hour out again. No doubt it will catch up in the summer. In the meantime - sorry about that! - it's just like the old days when the Town Hall clock was right twice a day.

There seems to be more activity in Cameron Square these days than in its Eastenders equivalent. New wood for the seats, sundry painting and cobble scraping. No replacement guttering for the all weather centre, though. However, I notice the fire alarm in the premises seems to work. Aye, one day I'd like to discover how much the 're-creation' of Cameron Square is costing us.

Claggan Park isn't half a cold place when you're a spectator, player or official at the Fort games at this time of year. The sun just doesn't get a look down. However, on the moorland on the BA side of the park, you can see the cattle sunning themselves. Aye, there must be something in the local saying: 'There's wisser eating grass'.

Continuing on the Claggan Park theme, conditions were atrocious in the condemned stand last Saturday. No sooner had the Fort faithful brushed away the thick layer of dust from their seats than the drillers began to attack the rear wall of the stand. Since the drill bits looked like being a lot more incisive than the Fort forwards, many spectators took off from the stand and braved the conditions out in the open. However, they left too soon because, to the biggest cheer of the afternoon, the generators were shut off shortly afterwards. And that was after they had resolved to contact Lochaber's emergency planning officer - at Lochaber House - for a regulation issue of gas masks and tin helmets.

Council business again. I thought it was a nice touch on Friday for the private A82 meeting, called by the region, to be delayed until the arrival of a senior planning officer. You see he had run out of gritted road at Abertarf and had to have his car reclaimed from a Highland region ditch.

What a shame the MacIntosh Steps and the Rocky Brae were left in such a state after Saturday's snow. Both local amenities were still very difficult to negotiate on Tuesday. And both rendered completely non-negotiable spoiled for the sake of a ha'penny worth of tar.

James's face was a picture one lunchtime last week. He'd gone into Ladbroke's for one of his occasional flutters and had laid his William Low's carrier bag on the writing counter. Inside it were his piece, daily papers and his specs. James picked up a couple of betting slips, had a quick squint at the TV screens and then had a word or two with a couple of fellow punters. He then looked into the carrier bag for his papers and specs. And what did he find? Inside, of all things, was a chef's outfit, complete with big white hat! Poor James thought someone was taking the Mickey. Curiously, though, there were no likely suspects. But, just then, a very harassed young fellow came breenging into the betting shop, toting a Low's carrier bag, and wailing that he'd picked up the wrong one. Yes, Chef!



Inverloch pipe band - we think this might have been taken in the 1920s or 30s, but if someone knows better, please let us know.

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Playgroup youngsters entertain Invernevis House residents



Youngsters from the Gaelic Playgroup visited Invernevis House care home recently to bring extra festive cheer to residents with seasonal singing.

Lochaber Autism Support Group volunteers held a successful 'bag pack' this week.

Autism Support Group raises more than £1,200 from bag pack

LOCHABER Autism Support Group volunteers have raised more than £1,200 from a bag pack at Morrisons supermarket in Fort William this week. It was the group's most successful fundraising event to date.

Arisaig Institute

ARISAIG Institute held its latest meeting on December 14. After business was conducted, a Christmas celebration was enjoyed. Everyone contributed to the meal and this was followed by members entertaining with readings and songs. Anne Cameron was the raffle winner.

Youngsters sparkle in festive shows



St Columba's pupils are the stars of the show. Photograph: Abrightside Photography



Lundavra's festive show had all the elements of a great pantomime – aren't the costumes absolutely fabulous!



St Columba's nativity was a special treat.



St Columba's Primary School



Lundavra Primary School



Caol school choir



Festive fun at Lundavra Primary School.

Let us do the dishes this Sunday

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Sunday all-day roast

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WHAT'S ON

IN OBAN

In partnership with Oban Town Diary
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Thursday

28th December

Entertainment@
Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

Friday

29th December

Entertainment@
Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

Saturday

30th December

Entertainment@
Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

Ganavan Sands Parkrun

9.30am-11am

Cearcall Còmhraidh

(Gaelic Conversation Group)

Furan Gaelic Centre,
12pm-1.30pm

Hill Walk Kinlochleven

Kinlochleven, Share Petrol
All Day

New Years Eve

Hogmanay Fireworks

bought to you by
BID4OBAN

From McCaigs Tower
Starts Midnight

New Years Day

Entertainment@

Coasters Bar
George Noble DJ

Tuesday

2nd January 2018

Entertainment@

Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

Irish Dancing Classes

St Columba's Cathedral
Hall

4.15pm-5.45pm

Wednesday

3rd January 2018

Entertainment@

Coasters Bar
Pool table
Big Screen live sports

WORD SEARCH: EVANESCENT

How many English words can you make from the word above? We can find 143. Try to find as many as possible. Words must be at least three letters.

90 WORDS: **GOOD**, 105 WORDS: **EXCELLENT**, 120 WORDS OR MORE: **YOU ARE A GENIUS**

6				1				9
3			8	9				6
		5	2					
		7	4		2			1
8		3				9		6
		5		9	6	3		
					8	6		
		2			7	9		8
4				2				3

BURNS SUPPER

on Friday 26th January



Tickets for Burns Club Of Oban Annual Supper will be on sale in Regent Hotel on Tues 9th, Wed 10th and Mon 15th Jan between 6pm till 7.30pm.

