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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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SCOTTISH SEALIFE SANCTUARY

OAP 'vigilantes' patrol the streets for illegal parking

LOUISE LEE
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A GROUP of elderly parking 'vigilantes' are helping traffic wardens in Oban by pointing out cars with no tickets, in order that no one gets away 'Scot free'.

The plucky pensioners said they were working to 'clear up the town of bad parking' and patrol the street, pointing out where drivers have not paid their fee by putting handwritten notes on the cars or phoning the police.

The unappointed wardens have also been seen making sure up-to-date information about fines appears on signs in the town's car parks.

Traffic wardens introduced to the town last year have been vigorous in enforcing parking restrictions since Argyll and Bute council took over responsibility from Police Scotland.

By the end of the second financial quarter of 2014/15, the car parking income alone in Oban, Lorn and the isles generated a substantial £414,070 for the council's coffers.

But one of the town's unofficial wardens, who is in her seventies, said: 'I thought that when the parking wardens were on the street, we would see an end to the parking misery in the town.'

'But the truth is people are getting wise to the wardens and their working patterns.'

'For example, when they have their tea breaks and when they go into the shops for a chat, people just seem to go back to their old habits.'

'I've been reporting the cars to council workers and also telling the police about them.'

Another female member of the group, who patrols the Rockfield area of the town to ensure that cars display valid parking permits or tickets, said: 'I pay all my dues, and I pay for a parking permit that costs me more than £100 a year.'

'I have updated the fine information on the information boards in both places on a number of occasions in both the Rockfield car park and the one at the North Pier - but someone else just keeps coming along and rubbing it out.'

'People shouldn't get away with illegal parking just because there is no one to check them.'

However, some members of the town's business community were less than enthusiastic about the work of the vigilantes.

Lillian Hutchison, who works in George Street, said: 'As a business, we are already paying more than £1,000 a year in parking tickets.'

'I'm already worrying about getting parking tickets from the real wardens and it is now even worse that a lady who is not even employed by the council is now drawing attention to all the cars which don't have tickets. It is quite odd that someone would want to do that.'

Chris Sewell, a pensioner from Ayr visiting the town for the first time last week, fell foul of the parking vigilantes.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I paid the parking fee and walked into the town centre where we enjoyed a lovely lunch before visiting the Oban distillery.'

'The tour lasted longer than I had anticipated and when we got to the car just minutes after the two-hour parking time limit, I noticed I had been issued with a fixed penalty notice. I think someone had pointed out the lapsed time to a warden.'

An Argyll and Bute council spokeswoman said: 'If a member of the public has concerns about parking, we would encourage them to contact our parking team on 01546 605514 or email enquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk.'

'While the team cannot attend at the scene immediately, they can assist if it becomes clear that there are problems.'

HOT TO TROT: Salsa rides into the record books



AN ARGYLL horse is being hailed as the fittest in Scotland after winning a prestigious trophy for the club member that has recorded the highest mileage in 2014, clocking up 1,130 kilometres.

ridden by Suzanne Taylor, from Seil, won the Mousquetaires Trophy for the club member that has recorded the highest mileage in 2014, clocking up 1,130 kilometres.

This included a 160-kilometre ride in one day at a competition in North Berwick (pictured), which started at 5am and finished at 10.30pm.

Runner-up in the category was Shona McCorkindale, from Scammadale, on her homebred Arab horse, making it a successful season all round for Argyll endurance riders.

For more, see sport pages.

TIMESLINE

High winds cause ferry disruption

HIGH winds forced CalMac to cancel ferry sailings between Oban and Tiree, and between Mallaig and South Uist on Tuesday.

A 30mph limit was also in force on bridges, including Skye. Seven of the ferry operator's routes were on amber alert, with continued disruption forecast due to high winds for the rest of the week.

Cocaine find after police search man

POLICE found a quantity of the class A drug cocaine when a man was searched in an Oban pub under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

The search took place within the licensed premises in the town centre during the early hours of Sunday morning.

The 38-year-old suspect is now the subject of a report to the procurator fiscal.

Mull-based firm wins top award

A PRESTIGIOUS award is being made to Mull-based builders TSL Contractors for its outstanding commitment to environmental management.

Tomorrow TSL's managing director Andy Knight will receive the award for corporate responsibility in environmental impacts from the head of the British Standards Institute Scotland, Anne Dolan.

Trust still waiting for council reply

OBAN Community Trust (OCT) has not had any 'official' confirmation on its £1,000 bid to buy the former Rockfield primary. Trust chairman, Gordon MacNab, said: 'We are no further forward. We are still waiting for a response.'



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McCuish pledge on bay pontoons

A LEADING councillor has reassured residents that pontoons will be installed in Oban Bay by summer.

Oban, Lorn and the Isles area chairman Roddy McCuish reiterated the statement he made last week to *The Oban Times* that six pontoons will be in place for the summer season.

Quizzed at Oban community council on Monday about the realistic prospect of the pontoons, he said: 'The full £2 million is still in the budget for the marina.'

'It is incredible to be sitting here and to be accused of doing something - Argyll and Bute council was accused of doing nothing before about this.'

'There are lots of questions about the pontoons - but I am asking you to trust us on the fact that it will happen.'

Town set to play the name game

CALLS have been made to change the name of Oban's Stafford Street back to George Square when pedestrianisation work is completed in May.

Oban historians agree any change should be carefully considered.

Community councillor Stuart McIver said: 'We should rename it George Square. That was the original name.'

However, local historian Robert McCulloch counselled caution, opting for the status quo: 'Stafford refers to the Marchioness of Stafford, the wife of the Duke of Sutherland. I'd be against changing the name.'

Fellow historian Charles Hunter, Oban, added: 'I can't see that anything is wrong with Stafford Square, if it has to change to a square at all.'

Minister is up to the task on A83

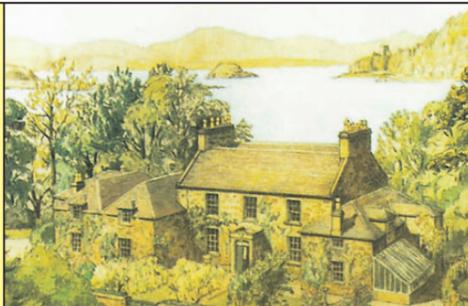
A CAMPAIGNER for a long-term solution to the land slip problem at the 'Rest and Be Thankful', says he is pleased with progress the A83 Task Force is making under transport minister Derek Mackay MSP.

Donald Clark, owner of the George hotel in Inveraray, said: 'Mr Mackay has distinguished himself by coming along to task force meetings and taking a fresh approach to finding a solution.'

'He is a totally different from the last man and I think he wants to talk to us about a long-term solution.'

'I understand that after the last task force meeting that solutions to the land slip would be re-costed by the Scottish government in order to find a permanent solution.'

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Film fans flock to movie screenings

A BID to keep the movies coming to Campbeltown while the town's historic Picture House is closed for renovations has been backed by the community, who turned out in droves for the first of the monthly screenings.

Over two days at the Victoria Hall in the town more than 500 people flocked to see Paddington, The Theory of Everything, Shaun the Sheep, Big Hero Six, 50 Shades of Grey, the King's Man and the Second Best Marigold Hotel as well as an encore production from the National Theatre, Beautiful Forever.

Jane Mayo, of Campbeltown Community Business which is restoring the Picture House, said: 'It was a leap in the dark putting on these shows, so we were delighted with the response.'

Wealth of unused clothing sought

ARGYLL and Bute residents are being urged to turn rags into riches for a leading homeless charity.

Shelter Scotland has said that millions of pounds worth of unworn and unwanted clothing could be used to help vulnerable people across the region, with the average household having up to £1,000 worth of clothing items that have not been worn for a year, usually because they no longer fit.

Graeme Brown, director of Shelter Scotland, said: 'The total cost of unworn clothes is a staggering £2.4 billion in Scotland.'

'Even a very small fraction of that could help Shelter Scotland to continue our fight against bad housing and homelessness.'

For more information on the appeal visit: <http://scotland.shelter.org.uk>

WWI flags gone with the wind

FLAGS to commemorate World War One in Oban, which cost £1,000, have been mislaid somewhere in Oban, says the town's community council.

The bunting was taken down at the end of commemorations last year and 'put somewhere safe'.

At Oban community council on Monday evening councillors heard that it was thought the bunting had been found only to discover it had not.

Community councillor Kate Winton said she would make inquiries as to the whereabouts of the bunting.



INFERNO: Smoke billows from the Yeoman Bontrup as emergency services attempt to control the fire

Yeoman Bontrup 2010 fire reality revealed in talk

STEVEN RAE
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'ALTHOUGH at times it felt like it, this was not fantasy - it happened.'

The words of Ian Henry, harbourmaster for Aggregate Industries, who was on board the 97,000-tonne Yeoman Bontrup ship in 2010 when it went on fire, eventually burning for four days.

Ian gave a fascinating, first-hand account of the incident for the Appin Historical Society on Saturday at the Port Appin Hall, where he talked about the chain of events leading to the surreal moment when part of the ship exploded, on July 2, 2010, next to Glensanda Quarry.

'There's footage of the explosion on board, taken on mobile phones by people being evacuated at the time,' he said.

'One Corran resident, who was 15 miles away, said at the time, when the explosion went off, the windows in her patio shook.'

'You see what looks like two small dots exploding right at the top of the cloud of smoke. It's hard to put it into perspective by watching the video, but that was the poop deck of the ship - a piece of metal that is 80metres-square and weighs 50 tonnes - being launched into the air.'

'Luckily, it landed back on the ship, avoiding pollution in the loch or the seabed. The main priority for us was containing the fire and debris on the ship.'

'If oil or diesel or other chemicals on board had hit the water



It sounds crazy, but in many ways we were very lucky ...

Ian Henry
(Pictured above)

rather than staying on the ship, it could have been catastrophic.'

Describing the lead up to events, Ian said: 'Someone came running into the control room, speaking to the captain. The crew were almost all Ukrainian so I couldn't understand what he was saying, but the captain said to us, "I've got to go" and ran out, so I knew something serious was happening.'

The fire started after a piece

of rubber on a conveyer belt ignited due to friction, taking only four minutes to get from one end of the ship's boom to the other and creating a huge ball of black smoke as the fire spread.

Ian said: 'It sounds crazy, but in many ways we were very lucky that day. The wind happened to be blowing up the loch, away from the site and from any houses nearby. If the wind was blowing in the other direction, there's a chance Glensanda might have had to shut down.'

Following evacuation, fire-fighters on site were joined by other members of staff, but it became apparent very quickly that the fire wasn't going to be extinguished easily.

Ian said: 'Amazingly, only one person was taken to hospital, one of the first guys to start fighting the fire. He fell and bruised his ribs quite badly, but carried on fighting the fire until he had inhaled too much smoke and was given oxygen by our on-site medical staff.'

With hazardous materials on board, including diesel, oil, chemicals used for cleaning parts of the ship, as well as two tonnes of paint, the ship sinking or spilling would have caused huge pollution.

The main engine survived the fire, meaning the ship could be salvaged. It was towed to Gdansk in Poland and underwent repairs costing an estimated \$27 million, which included coating the vessel with 35 tonnes of paint.

By Ian's estimate, the ship was worth around \$60 million before the fire, and a new vessel of the same capacity would have cost upwards of \$100 million.

'On April 9, 2012, the Yeoman Bontrup left Glensanda - one year and nine months after the fire,' said Ian. 'Lessons were learned, including better fire-safety practises in the shipping industry worldwide, but with regards to the Yeoman Bontrup, things could have been a lot worse.'

MULL lines



PICTURE PERFECT: Shannon MacLean is up for best young filmmaker at this year's FilmG awards

Shannon reaches shortlist

A TOBERMORY high school pupil has been nominated for a second award in a Gaelic film-making competition.

Sixth year student, Shannon Maclean, 17, has been shortlisted for the national award through FilmG.

Shannon has been taking part in the competition with her fellow pupils since second year and, in 2013, her class film won the FilmG theme award with 'Tha an t-acras gam tholladh' (I'm famished with hunger).

Shannon has now been shortlisted for best young filmmaker, for 'Geallaidhean airson nan Gàidheal' (Promises for the Gaels). The film gives an insight into different Muileachs' opinions on the recent referendum.

'I'm very happy to be shortlisted again this year and I'm really looking forward to the awards ceremony next month,' said Shannon.

Last year, Shannon entered her first independent film, 'Gaoil nan Eilean' ('Island Love') a heart-warming film about the Isle of Mull, into the competition. Her film was shortlisted for best film but unfortunately didn't win.

The FilmG Awards will be held on Friday March 27 at the Old Fruitmarket, Inverness.

Masterplan approved

A TOBERMORY business has been given the green light to develop its own premises and much-needed rural housing.

A masterplan for development at Lephain on the outskirts of the Mull town will see private and social housing and light industry merged at the Isle of Mull cheese and Island Bakery site.

Up to 12 low density housing units are to be built, half of which will be affordable units, primarily for employees of the bakery or the nearby Sgrìobruadh farm, which produces the cheese.

Planners said the development had to merge with the existing landscape and pedestrian, cycle and road links be built throughout the site to connect to the existing path/road networks.

Chairman of Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee and member of the planning committee, councillor Roddy McCuish, said: 'This is great news for the area. I particularly welcome the creation of affordable housing units for local employees.'

'We want industrial developments because they create jobs but we need to ensure that there is modern, warm and safe housing for the people doing the jobs.'

'One is intrinsically linked to the other and I am pleased to see this common sense approach being taken.'

'The local planning officers have worked with the architects throughout the process of developing this plan, providing them with high quality, professional advice at every stage.'

'Our planning service works proactively with private developers, guiding them through the process and ensuring their designs are appropriate.'

Health review under way

MULL and Iona health and care review group will hold meetings with the community over the next few months to discuss its recommendations for the future of health care on the islands.

At the most recent meeting of the partnership group, consisting of professionals and community representatives, Dr Richard Wilson, clinical director for Oban, Lorn, and the Isles presented a report suggesting recommendations for services on the island.

The meeting held on February 10 considered ways in which GPs could be encouraged to come to the island.

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'A paper was discussed by members of the group and there was broad support for the various recommendations suggested by Dr Wilson.'

'The next step will now be to arrange a series of public information events in conjunction with the local community and details of these events will be widely circulated nearer the time.'

'One of the main aspects of Dr Wilson's paper was the recruitment of GPs for Bunessan and Tobermory and any innovative ideas from members of the public to encourage the recruitment of GPs would be more than welcome.'

The group also heard that the Scottish Ambulance Service had been considering different models for the provision of its service on the island and it was agreed by the review group that the next stage was to move to an option appraisal process.

Garmony work powers on

CONSTRUCTION has restarted on Mull's community-owned Garmony hydropower production project after severe weather disruption during January brought work to a halt.

The hydro project will harness hydroelectric power near Garmony on Mull linking this to the National Grid.

Profits from the charity will be distributed to island groups and charities.

More than £451,150 was raised from selling shares in the project to members of the public.

A spokesman for Green Energy Mull, which runs the project, said: 'The main intake has been completed, the pipeline has been installed and the turbine house has been constructed and painted internally.'

'The grid connection work is well underway with three new poles erected adjacent to the roadside pylons.'

'The turbine and control panel are due for delivery.'

'We are hopeful of commissioning the system by early April when we can then start generating power and exporting it to the grid.'

Oban 'will suffer' if police areas merge

OBAN will suffer if the police division Argyll and Bute is currently in is merged with Paisley, according to Oban community council.

But Oban and Lorn area commander Marlene Bailey defended the proposal to merge L-Division, Argyll and Bute and West Dumbarton, and K Division, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, saying there would be no loss of policing staff.

Ms Bailey said all savings would be made in administrative and back room functions. She said: 'It is intended to do things more effectively. There is no intention to change the numbers or shape of policing. It is a proposal and not a done deal.'

Marrri Malloy, chairwoman of Oban community council, said: 'We don't agree with the plans to merge the policing areas.'

Community councillor George Berry added: 'It won't work because all the resources will be pulled to the south and we will suffer here in Oban.'

Iconic Argyll Hotel goes on the market

THE ARGYLL hotel in Inveraray has gone on the market this week for offers in the region of £1.5 million.

Selling agents Colliers said the hotel, built by the Duke of Argyll in the 1750s for visiting officials to Inveraray Castle, had already attracted international interest. Designed by renowned architect John Adam, the 36-bedroom hotel has been in continuous use since it was built.

It is believed that renowned traveller and writer, Dr Samuel Johnson, stayed at the Argyll Hotel during his 1773 visit to Inveraray in his journey to the Western islands of Scotland.

Wind turbine plans split communities

A PROPOSAL for five 74-metre high community-owned wind turbines above Glendaruel on Cowal is splitting communities on either side of Loch Fyne.

While 70 per cent of those surveyed by West Lochfyne-side community council were against the Achnelid proposal, Lochgilphead community council has put its weight behind the scheme.

Doors open on BID4Oban shop

THE BID4Oban shop on Oban's Stevenson Street will open to customers this Friday.

Housing the business improvement company's staff - it is hoped people will drop in with questions and suggestions about the town or the community company.

Former chairman Graham MacQueen said: 'This is a great move for BID4Oban. It will be good for the company to have a shop frontage where people can access it from the street.'

MS charity dinner dance at Kilmore

A CHARITY dinner dance will be held in Kilmore Hall, south of Oban, on Saturday, March 7, to raise funds for multiple sclerosis.

It will include a four-course meal, a live band and a raffle.

Contact Karen on 07766240194.

Winners of the Kilmore 100 club were: January, M. Cruickshanks and February, R Thomas.

Piper Willie lands gold in New York

CHAMPION piper Willie MacCallum, originally from Campbeltown, has added another gold medal to his tally.

He won first prize in the pìobaireachd and second in the medley at the annual Metro Cup solo piping competition in New York.

Willie has won the Glenfiddich world championships eight times.

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Claim your pass, using the Oban Times' application form, and pay just £13.20. A child's annual pass will cost just £10.80. Children under three go free of charge. Your annual pass will entitle you to 12 months unlimited entry to The Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary Oban and Sea Life Loch Lomond Aquarium, 20% discount in the Sea Life Sanctuary and Loch Lomond gift shops, 20% off hot drinks at the centres, a half price guide book and entry to our special events at both sites including our Easter Eggstravaganza and Santa at Sea Life fun day to name a few.

To claim this offer, complete the below application form and, along with an up to date passport sized photograph, take it along to the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Oban. This offer is valid until March 31st 2015. You can also post your application, complete with a stamped self-addressed envelope, photo and a cheque for the appropriate amount, made payable to Merlin Entertainments, to Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1SE.

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I have enclosed all photographs required and a cheque

Free school meals taken up by 1,700 primary pupils

A FREE school meals initiative costing more than £1million has been heralded a success by Argyll and Bute council.

The service, delivered by the council through Scottish government funding, has been taken up by 1,700 primary one-to-three pupils, 77 per cent of those eligible.

Argyll and Bute councillor Aileen Morton said: 'The provision of a hot meal to children who may not have had one previously, for a variety of reasons, promotes healthy eating in early years and underpins the council's commitment to ensuring that every pupil has the best chance of making the most of their educational opportunities as well as promoting inclusion and equality.'

The cost to the council of providing the increased number of meals in 2015/2016 is estimated to be £745,000, for food, staffing, and equipment.

The Scottish government has allocated funding for these costs, as well as an additional £550,000 for any kitchens that needed to be upgraded to provide the service.

New designs on Brooch of Lorn

OBAN'S Dunollie House has launched a competition for a contemporary design for the historic Brooch of Lorn.

The real brooch is a Medieval 'turreted' disc supposedly taken from Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Dalriach in 1309 and is centred on a large quartz stone.

The competition, organised by the Fastanta fashion festival, is asking for a textile that explores the 'heritage and romance' of the historic brooch - contact breege@dunollie.org

Jura ferry off for annual service

THERE may be some disruption to the Islay to Jura ferry service after the operating vessel, the Eilean Dhiura, went in for its annual refit this week.

The ferry will be replaced by the Ferguson Shipping vessel Harvest Anne and should be back on station around March 3, said operators ASP Ship Management.

ASP explained it would make 'all efforts' to maintain the scheduled service but as the vessel's specification is different from the Eilean Dhiura, there may be 'some slight disruption' to normal service.

Three injured in two-car crash

THREE people were hospitalised following a collision on the A82 near Tyndrum on Tuesday morning.

The casualties were taken to Lorn and Islands hospital in Oban by road ambulance to be treated for minor injuries.

The two-car crash on the trunk road at Bridge of Orchy happened around 10.15am, with the road blocked for around 10 minutes.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Alex Needham with Chloe Campbell, who is a trainee chef at the YuWu Chinese restaurant in Oban 16_t09chef01

Top town chef argues for hospitality on the menu

STEVEN RAE
srae@obantimes.co.uk

MORE should be done to encourage school leavers to embark upon careers in Oban's hospitality sector.

That's the opinion of Alex Needham, who has been a chef for 30 years and is a partner in the town's Waterfront restaurant, YuWu Chinese restaurant and the Ranald hotel.

The highly respected restaurateur raised the matter at the 'open forum' Oban, Lorn and Isles area committee meeting with Argyll and Bute councillors at the beginning of the month.

Alex feels that with the abundance of eateries in the town, more should be done to guide pupils into hospitality, which would provide them with national qualifications.

He said: 'It was brought up at the Corran Halls meeting that

we need to concentrate on construction apprenticeships.

'I disagree, because as a tourist town, catering is our bread and butter - that's what tourists come here for.

'In Oban, we have every aspect of catering, including seafood, steakhouses, butchery, Chinese cooking, coffee shops, cafes, the chocolate shop, the hotels and more. But for some reason, pupils aren't pointed in the direction for careers in catering.'

At present, Argyll College offers sixteen tourism and hospitality-related courses, including food preparation basics, professional cookery and a BA in tourism and hospitality management.

However, Chloe Campbell, 16, is a trainee chef at Yu Wu and says that she could have followed a totally different career path if she hadn't happened to take a part-time job at the Waterfront.

She said: 'Being a chef never really appealed to me until I worked in the kitchen. I think if I'd seen the cooking side of it, it would have appealed to me earlier and I would have chosen it as a career, but I've just been lucky.'

'There are loads of restaurants in Oban.

'I think they should be giving more people the chance to go to college to study hospitality, rather than just having folk taking a job because it happens to come up somewhere.'

Alex added: 'Argyll college and the council should lead a programme.

'They should put school leavers into a three or four-year apprenticeship, giving them a chance to experience the different types of jobs in hospitality and then allow them to concentrate on one they really enjoy.'

Andrew Campbell, chairman of the Argyll College board,

was 'sympathetic' to the request for an increase in training opportunities for all courses, but explained that places were limited by financial constraints.

He said: 'The college is working hard to grow across all our campuses, and we recognise the hospitality industry as providing a vast and ever-growing amount of job opportunities in Oban in particular.'

'We would always like to train more people in all subjects, but with everything, funding is limited.'

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute council said it already supported school leavers in finding vocations in hospitality, including at an upcoming job fair on March 5 in the Corran Halls.

She said: 'As an employer, we are currently looking to offer modern apprenticeships in our own catering and school meals service and have previously

provided work experience placements for hospitality students from Argyll college.

'Our Business Gateway offers hospitality training courses to new and existing businesses to increase the skills base in what is undoubtedly a significant industry for the Argyll and Bute economy.'

'At council job fairs, local employers from a range of sectors, including tourism and hospitality, are encouraged to come along and promote their business or industry to prospective employees.'

MSP for Argyll and Bute, Michael Russell, who is also involved in the jobs fair on March 5, said: 'We have an incredibly rich pool of talented people but we know that finding the right job can be difficult.'

'That's why events such as this are so important, to help people find opportunities and jobs to enhance their careers.'

Tenant's plea for action on repairs

A TENANT has called on a housing association to put more money into repairs before building new homes.

Laura Walker of Tarbert, who lives in a two-bedroom flat with her husband Bruce and two children, says she has spent four years trying to get Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) to repair a gutter on their rented house.

ACHA, which recently opened new homes in the village, said it had spent around £15 million a year on repairs to existing homes and £7 million on new homes.

Chief executive Alistair McGregor said that he was unaware of any outstanding repairs at the Walkers' home, but he had arranged for staff to contact the family.

Traffic grinds to a halt after oil spill

AN OIL spill on the road between Oban and Dalmailly almost brought traffic to a standstill on Sunday morning.

A spokesman for Police Scotland said: 'The first call was reported at 9am and there were seven calls in the next 50 minutes.'

'Road managers BEAR Scotland were called out and the matter was quickly resolved.'

Police urged drivers to drive to the road conditions and be aware of any hazards on the road.

Charity drive helps two worthy causes

TWO Argyll worthy causes have benefited from £600 of charity donations from Oban and District Classic Vehicle club.

Oban's Mountain Rescue team and Oban and Lorn carers each received £300, with the charities nominated by vehicle club members.

Chairman of the vehicle club, Kevin Devine, said that the donations came mainly from collections at club events, the members' auction night and from other club activities.

Lights dimmed as fund switched off

CHRISTMAS lights costing £100,000 for towns throughout Argyll and Bute may be one of the first things to go when the area's council looks to claw back £27 million worth of savings next year.

While many smaller towns self-fund festive decorations, the council set aside money into the 2012 budget for trees and decorations. The funds will come to an end in 2016.

Games at risk over budget shortfall

EVENTS and festivals may be under threat from next year after Argyll and Bute council revealed a budget gap of £77,000 for 2016.

The Cowal Games, The Royal National Mod and Helensburgh Christmas festival may have to find money elsewhere after 2016 when the three-year funding comes to an end.

New school will reflect landscape

LOUISE LEE
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PLANNING permission for a 'concept school' in Oban will be lodged by the end of March, the lead architect told the town's community council on Monday night.

Plans to build a new four-storey rectangular school will 'embrace' topographical issues such as a mound and a historic dun on the site 'to set the standard' for school design, the meeting heard.

The school building has been funded by Scottish Future's Trust and will be designed along the lines of similar schools in Shetland and Eastwood high school in East Renfrewshire.

Oban community council was told the school plans include



SIMILAR LINES: Oban high school may look like Eastwood high

bus parking for 10 vehicles, a car park for 187 spaces, an 'entrance plaza' via the MacColl Terrace entrance to the school and an increased number of games pitches associated with the school.

The meeting was told the school

will 'reflect the local landscape'. A stairway from Soroba Road to the high school will be removed and entrances will be realigned to the north and south of the school building.

Architect Chris Allan from

Ryder Architects said the site Oban high school occupied was a historic and scenic one, and the building should reflect this outstanding natural beauty.

He said he wanted the building to fit in with its surroundings but at the same time make use of the changing light found on the west coast.

Chris said: 'Oban high school will nestle on the site and will look stunning to all who see it.'

'There have been limitations in building the school on this site due to the area.'

'Most of the important geographical features of this area have been hidden in the current school design. I hope we will now be able to show them off to the fullest.'

'We have worked with the coun-

cil's planning department all the way through the pre-application stage and we are almost at the point where we are ready to put in our full application.'

Oban Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'There will be 187 spaces in the car park and it gives real opportunities not only for space during the school week, but when we have a concert.'

'The school car park lies empty during school holidays, so it could potentially be used as a base for longer term parking.'

It is hoped that a 3D print of the proposed school building will be made available for people to examine.

The plans for the new school are to be lodged with Argyll and Bute council at the end of next month.

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Wind farm applications are 'out of control' says protester

EUAN PATERSON
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A POTENTIAL nine wind farms and an extension to an existing development around the shores of Loch Awe will destroy the scenic spot, say residents in the area.

The warning comes days before a Scottish government hearing to be held in Dalavich social club, which will consider an appeal by developers RWE Innogy to erect 15 111-metre turbines opposite the village.

The wind farm, which would be built on land owned by Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor, was rejected by Argyll and Bute council planners but could be given the green light if the appeal, to be heard on Tuesday and Wednesday next week, is successful.

Alongside existing operational wind farms Beinn Ghlas (14 turbines); An Suidhe (24 turbines); Carraig Gheal (20 turbines); and Clachan Flats, there are proposals for turbines at Balliameanoch, Ardchnonnel, Glen Lonan, Upper Sonachan and Musdale, with an extension to Carraig Gheal being

mooted. Three of the proposed developments are sufficiently large that they are classed as S36 proposals, meaning they will go straight to Holyrood for consideration, with the council given the role of statutory consultee.

Wind farm protester and Avich and Kilchrenan community councillor Christine Metcalfe said: 'Speculative applications for the whole of Argyll and Bute have reached a level that is beyond the level that any authority can adequately deal with.'

'Planners, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, all of the authorities involved are looking at increasingly complicated applications, which weigh a ton in paper. It's completely out of control.'

'So much of our community council time is dealing with wind farms that we barely have time to look at other issues.'

'These speculative applications - they are speculative because everyone knows the best sites have all been taken - also take up the resources of the hard-pressed local authorities which have to deal with these.'

'The problem with that,' said Mrs Metcalfe, 'is the plans are examined at Scottish government level.'

'And the Scottish government has an agenda to get as many wind farm applications consented as possible to fit its energy policy.'

However, a spokeswoman for the Scottish government rejected the charge of bias, explaining: 'Our policy on wind farm applications aims to strike the right balance between Scotland's massive green energy potential and the need to protect some of the country's most scenic and wild areas.'

'That has resulted in a ban on wind farm development in areas covering almost a fifth of the landmass of Scotland.'

'Scottish ministers very carefully consider all of the issues raised and all submissions made before coming to a decision on wind farm applications.'

'There are numerous competing considerations to be taken into account in determining these important decisions, and ministers take these responsibilities very seriously.'

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Islanders mourn death of former oil executive who led energy trust

THE CHAIRMAN of an Islay-based energy group, who helped to generate income for the island through renewable projects, has died at the age of 67, writes Euan Paterson.

Philip Maxwell came to Islay after retiring as a vice-president of oil giant Shell and soon became involved in the Islay Energy Trust (IET), becoming its chairman in 2009. He died on Sunday, February 15 after a long battle with cancer.

Mr Maxwell was at the helm of IET during a time of significant investment in the island's renewables sector.

He presided over an energy survey of island properties, the appointment of an island-based project officer for a Sound of Islay tidal power survey and the building of a community wind turbine that could pay out £80,000 per year to community projects.

He also convinced the Crown Estate that IET should have a lease on part of the seabed off The Rhinns.

Dr Malcolm Ogilvie, IET's vice-chairman, said of his former colleague: 'He had sheer charm and determination - a perfect combination. We will miss him horribly.'

'I was his vice chairman and, to be honest, I didn't have a lot to do because he would come to meetings having done exactly what he said he would do. It was a privilege to work with him.'

Mr Maxwell's funeral was due to take place yesterday (Wednesday) at St Kieran's Church, Port Charlotte, with the interment at Kilchoman cemetery. He is survived by his wife, Briar, and two sons.



HUGE LOSS: Philip Maxwell

'Jam lady' Seonag leaves a lasting legacy and a sweet taste for village

ANN HENDERSON
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ANYONE who thinks that retirement means putting on your slippers and sitting with your feet up, should take a leaf out of Seonag Morison's book.

Since retiring to Appin in 1980, Seonag has formed the Lorn branch of Home-Start, which provides support for families with young children, was heavily involved with the Natural Childbirth Trust and has made thousands of jars of jam and marmalade for charity.

She also ran the Appin playgroup for 20 years, was an enthusiastic member of the local art club, enjoyed Scottish country dancing and made countless pots of soup for the Lunch Club in Port Appin which she regularly attended.

Fondly known in Appin and the wider community as 'the jam lady', Seonag - who will be 94 in April - is moving to the south of England to live near her son, Tony, and daughter-in-law, Sue, in Wiltshire.

'I'm not as mobile as I used to be,' said Seonag, 'so I thought it best to be near my family. But I'll miss everyone here.'

Born in Helensburgh in 1921, Seonag joined the Red Cross as a nurse during the Second World War.

'The hotel at Garelochhead was turned into a hospital, so I worked there,' she said.

'I went to university at St Andrews and studied philosophy, but I wanted to be a social worker, so I studied social sciences at Edinburgh University. After that I took a mental health course at the London School of Economics.'

In 1947, Seonag married husband, Charlie, who was in the navy at the time, but later trained as a civil engineer.

The couple went on to have four children, Tony, Iain, Colin and Sheila, who all followed in their father's footsteps and became civil engineers. But sadly Sheila died in a plane accident in Australia when she was 37.

Seonag and Charlie lived and worked mainly in England and bought a house in Appin for holidays.

But they liked the West High-



LADY MARMALADE: Seonag with a jar of her famous marmalade

lands so much they decided to retire there and settled down to enjoy life in the local community.

When Charlie died in 1983, Seonag devoted herself to her voluntary work.

Seonag explained: 'I was always interested in the relationship between mothers and children so decided to start the Home-Start scheme here.'

'The charity was originally formed in Leicester, but gradually moved throughout the country.'

'Volunteers help to support young families with children under five, rather like a parent would do. For instance, if the mother has to go out, the volunteer will look after the children until she gets back.'

Home-Start Lorn has been a resounding success helping to

support 500 parents and 1,000 children, since Seonag started it, and has now expanded to Mull.

She received a special certificate when she celebrated 25 years with the charity, honouring her work as instigator, founder member, volunteer, trustee and supporter.

Seonag was also named Volunteer of the Year in 2004 by the Argyll and Bute Volunteer Centre in Oban and was presented with an engraved silver plaque.

And it was to help Home-Start as well as the Natural Childbirth Trust that Seonag embarked on her astonishing jam and marmalade-making marathon.