Alternatively contact John MacLean on 01631 565519
New Members Welcome

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MY ALBA

DIARDAIN 28 DÙBHLACHD THURSDAY 28 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

18.00 ÙR/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 Shìair - the wildlife and landscape of the Coast of Europe (rpt)

19.55 Binneas - Hogmanay - Blue Rose Code performing at the Hogmanay Show 2016 (rpt)

20.00 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 Dùbhlachd (rpt)

23.00 Lorient is Alba: HEBCELT (rpt)

DIHAOINE 29 DÙBHLACHD FRIDAY 29 DECEMBER

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming

18.00 De a-nis? (rpt)

19.00 An Là - News

19.05 Binneas - Hogmanay (Julie Fowlis)

19.10 Briseadh na Cloiche - drama following the progression of a post-war

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



Mascapone & Raspberry Creme Brulee

Serves 6

225g Raspberries
8 Egg yolks
50g Castor sugar
100g Mascapone
500ml Double cream
1 Vanilla pod

Method
Divide the Raspberries into 6 Ramekins.
Whisk Caster sugar, yolks and Mascapone together.
Pour the double cream and

vanilla pod into a pan and bring to the boil, remove from the heat and add the egg mixture and mix well. Return pan to the heat and cook over gentle heat until mixture thickens. Take care not to let the mixture boil again. Strain and pour into the Ramekins. Allow to cool for 4 hours or overnight. Sprinkle with Demerara sugar and glaze under a hot grill until sugar caramelises, chill for 5 minutes and serve.

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What year is it?

USE THE CLUES AND PICTURES TO HELP GUESS THE YEAR.

- The Scottish Government announce their plans to hold an independence referendum.
- Rangers Football Club enters administration.
- The Royal Christmas Message is broadcast in 3D for the first time.
- Andy Murray wins the US Open Tennis championship, making him the first British man to win a Grand Slam tournament since 1936. He also makes it to the final of Wimbledon.
- Prince Charles presents the lunchtime weather forecast during a visit to the BBC Scotland headquarters in Glasgow.



General knowledge

- Which Scottish writer won the 1994 Man Booker Prize for his novel 'How Late it Was, How Late'?
- Which town was granted city status in 2002 and is now known as 'The Capital of the Highlands'?
- Who is the most capped Scottish rugby player of all time?
- At Alexander McCall Smith's No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, who is Mma Ramotswa's secretary?
- For which film has Sean Connery won his only Oscar?
- In which Scottish town was the 1981 film Gregory's Girl filmed?
- Edinburgh Old Town and New Town, The Heart of Neolithic Orkney, and New Lanark are three of the six World Heritage Sites in Scotland; what are the other three?
- In which whisky region are BenRiach, Aberlour and Glenfarclas located?
- In which town was Scottish actor Robbie Coltrane born?
- Which famous Scottish battle took place in 1314?

ANSWERS: 1. James Kelman 2. Inverness 3. Ross Ford 4. Mma Grace Makutsi 5. The Untouchables 6. Dumfries 7. St Kilda, The Antonine Wall, and The Forth Bridge 8. Speyside 9. Rutherglen 10. Battle of Bannockburn

Glasgow Letter

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



2018 approaches

I hope everyone has had a fulfilling Christmas and that you are ready to bring in the New Year,

however you intend to do so.

2017 has been another busy year in Glasgow. Attendances for association dances are generally rising, there have been some wonderful concerts and individual events throughout the year, and let's not forget the unplanned gatherings and ceilidhs that often arise spontaneously among friends and are frequently the best nights.

I am hoping for more of the same next year. The start of 2018 will herald the 25th Celtic Connections Festival which I will bring details of at the beginning of January.

To all readers of the Glasgow Letter, I wish you whatever you would wish for yourself in 2018.

Mull and Iona Association plans for 2018

The Mull and Iona Association has announced plans for its gathering weekend early next year.

An excerpt from a press release from the association reads: 'In line with recent years, the Mull and Iona gathering will again be held on the third Friday in February. The 2018 gathering falls on

February 16 and the venue is the Glasgow University Union debating chamber.

The evening will follow the traditional structure of a concert and then a dance into the small hours to the music of West Coast favourites and 2016 Scottish dance band of the year, Trail West.

'We have endeavoured to produce a programme of varied and esteemed performers for this year's concert. Our first Gaelic singer is Rachel Walker. Rachel won the female Mòd gold medal at the 2017 Lochaber Mòd but has been up there with the best of the best since she released her first album in 2004.

'To add a bit of variety, Fiona Hunter will be entertaining us with some Scots song. Fiona is part of the well-travelled folk band, Malinky, who won the Folk Band category at the 2010 Scots Trad Awards.

'Joining them, and warming up his fingers for the dance, will be Ian Smith of Tìree. A first class accordion player with Trail West, Ian cemented his position as one of the West Coast's finest musicians by recording a highly praised BBC Take The Floor broadcast in early 2017.

'The Mull and Iona Association looks to nurture and promote local talent and, to that end, Shannon Maclean from Tobermory will be singing for us this year. Shannon made her mark on the senior competitions at the National Mòd in Lochaber by making it through to the gold medal final.

'Shannon has previously won many junior and choral competitions as well as being awarded for her film-making. She is a great ambassador for Mull and is currently studying Gaelic at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye.

'Also performing on the evening will be Emma Deans with her winning song from the Sarah Weir Memorial trophy at the Mòd - a competition that the association sponsors annually.

'The concert would not be complete without Iain Donaldson's assembly of local pipers who will open and close proceedings under the title: The Mull and Iona Pipers.'



Rachel Walker with her Gold Medal.

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 Crannog 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.

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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 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

Pet Idol

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*:

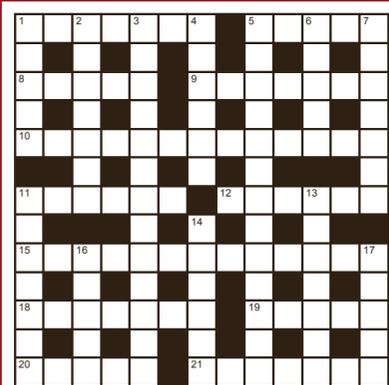
Pet's name:

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 LOCHABER TIMES argyllshire advertiser campbeltown courier

THE OBAN TIMES GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Naps (7)
 - 5 Dried coconut meat (5)
 - 8 Underworld family (5)
 - 9 Small yellow fruit (7)
 - 10 Requiring intelligence (6,7)
 - 11 Overseas (6)
 - 12 Thick skinned fruit (6)
 - 15 Preliminary performance (7,6)
 - 18 Structure supported by columns (7)
 - 19 Speck in the ocean (5)
 - 20 Offspring (5)
 - 21 Under (7)
- Down**
- 1 Object (5)
 - 2 Policeman (7)
 - 3 Directing (5-8)
 - 4 Thinly spread (6)
 - 5 Authorisation (13)
 - 6 Nut (5)
 - 7 She portrays another (7)
 - 11 Receives with approval (7)
 - 13 Parakeet (7)
 - 14 Put away underground (6)
 - 16 Not so common (5)
 - 17 Throat sound (5)

OFFERS & competitions

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

WIN

A PAIR OF FAIRFAX AND FAVOR REGINA BOOTS WORTH £329

A Hume Country Clothing, a lifestyle country clothing retailer based in Kelso in the heart of the Scottish Borders, are offering one lucky reader the opportunity



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

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

WIN

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



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

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

Valid Tuesday - Thursday, subject to availability, based on two people sharing a twin or double room for one night. Prizes are not included. Must be 18 or over. 21.12.2017

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.

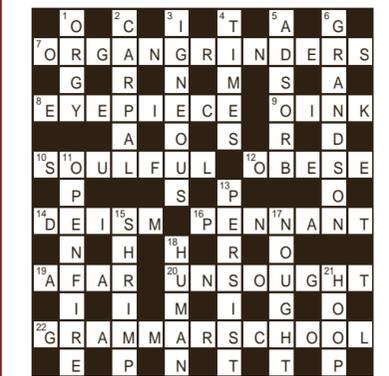
HOGMANAY FIREWORKS!

The display starts at midnight, from McCaigs Tower.

Where will you watch it from? GREAT VIEWPOINTS... The Harbour, Station Square, Tesco Car Park, North and South Piers.

STAY SAFE AND HAVE FUN!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at BID4OBAN



Review of the year

January

Liz, right, with Kirsty Kyle who presented her with the Caol community citizenship award at the Caol gala day 2016.

Photograph: Anthony Macmillan.



Fundraiser smashes £35,000 barrier

A LOCHABER community fundraiser has broken the £35,000 mark for all of her charity work over the years.

Liz MacMillan, who has raised money for a number of Lochaber people and causes, revealed on new year's eve that she has now fundraised more than £35,000.

Before the end of 2016, Liz had spent time trying to help three Fort William families who children had been diagnosed with cancer.

She successfully managed to raise more than £8,500 in just a few months for the children and their parents.

Liz has now decided to take some time off to 'recharge' her batteries.

She told *The Lochaber Times*: 'I have had a few people asking

me when my next fundraiser is but I am taking a few months off now. I badly twisted my pelvis in September when my dog was attacked so I need to listen to my body for a change and get this back to normal.'

Liz said that anyone who has new items that they want to donate should give them to Kirsty Kyle for the Caol gala day fundraiser. They are having a prize bingo on February 3 and are looking for bottles and prizes.

Liz thanked everyone for their 'continued support' and said: 'Hopefully, I will be fundraising again in a few months.'

And there are already signs that Liz will be back as she said that she still has items for sale and anyone looking to purchase them should let her know and

Gladys' incredible life journey on TV

A DOCUMENTARY charting the journey of a Spean Bridge woman's life from a Dublin mother to adoption in Lochaber and her quest to find her half-sister has aired on television.

The incredible story of Gladys Johnston, which has been kept hidden away for more than 30 years, has finally come to light in an emotional BBC Alba programme.

Gladys, who was born in a Dublin suburb in 1936 to a young unmarried Irish woman, spent three years in the Protestant orphanage Bethany Home before she was adopted by Mary and Duncan Cameron of Acharacle in 1939.

Gladys discovered she was adopted at the age of 12 and, while the news initially upset her, she decided it would be best to forget about it and move on.

But following the death of her adoptive parents, she took on the daunting task of searching for her birth mother.



Gladys, left, with her half sister who is also called Gladys, but known as Glad.