'I started to sell it firstly to friends and committee members to raise money then went on to have stalls at the Appin Show

and the Charities Day in Oban. 'Over the years it just took off and I became known as the jam lady,' she laughed.

Seonag raised around £700 every year making her jam and marmalade. 'I had an arrangement locally that if anyone was going to the bottle bank, they would hand in all their jars to me first and that helped a great deal,' she said.

Raspberries came from her garden and she also foraged for fruit along the old Appin railway line, and undertook many brambling excursions as well to keep up with demand.

She only stopped making jam in November as she is not able to get about as well as she used to.

Tributes were paid to her tireless work for the local community and beyond at the weekly Lunch Club held in Port Appin village hall.

The former GP for Appin and Lismore, Dr Iain McNicol, said: 'The contributions that Seonag

has made were huge over many years, both with Home-Start Lorn and the local pre-school playgroup.'

'She was a member of many different groups and didn't let her age stand in the way of anything she wanted to do. She particularly enjoyed the art club and still paints now and again. She leaves behind many friends here and will be greatly missed.'

A special afternoon tea was also held in her honour at the Castle Stalker View Café, organised by Home-Start volunteers.

'It was a lovely surprise and we had scones with jam and cream which were just delicious,' she said.

But while it will be a wrench to leave Appin, Seonag is looking forward to meeting one family member for the first time.

'My grand-daughter, Heather, is expecting a baby in April - my first great-grandchild. My birthday is April 4, so if he/she arrives then, it will be just lovely.'



BIRTHDAY BASH: Seonag cut the cake when Home-Start Lorn celebrated 15 years in existence. She is pictured with (left to right) Margaret Harrison, who founded the charity, Bette Graham, the original co-ordinator and Aileen Binner, the present co-ordinator

Six of the best for eco friendly-school

AN OBAN primary is the first school in Argyll and Bute to be awarded a sixth Green Flag for its environmentally friendly pupils.

Pupils at Park primary received the green accolade for their regular 'clean-ups' of Oban's esplanade and their support of charities such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Marine Conservation Society. The school was also praised for its promotion of the Fairtrade movement.

The Dunollie school was handed its Green Flag last month by Eco Schools Scotland, which is part of the Holyrood-funded Keep Scotland Beautiful campaign.

The school's themed classroom topics, such as Tesco's 'Farm to Fork' initiative and participation in events such as Earth Hour and Apple Day, were also commended by Eco Schools Scotland.

Thankful project for coach parties

ROADS bosses are to spend £400,000 on a project to improve vehicle safety at the Rest and Be Thankful beauty spot.

The project, which will be managed by Argyll and Bute council, is to build a turning circle at the hugely popular viewing point near the summit on the A83.

This will enable coach services travelling from Oban and Campbeltown to Glasgow to drop-off and pick-up passengers. At present there is no safe place to stop at the beauty spot.

The money has been allocated to the council, with the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport awarding £150,000, in addition to £250,000 already secured from the Scottish government's Bus Investment Fund.

Fake cash alert for Mid Argyll stores

TRADERS in Mid Argyll and Kintyre are being urged to be on the look-out after counterfeit cash was used to buy goods in several shops.

Forged £20 and £10 banknotes were discovered this month by shopkeepers in Lochgilphead and Campbeltown.

Dee Carrick, a volunteer at Mary's Meals in Lochgilphead, was shocked when she found both a counterfeit £20 and £10 note in the charity shop's takings.

Fake notes were also used in Bargain Zone and RS McColl in Lochgilphead, while counterfeit £10 and £20 Bank of Scotland notes were found in a Campbeltown shop.

Anyone with any information or who has received forged banknotes should contact the police on 101.

Survey to look at young attitudes

AN ONLINE survey has been launched to find out what people aged 15-30 years think about jobs, education and life in the Highlands.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise has commissioned marketing company ekosgen to carry out the research.

A 2009 survey showed that 1,500 more young people left the area than chose to move in.

It is hoped the research will find out if actions to reverse this trend have worked.

The survey at www.hie.co.uk/HaveYourSay ends at the beginning of April 2015 and the research should be complete by summer 2015.

Finnie not Swinney is name in frame

IN AN article on page three of *The Oban Times*, dated February 19 2015, Michael Russell, MSP, was quoted regarding a story about ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne.

In this report, it was stated that Mr Russell said MSP John Swinney was in attendance at a meeting at Holyrood, when in fact it was MSP John Finnie who was at the meeting. We apologise for the confusion.

Archive appeal for hospital stories

AN appeal has been made for archive material for a book which is being published to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Lochgilphead's Argyll and Bute hospital.

Anyone with suitable material should contact Jess Grant on 01546 602701.

Calls to bring back tugs after ship lies grounded for 36 hours

LOUISE LEE
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A TWENTY-four-hour delay for an 'emergency' tug boat to reach a stricken cargo ship stranded on rocks at Ardnamurchan Point last week has led to calls for the return of tugs to west coast waters.

Michael Foxley, former leader of Highland council, made a plea to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for tug boats to be stationed in the Western Isles immediately.

Now politicians at all levels have backed his call.

It took a full day for the Emergency Tug Vessel (ETV) to draw up alongside the 120-metre long Lysblink Seaways vessel, which was aground on rocks at Ardnamurchan for more than 36 hours after it got into trouble near Kilchoan last Tuesday.

Two high tides were missed when the 7,500 dead-weight tonnage (DWT) cargo ship could have been refloated.

A Clyde tug, The Kingdom of Fife, which is not usually contracted by the MCA, arrived on the scene after travelling north, while the Orkney-based ETV, the Heracles, took 24 hours to arrive at Ardnamurchan.

An absorbent boom was deployed around the vessel to capture leaking fuel after a sheen was seen on the water around the stern.

The vessel self-floated free at 9pm last Thursday. But early on Sunday the increased wind caused the ship to drag her anchor, so she was towed



ON CALL: Tobermory Lifeboat was called to the Lysblink Seaways Jon Haylett/Kilchoan Diary

back out to sea and anchored 1.5 miles east of Kilchoan in Mingary Bay with her nine crew on board.

The Lysblink was travelling from Belfast to Skogn in Norway when it ran aground at Kilchoan. None of the crew was injured.

Since 2011, only one tug has been available as an ETV and the MCA contract to provide the service ends this year after 15 years.

Mr Foxley said the area would be safer if a tug boat was stationed off the Minches.

He said: 'If this had happened when the tug was still in Stornoway, the MCA would have tried to contact the ship when it was to be off course.

'The ETV would have been ready to go immediately from Stornoway or from the Minches. The ETV could have possibly got there to pull the ship off at high tide. At worst, it would have got there before this ETV had even left Orkney at 7am.'

'Do we have to wait for a catastrophe? An ETV needs to be returned to the Minches to safeguard the marine environment and the fishing, aquaculture and tourism jobs dependent upon it.'

Charles Kennedy, MP for Lochaber, added: 'The grounding of the Lysblink Seaways has rightly re-engaged the debate concerning the maritime and environmental safeguards on

the west coast of Scotland.

'It is good news that in this incident no one was injured and I am confident the authorities are carefully monitoring the situation.'

'I fought in parliament against the reduction in emergency tugs and I am full square behind the call to restore them now - that is pivotal when we consider the speed of response needed.'

Comhairle na Eilean Siar leader Angus Campbell, said: 'This is another occasion when, thankfully, there were no injuries but which could have been a vastly different story.'

'The removal of the ETV from Western waters has increased the risk to mariners.'

'We call on the UK government to reassess and find a long term solution to this crucial issue.'

Lochaber MSP Dave Thomson added: 'It couldn't be clearer that there is a role for government in protecting the coastal communities and their economies and yet the UK government want to save a few million pounds by withdrawing this necessary protection. 'I call on them to see sense.'

Oban development road necessary

A DEVELOPMENT road is needed for Oban, according to councillor for Oban North and Lorn Iain S MacLean.

Speaking at Oban community council on Monday, he said traffic congestion in Oban would have to be

solved 'sooner rather than later' - but major investment in a development road linking the A85 Pennyfuir with the south side of the town was necessary.

On being told that Argyll and Bute council planners

had left space for the road while other developments in the area moved forward, he said: 'Thank goodness for that. Everyone knows that we need to solve the roads issue in Oban, so it is good this is being kept on the agenda.'

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Oban inspector 'will be missed'

A POPULAR police inspector is on the move after six years of stalwart service in Oban.

Inspector Julie McLeish (pictured below) said she would be sad to leave the town but will be taking up a similar post in Mid Argyll.

Oban's community council chairwoman Marri Malloy paid tribute to the popular police officer: 'She will be missed in Oban. She has been a fantastic inspector and we wish her well.'

Acting inspector Mark Stephen will replace inspector McLeish from March 23, when she takes up her new position. Mark is currently the inspector in Mid Argyll, and had previously worked as sergeant on Mull.



LED lights would save electricity

ARGYLL and Bute council could pay less for electricity in 25 years than it pays now by switching to LED lighting, it was claimed this week.

A trial of equipment - developed by the Scottish Futures Trust and supported by the Scottish Government - demonstrated that councils on average could expect to save up to 70 per cent of their current electricity costs by switching to LED street lighting, as well as the change having a benefit on the environment.

LED lighting last year replaced sodium street lights on the A85 in Connel village.

Not a new facility, says Jane Scott, who raised funds in '81 to buy a scanner for maternity hospital

Midwives to be trained to scan women in Oban area

LOUISE LEE
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MATERNITY scanning will be re-instated at Lorn and Islands hospital after health bosses agreed to train midwifery staff to operate machinery.

While NHS Highland claims this is a new facility for pregnant women in Oban, a former fundraiser says this is 'nonsense' and the health board has had staff and machinery since she, and her sister, raised the cash in 1981.

Jane Scott of Bridge of Awe and her sister Jess MacDonald, who has since died, raised £14,000 for an ultrasonic scanner under the banner of the Scan81 campaign, with a cheque presented in 1982.

Jane, originally from Oban, said she and her sister worked hard in their 20s to raise the cash over the course of a year.

Jane said: 'I feel like we are moving backwards. We used to have scanning in the area - I know because my sister and I helped to raise the cash for the machine. My sister was even scanned on the machine.'

'The problem is, the health board didn't want the scanner in the first place and that is why it allowed the service to be removed from the area.'



DONATION: The ultrasonic scanner which was donated Oban Maternity Hospital in 1982

'The roads have not improved in the last 30 years and neither have the routine services for women.'

'I mean, women are still making the long journey to the Vale of Leven hospital to have a scan. It's not good enough. We need the routine procedure to take place here in Oban.'

Argyll and Bute councillor Mary-Jean Devon, who led a meeting on scans in Argyll in

Oban's Corran Halls last Thursday, said: 'I am very happy to set up a forum for women who want to talk about the best health care for pregnant women and new babies. While it is important that these issues are discussed it is also very important that the best medical care is provided.'

'In Glasgow, for instance, an obstetrician will see more than 1,000 patients a year. That expertise is important in dealing with

issues that arise in pregnancy. 'The training from NHS Highland will be invaluable for providing more services locally.'

Pat Tyrrell, lead nurse for Argyll and Bute community health partnership (CHP), said: 'I am delighted to announce that the CHP core management team has agreed to fund a proposal to develop scanning services locally in Argyll and Bute.'

'This is excellent news for wom-

en and their families and will significantly reduce the number of journeys that women will have to make to hospitals in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

'We used to carry out scanning in Argyll and Bute to confirm pregnancies and additional scans were sometimes provided in some areas if consultants and radiographers were available.'

'The service was, though, extremely inconsistent and we have never been in a position to provide as a matter of routine the two main antenatal scans that women receive elsewhere in Scotland.'

'A recent review of the service had also recommended that we stop providing any antenatal scans by midwives until we could meet the national requirements for this service.'

'Now that this funding has been made available we will be setting up a project team to move things forward with the aim of providing a robust, equitable, local service.'

'This will require those health professionals who will be carrying out scans to undertake a one year accredited post graduate course and it is anticipated that we will be able to fully implement the new service from the autumn of 2016.'

Driver reported after A85 crash

THE A85 was closed for a short time near to Cruachan power station on Loch Awe following a head-on collision between two cars.

A blue Ford Fiesta is suspected of crossing the broken central line on the road, one mile west of the power station and being in a collision with a Nissan Duke at around 11am last Friday.

There was extensive damage to both vehicles and the road was closed while the cars were removed.

The driver of the Nissan was taken by ambulance to Lorn and Islands hospital in Oban as a precaution.

The 29-year-old driver of the Ford Fiesta is subject of a report to the procurator fiscal.

Girl injured after stepping off bus

A TEENAGER who was knocked down by a car outside Oban high school escaped with minor injuries, police have said.

The 13-year-old girl was knocked down on Soroba Road just after 9am last Thursday when the car was passing a stationary bus, which the girl was stepping off.

The girl had injuries to her right leg in the incident but was discharged later that day from Lorn and Islands hospital in the town after a check-up.

Police say that no charges have been brought against the driver of the car.

No gas at the inn as town's supply reaches full capacity

NEW businesses which want to hook up to the gas network in Oban will be given short shrift as it has been revealed the gas plant in town is operating near full capacity.

The news will delay business start-ups such as the proposed Argyll hotel on Oban's Esplanade, but the replacement high school will be able to use its existing supply.

Hannah Adam, spokesperson

for gas distribution network company Scottish Gas Network (SGN), said: 'Oban has its own gas network supplied by Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), which is separate to the national gas distribution network.'

'We are obliged by our licence from the regulator to operate a safe and secure network, and deliver a firm supply of gas to customers under these conditions.'

'The LNG plant is operating close to full capacity. New and existing properties can be connected to the gas network, however, to ensure a continued safe and reliable supply to our existing customers, the gas load for new customers is currently limited.'

'In the case of the high school, it has an existing gas supply and so the new school will be able to use the same volume of gas.'

Alan MacLeod, owner of Ee-usk restaurant on the North Pier and the businessman behind plans for a new Argyll hotel said he was concerned.

'It has taken us three years of planning issues, two years of access concerns and finally we are ready to go - only to be told there is no gas,' he said.

'So, for me, it doesn't matter if we are ready to build our hotel, with no gas any new business

would struggle. We are building a luxury 53-bedroom hotel and gas bottles will simply not meet our demand.'

'It is all very well wanting to increase business in Oban, and build new houses - but with no gas the infrastructure for development does not exist.'

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute council said: 'For some time the council has been engaging with Scottish Gas Network

as it works to find an enduring solution for the gas network in Oban.'

'In the meantime there are alternative fuel sources available - for example renewable energy, electricity and biomass - that are currently used by many businesses in Argyll and Bute.'

'These and other options can be explored to meet a range of different needs for both householders and business premises.'

Lock your sheds, warns sergeant

PEOPLE must tell the police if they see anything strange in rural areas, Oban community council was told on Monday night.

With more property being stolen from outhouses and unlocked cars than ever before Oban's community police sergeant Allan Moore said the solution was simple - vigilance and locking property.

Mr Moore said: 'Thieves are opportunists, so if a house or an outhouse is unlocked it is very likely that will be the one that is broken into and items stolen.'

'What we are seeing are items such as chainsaws, mowers and garden equipment being taken. These are items that do not have identification numbers and are easy to move on.'

'If anyone sees someone that is unfamiliar or in an unusual place, or even an unusual car then I would urge a phone call to 101 to tell the police about it. If there is any doubt about people in the area do not hesitate to pick up the phone to the station.'

Man crossing road hit by turning car

A MAN crossing the road on Stevenson Street at its junction with George Street in Oban was taken to Lorn and Islands hospital after being hit by a car.

The car was turning into Stevenson Street when it hit the man, who lives locally, and as a result the driver is subject of a report to the procurator fiscal.

The man suffered bruising to his right leg.

Bench stolen from outside Oban shop

POLICE are looking for any witnesses to a theft of a black, wooden bench from outside a shop in Oban.

The bench was taken from Penelope Pitstop on Craigrad Road sometime between 5pm on Saturday and 3.30pm on Sunday.

Anyone with any information should contact PC Emma Campbell at Oban police station on 101.

Raffle prize is good news for Alzheimer Scotland

STAFF REPORTER
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AN OBAN Times reporter has raised more than five times his target for a charity close to his heart.

After winning a Kindle in a raffle, reporter Steven Rae decided to sell it and donate the money to Alzheimer Scotland.

However, after publicising it for sale on Facebook, with proceeds going to the charity, friends, family and colleagues offered to donate to the charity, so Steven set up a JustGiving page instead.

He said: 'I thought I might get around £50 for it, and donate the money to Alzheimer Scotland, because my grandmother suffered from dementia for around 10 years before passing away in 2009.'

'When I advertised it for sale, almost immediately people were offering to donate to the charity and weren't bothered about the Kindle.'

'I set up a JustGiving page, made a donation myself and said that the highest amount donated would be given the Kindle, setting a fundraising target of £100.'

'However, most people who have donated have either done it anonymously or said they don't want the Kindle.'

Steven said he will post the Kindle to the person with the



GOOD NEWS STORY: Oban Times reporter Steven Rae with the Kindle he won in a raffle

highest donation, unless they state they don't want it, in which case it will also be donated to Alzheimer Scotland. He plans to carry on accepting donations until the end of March.

Amongst those supporting his cause is Elaine Robertson, councillor for Oban North and Lorn, who came in to *The Oban Times* office to hand over a generous contribution.

She said: 'I am more than happy to donate, and Alzheimer's is one of the charities my husband and I support regularly. I have a long association with the Oban branch, having helped to establish it. Well done to Steven for supporting such a worthwhile charity.'

Steven added: 'I'm really surprised and pleased at how much has been pledged already. Some people have donated as much as £50, which is so generous. 'With the money from the

JustGiving page, along with cheques and cash, £505 has been raised, and that's not including Gift Aid, which adds on another 25 per cent to online donations, so it looks like a few hundred pounds will go to this great cause.'

'Also, on a personal level, a few people who donated have left messages saying they remember my gran and were fond of her, including former neighbours and people who cared for her, which were lovely to read.'

Steven plans to make a cheque presentation to the Dementia Resource centre on Oban High Street, some time in March.

The easiest way to donate is to visit: www.justgiving.com/Steven-Rae

Alternatively, cheques made out directly to Alzheimer Scotland, as well as cash donations, can be handed in to *The Oban Times* office.



Mum's the word!

Sunday, March 15, is Mother's Day, when everyone likes to spoil the special lady in their lives and show her just how much she means to them.

This year, let The Oban Times do this for you, as we have fantastic prizes to give away in our marvellous Mum's the Word competition.

All you have to do to win is tell us - in no more than 50 words - why your mum is one in a million.

And the three best entries will win one of these terrific prizes:

- A private showing of a film of their choice for up to 22 guests with a bottle of bubbly, buckets of popcorn and soft drinks, courtesy of Oban's Phoenix cinema
- A meal for two at a select restaurant
- A beautiful bouquet of flowers

Complete the attached coupon and either send it to us at the address below, or hand it in to our office. This coupon must be completed for your entry to be valid.

The closing date is Monday, March 9, so give your mum a Mother's Day to remember, and enter today.

Send your entries to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB by Monday, March 9, 2015

My Mum is one in a million because (50 words)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your name:

Address:

.....

Daytime telephone number:

Age (if under 16)

Terms and conditions: Please post your entries to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Entries to be in by 12 noon Monday, March 9, 2015. Normal Oban Times rules apply. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. No cash alternative.

Lismore

BOB HAY, of Lismore Gaelic heritage centre and Claire Ellis of Argyll Archaeology spoke to pupils at Lismore primary school about an exciting island project to do with the graveyard.

The afternoon discussion proved to be a great success with questions such as 'how much treasure has been discovered?' It was agreed that the children would visit, and film, the graveslabs at Baligarve, and help Bob in the research for the display interpretation boards.

Clare had intended to take the 3pm ferry to Achnacroish but was stranded when it was cancelled because of the afternoon gale.

Work is continuing to record and preserve gravestones in Lismore Parish Church graveyard. Slabs are being allowed to dry for at least two months before they are carefully cleaned to remove lichen and moss.

They will then be stabilized to prevent further deterioration of the stone - repaired (where necessary) and mounted in preparation for transfer to a specially-built shelter to display the stones.

The latest instalment of Bob Hay's blog about the graveslabs project is at <http://www.lismoregaelicheritagecentre.org/lismore-graveslab-project/>

ROXANNE MacColl is now compiling the Lismore district news for *The Oban Times*. If anyone has any information about an event they attended or organised on the island and would like it mentioned in *The Oban Times*, please let her know on 760 025, or email roxanne.prando@yahoo.co.uk. Photos are welcome.



ISLANDERS had to endure the biggest traffic jam since the potholes were filled last year when the school bus got a puncture enroute to school.

But thanks to some resilience from residents the wheel was changed and the road was cleared in no time.

Head teacher Catherine Davies came up to collect half the children and Colin Fleming took the other half round the Salen road. Islanders said it was a wonderful display of community spirit.

Arisaig

THE ARISAIG women's rural institute met on February 12.

Unfortunately the planned speaker couldn't attend but the ladies carried on regardless.

Anne Cameron and Yvonne MacDonald were joint winners of the porcelain figurine competition, with June Cairns in second place.

Margaret MacEachan won the button picture contest, Anne Cameron came second and June Cairns in third.

The raffle was won by Yvonne MacDonald. The next meeting will be on March 17.

Dunbeg and Dunstaffnage

FACEBOOK site Dunbeg and Dunstaffnage memories has organised a reunion of residents to meet up in the summer.

The meeting is planned for July 25 at the Glen on Soroba Road.

Anyone who wishes to book for the Dunbeg Dunstaffnage reunion, buffet and disco should sign up on the Facebook page.



BUILDING: Primary school children visit the almost finished Atlantic Islands centre

EXTERNAL building work on the Atlantic Islands centre has been held back by the gales in recent weeks but internal work has continued and workers have been very busy preparing for it opening

Luig

by Easter. The marketing group has been meeting, plans for centre events are well under way, and some

went to Scotland's trade and food fair in Glasgow to look at possible goods for the shop. The group has appointed Laura McIntyre as the centre development manager who is now in post.

Canna

FOUR siblings on the Isle of Canna enjoyed learning about sea rescues last week.

Coastguard Phil Wren taught Ryan, Erin, Julie-Ann and Gordon Guthrie - the only pupils at Canna primary school - about his work at sea and let them try out the car's lights and siren.

RESCUE: Canna primary school pupils enjoyed a visit from the coastguard



Connel

CONNEL community councillor, John Anderson, has been in touch with Highlands and Islands Enterprise digital about the prospects for Next Generation Broadband in Connel. Here are extracts from the exchange of correspondence he has had.

It has been revealed the first premises in the area are expected to receive a super-fast service by the summer.

However, Mr Anderson also found out that sites to locate cabinets with the equipment had not yet been disclosed.

'Detailed local survey work needs to be done first, and it is usually done just before work starts,' he said. 'The cabinets are quite large, need to be powered and siting requires input from the council roads and planning departments.'

'Once the cabinet is sited then work starts in powering it, bringing fibre cable to it, connecting the lines in and then testing it - this usually takes around three months depending on how difficult it proves to be.'

COMMUNITY council meetings in Connel have been posted on the group's website.

The dates are March 10, May 12, July 14, September 8 and November 10. All meetings will take place on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm in Connel village hall.



ENCORE: A massive well done to everyone involved in the pantomime in Dalmally. The last performance is tomorrow night (Friday) so there is still time to see it.

THE TRUSTEES of Dalmally hall have been conscious of the fact that the hall should not be just a music venue and they have decided to leap in at the deep end of premier league Scottish comedy.

The group has persuaded 'the

Dalmally

brilliant Fred MacAulay' to bring his one-man show to Dalmally on Saturday April 18. A spokesman said: 'We make no excuse for undercutting

the King's Theatre on both ticket and bar prices for a night with Fred.

'Unfortunately, we won't have as many tickets available. Only about 200, so keep an eye out for details, as they will go on sale from the beginning of March.'

Bowmore

AN APPLICATION has been submitted to build the second stage of a housing development on the outskirts of Bowmore on Islay.

The Argyll Community Housing Association development, which will be built by M and K MacLeod Construction, is near to the bonds warehouse on the outskirts of the village and will comprise 10 houses.

These will be built between the phase one construction and the playing fields near Bowmore primary school.

Raasay

A REUNION for former Raasay primary school pupils is to be held this summer.

Anyone who attended the island's only school, including staff, until the year 2000 is invited to the event, although organisers ask attendees to sign up as soon as possible.

It is hoped the reunion on July 31 will include a meal, visit to the school and a ceilidh.

Anyone who would like to attend is asked to contact Sandy MacLeod on raasayschoolreunion@gmail.com or 01478 660 3381.



Ballachulish

BALLACHULISH primary school had a range of visitors last week, all with a different tale to tell the pupils.

A number of locals volunteered to read books to each class at the school, as part of national storytelling week. Pictured is Dr Morag Calder, GP, reading to the primary four and five class.



Kinlochleven

IT WAS big smiles at Kinlochleven nursery when oral health educator Suzi McAllister came to teach the youngsters about teeth.

With the help of her furry friend, Ms McAllister explained to the children how important it was to brush their teeth and visit the dentist.

MORVERN lines

First class cargo service

THE ROAD carrier service to the west coast has improved over the past 10 years although price differentials to the islands and other remote places still need to be addressed.

I doubt, however, that whatever we end up with will be as efficient as that provided by David MacBrayne Limited in the 1930s.

I have a company poster in front of me advertising a list of all MacBrayne's cargo vessels sailing from Glasgow and Greenock in July 1938, giving the names of the ships and their destinations. It is of particular interest now because many of the piers they tied alongside no longer exist.

The first sailing was on July 1 by the SS Lochgorm to Tobermory, Kilchoan, Raasay, Portree and Stornoway followed three days later by the SS Lochgarry bound for Craignure, Lochaline, Salen (Mull), Tobermory, Kilchoan, Eigg, Mallaig, Armadale, Isle Oransay, Glenelg, Kyle-of-Lochalsh, Raasay, Portree, Staffin, Gairloch, Aultbea, Inverasdale, Scorraig, Ullapool, Baden-Tarbert (Loch Broom), Lochinver, Stockinish and Rodel.

On the same day the SS Lochshiel sailed for Port Ellen, Bowmore, Gigha, Ardlussa, Luig, Easdale, Oban, Lismore, Calgary, Kingairloch, Kinlochleven, Fort William, Tobermory, Loch Sunart, Mingarry and Croggan (Isle of Mull).

And so it went on throughout the month, 16 sailings to these and other places including Islay and Jura by the SS Clydesdale. What a service.

It has been said that many out-of-the-way coastal and island villages owe their existence to David MacBrayne.

Little wonder someone wrote: 'To God belongs the Earth, and all that it contains, except the Western Isles and they belong to MacBrayne's.'



EFFICIENT: David MacBrayne steamer the Lochbroom taking on a cargo of sheep at Laudale Pier, Loch Sunart

A peaceful haven

TODAY I followed a rough track through wild moorland and forest to the Barr River on the south shores of Loch Teacuis.

Where the burn leaps into a deep pool it is flanked by a jungle of alders, oaks and gnarled wild cherry trees clothed with ghost-like mosses and hanging lichens.

Nearer the sea, I walked through heather, moss and heavily scented bog-myrtle to the mouth of the river where it fans out over gravel and through black sandy saltings into a shallow bay. The salt marsh, full of geese, golden eye, herons and mallards was patched with dead sea plantain, cushions of thrift and scurvy grass.

The beach was remarkable for its litter of empty scallop shells and long-pointed, spirally-whirled white turret-shells and delicate mussels, cockles, razor-shells, winkles and sundry bivalves some of which appear as fossils around the shores of Loch Aline. From this peaceful and sunlit bay I looked across the loch to rocky islands on one of which 21 seals were basking.

An early boneshaker

CYCLING has become very popular recently and designated ways, some better than many public roads, have been built in Argyll and elsewhere in the Highlands.

Of all the many useful modern inventions it is difficult to image one more popular than the bicycle. Nowadays it is used as a means of keeping fit and saving energy, and in the rest of the world as a basic means of transport.

A man on a bicycle is the most efficient of all moving animals and machines and, in the days before cars, the combination is said to have helped to increase and sustain the population in many rural communities.

Developed from the wooden and metal hobby-horse, the first pedal operated bicycle was invented and built in 1839 by a Dumfriesshire blacksmith, Kirkpatrick Macmillan (1813-78). Macmillan's niece, Mary Marchbank, was the world's first lady cyclist when she borrowed Macmillan's bicycle to ride through Keir Mill.

Macmillan's introduction of pedals was so successful he was fined for speeding while riding to Glasgow in 1842.

Macmillan's smithy still stands and bears a plaque that reads: 'He builded better than he knew.' He certainly did; there are now more than one billion bicycles in the world.

What is not so well known is that Kirkpatrick's ancestor, William MacMillan, came from the Garvan area on the south side of Loch Eil on the Conaglen Estate.

The MacMillans were an ancient Lochaber family and owned extensive land which they were given by the Lords of the Isles. Later they lost it to the Camerons of Lochail and the Macleans of Ardgour.

After the 1715 Jacobite Rising, William MacMillan and his extended family were forced to leave Lochailside.

William settled in Galloway, other kin emigrated to Australia. Many of the Lochaber MacMillans were skilled metal workers and blacksmiths so in a way it is hardly surprising that one of them invented the bicycle.

Who knows perhaps an early version might have travelled the flat Garvan roads long before Kirkpatrick's day!

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Inveraray

INVERARAY will host its very own Strictly Come Dancing evening on Saturday March 14 in the Argyll Hotel at 7.30pm.

Nine couples are going to shimmy to impress judges to help raise money for Yorkhill Children's Charity, Parkinson's Scotland and Beatson Cancer Charity.

Tickets are on sale in The Scullery, Main Street, Inveraray.

IN NEED OF SOME SPRING JOIE DE VIVRE?
SCOTTISH FIELD'S PHOTOGRAPHER CAN'T WAIT TO MEET YOU!

Dress to impress and be Scene Around with a group of friends whilst enjoying an evening of glamour with Scottish Field.

Come along for a great night at Our Dynamic Earth on Thursday 26 March and join in the celebration of the very best at the **SCOTTISH RURAL AWARDS GALA DINNER**

This glamorous evening will feature a champagne reception, a delicious meal and live entertainment. Guests will also receive a luxury goody bag. Photographs of the evening will be featured in Scottish Field or online at scottishfield.co.uk and scottishruralawards.org.

SOMEONE ON EACH TABLE WILL WIN A BOTTLE OF MALT WHISKY!

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Review prompts pledge to resurface A82 'deathtrap'

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A 'DEATHTRAP' road in Lochaber will be resurfaced following numerous reports of cars skidding off the carriageway into ditches, repair group BEAR Scotland has promised.

Ronnie McLauchlan, a concerned farmer in the area, said he has seen vehicles career into the opposite lane, plough through fences and fall into the roadside ditch on the short stretch of the A82 between Ballachulish roundabout and bridge and said it is lucky nobody has been hurt.

He added: 'It seems to be when cars come off the roundabout and accelerate, they skid all over the place and end up down in the ditch. There hasn't been much said about it because nobody has been hurt but the last one I saw was on Sunday and there was a three-year-old girl in the car. It would be a deathtrap if there was anything coming the other way.'

'Does there need to be a fatality before anyone sits up and takes notice? I don't know if it's oil leaking out of the tar, if the surface has become too smooth or what the problem is, but I do know it can't be left like that.'

Mr McLauchlan has farmed in the area for more than 50 years but said there wasn't a problem until last year.

He added: 'I remember seeing a couple of cars down the ditch last summer and I didn't take too much notice but then there were more in December and more again this year. It has got to be more than a coincidence now. It's happening far too often.'

And that was just the accidents he could see from his house on the north-bound side of the carriageway.

'I hear the same thing has happened umpteen times on the

“The car flew clean over the top of the fence.**”**

Ronnie McLauchlan
concerned farmer

other side,' he added. Mr McLauchlan also said cars crashing through his fence could cause more problems on the busy Glasgow-Inverness trunk road.

He said: 'The car at the weekend flew clean over the top of the fence but more often than not cars smash right through it and it means the sheep in my field can get out.'

'Insurance covers the cost so it's no money out of my pocket but I always need to make sure the fence is repaired straight away because the last thing we need is sheep running across the A82.'

Lochaber area police inspector Donald Campbell confirmed he was aware of the problem and had passed on concerns to BEAR and Transport Scotland.

He added: 'Because these appear to be what are known as damage-only incidents it may not have been brought to the attention of the appropriate people but the problem should be solved before there is a serious accident, not after, so I'll make sure they [BEAR] are aware of it.'

A spokeswoman from BEAR Scotland said: 'A road safety review of this section of the A82 has been carried out following the recent incidents at the Ballachulish roundabout.'

'As a result of this, the road surface and signs are to be improved in the coming weeks.'

'Road safety is a top priority and we will continue to work with Police Scotland and Transport Scotland on this important issue.'



Looking to the stars to remember

THE FIRST astronomy event in memory of a well-known Lochaber man was held on Tuesday.

Caol primary school played host to Professor John Brown, 10th astronomer royal for Scotland, as he held two lectures to commemorate former pupil William Cameron.

Professor Brown organised the event with the late Mr Cameron's sister, Lorna MacCallum, to commemorate the former Nevis Radio station manager.

As well as the day and evening lectures, the school pupils were treated to a pop-up planetarium in the gym hall, where they had the opportunity to stargaze and learn about the night sky.

The £565 raised at the event was donated to Macmillan Cancer Support.