After tracking down her birth certificate, which revealed she was born Gladys Mabel to Dorothy Patton or Murphy, Gladys also discovered her mother had gone on to have a second child, who, remarkably, was also named Gladys.

Speaking to *The Oban Times*, Gladys said she has had a lot of feedback from people in the

street and her phone has 'rung off the hook'.

'I find it very interesting the way people have responded to it. I feel like I am giving people inspiration to find their roots. Maybe I am opening a book for others,' she said.

'It's nice that people are taking an interest in my story and thinking if she can do it then so can I.'



Crew from Portree RNLI gathered last week to bid Peter MacDonald farewell. Coxswain Hamish Corrigan presented Mr MacDonald with an RNLI excellence in volunteering award. Mr MacDonald has been involved with Portree lifeboat station for the past 18 years. Apart from his role as chairman, he was also a deputy launching officer.



Fiona Macdonald with Richard Bracken and Gracie Henderson, Robert Gosling, Katie Robertson and Kaci Hatch.

Caol art project lands £50,000 windfall

A COMMUNITY art studio supporting schools across Lochaber has received a cash windfall of almost £50,000.

Room 13 International in Caol was awarded £49,490 from the Big Lottery Young Start Fund to support its new Generation Creative project.

The charity hopes that the money will help extend the project's reach to children who are not currently able to access the Room 13 facilities.

Fiona Macdonald from Room 13 said: 'The money gives us stability to keep our contract running for our two artists, which is very important, and allows us to develop what we are doing.'

The Generation Creative project will enable Room 13's lead artist, Richard Bracken, to

work with children and various contributing artists to develop a programme of delivery for primary and high school students.

One of the many schools to benefit from Room 13 is St Columba's Primary in Fort William. It has worked with the organisation for the past 14 years and head teacher Violet Smith said it is very pupil-led.

'It's really good for the children because it increases confidence. They can become committee members and be involved in decision-making.'

'It's great for kids who you wouldn't normally expect to see stand up and talk in front of the class, because once they have been to Room 13 they become more confident in themselves and their class work.'

February

Wheelie bin ends up on Fort shop roof

A CROWD gathered at Cameron Square in Fort William on Thursday morning (February 9) as police and firefighters arrived to deal with a stray recycling bin ... on the roof of the DV8 shop.

Police were alerted to the bin hanging off an apex of the roof by a member of the public.

Police have issued strongly worded advice to a group of young men thought to be responsible, but there have been no formal charges.

Adrian Young was passing through Fort William while holidaying in the Highlands.

He described the scene as 'the excitement of the morning', and said he and the crowd that gathered had their eyes glued to the scene as they watched the firefighters remove the blue wheelie bin.

He added: 'Fortunately, Fort William's finest blues and twos had everything under control. Within minutes, firemen in



Firefighters were called to remove the bin from the roof.

brilliant yellow helmets rescued a royal blue wheelie bin, with clinical efficiency, from its pinnacle repose.'

There was a lot of reaction to the news on Facebook as well, with 145 likes and other reactions to *The Oban Times* post over the weekend, while the photo was shared 50 times.

People saw the funny side, with more than 30 comments including: 'Whoever did this is a legend' and 'Fort William at its best'.

One person described it as 'the most expensive bin in Fort William' and another joker said the incident was 'wheely out of order'.

New bridge helping improve glen

A NEW bridge to take walkers over the River Nevis towards the Ben Nevis path has been installed to help improve accessibility in Glen Nevis.

The bridge is closer to the Glen Nevis visitor centre than the one it replaces.

The bridge was designed by Dingwall-based Wallace Stone, which worked with the Highland Council and other stakeholders. The Highland Council awarded the works contract to Fion Construction Ltd, based in Fort William. Fion Construction contracted AJ Engineering to build and install the 42m bridge, which was manufactured in Forres and transported in sections to the site at Glen Nevis.

This project is being delivered by Highland Council and Nevis Landscape Partnership and is funded by The Highland Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Rural



Gary Moir, left, project manager; Clark Hurlley, fabrication foreman; and Ally Stevens and Cliff Robertson, installation, at the new Glen Nevis bridge.

Development Programme and Sport Scotland.

AJ Engineering's project manager Gary Moir said the installation went 'like clockwork'.

'It's hoped it will draw more people into the visitor centre,' he added.

Alex Farquhar, chairman of Nevis Partnership, said: 'This project will allow access to the riverside to all sections of the local community and provide an enhanced experience to the increasing visitor numbers to the area.'

March



Sarah Kennedy gave a talk on beekeeping to Rotary Club members.

Real buzz to lunch

LOCHABER Beekeepers' Association secretary Sarah Kennedy told the Rotary Club of Lochaber about beekeeping and the history of the association at its business lunch meeting on Thursday February 23.

During her presentation to the club, described as 'absorbing and educational' by club member Ken Johnston, she informed the Rotarians there are 56 beekeepers in the Lochaber area to whom the association has expert advice and practical training.

The beekeepers' association was established in around 1968 to promote the health of beekeeping and honey bees. Sarah described the various types of bees and their essential role in pollination and their importance for the environment. She brought a display of hives and other equipment needed for the hobby and gave a demonstration of the safety suits worn. Bee illnesses and their seasonal activities were also discussed.

Club president Paula Ross thanked Sarah for her 'illuminating and wide-ranging talk'.

Bus firm's U-turn on Sunday service



Left: Local residents arrive to discuss bus timetables with Stagecoach at a meeting in Fort William.

A BUS company is to reinstate its Sunday service between Fort William and Kinlochleven.

Fort William and Ardnarnach councillor Andrew Baxter took to social media on Monday night after he was informed by a Highland Council repre-

sentative that Stagecoach is to reinstate the service. Mr Baxter had launched an online petition called 'Save our Sunday service' after the operator said it was going to withdraw its service as it was no longer viable.

The company held a meeting

in Fort William High Street on March 1 asking bus passengers to have their say following an announcement new timetables would be introduced from April 24.

Mr Baxter says he is delighted and amazed by the U-turn.

Doors open on second Buzz venue

THE BUZZ Project officially launched a second venue on Fort William High Street on Saturday March 18.

Studio two was opened by newly-appointed manager Bronwyn Strachan, who was greatly helped by the youth project, which aims to help young people aged between 14 and 25 fulfil their potential and overcome personal barriers through music.

Anita Nicholls, a Buzz Project trustee and fundraiser, said: 'Studio two is a place where young people can get work experience in a music venue, learning skills and building confidence.'

'We are changing the lives of young people significantly.'

In a short speech before she cut the ribbon, Bronwyn, 20, said: 'Thank you to the Buzz Project for being here for me and other people. I hope we continue to make memories here. Thanks for helping me through dark times and being there.'



Right: Morganisation members Alan Pianosmith, Mandy Scott-Morgan and Dave Scott-Morgan.

The ribbon-cutting was followed by a music workshop led by Dave Scott-Morgan, former lead guitarist of the Electric Light Orchestra (ELO), who also gave a performance with

his new band Morganisation that evening to round off the launch day.

Mr Scott-Morgan said of the project: 'It's really well organised and has great presentation.'

Review of the year

April

Caol art project lands £50,000 windfall

A DETERMINED fundraising duo planning to become the first adventurers to circumnavigate mainland Britain in an open canoe will set off from Strontian.

Colin Skeath and his nephew, Davis Gould-Duff, are making the attempt in a Swift Temagami craft and will leave from outside the Sunart Hotel on Sunday April 30.

The pair plan to cover the 2,500 miles clockwise. When conditions allow, they will take the shortest route between daily stops, taking maximum advantage of each tide.

Colin said: 'My wife Katrina and I have moved to Strontian from Halifax in West Yorkshire. We had been coming to the West Coast for a long time and

had been hoping to move up for the past 13 years. Now we have finally done it.

'Although it will make the circumnavigation longer, we thought it would be nice to start at Strontian as it is now our home.

'Davis is 25 years old – half my age – and is currently living in Limerick in southern Ireland. He will be giving up his job working in an outdoor shop to enable him to go on the trip.'

As well as being a personal challenge, Colin and Davis will be raising money for the Forget Me Not Charity.

Colin added: 'I feel very fortunate when I look at the struggles some people face in their daily lives, so to be able to support a charity is a privilege.'



Lewis MacLean, with mum Florence, who has safely 'guarded' the Jacobite steam train for decades. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Mother and son on track to make history on Jacobite steam train

A MOTHER and son are set to make history as they team up on a train.

Florence MacLean, from Fort William, has been a guard with West Coast Railways' Jacobite steam train for 22 years.

Now her 18-year-old son Lewis is joining her on the Harry Potter train after qualifying for the same job.

Speaking to the *Lochaber Times*, Florence said she believes it's the first time a mother and son have worked on the train

together. 'You know what it's like between mothers and sons, but I am looking forward to working with Lewis,' said Florence.

Florence, 55, said Lewis, a former student at Lochaber High School, was never sure what he wanted to do after school but 'I think this is a natural progression for him because in the holidays he would come on the trains and help out – he loved it'.

Lewis is also training to be a fireman for the engine crew so Florence said he will 'be quite

the all rounder. Lewis is always looking for new challenges,' she said.

Florence, who used to work at the pulp mill, has worked on trains for the past 35 years. She said: 'I have been a conductor, a trolley dolly for ScotRail, I have worked on the platform and I've been a freight guard.'

The new season for the Jacobite began last weekend and will be taking passengers between Fort William and Mallaig twice a day.

Teacher reunited with 50-year-old ice axe against the odds

A LOCHABER High School teacher has been reunited with his 50-year-old ice axe after losing it down a 1,500ft drop in the Cairngorms.

A day out on Creag Meagaidh looked to have been spoiled for William Cameron, 43, when he discovered his much-loved ice axe was no longer attached to his rucksack on his descent down the 3,710ft munro.

A gift from a retired teacher years ago, the axe held great sentimental value for William.

So he was overjoyed to learn that against all odds it had been found.

His colleague and climbing partner on the expedition, Neil Adams, messaged William a week after their climb to tell him he had seen a post on

the Scottish Hills Facebook page that someone had found a distinctive ice axe halfway down the snow covered slopes of Creag Meagaidh.

William's swift response onto the site to give its full description confirmed it was his lost axe. It had been found by a climber from London.

And it was just in the nick of time as the axe accompanied William in his latest climbing adventure to Iceland.

Speaking to the *Lochaber Times* on return from his trip, the technological studies teacher said: 'It just goes to show it's all about connectivity.'