COMMEMORATION: Professor John Brown, left, gave the first William Cameron Lecture. He is pictured with the late Mr Cameron's mother Betty, father Tavish and sister Lorna MacCallum

STARRY-EYED: Caol primary school pupils enjoyed a planetarium experience from their gym hall

John Muir Trust cash boosts groups

COMMUNITY projects in the West Highlands have benefited from almost £6,000 of funding.

Each year The John Muir Trust donates money to a range of nature-based schemes and this year groups on Harris, Skye and Lochaber were among the 10 to receive a cash boost.

Nevis Partnership, in Fort William received £1,220 to bridge a gap in funds until more grants are provided for a range of projects held at Glen Nevis. Also in

Lochaber, the Knoydart Foundation was awarded £1,083 to construct nest boxes for owls to help birds breed in the area.

The North Harris Trust benefited from £3,000 towards the Isle of Harris Mountain Festival, which raises awareness about the importance of landscape and natural environment on the island, as well as boost the local economy outside the tourist season.

A final £560 was donated to Portree high school to allow 12 third year pupils to complete the John Muir Award, which includes

learning about conservation, exploring and wildlife on Skye. Mike Daniels, head of land and science for the trust, said: 'Our conservation land fund was established to help community projects on land that is either managed by the trust or by community landowners which we work in partnership with. Hopefully this will provide a modest boost to some of the most fragile communities in the Highlands and islands and help strengthen the historic link between people and nature across the region.'

Oban mountain team carry out 'textbook' rescue

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A MAN was airlifted to hospital at the weekend after breaking his ankle while hill-walking near Dalmailly.

The climber, a 59-year-old Irishman, fell while climbing a Beinn Udlaidh near Glen Orchy on Sunday around 10.45 am.

The climber was able to make his way down the gully, where a group of four other climbers met him and raised the alarm.

They helped him further down the mountain and waited for rescue teams to come to his aid.

Police Scotland's mountain rescue team and Oban mountain rescue team found the man and pinpointed his location for the Royal Navy rescue helicopter from HMS Gannet, Prestwick, which airlifted him to the Southern General hospital in Glasgow.

An Oban mountain rescue spokesman said: 'This was what we would class as a 'textbook rescue', although the man was fortunate that he was met by the other climbers, or it could have been a lot worse.'

'Conditions are not particularly good just now and we would always advise climbers to keep an eye on the Scottish Avalanche Information Service and err on the side of caution. Also, if possible, it always makes it safer to climb with others than on your own.'



TEXTBOOK RESCUE: the Royal Navy helicopter from HMS Gannet leaving Beinn Udlaidh on Sunday, airlifting an injured climber to the Southern General hospital in Glasgow

OAP jumps clear from runaway car

AN ELDERLY woman had a miraculous escape when she managed to jump clear of her own car, which crashed through the fence of an Oban garden centre.

The 85-year-old driver had been at the recycling point in Tesco car park but as she got into her automatic car, the foot mat caught on the accelerator and the Red Berlingo van lurched forward.

The woman was able to get out before the car smashed through the fence of The Landscaping Centre (TLC) at speed and destroyed garden furniture, pots, signs and seriously damaged a works van.

No one was seriously injured in the incident, although the elderly woman was taken to Lorn and Islands hospital with an injured leg.

The incident, at 3.19pm on Sunday, was captured on the centre's CCTV camera.

Witnesses reported hearing a loud bang as the car crashed into the fence. TLC employee Alan Steele had been shopping in Tesco when he came across the crash site and he contacted business owner Ruairaidh Neish.

Ruairaidh was not on site at the time of the crash but was called in shortly after. He said: 'My first thought was for the woman because I presumed she had been in the car. I didn't understand why she wouldn't be in it because I didn't think the car would have driven itself.'

'It was just lucky that no one was hurt. You see a lot of prams and children crossing the grass outside the yard.'



CLOSE ESCAPE: the Berlingo van crashed into The Landscaping Centre after the vehicle's accelerator jammed

Call to spend pier cash on Rockfield

LOUISE LEE
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THE FORMER Rockfield primary school should benefit from cash being pumped into the North Pier, says an Oban businessman.

A 'performance space' being created from the White Building and surrounding area would thrive in the planned Rockfield cultural hub, says owner of Oban restaurant Ee-usk, Alan MacLeod.

Oban Community Trust's (OCT) plans for the listed Victorian building include a theatre space, artist's workshops, office accommodation and a community canteen. Alan MacLeod said building

a performance space on Oban's North Pier isn't popular with his customers. But many have said they were hopeful the Rockfield 'cultural centre' would be up and running quickly.

Mr MacLeod continued: 'We are building the largest bus stop in Scotland on the North Pier, and I can not imagine a worse place for it.'

'The community is hoping to build a centre that will be a space for visitors and the community. I know where I would want the taxpayers money to go into a building that will deliver lots of things to do in Oban.'

'Oban's waterfront is one of the most beautiful in the world and we are about to plonk a great, big carbuncle right in the middle of

our outstanding scenery. To top it all, it will be a building without any sort of useful function.'

'The whole idea of the White Building was to support the infrastructure of a marina that doesn't now seem to be taking place. Instead we are getting six pontoons.'

'It is time Argyll and Bute council listened to the community: either give us the marina that 40 businesses put £1,000 cash into, or support the Rockfield development.'

'But for heaven's sake, don't build a huge bus stop - it doesn't make sense.'

OCT chairman Gordon MacNab told *The Oban Times* he would 'love to get £500,000, the money being invested into the

'performance space' at the North Pier.

Mr MacNab continued: 'The North Pier project seems like an extravagant waste of money. It is a pedestrian precinct that will serve very little purpose other than shelter when it is wet. It would seem a better idea to encourage people into local businesses when it is wet.'

'The money would make all the difference at Rockfield. It would allow us to get under way with our plans immediately.'

However, a council spokesman said: 'Regeneration plans for Oban's North Pier are a key part of our work to secure a prosperous future for the area.'

'We share this ambition with the local people and companies

who are also playing their part in growing the local economy. This work will ultimately enhance the pier for everyone who uses it.'

'It aims to benefit local businesses and complement their own activity by attracting more people. In place of the White Building we will be constructing a new, purpose-built facility.'

'The performance space will become a focal point where people can gather together and a disembarking point for cruise passengers.'

'We have used a series of consultations with the local community, particularly those directly affected by the project, to inform our plans and are confident that the final design will suit everyone.'

Search on for Fort citizen of the year

FOLLOWING a successful first year, Fort William community council will be presenting an award to another outstanding member of the town's community.

Last year, former Belford Hospital surgeon David Sedgwick won the inaugural Citizen of the Year prize and now entries are open for the second year.

The nomination form states the award is intended for someone living or working in Fort William for 'outstanding personal and voluntary service to the Fort William community' or 'whose service has made a special contribution to the life and wellbeing of Fort William and the wider community'.

Nominations can be made to any member of the community council. Contact details for members can be found on the high street notice board.

Forms are also available from the town's library and council service point or from Drew Purdon at House of Clan Jamfrie, High Street.

All nominations must be with the community council by the end of March.

Grant boost for carers and scouts

TWO West Highland community groups have received more than £15,000 in grants.

Care Lochaber was given £6,119 by Awards For All to help promote monthly social events which will in turn raise awareness for the charity.

Lochalsh Scout Group received £9,750 to buy camping equipment.

Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, welcomed the news.

He said: 'I would like to congratulate both groups for their successful applications to Awards for All and wish them all the best in continuing with the great work they are doing to help those most in need.'

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Campaign's cash prize incentive

SCHOOLS in the West Highlands could win £1,000 as part of a scheme to stop young people smoking and drinking.

The competition from the Trading Standards Institute encourages high school pupils to come up with a campaign to combat both illegal sales to underage people and the use of tobacco and alcohol by children.

Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, directed '10 years of a child's life saved', a previous campaign on the same subject.

He said: 'It was a pleasure to host 10 years of a child's life saved in the [Scottish] parliament. I was able to formally endorse the campaign to stop illegal sales of tobacco and alcohol products to children, which aside from being illegal, helps young people to start their life on a healthier footing, by not being exposed to the seriously damaging effects of smoking and drinking.'

More information about the campaign can be found at www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/home.cfm.

Young artists impress judges

BUDDING young artists in Lochaber impressed judges of a creative competition when they were urged to be inspired by nature.

More than 400 drawings, paintings and poems in both English and Gaelic were submitted to the contest by Nevis Landscape Partnership and John Muir Trust, from schoolchildren from Fort William to the Small Isles.

Freja MacDougall, of Nevis Landscape Partnership, said: 'This is my first year helping out with the creative competition and I've been amazed by how diverse and interesting the children's work is. A big "thank you" to all the teachers who really got on board with this and ensured we had such a huge response.'

The top entries were displayed at the Fort William Mountain Festival and can also be found on the Nevis Landscape Partnership website.

Skye owner new food group head

A MICHELIN star restaurant owner from Skye has been named chairwoman of the Scottish Food Commission.

Shirley Spear, founder, co-owner and former head chef of Three Chimneys, Colbost, will lead the commission in efforts to improve the country's attitude to eating fresh and healthy produce.

She said: 'Good food and Scotland are two things I can safely say I am very passionate about in life. Scotland's natural larder of exceptional ingredients is something that every member of our population should regard with a big spoonful of pride. There is an incredibly important job to be done and I am going to take a huge amount of responsibility and personal pride in helping to set goals and achieve improvements over the next few years, together with my colleagues.'

Argyll helps biofuel cars hit the road

WHISKY residue from Argyll may soon be powering cars throughout the UK.

Edinburgh-based Celtic Renewables has become the first company in the world to produce biofuel capable of powering cars from residues of the whisky industry.

The company will unveil the first samples, along with plans to locate a production facility capable of producing several million litres of biofuel a year, at the Grangemouth petrochemical plant.

Eat safe award for Glencoe café

A CAFE in Glencoe has been named one of the safest places to eat.

Crafts and Things was given an award from Highland council's environmental health department for going over and above requirements detailed in health and safety law.

The gift and coffee shop is one of only 12 in the local authority area to receive the Eat Safe award and staff were delighted when it was presented by councillor Thomas MacLennan, Lochaber area leader.

Owner David Cooper said: 'It's down to the training we give our staff. When we were assessed for health and safety we were also tested for this and they said our staff training exceeded expectations.'

'All of the credit goes to my manageress Mary MacIntyre and the rest of my staff, they do a great job every day.'

ACCOLADE: John Murray, left, of environmental health and councillor Thomas MacLennan, right, present the Eat Safe certificate to Mary MacIntyre, manager, and staff of Crafts and Things



Oban's north pier plans revised

LOUISE LEE
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REVISED plans will go before Argyll and Bute planners for a smaller 'performance space' on the North Pier after the council was threatened with legal action.

Last month, *The Oban Times* reported that a writ had been issued by father and son Alan and Callum MacLeod from North Pier restaurants Piazza and Ee-usk to force the council to reconsider a covered area that would back onto their buildings, limiting their rights under a 99-year tenancy agreement.

At Oban's community council meeting on Monday night, town centre project manager Linda Houston said a revised plan for a reduction in the size of an overhanging canopy on the performance space would be going before planners.

She said the new plans would allow access to the buildings and would allow the back of the building to be visible to tourists.

Ms Houston, who has led the project since 2008, said: 'We are in discussions with the businesses on the North Pier and we are actively working on a design that will satisfy everybody.'

'We are planning to reduce the scope of the canopy.'

'All the same facilities inside the building will remain the same. We are drawing back the scale.'

'The amended design will be with planners and available for everyone to see.'

Councillor Roddy McCuish, chairman of Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee said at the meeting: 'This shows a willingness to try and compromise. We have been thinking about this since 2008.'

'I hope this will allow the project to go ahead without delay.'

But community councillor George Berry disagreed. 'I don't share your optimism. I spoke to the owners. Are you not putting the cart before the horse again by telling us something that has not been fully agreed by the MacLeods?' he asked.

Alan MacLeod said on Tuesday: 'We have not seen any plans. I can hardly accept something that I have not seen.'

'They have said the size of the building will be reduced. I will need to see what they are thinking about. The truth is we will be happy if our access around the building, as agreed in our tenancy, is maintained.'

Group's road safety re-think call

EMMA CRICHTON
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A CAMPAIGN group has called for accident-reduction measures instead of a speed-limit reduction on the road connecting Skye to the mainland.

Members of Sleat Transport Forum objected to plans by Transport Scotland to introduce

a 50-miles-per-hour limit on stretches of the Invergarry-Uig road because they believe it would encourage speeding as commuters rush to make ferry connections.

The plans include reducing the limit from 60mph to 50mph on the section from Invergarry to Viewpoint and from Cluanie Inn to Kintail Lodge Hotel.

In a letter to Transport Scotland, Rob Ware, secretary of

the transport forum, said there had been an 'apparent lack of consideration to alternative road-safety measures'.

He added: 'The sections of road in question serve the fragile rural communities of Lochalsh, Skye and the Western Isles.'

'The economies of these areas are dependent on efficient road access to, and from, the south and rely heavily on tourism.'

'Vehicles travelling to the

Western Isles have to connect with ferries and any further impediment to their progress such as reduced speed limits could lead to breaches of these lower limits as they try and arrive at the terminals in time or miss their connections, thereby adding to their deprivation.'

Mr Ware also suggested improved signage, markings, skid resistance, visibility, road re-profiling and additional laybys

could be implemented to reduce accidents, without dropping the speed limit.

A Transport Scotland spokesman said: 'We are currently considering the comments received since we announced our intention to reduce the speed limit and we hope to discuss the most appropriate way forward with community representatives in the near future.'



DETERMINED: Roslyn MacPherson, SNP candidate for Foghla agus Uibhist a Tuath

Benbecula pair go head-to-head in council by-election

TWO candidates have confirmed they will stand in the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar by-election for Benbecula and North Uist.

Roslyn MacPherson is the Scottish National Party (SNP) candidate for the Beinn na Foghla agus Uibhist a Tuath ward and will be up against independent Andrew Walker.

The pair, who both live on Benbecula, have a month of campaigning before polling day on March 26. Ms MacPherson works for Skills Development Scotland and was previously a counsellor for the National Childbirth Trust.

She said: 'I look forward to using that time to listen to views and concerns and to demonstrate my desire to be part of representing the people of

Benbecula and North Uist at the Comhairle.

'I know I can hit the ground running, given the encouragement I've been given by the SNP council group. Having lived, worked and raised a family in the ward for the past 20 years, I'm well acquainted with many of the challenges we face, and I'm determined to make our voice heard at local government level and beyond.'

Mr Walker is retired from the social care industry and is active within vulnerable people charity Tagsa Uibhist and Benbecula community council.

He said: 'I have 41 years' experience as a social work practitioner and manager and have an interest in the integration of health and social care services.'



EXPERIENCED: Andrew Walker, independent candidate for Foghla agus Uibhist a Tuath

Patient transport scheme extended

A SCHEME to transport pensioners to and from hospital appointments by minibus is to be extended.

The trial was originally launched in June last year, led by Highland council along with NHS Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service and the Lochaber Transport Advice and Booking Service (LTABS), and saw a minibus take patients to appointments at the rural unit in Belford Hospital and an ambulance would return them home.

Now the trial will be extended to allow patients to be taken home on the bus, owned by Invernevis Care Home in Fort William. It is hoped this will provide a 'joined-up approach' between health and transport, helping people attend appointments and meet other people.

Flora McKee of LTABS said: 'The benefits are accessible and cost effective transport solutions, enabling more access to hospital and doctors' surgeries.'

'The renal transport pilot is just one example of the collaborative work undertaken by the service developing in-house transport solutions for the NHS to the benefit of Lochaber residents.'

Leading role in harnessing wave power praised

HIGHLANDS and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor has praised Argyll and Bute for leading the way in harnessing wave power in Scotland.

Mr McGrigor, who is the Scottish Conservative environment spokesman, said on February 19, in a member's

debate on the subject of renewable energy: 'We live in a time where energy security is becoming ever-more important.'

'If we want to avert the consequences of climate change we must cut down on our carbon dioxide emissions, and wave power can play an important

part in doing so. One example of how wave power is already working can be found in Argyll and Bute, on Islay, where a LIMPET has been operational since 2000.'

The Islay LIMPET, which stands for Land Installed Marine Power Energy Transmitter, was

the world's first commercial wave power device connected to the United Kingdom's National Grid and produces 250 kW of electricity. Mr McGrigor added: 'Islay is also the location for a significant tidal power development and this is another promising technology with a

guaranteed power source, four times every 24 hours.'

'I note the people on Luings, who are calling for a fixed link to the mainland for the island, are suggesting housing a tidal generator as well.'

The idea is good if it can work in practise.'



ASCOT: Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative is taking Argyll to Ascot in a bid to attract an international audience

Tourism group takes Argyll to Ascot to catch the eye of international audience

ARGYLL and the Isles Tourism Co-operative (AITC) is taking Argyll to Ascot in a bid to gain an international audience.

AITC chairman Gavin Dick says promoting Argyll is like betting on a winning horse.

AITC development manager Carron Tobin is heading to Ascot to promote the area to more than 260 buyers from 40 countries at VisitBritain's very first Explore GB.

It is an international event with more than 30 contacts with countries as far apart as Canada, Japan and Russia, as well as some from closer to home in the

group's appointment book. Explore GB is the first event in a very busy few weeks for AITC, as next week it will join tourism colleagues at the Scottish Tourism Alliance's national conference in Glasgow.

The group will then head south of the border to the NEC in Birmingham to exhibit at Best of Britain and Ireland (BoBI) on March 11 and 12. The fourth AITC summit will be held at Lochs and Glens Ardgartan Hotel on March 17, and then the team will be back on the road, this time to Aberdeen, for VisitScotland Expo on April 22 - 23.

Mr Dick said: 'Argyll and the isles boasts

some of the UK's most breathtaking scenery and wildlife, which together offer the perfect platform for all sorts of outdoor activities.'

'We, of course, also have countless other attractions and reasons to come and stay.'

'Our diversity is undoubtedly one of our greatest assets. We are fortunate to represent a region that has something for everyone.'

'Whether visitors are looking for castles, beaches, mountains, distilleries, islands, walking, adventure, locally-sourced food, scenery, golf, history or any one of countless other attractions - Argyll and the isles has it all.'

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Power giant accused of ignoring campaigners

BOSSSES of power giants Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) have been accused of 'washing their hands' of a campaign to end a surcharge on consumers in the Highlands and islands.

A group of representatives, from Lochaber to the Hebrides, met SSE staff at the firm's headquarters in Perth last week and called for equal pricing across the country, which would mean abolishing the two pence per unit additional charge currently implemented in the north.

Angus McCormack, of Western Isles Poverty Action Group, has been one of the lead campaigners for the cause.

He said: 'It is ridiculous that in an area which actually produces clean electricity that people are genuinely living in hardship and not being able to properly heat their homes.'

'For a company that made £1.5 billion of profit last year to effectively wash its hands of this is unacceptable.'

'We would ask SSE to take this matter seriously and do something from its own vast resources for its customers in the Highlands and islands.'

Also representing the Highlands was John Maciver of Hebridean Housing Partnership, Donnie Mackay from Skye and Lochalsh Housing Association and Di Alexander from Lochaber Housing Association.

A spokesman for SSE said the meeting was 'productive' but the company alone could not abolish the charge.

He said: 'We had a productive meeting where we discussed how we can work together to support those living in fuel poverty.'

'SSE is keen to work closely with the groups going forward and share SSE's expertise to ensure more people are aware of all measures available to those who may be worried about their energy bills.'

'SSE also discussed the extensive work it's carried out to make the case for national pricing with Ofgem, Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Scottish government and the Competition and Markets Authority.'

'This is an industry-wide issue and requires an industry-wide solution and we urged those present to support us in making the case for moving to national pricing which will be a simpler and fairer way forward.'



FORT WILLIAM MAN TEAMS UP WITH UNIVERSITY FRIENDS TO ROW ACROSS ATLANTIC OCEAN IN 50 DAYS

Liam sets sail on gruelling charity rowing challenge

EMMA CRICHTON
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A FORT William man is set to row across the Atlantic Ocean in less than 50 days to raise thousands of pounds for charity.

Liam Browning, 30, and three friends, will complete the 3,000-mile challenge in December in aid of Unicef, the Cystic Fibrosis Trust and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

The group, who met at Newcastle University, will row their boat 24 hours a day, swapping at two-hour intervals for short bursts of sleep from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Antigua.

They have allocated 50 days for the trip as part of the organised Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge but hope to beat the record of 39 days.

In preparation, this weekend Mr Browning will be joined in Lochaber by the rest of his team, Stuart Markland, James Timbs-Harrison and James Kendall, for an intense training session in Loch Linnhe.

Rowing under the team name 'All Beans No Monkeys', the



BEANS: Liam Browning from Fort William will row the Atlantic with university friends in December this year. From front: James Timbs-Harrison, Stuart Markland, James Kendall and Liam Browning

crew will set off from Corpach on Saturday to row constantly for 24 hours.

Now manager of a commercial shipping company, Mr Browning said he thinks this will be crucial practise for the group.

He said: 'It's certainly going to be cosy on board, with not too much space.'

'I had no sea sickness after the first row but I am sure it will catch us when we go for our next row which will be 24 hours long. Overcoming that will be part of the long challenge ahead of us.'

All four members of All Beans No Monkeys have been running, swimming and training on rowing machines to train and think they will need to eat up to 10,000 calories every day to keep up their strength when on board their boat.

The team have even had their boat specially made for them by a company based in Dorset, but despite all the preparation, they have only raised £1,125 and have a long way to go to reach their £60,000 target.

To find out more, donate or sponsor the group, go to <http://allbeansnomonkeys.com>.

Resurfacing work starts on A830 at Corpach

WORK will start this weekend on improving the A830 road at Corpach.

Earlier this month *The Oban Times* reported drivers were 'dugusted' at the potholes in the Fort William-Mallaig trunk road but repair group BEAR Scotland announced on Monday that resurfacing work will begin on Sunday March 1.

The £350,000 investment will provide a 'durable and long-lasting surface', according to a BEAR spokeswoman.

Work will be carried out overnight, Sunday to Thursday, for two weeks, between 7pm and 6am. Temporary traffic lights and a 10mph convey system will be in place during working hours.

Eddie Ross, BEAR's operating company representative for the north-west, said: 'These essential overnight works will lead to a much-improved road surface and is part of a programme of maintenance works along this lifeline route.'

'Whilst the resurfacing works may result in some short-term disruption, the traffic management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of both motorists and road workers. We would like to thank motorists in advance for their patience and also encourage them to plan ahead before setting out.'

New look at village slate quarries



SLATE PROJECT: taking a look at the slate arch in Ballachulish which will be major part of the project, from left, Highland councillor Thomas MacLennan, Kevin Smith of Ballachulish Community Council, Highland councillor Brian Murphy, builder Derek MacPherson, Lorna MacAskill of Ballachulish Community Council, and Highland Council ranger, Michelle Melville.

A NEW local history project will kick off in Ballachulish next week to find out more about the slate quarries.

It is part of a wider plan to conserve the slate arch, also known as the Tom Beag Inclined Plane, which was used to transport the slate from the quarries down to boats waiting on Loch Leven.

Funding for this has been provided by Highland council as owners of the structure, Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

Interpretative panels will also be erected and those behind the project want to hear stories and information to help them with this.

People from the village and the surrounding areas are being invited to a workshop to launch the project, held on Thursday March 5 in Ballachulish Shinty Club from 6.30pm.

Scottish historian Margaret Bennett will lead the event to help piece together information about the historic Ballachulish quarry.

Earlier the same day, Ms Bennett will be leading an informal story-gathering session with residents and those attending the lunch club at Abbeyfield

care home in the village, where it is hoped much information will come to the fore.

The whole project will be run by Highland council, owners of the structure.

Project co-ordinator Verity Walker said: 'Many local people have family memories of the quarry and some older residents even recall going up there as children and being allowed to work the slate alongside the men.'

'The aim of our project is to help collect these memories and stories, and to look at how they can be shared with other local people and visitors.'

Ballachulish community council chairman Kevin Smith thinks it will be a positive project for villagers to take part in.

He said: 'This is not only a project with benefits for visitors, but one with great opportunities for local people too.'

'We will be inviting local folk to get involved in many ways - by sharing stories, by training in oral history recording techniques and also by taking part in practical slate-working training.'

'This project is going to allow us all to learn more about our slate quarrying heritage and to share it with others.'

Call for return of free school milk drink

A HIGHLAND politician is calling for the return of free milk for school children.

Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, has raised the idea of 'dairy breaks' at primary schools, with flavoured milk or yoghurt provided each day.

He has now written to bosses of major retail chains asking for a financial contribution, as well as asking Maureen Watt, Scottish minister for public health, for her support.

Mr Thompson said: 'Many schools and have breakfast clubs, because some children come to school without breakfast and it is not good for their ability to learn if they come to school with an empty stomach.'

'Could we look at providing a mid-morning flavoured milk or yoghurt break for kids, which would help them and give them more nutrition at that time?'

'I remember well when I was at school, a long time ago, we had daily milk. Sometimes it was good, sometimes it was not so good and sometimes it was better.'

'We could make the milk attractive, it could be flavoured, or we could have yoghurt and so on. I am sure that it would help children physically and mentally, and it would help the industry.'

New sleeper trains on track to deliver 'innovative' travel

NEW TRAINS for the Caledonian sleeper service will offer 'innovative' ways to travel, according to directors.

The overnight transport, which includes a Fort William to London

service, will be taken over by Serco in April and bosses of the traffic company have already unveiled plans for 75 new coaches for the sleeper trains, which will be brought into service in 2018.

Private cabins, with or without ensuite showers, will be available as well as 'pod flatbeds' which recline from chairs into beds. 'Cradle seats' with reclining footrests will also be on offer.

Peter Strachan, Serco's managing director for the new Caledonian sleeper, said: 'This is a major milestone in our plans to deliver an innovative new service. I'm absolutely delighted we have

signed contracts with our partners and look forward to delivering an improved service from April 1 and from 2018 when we introduce the innovative new coaches into service.'

New wind farm map revealed

A NEW interactive map has been launched showing all wind farms and turbines in the Highlands.

Available on Highland council's website, it shows all scales of on-shore wind turbine developments with details such as turbine size and planning reference numbers so further information can be accessed.

The map was revealed at

a meeting of the planning, development and infrastructure committee last week.

Chairman councillor Thomas Prag said: 'This is a step up from what we have previously provided and gives very clear and comprehensive information at the click of a mouse.'

'I am sure people will find having such an interactive and visual representation of where

we currently are in terms of wind farm activity very useful.

'At the moment just the constructed and under construction schemes are shown on the map but plans are to get all approved schemes, refused schemes and those in the planning process added.'

The map can be viewed by visiting www.highland.gov.uk/windmap.

Schools' spotlight on skills courses

YOUNG people in the Western Isles will be given the opportunity to choose courses to provide skills in the workplace while still at school.

Qualifications in both engineering and health and social care will be available to senior pupils of The Nicolson Institute in Stornoway, Castlebay on Barra, Lionacleit on Benbecula and Sir E Scott on Harris.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is working with a number of other organisations to implement the courses which will be piloted from August and be in place island-wide from 2016.

Available at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels five and six, (the equivalent of the old standard grade and higher), the two-year courses will combine on-the-job skills with academic study, allowing pupils to apply directly for jobs in both fields before leaving school.

Air fare discount scheme extended

ISLANDERS are to benefit from money off flights for another four years.

The air discount scheme, which provides a 40 per cent reduction on core fares for residents of Colonsay, Islay, Jura, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, has been extended until March 2019, transport minister Derek Mackay announced last week.

Alasdair Allan, MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, welcomed the news.

He said: 'The air discount scheme has continued to be a resounding success in the Western Isles, together with many other island communities, with more than 90 per cent of our eligible residents signed up to take advantage of discounts.'

'This level of uptake, and markedly increased passenger numbers, underlines just how valuable the scheme is to remote communities which previously contended with relatively high air fares.'

Oban High School Fundraiser for Laurinburg Exchange

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It is, as the Americans so concisely if a little prosaically express it, a 'no-brainer'. Food, to quote Oban restaurateur Alex Needham, is the bread and butter of the West Highlands.

Hotels, restaurants, tearooms, pubs and cafes from Fort William to Dalmally, pride themselves on a standard of cuisine and hospitality which is the envy of the rest of Scotland. It's a brand leader.

So why, asks Mr Needham, is the hospitality industry not promoted more vigorously by the authorities, agencies and schools as a worthwhile career path for school leavers?

People naturally think of traditional apprenticeships as the mainstay of the local economy, but tend to overlook the part played by hospitality. Mr Needham has given all of us something to chew on.



Days gone by: Mull Mod 1998

Oban Gaelic Choir pictured after competing at Mull Mod in 1998. Digital versions of flashback photos for The Oban Times can be sent to editor@obantimes.co.uk or prints sent in to Editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Anyone who wishes a print returned should include a stamped, addressed envelope.

Sort out the dog mess problem

Sir, Whilst all councils love accolades and awards, can Oban really take pride in being the dog poo capital of Scotland?

I appreciate that from a European perspective, our Skye terriers and Westies are outperforming French poodles and German shepherds but our council leaders must step into the dog poo problem.

Tourists are the economic lifeblood of the town.

But the North Pier toilets often run out of toilet paper and soap whilst visitors on their 'customer journey' walk along George Street and into piles of dog mess.

To the authority's credit though, it does not just show contempt for visitors as it ignores the needs of council tax payers too. Up here on Pulpit Hill, having dog poo picked up is less likely than Scotland winning at rugby or cricket.

Argyll's council should look into special dog waste bins and designate a named council officer to be accountable for sorting out this smelly mess.

Mike Foster, Crannaig a Mhinister, Oban.

Clan Campbell's part in Glencoe massacre

Sir, I write in regard to the letter in The Oban Times of February 12 'Campbell's exonerated'.

Whilst the part played in this slaughter under trust by the government's representatives cannot

be exonerated, there can be no doubt that the part played by Clan Campbell was as guilty as the rest.

From Glen Lyon down there were still upwards of 90 men in the command of the name Campbell that took the hospitality of Maclan.

Remembering that Maclan's wish to take the oath led him a merry dance through Clan Campbell lands, there can never be doubt that Clan Campbell had a part in this slaughter.

Play the tape to 1752 and Clan Campbell raises its government head again in its 'art in part' hanging of Seumas a ghlinne.

There is a long-standing hatred of the Clan Campbell throughout the period of the demise of Clan Donald.

Iain Lom records the deeds of Clan Donald at Inverloch in 1645 and that great slaughter.

Clan Campbell expansion through government titles and the taking over of post reformation church lands cannot be disputed.

Fact or legend there can be no doubting the part played by Clan Campbell in the slaughter under trust that was the massacre of Glencoe.

Stewart Connor, Sanday, Isle of Canna.

Great job by snowplough drivers

Sir, I write to praise the men manning the snowploughs on the morning of Monday February 23 in Glencoe and on Rannoch Moor.

I travelled from Tyndrum to Appin that morning. Snow and high winds blocked the road over Rannoch for several hours. But the snowplough crews did an excellent job in foul conditions to clear the road so we

could get through. Well done and thank you.

Alasdair MacDiarmid, Appin.

Hard-working MP

Sir, May I congratulate Brendan O'Hara on winning the contest to represent the SNP in the forthcoming general election.

It was interesting to hear his call for a 'new type of politics'. It is difficult not to agree that politics has become top down and out of touch when one looks at the result of creating a single police force that put armed police on streets in the Highlands. If he wants us to listen to the voice of the community, did he not hear what 60 per cent of the electorate in Argyll and Bute told us in the referendum?

To guarantee the new powers now being drafted by Alistair Carmichael, we need a strong Liberal Democrat presence in Westminster. Scottish home rule is a long-standing Liberal Democrat policy and Alan Reid and his colleagues have already delivered the 2012 Scotland Act, which started the transfer of fiscal powers to the Scottish parliament. That now needs to be completed.

Alan Reid is not a London-obsessed politician and spends an enormous amount of his time touring his huge constituency, meeting constituents. He also has an impeccable attendance and voting record in parliament.

With the Tories having announced Argyll and Bute is not on the list of seats it will be fighting to win, this contest is clearly between the hardworking Alan Reid and the SNP. Andrew Nisbet, Convenor, Helensburgh and Lomond Liberal Democrats.

Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON
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MG Alba

ON WEDNESDAY February 18, MG Alba held a public meeting in the Gaelic department of Glasgow University - one of a number it is currently holding across the country.

It is in the process of planning its strategy to 2020, which will be published this summer, and are using the meetings to hear the public's view on how the channel should progress.

A meeting was also held in Edinburgh on Thursday February 19. Other meetings will take place between now and the end of March in Oban, Fort William, Skye, Inverness, Lewis, South Uist, Barra and Tiree - exact details of which are yet to be confirmed.

As well as the public meetings, there is a questionnaire available on their website www.mgalba.com.

Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir annual concert

GLASGOW Islay Gaelic Choir will be holding its annual concert on Friday February 27 at 7.30pm in Bearsden Burgh Hall on Drymen Road at Bearsden Cross.

The evening will be chaired by Alasdair Gillies. Tickets are £8 and children under 15 get in free.

Tickets can be bought in advance from choir members or at the door on the night.

Tiree Association drama night

ON SATURDAY February 28, an evening of dinner, dram and drama will be held in Ralston Community Hall, Allantown Avenue, Paisley starting at 7pm.

The Tiree West End Players will be performing 'An Coigreach' - a humorous bilingual play by Mable Macarthur.

Tickets are £16 and audience members must bring their own refreshments. Contact Morag-Anne on 07763 126390 for more details.

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

LETH-CHEUD BLIADHNA air ais chaidh mi a dheasbad às leth Àrd-Sgoil Phort Rìgh ann am Farpais Deasbhad Sgoiltean Alba a bha an Daily Express a' cur air adhart. Ged a b' i Port Rìgh an sgoil a bu lugha san farpais, rinn sinn meadhanach math, a' ruigheachd na cairteal chuirtean deireannach san farpais. Ach 's e thug orm iomradh a thoirt air an fharpais sin gum bheil deagh chuimhne agam air a' chiad chuspair a bh' againn ri a dheasbad. B' e sin gun robh spòrs air tighinn gu bhith na chultar a' mhòr-shluagh.

Saoilidh mi gun gabhadh deasbad gu math beothail a chur air adhart air a' chuspair sin an-diugh cuideachd oir ged a tha iomadh cur-seachad eadar-dhealichte a' dol, tha an t-uabhas dhaoine a' leantainn spòrs, agus gu sònraichte ball-coise. 'S dòcha gu dearbh gur e an cuspair a bu chòir a dheasbad caran a tha eadar-dhealachadh cho mòr ann am modh giùlain cuid de luchd-leantainn

Glasgow Islay annual gathering

AN COMUNN Ieach Ghlaschu's annual gathering will take place on Friday March 6 at 7.30pm.

Association president Janette MacArthur will host the evening and the concert will be chaired by Peter Campbell - former manager of Lagavulin distillery and now manager of Cardhu distillery.

There will be Gaelic songs from Janet Campbell, Linda MacLeod, and Angus MacLeod.

Andrew MacTaggart, who often sings with Scottish Opera, will also be entertaining the audience. Piano accompaniment will be provided by Kirsteen Grant.

The fantastically musical young Rowan Brothers, Alan and Kyle, will be giving a few tunes on the accordion and piano.

Tickets will be available at the door for what looks set to be a great night.

Latha na Gàidhlig

GLASGOW University's annual Latha na Gàidhlig (Gaelic language day) will be held on Friday March 6.

This is a whole day of Gaelic events at the university organised by the Gaelic department.

Events include a lunch time concert in the university, a Gaelic pub quiz in the beer bar and live music in the café at the university's Fraser Building.

Menus in the Fraser Building café - the busiest in the university - will all be written in Gaelic to mark the event.

This will surely make for some very confused, hungry students!

The day will be finished off with a 'house ceilidh' in the evening at Partickhill bowling club pavilion at which anyone in attendance is invited to give a song, a tune or a story.

The ceilidh will start at 8pm.

GG concert

GLASGOW Gaelic Musical Association is holding its annual concert on Friday March 13 at 7.30pm in Partick Burgh Hall.

The programme is full of old Gaelic

choral favourites along with solos from Joy Dunlop, Jayne Morrison, DI Brown and Gordon Mackeeve.

The Glasgow Gaelic School folk group will also be performing.

What's on

Friday February 27: Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir annual concert, Bearsden Burgh Hall, 7.30pm.

Friday February 27: Glasgow Uist and Barra Association ceilidh dance, Crawford Hall.

Saturday February 28: Three Association drama night, Ralston Community Hall, Paisley, 7pm.

Saturday February 28: Glasgow Skye Association Buntàta 's Sgadan in the Crawford Hall.

Saturday February 28: Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association buffet ceilidh, Partick bowling club.

Wednesday March 4: An Lòchran's traditional music session at the Lismore.

Friday March 6: Glasgow Islay Association annual gathering concert in Glasgow University Union at 7.30pm.

Friday March 6: Latha na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Language Day) at the University of Glasgow, followed by a taigh-ceilidh in Partickhill bowling green pavilion.

Saturday March 7: Glasgow Uist and Barra Association annual invitational piping competition in the Piping College.

Saturday March 7: Clydebank and District Highland Association ceilidh dance, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick.

Thursday March 12: Comunn an Taobh-an-Iar closing ceilidh, Ellangowan social club, Milngavie.

Friday March 13: The GG annual concert, Partick Burgh Hall, 7.30pm.

Friday March 13: Clydebank and District Highland Association ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick.

Pub scene

Friday February 27 Trail West.

Saturday February 28: Dodgy Ground. Sunday February 29: Scott Harvey.

Islay Inn: Friday February 27: The O' Cajunals.

Saturday February 28: Gunna Sound. Sunday February 29: Open Mic.

Robert Robertson
robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk

Ailean Caimbeul

annas sam bith a ghabhail a bhith a' faicinn gràin-cinnidh a' nochdadh an lùib nan eucoirean eile aig miastair-eann ball-coise, agus tha dùbhan eagalach romhainn cur às dha na beachdan nàr seo ann an Alba.

Ged nach i deoch-làidir màthair-adhbhar an t-suidheachaidh gu tur, saoilidh mise gum bheil an seanfhacal fìor a thuir, far am bi an deoch a-staigh bidh a' chiall a-muigh! Chan eil mi idir a' tuigsinn carson a tha cuid ag iarraidh lagh dibhe aig geamannan ball-coise atharrachadh an-dràsta.

WITH 90 per cent of the people of Scotland of the view that the shameful scourge of sectarianism in this country is principally fuelled through football one must surely ask if this is the right time to be considering a relaxation of alcohol laws at football matches.

Alcohol may not be the primary cause of sectarianism but adding more drink to the terraces will not bring a resolution closer!

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

Press policy

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

We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times,

Crannog Lane, Lochavullin estate, Oban, PA34 4HB.

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can

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We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

Your letters

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

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal

addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith.

A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

Anonymous letters or those supplied without a

contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

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- Across
- Country which uses the zloty (6)
 - Burning (6)
 - Eating implement (4)
 - Train operated from either end (4-4)
 - Unrelaxed (7)
 - Substantial (5)
 - Direction (5)
 - Swiss cheese (7)
 - Abstruse (8)
 - Aerial maneuver (4)
 - American railroad signal (6)
 - Wolf-like (6)
- Down
- Aría (4)
 - Current subject of gossip (4,2,3,4)
 - In a proficient manner (7)
 - Midsection (5)
 - Once on, it's downhill all the way (8,5)
 - One who tries to do better (8)
 - Circular motion made by one descending from the air (8)
 - Small thorn (7)
 - Grounds (5)
 - Grunt from a sty (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

T	R	A	U	M	A	O	P	T	I	O	N
A	L	P	I	N	E	S	A	D	M	I	T
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THE winter the West Highlands and Islands has been through means everyone deserves a warmer few months as February comes to an end.

The wild winds, horrific hail and shocking sleet and snow made for some tough times, so thankfully it's now the time of year when the world is springing to life around everyone.

But as the light shines in through the windows, there is a lot to be done now the weather is set to turn kinder.

One little-known fact is that more people set out to improve their garden and home in the spring than at any other time of the year.

Most gardens need a complete overhaul after a harsh winter, especially if a lawn has been laid down – often the pride and joy of many a keen gardener.

The garden is in effect, a frame to the home.

It is what is seen by the onlooker. It is what gives the visitor that all-important, first impression of a house. It actually says a great deal about the occupants and their standards of living. In addition of course, it is a useful extension to the home. It is a place to go to enjoy fresh air, privacy and the pleasures of flowers and foliage, bird song and the sky. A garden should be as carefully composed and tended as the best room in the home.

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There are three main areas of a garden that require care and attention. They are; the pathways and boundaries; the buildings and decorative structures; and the planted areas. Each requires attention of a special sort. Each poses its own special problems. They all combine together to provide that unique ambience that signifies the home.

Pathways and boundaries need to be in good repair or they don't do the jobs they are designed to do. Broken pathways and drives are ugly to look at and dangerous to use. Steps and slopes even more so. The secret is to repair regularly to avoid being faced with a huge bill when it is least wanted. And the same applies to boundaries and

gates. They represent part of the security provisions of a property. They also show the outside world the limits of the land, so it is important that boundaries are intact and gates close easily and securely.

A patio is part of this section and most homes these days either have one or are planning one. There is nothing quite so useful as this decorative paved area where garden furniture can stand securely and the outdoors can be enjoyed when perhaps the lawn is too wet to walk on. With a selection of containers with flowering plants and pretty foliage, they can add a continental touch to the garden. A brick-built barbecue area attached as well will make a patio a perfect entertaining area too.

While a beautiful garden is undoubtedly an asset to a property, in a climate like Scotland, more time is spent indoors!

Often improving a room at a time makes all the difference, and is the easiest, most hassle-free way to 'keep up with the Joneses'.

Up until about 50 years ago, the kitchen was the least considered room in any house. The very

name implied something low and almost not respectable. Kitchen maids were a long way down the domestic hierarchy. Kitchen porters were even lower in the commercial sphere.

When it came to equipping a kitchen little attention was paid to convenience, even less to hygiene. A cooker, sink, table, cupboard, meat safe and a couple of chairs were about the best most kitchens



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could boast. Decor was as basic as it could be - emulsion or whitewash on the walls. Luxury kitchens might have had white-tiled walls but even these did nothing to detract from the bare, comfortless utilitarianism of the room. It was a room to escape from, as fast as possible or to keep away from if lucky enough to be able to afford a cook.

Thankfully all that has changed. Domestic staff have all but vanished, so families now have to carry out the cooking duties, and of course they demand a little more in the way of comfort and convenience.

So from around the 1960s the kitchen became a top priority for modernisation. Since then, many kitchens have had more than one re-fit, and still the average householder will, even after 10 years, consider a brand new kitchen, spending more money on that room than any other room in the house.

A great deal of design thought and effort goes into the creation of today's kitchen furniture and equipment. It is now a room to be bang up-to-date, to be shown off to friends, to linger in, to enjoy.

For some time now, the bathroom has been considered an area where comfort can be expected. This is not unreasonable considering most people pop in and out of it almost as much as they pop in and out of any other room in the house. And let's face it; in a room where the least is worn, it is only sensible the heating and furnishing should be sufficient to keep a body warm and comfortable. For this reason, bathrooms should have rather more heating than is provided by a single bar towel rail. At least one full-sized radiator is required, if not more. And if, because of its size, switch-on/off heating has to be employed, it should be of sufficient capacity to

heat all corners of the room, fast.

Decor in the bathroom has changed a lot over recent years. The once almost universal, chilly white tiles have given way to colour. Tiles now come in a huge range of patterns, colours, sizes and textures, but there are other alternatives. Bathrooms may be fully lined with pine boards. Beautiful vinyls are available in rolls with warm textured surfacing to banish condensation. Cork tiling too is available and very lovely that can look when it has been carefully sealed. However, with changing attitudes to heating and ventilation, it is even possible to decorate bathrooms with normal wallpapers or textured sisals.

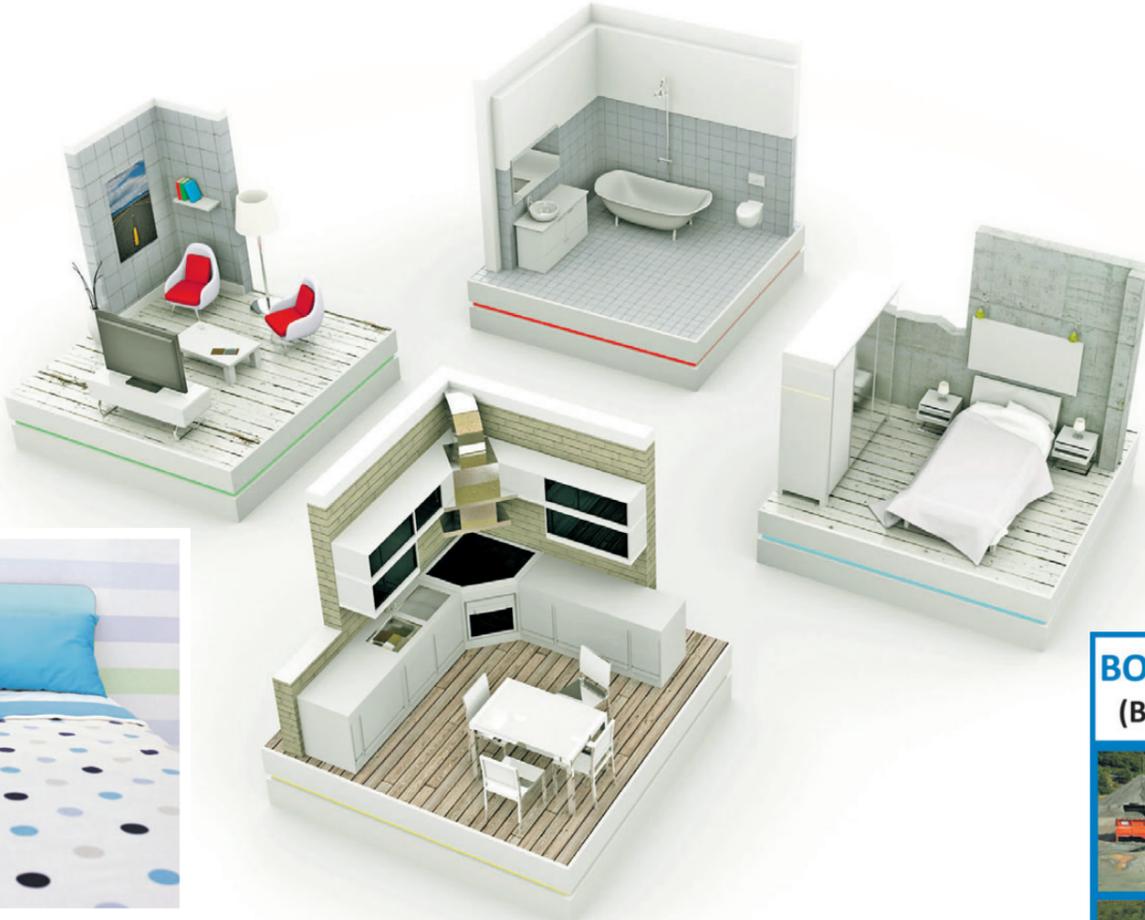
But decor doesn't stop there. Modern bathrooms have pictures, shelves for ornaments, and of course, the luxuriant growth of potted plants that find the atmosphere so very amenable.

Pretty curtains and blinds are included because gone, almost for good, are the plain boring, utilitarian window dressings of days gone by. Lighting is both concealed for relaxation, and direct for specific jobs like shaving and cosmetic application. And below it all, carpeting is thick and luxurious and wall-to-wall, carefully surrounding all the essential furniture that is the real business of the bathroom.

And of course, remember to keep warm in an efficient way.

Renewable energy has also become cheaper to install than ever before. Solar panels, air source heating pumps or a wood-burning stove, for example, could save thousands in the long run.

Just think, if started now, this time next year, the pipe dream could be a dream home!



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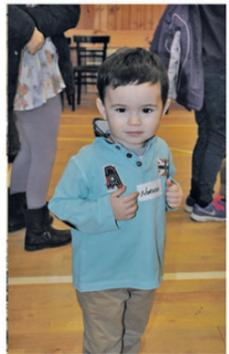
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Social scene

Fèis Mhuile



Youngsters enjoy Fèis Mhuile

MORE THAN 40 children recently attended Fèis Mhuile. The older children accessed classes with Kirsten Bennett (step dancing), Iain Cameron (accordion), Murdo Ewan Cameron (guitar), Alasdair Murray (drums), Allan Henderson (fiddle), Alasdair Whyte (singing) and Ross Wilson (keyboard). Younger children attended Fèis bheag, while others had fun with Sgioba G led by Vicky MacLean and Kirsty MacKinnon. Jennifer Johnston catered for the three and four-year-olds. Bunnassan resident Effie Cruden commented: 'It is great to see Fèis Mhuile back in Bunnassan. The village had a buzz over the weekend and the lovely weather allowed everyone to wander between venues.'

Riona Whyte, one of the organisers, said: 'I am delighted to see Fèis Mhuile back in Bunnassan where it all started 20 years ago. All the participants enjoyed their classes and praise must go to the tutors for their patience and encouragement. The community has been very supportive and the committee has worked very hard to ensure that participants had an enjoyable experience. I am looking forward to a successful future for Fèis Mhuile, inspiring participants, both young and old, to develop their skills and preserving their music and culture.'

Michael 'can't wait' to play in Oban

SINGER/songwriter Michael Cassidy is excited to be playing his first-ever gig in Oban next weekend, after hearing about the thriving music scene in the town. Michael, 28, has been playing the gig circuit for a number of years honing his song-writing and performance skills. In 2012 he became the first-ever winner of Scotland's prestigious Gerry Rafferty Songwriting Prize. The famous Scottish musician grew up in Michael's native Paisley. Michael, who has toured with Twin Atlantic and Ben Howard in the past, said: 'I'm really looking forward to finally getting up to play in Oban. I've been hearing great things about playing in the town so can't wait to come up. I've got the full band with me as well so it will be a fun night and I want to get people up dancing.'

Michael describes his music as folk pop and he cites diverse influences from Radiohead to Rufus Wainwright. The gig, at Cuan Mor's Brewery Bar on George Street is on Friday, March 6, and will feature music from Michael's debut album My Electric Heart, which includes the singles Everybody's Scared, Battleships and 15 Years. The gig is also a chance for local sound production students from Argyll College to gain experience of sound engineering a live gig with three different band requirements to test them on the night. Sound production course leader Richard Kengen explained: 'With teaching sound engineering you can only do so much in the classroom; so having the students actually put what they are learning into real situations and work on real gigs is fun for them and the best way for them to become confident enough to someday go out and do this for a living.'

Local support will come from artists Elissa Conway and Citizen 9. Tickets will be available on the door and are priced at £5 and is strictly over-18s. Doors open at 7.30pm.



SINGER/SONGWRITER: Michael Cassidy will be performing in Oban, with help from sound engineering students

Sequence choir going on tour

A LADIES' choir based near Oban is venturing out on tour in March to Campbeltown's Kirk Street hall. The prize-winning choir is conducted by former Campbeltownian Janet Fergusson (nee Martin), who herself is a renowned solo singer. Janet is currently working with students from Campbeltown Grammar school and some of them will also be performing solos at the concert, on March 14 at 7.30pm, which is in aid of Highland Parish Church funds. Janet, now of Benderloch, said: 'We decided to have a wee trip away after the long winter and I suggested Campbeltown. I first began to sing with the Highland Parish Church Youth Choir, under Jean Gillies, so it seemed appropriate to sing in aid of the church.'

The choir is made up of between 20-25 women, who meet on a Wednesday evening in Connel and sing everything from traditional Scots songs, like Glenlyon Lament and Dashing White Sergeant to modern classics like Last Blue Rose by Vicki Tucker Courtney and Flying Free by Don Besig, to upbeat numbers such as Chattanooga Choo Choo and Lollipop. The choir has been going since 2010 and has competed at the Highlands and Islands and Islands Music and Dance Festival in Oban, Glasgow Music Festival and Mid Argyll Music Festival, as well as taking part in many concerts, fund-raising events and providing a smaller number of singers for special occasions such as weddings.



ALL WORK AND NO PLAY: Members of Fort William Accordion and Fiddle Club provided music for the rest of the group at the annual dinner dance. The willing musicians took centre stage at the Railway Club, Inverlochty, last Friday night (February 13).

Beekeeper course

THERE is soon to be a buzz about West Highland College as a beekeepers course will run from next month. The beginners level lessons will cover the life of honey bees, the hive and pests and diseases as well as instructions on how to set up an apiary. Participants will also have the opportunity to work with members of Lochaber Beekeepers Association, to attend demonstrations and gain hands-on experience with the bees. To book a place on the course or find out more, contact Janice Wegner on 01397 874270 or email janice.wegner.whc@uhi.ac.uk.

First-ever Appin Fèis

THE first Appin Fèis day begins this Saturday. Children and adults can try out various musical instruments including accordion, fiddle and clarsach, and have a go at Gaelic drama, games and song as well as step and Highland dancing. The Fèis, led by experienced tutors, will be held at Strath of Appin primary from 10am to 1pm and is open to all ages in both Appin and the local community from Durort to Barcaldine, including Lismore and Achaleven and Kilchrean school areas. Children under eight must be accompanied by an adult. For further information and enrolment forms contact Fiona on 07881525754 or Vicky on 01397 703132. The cost is £3 per child, £5 per family and £5 for adults.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Soup and Pudding Lunch
In aid of Oban Free Church will be held in Oban Free Church Hall Rockfield Road on Saturday 28th February 2015 From 12 noon - 2.00pm Admission £5.00

ARGYLL BIRD CLUB
Spring Meeting
A day of talks on Golden Eagles, Geese, Seabirds and more Argyll Hotel, Inveraray Saturday 7 March 9.30am - 4.30pm Non-members welcome, entry by donation Details at www.argyllbirdclub.org

MÒD AN ÒBAIN 2015 Fundraising Ceilidh
Saturday 7th March 2015 at 10.30am Masonic Hall, Albany Street, Oban, 7.30pm Admission: £6.00
Featuring: Freddie MacKenzie (T.G.M), Morag Smith, John Joe MacNeil, Soille Folk Group Sileas Sinclair (Accordion), Stewart Campbell (Pipes) Fear an Taighe: Danny MacRae Raffle, tea and home baking

OBAN U3A
Tuesday 3 March 2015 at 10.30am Studio Theatre and café area, Corran Halls, Oban. A warm welcome to members new and old for our monthly coffee and chat meeting.

OBAN ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Monthly club night Thursday 5th March 7.30pm Royal Hotel
Guest Artist: Andy Kain Trio Admission £4 All Welcome!

Gaelic Pub Quiz
Studio Theatre Bar Corran Halls, Oban
Tuesday 3rd March at 7.30pm £2 per person - Max 5 people per team There will be a Gaelic speaker for each team

Spotlight Musical Theatre Group proudly presents
COLE PORTER'S ANYTHING GOES (BETHUNTON)
25TH - 28TH FEBRUARY, 7.30PM, CORRAN HALLS
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CORRAN HALLS BOX OFFICE - 01631 567333

FORT WILLIAM ACCORDION & FIDDLE CLUB
Musical Evening on Tuesday 3 March 2015 at 8pm
GUEST ARTISTS: Iain Joseph MacDonald and his Band Railway Club Inverlochty All Welcome
Admission £4.00, Tea & Raffle Extra IN THE EVENT OF A LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION BY ANY GUEST ARTIST THE COMMITTEE WILL FIND AN ALTERNATIVE ARTIST

Annual Fiddlers Rally
Caol Community Centre Saturday 7th March At 7.30pm
Tickets £8.00 Concessions £6.00 Available at the Door

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Young musicians put on spectacular show for charity



CHARITY CONCERT: Lochaber Music School's joint concert with St Augustine's high school swing band raised £500 for Mary's Meals 20_109music01

TALENTED young musicians wowed the audience at a charity concert in Roy Bridge and raised more than £500 in the process. Sgoil Chuil Loch Abar, the traditional music group

of Lochaber Music School, hosted the 24-piece swing band of St Augustine's high school swing band for the seventh time last Wednesday (February 18), for a show in aid of charity Mary's Meals.

Unknown to the performers, Calum MacFarlane-Barrow, father of Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, founder of Dalmally-based Mary's Meals, was in the audience. Mr MacFarlane-Barrow

(senior) stepped up at the end of the evening to thank the youngsters on behalf of Mary's Meals. Peter Rose, musical director of Lochaber Music School, said: 'The standard

of performance from the 30 talented musicians was truly mind blowing and the appreciation of the audience was very much reflected in their donations which totalled well over £500.'

Mull pupils prepare for schools pipe band championships

SCHOOL pupils from Mull are getting ready to 'give it a skirl' as they prepare for the world's largest schools piping and drumming competition in March. The competition, which is dedicated to stoking up passion for Scotland's national musical heritage, will see students from Tobermory high school travel to Edinburgh to take part in the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships (SSPBC). Calum MacLean, piping tutor at Tobermory High school said: 'The SSPBC is only two weeks away, and our high school quar-

ter is hard at work getting ready for the championship. 'I can see the children that are involved with piping and drumming in our school are becoming more confident and dedicated to a common goal. 'The benefits of pipes and drums in schools can't be underestimated as it is something that everyone can take part in and has endless possibilities.' Many schools across Scotland have already registered for the competition, taking place on Sunday, March 8, at Broughton high school and neighbouring

Fettes college. This year's competition will include a 'Freestyle' category which encourages pipers and drummers to perform modern and up-to-date songs, as well as traditional music. This innovative category will be judged by three experts of the piping and drumming world, including pipe major of Shotts and Dykehead pipe Robert Mathieson, Gary West, presenter of Pipeline on BBC Radio Scotland and Craig Munro from the hugely successful Red Hot Chili Pipers.

Village hall committee advice event

COMMITTEES of village halls and community-owned buildings across Argyll and Bute are being invited to a meeting to share skills at a special event in Oban. Advice on attracting committee members, becoming a registered charity, health and safety and how to reduce energy costs will all be addressed at the meeting to be held on March 14. Advisers from the Robertson Trust, Argyll and Islands LEADER, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and others will be attending. Argyll and Bute council community and culture spokesman, councillor Robin

Currie, said: 'Village halls and community buildings are at the heart of community life and provide space for communities to come together, meet, socialise and participate in a variety of activities. 'The council recognises the importance of nurturing the volunteers who work so hard and with such commitment. 'We aim to provide support and guidance which will enable them to continue and build on the good work already in progress.' For a booking form phone 01436 657608 or email communitydevelopment@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Entertainment Guide

Cinema

Oban Phoenix Cinema
Community owned and run
Tel: 01631 562905 www.obanphoenix.com

LISTINGS FOR 27 FEBRUARY - 5 MARCH

AMERICAN SNIPER (15) Daily Except Wed: 20:30 Wed: 15:10
BIG HERO 6 (PG) Sat, Sun: 13:00
FIFTY SHADES OF GREY (18) Daily: 18:00, 20:40
RSC: LOVES LABOURS WON (12A) Wed: 19:00
SHAUN THE SHEEP MOVIE (U) Fri: 16:00 Sat, Sun: 12:10, 14:10, 16:00
TESTAMENT OF YOUTH (12A) Fri: 17:50 Sat, Sun: 15:30 Mon, Thu: 15:20 Tue: 15:20, 17:50 Wed: 16:00
WHIPLASH (15) Fri, Tue: 15:30 Sat, Sun: 18:10 Mon, Thu: 15:30, 18:00

FILM SYNOPSIS

AMERICAN SNIPER (15) 132MINS
Clint Eastwood directs Bradley Cooper in the visceral true story of the US military's most lethal sniper. Having been raised by a religious father who impressed upon him the importance of fighting evil, Chris Kyle (Bradley Cooper) signs up for brutal Navy SEAL training. He's quickly shipped off to Fallujah, where his role as a marksman is to protect his brothers-in-arms. It's a nerve-shredding task, requiring him to make split-second distinctions between civilians and enemy combatants. Such is Chris's skill and pinpoint accuracy that he saves countless lives and earns the nickname 'Legend'. But this also means that insurgents soon put a price on his head. Legendary director Clint Eastwood's tense and harrowing film doesn't shy away from exploring the terrible psychological aftermath of war.

BIG HERO 6 (PG) 114MINS
A young robotics genius turns crime-fighter in Disney's fun-packed animated action comedy. Troubled 14-year-old technology prodigy Hiro Hamada (Ryan Potter) lives in the futuristic hybrid city of San Fransokyo. Helping him through his difficult teenage years is huggable, lovable, giant inflatable healthcare robot Baymax (Scott Adsit). When a mysterious villain emerges to threaten the city, Hiro rises to the challenge. He joins forces with can-do chemistry genius Honey Lemon (Genesis Rodriguez), comicbook fanboy Fred (T.J. Miller), burly beatnik Wasabi (Damon Wayans Jr) and tactum adrenaline junkie GoGo Tomago (Jamie Chung). Together, these nerds must overcome their fears and transform themselves into superheroes.

50 SHADES OF GREY (18) 124MINS
E.L. James's worldwide bestseller springs to life on the big screen. Virginal student Anastasia Steele (Dakota Johnson) goes to interview wealthy, handsome, charismatic entrepreneur Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan). The attraction between them is immediate and electric. But Ana learns that Christian is only interested in a relationship on his own controlling terms. As they embark on an intense and passionate affair, he introduces her to his dark and very particular tastes. Now she finds herself exploring her own desires for the first time. Having sold more than 100 million copies in e-book and print, E.L. James's worldwide bestseller is a genuine publishing phenomenon. 'Nowhere Boy' director Sam Taylor-Wood helms this eagerly anticipated steamy adaptation. Jamie Dornan from TV's 'The Fall' makes a sleek and manipulative Christian Grey. Fellow rising star Dakota Johnson is perfectly cast as Ana - the innocent woman on an extraordinary erotic journey.

RSC LIVE: LOVES LABOURS WON (12A) 180MINS
Love's Labour's Won, or Much Ado About Nothing Autumn 1918. A group of soldiers return from the trenches. The world-weary Benedick and his friend Claudio find themselves reacquainted with Beatrice and Hero. As memories of conflict give way to a life of parties and masked balls, Claudio and Hero fall madly, deeply in love, while Benedick and Beatrice reignite their own altogether more combative courtship. Shakespeare's comic romance plays out amidst the brittle high spirits of a post-war house party, as youthful passions run riot, loves are deceived and happiness is threatened - before peace ultimately wins the day. Christopher Luscombe directs the second of Shakespeare's matching pair of comedies that rejoice in our capacity to find love in the most unlikely places. Better known as Much Ado About Nothing, the play is performed under the title Love's Labour's Won, a name possibly given to it during Shakespeare's lifetime.

SHAUN THE SHEEP THE MOVIE (U) 85MINS
Lovable Shaun goes on a crazy adventure in this brilliant animation from the people behind Wallace and Gromit. Daily life on Mossy Bottom Farm is getting just a little bit too routine for Shaun the sheep. So he decides it's time to have a nice day off. Unfortunately, his cunning ruse leads to a series of mishaps that result in the Farmer making an unplanned exit. Now it's up to Shaun and the rest of the flock - plus Bitzer the sheepdog - to make their way to the Big City and recover him. But to avoid the attentions of nasty animal containment officer Trumper, the sheep have to disguise themselves as human! Luckily, they get a little help from a lovable orphan dog named Slip.

TESTAMENT OF YOUTH (12A) 130MINS
Rising star Alicia Vikander leads an outstanding cast in Vera Brittain's much-loved memoir of love and war. Bright, spirited young feminist Vera Brittain (Alicia Vikander) has her whole life ahead of her in the spring of 1914. She defies the wishes of her conservative parents (Dominic West, Emily Watson) to seek a place at Oxford. But her dreams are shattered by the outbreak of WWI. Her brother Edward (Taron Egerton) and their friends Victor (Colin Morgan) and Roland (Kit Harington) all enlist. So Vera sacrifices her education to become a nurse, falling urgently in love with Roland as war engulfs their generation.

WHIPLASH (15) 107MINS
BAFTA Winner for Supporting Actor J.K. Simmons. Editing and Sound - An ambitious jazz drummer is pushed to greatness by a monstrous mentor in this dazzling drama. Nineteen-year-old drummer Andrew Neyman (Miles Teller) is determined not to settle for mediocrity. He wants to become one of the jazz greats, like his idol Buddy Rich. He wins a place at America's top music academy, where Terence Fletcher (J.K. Simmons) is in charge of the leading jazz ensemble. Andrew's talents soon catch this star's instructor's attention. But Fletcher is a hard, cruel, bullying taskmaster who drives his competitive students ruthlessly towards perfection.

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THIS WEEK'S LISTINGS

MONDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning With Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Jim Edge, 1700 Drivetime With Danni Hay, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen, 2200 American Jukebox with Michelle
TUESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show with Maggie May, 1000 Ken Hunter, 1200 Memories are Made of This with Ken Hunter, 1330 The Quiz with Danni Hay, 1500 Lesley Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 1900 Sounds Scottish with Archie Cameron, 2000 Highest Praise with Stuart, 2100 Elaine Lamb, 2300 Northern Soul with Gordon Covey
WEDNESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Sound Scottish (repeat), 1000 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Elaine Lamb, 1700 Drivetime with Campbell and Coll, 1900 Country Meets Rock with Len & Ken, 2100 Gordon's Grooves
THURSDAY: 0800 Maggie May's Carousel, 1100 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with DJ Taz, 1900 Christine's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight
FRIDAY: 0800 Jean Ainsley Breakfast Show, 1000 Teeny and Tiny Show, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Weekend Warmup with Ian Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 1845 Sports View, 1900 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 2000 Friday Night with Innes, 2100 TFI Friday with Jim Lawn
SATURDAY: 0900 Maggie's Swingin' Sixties, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowscher, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis
SUNDAY: 0900 Sunday Morning with Breege, 1100 - 1400 Allan, 1630 Archie Darling, 1800 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 1900 New Country Show with David Entwistle, 2100 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott

Malt of the Month

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Glenfarclas 15-year-old
THERE was a big storm, a really big storm and it turned the CalMac lights from amber to red and signalled a long, lonely night in Lochgilphead.

I sought solace in the arms of the Cairnbaan hotel where there was a superb choice of single malts.

I choose a Glenfarclas 15-year-old. It reminded me of the days when I could drink whisky with no worries. My first bottle was purchased from Peckhams in Stirling.

I was a student, albeit a mature one. We were studying the films of the white telephone era in Italy. The other guys had grappa to drink. I couldn't bear grappa.