'The fact someone found it in this remote part of Scotland is amazing because where we descended there wasn't a path and there was a lot of snow.'



Lochaber High School teacher William Cameron with his much-loved ice axe. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.



Colin Skeath with his nephew, Davis, will paddle from Strontian on April 30 to circumnavigate the UK in an open canoe.

May

Lochaline Terra's picks up top award

LOCHALINE Primary School pupil Terra Grier won two gold and four bronze medals when she competed at the recent Dwarf Sport Association National Games.

Held in Birmingham at the end of April, nine-year-old Terra, who has achondroplasia, a form of dwarfism which mainly affects the long bones, picked up golds in hockey, which she practised for by playing shinty at school, and indoor curling.

She also secured bronze medals in javelin and all of her swimming events – 50m breaststroke, 25m breaststroke, and 25m freestyle.

Speaking to the *Lochaber Times*, Terra's mum Veronique Walraven said: 'Indoor curling is a really disabled-friendly sport because it's not so much about strength but tactics, so she did really well.'

Terra has been a member of



Swimming instructor Janey Walker with a very proud Terra and her medals. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

the national games for the past four years and has competed in three. She receives one-to-one swimming lessons once a week at Lochaber Leisure Centre and, on winning her swimming medals, Veronique said: 'I was so proud because she really only learned to swim recently, so swimming 50m is really amazing. I don't think a lot of people realise the difficulties of someone with Terra's condition.'

Everything is so much more complicated for her, so it's nice to see her compete on a level playing field. What is particularly nice about the games is that the children recognise they are with others who have forms of dwarfism.'

Terra competed as part of the Scottish region, which came third in the national games.

Terra plans to compete at next year's games.

Gary makes history as first Scot to win Pre-65

GARY MACDONALD made history over the weekend when he became the first Scottish winner of the Pre-65 Trial in his home village of Kinlochleven.

The vintage motorcycle event was held over two days in and around the village.

Gary, a member of Lochaber and District Motor Cycle Club, rode well on the first day, dropping only four marks to finish in third, placing him in a good position for the second and final day of the event.

Day two saw him do even better, with no points dropped, earning him both the Kinlochleven Trophy for best performance on the second day and the Challenge Trophy having taken the overall win.

This historic success for the 33-year-old comes in the 33rd year of the Pre-65s, which were established in 1984.

Gary told the *Lochaber Times*: 'I've not had time to take it all in yet as I've gone straight into the six days. It's a bit of a shock really. It's not often you can jump on an old bike and ride it as well as I did.'

Gary, who works for his family's business, Arthur MacDonald Joinery, has also been riding in this week's six days trial.

Gary's parents, Arthur and Sandra MacDonald, are his two biggest fans.

Arthur, who has been out following his son's progress and success on his trials rides, told the *Lochaber Times*: 'Gary is a hard-working joiner during the day for the family business. This doesn't stop him putting in the hours at his chosen sports.'

'We are rarely surprised that he succeeds at whatever he puts his mind to. We are so proud of him as are all our family and his many followers.'



Gary MacDonald waves to fans following his historic win at the Pre-65 trials. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

June

Volunteers entertain cruise liner visitors

BUSINESSES and groups in Fort William joined forces to put on a warm welcome for the return of *Boudicca* cruise ship last week.

The luxury Fred Olsen vessel once again negotiated the Corran Narrows to sail into Loch Linnhe on Wednesday morning following her debut visit last September.

Fort William Marina and Shoreline Company (FWMSC) thanked Captain Juha Sartela and said: 'It was really great to see so many passengers and crew come off the ship and we hope you all enjoyed yourselves in our beautiful part of the Highlands of Scotland.'



Country dancers entertained passengers on Cameron Square.

'A huge thank you to all our volunteers from Fort William Town Team, West Highland College, Megan and Amber, our wonderful pipers, Lochaber Geopark for carrying out two talks, Delicraft and Chocolate Box for the chocolate tasting, the Lochaber branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dancers for the Scottish dancing and The Lime Tree for extending

the Casting Shadows exhibition. Last, but not least, a huge thank you to the FWMSC team members who helped with the tenders on the pontoons. Well done, James, Gordon and Davey.'

Another vessel, the *Braemar*, will make her Loch Linnhe debut on Thursday May 25, followed by a second visit by *Boudicca* on May 27.

Kinlochleven youngsters triumph at VOSCARS

KINLOCHLEVEN High School pupil Jo Shepton has won young volunteer of the year at Voluntary Action Lochaber's 2017 VOSCARS.

The S5 student started recording her volunteering hours in August 2015. In that time she has spent an amazing 277.5 hours of her time supporting Active Schools, Kinlochlovin', the Prom Committee, Pupil Support, Young Enterprise and Nevis Radio.

Kinlochleven head teacher Rebecca Machin said: 'Jo supports everything and everyone while studying hard for her Nationals last year and five Highers this year. Not only is she an amazing student, but she gives so much to her community. Amazing at such a young age.'

S2 pupil Thomas Price made the finals at this year's awards.

The 13-year-old has spent more than 150 hours volunteer-



Kinlochleven pupils with Inspector Isla Campbell at the VOSCARS.

ing in the past 12 months, donating time to projects including Kinlochlovin', the schools Rock Challenge and UNICEF Club. He has also raised money for Social Bite, a charity supporting homeless people in Scotland, and is the youngest presenter of the Kinlochlovin' Drive Time Crew at Nevis Radio.