So I bought the Glenfarclas and offered a dram. The film was The Bicycle Thief, and

it shows abject poverty in Rome after the war. The richness of the whisky contrasted well with the film. One of the students who was the granddaughter of a vice-president of an African country and she had never tasted whisky before. She loved it. In fact she had to take bottles of the stuff home to her grandfather. In the Cairnbaan there was only one other table. They were sharing a birthday celebration and completely immersed in their own party. That evening I discovered the joy of solitary whisky drinking. It can surely be thought of as meditation time.

Louise Lee

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Farming

Caledonian Marts fails in shares bid

AUCTIONEERS Caledonian Marts has announced that it has failed to raise enough funds to carry on as it is.

A statement on the farming co-operative's website said the recent share issue had 'fallen short of the stated projection' in its business plan, aimed at securing the company's future and therefore its future as tenant at Oban Livestock centre.

The firm, which operates and owns a mart in Stirling, said the board would have a definitive decision on its operations in Oban by next week.

Rival livestock auctioneers United Auctions registered an interest in a takeover of Cale-

donian Marts on Wednesday, February 4.

David Leggat, executive chairman, said: 'We as a company have shown an interest, but clearly that is a matter for Oban Livestock Centre's board members to consider, and we respect that entirely.'

James Cullens, managing director of Caledonian Marts, told *The Oban Times*: 'We haven't raised the total amount, but we wanted to make it clear that the eventual total was admirable.'

'We did know we might struggle to raise funds of that level. At the moment we are still hedging our bets. We are looking at potential suitors for the

site as well as other operators, who nothing is set in stone.

'By next week we will almost certainly have a definitive answer for our members.'

Mr Cullens said the statement on the Caledonian Marts website was there to highlight that the operator, which has leased Oban Livestock centre for 17 years, appreciated the support and effort from its members.

'Obviously this is a sensitive issue for our members, who have given us great support, both here and in Stirling,' he said.

'Regardless of the outcome, Oban livestock centre will continue to operate.

'It would have been great to say

to our members, "yes we have raised enough to carry on as before", but unfortunately that's not the case.

'The bottom level share price was £500 and a lot of our members did invest at least that, which is extremely admirable, and showed a willingness to keep Caledonian Marts in operation.'

'The company will make the decision that the board feels is best for both members and creditors, so it is a complex situation.'

The operator held an emergency meeting on Tuesday, January 13, where board members admitted debts of more than £4 million had put the firm into a financial crisis.

Scheme launched to rid countryside of illegal pesticides

A BID to rid the countryside of illegal pesticides has been launched with a scheme to hand over such chemicals for safe and confidential disposal.

Substances including Carbofuran, which has been used to poison birds of prey, the highly lethal Mevinphos, Sodium cyanide (usually known as Cymag) and Strychnine are on the list of substances which can be handed over.

Environment Minister and chairman of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) Scotland, Dr Aileen McLeod said: 'There were 96 recorded incidents of illegal poisoning abuse involving wildlife in the last five years from 2009-2013.

'It is essential that we remove all substances from the countryside that could kill our wildlife and that are a risk to people and pets, who may accidentally be exposed to them, which is why

the Scottish government has introduced the pesticide disposal scheme.

'I would encourage people to carefully and safely check sheds and outbuildings for old stocks of illegal substances.'

NFU Scotland vice-president Rob Livesey said: 'Farmers are often unsure who they should turn to should they find chemicals of concern - leading many to leave them where they are.'

'NFU Scotland therefore commends the Scottish government for funding a straightforward and confidential scheme to deal with particularly problematic and now illegal products.'

'Scottish Land and Estates fully supports this Government-led joint initiative,' said chief executive Douglas McAdam.

'It is something we have been keen to see happen for a number of years and so it is good this is now in place.

'This scheme will help anyone who finds themselves still in possession of pesticides, which are now illegal, to dispose of them safely and without fear of prosecution.'

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Gamekeepers' Association, British Association for Shooting and Conservation Scotland, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust Scotland and Scottish Crofting Federation are all supporting the scheme.

'Anyone who believes they are in possession of any of these banned pesticides should contact the disposal scheme line on 0131 472 4187, 8.30am-4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Before calling, users are asked to make a note of which banned pesticides they have, and check whether these are included in the scheme using the guide on the PAW Scotland website www.PAW.Scotland.gov.uk

Knapdale beavers had little effect on rivers and streams

THE RESULTS of four independent scientific studies on the five-year trial introduction of beavers to Knapdale have been published by Scottish Natural Heritage.

Researchers at the University of Stirling found that the beavers had little effect on rivers and streams in the trial area.

Although they explored many of the streams, nearly all of their activity was concentrated around the lochs.

It wasn't clear if this was because the stream habitat was unsuitable or simply less attractive than the lochs.

They built some dams close to where streams flow in to or out of lochs but only where the water flow was slow.

The study concluded that evidence from Knapdale suggested that few dams would be built on

streams when there were a small number of beavers and they had easy access to lochs with wooded shores.

Most of the adult beavers established themselves, but a study by the University of Oxford found that of 14 beaver kits born in the wild, only one or two survived. Of the 16 beavers released in 2009, three died and five went missing.

The reason for this low rate of survival isn't fully known but two of the kits were preyed on by other animals.

At the end of the trial in May 2014 there were three groups of beavers at Knapdale and one single male beaver.

A study that looked at the effect on dragonflies concluded that the trial period was too short to fully appreciate the impact.

Another study showed that although beavers had little



KNAPDALE TRIAL: A beaver kit's arrival is announced by Scottish Natural Heritage in 2012

effect on most lichen habitat at Knapdale, they had an impact on lichens that grew on Atlantic hazelwoods.

While felling was very localised, affecting just more than half of hazel trees within 60 metres of lochs inhabited by beavers, there was concern that this may eventually cause a temporary or permanent loss of some of the nationally and internationally important lichen habitat in the area.

If beavers were permanently reintroduced to Scotland, they could have an impact on up to 27 per cent of the Atlantic hazel

habitat across the country. Martin Gaywood, from SNH, who led the independent scientific monitoring of the trial, said: 'It's essential that any species reintroduction project is properly managed and monitored.'

'The independent monitoring of the Scottish Beaver Trial has helped us understand how beavers behave in a Scottish environment.'

Scottish Ministers will decide later this year whether to reintroduce beavers to the whole of Scotland, after considering the results of the Scottish Beaver Trial along with other beaver research.

BVD farm status needs to be kept up-to-date

CATTLE farmers are being reminded to ensure they have not let their Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) status slip as phase four of the eradication scheme looms.

BVD testing is already an annual requirement for Scottish cattle keepers and it is illegal to knowingly sell any animal persistently infected (PI) with the disease but from June, movement restrictions will be placed on farms that do not have a valid 'negative' status for the disease.

The BVD herd screen is an annual requirement and herds that have not carried out a test in the last 12 months should contact their vet and do so now or face restrictions come the summer.

NFU Scotland vice president and beef cattle farmer Rob Livesey said: 'It is unacceptable that some 1,300 farmers have let their BVD status slip. The message is clear: be prepared ahead of calving starting.

'Some believe that having had

a clear test in the past is enough - but it isn't. You must screen your herd annually to maintain your status. It's far easier to get this essential job done now before cattle go to the grass.

'If you do not have a BVD negative status, animals will need to be individually tested in order to be moved, other than direct to slaughter.'

There are around 1,300 farmers across Scotland that are believed to have let their BVD status slip.

FARM BUILDING

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SPRING is just around the corner.

Farmers across the west Highlands and islands are preparing for lambing, or the long days offered by extended periods of light and drier weather.

But the weather conditions in recent weeks have proved a testing time for man and beast, with snow, high winds and heavy rain showers battering the west coast.

It should be a lesson to everyone that farm buildings and machinery are in top condition to cope with all the elements can throw at us.

Repairs and renovations can be big jobs, so you need to be confident you have the right company to meet your needs.

Using a tried and trusted company can give you piece of mind, especially if they have previously carried out good work in the area.

With the expense involved and importance of getting the job done properly, it is an expensive mistake if the job is not done properly.

Maintenance of machinery and equipment is essential for people who work the land, as faulty equipment and damaged buildings present a major hazard around the farm.

Imagine buying the best quality seeds and manure and then planting everything with tender love and care and then ruining all your produce just because the equipment and machinery that you

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First Milk to introduce new pricing structure

FARMER-owned co-operative First Milk is to introduce changes to its pricing structure as of April 1.

The milk processing company, which owns Campbelltown Creamery and Torrylinn Creamery on Arran, has said it will make three main changes: the introduction of 'A' and 'B' pricing; clarification on its two milk pools - manufacturing and balancing; and closer alignment of butterfat, protein and hygiene payments according to the end use of the milk.

The 'A' price will be based on farmers' historic production of milk and any milk over this volume limit will fall into the 'B' category.

Chairman of First Milk Sir Jim Paice MP said: "During 2014 we experienced unprecedented volatility in commodity markets and a surge in milk production which

not only drove milk prices down but also seriously challenged the mechanisms we used to set the price of milk.

"These challenges included: the time lag between making a milk price announcement and it coming into effect when markets are moving so rapidly; and the need to send timely signals of the value of milk which is additional to core market demand

"In October 2014 we set up working groups to review our current payment schedules and draw up proposals on changes required to make our pricing mechanisms more appropriate to deal with increased levels of volatility.

"The working groups' proposals have now been discussed and agreed by the board and our farmer representatives."

National Farmers Union Scotland milk committee chairman

Graeme Kilpatrick said the union welcomed the move by First Milk on pricing structure as it would be more transparent.

But he added: "We need to know if this pricing mechanism takes in all First Milk producers including those on specialist contracts and if there is seasonality on top of this."

At the beginning of March, First Milk farmers will receive a letter and new pricing schedule from the co-operative's enterprise team, setting out how these changes will be implemented, specifically for their own milk supply.

It will also inform members of dates in their area for drop-in days, where they can have a face-to-face meeting with a farm enterprise team member

Members will be taken through the calculations for their own farm, using the new schedule that applies from 1 April.

Ewen Campbell, SRUC Kirkton and Auchtertyre farms manager

FEBRUARY has been a much drier month compared to January here at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Kirkton and Auchtertyre farms and we have even seen the sun a few times.

Hopefully spring is fast approaching, which means there will be plenty to keep us busy with both cattle and sheep.

Our Aberdeen-Angus cross cows have just started calving and at the time of writing we have two calves and are hoping for a further 18.

The cows were brought inside to a shed at the Auchtertyre steading in advance of calving. However, the new cattle shed at Kirkton is almost complete and we will be moving them across in the next few weeks. This will allow us to connect up the sheds at Auchtertyre that will form the core of the new sheep handling facilities we are putting in.

We have also started to prepare for the coming lambing season.

The ewes are now half-way through their pregnancy and so we like to check their weights, assess what condition they are in and find out how many of them are carrying lambs.

We have already ultrasound scanned the 900 Blackface and Lleyn ewes in our Kirkton flock and the results are very good this year.

The scanning percentage is 134 per cent, which means that there is the potential to get 134 lambs from every batch of 100 ewes come lambing time.

We have not yet scanned our Auchtertyre flock of 365 Blackface ewes, but are hoping for good results from them as well.

We have also had a number of visitors to the farms from the Moredun Research Institute, the Soil Association, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and the James Hutton Research Institute in recent weeks.

All were here to discuss the potential to collaborate with us on new research ideas as well as to think about the focus of



Farmers and crofters from across Argyll and Lochaber at the recent drainage event

events that we could organise together.

We also had a visit from a dozen farmers and crofters from across Argyll and Lochaber last week.

They came on an overcast but otherwise dry afternoon to hear about the most suitable and cost-effective drainage techniques to use on west coast livestock farms.

The event was led by Niall Campbell from the Oban office of SRUC's SAC Consulting arm.

There was specialist input from Seamus Donnelly of SAC Consulting in Stranraer and I was also on hand to provide local knowledge of drainage issues across the farms. After initial discussion over a light soup and sandwich lunch, Seamus provided an overview of how and why drainage can be important for both farm production and the wider environment.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent out in the fields discussing how best to tackle

drainage issues in a range of situations, such as inbye fields with sub-soil drainage issues and hill parks where the wet areas were more suitable for open ditching.

All in all it I thought it was a very successful and interesting afternoon and will definitely be using some of Seamus' tips to try and improve some of our wetter fields.

This marks the start of a wide range of farmer and crofter focused events where we will be demonstrating and explaining to the industry the relevance of the findings from the research we are doing here on the farms.

By the time you read this my colleague Davy McCracken, head of the Hill and Mountain Research Centre here on the farms, will have spoken at an improving ewe profitability event held on hill farmer Stevie Guild's Ashmark Farm outside New Cumnock in Ayrshire.

Colleagues from SAC Consulting and Veterinary Service will discuss the market outlook for sheep, the importance

of good health planning and management of ewes before lambing, and Davy will highlight the latest results from our research here into the benefits to be gained from using Electronic Identification (EID) on our sheep.

We are also planning to participate at the Scottish Beef Association's Beef from the Hills event being held on the May 27th Mains of Mause Farm near Blairgowrie and we will also be at both North Sheep on June 2 in Cumbria and at Highland Sheep being held at Fearn Farm near Tain on June 9. Plenty to keep us occupied in the next few months preparing material for our input to those events.

In the meantime, we are still making sure that the animals get some supplementary feed until the snow eventually thaws and the grass starts growing again.

Next month, I will provide an update on the calving and how the rest of the preparations for lambing are going.

New farmers are 'vital' to industry's existence

NEW entrants to farming in Scotland are vitally important to the industry, according to rural affairs minister Richard Lochhead.

Speaking at an event for new entrants to farming at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) in Elgin, Mr Lochhead said: "It is vital that we fully engage with, and attract talented, entrepreneurial, new entrants to agriculture in Scotland in order to safeguard the future of the industry as it drives innovation and best practice, improves efficiencies and contributes towards the economic vitality of the sector as a whole."

He said there was an increase in applicants to study agriculture at colleges across the Scotland, helped by the fact new entrants would benefit from the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), where previously they had been totally or partly frozen out.

"Now that we are well into the Year of Food and Drink, I want to emphasise just how important a role farmers play in the food and drink industry - if it wasn't for them we wouldn't have the exceptional, world-class produce that we are fortunate enough to have available to us," said Mr

Lochhead. "The hard work of farmers ploughs millions into our economy every year as the reputation of Scotland as a land of food and drink continues to grow."

The SRUC programme ensures that potential and aspiring new entrants to the agricultural industry are aware of the opportunities that exist and have a skills and knowledge set that equips them for success in the industry.

Ten new entrant groups now exist throughout Scotland featuring around 150 new entrant and aspiring farmers.



used was not properly maintained. Maintaining your farming machinery, equipment and property is also demanded by the law to avoid risking people's health and safety.

While doing vehicle maintenance ensure: the brakes work properly; the engines are running properly; the fuel tanks are clean, and when emptying out fuel tanks beware of any explosion risks; drain the fuel away from any sources of ignition; and before changing any batteries make sure that you have disconnected the terminals to avoid any electrical hazards.

It is the job of the employers to make sure that their workers are safe. This includes doing regular

maintenance checks on farming machinery and equipment as well training their workers in a proper manner.

Health and Safety legislation also demands that any new machinery a farmer buys is CE marked. The CE mark basically means that each piece of machinery has been built keeping in mind the minimum legal safety requirements. The machinery should also have certificate of conformity and a workshop manual.

The farming community is approaching its busiest time of the year, so make sure your house is in order while you still have some spare time to do something about it.

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Making Moving Day Easy

WITH so much going on, it can be easy to forget something essential. Take some time to make a list of small tasks and tick them off as you go.

As soon as you get the date for your move and the time for the exchanging of keys you can start to get organised:

Book some time off work for the move

Get multiple quotes from removal companies - Once you are clear about your moving date, it is worth beginning to research removal costs. Hiring a removal firm can

certainly ease the burden, but don't settle for the first one you come across.

Many offer different levels of service including simple transportation of items right through to packing them for you, so it is worth shopping around.

If you are downsizing to a smaller property, look at storage space rental costs too. Remember, it might work out cheaper sourcing this service independently from the company you choose to transport your items. We would also recommend using a removal firm that is a member of the British Association of Removers (BAR), the trade association that maintains professional standards within the industry. You can search for your nearest BAR registered firm by visiting www.bar.co.uk

Don't rule out moving yourself - Not all moves require hiring the services of a removal company. Work out the distance to your new property, and most importantly the size

of vehicle you require to transport your possessions. If you are willing to put the work in yourself, it can save a lot of money.

That said, special furniture might well require experienced removers to pack and protect it to avoid damage during transit so don't be over ambitious.

Should you decide to do it yourself, research self-hire services in the same way, being careful to check you have the correct vehicle licence for the type of vehicle you end up selecting.

Set up services as soon as possible - It is frustrating to move into a new property only to find the gas and electricity isn't working. It is worth checking with the provider for the previous providers so you can call them to change the name on the contract or set up new accounts. Also, make sure that phone and broadband services are enabled prior to moving in as these often take a number of weeks to become active.

Check who holds the key to the door - This might sound like an obvious step but it is surprising how many new homeowners forget to check the date for when the keys will be released for the property.

Ensure you clarify whether your new keys will be released by your solicitor/conveyancer or your agent, and when. Often it will be on moving day, not before.

Research access points on the day - Logistical considerations are often

overlooked but making sure there is adequate access to the property for large vehicles will ensure no hidden surprises on the day of the move. It is always good to check that access will still be available to neighbours and other vehicles using the road outside the property during offload.

Plan your packing well in advance - Packing up your old house may appear a daunting task, but it needn't be. Many people make the mistake of packing up rooms according to what will fit best into boxes but it makes much more sense to plan where you want to put items in the new property. Labeling goes without saying but working on a floor plan for where you want everything to end up will help you to work out whether it will fit or not at the other end.

Dismantle heavy furniture first - It's very tempting to focus on packing the smaller items that can be easily put into boxes first but tackling larger furniture like cabinets and wardrobes should be made a priority as this usually takes longer. It is worth transferring these items to the front of the house in the days leading up to the move so they can be loaded first.

Pack a 'basics' box - It is very easy to forget the essentials when moving house but ensuring that you have a spare change of clothes, a wash bag and a charger for your phone can be very helpful. You

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want to avoid a situation where you have to search through boxes on the day you move in to find the basics.

Compile a fact file for the people who have bought your home - Include things like rubbish collection day, recycling arrangements and heating instructions. On the day of the move, defrost your fridge and freezer and make sure you leave any instruction booklets for appliances you agreed to leave. Pack a bag of essentials for your first 24 hours so you don't have to root through boxes for items like your toothbrush.

Make sure your old home has been thoroughly cleaned - Hire professional cleaners to clean the house for you, it will be one less thing for you to worry about.

Check the inventory - If you have been renting the property you should check your original contents list, and ensure that everything is in order.

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Since 2010 we've grown to a team of four (all women at the moment, all living and working in Argyll) based in our newly refurbished office in the centre of Oban. Pop in for a chat next time you're in town!

If you're interested in how to sell or let a property, make sure you look out for our features in the Oban Times over the coming months. In the meantime - if you'll excuse the sales pitch - here's a bit about what we offer:

Letting

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<p>Seawinds, Tobermory, Isle of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached Bungalow 3 Bed / 2 Bath Large private garden Excellent family home EPC Rating - D <p>OIRO £265,000</p> <p>***£15,000 UNDER HOME REPORT VALUATION*** This delightful detached bungalow is situated on an elevated position above Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. The property boasts generous living areas, three well sized bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, sizable private garden, large drive, garage and enviable views over Tobermory and the Sound of Mull.</p>	<p>Cove, Tobermory, Isle of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached house 6 Bed / 2 Bath Subdivided into 2 flats Excellent rental potential EPC Rating - D <p>OIRO £280,000</p> <p>A spacious 6 bedroom house currently sub divided into two 3 bedroom flats. Cove offers a fantastic opportunity of purchase a large family home or spacious flat with the potential to generate additional rental income as a holiday let or long term rental. The property is in walk in condition and has elevated views over Tobermory Bay from the first floor lounge.</p>
<p>Elmbank, Croft Road, Oban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large detached house 6 Bed / 2 Bath + WC Potential guesthouse or HMO rental investment EPC Rating - D <p>OIRO £325,000</p> <p>Built in 1880 Elmbank is a large detached 6 bedroom Victorian house situated in mature private gardens with distant views of Oban Bay. Previously run as a guesthouse the property boasts many original features with generous reception rooms and bedrooms with a large conservatory to the front. The property is bright with large rooms, double glazing and gas central heating throughout.</p>	<p>24 Morvern Hill, Oban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached bungalow 3 Bed / 1 Bath Large garden & drive Excellent family home EPC Rating - E <p>OIRO £180,000</p> <p>A semi-detached bungalow situated in a popular residential area above Oban town centre. The property would make an ideal family home in an excellent location with light, well proportioned rooms and plentiful outside space. The property is in walk in condition and comprises hall, lounge, modern kitchen, 3 bedrooms and recently renovated family bathroom.</p>
<p>47 Rockfield Road, Tobermory, Isle of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground floor flat 3 Bed / 1 Bath Private gardens Rental potential EPC Rating - C <p>OIRO £110,000</p> <p>47 Rockfield Road offers excellent family sized accommodation within easy reach of Tobermory town centre. Situated a short walk from the Main Street, the ground floor flat has a lounge, kitchen/diner, 3 double bedrooms and a family bathroom. This property would make an perfect rental investment, family home or first time buyer property.</p>	<p>7 Monadhbeg Houses, Dervaig, Isle of Mull</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-detached house 2 Bed / 1 Bath Private garden Excellent family home EPC Rating - F <p>OIEO £115,000</p> <p>***£10,000 UNDER HOME REPORT VALUATION*** A good sized, 2 double bedroom, semi detached house in the sought after village of Dervaig on the popular island of Mull with delightful rear views, including of Ben More. The property is in good order throughout and comprises hall, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, 2 double bedrooms.</p>
<p>Carraig, Clachan, Seil, Nr Oban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached bungalow 4 Bed / 1 Bath Spacious rooms Large 0.5 acre garden EPC Rating - E <p>OIEO £230,000</p> <p>A spacious, 4 bedroom bungalow enjoying an elevated position on the popular island of Seil. The property comprises porch, kitchen, large lounge/dining room, bathroom and 4 bedrooms. Carraig sits in approximately 0.5 acre of mature grounds with large lawns, trees, mature borders and gravel drive providing parking space for several cars and a boat.</p>	<p>3/2, 7 Drimvargie Terrace, Oban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top floor flat 2 Bed / 1 Bath Quiet central location First time buyer home EPC Rating - E <p>OIRO £105,000</p> <p>A delightful 2 bedroom top floor flat in a popular central location in Oban. The property is in excellent condition throughout and comprises hall, lounge/kitchen, two double bedrooms and a bathroom. The large windows, spacious rooms and high ceilings make this property feel bright and airy. This property would make an excellent first time buyer home or rental property.</p>



west coast recruitment



Technical Services Manager

Marine Harvest (Scotland) is the largest Aquaculture Company operating in Scotland producing over 50,000 tonnes of salmon annually. Our marine and freshwater sites are located throughout the West Coast and Outer Isles with our farming operations based in Fort William.

Due to internal promotion we are seeking to appoint a Technical Services Manager to oversee the multi-disciplinary technical teams which support our production, processing and sales departments. The role is a senior post within the organisation with the incumbent reporting to the Managing Director and joining the Senior Management Team.

The key responsibilities cover five main areas which include Environment & Planning, Product Quality & Laboratory services, Quality systems & Food safety, Feed & nutrition as well as our Feed Trial facility based in Lochailort.

The successful candidate will possess several years' fish farming experience and have a sound understanding of fish biology and nutrition as well as a broad technical expertise in the aforementioned areas. A working knowledge of industry regulatory affairs would be advantageous as would experience of dealing with UK retail customers and their technical support requirements.

The incumbent will have proven track record of leading and managing small teams combined with strong interpersonal, communication, organisational and planning skills. The ability to problem solve, motivate and achieve results through the success of others are some of the other attributes required for this post.

Candidates must possess excellent computer skills, particularly in Microsoft Excel and Word. A current full driving licence is essential for the role.

In return the successful candidate will benefit from a highly competitive salary package, plus bonus.

If you feel you have the necessary skills to rise to this challenge, please apply in writing no later than Friday 13th March 2015 to: Vicky Ferguson, Human Resources Manager, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William PH33 7PT.



Assistant Farm Manager Laga Bay Trainee Farm Manager Kingairloch

Salary £26,204 to £28,588 per annum plus overtime

Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd is currently seeking highly motivated and strong individuals for the above posts.

Applications are invited from individuals who are genuinely interested in developing their career within the organisation. Potential candidates should have at least two to three years practical knowledge and experience of fish farming. Initiative, the ability to manage and motivate personnel, good planning, organisation & computer skills and a proven ability to achieve results without close supervision are some of the necessary skills required for this post.

The successful candidate will be expected to attend the necessary training courses to gain sufficient knowledge on feed & stock management, harvest & grading planning, asset management, performance and HSEQ management.

If you consider yourself to have the commitment, enthusiasm, willingness and underlying capability to become a Manager then please apply in writing, no later than Friday 13th March 2015 to: Vicky Ferguson, Human Resources Manager, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William PH33 7PT.



Caledonian MacBrayne

Seasonal Port Assistant (fixed term contract)

Rate of Pay £9.24 per hour Ref: 685-SB
12 positions available - (10 positions available for 7 months and 2 for 4 months)
Oban Ferry Terminal
20 hours per week

Applications are invited for the position of Seasonal Port Assistant based at the Oban Ferry Terminal.

Reporting to the Port Manager, you will need a flexible approach to your day-to-day responsibilities. Your duties will include mooring operations, customer enquiries, sales of passenger/vehicle tickets, cash handling and control of passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking from vessels.

You must be computer literate, with excellent verbal and written communication skills. You are expected to have a flexible approach to working as shift and weekend work will be involved. You must be customer focused, have a clear understanding of the customer interface and have a proactive approach to customer care.

The successful candidate must be able to commute to the Oban Ferry Terminal on a daily basis.

If you are interested in this position, please respond by emailing your CV quoting reference number 685-SB no later than 11 March 2015 to: vacancies@davidmacbraynehr.co.uk, or mail to:

David MacBrayne HR (UK) Limited
Ferry Terminal, Gourock, PA19 1QP
t: 01475 650144

Caledonian MacBrayne Crewing (Guernsey) Limited is an equal opportunities employer.

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES
Reporter
An enthusiastic, multi-skilled Reporter is required to join the award-winning Wyvex Media newspaper group.
The successful candidate will have a solid foundation in journalism, good leadership qualities, excellent communication skills, a great deal of energy and at least two years experience. A full driving licence is essential.
This is an exciting opportunity with excellent salary and benefits package.
To apply, please send a covering letter of application with CV by email to: ali@obantimes.co.uk

THE COMMISSIONERS OF NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSES

require a
TECHNICAL SYSTEMS OFFICER

The Northern Lighthouse Board - www.nlb.org.uk is the General Lighthouse Authority for Scotland and the Isle of Man, established by statute to provide, maintain and inspect marine Aids to Navigation - lighthouses, buoys, beacons and, increasingly, precision satellite navigation and positioning - throughout its waters.

Based at our facility in Oban and reporting to the Technical Systems Manager in Edinburgh, the successful applicant will be responsible for providing helpdesk and second line technical support to the Boards ships and staff in Oban. They will also provide telephone support for staff in Edinburgh and other remote locations.

Key tasks will include - replace users computers, tablets and mobile phones as part of a rolling replacement program; provide ad-hoc user training to staff in NLB Oban and on the Boards ships, ensuring the ISO27001 change control logs and procedures are up to date and well maintained; monitoring and maintaining database backups; provide assistance in ongoing development of current and new ICT systems. Flexibility and good interpersonal skills are essential, as is the ability to communicate at all levels.

Applicants should have a computing qualification at HND or degree level and a minimum of 2 years experience in Information Communication Technology support environment. Knowledge and understanding of network concepts and principles, imaging software, Microsoft operating systems and Active Directory, Citrix technologies and networks, iPhones and other smart devices, plus an understanding of hardware in order to diagnose issues. Basic programming knowledge would also be an advantage. The successful applicant will have and be able to demonstrate prior knowledge and experience of providing technical support at all levels.

Salary range is from £26460 per year rising to £29100 per year, depending on performance. Benefits package includes: career average occupational pension scheme; flexible working; and generous leave arrangements.

For further details and an application pack please e-mail jobs@nlb.org.uk or write to: HR Adviser, Northern Lighthouse Board, 84 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DA.
Closing date: 20th March 2015.

The Northern Lighthouse Board is an equal opportunities employer and positively encourages applications from all suitably qualified people regardless of sex, race or disability.

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www.hie.co.uk

HEAD OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

Lochgilthead - £38,391 - £48,151

2 year fixed term project

As one of Europe's most highly-regarded development agencies, Highlands and Islands Enterprise delivers the Scottish Government's economic strategy, generating sustainable economic growth across a region which covers more than half of Scotland.

The Argyll and the Islands team is currently recruiting to a new senior role and is seeking a dynamic and motivated individual to develop and deliver a range of ambitious projects to drive the economic success of the area.

This project role is an exciting opportunity to deliver our vision for the area through a strong economic and community development focus. You will be working with the Area Manager and wider HIE team, leading on HIE's engagement with partners in developing and implementing specific projects to drive change.

You will bring strong influencing and negotiating skills, project management experience and the determination to deliver short term change whilst laying plans for the future.

TO APPLY ONLINE VISIT: www.hie.co.uk/vacancies JOB REFERENCE: 387

FOR AN APPLICATION PACK CONTACT US: E recruitment@hie.co.uk T 01463 244 414

CLOSING DATE: 15 March 2015

INTERVIEW DATE: w/c 23 March 2015



Glen Scotia Distillery



Due to continued expansion, Glen Scotia Distillery is looking to recruit:

1 x Shop Assistant - (Whisky Ambassador).

Working as part of a small team and reporting to the Distillery Manager, duties include:

- Daily operation of the Glen Scotia Distillery shop.
- Dealing with customers, sales and general enquires.
- Learning the process for the production of malt whisky at Glen Scotia Distillery.
- Excellent oral presentation skills, with the ability to hold tastings and tours etc.
- Good organisational/prioritisation skills.
- Strong interpersonal, influencing and negotiating skills.
- Other duties as and when required.

• Have a flexible approach to work.

This role will initially be a temporary position; running from April to November, operating over a 5 day, 40 hour week. Occasional overtime may be required.

This role could develop into a whisky ambassador role for the right person, but no guarantee can be given at this stage.

Please apply by e-mail only, including your CV & Cover letter to the distillery manager at ian.mcalister@lochlomondgroup.com

Closing date is the 13th of March 2015.

Catering Manager/Chef

sought to set up and run new Atlantic Islands Centre cafe/restaurant on Luing.

Previous experience essential.

Full time, fixed term 6 month contract.

£20k-£24 pro-rata depending on experience.

To apply email covering letter and CV to laura@atlanticislandscentre.com by 6th March, 2pm.



Bookkeeper / Finance Administrator

Landcatch Natural Selection Limited is part of the Hendrix Genetics Group, operating from Ormsary, Lochgilthead. We are now looking for a Bookkeeper / Finance Administrator to help support the changing financial reporting functions within the business, reporting to our Finance Controller at Ormsary.

Candidates should have experience in managing accounts payable and receivable, bank reconciliations and associated administration tasks. Essential skills include a good working knowledge of Microsoft office along with excellent communication skills. Desirable skills such as a previous experience in a similar role, Pegasus Opera software and an accounts related qualification.

Hours of work are fulltime; however we operate a flexible working pattern should this be necessary.

Landcatch offers a competitive salary and benefits including, after a qualifying period, company pension scheme and 32 days annual holidays.

If this sounds interesting and you would like to be part of Landcatch's growing business please apply with a covering letter and CV to Landcatch Natural Selection Ltd, Ormsary Fish Farm, Ormsary, Lochgilthead, Argyll, PA31 8PE or enquiries@hendrix-genetics.com
Closing date for all applications is 6th March 2015.



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Lochgilthead PA31 8RR
e-mail - lil@mkmacleod.co.uk

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A remote and diverse West Highland Coastal Estate is seeking an individual to fulfil the role of: Estate Handyman (Full Time)

The role requires a self-motivated dedicated individual, able to work under their own initiative in all weathers.

The individual will have experience of maintaining and repairing a variety of buildings. In addition experience of micro hydro schemes and bio mass boilers would be an advantage, as the individual will also be part of a team responsible for the maintenance of wood chipping equipment and boilers, as well as the logistics and supply of wood chips.

The role attracts an attractive remuneration package which includes a house and use of an estate vehicle.

Part time employment may be available for partners

Please contact Roanna Agate on 01631 567797 or by email roanna.agate@bellingram.co.uk for a detailed job description and application form.

ORMSARY FARMERS BOOKKEEPER/ADMINISTRATOR

A bookkeeper/administrator is required, to be responsible for processing the accounting transactions of the businesses, customer and supplier contact and support, general administration and invoicing at Ormsary Estate in Argyll.

The successful candidate should have a good working knowledge of Microsoft Office (especially Excel) and experience with accounting software. A relevant qualification would be desirable but is not essential if sufficient experience is demonstrable. The successful applicant will have strong verbal and written communication skills and the ability to work individually and as part of a small rural management team.

An attractive employment package including pension is offered for this position.

Ormsary is a diversified estate with excellent local community and schooling facilities.

Apply with CV and references to:

Mrs Barbara Cutler, Finance Manager, Ormsary Farmers, Ormsary Estate Office, Lochgilthead, Argyll, PA31 8PE or email to Enquiries@Ormsary.co.uk.



GRADUATE/TRAINEE ENGINEER

Skilled in setting out, levels and CAD operations
Willing to travel and work throughout Argyll, company vehicle available.
Accommodation can be provided within the Lochgilthead area.
Full Driving License required
Application/CV by post to Lochgilthead Office
OR e-mail - lil@mkmacleod.co.uk
OR Call - Kenny on 07768025762

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 To find out more please visit www.Diageo-Careers.com and click on 'Search and Apply'. Then go to 'Search Openings' and enter the reference number in the Keyword box.

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STARTING SALARY £25,810 (£12.77/HR)
RISING TO £27,745 (£13.73/HR)
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What we are looking for:

- Ideally you will be a time served plumber or equivalent with a service background.
- You must hold a City and Guilds/ACS accreditation.
- You will be reliable, practical and hardworking with good leadership skills.
- You must hold a full driving licence.

SGN operates two of the largest gas distribution companies in the UK, with over 74,000km of gas mains and services in Scotland and the South of England. We have a responsibility to deliver gas safely, reliably and efficiently to every one of our 5.8 million customers. We are dedicated to keeping our customers safe and warm by leading the way in energy delivery.

This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced time served plumber with an ACS accreditation to be involved in a multi-skilled environment within our Scottish Independent Undertakings (SIUs) in Oban. Initially the successful applicant will be involved in boiler servicing, emergency duties and meter work. Other skills will be developed over time to include mains and service laying and plant duties. You will be expected to work variable hours and participate as necessary in a high frequency standby rota.

For more details and how to apply please download an application form from our website www.sgn.co.uk or request one by emailing laura.thomson@sgn.co.uk
 Applications must be received by close of business on Monday 9 March 2015.

SGN is an equal opportunities employer

Catering Assistant (Permanent)
£13,697 - £14,970 pro rata
10.5 hours per week
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Driver/Handyperson (Permanent)
£15,433 - £16,340
37 hours per week
Ardrishaig Ref: CMA00492

☎ 01546 604334

Closing date for both posts:
 13 March 2015.

To apply visit our website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/jobs

ACHA Argyllhomes FOR ALL

Painter
Salary £21,620 to £23,816

Labourer / Apprentice,
Salary £11,034 to £20,016
Dependant on age and experience

Base Location: Mid Argyll

Having recently been awarded Argyll Community Housing Association's painter work contract, Argyll Homes for All need to recruit a qualified, time served Painter to deliver a high quality painter work and building maintenance service to ACHA tenants across the Argyll and Bute area. Experience in the supervision and training of other staff would be an advantage.

We also require a Labourer / Apprentice to work with the Painter, assisting with delivering painter work and building maintenance work.

This contract, which starts on 1st April 2015, will operate on annualised hours;

- April to October – 47.5 hours per week; Monday to Friday 8 am to 6 pm and
- November to March – 22 hours per week; Monday to Thursday 9 am to 3 pm

A full driving licence is essential for the Painter post and desirable for the Labourer / Apprentice post. In addition, the successful candidates will be subject to a basic Disclosure Scotland check.

Closing Date for both posts: 12 noon on Friday 6th March 2015

For further information about these posts or for an informal chat please contact Robert MacKay, Planned Preventative Maintenance Manager on 01546 605919 or email Robert.MacKay@ahfa.co.uk

For full details and to apply visit our website at www.acha.co.uk/recruitment
 If you are unable to access the website contact the Recruitment Team:
 Tel 01546 605917 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk

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Julie@crear.co.uk

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Please telephone 01586 551111
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 Glebe Street, Campbeltown, Argyll PA28 6JJ

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public notices

One call.

CROFTING COMMISSION
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD

FIRST REGISTRATION OF COMMON GRAZINGS

The Crofting Commission have registered the following Common Grazings on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland.

Shielfoot Common Grazings, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
 Registration Number: CG140

Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may appeal to the Scottish Land Court. The appeal must be brought within 9 months from the date of this advert and should be made directly to the Land Court.

Details of the registration can be found at www.crofting.com/register/home

Cover it all.

www.highland.gov.uk

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
14/04496/FUL	Land 15m North of Camus An Tallan Cottages, Arisaig	Erection of house (Renewal of application Ref 11/04259/FUL)
15/00325/FUL	Monessie, Glenuig, Lochailort	Extensions and alterations to derelict single storey stone cottage
15/00426/FUL	Allt A'Mhullinn, Spean Bridge	Proposed sub-division of house to create dwelling house and holiday letting accommodation

Time period for comments is 14 days
 ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
 Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

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To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
15/00342/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse.	Land North East of The Haven Kirkton Tainuil Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Tainuil
15/00344/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse with attached garage, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Rowanbank (Plot 2) Dalmally Argyll and Bute PA33 1AE	Sub Post Office Dalmally
15/00407/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land North East of Rhuagarth Croft Appin Argyll and Bute PA38 4BA	Sub Post Office Ledaig
15/00427/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse associated outbuilding and formation of new access.	Land At Caberfeidh Tobermory Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6PY	Tobermory Area Office
15/00234/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage and formation of vehicular access	Land Adjacent to Morven Cullipool Isle of Luing Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Cullipool
15/00316/LIB	Repairs to wallhead, new roof timbers, sarking, re-slating, new rainwater conductors and general maintenance works	5 Charles Street Stafford Street Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office
15/00320/PP	Remove existing roughcast and installation of external wall insulation system	1 Monadhbeg Houses Dervaig Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6DJ	Sub Post Office Dervaig
15/00321/PP	Removal of existing roughcast and installation of external wall insulation system	3 Monadhbeg Houses Dervaig Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6DJ	Sub Post Office Dervaig
15/00400/PP	Renewal of planning permission 11/00636/PP - Erection of 3 dwellinghouses and installation of septic tank	Land Adjacent to Morven Cullipool Isle of Luing Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Cullipool

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Central Validation Team, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.

Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

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I would like to thank all my family, friends and neighbours for all the lovely cards and gifts received for my 21st birthday.
It was very kind of you all.
Sophie MacLennan

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

BRYAN - MACCUISH - On February 27, 1965 in Panama, Malcolm to Roseane.

DEATHS

LOCKE - Peacefully in the care of Abbeyfield Nursing Home, Ballachulish, in her 95th year, Betty Locke, a loving wife of the late Donald and much loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Reunited with her husband of nearly 75 years after just three short weeks apart. Funeral service on Friday, February 27, 2015 at 2.30pm in St Mary's Episcopal Church, Glencoe and thereafter to Kinlochmore Cemetery. Family flowers only please. All friends are respectfully invited. Enquiries to John McLellan Funeral Directors.

MACKIE - Peacefully, on the February 19, 2015 in the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, Lily (née May), beloved wife of Bill. Sadly missed. Funeral will take place at the Free High Church, Oban on Friday, February 27, 2015 at 12.00 p.m. Thereafter to Kilchattan Cemetery, Isle of Luing for interment at 1.30 p.m.

MACSWEEN - Peacefully, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on February 23, 2015, Flora J, née Macdonald, beloved wife of the late Kenneth MacSween, dear mother of Lewis and the late Ken and infant John. Funeral service at the Associated Presbyterian Church, Campbell Street, Oban at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery, Oban. Family flowers only please.

Oban Times
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS
Oban Times
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

MARTIN - Matilda (Milda) Euphemia MacIndeor Martin (née MacLachlan) passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday February, 24 2015. Beloved wife of Alexander and mother of Moira, Allan and Wendy and grandmother of Mairi. The memorial service will be held at Killermont Parish Church, Bearsden on Tuesday March, 3 at 10am and the service at Kilmeny Church, Ballygrany, Islay on Wednesday March, 4 at 11am followed by the interment at Kilnave, Gruinart.

McCALLUM - Joan. Suddenly at Gortanvogie Eventide Home, Bowmore, Islay on February 18, 2015, aged 94 years. A loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and aunt. Sadly missed by all.

SMITH - Flora MacLean Hutchison. Peacefully in South Devon on Saturday February 7, 2015, Flora, formerly of Fasadale, Ardrihaig. Dearly loved wife of the late Iain, much loved mum of Leslie, Euan and Margaret-Anne also loving granny of 10, and sister of the late Duncan. Funeral service took place at Clydebank Crematorium, North Dalnottar on Saturday February 21.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ANGUS - The family of the late Sandy Angus wish to express their sincere thanks to all relatives, friends and neighbours for the kindness and sympathy shown to them during their recent bereavement. Also for the cards, letters of condolence and donations to Diabetes UK and Breast Cancer Care. Thanks also to the staff of Lochgair Place, District Nurses and Home Support, Tarbert and to the Doctors and staff of ward 12 at Wishaw General Hospital. Special Thanks to Rev Mhorag MacDonald for a comforting service at Daldoie and Rev. Robert MacLeod for the blessing in Tarbert.

BUCHANAN - Jean 18.02.31 - 10.02.15. Following the recent sad passing of the late Jean, the family wish to thank most sincerely friends, neighbours and colleagues for their kindness and support, to all those who attended at St Modan's Church and Achnaba, to all staff at the Lynn of Lorne Care Home for Mum's care over the years. To Ian at D & A Munn for his professional and personal service, the Rev. Jeff McCormick for his comforting service and The Falls of Lora Hotel for an excellent buffet. A generous retiral collection was taken for Alzheimer's Scotland.

CAMERON - Ian - 1954 - 2015. So deeply loved son of Sybil and the late John Cameron and a loving caring brother to Colin, passed away Sunday January 25, 2015, peacefully in his chair. We who are suffering his loss also hold dear the wonderful memories of his caring and kindness, always found the best in everyone. We deeply appreciate all the love and support shown to us which has sustained us in our grief. The Rev. Robert Brookes for his very touching and heartfelt words, organist Allison Pringle for her rendering of Scottish melodies plus the amazing response towards the charity Guide Dogs for the Blind sponsored by the Caledonia Harley Davidson Club. The undertakers excellent services of Hamish Hoey & son. We give our profound thanks - Sybil and Colin.

ROBERTSON - The family of the late Robert Robertson (Sugar) would like to thank most sincerely relatives, friends and neighbours for their kindness and support, cards, flowers and telephone calls. Thanks to ambulance crew, Police Scotland and Dr. Colin Wilson. Heartfelt thanks to the Rev. Chris Fulcher for a beautiful and comforting

service. To all who attended the church service. Also Fr James MacNeil for his comforting visits. Thanks to Catriona and all at Hamish Hoey undertakers for a very personal and professional service. Thanks also to Maureen Gracie for lovely flower arrangements and the staff at the Rowantree Hotel.

MEMORIALS

ASKEW - In loving memory of Thomas Askew, who passed away March 2, 2014. Loved and remembered always.

BROWN - In loving memory of my dear husband Alaisdair, who died February 25, 2005. Also remembering my brother-in-law Hector, who died on March 24, 2004. Always in my thoughts and sadly missing you.

CAMERON - Sheena Ann Macintyre, died February 26, 2015. Always in our thoughts.

CAMERON - Ian D (Hoots). Ian our hearts are full of memories we treasure them with care. The way you had to leave us Will always seem unfair. Special visits will not return. When we were all together But with the love in our hearts You will walk with us forever.

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CHISHOLM - Stewart (Chubby), February 24, 2012. A much loved father and grandfather. Did the sun shine a little brighter. Was the sky a deeper blue. Or was it just a better world. When we shared our lives with you. Love always.

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CHISHOLM - James Stewart (Chubby), February 24, 2012. A golden heart stopped beating. Hard working hands put to rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us He only takes the best.

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MACVICAR - In loving memory of my wife Christina (Teena), who died March 1, 2007. There's not an hour of any day I don't recall the past. Johnnie. Much loved mum and nana. Loving you always, forgetting you never. Catherine, John, John, Niall and Michael.

WRAGG - In loving memory of Kay, passed away February 23, 2014. Greatly missed. - Charlie and family

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Coping with Bereavement



The death of a loved one can be devastating. Bereavement affects people in different ways. After a death there can be a range of emotions, from shock, to anger, to a feeling of release. There's no right or wrong way to feel. People often feel many emotions at once, or feel they're having a good day, then the following day feel worse again. Powerful feelings can come unexpectedly. One minute, calmness and serenity rule, and the next minute, irrationality and anger overwhelm - there are no rules in dealing with grief. Experts generally accept that there are four stages of bereavement: accepting the loss is real, experiencing the pain of grief, adjusting to life without the person who has died and putting less emotional energy into grieving and putting it into something new (in other words, moving on). People probably go through all these stages, but it is unlikely that one stage will move smoothly to the next. While grief might feel chaotic and out of control, these feelings will eventually become less intense. The best advice is to let time take its course. Feelings of shock and numbness (this is usually the first reaction to the death, and people often speak of being in a daze), overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying, tiredness or exhaustion, anger, for example towards the person who died, their illness or God, guilt, for example about feeling angry, about something said or unsaid, or about not being able to stop our loved ones dying. Negative feelings are perfectly normal. Lots of people feel guilty about their anger, but it's OK to be angry and to question why? **Coping with grief** Don't be afraid to talk about the person who has died. People might not mention the deceased's name because they don't want to cause upset. But remembering people as they were is often a good way of coming to terms with all that has happened. Anniversaries and special occasions can be hard. Do whatever is needed to get through the day. Bereavement is unique to each individual and no one knows how long it will last. Coping with bereavement is easier with the help of professionals. Having someone who is courteous and businesslike in taking care of matters after a death is absolutely imperative. The quality of care and respect a loved one has is often a real part of coming to terms with a loss. Having a place to meet, to talk and to spend time with other people who are sharing in the loss of a loved one can be a very happy time for someone recently bereaved. From making arrangements for a loved one's final journey, enjoying time together in memory, or indeed for a lasting memorial such as a head stone, our advertisers go out of their way to help cope with bereavement.

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Fort's cup-winning captains get life-time achievement awards

Shinty club surprises retired trio at prize-giving dinner dance

THREE former Fort William Shinty Club captains were celebrated at the annual dinner dance on Saturday night. Gary Innes, Chris Bamber and Neil Robertson, all captains during three of the club's three recent Camanachd Cup wins, were given framed shinty tops printed with their respective numbers and newspaper clippings from their victories. The trio are all retiring this

year and received lifetime achievement awards at the Moorings Hotel prizegiving, although Neil, who works offshore, was unable to attend. The club has won the Scottish cup six times in its history but enjoyed a run of five victories in just six seasons from 2005 to 2010, with Gary, Chris and Neil part of the golden generation that brought so much silverware back to Lochaber.

Shinty

Gary said the special award was a surprise, but a very welcome one.

The former Fort William player of the year added: 'It was really lovely. My heart was in my mouth, to be honest, when I had to say a few words.'

'It was a brilliant night and great to see all the lads together but I felt it was the end of an era because there are very few of the 'old team' still playing.

'It was an emotional night; it was like a conclusion for me, like a door was closing. 'People say I'll be back but I see the calibre of young players coming through and it just reiterates that the club is moving forward.

'Next season in the premierships will be a difficult one but that will be part of the rebuilding of the team and there are good guys at the helm.'

Other presentations included players of the year, Gordy MacKinnon for the first team, Peter Wood for the second team, Alexander MacMillan and Calum Shepherd (joint) for the under 17s and Rhuaraidh Shaw for under 14s.

Alexander 'Astie' Cameron was the winner of the most improved player award.



Gordy MacKinnon (right) accepts the player of the year trophy from club chairman Duncan MacPhee 20_f09shintydance02



LIFETIME: Fort William Shinty Club chairman Duncan MacPhee, left, presents awards to the prizewinners 20_f09shintydance01

Runners face all weathers in first event of its kind

THE FIRST 'multi-stage' running event in Scotland was won by Lochaber's Stephen Burns on Saturday.

More than 100 people gathered in Fort William for the eight-leg event, which was split into timed and non-timed sections to allow participants to socialise and take in the scenery between races.

A popular format in mountain-biking, the event from No Fuss Events is the first of its kind in this country and runners were faced with snow, wind and rain on top of varied terrain to make for a difficult race.

Athletics

But it was Lochaber Athletic Club's Stephen Burns who finished first overall, with a time of 55 minutes and 52 seconds.

The experienced runner was fastest in four of the eight timed stages and more than a minute ahead of second placed Paul Prentice.

Amanda Blackhall, also of Lochaber Athletic Club, was fastest woman and 21st over-all in 1:07:14 and at just 12 years old, Isla Britton was second lady and 27th over-all.



Event organiser Frazer Coupland, right, congratulates overall winner Stephen Burns 20_f09runduro01

Falcons' flying first game leads the way

Netball

FORT William Falcons netball club hosted their first tournament at the weekend and achieved a joint first place for their efforts.

The locals were joined by a newly established Fort Augustus team and Ayrshire's Stewarton Ladies and combined subs to make a mixed fourth team in Lochaber high school on Saturday.

The Falcon's Highland League training and league experience was clear in their first game, a 15-0 win over Fort Augustus.

This fixture also saw the debut of Karen MacInnes at wing attack, who looks promising for future league games.

As both teams achieved two out of three wins, Fort William and Stewarton shared first place.

It was a day of netball for all ages as the same morning girls from Inverloch primary school won all of their matches to come



Claire Lumley-Holmes passes the ball to Fort William shooters 20_f09netball02

first place in a junior tournament arranged by Active Schools, also held in Lochaber high school.

Following the success of the day, Fort William Falcons are encouraging potential new mem-

bers to join them at training, held on Tuesday evenings, 6.45pm until 8pm at the high school. Junior training, P7 upwards, is held at the same place from 3.45pm until 5.45pm on Tuesdays.

Players face three games a week to finish season

FORT William Football Club could be playing three or four games every week until the end of the season to catch up on a massive fixture backlog.

The Fort boys have eight Saturdays left until the end of the Highland League on April 18 and 13 games still to play but Claggan Park is still flooded, raising questions about the next few fixtures.

Rain put paid to both home and away fixtures against Rothes scheduled for last week and if the wet weather puts off any more Fort games manager Calum MacLean said they could be playing multiple times a week.

He said: 'This has been an absolute nightmare.'

'We've had this problem before but never this bad as far as I can remember.'

“This has been an absolute nightmare”

Calum MacLean
Fort William FC

'We have eight home games and five away to play between now and April, we should be able to catch up on our away games but it's home I'm worried about because the pitch is absolutely soaked with rain, it's a mess.'

'Starting from next week we will probably have games every Wednesday and Saturday but again that's only if the weather improves.'

Football

'If any more games are postponed we could end up playing three or four times a week just to finish in time with the league.'

This season so far Fort William have played 21 games, fewer than any other team in the Highland League. On Saturday (February 28), the Fort take on fifth-place Inverurie Locos, which MacLean said will be a 'tough' game.

He added: 'We lost out on two massive games last week [against Rothes], and this one is going to be tough but we're looking forward to it.'

'We lost 3-0 to them last year and I was really impressed with their performance on the day, it's won't be an easy game.'

Alleycats in lead as final bowls played

Ten pin bowling

WITH just one week left of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league there is still everything to play for.

Alleycats remain in the lead of the scratch division with 72 points but second place The Creeps are hot in their heels with 71.

Ardtoe/Nevis Radio collected five points this week to keep them in third place with 69.

In the handicap division, Alleycats are also in the top spot with 64 points with Rotavators in second place with 62 and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio's 60 points put them in third place.

Pam Weller of Alleycats achieved both the top individual scratch game and two-game scratch series with 186 and 337.

Dean Kennedy, British Legion Fort William B, had the top handicap game of 237 and the top two-game handicap series of 440.

Alleycats rolled the top scratch team game of the week of 620 and the top two-game scratch team series of 1,172. Council had the top handicap game of 791 and the top two handicap team series of 1570.

The highest scratch average is currently held by Pam Weller of Alleycats on 155 followed by Tony Whitelocke, Alleycats, on 151 and Stewart Duncan, The Creeps, on 147.

Shinty's role played out to politicians

Shinty

HIGHLAND politicians paid a visit to Fort William Shinty Club grounds on Friday to understand the importance of shinty in Lochaber.

Although rain and hail confined the meeting to the An Aird clubhouse, MSPs Rhoda Grant, shadow minister for sport, and David Stewart, as well as Chris Coniff, prospective Labour UK parliamentary candidate for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, met with committee members to learn about both the club's history and future.

Mr Stewart said: 'Shinty is such an important part of the culture in Lochaber and the Highlands as a whole.'

'It's important for health and wellbeing, especially from a young age so I'm looking forward to hearing more about it.'

National indoor firsts underway

First shinty

THE TOP young players in Scotland will descend on Fort William on Saturday for the annual National Indoor First shinty finals.

The primary seven and under competition will be played at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, starting at 12noon.

The primary five and under competition takes place at Lochaber High School in the town with play getting underway at 12.30pm.

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New kids on the block making their mark in first home game

A NEWLY-formed shinty team in Oban got off to a fantastic start in their first home game, putting five goals past Aberdour in a friendly at Ganavan on Saturday.

Oban Lorn was formed for the 2015 season by former Oban Celtic coach Jocky Martin, who believed the town's young players were not getting enough games.

Along with Oban Lorn there are already three established sides in the town: Oban Celtic, Oban Camanachd and Camanachd's junior team Lochside Rovers.

But Martin said there was room for the new club, which will offer an opportunity to those not playing regularly with other teams and can be an alternative to the rivalry between Oban's two established clubs.

He said: 'We've got 18 players at the moment and are growing bit-by-bit. I'm actually just off the phone to another lad who is interested in joining us.

'There are too many players, especially younger guys, who aren't getting games at the other clubs, so that's why I've set up this team.

'It's about developing younger

Shinty

players.' With the club entering the Marine Harvest South Division Two, the Bullough Cup and the Sutherland Cup, Martin is hopeful that in their second season, the side will pick up some silverware.

'A lot of our first season will be a learning curve,' he said. 'My own son played for Celtic but he and a lot of the other lads weren't getting to play a full season, so this is an opportunity for them to develop their game.

'Next season I'm confident we'll win something.

'Some of the players who have joined Oban Lorn are guys I was involved with when I was with Oban Celtic,' he said.

'But we do have a couple of former Lochside players too.

'We'll take anybody and that's the whole idea, to keep developing the game in the town.

'There are some fantastic young players here.

'The Oban Camanachd under-14s have won the MacMaster

cup the past three years in a row, but then you don't seem to see these players progressing through the ranks and playing senior shinty as they get older - the clubs need to allow this to happen.

'We're starting from grass-roots

level. For example, we have two 13-year-olds in our team. It's a fantastic way to bring the young ones through.'

Martin's son, David, produced a man-of-the-match performance last Saturday, scoring all of the goals against a competitive Ab-

erdour team, who managed one goal in reply. After the match, Martin said: 'There were some great performances from all the young boys, who should be proud of themselves by the way they approached the match.

'Poor conditions made the

game hard on both teams but it didn't stop us playing some decent shinty.'

This Saturday, Lorn are playing in a three-team friendly tournament with Glenorchy and Tainuait at Oban's 3G pitch, starting at 1pm.



NEW BOYS: Oban Lorn pictured before Saturday's friendly against Aberdour at Ganavan 16_t09obanlorn01

Fort come through tough test against Lovat at An Aird

A WELL-FOUGHT game at An Aird saw Fort William and Lovat draw 2-2 on Saturday.

The Fort men took an early lead thanks to a 16th-minute goal from Ewan Cameron but it was not to last as Lovat's Sean Cameron equalised just before half time.

Fort's Graham Campbell put his team straight back in front

Shinty

in the second half and they remained ahead until 15 minutes from full-time when Jamie Matheson made the final score 2-2.

Lochaber enjoyed a 3-0 victory away to Beauly, with goals from Kevin Ferguson, Shaun Nichol-

son and Findlay MacDonald at Braeval Park.

Kilmallie also played away this weekend and went down 5-1 to Glenorchy. Goals at Blairbeg from Neale Reid, Lewis MacLennan and Billy Urquhart saw the Glen lead 3-0 at the break.

Arran MacDonald added a fourth in the second half and although Kilmallie captain Liam

MacDonald pulled a goal back, James MacPherson rounded off the 5-1 win.

Ballachulish also faced disappointment on Saturday when they lost 8-0 to Lochside Rovers at home.

Scheduled clashes between Kilmallie and Lochaber reserve teams and a north and south Skye special were rained off.



FIVE-STAR PERFORMANCE: David Martin scored five goals in Oban Lorn's first home game Photo: Kevin McGlynn

Second half struggle as Saints share points

Busby	1
Oban Saints	1
SAFL Premier Division	

SAINTS travelled to Overlee Park in Clarkston last Saturday to take on Busby in a SAFL premier division match, but a poor second half performance saw the Oban side having to settle for a point in a game they should have won comfortably.

The visitors were without Ross Maitland, Allan MacKay, Craig MacEwan, Martin Bonar and long-term injury victim Dene Cassells for this fixture but still travelled with a strong enough squad that should have been capable of picking up all three points.

Saints got off to a great start and took the lead in the fourth minute when Lewis Cameron and Donnie Campbell set up Ally McKerracher, who actually scuffed his shot but the ball nestled in the back of the net despite a brave effort from Busby keeper

Danny Moy to stop the ball from crossing the line.

This was just the start the visitors were looking for and they looked good in the early exchanges knocking the ball about confidently giving Busby little opportunity to get going as an attacking force.

Saints had a great chance to increase their lead when Ally McKerracher set up Donnie Campbell but Donnie's shot sailed over the bar from inside the box.

Busby were stung by the opening from the visitors but gradually fought their way back into the game but the Saints defence, well marshalled by skipper Marc MacCallum, were giving nothing away.

The Oban side had another great chance to increase their lead in the 22nd minute when Myles McAuley cut through the home defence like a knife through butter.

He raced past two defenders and rounded the keeper but was

Football

unlucky to see his net-bound shot cleared off the line by Scott Bruce.

The visitors created another good opportunity on the half-hour mark when Scott Maitland and Lewis Cameron set up Donnie Campbell but again the chance was missed.

Busby were quite content to defend in depth and hit Saints on the break and this tactic almost paid off on the stroke of half time when Chris Bendoris came close with a fine effort which Saints netminder Daniel Cassells was happy to see fly inches over the bar.

Half time arrived with Saints good value for their narrow one goal lead but Busby had shown signs that they were up for the fight and were coming right back into the game.

The next goal was going to be vital. If Saints scored they would

have been fancied to go on and win comfortably but if Busby netted then it was game on.

The Oban side took the early initiative at the start of the second half and created the first real chance when Lewis Cameron made progress down the right flank before cutting the ball back for Donnie Campbell but Donnie failed to hit the target, firing over the bar from 12 yards.

Busby came roaring back into the game and created a couple of half decent chances, but last ditch clearances from Paul Kerr and Marc MacCallum denied the Busby strikers.

Saints front men Lewis Cameron and Dean Smith were finding things tough against the hard working Busby defence which meant the ball wasn't sticking up front for the Oban side and this gave the home side a glimmer of hope that they might just get something out of this game.

Saints created another great opportunity in the 65th minute

when Lewis Cameron set up Ally McKerracher who fired a low ball across the face of the goals but there was no takers and another chance went begging.

Ally then had another effort but his shot slid agonisingly past the post.

Busby were growing in confidence as the game wore on and their hard work and commitment to the cause paid off with 10 minutes remaining when a cross from the right was met by Billy McGhee, who thumped a great shot past a helpless Daniel Cassells to make the score 1-1. This was no more than the home team deserved.

Saints almost snatched the winner in the dying minutes when Lewis Cameron fired over a great cross to the far post. Scott Maitland got his header on target but Busby keeper Danny Moy made a fine save to deny the Saints midfielder. Seconds later referee Jim Rose blew for full time and Saints had to settle for a point

in a match they should have won comfortably.

Manager Iain Jackson was bitterly disappointed after the game. He said: 'We played really well in the first half against a hard-working Busby outfit, restricting them to just the one scoring chance while we created three or four great opportunities ourselves.

'We fell out of the game for long periods in the second half and the disappointing thing was we stopped passing and moving off the ball which we had done really well in the first 45 minutes.

'The league table is still very tight, but if we want to retain the title we won last season then these are the games we must win.'

The Oban side have a break from league duty this Saturday when they take on Jamestown in the second round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy which they won last season.

The game will take place at Glenorchy with a 2pm kick-off.

Pedal power fundraiser aims to top £100,000 mark

Cycling

AN ANNUAL cycle from the Butt of Lewis to Barra, by members of the Western Isles' emergency services, has set a target of raising £20,000.

The group, now in its fifth year, wants to see its total top £100,000 raised for cancer and elderly care charities by undertaking the 5,000-metre climbing cycle assault over 214 miles in only a few days.

One of the cycle ride's most colourful characters will sadly not be on his bike this year after he suffered a heart attack earlier in the year.

Sergeant George Murray, also known for being one of the regular policemen at the Royal National Mod, was due to be part of the annual run.

But he will still be involved and has now been put on lighter duties to make sure the event remains on track.

George said: 'This year's annual Butt to Barra charity cycle run, by the Western Isles emergency services, promises to be the biggest yet.

'Now in its fifth year, the cycle run has raised £80,000 with



SUCCESS: Last year's Butt to Barra cycle ride was a huge success with more than £20,000 raised for charity. One of the fundraisers, George Murray, is pictured to the left of the central poster.

funds going specifically to charities in the Western Isles.

'Summer 2014 saw the most successful cycle ever with 28 cyclists raising the huge sum of £21,750, averaging £750 per cyclist.

'Participants are mainly from the islands but a number have

also come from all over Scotland to take part, from Golspie, Fort William, Skye, Kyle and Glasgow.

'Without question it is the generosity of the people in the Western Isles and beyond, the continuing assistance of the local businesses which support

us and the good-humoured commitment of the cyclists which make this event such an enormous success.

'We again ask for the support of the people for these deserving causes.'

Individual cyclists or the event as a whole can be sponsored by

using the Just Giving page which will be set up for the event.

Sponsor sheets and posters will also be widely distributed.

To date Macmillan Cancer Research has benefited to the tune of £65,000; Crossroads - £10,000; and Lewis and Harris Youth Clubs Association and

Hebrides Mountain Rescue benefitted by £3,000 each.

George added: 'It would be wonderful if, in our fifth year, we were to exceed £100,000 in fundraising.

'The main charities to benefit will be Macmillan and Crossroads.'

Pre-season friendly fixtures

Shinty

Saturday February 28

Fort William 2nds v Lochside An Aird, Fort William, 1.30pm throw up.
GMA v Oban Camanachd - Peterson Park, Yoker.
Oban Celtic v Kilmory - venue tbc.

Oban Lorn v Glenorchy 3G pitch, Oban High School, 1.00pm throw up.

Strachur v Ballachulish Strachurmore.
Lochcarron v Skye 2nds Battery Park, Lochcarron, throw up tbc.
Bute 6 a sides (Bute 1st's, 2nd's & youths) The Meadows, Rothesay.

Big win for young Lochside at Balla' Shinty

A YOUNG Lochside Rovers showed their promise with a convincing 8-0 win over Ballachulish at the Jubilee Park.

Liam Higgins and Brian McCallam scored two each in the first half with the young half-forward line of Daniel MacVicar, Liam Higgins and Ross McMillan playing some lovely shinty.

In the second half, a Willie Lafferty hat-trick and a Daniel MacVicar strike completed the rout.

Team manager Gareth Evans praised his young side, including young goalkeeper Brian 'Beano' Logan, who kept a clean sheet.

Ballachulish fielded a mixture of first and second team players, as several first-teamers were away on David Campbell's stag do.

Father and son win bowls competition

Bowls

IT WAS a family affair at this year's annual open doubles, hosted by Connel Carpet Bowling Club, as a father and son played two brothers in the final.

Held in Connel Village Hall on Saturday the competition attracted 25 pairs from clubs throughout Lorn but it was two Kilmory pairs that contested the final.

Brothers Ali and Angus Dickie played last year's winners, father and son Ivor and Stuart MacLean, in the final match. The MacLeans successfully defended their title, lifting the Falls of Lora Shield once again.

Ali and Angus had beaten Robert Scott and Lachie MacLean, Cairnbaan in their semi-final, while Ivor and Stuart defeated young brothers Michael and Ryan Strathern, Benderloch.



WINNERS: Stuart and Ivor MacLean with the Falls of Lora Shield

Popular squash is holding court

Squash

AS squash in Oban continues to grow in popularity, the women's section is preparing to start the second round of its league programme, involving 30 women.

Five leagues of six players make up the new league programme, which consisted of only four leagues last year.

'Squash is really picking up in Oban, it's crazy,' said Oban squash club's Jackie Kersley. 'We are sometimes struggling to get courts booked because it is so popular.'

'There are 30 women playing regularly in league matches and that's just the ones who play regularly.'

Jackie won the top league prize last time around, with Jo Gosling and Julie McGlynn sharing the spoils in league two, Charmaine Love winning league three and Seph Burton winning league four.

The women's leagues run in conjunction with mixed leagues and men's leagues.

Division two title within touching distance

Oban Lorne	42
Clydebank	14
RBS West Division Two	

DEFEAT in the RBS Regional Shield Final the previous week was forgotten about as Oban Lorne returned to winning ways with a dominant display in the league, edging them closer to the title.

The Green Machine secured the crucial five points on offer to keep up the pressure on table-toppers Cambuslang; if Oban win their three remaining games, the title will be theirs.

Oban made a confident start to the game last Saturday and were dominating the majority of play with the forwards carrying the ball well and winning ball at the scrum and lineout.

As a result, the Oban backline were given good ball to attack with and on 10 minutes a Plato Moisiadis break from inside his own 22 resulted in Craig Wright scoring and converting Oban's first try of the day.