Hannah Newson was also a finalist. Hannah has amassed the most volunteering hours of any student this year – 235 hours from August 2016 to May 2017.

Ms Machin said: 'It is incredible to think any youngster of this age could find five to six hours a week to volunteer for their committee, especially such a

diligent student who works so hard for her exams. She does 87 hours for Active Schools, 49 hours for Pupil Support, as well as the schools Prom Committee and Young Enterprise. It is an incredible achievement. Well deserving of praise.'

The awards were part of National Volunteers Week.

Lochaber swimmers finish 2017 with a splash

LOCHABER Leisure Centre Swim Team has had a busy period of action as it nears the end of a successful year. Coach Stevie Martin has been recognised for his outstanding contribution to the continued progress of the swimmers. Stevie was awarded the Highland performance development coach of the year for 2017 as part of the Highlife Highland awards in October. Members of the club said they were delighted for Stevie and said he was instrumental in the training and motivating of the swimmers from the feeder squad through to those who competed at local, district and national level. The club also received a boost as Stewart Borland of Highland Titles presented the swimmers

Swimming

with a generous donation earlier this month to help with the club's running costs. Results: Highland schools competition - The Highland schools competition in Inverness saw a total of eight swimmers getting gold medals: Alex, Kai, Evie-Jay, Indigo, Poppy, Jenna, William and Aimee. Silver medals: Alex, Evie-Jay, Rhian, Poppy, Jenna, Gabriel, Alistair, Siobhan, Millie, Jack and Connor. Bronze medals: Iona, Sean, Danni, Kai, Indigo, Alice-Anne, Gabriel, Alistair, Lyal, Millie and William. Personal Best times for: Mateasz, Cameron, Kirsty, Elizabeth, Hannah, Caitlin, Dobrochna, Natalie, Connie, Lisa, Eilidh, Evan, Ben, Rachel and Anna. Bathgate Sprint Meet - Another successful meet for the Lochaber swimmers as they amassed a medal haul of six golds, seven silver and four bronze. Even more remarkable was the improvement in all of the swimmers. The club achieved a total of 58 personal best times. Gold medalists: Evie-Jay, Jenna, Poppy and Millie. Silver medalists: Evie-Jay, Kai, Jack, Jenna and Sean. Bronze medalists: Jenna, Lyall, Sean and Kai. Club swimmer Evie-Jay was also the overall winner of her age group 11-to-12-year-olds. North District Open - This is



Stewart Borland of Highland Titles presented the Lochaber Leisure Centre Swim Team with a generous donation this month to help with the club's running costs. Photos: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

a competition to which many of the country's top swimmers travel to compete in. Lochaber was represented by William, Millie, Jack and Aimee. Jack set three new club records during his swims at this meet; William got a new personal best in the 200m back crawl; Millie got a new personal best in the 200m breast stroke and Aimee was placed ninth overall in the senior competition of the 200m back crawl and this result was enough to win her the title of north district junior champion. North District Time Trials - Overall Lochaber managed to amass 28 personal best times, 14 age-group records, and four new club records at the district time trials in November. There was also one gold medal and

three bronze medals. The only male swimmer, Kai, set a new 200m front crawl record. The youngest swimmer Iona is now in the top five 11-year-old swimmers in the north district in back crawl and breast stroke. Danni achieved personal best times in all seven of her swims. Evie-Jay dominated the three back crawl swims, winning one gold and two bronze medals. Evie-Jay also went on to set new age group records in five events including 100m fly, 200m IM - showing her versatility in all strokes. Alice-Anne, took five seconds off her 200m breast stroke. Poppy is now officially the fastest 100m back crawl swimmer in the north district. Jenna produced six personal best times, six age

group records and three new club records. Club Sprint Championships - An excellent two nights of swimming. The club saw a total of 170 new personal bests at the club sprint championships over two dates in November and December - 25 of these times beat the old age-group records, 18 new club records were produced and six new club records were broken. New club record holders are Jenna in the 100m IM, 50m fly, 50m front crawl. Lyall, 50m front crawl. Finlay took the fly and back crawl records. New age group records were set by Evie-Jay in the back crawl and IM; Sean in the 25m fly, 50m breast and 100m front crawl; Evan in the breast stroke, front crawl and 100m IM; Ben

in the back crawl; Siobhan in the front crawl; and Aimee in the 50m fly. The top 10 most improved swimmers were Natalie, Dobrochna, Alistair, Indigo, Caitlin, Cameron, Sandy, Kirsty, Ben and Lisa. Age group winners were Andzelena for the nine-year-old girls, Helen for the 10-year-olds, Iona for the 11-year-olds, Evie-Jay for the 12-year-olds, and Jenna for the 13-year-olds. In the boys' category, Finlay won the back crawl and fly, Lyall in breast stroke and front crawl and Jack in the IM. The club is looking for sponsors so if anyone is interested, contact the club secretary. All details can be found on the Lochaber Leisure Centre Swim Team Facebook page.