Oban looked to end the contest early and extended their lead on 20 minutes. A period of pressure on the line eventually resulted in a five-metre penalty which was

Rugby

tapped quickly by Oban captain Cammy Smith, who touched down over the line.

Oban were breaking down the away defence at will and second row Andy MacDougall made a powerful run down the right touchline and was unlucky not to beat the last man for a chance at the try line.

The ball was eventually spun wide where winger Allan Wright gathered and passed to Cammy Smith, who scored his second try of the day with a superb inside run that bamboozled the Clydebank defence.

The bonus point was secured shortly before halftime with player/coach Corrie Louw touching down from the back of a fantastic driving maul. At half time Oban led 28-0 and were looking very comfortable.

Assistant coach Aaron Collins rang the changes with fullback Dave McCabe being rested and replaced by Callum MacLachlan.

Injured Lorne MacLachlan also left the field to be replaced by Travis Smith, who was himself returning from injury. Oban planned to extend their

impressive lead in the second half but the team self-destructed with 10 minutes of madness allowing Clydebank a way back into the game. In the space of a few minutes Oban lost possession of the ball in keys areas, allowing the away side to score two tries, narrowing the score to 28-14.

The home team managed to recover and find their best form for the remainder of the second half by running in two further tries. Cammy Smith secured his hat-trick with another powerful run, easing through the defence, while Andy MacDougall scored a great try from a break by Jamie Bate.

Craig Wright boasted a 100 per cent kicking record for the day with all six conversions being successful.

Oban welcomed debutant Stephen Parr into the team for the last five minutes, another promising young player for the club.

Oban Lorne's next game is away to Uddingston on Saturday, March 7.

The next home game is on Saturday, March 28 against Way-siders Drumpellier.



HAT-TRICK HERO: Cammy Smith touches down one of his three tries in Oban Lorne's win against Clydebank. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Jimmy Marshall Cup second round - Haldane United 5, Campbeltown Pupils 2; Premier Division - Busby 1, Oban Saints 1; Premier Division One - Dunoon 2 Shawlands 4; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star v South Camlachie postponed; Easthall Star 10, Dunoon Athletic 0. Tarbert no game.

This Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division - Campbeltown Pupils v Alba Thistle; Premier Division One - Dunoon v Rutherglen; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star no game. Jimmy Marshall Cup 2nd round - Oban Saints v Jamestown; Coronation Cup 2nd round - Rosehill Star v Tarbert.

Oban Saints Youths results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Ardencaple 1, Under 13s 2. Scoring for Saints were Kenni Gray and Jamie Forgive. Under 14s v Ardencaple postponed; Under 15s 12, Renton Craigandro 0.

On target for Saints were Lewis Buchanan (5), Daniel McCuish (3), Ruairidh Horne, Martin Rennie, Kenneth MacDonald and an own goal. Under 16s v Drumchapel postponed Under 19s 3, Ardencaple 1. Saints goalscorers were Connor Howe, Zak Straub and Stewart Twort.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Kilpatrick; Under 14s no game; Under 15s v Dumbarton United; Under 16s no game; Under 19s v Broomhill SC.

Harry is a smash hit on national circuit

Badminton

TAYNUILT teenager Harry Mobey continues to make a name for himself on the national badminton stage, finishing runner-up in the Glasgow Junior Badminton Championship.

Competing in the under-15 competition Harry beat the number one seed in the semi-final but lost in three sets in the final.

He did pick up gold, however, in the mixed doubles with partner Jennifer Lafferty.

This season Harry is working on building his international ranking and participated in a team event for Glasgow in Hungary at the end of 2014, winning five of his six matches as Glasgow won gold.

Harry's elder brother, Stewart, won an under-18 tournament in Motherwell last month and retains a top 20 ranking in Scotland.

Shinty fixture list in disarray as relegation request is granted

WITH the shinty season starting in less than two weeks, the Camanachd Association has accepted an appeal from Glenorchy Camanachd to drop down a league following a mass exodus of players pre-season.

The Dalmlally-based club, which marks its 50th anniversary this year, made the 11th hour plea after confirming six of its first team players had ruled themselves out of contention through injury and work commitments.

Others in the squad indicated they were unable to commit weekly and could only play in home games.

The move means the sport's Marine Harvest National Division, the game's second tier, will go ahead with just seven teams,

Shinty

instead of the planned eight. The Marine Harvest South Division Two league will include Glenorchy for this season.

The Camanachd Association, the game's governing body, had approached teams in both north and south division one leagues but could not find a replacement for Glenorchy.

The decision to grant Glenorchy's appeal, said the association, was based on an understanding that Glenorchy would have withdrawn from competition if forced to play in the National Division.

But Gareth Evans, manager of Marine Harvest South Division



Glenorchy won promotion to the National Division in 2013 but have elected to be relegated this year after losing key players.

One side Lochside Rovers is worried about other clubs following suit.

He said: 'I think it sets a dangerous precedent that Bute and

now Glenorchy have been able to opt out of playing in the National Division.'

A statement from the association to the clubs involved said: 'In

the circumstances there seems no option other than for the National Division to progress as scheduled with the seven remaining teams and no fixture for the team scheduled to play Glenorchy.

'We recognise and share the disappointment for the teams competing in the National Division.'

The association added that it would convene a meeting this week with representatives of the National Division teams to 'consider any options put forward to minimise the negative impact of Glenorchy's decision to withdraw'.

Glenorchy's second team will remain in South Division Two. John Smith, Glenorchy team

manager, said his first team had been decimated with the loss of key players such as Findlay Ross and Grant MacPherson to injury and defender Scott McKillop, who has transferred to Oban Camanachd.

'Because of the number of players we have lost, it would mean playing 14 and 15-year-olds in the National Division, which you just can't do.'

'We have apologised to the Camanachd Association for the short notice but we had not realised the extent of the injuries to players until now.'

'It is disappointing to have to take this decision in the club's 50th anniversary year and I think we had the makings of a very good team.'

Argyll endurance riders top club's national prize list

TWO ENDURANCE riders from Argyll can claim to have the best horses in Scotland after their performances last year.

Scottish internationalists Suzanne Taylor from Seil, on her part-bred Arab Salsa Caramel and Shona McCorkindale, Scammadale, on her homebred Arab Sefras Blue Jewel, were among the top prizewinners for the Scottish Endurance Riding Club (SERC) 2014 season.

Suzanne, who is sponsored by Aloeride, finished the season with the highest accumulative mileage of 1,130 kilometres (140 kilometres ridden in England) with 416 points, closely followed by Shona, who accumulated 911 kilometres and 376 points.

Suzanne's total was boosted by a 160-kilometre (100-mile) ride in one day at a competition in North Berwick last year. The gruelling race started at 5am and finished at 10.30pm.

By completing the ride Salsa

Caramel was promoted to diamond status, one of only three horses in Scotland to achieve the status.

Shona's Sefras Blue Jewel also won the endurance points trophy from the Scottish Regional Group of Arab Horse supporters.

Both combinations were selected to represent Scotland for the 2014 Home International held in Yetholm, where they took home silver medals.

In an extremely successful season for the Argyll branch of SERC, Liz Paul from Duror, with her Arab Artizana Oberon, took home a new trophy in the club for the horse achieving an average speed closest to 11 kilometres-per-hour across the season.

Sheila Ogilvie, Taynuilt, and her horse General George, during 2014, reached a career distance of 6,500km and Hazel McCorkindale, Scammadale, boosted her total with her Arab Sefra to 5,000 kilometres.

Scottish champion joins field of 70 in Mull's indoor athletics competition

NEARLY 70 young athletes competed in the Mull contest of Sports Hall Athletics last Saturday in Tobermory High School.

The Mull event was the third of the four local area competitions this winter in Argyll, promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club.

This was the 16th year this form of indoor athletics has been held in Tobermory and, as in previous years, the day was split into two sessions: the under-7s, under-9s and under-11s competing in the morning and the older age groups in the afternoon.

Athletes from Mull Harriers, based in Bunnassan, made up a third of the total entry.

Bunnassan had won the annual trophy for the primary schools in 2014 but this year had to settle for second place behind Salen. Salen primary totalled 79.5 points, with Bunnassan on 65.5 and Tobermory

Athletics

group Alfie John Riley, Tobermory, won the high jump and speed bounce.

Two Salen girls excelled in the under-7 contest with Ellen MacRae winning ahead of Lexi Dalgleish. Ellen won the four-lap race in 31.5secs and then went on to win the long jump and speed bounce. Lexi won the triple jump achieving an amazing distance for one so young, attempting the event for the first time.

Keira Munro from Salen was an outstanding winner in the under-9 category, winning all six events with some style.

Salen primary had two winners in the morning session and dominated in the boys' under-9s with Ewan MacPhail the champion only three points ahead of Rio Brown, also Salen.

Ewan excelled in the four-lap race winning in 28.1 seconds and

then proceeded to win both the long and triple jumps. Rio won an exciting high jump contest, clearing 0.98m and also won the speed bounce. Johny Duffy, Salen, won the under-7s, one point ahead of Innes MacCallum from Bunnassan. Johny won two events outright and shared first place with Innes in the long jump. Innes won the triple jump and javelin. Isaac Yelder from Bunnassan was the under-11 champion with Bailey Wild from Salen close behind.

The day ended with Mull's own Scottish champion Molly Reade winning the under-15s high jump, although the national indoor champion found the hall too small for her normal run-up.

Successful athletes will be invited to compete in the Argyll final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on March 21.

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DIVING & MARINE SPECIALISTS

<p>WEATHER</p> <p>Thursday Sunshine and wintry showers Winds strong west south westerly Temperatures 3°C to 75°C.</p> <p>Friday Cloudy with showers Winds westerly Temperatures 4°C to 6°C.</p> <p>Weekend Outlook Heavy rain on Saturday Heavy rain on Sunday Winds south and westerly Temperatures 2°C to 7°C.</p>		<p>TIDAL INFORMATION</p> <p>Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, February 26, 2015 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th colspan="3">am</th> <th colspan="3">pm</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Thur</td> <td>05.17</td> <td>1.4</td> <td>11.19</td> <td>2.9</td> <td>17.42</td> <td>1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fri</td> <td>06.31</td> <td>1.7</td> <td>** ** *</td> <td>* * *</td> <td>13.34</td> <td>2.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sat</td> <td>01.30</td> <td>2.8</td> <td>08.26</td> <td>1.7</td> <td>15.16</td> <td>2.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sun</td> <td>02.59</td> <td>2.9</td> <td>09.47</td> <td>1.6</td> <td>16.06</td> <td>3.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mon</td> <td>03.46</td> <td>3.2</td> <td>10.35</td> <td>1.4</td> <td>16.29</td> <td>3.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tues</td> <td>04.21</td> <td>3.4</td> <td>11.12</td> <td>1.3</td> <td>16.55</td> <td>3.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wed</td> <td>04.57</td> <td>3.6</td> <td>11.45</td> <td>1.1</td> <td>17.25</td> <td>3.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Ardershaig</td> <td>-5.35</td> <td>Mallaig</td> <td>+0.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Campbeltown</td> <td>-5.30</td> <td>Portree</td> <td>+0.55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Crinan</td> <td>-0.47</td> <td>Tobermory</td> <td>+0.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Islay Port Ellen</td> <td>2.00</td> <td>Dover</td> <td>+5.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lochboisdale</td> <td>+0.30</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Ferry Crossings/Sea States</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Oban to Barra/South Uist</td> <td>Moderate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oban to Coll/Tiree</td> <td>Moderate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kennacraig to Islay</td> <td>Moderate</td> </tr> </table>	Date	am			pm			Thur	05.17	1.4	11.19	2.9	17.42	1.5	Fri	06.31	1.7	** ** *	* * *	13.34	2.8	Sat	01.30	2.8	08.26	1.7	15.16	2.9	Sun	02.59	2.9	09.47	1.6	16.06	3.1	Mon	03.46	3.2	10.35	1.4	16.29	3.3	Tues	04.21	3.4	11.12	1.3	16.55	3.5	Wed	04.57	3.6	11.45	1.1	17.25	3.7	Ardershaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25	Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55	Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30	Lochboisdale	+0.30			Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate	Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate	Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate
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SCOTTISH SEALIFE SANCTUARY

Review prompts pledge to resurface A82 'deathtrap'

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A 'DEATHTRAP' road in Lochaber will be resurfaced following numerous reports of cars skidding off the carriageway into ditches, repair group BEAR Scotland has promised.

Ronnie McLauchlan, a concerned farmer in the area, said he has seen vehicles career into the opposite lane, plough through fences and fall into the roadside ditch on the short stretch of the A82 between Ballachulish roundabout and bridge and said it is lucky nobody has been hurt.

He added: 'It seems to be when cars come off the roundabout and accelerate, they skid all over the place and end up down in the ditch. There hasn't been much said about it because nobody has been hurt but the last one I saw was on Sunday and there was a three-year-old girl in the car. It would be a deathtrap if there was anything coming the other way.'

'Does there need to be a fatality before anyone sits up and takes notice? I don't know if it's oil leaking out of the tar, if the surface has become too smooth or what the problem is, but I do know it can't be left like that.'

Mr McLauchlan has farmed in the area for more than 50 years but said there wasn't a problem until last year.

He added: 'I remember seeing a couple of cars down the ditch last summer and I didn't take too much notice but then there were more in December and more again this year. It has got to be more than a coincidence now. It's happening far too often.'

And that was just the accidents he could see from his house on the north-bound side of the carriageway.

'I hear the same thing has happened umpteen times on the other side,' he added.

“The car flew clean over the top of the fence.”

Ronnie McLauchlan
concerned farmer

Mr McLauchlan also said cars crashing through his fence could cause more problems on the busy Glasgow-Inverness trunk road.

He said: 'The car at the weekend flew clean over the top of the fence but more often than not cars smash right through it and it means the sheep in my field can get out.'

'Insurance covers the cost so it's no money out of my pocket but I always need to make sure the fence is repaired straight away because the last thing we need is sheep running across the A82.'

Lochaber area police inspector Donald Campbell confirmed he was aware of the problem and had passed on concerns to BEAR and Transport Scotland.

He added: 'Because these appear to be what are known as damage-only incidents it may not have been brought to the attention of the appropriate people but the problem should be solved before there is a serious accident, not after, so I'll make sure they [BEAR] are aware of it.'

A spokeswoman from BEAR Scotland said: 'A road safety review of this section of the A82 has been carried out following the recent incidents at the Ballachulish roundabout.'

'As a result of this, the road surface and signs are to be improved in the coming weeks.'

'Road safety is a top priority and we will continue to work with Police Scotland and Transport Scotland on this important issue.'



Looking to the stars to remember

THE FIRST astronomy event in memory of a well-known Lochaber man was held on Tuesday.

Caol primary school played host to Professor John Brown, 10th astronomer royal for Scotland, as he held two lectures to commemorate former pupil William Cameron.

Professor Brown organised the event with the late Mr Cameron's sister, Lorna MacCallum, to commemorate the former Nevis Radio station manager.

As well as the day and evening lectures, the school pupils were treated to a pop-up planetarium in the gym hall, where they had the opportunity to stargaze and learn about the night sky.

The £565 raised at the event was donated to Macmillan Cancer Support.

COMMEMORATION: Professor John Brown, left, gave the first William Cameron Lecture. He is pictured with the late Mr Cameron's mother Betty, father Tavish and sister Lorna MacCallum

STARRY-EYED: Caol primary school pupils enjoyed a planetarium experience from their gym hall

John Muir Trust cash boosts groups

COMMUNITY projects in the West Highlands have benefited from almost £6,000 of funding.

Each year The John Muir Trust donates money to a range of nature-based schemes and this year groups on Harris, Skye and Lochaber were among the 10 to receive a cash boost.

Nevis Partnership, in Fort William received £1,220 to bridge a gap in funds until more grants are provided for a range of projects held at Glen Nevis. Also in

Lochaber, the Knoydart Foundation was awarded £1,083 to construct nest boxes for owls to help birds breed in the area.

The North Harris Trust benefited from £3,000 towards the Isle of Harris Mountain Festival, which raises awareness about the importance of landscape and natural environment on the island, as well as boost the local economy outside the tourist season.

A final £560 was donated to Portree high school to allow 12 third year pupils to complete the John Muir Award, which includes

learning about conservation, exploring and wildlife on Skye. Mike Daniels, head of land and science for the trust, said: 'Our conservation land fund was established to help community projects on land that is either managed by the trust or by community landowners which we work in partnership with. Hopefully this will provide a modest boost to some of the most fragile communities in the Highlands and islands and help strengthen the historic link between people and nature across the region.'

Search on for Fort citizen of the year

FOLLOWING a successful first year, Fort William community council will be presenting an award to another outstanding member of the town's community.

Last year, former Belford Hospital surgeon David Sedgwick won the inaugural Citizen of the Year prize and now entries are open for the second year.

The nomination form states the award is intended for someone living or working in Fort William for 'outstanding personal and voluntary service to the Fort William community' or 'whose service has made a special contribution to the life and wellbeing of Fort William and the wider community'.

Nominations can be made to any member of the community council. Contact details for members can be found on the high street notice board.

Forms are also available from the town's library and council service point or from Drew Purdon at House of Clan Jamfrie, High Street.

All nominations must be with the community council by the end of March.

Grant boost for carers and scouts

TWO West Highland community groups have received more than £15,000 in grants.

Care Lochaber was given £6,119 by Awards For All to help promote monthly social events which will in turn raise awareness for the charity.

Lochalsh Scout Group received £9,750 to buy camping equipment.

Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, welcomed the news.

He said: 'I would like to congratulate both groups for their successful applications to Awards for All and wish them all the best in continuing with the great work they are doing to help those most in need.'



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Valuations and talk raise £600

FUNDRAISING events for the West Highland Museum have raised more than £600. On Friday, more than 60 people attended a lecture about the 1715 Jacobite uprising by Professor Hugh Cheape, research chairman at the University of the Highlands and Islands. The following day, experts from auctioneers Lyon and Turnbull conducted a valuation event in the Fort William Museum. Coined 'Not the Antiques Roadshow', more than 100 valuations were carried out for a donation, with all proceeds going to West Highland Museum.

PRICE TAG: Colleen Foggio, West Highland Museum manager, helps antiques specialist Colin Fraser value some finds

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Power giant accused of ignoring campaigners

BOSSSES of power giants Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) have been accused of 'washing their hands' of a campaign to end a surcharge on consumers in the Highlands and islands.

A group of representatives, from Lochaber to the Hebrides, met SSE staff at the firm's headquarters in Perth last week and called for equal pricing across the country, which would mean abolishing the two pence per unit additional charge currently implemented in the north.

Angus McCormack, of Western Isles Poverty Action Group, has been one of the lead campaigners for the cause.

He said: 'It is ridiculous that in an area which actually produces clean electricity that people are genuinely living in hardship and not being able to properly heat their homes.'

'For a company that made £1.5 billion of profit last year to effectively wash its hands of this is unacceptable.'

'We would ask SSE to take this matter seriously and do something from its own vast resources for its customers in the Highlands and islands.'

Also representing the Highlands was John Maciver of Hebridean Housing Partnership, Donnie Mackay from Skye and Lochalsh Housing Association and Di Alexander from Lochaber Housing Association.

A spokesman for SSE said the meeting was 'productive' but the company alone could not abolish the charge.

He said: 'We had a productive meeting where we discussed how we can work together to support those living in fuel poverty.'

'SSE is keen to work closely with the groups going forward and share SSE's expertise to ensure more people are aware of all measures available to those who may be worried about their energy bills.'

'SSE also discussed the extensive work it's carried out to make the case for national pricing with Ofgem, Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Scottish government and the Competition and Markets Authority.'

'This is an industry-wide issue and requires an industry-wide solution and we urged those present to support us in making the case for moving to national pricing which will be a simpler and fairer way forward.'



FORT WILLIAM MAN TEAMS UP WITH UNIVERSITY FRIENDS TO ROW ACROSS ATLANTIC OCEAN IN 50 DAYS

Liam sets sail on gruelling charity rowing challenge

EMMA CRICHTON
ecrichton@obantimes.co.uk

A FORT William man is set to row across the Atlantic Ocean in less than 50 days to raise thousands of pounds for charity.

Liam Browning, 30, and three friends, will complete the 3,000-mile challenge in December in aid of Unicef, the Cystic Fibrosis Trust and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

The group, who met at Newcastle University, will row their boat 24 hours a day, swapping at two-hour intervals for short bursts of sleep from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Antigua.

They have allocated 50 days for the trip as part of the organised Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge but hope to beat the record of 39 days.

In preparation, this weekend Mr Browning will be joined in Lochaber by the rest of his team, Stuart Markland, James Timbs-Harrison and James Kendall, for an intense training session in Loch Linnhe.

Rowing under the team name 'All Beans No Monkeys', the



BEANS: Liam Browning from Fort William will row the Atlantic with university friends in December this year. From front: James Timbs-Harrison, Stuart Markland, James Kendall and Liam Browning

crew will set off from Corpach on Saturday to row constantly for 24 hours.

Now manager of a commercial shipping company, Mr Browning said he thinks this will be crucial practise for the group.

He said: 'It's certainly going to be cosy on board, with not too much space.'

'I had no sea sickness after the first row but I am sure it will catch us when we go for our next row which will be 24 hours long. Overcoming that will be part of the long challenge ahead of us.'

All four members of All Beans No Monkeys have been running, swimming and training on rowing machines to train and think they will need to eat up to 10,000 calories every day to keep up their strength when on board their boat.

The team have even had their boat specially made for them by a company based in Dorset, but despite all the preparation, they have only raised £1,125 and have a long way to go to reach their £60,000 target.

To find out more, donate or sponsor the group, go to <http://allbeansnomonkeys.com>.

Resurfacing work starts on A830 at Corpach

WORK will start this weekend on improving the A830 road at Corpach.

Earlier this month *The Oban Times* reported drivers were 'dugusted' at the potholes in the Fort William-Mallaig trunk road but repair group BEAR Scotland announced on Monday that resurfacing work will begin on Sunday March 1.

The £350,000 investment will provide a 'durable and long-lasting surface', according to a BEAR spokeswoman.

Work will be carried out overnight, Sunday to Thursday, for two weeks, between 7pm and 6am. Temporary traffic lights and a 10mph convey system will be in place during working hours.

Eddie Ross, BEAR's operating company representative for the north-west, said: 'These essential overnight works will lead to a much-improved road surface and is part of a programme of maintenance works along this lifeline route.'

'Whilst the resurfacing works may result in some short-term disruption, the traffic management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of both motorists and road workers. We would like to thank motorists in advance for their patience and also encourage them to plan ahead before setting out.'

New look at village slate quarries



SLATE PROJECT: taking a look at the slate arch in Ballachulish which will be major part of the project, from left, Highland councillor Thomas MacLennan, Kevin Smith of Ballachulish Community Council, Highland councillor Brian Murphy, builder Derek MacPherson, Lorna MacAskill of Ballachulish Community Council, and Highland Council ranger, Michelle Melville.

A NEW local history project will kick off in Ballachulish next week to find out more about the slate quarries.

It is part of a wider plan to conserve the slate arch, also known as the Tom Beag Inclined Plane, which was used to transport the slate from the quarries down to boats waiting on Loch Leven.

Funding for this has been provided by Highland council as owners of the structure, Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

Interpretative panels will also be erected and those behind the project want to hear stories and information to help them with this.

People from the village and the surrounding areas are being invited to a workshop to launch the project, held on Thursday March 5 in Ballachulish Shinty Club from 6.30pm.

Scottish historian Margaret Bennett will lead the event to help piece together information about the historic Ballachulish quarry.

Earlier the same day, Ms Bennett will be leading an informal story-gathering session with residents and those attending the lunch club at Abbeyfield

care home in the village, where it is hoped much information will come to the fore.

The whole project will be run by Highland council, owners of the structure.

Project co-ordinator Verity Walker said: 'Many local people have family memories of the quarry and some older residents even recall going up there as children and being allowed to work the slate alongside the men. 'The aim of our project is to help collect these memories and stories, and to look at how they can be shared with other local people and visitors.'

Ballachulish community council chairman Kevin Smith thinks it will be a positive project for villagers to take part in.

He said: 'This is not only a project with benefits for visitors, but one with great opportunities for local people too.'

'We will be inviting local folk to get involved in many ways - by sharing stories, by training in oral history recording techniques and also by taking part in practical slate-working training.'

'This project is going to allow us all to learn more about our slate quarrying heritage and to share it with others.'

Call for return of free school milk drink

A HIGHLAND politician is calling for the return of free milk for school children.

Dave Thompson, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, has raised the idea of 'dairy breaks' at primary schools, with flavoured milk or yoghurt provided each day.

He has now written to bosses of major retail chains asking for a financial contribution, as well as asking Maureen Watt, Scottish minister for public health, for her support.

Mr Thompson said: 'Many schools and have breakfast clubs, because some children come to school without breakfast and it is not good for their ability to learn if they come to school with an empty stomach.'

'Could we look at providing a mid-morning flavoured milk or yoghurt break for kids, which would help them and give them more nutrition at that time?'

'I remember well when I was at school, a long time ago, we had daily milk. Sometimes it was good, sometimes it was not so good and sometimes it was better.'

'We could make the milk attractive, it could be flavoured, or we could have yoghurt and so on. I am sure that it would help children physically and mentally, and it would help the industry.'

New sleeper trains on track to deliver 'innovative' travel

NEW TRAINS for the Caledonian sleeper service will offer 'innovative' ways to travel, according to directors.

The overnight transport, which includes a Fort William to London

service, will be taken over by Serco in April and bosses of the traffic company have already unveiled plans for 75 new coaches for the sleeper trains, which will be brought into service in 2018.

Private cabins, with or without ensuite showers, will be available as well as 'pod flatbeds' which recline from chairs into beds. 'Cradle seats' with reclining footrests will also be on offer.

Peter Strachan, Serco's managing director for the new Caledonian sleeper, said: 'This is a major milestone in our plans to deliver an innovative new service. I'm absolutely delighted we have

signed contracts with our partners and look forward to delivering an improved service from April 1 and from 2018 when we introduce the innovative new coaches into service.'

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BUILT TO ORDER

New wind farm map revealed

A NEW interactive map has been launched showing all wind farms and turbines in the Highlands.

Available on Highland council's website, it shows all scales of on-shore wind turbine developments with details such as turbine size and planning reference numbers so further information can be accessed.

The map was revealed at

a meeting of the planning, development and infrastructure committee last week.

Chairman councillor Thomas Prag said: 'This is a step up from what we had previously provided and gives very clear and comprehensive information at the click of a mouse.'

'I am sure people will find having such an interactive and visual representation of where

we currently are in terms of wind farm activity very useful.'

'At the moment just the constructed and under construction schemes are shown on the map but plans are to get all approved schemes, refused schemes and those in the planning process added.'

The map can be viewed by visiting www.highland.gov.uk/windmap.

Schools' spotlight on skills courses

YOUNG people in the Western Isles will be given the opportunity to choose courses to provide skills in the workplace while still at school.

Qualifications in both engineering and health and social care will be available to senior pupils of The Nicolson Institute in Stornoway, Castlebay on Barra, Lionacleit on Benbecula and Sir E Scott on Harris.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is working with a number of other organisations to implement the courses which will be piloted from August and be in place island-wide from 2016.

Available at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels five and six, (the equivalent of the old standard grade and higher), the two-year courses will combine on-the-job skills with academic study, allowing pupils to apply directly for jobs in both fields before leaving school.

Air fare discount scheme extended

ISLANDERS are to benefit from money off flights for another four years.

The air discount scheme, which provides a 40 per cent reduction on core fares for residents of Colonsay, Islay, Jura, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, has been extended until March 2019, transport minister Derek Mackay announced last week.

Alasdair Allan, MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, welcomed the news.

He said: 'The air discount scheme has continued to be a resounding success in the Western Isles, together with many other island communities, with more than 90 per cent of our eligible residents signed up to take advantage of discounts.'

'This level of uptake, and markedly increased passenger numbers, underlines just how valuable the scheme is to remote communities which previously contended with relatively high air fares.'

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OAP 'vigilantes' patrol the streets for illegal parking

LOUISE LEE
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A GROUP of elderly parking 'vigilantes' are helping traffic wardens in Oban by pointing out cars with no tickets, in order that no one gets away 'Scot free'.

The plucky pensioners said they were working to 'clear up the town of bad parking' and patrol the street, pointing out where drivers have not paid their fee by putting handwritten notes on the cars or phoning the police.

The unappointed wardens have also been seen making sure up-to-date information about fines appears on signs in the town's car parks.

Traffic wardens introduced to the town last year have been vigorous in enforcing parking restrictions since Argyll and Bute council took over responsibility from Police Scotland.

By the end of the second financial quarter of 2014/15, the car parking income alone in Oban, Lorn and the isles generated a substantial £414,070 for the council's coffers.

But one of the town's unofficial wardens, who is in her seventies, said: 'I thought that when the parking wardens were on the street, we would see an end to the parking misery in the town.'

'But the truth is people are getting wise to the wardens and their working patterns.'

'For example, when they have their tea breaks and when they go into the shops for a chat, people just seem to go back to their old habits.'

'I've been reporting the cars to council workers and also telling the police about them.'

Another female member of the group, who patrols the Rockfield area of the town to ensure that cars display valid parking permits or tickets, said: 'I pay all my dues, and I pay for a parking permit that costs me more than £100 a year.'

'I have updated the fine information on the information boards in both places on a number of occasions in both the Rockfield car park and the one at the North Pier - but someone else just keeps coming along and rubbing it out.'

'People shouldn't get away with illegal parking just because there is no one to check them.'

However, some members of the town's business community were less than enthusiastic about the work of the vigilantes.

Lillian Hutchison, who works in George Street, said: 'As a business, we are already paying more than £1,000 a year in parking tickets.'

'I'm already worrying about getting parking tickets from the real wardens and it is now even worse that a lady who is not even employed by the council is now drawing attention to all the cars which don't have tickets. It is quite odd that someone would want to do that.'

Chris Sewell, a pensioner from Ayr visiting the town for the first time last week, fell foul of the parking vigilantes.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I paid the parking fee and walked into the town centre where we enjoyed a lovely lunch before visiting the Oban distillery.'

'The tour lasted longer than I had anticipated and when we got to the car just minutes after the two-hour parking time limit, I noticed I had been issued with a fixed penalty notice. I think someone had pointed out the lapsed time to a warden.'

An Argyll and Bute council spokeswoman said: 'If a member of the public has concerns about parking, we would encourage them to contact our parking team on 01546 605514 or email enquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk.'

'While the team cannot attend at the scene immediately, they can assist if it becomes clear that there are problems.'

HOT TO TROT: Salsa rides into the record books



AN ARGYLL horse is being hailed as the fittest in Scotland after winning a prestigious prize at the Scottish Endurance Riding Club annual prizegiving. Part-bred Arab Salsa Caramel,

ridden by Suzanne Taylor, from Seil, won the Mousquetaires Trophy for the club member that has recorded the highest mileage in 2014, clocking up 1,130 kilometres.

This included a 160-kilometre ride in one day at a competition in North Berwick (pictured), which started at 5am and finished at 10.30pm. Runner-up in the category

was Shona McCorkindale, from Scammadale, on her homebred Arab horse, making it a successful season all round for Argyll endurance riders. For more, see sport pages.

TIMESLINE

High winds cause ferry disruption

HIGH winds forced CalMac to cancel ferry sailings between Oban and Tiree, and between Mallaig and South Uist on Tuesday.

A 30mph limit was also in force on bridges, including Skye. Seven of the ferry operator's routes were on amber alert, with continued disruption forecast due to high winds for the rest of the week.

Cocaine find after police search man

POLICE found a quantity of the class A drug cocaine when a man was searched in an Oban pub under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

The search took place within the licensed premises in the town centre during the early hours of Sunday morning.

The 38-year-old suspect is now the subject of a report to the procurator fiscal.

Mull-based firm wins top award

A PRESTIGIOUS award is being made to Mull-based builders TSL Contractors for its outstanding commitment to environmental management.

Tomorrow TSL's managing director Andy Knight will receive the award for corporate responsibility in environmental impacts from the head of the British Standards Institute Scotland, Anne Dolan.

Trust still waiting for council reply

OBAN Community Trust (OCT) has not had any 'official' confirmation on its £1,000 bid to buy the former Rockfield primary. Trust chairman, Gordon MacNab, said: 'We are no further forward. We are still waiting for a response.'

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Oban mountain team carry out 'textbook' rescue

STEVEN RAE
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A MAN was airlifted to hospital at the weekend after breaking his ankle while hill-walking near Dalmally.

The climber, a 59-year-old Irishman, fell while climbing a Beinn Udlaidh near Glen Orchy on Sunday around 10.45 am.

The climber was able to make his way down the gully, where a group of four other climbers met him and raised the alarm.

They helped him further down the mountain and waited for rescue teams to come to his aid.

Police Scotland's mountain rescue team and Oban mountain rescue team found the man and pinpointed his location for the Royal Navy rescue helicopter from HMS Gannet, Prestwick, which airlifted him to the Southern General hospital in Glasgow.

An Oban mountain rescue spokesman said: 'This was what we would class as a 'textbook rescue', although the man was fortunate that he was met by the other climbers, or it could have been a lot worse.'

'Conditions are not particularly good just now and we would always advise climbers to keep an eye on the Scottish Avalanche Information Service and err on the side of caution. Also, if possible, it always makes it safer to climb with others than on your own.'



TEXTBOOK RESCUE: the Royal Navy helicopter from HMS Gannet leaving Beinn Udlaidh on Sunday, airlifting an injured climber to the Southern General hospital in Glasgow

OAP jumps clear from runaway car

AN ELDERLY woman had a miraculous escape when she managed to jump clear of her own car, which crashed through the fence of an Oban garden centre.