Finlay Wild triumphs again in Cruim Leaccain Hill Race

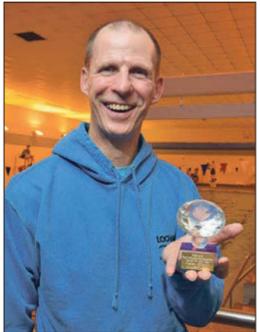
Athletics

THERE was a good field for Lochaber Athletic Club's annual Cruim Leaccain Hill Race 2017 (Boxing Day Race), with member Finlay Wild first home in a time of 00:45:11. This was a minute and seven seconds faster than his win in the same event last year. Two minutes behind in second place was LAC's Andrew Barrington. In third place and first Male Vet 40 runner home was LAC's Tom Smith in a time of 00:47:18. First female runner home was Inverness Harriers' Caroline Marwick in 14th spot in 00:56:04, with LAC runner Marie Meldrum (Female Vet 40) second in 17th place in a time of 01:00:36. Full results at: lochaberac.co.uk The next race is New Year's Day and the Aonach Mor Uphill Race, which starts at 11am with the start venue the Nevis Range Ski Centre, Torlundy.

Lochaber indoor winter league results

Indoor football

RESULTS from week nine of Sammy's Indoor Winter League: Arse n All 0, Borussia Fortmund 3; The Goon Squad 3, Balla 1; Gozos 0, Fiorentina Turner 3; The Young Team 2, Expected Toulouse 2; Doghouse Thistle 16, HW Energy 2; Snorting Lisbon 0, Portoway 3. After nine rounds of competition, Doghouse Thistle remain top of the league table with 27 points, three points clear of second-placed Fiorentina who are keeping up a strong title chase. Further down the table, third-placed Fortmund are sitting on 18 points, along with the Goon Squad. David Forbes looks certain to finish the league as top scorer, having netted an impressive 34 times. Lochaber club lottery draws Lottery THE CHRISTMAS Eve Caol Community Centre bingo lotto numbers were 5, 8 and 14. There were no winners, so the next jackpot is £200. Caol Regeneration Lotto draw numbers on December 21 were 9, 12 and 16. There were no winners so next week's draw on January 4 will have a £1,000 jackpot. Fort William Golf Club Lotto draw numbers on December 21 were 8, 10 and 14. There were no winners so £600 is up for grabs in draw for tonight (December 28).



Coach Stevie Martin with his Highlife Highland award.



The teams line up before the annual Boxing Day match. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

Rugby clash a festive draw...again!

THE ANNUAL Boxing Day rugby match between a Lochaber RFC President's XV and a Club Captain's XV was played in good spirits...and some were consumed as well! As is traditional, it did not matter how many tries were scored and Lochaber Rugby Club's annual Boxing Day rugby match ended in a sporting draw. About 18 players took to the Banavie pitch for each of the two sides - a Club Captain's XV

and a President's XV. It was a great game played in great spirits by both teams and also one of the most contested for a few years. President Ali Mackinnon, who was cheering his team on from the sidelines, said a large number of ex-pats had returned home for the festive season and it meant there were players from as far afield as London, Edinburgh and Aberdeen on the pitch.

Rugby

'It was a really good day. Very enjoyable. As always it was declared a sporting draw at the final whistle,' Mackinnon told the Lochaber Times this week. However, it will be back to the serious business of league and it meant there were players from as far afield as London, Edinburgh and Aberdeen on the long journey south to take on Wigtownshire on January 6.

Fort William lose to Lossiemouth in seven-goal thriller at Claggan

Fort William	3
Lossiemouth	4
Highland League	

TWO LATE goals broke Fort fans' hearts in this tense game on Saturday and the first at Claggan Park for 10 weeks. Lossie got their name on the scoresheet first thanks to the boot of Scott Dunn, but the visitors' joy was short lived when, just a minute later, Fort defender Darren Quigg equalised. Iain Maclellan got the home crowd cheering when he put the hosts ahead in the 22nd minute and the Claggan faithful were in raptures when Michael Gillespie made it 3-1. Lossie's Harry Noble managed to claw a goal back five minutes before the interval but Fort went into the break looking strong. Sadly Fort were to be denied their first win of the season thanks to two late goals - the first coming when Dunn netted his second of the afternoon and the other, to the groans of the home support, from a Fort own goal.



Fort William's Darren Quigg gets away from Lossie's Scott Dunn. Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

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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 28, 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	Mallaig
Thur	00.20	3.1	06.51	1.6	13.42	3.4	19.47	1.7	-5.35	+0.25
Fri	01.54	3.2	08.05	1.6	14.50	3.6	20.48	1.4	-5.30	+0.55
Sat	03.01	3.4	09.13	1.4	15.42	3.8	21.43	1.2	-0.47	+0.16
Sun	03.53	3.7	10.13	1.1	16.29	4.0	22.33	0.9	2.00	+5.30
Mon	04.40	3.9	11.08	0.9	17.14	4.1	23.21	0.7		
Tues	05.26	4.1	11.59	0.7	17.58	4.1	***	**		
Wed	00.88	0.5	06.10	4.2	12.49	0.6	18.41	4.1		

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

FRIDAY

WEATHER

Thursday	Sunny Winds moderate North North Westerly Temperatures -1°C to 4°C.
Friday	Cloudy Winds light East South Easterly Temperatures 1°C to 3°C.
Weekend Outlook	Heavy rain showers on Saturday Heavy rain showers on Sunday Winds strong South South Easterly Temperatures 4°C to 7°C.