The 85-year-old driver had been at the recycling point in Tesco car park but as she got into her automatic car, the foot mat caught on the accelerator and the Red Berlingo van lurched forward.

The woman was able to get out before the car smashed through the fence of The Landscaping Centre (TLC) at speed and destroyed garden furniture, pots, signs and seriously damaged a works van.

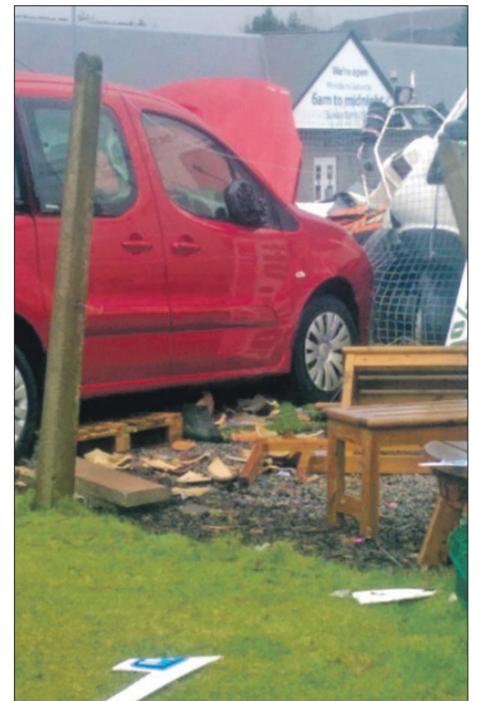
No one was seriously injured in the incident, although the elderly woman was taken to Lorn and Islands hospital with an injured leg.

The incident, at 3.19pm on Sunday, was captured on the centre's CCTV camera.

Witnesses reported hearing a loud bang as the car crashed into the fence. TLC employee Alan Steele had been shopping in Tesco when he came across the crash site and he contacted business owner Ruairaidh Neish.

Ruairaidh was not on site at the time of the crash but was called in shortly after. He said: 'My first thought was for the woman because I presumed she had been in the car. I didn't understand why she wouldn't be in it because I didn't think the car would have driven itself.'

'It was just lucky that no one was hurt. You see a lot of prams and children crossing the grass outside the yard.'



CLOSE ESCAPE: the Berlingo van crashed into The Landscaping Centre after the vehicle's accelerator jammed

Call to spend pier cash on Rockfield

LOUISE LEE
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THE FORMER Rockfield primary school should benefit from cash being pumped into the North Pier, says an Oban businessman.

A 'performance space' being created from the White Building and surrounding area would thrive in the planned Rockfield cultural hub, says owner of Oban restaurant Ee-usk, Alan MacLeod.

Oban Community Trust's (OCT) plans for the listed Victorian building include a theatre space, artist's workshops, office accommodation and a community canteen.

Alan MacLeod said building

a performance space on Oban's North Pier isn't popular with his customers. But many have said they were hopeful the Rockfield 'cultural centre' would be up and running quickly.

Mr MacLeod continued: 'We are building the largest bus stop in Scotland on the North Pier, and I can not imagine a worse place for it.'

'The community is hoping to build a centre that will be a space for visitors and the community. I know where I would want the taxpayers money to go into a building that will deliver lots of things to do in Oban.'

'Oban's waterfront is one of the most beautiful in the world and we are about to plonk a great, big carbuncle right in the middle of

our outstanding scenery. To top it all, it will be a building without any sort of useful function.'

'The whole idea of the White Building was to support the infrastructure of a marina that doesn't now seem to be taking place. Instead we are getting six pontoons.'

'It is time Argyll and Bute council listened to the community: either give us the marina that 40 businesses put £1,000 cash into, or support the Rockfield development.'

'But for heaven's sake, don't build a huge bus stop - it doesn't make sense.'

OCT chairman Gordon MacNab told *The Oban Times* he would 'love to get £500,000, the money being invested into the

'performance space' at the North Pier.

Mr MacNab continued: 'The North Pier project seems like an extravagant waste of money. It is a pedestrian precinct that will serve very little purpose other than shelter when it is wet. It would seem a better idea to encourage people into local businesses when it is wet.'

'The money would make all the difference at Rockfield. It would allow us to get under way with our plans immediately.'

However, a council spokesman said: 'Regeneration plans for Oban's North Pier are a key part of our work to secure a prosperous future for the area.'

'We share this ambition with the local people and companies

who are also playing their part in growing the local economy. This work will ultimately enhance the pier for everyone who uses it.'

'It aims to benefit local businesses and complement their own activity by attracting more people. In place of the White Building we will be constructing a new, purpose-built facility.'

'The performance space will become a focal point where people can gather together and a disembarking point for cruise passengers.'

'We have used a series of consultations with the local community, particularly those directly affected by the project, to inform our plans and are confident that the final design will suit everyone.'

Free school meals taken up by 1,700 primary pupils

A FREE school meals initiative costing more than £1million has been heralded a success by Argyll and Bute council.

The service, delivered by the council through Scottish government funding, has been taken up by 1,700 primary one-to-three pupils, 77 per cent of those eligible.

Argyll and Bute councillor Aileen Morton said: 'The provision of a hot meal to children who may not have had one previously, for a variety of reasons, promotes healthy eating in early years and underpins the council's commitment to ensuring that every pupil has the best chance of making the most of their educational opportunities as well as promoting inclusion and equality.'

The cost to the council of providing the increased number of meals in 2015/2016 is estimated to be £745,000, for food, staffing, and equipment.

The Scottish government has allocated funding for these costs, as well as an additional £550,000 for any kitchens that needed to be upgraded to provide the service.

New designs on Brooch of Lorn

OBAN'S Dunollie House has launched a competition for a contemporary design for the historic Brooch of Lorn.

The real brooch is a Medieval 'turreted' disc supposedly taken from Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Dalriach in 1309 and is centred on a large quartz stone.

The competition, organised by the Fastanta fashion festival, is asking for a textile that explores the 'heritage and romance' of the historic brooch - contact breege@dunollie.org

Jura ferry off for annual service

THERE may be some disruption to the Islay to Jura ferry service after the operating vessel, the Eilean Dhiura, went in for its annual refit this week.

The ferry will be replaced by the Ferguson Shipping vessel Harvest Anne and should be back on station around March 3, said operators ASP Ship Management.

ASP explained it would make 'all efforts' to maintain the scheduled service but as the vessel's specification is different from the Eilean Dhiura, there may be 'some slight disruption' to normal service.

Three injured in two-car crash

THREE people were hospitalised following a collision on the A82 near Tyndrum on Tuesday morning.

The casualties were taken to Lorn and Islands hospital in Oban by road ambulance to be treated for minor injuries.

The two-car crash on the trunk road at Bridge of Orchy happened around 10.15am, with the road blocked for around 10 minutes.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Alex Needham with Chloe Campbell, who is a trainee chef at the YuWu Chinese restaurant in Oban

Top town chef argues for hospitality on the menu

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MORE should be done to encourage school leavers to embark upon careers in Oban's hospitality sector.

That's the opinion of Alex Needham, who has been a chef for 30 years and is a partner in the town's Waterfront restaurant, YuWu Chinese restaurant and the Ranald hotel.

The highly respected restaurateur raised the matter at the 'open forum' Oban, Lorn and Isles area committee meeting with Argyll and Bute councillors at the beginning of the month.

Alex feels that with the abundance of eateries in the town, more should be done to guide pupils into hospitality, which would provide them with national qualifications.

He said: 'It was brought up at the Corran Halls meeting that

we need to concentrate on construction apprenticeships.

'I disagree, because as a tourist town, catering is our bread and butter - that's what tourists come here for.

'In Oban, we have every aspect of catering, including seafood, steakhouses, butchery, Chinese cooking, coffee shops, cafes, the chocolate shop, the hotels and more. But for some reason, pupils aren't pointed in the direction for careers in catering.'

At present, Argyll College offers sixteen tourism and hospitality-related courses, including food preparation basics, professional cookery and a BA in tourism and hospitality management.

However, Chloe Campbell, 16, is a trainee chef at Yu Wu and says that she could have followed a totally different career path if she hadn't happened to take a part-time job at the Waterfront.

She said: 'Being a chef never really appealed to me until I worked in the kitchen. I think if I'd seen the cooking side of it, it would have appealed to me earlier and I would have chosen it as a career, but I've just been lucky.'

'There are loads of restaurants in Oban.

'I think they should be giving more people the chance to go to college to study hospitality, rather than just having folk taking a job because it happens to come up somewhere.'

Alex added: 'Argyll college and the council should lead a programme.

'They should put school leavers into a three or four-year apprenticeship, giving them a chance to experience the different types of jobs in hospitality and then allow them to concentrate on one they really enjoy.'

Andrew Campbell, chairman of the Argyll College board,

was 'sympathetic' to the request for an increase in training opportunities for all courses, but explained that places were limited by financial constraints.

He said: 'The college is working hard to grow across all our campuses, and we recognise the hospitality industry as providing a vast and ever-growing amount of job opportunities in Oban in particular.'

'We would always like to train more people in all subjects, but with everything, funding is limited.'

A spokeswoman for Argyll and Bute council said it already supported school leavers in finding vocations in hospitality, including at an upcoming job fair on March 5 in the Corran Halls.

She said: 'As an employer, we are currently looking to offer modern apprenticeships in our own catering and school meals service and have previously

provided work experience placements for hospitality students from Argyll college.

'Our Business Gateway offers hospitality training courses to new and existing businesses to increase the skills base in what is undoubtedly a significant industry for the Argyll and Bute economy.'

'At council job fairs, local employers from a range of sectors, including tourism and hospitality, are encouraged to come along and promote their business or industry to prospective employees.'

MSP for Argyll and Bute, Michael Russell, who is also involved in the jobs fair on March 5, said: 'We have an incredibly rich pool of talented people but we know that finding the right job can be difficult.'

'That's why events such as this are so important, to help people find opportunities and jobs to enhance their careers.'

Tenant's plea for action on repairs

A TENANT has called on a housing association to put more money into repairs before building new homes.

Laura Walker of Tarbert, who lives in a two-bedroom flat with her husband Bruce and two children, says she has spent four years trying to get Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) to repair a gutter on their rented house.

ACHA, which recently opened new homes in the village, said it had spent around £15 million a year on repairs to existing homes and £7 million on new homes.

Chief executive Alistair McGregor said that he was unaware of any outstanding repairs at the Walkers' home, but he had arranged for staff to contact the family.

Traffic grinds to a halt after oil spill

AN OIL spill on the road between Oban and Dalmlally almost brought traffic to a standstill on Sunday morning.

A spokesman for Police Scotland said: 'The first call was reported at 9am and there were seven calls in the next 50 minutes.'

'Road managers BEAR Scotland were called out and the matter was quickly resolved.'

Police urged drivers to drive to the road conditions and be aware of any hazards on the road.

Charity drive helps two worthy causes

TWO Argyll worthy causes have benefited from £600 of charity donations from Oban and District Classic Vehicle club.

Oban's Mountain Rescue team and Oban and Lorn carers each received £300, with the charities nominated by vehicle club members.

Chairman of the vehicle club, Kevin Devine, said that the donations came mainly from collections at club events, the members' auction night and from other club activities.

Lights dimmed as fund switched off

CHRISTMAS lights costing £100,000 for towns throughout Argyll and Bute may be one of the first things to go when the area's council looks to claw back £27 million worth of savings next year.

While many smaller towns self-fund festive decorations, the council set aside money into the 2012 budget for trees and decorations. The funds will come to an end in 2016.

Games at risk over budget shortfall

EVENTS and festivals may be under threat from next year after Argyll and Bute council revealed a budget gap of £77,000 for 2016.

The Cowal Games, The Royal National Mod and Helensburgh Christmas festival may have to find money elsewhere after 2016 when the three-year funding comes to an end.

New school will reflect landscape

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PLANNING permission for a 'concept school' in Oban will be lodged by the end of March, the lead architect told the town's community council on Monday night.

Plans to build a new four-storey rectangular school will 'embrace' topographical issues such as a mound and a historic dun on the site 'to set the standard' for school design, the meeting heard.

The school building has been funded by Scottish Future's Trust and will be designed along the lines of similar schools in Shetland and Eastwood high school in East Renfrewshire.

Oban community council was told the school plans include



SIMILAR LINES: Oban high school may look like Eastwood high

bus parking for 10 vehicles, a car park for 187 spaces, an 'entrance plaza' via the MacColl Terrace entrance to the school and an increased number of games pitches associated with the school.

The meeting was told the school

will 'reflect the local landscape'. A stairway from Soroba Road to the high school will be removed and entrances will be realigned to the north and south of the school building.

Architect Chris Allan from

Ryder Architects said the site Oban high school occupied was a historic and scenic one, and the building should reflect this outstanding natural beauty.

He said he wanted the building to fit in with its surroundings but at the same time make use of the changing light found on the west coast.

Chris said: 'Oban high school will nestle on the site and will look stunning to all who see it.'

'There have been limitations in building the school on this site due to the area.'

'Most of the important geographical features of this area have been hidden in the current school design. I hope we will now be able to show them off to the fullest.'

'We have worked with the coun-

cil's planning department all the way through the pre-application stage and we are almost at the point where we are ready to put in our full application.'

Oban Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'There will be 187 spaces in the car park and it gives real opportunities not only for space during the school week, but when we have a concert.'

'The school car park lies empty during school holidays, so it could potentially be used as a base for longer term parking.'

It is hoped that a 3D print of the proposed school building will be made available for people to examine.

The plans for the new school are to be lodged with Argyll and Bute council at the end of next month.

Wind farm applications are 'out of control' says protester

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A POTENTIAL nine wind farms and an extension to an existing development around the shores of Loch Awe will destroy the scenic spot, say residents in the area.

The warning comes days before a Scottish government hearing to be held in Dalavich social club, which will consider an appeal by developers RWE Innogy to erect 15 111-metre turbines opposite the village.

The wind farm, which would be built on land owned by Highlands and Islands MSP Jamie McGrigor, was rejected by Argyll and Bute council planners but could be given the green light if the appeal, to be heard on Tuesday and Wednesday next week, is successful.

Alongside existing operational wind farms Beinn Ghlas (14 turbines); An Suidhe (24 turbines); Carraig Gheal (20 turbines); and Clachan Flats, there are proposals for turbines at Balliameanoch, Ardchonnell, Glen Lonan, Upper Sonachan and Musdale, with an extension to Carraig Gheal being

mooted. Three of the proposed developments are sufficiently large that they are classed as S36 proposals, meaning they will go straight to Holyrood for consideration, with the council given the role of statutory consultee.

Wind farm protester and Avich and Kilchrenan community councillor Christine Metcalfe said: 'Speculative applications for the whole of Argyll and Bute have reached a level that is beyond the level that any authority can adequately deal with.'

'Planners, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, all of the authorities involved are looking at increasingly complicated applications, which weigh a ton in paper. It's completely out of control.'

'So much of our community council time is dealing with wind farms that we barely have time to look at other issues.'

'These speculative applications - they are speculative because everyone knows the best sites have all been taken - also take up the resources of the hard-pressed local authorities which have to deal with these.'

'The problem with that,' said Mrs Metcalfe, 'is the plans are examined at Scottish government level.'

'And the Scottish government has an agenda to get as many wind farm applications consented as possible to fit its energy policy.'

However, a spokeswoman for the Scottish government rejected the charge of bias, explaining: 'Our policy on wind farm applications aims to strike the right balance between Scotland's massive green energy potential and the need to protect some of the country's most scenic and wild areas.'

'That has resulted in a ban on wind farm development in areas covering almost a fifth of the landmass of Scotland.'

'Scottish ministers very carefully consider all of the issues raised and all submissions made before coming to a decision on wind farm applications.'

'There are numerous competing considerations to be taken into account in determining these important decisions, and ministers take these responsibilities very seriously.'

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Rugby

DEFEAT in the RBS Regional Shield Final the previous week was forgotten about as Oban Lorne returned to winning ways with a dominant display in the league, edging them closer to the title.

The Green Machine secured the crucial five points on offer to keep up the pressure on table-toppers Cambuslang; if Oban win their three remaining games, the title will be theirs.

Oban made a confident start to the game last Saturday and were dominating the majority of play with the forwards carrying the ball well and winning ball at the scrum and lineout.

As a result, the Oban backline were given good ball to attack with and on 10 minutes a Plato Moisiadis break from inside his own 22 resulted in Craig Wright scoring and converting Oban's first try of the day.

Oban looked to end the contest early and extended their lead on 20 minutes. A period of pressure on the line eventually resulted in a five-metre penalty which was tapped quickly by

Oban captain Cammy Smith, who touched down over the line. Oban were breaking down the away defence at will and second row Andy MacDougall made a powerful run down the right touchline and was unlucky not to beat the last man for a chance at the try line.

The ball was eventually spun wide where winger Allan Wright gathered and passed to Cammy Smith, who scored his second try of the day with a superb inside run that bamboozled the Clydebank defence.

The bonus point was secured shortly before halftime with player/coach Corrie Louw touching down from the back of the scrum.

Assistant coach Aaron Collins rang the changes with fullback Dave McCabe being rested and replaced by Callum MacLachlan.

Injured Lorne MacLachlan also left the field to be replaced by Travis Smith, who was himself returning from injury.

Oban planned to extend their

impressive lead in the second half but the team self-destructed with 10 minutes of madness allowing Clydebank a way back into the game. In the space of a few minutes Oban lost possession off the ball in keys areas, allowing the away side to score two tries, narrowing the score to 28-14.

The home team managed to recover and find their best form for the remainder of the second half by running in two further tries. Cammy Smith secured his hat-trick with another powerful run, easing through the defence, while Andy MacDougall scored a great try from a break by Jamie Bate.

Craig Wright boasted a 100 per cent kicking record for the day with all six conversions being successful.

Oban welcomed debutant Stephen Parr into the team for the last five minutes, another promising young player for the club.

Oban Lorne's next game is away to Uddingston on Saturday, March 7.

The next home game is on Saturday, March 28 against Waverley Drumpeillier.



HAT-TRICK HERO: Cammy Smith touches down one of his three tries in Oban Lorne's win against Clydebank. Photo: Stephen Lawson

Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

Football

LAST Saturday's results: Jimmy Marshall Cup second round - Haldane United 5, Campbeltown Pupils 2; Premier Division - Busby 1, Oban Saints 1; Premier Division One - Dunoon 2 Shawlands 4; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star v South Camlachie postponed; Easthall Star 10, Dunoon Athletic 0. Tarbert no game.

This Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division - Campbeltown Pupils v Alba Thistle; Premier Division One - Dunoon v Rutherglen; Premier Division Two - Lochgilphead Red Star no game. Jimmy Marshall Cup 2nd round - Oban Saints v Jamestown; Coronation Cup 2nd round - Rosehill Star v Tarbert.

Oban Saints Youths results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Ardencaple 1, Under 13s 2. Scoring for Saints were Kenni Gray and Jamie Forgive. Under 14s v Ardencaple postponed; Under 15s 12, Renton Craigandro 0.

On target for Saints were Lewis Buchanan (5), Daniel McCuish (3), Ruaridh Horne, Martin Rennie, Kenneth MacDonald and an own goal. Under 16s v Drumchapel postponed Under 19s 3, Ardencaple 1. Saints goalscorers were Connor Howe, Zak Straub and Stewart Twort.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v Kilpatrick; Under 14s no game; Under 15s v Dumbarton United; Under 16s no game; Under 19s v Broomhill SC.

Harry is a smash hit on national circuit

Badminton

TAYNUILT teenager Harry Mobey continues to make a name for himself on the national badminton stage, finishing runner-up in the Glasgow Junior Badminton Championship.

Competing in the under-15 competition Harry beat the number one seed in the semi-final but lost in three sets in the final.

He did pick up gold, however, in the mixed doubles with partner Jennifer Lafferty.

This season Harry is working on building his international ranking and participated in a team event for Glasgow in Hungary at the end of 2014, winning five of his six matches as Glasgow won gold.

Harry's elder brother, Stewart, won an under-18 tournament in Motherwell last month and retains a top 20 ranking in Scotland.

Shinty fixture list in disarray as relegation request is granted

WITH the shinty season starting in less than two weeks, the Camanachd Association has accepted an appeal from Glenorchy Camanachd to drop down a league following a mass exodus of players pre-season.

The Dalmlally-based club, which marks its 50th anniversary this year, made the 11th hour plea after confirming six of its first team players had ruled themselves out of contention through injury and work commitments.

Others in the squad indicated they were unable to commit weekly and could only play in home games.

The move means the sport's Marine Harvest National Division, the game's second tier, will go ahead with just seven teams,

Shinty

instead of the planned eight. The Marine Harvest South Division Two league will include Glenorchy for this season.

The Camanachd Association, the game's governing body, had approached teams in both north and south division one leagues but could not find a replacement for Glenorchy.

The decision to grant Glenorchy's appeal, said the association, was based on an understanding that Glenorchy would have withdrawn from competition if forced to play in the National Division.

But Gareth Evans, manager of Marine Harvest South Division



Glenorchy won promotion to the National Division in 2013 but have elected to be relegated this year after losing key players.

15_109glenorchy01

One side Lochside Rovers is worried about other clubs following suit.

He said: 'I think it sets a dangerous precedent that Bute and now Glenorchy have been able to opt out of playing in the National Division.'

A statement from the association to the clubs involved said: 'In

the circumstances there seems no option other than for the National Division to progress as scheduled with the seven remaining teams and no fixture for the team scheduled to play Glenorchy.

'We recognise and share the disappointment for the teams competing in the National Division.'

The association added that it would convene a meeting this week with representatives of the National Division teams to 'consider any options put forward to minimise the negative impact of Glenorchy's decision to withdraw'.

Glenorchy's second team will remain in South Division Two. John Smith, Glenorchy team

manager, said his first team had been decimated with the loss of key players such as Findlay Ross and Grant MacPherson to injury and defender Scott McKillop, who has transferred to Oban Camanachd.

'Because of the number of players we have lost, it would mean playing 14 and 15-year-olds in the National Division, which you just can't do.'

'We have apologised to the Camanachd Association for the short notice but we had not realised the extent of the injuries to players until now.'

'It is disappointing to have to take this decision in the club's 50th anniversary year and I think we had the makings of a very good team.'

Argyll endurance riders top club's national prize list

TWO ENDURANCE riders from Argyll can claim to have the best horses in Scotland after their performances last year.

Scottish internationalists Suzanne Taylor from Seil, on her part-bred Arab Salsa Caramel and Shona McCorkindale, Scammadale, on her homebred Arab Sefras Blue Jewel, were among the top prizewinners for the Scottish Endurance Riding Club (SERC) 2014 season.

Suzanne, who is sponsored by Aloeride, finished the season with the highest accumulative mileage of 1,130 kilometres (140 kilometres ridden in England) with 416 points, closely followed by Shona, who accumulated 911 kilometres and 376 points.

Suzanne's total was boosted by a 160-kilometre (100-mile) ride in one day at a competition in North Berwick last year. The gruelling race started at 5am and finished at 10.30pm.

By completing the ride Salsa

Caramel was promoted to diamond status, one of only three horses in Scotland to achieve the status.

Shona's Sefras Blue Jewel also won the endurance points trophy from the Scottish Regional Group of Arab Horse supporters.

Both combinations were selected to represent Scotland for the 2014 Home International held in Yetholm, where they took home silver medals.

In an extremely successful season for the Argyll branch of SERC, Liz Paul from Duror, with her Arab Artizana Oberon, took home a new trophy in the club for the horse achieving an average speed closest to 11 kilometres-per-hour across the season.

Sheila Ogilvie, Taynuilt, and her horse General Geult, during 2014, reached a career distance of 6,500km and Hazel McCorkindale, Scammadale, boosted her total with her Arab Sefra to 5,000 kilometres.

Scottish champion joins field of 70 in Mull's indoor athletics competition

NEARLY 70 young athletes competed in the Mull contest of Sports Hall Athletics last Saturday in Tobermory High School.

The Mull event was the third of the four local area competitions this winter in Argyll, promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club.

This was the 16th year this form of indoor athletics has been held in Tobermory and, as in previous years, the day was split into two sessions: the under-7s, under-9s and under-11s competing in the morning and the older age groups in the afternoon.

Athletes from Mull Harriers, based in Bunnassan, made up a third of the total entry.

Bunnassan had won the annual trophy for the primary schools in 2014 but this year had to settle for second place behind Salen. Salen primary totalled 79.5 points, with Bunnassan on 65.5 and Tobermory

Athletics

group Alfie John Riley, Tobermory, won the high jump and speed bounce.

Two Salen girls excelled in the under-7 contest with Ellen MacRae winning ahead of Lexi Dalgleish. Ellen won the four-lap race in 31.5secs and then went on to win the long jump and speed bounce. Lexi won the triple jump achieving an amazing distance for one so young, attempting the event for the first time.

Keira Munro from Salen was an outstanding winner in the under-9 category, winning all six events with some style.

Salen primary had two winners in the morning session and dominated in the boys' under-9s with Ewan MacPhail the champion only three points ahead of Rio Brown, also Salen.

Ewan excelled in the four-lap race winning in 28.1 seconds and

then proceeded to win both the long and triple jumps. Rio won an exciting high jump contest, clearing 0.98m and also won the speed bounce. Johny Duffy, Salen, won the under-7s, one point ahead of Innes MacCallum from Bunnassan. Johny won two events outright and shared first place with Innes in the long jump and javelin. Isaac Yelder from Bunnassan was the under-11 champion with Bailey Wild from Salen close behind.

The day ended with Mull's own Scottish champion Molly Reade winning the under-15s high jump, although the national indoor champion found the hall too small for her normal run-up. Successful athletes will be invited to compete in the Argyll final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on March 21.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1850

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1. If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

Easy to enter
Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday. You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules
No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company. In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB



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Name

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LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE. . .



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

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South Uist

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Fort's cup-winning captains get life-time achievement awards

Shinty club surprises retired trio at prize-giving dinner dance

THREE former Fort William Shinty Club captains were celebrated at the annual dinner dance on Saturday night.

Gary Innes, Chris Bamber and Neil Robertson, all captains during three of the club's three recent Camanachd Cup wins, were given framed shinty tops printed with their respective numbers and newspaper clippings from their victories.

The trio are all retiring this

year and received lifetime achievement awards at the Moorings Hotel prizegiving, although Neil, who works offshore, was unable to attend.

The club has won the Scottish cup six times in its history but enjoyed a run of five victories in just six seasons from 2005 to 2010, with Gary, Chris and Neil part of the golden generation that brought so much silverware back to Lochaber.

Shinty

Gary said the special award was a surprise, but a very welcome one.

The former Fort William player of the year added: 'It was really lovely. My heart was in my mouth, to be honest, when I had to say a few words.

'It was a brilliant night and great to see all the lads together but I felt it was the end of an era because there are very few of the 'old team' still playing.

'It was an emotional night; it was like a conclusion for me, like a door was closing.

'People say I'll be back but I see the calibre of young players coming through and it just reiterates that the club is moving forward.

'Next season in the Premiership will be a difficult one but that will be part of the rebuilding of the team and there are good guys at the helm.'

Other presentations included players of the year, Gordy MacKinnon for the first team, Peter Wood for the second team, Alexander MacMillan and Calum Shepherd (joint) for the under 17s and Rhuaraidh Shaw for under 14s.

Alexander 'Astie' Cameron was the winner of the most improved player award.



Gordy MacKinnon (right) accepts the player of the year trophy from club chairman Duncan MacPhee 20_f09shintydance02



LIFETIME: Fort William Shinty Club chairman Duncan MacPhee, left, presents awards to the prizewinners 20_f09shintydance01

Falcons' flying first game leads the way

Netball

FORT William Falcons netball club hosted their first tournament at the weekend and achieved a joint first place for their efforts.

The locals were joined by a newly established Fort Augustus team and Ayrshire's Stewarton Ladies and combined subs to make a mixed fourth team in Lochaber high school on Saturday.

The Falcon's Highland League training and league experience was clear in their first game, a 15-0 win over Fort Augustus.

This fixture also saw the debut of Karen MacInnes at wing attack, who looks promising for future league games.

As both teams achieved two out of three wins, Fort William and Stewarton shared first place.

It was a day of netball for all ages as the same morning girls from Inverloch primary school won all of their matches to come



Claire Lumley-Holmes passes the ball to Fort William shooters 20_f09netball02

first place in a junior tournament arranged by Active Schools, also held in Lochaber high school.

Following the success of the day, Fort William Falcons are encouraging potential new mem-

bers to join them at training, held on Tuesday evenings, 6.45pm until 8pm at the high school. Junior training, P7 upwards, is held at the same place from 3.45pm until 5.45pm on Tuesdays.

Runners face all weathers in first event of its kind

THE FIRST 'multi-stage' running event in Scotland was won by Lochaber's Stephen Burns on Saturday.

More than 100 people gathered in Fort William for the eight-leg event, which was split into timed and non-timed sections to allow participants to socialise and take in the scenery between races.

A popular format in mountain-biking, the event from No Fuss Events is the first of its kind in this country and runners were faced with snow, wind and rain on top of varied terrain to make for a difficult race.

Athletics

But it was Lochaber Athletic Club's Stephen Burns who finished first overall, with a time of 55 minutes and 52 seconds.

The experienced runner was fastest in four of the eight timed stages and more than a minute ahead of second placed Paul Prentice.

Amanda Blackhall, also of Lochaber Athletic Club, was fastest woman and 21st over-all in 1:07:14 and at just 12 years old, Isla Britton was second lady and 27th over-all.



Event organiser Frazer Coupland, right, congratulates overall winner Stephen Burns 20_f09runduro01

Players face three games a week to finish season

FORT William Football Club could be playing three or four games every week until the end of the season to catch up on a massive fixture backlog.

The Fort boys have eight Saturdays left until the end of the Highland League on April 18 and 13 games still to play but Claggan Park is still flooded, raising questions about the next few fixtures.

Rain put paid to both home and away fixtures against Rothes scheduled for last week and if the wet weather puts off any more Fort games manager Calum MacLean said they could be playing multiple times a week.

He said: 'This has been an absolute nightmare.'

'We've had this problem before but never this bad as far as I can remember.'

“This has been an absolute nightmare**”**

Calum MacLean
Fort William FC

'We have eight home games and five away to play between now and April, we should be able to catch up on our away games but it's home I'm worried about because the pitch is absolutely soaked with rain, it's a mess.'

'Starting from next week we will probably have games every Wednesday and Saturday but again that's only if the weather improves.'

Football

'If any more games are postponed we could end up playing three or four times a week just to finish in time with the league.'

This season so far Fort William have played 21 games, fewer than any other team in the Highland League. On Saturday (February 28), the Fort take on fifth-place Inverurie Locos, which MacLean said will be a 'tough' game.

He added: 'We lost out on two massive games last week [against Rothes], and this one is going to be tough but we're looking forward to it.'

'We lost 3-0 to them last year and I was really impressed with their performance on the day, it's won't be an easy game.'

Alleycats in lead as final bowls played

Ten pin bowling

WITH just one week left of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling league there is still everything to play for.

Alleycats remain in the lead of the scratch division with 72 points but second place The Creeps are hot in their heels with 71.

Ardtoe/Nevis Radio collected five points this week to keep them in third place with 69.

In the handicap division, Alleycats are also in the top spot with 64 points with Rotavators in second place with 62 and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio's 60 points put them in third place.

Pam Weller of Alleycats achieved both the top individual scratch series with 186 and 337.

Dean Kennedy, British Legion Fort William B, had the top handicap game of 237 and the top two-game handicap series of 440.

Alleycats rolled the top scratch team game of the week of 620 and the top two-game scratch team series of 1,172. Council had the top handicap game of 791 and the top two handicap team series of 1570.

The highest scratch average is currently held by Pam Weller of Alleycats on 155 followed by Tony Whitelocke, Alleycats, on 151 and Stewart Duncan, The Creeps, on 147.

Shinty's role played out to politicians

Shinty

HIGHLAND politicians paid a visit to Fort William Shinty Club grounds on Friday to understand the importance of shinty in Lochaber.

Although rain and hail confined the meeting to the An Aird clubhouse, MSPs Rhoda Grant, shadow minister for sport, and David Stewart, as well as Chris Coniff, prospective Labour UK parliamentary candidate for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, met with committee members to learn about both the club's history and future.

Mr Stewart said: 'Shinty is such an important part of the culture in Lochaber and the Highlands as a whole.'

'It's important for health and wellbeing, especially from a young age so I'm looking forward to hearing more about it.'

National indoor firsts underway

First shinty

THE TOP young players in Scotland will descend on Fort William on Saturday for the annual National Indoor First shinty finals.

The primary seven and under competition will be played at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, starting at 12noon.

The primary five and under competition takes place at Lochaber High School in the town with play getting underway at 12.30pm.

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WEATHER

Thursday Sunshine and wintry showers
Winds strong west south westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 75°C.

Friday Cloudy with showers
Winds westerly
Temperatures 4°C to 6°C.

Weekend Outlook Heavy rain on Saturday
Heavy rain on Sunday
Winds south and westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 7°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, February 26, 2015** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am		pm	
Thur	05.17	1.4	11.19	2.9
Fri	06.31	1.7	** **	**
Sat	01.30	2.8	08.26	1.7
Sun	02.59	2.9	09.47	1.6
Mon	03.46	3.2	10.35	1.4
Tues	04.21	3.4	11.12	1.3
Wed	04.57	3.6	11.45	1.1

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrisaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate