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## & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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# Police Twitter merger talk just a 'box-ticking exercise'

EUAN PATERSON  
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THE LATEST part of a police consultation over a divisional merger that would see Argyll's decision makers moved to Paisley has been branded a 'box-ticking exercise' and 'spin'.

Police Scotland, which needs to save £10.9 million this year, proposes to merge L (Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire) and K (Renfrewshire and Inverclyde) divisions, with the new division's headquarters based at Paisley. L Division's headquarters is currently in Dumbarton, which could close as a result of a merger.

The police service said the merger would not affect the number of constables on the beat in Argyll but would reduce the number of senior officers and 'strengthen local policing'. Oban has already lost its permanent chief inspector post.

A consultation on the merger is being conducted by Police Scotland; the latest method of community contact came on Monday during a Twitter question and answer session with the hashtag #commanderchat.

The Twitter exercise and the consultation as a whole have come in for criticism from two MSPs: John Finnie, a retired police officer, and shadow cabinet member Jackie Baillie, who said the public believed a decision had already been made.

Mr Finnie, who represents the Highlands and Islands, said: 'Police Scotland keep using the phrase "strengthening local policing" but I don't think they are doing that by taking the chief inspector out of Oban and moving the headquarters to Paisley.'

'The language is very important and it has become apparent that Police Scotland's understanding of the term "consultation" is not mine. They have put out a proposal and sought comments on it



John Finnie

without any suggestion that they have any intention of altering their plan.'

Ms Baillie, whose constituency is Dumbarton, was very active in the #commanderchat conversation but was 'disappointed' she was unable to get straight answers to questions on officer numbers after the merger.

She said: 'As much as I think Twitter might be the new social medium, I don't think many people engaged. I am genuinely disappointed because with Twitter, which limits each tweet to 140 characters, there is no space for spin. We expected straight answers but we didn't get them.'

Adding the merger would also see the loss of many experienced officers, she said: 'In my view

this merger is nothing more than a cost cutting exercise. The L and K divisions cover an area from Tiree to Clydebank, it just doesn't make sense. The loss of headquarters in Dumbarton would mean a reduction in service this side of the river (Clyde).'

Mr Finnie said he had not participated in #commanderchat but commented: 'It appears nothing meaningful was shared, however Police Scotland will be able to tick the "we engaged with the public via social media box" on their computer in central Scotland.'

Chief Superintendent Swann, commander of L Division, said the Twitter exercise was just one way of consulting the public and that the force had also engaged with more than 400 individuals, organisations and community representatives including local councillors, MPs, MSPs and community councils.

She said this would ensure the force was 'fully informed of the views and concerns of our communities, and any decisions are based on what best serves the needs of the public'.

Chf Supt Swann added: 'I would like to highlight that the division's local officers are just part of the picture and should not be considered as the only resources available to respond to community priorities. We often access national and regional resources such as specialist units and major investigation teams.'

'I'd like to reassure the residents of Argyll that this proposal is about strengthening local policing. By reducing senior management posts and removing duplication, we can continue to deliver a service which is both efficient and meets the needs of our people and communities.'

'Local policing in Argyll and Bute will continue to be delivered by the two local area commanders, from the current locations embedded in the community.'



Chf Supt Helen Swann



RURAL RECOGNITION: Duncan, left, and Brian Swinbanks, centre receive the Rural Hero award

## Brothers are local heroes

TWO BROTHERS from the Isle of Mull have been named rural 'heroes' for their work across a number of community projects in the island.

Tobermory's Brian and Duncan Swinbanks jointly received the Rural Hero award at the inaugural Scottish

The new awards, held last Thursday at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, are the

first major event of a five-year partnership between Scottish Field magazine and the Scottish Countryside Alliance to celebrate rural businesses.

Brian devotes most of his spare time to the Tobermory Harbour Association and arts projects.

Duncan, who has been heavily involved in the island's swimming pool and rugby club

projects, said: 'It was really nice to win the award with Brian. We both just do things because we enjoy working on projects and working with other people.'

Mull-based councillors Mary Jean Devon and Alistair MacDougall hosted a civic reception for the brothers on Sunday in Tobermory's Hebridean Lodge.

For full story on the Scottish Rural awards, see page seven.

## TIMELINE

### Flooding scheme would cost £4.7M

SOLUTIONS to Campbeltown's flooding problem could cost as much as £4.7 million.

The town suffered severe flooding in November last year and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the islands councillors will discuss next Wednesday how the local authority can deal with future threats.

A report to the council states the town's water courses were unable to deal with prolonged periods of rain.

### Traffic levels are among UK's lowest

PARTS of the West Highlands have the lowest traffic levels in the UK.

The 2015 Halifax Rural Areas survey found that the Western Isles has 67 vehicles per square kilometre. Next was Highland with 100 per and Argyll and Bute with 126.

The UK average is 8,792 vehicles per square kilometre.

### A&E figures below Holyrood target

THE PERFORMANCE of A&E departments in NHS Highland took a dip last week.

Figures from the Scottish government show that departments in the area treated, discharged or admitted 94.5 per cent of patients, down from 96.6 per cent. The figure is just under the 95-per-cent-within-four-hours target.

### Creaming of the cash for Kintyre

THE SCOTTISH government is set to invest £450,000 in Campbeltown Creamery.

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## Walking in Scott's memory for charity

EUAN PATERSON  
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

AROUND 70 people will take part in a memorial walk to mark the anniversary of the tragic death of an Oban teenager.

Friends and family of Scott Goldie (pictured), who died on April 8 last year, will walk from Oban high school bus turning circle at noon this Saturday and head for Pennyfuir cemetery, where Scott is buried.

Those taking part in the walk will wear T-shirts showing a picture of the promising young shinty player and carry collection buckets for Scott Goldie Brighter Future, a new charity



created by Scott's family. The new charity will raise money for Great Ormond Street hospital in London.

Scott's mother, Tracy, said she hoped that the memorial walk would also raise awareness of the condition that claimed her son's life, streptococcus

pneumonia (group A). She said: 'We want to raise money for the work at Great Ormond Street hospital through Scott Goldie Brighter Future.'

'People are already planning other fundraising ideas but I thought this weekend, the anniversary of his death, would be the right time for the memorial walk.'

'Everyone taking part will pay £5 to wear one of the T-shirts and we have already made around £1,000 in advance of the walk.'

At Pennyfuir, the walkers plan to sign a T-shirt to be laid at Scott's gravestone and a minute's silence will be observed.

### 'Fish-bomb' plan to make a splash

OBAN'S creative community play park fundraisers have been busy planning something fishy for their latest money-making scheme.

The group wants people in the town to join a community 'fish-bomb' to support Oban Community Playpark.

A fish-bomb requires crafters to create a fish out of yarn or fabric and hand it in to Atlantis Leisure by May 20.

The fish will then be hung in the town centre during the Festival of the Sea, from May 22-31.

For more information, visit atlantisleisure.co.uk/playpark

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**TRAGIC DISCOVERY:**  
Daniel Bennett, 43, from Bishopbriggs, whose body was discovered near Ben OSS

### Body of hillwalker found in Tyndrum

POLICE Scotland confirmed last week that the body recovered on a mountain to the west of Crianlarich is that of Daniel Bennett.

The 43-year-old hillwalker was reported missing in the Tyndrum hills on Saturday, March 21, prompting a large-scale search.

The Bishopbriggs man was last seen at the Green Welly Stop in Tyndrum around midday. His body was found in the area of Ben OSS on the afternoon of Tuesday, March 24.

Police said that whilst a post-mortem is still to take place, there are believed to be no suspicious circumstances.

### New forum to help vulnerable people

OBAN'S police inspector Mark Stephen has taken on a role that will help adults who are at risk of harm.

Argyll and Bute adult protection committee has appointed four new chairmen to area development forums that encourage people to act when they think an adult is being harmed, neglected or exploited.

In Oban, Lorn and the Isles, Inspector Stephen will chair the forum, which will comprise representatives of Argyll and Bute council, NHS Highland, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

If someone is in urgent need of help to keep them safe, please contact the police on 999. To report someone who may be at risk of harm, contact 01546 6055517.

# Roadshow to drive pupil numbers

**EUAN PATERSON**  
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AS THE Royal National Mòd returns to its home of Oban this year, efforts are being made to reinvigorate interest in the festival among young competitors.

Although the Gaelic festival boasted record numbers of competitors last year in Inverness, just three youngsters from the Oban area made the journey to the Highland capital to compete. Now, as the Mòd comes to Oban for the 16th time - the town hosted the inaugural event in 1892 - organisers at local and national level are attempting to make sure the Lorn area is well represented on home turf.

Mòd manager James Graham is fronting a Mòd Roadshow, which has toured 12 schools across Oban and Lorn to encourage participation in the Royal National Mòd from October 9 to 17.

James brought some of the West Highlands' most talented musicians to schools in Taynuilt, Appin, Connel, Barcaldine, Ardfearn, Kilnivern, Dunbeg, Easdale and Oban's Rockfield, St Columba and Park schools, as well as Oban high school.

During the visit to St Columba's primary last Friday, James said: "There has been an amazing response from the pupils and teachers at every school."

The roadshow is something we had planned to use to drum up support in other parts of the country but Oban is the ideal place to start because of the recent drop in the number of junior competitors.

"The teachers we speak to are



FUTURE STARS: Mod Roadshow tutors are greeted by pupils at St Columba's primary school

aware of the Mòd but they are not all aware of the support we can offer schools. We want to have really good representation from the Oban area at this year's event because it has great talent and great music teachers."

Among the musicians on the Mòd Roadshow were Sileas Sinclair (Connel), Murray Willis (Lismore) and Finlay Wells (Oban) who entertained the pupils with their lively music.

Argyll Gaelic development officer Duncan MacNeil and

Gàidheal drama development officer Dougie Beck coached and performed drama skills with the pupils and 2014 Gaelic ambassador and broadcaster Kirsten MacDonald shared her Mòd experiences with the pupils.

Locally, the organising committee behind this year's national Mòd in Oban has agreed to establish a Mòd Academy, which will put tutors into schools in an effort to increase participation. The project will be similar to

the well-established Mull Mòd Club, which is responsible for a strong showing of young competitors from the island at recent Mòds.

Duncan Macdonald, Royal National Mòd 2015 local organising committee chairman, said: "The Mòd Academy is a pilot project that we would hope to continue after the Royal National Mòd this year; we want schoolchildren from Oban and Lorn competing at the Mòd. The numbers have been falling but teachers are very

busy and many parents want to take their children on holiday during the October break, when the Mòd is held."

Upwards of 10,000 people are expected to attend this year's Royal National Mòd, which will welcome competitors from across Scotland, Gaelic choirs from Germany and Canada and adult competitors from Australia.

The Mòd fringe festival will see concerts, sessions, talks and street theatre in various venues throughout the nine-day festival.

## TIMELINE

### Islands candidate praises Holyrood

WESTMINSTER politician Angus Brendan MacNeil has welcomed the announcement from the Scottish government transport minister Derek Mackay that the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) will be rolled out on inter-island ferry services from October 2015.

Mr MacNeil, who is the SNP candidate for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, said: "There is no doubt that RET introduced by the Scottish government has been a real success story for our islands."

"I am pleased to see that ferry fare will be reduced from October 2015. This will be of huge benefit to our local businesses and the tourism industry."

Derek Mackay made his announcement about RET during a visit to Mull last week.

### Extra funding for foreign languages

A GRANT of more than £100,000 will be spent on the teaching of foreign languages in Argyll.

The Scottish government minister for learning, Dr Alasdair Allan, announced the extra money for Argyll and Bute council last week to support implementation of the European Union 1+2 languages model.

Councils such as Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar, Highland, the Orkney and Shetland Islands are receiving a total of £529,000, which they can use for resources such as training primary teachers, strategic planning and development or employing more language assistants.

### Talk puts a spring in members' steps

ONE OF Scotland's best-known alpine plant growers travelled all the way to Oban from his nursery in Kirriemuir, Angus, to give Lorn Garden Club's March lecture.

Entitled 'Spring Treasures', his talk was a revelation to members and his photographs a feast for the eyes.

The next presentation will take place in St John's Cathedral hall next Tuesday (April 7), when Margaret Lear will talk about 'Gardening for Wildlife'.

## Call for locals to enjoy the fun of the fringe

ORGANISERS of an Oban-based national music festival are banging the drum ahead of this year's event as they look to get more local people involved, writes Euan Paterson.

The Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival (HIMDF) has been held annually in Oban for more than 30 years.

It attracts some of the country's best musicians and dancers, more than 3,000 visitors on the first weekend in May and contributes up to £3 million to the local economy.

But organisers are looking to extend the festival's reach and

have organised a fringe festival in hotels, pubs and cafes throughout Oban and Lorn in order to create a 'festival' atmosphere.

HIMDF chairman Donald MacLean explained: "There are between 1,100 and 1,200 competitors in a multitude of classes that fill almost every venue available in the town but everything is behind closed doors."

"We want Oban to get a real buzz from having the festival on, like there is when a Mòd comes to town."

"It is Oban's best kept secret," adds HIMDF committee member Kirsty Duncan. "I go

involved after stewarding at the accordion and fiddle masters event last year.

"The playing was so good my jaw was on the floor, yet there were maybe 100 people in the audience and only half of them were locals."

The expansion of a fringe festival, which was trialled last year in the Oban Chocolate Company

and Cuan Mor, will also see the festival's influence extend beyond the town boundary.

Venues will include: Loch Melville hotel, Corchie Clematis, Poppies Garden Centre, The Barn Bar, Markie Dan's, Oban

Chocolate Company, Cuan Mor, The Kelvin Hotel, Olive Garden, The Royal Hotel and the Grassroots Cafe.

Duncan said: "We hope that the fringe will become something that organises itself and give venues an opportunity to put something on at the start of the season."

The festival weekend will see an abundance of talented musicians and dancers who will have gathered in the town, but locals will need to turn out too if it is to be successful.

"I feel the fringe will bring more of a festival atmosphere

for locals and encourage them to join in the fun."

"Hopefully, the visitors to the town will stay a bit longer than they normally would and come to sample the town's spectacular food and drink."

The festival is called High-

lands and Islands Music and Dance Festival but it doesn't go outside of Oban. This year, with the fringe, we have more of a presence in the surrounding areas."

The festival, which has received an EventScotland grant to support the fringe, is supported by around 100 volunteers.

## MULL LINES with Michelle McAnally



KITCHEN SINK DRAMA: Mary Jean Devon and Ryan Lowe in 'Watching the World Go By'



SPELLBOUND: Lochdonhead primary school pupils in the award-winning play 'Our Teacher is a Witch'

## Drama 'alive and well' on Mull as curtain comes down on festival

THE ANNUAL Mull Drama Festival took place over two nights last week with crowd-pleasing performances that raised £1,250 towards a new floor for Tobermory's Aros Hall.

Continuing a long tradition of community theatre, the festival, established in 1957, showcased the deep well of local writing, directing and acting talent on Mull.

It featured 12 plays - 11 of which were written by local children and adults, and two of which were performed in Gaelic. Aros Hall secretary and thespian Gill Govan said: "The standard of drama was so high. The scores, the Gaelic guides, the quality of writing and performance were so impressive."

Tobermory primary school took the award for best primary play with their performance of 'Our Teacher is a Witch', directed by Claire Bidwell and starring Ellie Geierson, Alex Geddes and Fraser Mitchell.

The Tobermory high school

players won best youth play for '1915', written and directed by Ryan Lowe and starring Scott Thompson, Conor Garvey, Eire Laverty, Zac Finch, Molly Reade and Fraser Mitchell.

The award for best adult play went to 'World Go By' written by and starring Mary Jean Devon and Ryan Lowe, along with Kirsten McDonald and Gill Govan.

Festival MCs were Alasdair McCrone, director of Mull Theatre, and Janet MacDonald, director of the National Mòd. Professional actor and Mull resident Stephen Picton adjudicated.

As the players packed away their costumes, they were already planning next year's festival. 'Drama is alive and well on Mull,' Gill Govan declared.



STAGE PRESENCE: Tobermory high school players receive their award for 'Best Youth Play'

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**OBAN RESIDENT COMPILES FOUR-YEAR DOSSIER ON FILTHY HABIT THAT BLIGHTS THE TOWN'S STREETS AND PARKS**

# Kenny dishes the dirt on messy owners

**STEVEN RAE**  
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THOUGHTLESS owners are messing up the town, according to an Oban resident with a dossier on dog dirt.

Kenny MacLennan dished the dirt, at a meeting of the town's community council on Monday, on people who allow their animals to foul Oban's streets.

Mr MacLennan disclosed the contents of his dossier on dog fouling, which he has compiled since 2011, to the meeting in the Salvation Army hall - complete with pictures and information.

He said the situation had been bad for years near his Pulpit Hill home, despite him reporting it on countless occasions to Argyll

and Bute council. Councillor for Oban North and the Isles Roddy McCuish agreed with Mr MacLennan. He said: 'It needs to be remembered that these are members of our community.'

'It seems these people have lost their pride for the town and how it looks.'

Other Oban residents shared similar stories of irresponsible owners not cleaning up after their pets, including Mairi Bryce, who said dog fouling was almost a daily occurrence near her Craignard Road home.

Speaking after the meeting to the *Oban Times*, retired telecom engineer Mr MacLennan said he was running out of ideas on how to deal with the issue.

He said: 'I've given evidence to

the council directly but it seems nothing gets done. Some filthy dog owners have been dumping their pet's dog mess in my wheelie bin. It's a disgrace.'

I even added pictures of dog dirt on Facebook and asked if anyone could remember when our town wasn't engulfed with this mess.'

Councillor McCuish told the meeting that people should send any evidence of dog fouling they have to the council offices in Lochgilphead and address the letter for his attention or any of the other ward councillors.

Local councillors Neil McIntyre, Mary-Jean Devon and Elaine Robertson agreed they would look into the matter if it was brought to their attention.



ACTION CALL: Kenny MacLennan still feels nothing is being done about dog fouling

## 'I think they thought the bus was going to drop into the loch below'

**AMANDA CRAWFORD**  
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'PEOPLE were shaking and in a state of shock.'

Those were the words of Brian Ward, who was travelling with a friend to Tarbert, and was one of the first to race to the aid of passengers of the tour coach which crashed last Thursday on The Rest and Be Thankful hill on the A83.

Also one of those to lend a helping hand was Archie Munro, a Scottish and Southern Electric lead project manager within the transmission customer connections team.

He had been at the Crarae substation site near to Minard and was on his way home to the Central Belt.

Both arrived at the scene just moments after the Lochs and Glens holiday coach, with 52 people on board, crashed last Thursday at 2.10pm.

It had been caught by a gust of wind, tipping it off the road where it rolled

down the embankment and came to a stop upright, next to Loch Restil.

Mr Ward, 67, said: 'We were about the fourth or fifth car to stop. Some other cars stopped and the queue of traffic started to build up.'

Drivers and passengers from those cars went down the embankment to try to get people out of the bus before the emergency services arrived.

'I think we managed to get the majority of people out. Some were so shocked that they were shaking.'

'People took the walking wounded back to their cars for warmth and to calm people down. I had two ladies in my car.'

'One of them had been so spooked by the movement of the bus.'

'I think they thought the bus was going to drop into the loch below.'

'The front wheels of the bus were just feet away from the water.'

'They were very lucky that it didn't roll into the loch.'

Mr Munro said: 'Every window was smashed, except the windscreen, and I could see that there were already two other passing drivers who had stopped and were heading down the embankment in order to try and give assistance to the people on the coach.'

The first two men who had reached the coach had managed to force the side door open with the help of the passengers.

'We started to help each of them out of the coach and up the muddy embankment to the ever-growing group of cars and drivers who had also stopped on the A83.'

There were a few people who had little to no injuries at all and they were obviously able to get up the embankment with just a little assistance to help them remain steady on their feet.'

He gave shelter in his car to two sisters in their 80s, before taking them to Arrochar community centre.

Mr Ward added: 'The winds were so

strong there, it could have taken a car door off its hinges.' The bus was understood to be on its way to Inveraray before a stop at the Loch Fyne Hotel.

Police were joined at the scene by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Argyll and Bute council, the Royal Navy and a mountain rescue team.

Mr Ward said: 'The emergency services were amazing, really fast working and organised, and they did not take long to arrive.'

Six people remain in hospital, where they are being treated for a range of injuries.

One patient is serious but stable at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. Two patients at the Western Infirmary in Glasgow and three patients at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley are all in a stable condition.

A spokeswoman for Police Scotland said inquiries into the incident were still ongoing.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE: police, fire and ambulance crews rushed to the aid of the 52 passengers on board the stricken Loch and Glens tour bus

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## Father backs coach over rugby ban

THE FATHER of a promising young rugby player whose selection by a coach led to a nine-week ban has hit out at the way the game is run in Scotland, writes Steven Rae.

Ashley Stones' son, Rufus, 16, was picked to play for Argyll and Bute's under-16s team, despite being 13 days too old.

As a result, coach Tommy Sutherland, who also plays for Oban Lorne, was banned from playing, coaching and volunteering at any level of the game by the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) for fielding Rufus.

Tommy claimed the SRU initially told him he could play Rufus provided the opposition agreed to it. He met SRU bosses on Wednesday at Murrayfield but his appeal against his ban was rejected.

Mr Stones, who lives in Benderloch, said: 'Rather than punishing a keen and dedicated coach like Tommy and a boy who was carelessly born 13 days too early, they should be thinking of ways to improve the sport in Scotland as a whole.'

Rufus was picked along with two other boys from Oban to go on the West of Scotland training trip to Perpignan last summer as he showed promise, but then not to be allowed to play for a year because he lives in a rural community is ridiculous.'

There is no under-17s team in the area and he is too young to play under-18s.

Mr Stones has said the SRU should look at the model used by New Zealand when selecting and separating youth players of the game.

He said: 'I've watched a number of the team's games and, whilst Rufus is a talented player and a boost to the team, he's by no means the biggest player on the field.'

'Look at New Zealand, consistently the best in the world and also with large areas of rural countryside, who looked at this problem and brought in a size and weight cut-off for juniors, rather than just using their age.'

'Next year, Rufus will have to play against men the size of Tommy, and will be much more likely to be injured. His other option is to play for a team his age, but the two that have been suggested are in Perth and Inverness, so would involve a huge amount of travelling. It's really disappointing he might have to give up the game after showing such promise.'

Tommy was so angry by the SRU ban that he threatened to hand back the BT Volunteer of the Month trophy he received back in September for his contribution to the game.

## Rot report handed over as goodwill

ARGYLL and Bute council has given its dry rot report on the former Rockfield primary school to Oban Communities Trust (OCT).

At Oban community council meeting on Monday, Oban-based councillor Roddy McCuish said the report had been presented free of charge to the trust as a goodwill gesture.

It was reported in January that the dry rot was spreading at a cost of around £1,000 a day, but the expensive treatment work has been left to the trust to foot the bill. The council made the decision on March 19 to sell the former school to OCT for £1,000.

The trust plans to turn the building into a cultural hub and needs to raise between £100,000 and £200,000 in the next few months.

The former Rockfield school's car park and the renting of the school sheds within the grounds will be used to generate funds for the trust, as well as donations from the public. At present, the car park raises around £25,000 a year for the local authority.

OCT chairman Gordon McNab thanked the generosity of donors who have already been making contributions.

## Island airports to defy strike call

HIGHLANDS and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) has moved to reassure passengers that its airports will open as normal next week, despite the threat of industrial action by members of an airport workers' union.

Promised, the union which represents some Airport Management Services Limited (AMSL) staff at HIAL's airports, has confirmed that some members are ready to strike for 48 hours.

The call for action follows HIAL's refusal to accept union claims for a near 30 per cent pay rise for AMSL staff.

HIAL operates within the pay policy set by the Scottish government and cannot accept Prospect's demands, but the airport body released a statement saying it remained open to further dialogue.

In total, 11 airports come under HIAL's management, including Barra, Tiree, Islay and Campbeltown.

## TIMELINE

### Oban crew in early morning call-out

THE CREW of the Oban lifeboat were called out on Tuesday afternoon to transport an elderly man from Mull who needed urgent hospital attention.

The seven-man crew of the Mora Edith MacDonald launched at 4.50pm in near gale-force conditions, arriving in Craignure around 30 minutes after leaving Oban.

They were met by a waiting ambulance, which took the patient and a nurse onto the lifeboat for the journey back to Oban.

Because of the adverse weather conditions, the ferry service had been cancelled earlier in the day, which meant that the Oban lifeboat was called upon to carry out the emergency transfer to the mainland, which is usually a night-time routine.

When the lifeboat arrived back in Oban, the patient was taken by ambulance to Lorn and the Islands hospital.

### South American way in Mid Argyll

A MID Argyll farm is offering treks with a South American flavour.

Alpaca trekking is becoming popular in Scotland and will now be available at North Beachmore Farm on the West Loch.

The farm has a herd of 12 alpacas and plans to start supervised walks from Tarbert, Lochgilphead, Inveraray and surrounding areas this month.

### Extra money will help to raise roof

FOUR churches in Argyll and Bute will receive nearly £200,000 for repairs from the UK government's listed places of worship roof repair fund.

The trustees of St Conan's Kirk at Loch Awe will receive a grant of £51,900.

Ardchattan Kirk, on the shores of Loch Etive, has been awarded a grant of £79,000.

St Kieran's Church, Port Charlotte, Islay, gets a grant of £15,800 and Rhu and Shandon Parish Church receives £49,500.

The funding was announced by the government on March 26.

### Bus goes off road at Barcaldine

A BUS is believed to have been blown off the A828 road at Barcaldine around 1.20pm on Tuesday.

The West Coast Motors vehicle, with no passengers on board, hit a fence and got stuck in mud but the road was not closed.

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## DURING A VISIT TO MULL STEVEN RAE TALKS TO THE MAN WHO HEADS UP TRANSPORT AND ISLAND ISSUES AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

**Minister gets taste of ferry cancellations on island trip**

WITH GUSTING winds on the Craignure to Oban crossing last week, the Scottish government minister who is responsible for keeping transport on the move for the islands, was almost stranded on Mull because the adverse weather severely disrupted the ferry service.

The 1pm, 3pm and a revised 4pm sailing from the island were all cancelled on Wednesday, March 25, because of the choppy conditions.

However, ferry operator CalMac managed to take to the water on a rescheduled 5.30pm sailing and get travellers back to the mainland, with another unscheduled return service later that evening also put on.

Once safely on the boat for the return sailing to the mainland, Derek Mackay said: 'I've now experienced first hand the daily challenges many islanders face in making journeys to the mainland.'

'The captain's concerns for safety are paramount and in these situations the vessel must be able to cross without disruption, otherwise it must stay in dock.'

'I must pay credit to ferry operator CalMac for doing all it can to keep the ferries running on time, and in this case, putting on an extra sailing later this evening to take the backlog of passengers the cancellations have caused back to the mainland.'

Passengers whose journey were delayed by the bad weather were given vouchers for a meal onboard as a gesture of goodwill from the operator. Mr Mackay also said that it was easy to travel from the central belt to the islands by public transport: 'I think Oban's a beautiful place, and well served by road, ferry and rail in a way that might make other communities rather jealous.'



PLAIN SAILING: Scottish transport minister Derek Mackay says Mull's roads will cope with increased traffic 16\_t14derek01

## Mackay mulls over RET

MULL'S largely single-track roads network will cope with the huge increase in traffic when the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) is implemented, according to a Scottish government minister.

Derek Mackay, minister for transport and the islands, unveiled details of the final stage of the rollout while visiting Mull on Wednesday, March 25.

RET will reduce dramatically the cost of ferry travel to Mull when it is introduced in October.

The price of a single passenger fare to Mull is to fall by an average of 44 per cent, whilst car fares will be cut by an average of 55 per cent.

Experts say an extra 65,000 passengers a year could visit Mull, based on figures for Tiree, which already has the tariff.

This reduction in price, and the pledge of a new ferry for the Oban to Craignure route, has prompted fears of a 'gridlock' situation on the road from Craignure to Tobermory.

Despite this, Mr Mackay said RET was positive for the island.

'The implementation and rollout of RET I think is going to be very welcome,' said Mr Mackay.

'It makes it cheaper to travel, it's fairer and it improves the connectivity between the islands and the mainland. But there is a knock-on impact and I recognise that. That's why we'll work with the local authority, including the leader and chief executive, about requirements such as infrastructure, responding to needs such as ongoing investment.'

Councillor for Oban South and the Isles, Mary Jean Devon, who lives on the island, said there were concerns from residents about the impact it will have.

'RET is definitely welcomed by people on Mull but we do have severe reservations that our roads can cope,' she said.

'The problem we have is the six-mile section of single-track road from Craignure to Tobermory, which already has the tariff.'

'There can be times you are in a huge queue of 20 or 30 cars and the front one is doing 35mph. The increase in traffic could just exacerbate that. Hopefully some form of investment, perhaps from the EU, can address the infrastructure issues that we have.'

However, Mr Mackay said that the increase in traffic would cause minimal effect to the

island. 'We'll be as supportive as we can and Transport Scotland will help to look at technical solutions but I don't think it'll be gridlock,' he said.

'I think there'll be pressure points, naturally, when the vessels are unloading and waiting, but it will be a success story.'

'More people will use the ferry, costs will come down and then further investment to improve infrastructure should be led by the council.'

'Overall it has to be welcomed as we want economic growth, we want vibrancy, we want connectivity. We don't want islanders to feel isolated.'

Discussing the future for island communities in Scotland, Mr Mackay said the Scottish government would be focusing on two pieces of land reform.

The Crown Estate reform aims to ensure that the property, rights and interests that make up the estate in Scotland will be within the remit of the Scottish parliament so that they directly benefit Scottish people.

The Community Empowerment Bill will extend the community right to buy in urban

Scotland, giving communities a greater say in local budget decisions and a right to challenge them. It also aims to give local authorities greater powers to deal with empty homes and buildings. Both pieces of legislation will be passed later this year if successful.

'When the Crown Estate comes, this government has set out a commitment to our islands that local communities should harness the benefits,' said Mr Mackay.

'That will give us more opportunity to improve renewable projects, mobile phone and broadband infrastructure and other job-creating measures.'

'The charges and regime as implemented by Westminster has impeded and slowed so much in rural Scotland, but we will continue to provide improvements to island living.'

'The Community Empowerment Bill will increase cases of community ownership, which has been used for great success in the renewable energy and communication sectors, and could revolutionise and rejuvenate many island communities.'

## Garmony given seal of approval from Holyrood

DEREK Mackay visited the Garmony Hydro Project during his visit to Mull and was impressed with the innovative approach of the community-owned, renewable energy venture.

Green Energy Mull (GEM) will complete construction of the community hydroelectricity scheme at Garmony later this year after securing loans from Scottish Enterprise's Renewable Energy Investment Fund (REIFF), which is administered by Scottish Enterprise on behalf of the Scottish government, and from Charity Bank, which lends solely to social sector organisations.

The scheme is capable of powering 280 homes and reducing the island's carbon footprint by 450 tonnes.

Income will come from electricity sales and feed-in tariffs, with profits being invested entirely within the communities of Mull and Iona.

Mr Mackay said: 'The Garmony Hydro Project is an impressive venture – with the ability to power 280 homes once complete – and will be a

real asset to Mull.' Through Green Energy Mull, an estimated turnover of £5 million will be generated in the first 20 years of the scheme, with net proceeds of up to £2.4 million going into the Waterfall Fund for a variety of projects.

The project has been put in place with a 40-year lease under Forestry Commission Scotland's national forest land scheme.



GEM OF A PROJECT: Moray Finch, chairman Green Energy Mull shows minister Derek Mackay the Garmony scheme 16\_t14derek04

Derek Mackay  
Transport Minister



The Surgery  
**Connel**  
PA37 1PH  
Tel: 01631 710 229  
Fax: 01631 710 767

The Surgery  
**Taynuilt**  
PA35 1JE  
Tel: 01866 822 684  
Fax: 01866 822 363

The Surgery  
**Dalmally**  
PA33 1AX  
Tel: 01838 200 204  
Fax: 01838 200 376

At Taynuilt Medical Practice we are pleased to be able to advertise our new opening times for GP and nurse led services across our three local surgeries, Connel, Taynuilt and Dalmally. As a practice we are open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. If your local surgery reception is closed during these hours calls will be diverted to Connel Surgery.

<b>Connel Surgery</b>	
Reception Opening Times	Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm (when Taynuilt and Dalmally are closed Connel reception provides a service to the whole practice area).
GP Consulting Times	Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 11am for routine appointments Monday to Friday from 11.30am to 12noon for emergency appointments (call to make an appointment)
Nurse Consulting Times	Monday to Friday from 2pm to 4.30pm for routine appointments
Health Care Assistant Consulting Times	Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 12noon and from 1.30pm to 4.30pm
<b>Taynuilt Surgery</b>	
Reception Opening Times	Monday to Friday from 9am to 1.00pm and 1.20pm to 5.30pm (Fridays close at 5pm) Closed all day Wednesday
GP Consulting Times	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9.15am to 11am, Thursday, Friday 2pm to 4.30pm
Nurse Consulting Times	Monday from 9.15am to 11.45am and 2pm to 4.30pm Tuesday from 9.15am to 11.45am Friday from 9.15am to 11.45am
Health Care Assistant Consulting Times	Thursday from 9.15am to 11.45am
<b>Dalmally Surgery</b>	
Reception Opening Times	Monday and Friday 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9am to 1pm
GP Consulting Times	Monday and Friday 9am to 11am and 2pm to 4pm, Wednesday 9am to 11am
Nurse Consulting Times	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9.00am to 11.30am
Healthcare Assistant Consulting Times	Wednesday from 9.00am to 11.30am

Note these are the regular opening times and may be altered to cover leave. Evening surgeries are provided on a changing timetable, please ring for information.

During our recent patient consultation exercise we were asked to provide more information about when to ask for a nurse appointment. Our practice nurse team is made up of Rhona, Libby, Diane and Catriona who provide clinics at all of our surgeries. Making an appointment with the nurse for appropriate problems helps to free up GP appointments for those who need medical advice.

Please make an appointment with one of our nurses for the following:

All bloods	Travel advice and vaccinations
Recording blood pressure	Asthma reviews
Recording weight	COPD reviews
Smear tests	Cardiac reviews
Smoking cessation advice	Diabetic reviews
Contraception Reviews	Tick removal
Advice on diet and lifestyle	Ear syringing
Wound dressing	ECGs
Suture removal	B12/depo injections
Minor ailments e.g. cough, cold, urine infection	

One of our nurses is a prescriber and can prescribe a range of medications including inhalers, antibiotics, dressings, creams etc... If you are unsure please ask our receptionists for advice on who best to book an appointment with.

## Campbeltown gains almost £1 million for regeneration

CAMPBELTOWNS is one of seven historic communities across Scotland to benefit from the latest round of Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) funding.

Argyll and Bute council will now receive £900,000 of funding over five years, helping to further improve Campbeltown's historic town centre.

The money will be used for urgent improvements to a number of key buildings in the town centre.

Buildings on Longrow South and Main Street, including the old post office, which has been vacant for 20 years, have been earmarked for investment to improve their condition.

The money was awarded in round six of the funding initiative.

Councillor Rory Colville, chairman of Argyll and Bute council's local area committee, said: 'This funding is a great boost for Campbeltown.'

'It has had real tangible benefits for the town – safeguarding jobs, creating the right conditions for businesses to thrive and bringing over 2,000sq/m of empty shop and flat space back into use.'

### Three-year plan to boost jobs

A THREE-year plan by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to create up to 900 jobs and increase supported business turnover by as much as £100 million in the region has been unveiled the First Minister.

'Building our Future', shows how HIE will invest its annual budget of £97.7m to build successful businesses and social enterprises.

The agency is currently leading a £146m project to deliver high-speed fibre broadband across the area and aims to expand the use of digital technologies.

The First Minister said the region offered 'significant economic opportunities'.

## ISLAY LETTER

by Hugh Smith

## Gaelic centres in London

REPRESENTATIVES

from Ionad Chaluim Chille Ille, the island's St Columba Gaelic centre, joined their Sabhal Mòr Ostaig counterparts at a reception in London's Dover House hosted by Rt. Hon. Alistair Carmichael, outgoing Secretary of State for Scotland.

Representing the Islay centre was manager Neil Woodrow, secretary Ella Edgar and Catherine Johnston, chair of the board of directors. Among those representing the Skye institution was its Principal Professor Boyd Robertson, Donnie Munro, director of development and Lord Minginsh, chairman of the directorate.

The Islay-born secretary of state, who was also Lib Dem MP for Orkney and Shetland, spoke of his pleasure in hosting a reception honouring two Scottish institutions which have helped the Gaelic flame to burn brightly over recent years.

He went on to describe the Islay Gaelic centre as 'being close to his heart', adding that it and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig have

both been instrumental in sustaining and promoting the Gaelic language and culture to a wider audience.

Following the reception, Lord Minginsh, former Sheriff Roderick J MacLeod QC, thanked Mr Carmichael for his support and hospitality and Donnie Munro added that the relationship between the two

institutions played a central role in the wider economic regeneration of their respective areas.

This view was shared by Catherine Johnston, who referred to the bonds that connect the two island institutions as creating an important link in raising the profile and strengthening the Gaelic language on Islay.

## Philip's memory lives on at mod

CÖISIR Ghàidhlig Ille, the island's Gaelic choir, is to present a new trophy to the Mod Ille organising committee in memory of Philip Maxwell, a choir stalwart and secretary, whose death in February saddened everyone and his fellow choristers in particular.

The new trophy will be competed for in the men's choral section, a competition dear to Philip's heart, and will make its first appearance at Mòd Ille 2015 in the local high school on Saturday, June 6.

ROUND Church members at Bowmore are delighted with the success of their recent daffodil tea which added £813 to the church coffers.

They are indebted to all who supported the event and to multi-talented school pupils who provided entertainment.

Please write to or telephone our Islay correspondent Hugh Smith with any interesting news and views at 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810 658.

## Eagle-eyed police to prey on crooks

POLICE Scotland have launched a campaign to show would-be wildlife criminals that such offences will be high on the agenda in 2015.

The campaign launch last week by L Division's (Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire) wildlife crime unit came after the force recorded 250 wildlife crimes from April 2014 to February 2015.

These included persecuting badgers, poisoning birds of prey and trading in some of the world's most endangered species.

In the new campaign, Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime in Scotland (PAWS), Police Scotland called on the public to report suspicions of criminal activity either directly to the police or through the PAWS app.

Each division has a wildlife crime liaison officer and Con-

stable Andy Crawford, based at Helensburgh, is the officer for L Division.

He has been involved in a range of wildlife crime investigations, including deer poaching in Arrochar, the theft of two Harris Hawks from Loch Lomond Bird of Prey Centre and a case of two Golden Eagles found dead on Jura.

He said: 'Most residents in our communities can enjoy watching wildlife from a window in their homes. The animals are there to be enjoyed and admired. They have no voice and we must act on their behalf.'

'This campaign sends a clear message to those engaging in wildlife crime – we take it extremely seriously.'

Anyone with information about wildlife crime can contact police on the 101 number.

### More flights for Argyll airports

INCREASED flights and two new planes are included in the forthcoming tender for services to Argyll airports.

The Scottish government's public service obligation (PSO) to provide flights to Campbeltown, Barra and Tiree will go out to tender on April 7.

As part of the revised contract, return trips to Tiree and Barra will increase to two a day Monday to Saturday.

The start date of Sunday flights to Campbeltown will be brought forward to May and Sunday services to Tiree and Barra will operate all year round. The contract will be awarded by July, with the next contract period expected to start in October to coincide with the winter timetable.

Inglis Lyon, of Highlands and Islands Airports Limited, said the impending arrival of new aircraft and the promise of increased capacity on all three routes would have a positive impact for local business and tourism.

## Bid to fly from Oban to Glasgow to be launched by local authority

**EUAN PATERSON**

eupaterson@obantimes.co.uk

A PLAN to run flights between Oban and Glasgow is set for take off if a funding application to the UK government's Department for Transport (DfT) is successful.

Argyll and Bute council has applied to Westminster for the start-up cost to run flights from Oban to Glasgow and Barra.

But council leader Dick Walsh says the flights may go ahead, even if the application is unsuccessful.

A study commissioned by the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) in 2013 recommended that these routes be explored on a trial basis, following feedback from Transport Scotland and Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL).



LIFT-OFF: Oban airport is proposed hub for Lorn to Glasgow

Oban airport is a key part of the council's overall regeneration initiative for the wider Oban and Lorn area, with nine separate projects set to go ahead over the next five years.

The first of these, a project for a business park at the airport, is to get under way in September.

Trial flights to Glasgow and

Barra could start after the DfT publishes its list of successful bidders on June 30.

Councillor Walsh said: 'This is another great initiative coming out of the Oban area and I fully support the drive to increase the services offered by the airport.'

'Daily flights to and from Glasgow would be a massive benefit

and would support the council's strategic vision for the Lorn area, making it far easier for people to come and do business.'

'These are exciting times, with the business park access road set to go on-site in September.'

'Hopefully, we can secure this funding from the Department for Transport but if not we will explore other ways to turn our intent into action.'

Councillor Roddy McCuish, chairman of Oban, Lorn and the Isles area committee, said councillors would work hard to secure an air link between Oban and Glasgow.

He added: 'This would have significant economic benefits for the town, with people able to come from London to Oban in a day and do business.'

'Particularly with the world class facilities at SAMS, which attracts leading scientists from

around the globe, the ability to get from Glasgow to Oban in less than an hour would be fantastic.'

In a letter of support for the bid, Dr Tracy Shimmield, managing director of the research arm of the Scottish Association for Marine Science, and a member of the new Argyll and Bute Economic Forum, said: 'Our aim is to expand the business from a £2 million turnover to £5 million over the next five years. To do this, we need to encourage prospective clients to visit our base in the European Marine Science park located in Oban.'

'It would be a massive advantage to our business if clients and our staff could link up with flights from England and overseas through a regular flight from Oban airport.'

DfT funding can be provided to cover up to 50 per cent of airport aeronautical charges.

## Path plan going in right direction

A PATH linking Iona and Tyndrum is a step closer after the Scottish government announced plans to add routes to its foot and cycle path network.

The National Walking and Cycling project plan was launched on March 19 by cabinet secretary for social justice Alex Neil, and will extend the network by 500 miles over the next five years, joining up and improving existing routes.

Further long-distance paths,

including the Iona to Tyndrum route, are earmarked for completion by 2034.

The proposed route would connect directly with the Oban to Fort William section of the National Cycle Network.

This section will link, via ferry, with the Tyndrum to Oban path, which will in turn link to the West Highland Way.

Work is currently ongoing to identify the best route for the Tyndrum path.

It is hoped the routes will help link communities, as well as attract tourists to the west Highlands.

A steering group, chaired by Argyll and Bute council, is finalising a feasibility study for the path.

Funded by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the study will include specific details of the potential routes on the ground and identify engineering works and costs.

The steering group is currently considering their preferred route.

An SNH spokeswoman welcomed the development, adding: 'The route will create a strategic link for visitors and tourists between the West Highland Way at Tyndrum and Oban, as a "Gateway to the Isles" underpinning the rural economy, as well as benefiting local people as it will help link villages and communities.'



CON ALERT: PC Emma Campbell, James Howard and PC Shaun Conway 16\_t13trading01

### Joint effort to tackle blight of fraudsters

OBAN police joined trading standards officers to highlight the menace of telephone, doorstep and online fraudsters.

PC Emma Campbell, PC Shaun Conway and James Howard from Argyll trading standards gave advice to shoppers at Tesco in Oban recently about how to deal with con men.

Mr Howard said that if anyone received suspicious letters, emails or visitors to their door, to call the non-emergency police number 101. He urged residents never to pay up-front deposits to people they had just met.

Argyll trading standards is also keen to promote the 'Buy With Confidence' scheme, launched last year by Argyll and Bute council, which provides a register of reliable, trusted traders.

### Statue of family pet stolen from grave

A PENSIONER who read an *Oban Times* report on the theft of items from Pennyfuir cemetery, near Oban, has come forward to report a similar incident as a result of the story.

The 71-year-old man contacted police last week after seeing the story of solar-powered lamps being taken from grave sites tended by Frank Toman and William Goldie.

He complained that between December 23 and Christmas Day last year thieves had removed a life-sized statue of a Yorkshire Terrier from a grave site in Pennyfuir.

## TIMELINE

### Helpful man may shed light on crash

POLICE are attempting to trace a man who may have helped a female driver who had crashed her car on the outskirts of Oban.

The woman is believed to have been driving a grey Saab Sport on Lerags road last Friday afternoon when the accident happened.

Police have asked the man, or anyone who may have information on the incident, to contact PC Andrew Hogg at Oban police station on 101.

### Unwelcome guest leaves £400 bill

OBAN police are asking for help from the public in their search for a vandal who didn't pay his way while staying at an Oban hotel.

The 50-year-old man was staying at the Sutherland hotel between Saturday and Sunday (March 28 - 29) and while there caused £400 of damage.

The man also left the hotel without paying his bill for bed and board. Enquiries are ongoing to trace the man.

### Youth, 18, faces assault charge

AN 18-YEAR-old man has been reported to the procurator fiscal for a number of disorder offences after allegedly assaulting a woman in Oban.

The teenager is accused of assaulting the 25-year-old woman in Gallanach Road last Tuesday at around 5.30pm.

### Figure it out when calling the station

PEOPLE living in Oban, Lorn and the Isles have been asked to telephone 101 when contacting the Oban police station.

Previously used direct phone numbers for the station in Albany Street (01631 510 500/501) are no longer in operation.



WINGING IT: Orla the golden eagle helps Constable Andrew Crawford (right) and Stuart Robertson, director of Loch Lomond Bird of Prey Centre, launch the new PAWS campaign

### No job is too small or large

Removal business already looking to expand

West Coast Removals of Oban is now providing quality removal, delivery and clearance services for the entire



west coast, as well as Mull and the surrounding isles. Owner James McCahey opened the business in January with one employee and is already looking to expand. "We do home and garden clearance, including full house cleaning and clearing services, and are available for lets and new builds as well," James said.

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### Cadbury Easter Egg Trails

We've teamed up with Cadbury again to bring Easter Egg Trails to 50 National Trust for Scotland places across the country from Good Friday to Easter Monday

Turn eggsplorer with us as you follow the trail, collect the clues, solve the puzzle and win a Cadbury Egghead! Each of the trails is different – a great excuse to try your hand at more than one!

Trails are taking place at



Oban Times  
Arduaine Garden  
Glencoe Visitor Centre



Glenfinnan Monument  
Balmacara Estate  
Crarae Garden

Dates and times vary for each trail. You'll find everything you need to know at

[www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)

 the National Trust for Scotland  
a place for posterity

**Great Glen**

VIEWS from a famous military road through the Scottish highlands will be spoiled if a wind farm application gets the go-ahead.

RES Ltd has applied for planning permission for 13 wind turbines in the rolling moorland below the Corrieyairack Pass, with its historic General Wade road between the Great Glen and upper Strathspey.

The old military road was built under the command of General Wade in 1731, but was used by Bonnie Prince Charlie's Jacobite Army in 1745.

Now used by hill walkers for more peaceable purposes, it is a popular route through the Monadhliath mountains.

It is already scarred by the Beauly-Denny overhead power line, but mountaineers fear even greater damage will be done if the Culachy wind farm is permitted, with its 149-metre turbines visible over a much greater area and being more eye-catching because of their movement.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland has objected to the planning application, arguing the development will not only be unsightly in its own right but will add to the impact of existing and approved wind farms in the area.

**Killin**

KILLIN community auction will be held on Saturday April 4 at the McLaren Hall.

There has been a wonderful response from residents who have provided a variety of items for sale.

Household goods including new baking trays, serving dishes and glassware have been donated.

Fishing rods, reels and other goods, including a trout fly reel, will give the anglers plenty to bid for, and there is a selection of collectables including a Royal Doulton nursery bowl, silver toast rack, figurines and decorative items.

Those with an interest in DIY will be well-catered for, with handcraft tools and joinery items. Furniture includes coffee tables bookcases and general goods.

All the proceeds from the auction will be going to local organisations and worthy causes.

Viewing is from 5pm with the sale at 6pm. The kitchen will serve snacks and the refreshment bar will also be open. For more information visit [www.lodge815.co.uk](http://www.lodge815.co.uk)

**Aberfeldy**

CREATIVE Scotland has announced that Aberfeldy is one of nine Scottish communities shortlisted for a 2015 creative place award.

The application submitted on behalf of Aberfeldy states the community would like to use the £50,000 award to create Aberfeldy Arts, a year-long campaign with a focus on a specific art form each month during the campaign. It is intended Aberfeldy Arts would become self-sustaining and be able to continue after the end of the creative place award project.

A creative place award is both an accolade and a grant, which Creative Scotland awards to a few specific communities each year. The accolade recognises the creativity and co-operation in these communities, whilst the grant funding supports their ambition to further develop their creative programme and profile. The winners will be announced on Wednesday June 10.

**Coll**

THIS year's Coll bird festival will be held between Friday April 24 and Sunday April 26.

The event is an opportunity for locals and visitors to learn more about the birdlife on and around Coll, with a range of different activities on offer.

Guided walks, boat trips to Lunga, family events and an evening of talks will be held, with the main base at An Cridhe. For more information, visit [www.collbunkhouse.com/bird-festival-2015](http://www.collbunkhouse.com/bird-festival-2015)

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**Lismore**

LIOSACHS of all ages enjoyed an evening whist drive organised by the hall committee.

Congratulations went to young players Lewis Walker and Shane Stewart who played admirably against stiff competition.

LISMORE heritage centre opened its doors for the 2015 season with a remarkable and inspiring new exhibition 'Women: Life and Work on Lismore', which celebrates the lives of generations of island women.

The café is also open serving a great menu.

AFTER weeks of learning lines, painting backdrops and making costumes, Lismore primary school pupils, left, wowed the audience and adjudicator at the North Lorn drama festival, taking home three cups.

It was a fitting reward for all the hard work they put in. Thanks went to all the parents, friends and relatives who helped make costumes and produce the performance.

**MORVERN lines****Early arrival of first migrants**

DAVE Sexton, the highly popular Royal Society for the Protection of Birds officer for Mull who deserves the freedom of the island for all the business he helps bring to it, tells me the first wheatears of the year have arrived - earlier than usual according to old accounts.

Wheatears belong to the genus *Oenanthe*. They are passerine birds, that is birds which have feet specialised for grasping branches and similar structures, with the first toe facing backwards.

They were formerly considered to be members of the thrush family, but are now more commonly placed in the flycatcher group. The name 'wheatear' is not derived from 'wheat' or any sense of 'ear', but is a 16th-century linguistic corruption referring to the prominent white rump found in most species.

Henry Davenport Graham, in his 'Birds of Iona and Mull' (1890), tells us that in his youth wheatears were in great demand around Beachy Head in Essex for the table, where they were served up on fried vine leaves as ortolanis. It seems large numbers of them were caught in cleverly constructed turf traps and sold in the local markets for a shilling a dozen.

Oenanthe is also the name of a plant genus, the water dropworts, and is derived from the Greek *oenos* 'wine' and *anthos* 'flower'. In the case of the plant genus, it refers to the wine-like scent of the flowers. In the case of the wheatear, it signifies the Northern wheatear's return to Greece in the spring just as the grapevines blossom.

In Gaelic they were known as 'critheanach' and in English 'underground jabbler'.

A good deal of superstition used to surround wheatears. If they were seen for the first time perching on a stone, the weather would be stormy and calm if spotted on a sod. In some parts of the Highlands and islands they were called 'Fear na Feill Padraig', bird of the Feast of St Patrick, because they usually appear then - March 17.

According to Alexander Carmichael (1832-1912), the renowned Gaelic folklorists and collector from Lismore, wheatears were known as 'saint' or 'sained' and were thought to hibernate during winter.

In support of this extraordinary theory, he recorded that a Donald MacMurdo from Bailemeadonach in Islay told him that he and his sons were clearing away an old turf-wall one winter when they came across great numbers of wheatears inside it. The birds were stiff and cold and appeared to be dead. The boys took some home and laid them on the floor beside a fire and before long they began to show signs of life, flap their wings and fly about.

Carmichael recorded a similar story in Gleneroran, Appin, from Donald MacColl, the local foxhunter.

It appears that in the early 1800s a long stretch of undermined bank fell down on a nearby road. Among the debris of roots, moss and gravel there were masses of wheatears, apparently dead. There had been a long spell of frost, followed by a sudden thaw and above average heat. The birds exposed to this rise in temperature showed signs of life. Some children took home many of the dormant birds and brought them to life in front of fires. This was such an unusual phenomenon that people came from near and far to see it.

Carmichael recorded these informants were highly intelligent and very observant naturalists. So, who knows.

OTHER earlier than usual spring arrivals include several immature Great Northern Divers feeding off the rocky shores between Kingairloch and Kilmalieu.

Nearby, wild goat kids have been foraging among the seaweed with their siblings since at least late January.

Their numbers this year appear to be slightly down both here and on the west coast of Jura. Perhaps the continuous rain is responsible.

In the plant world, primroses are well ahead, particularly among the damp moss-covered cliffs along Loch Sunart-side between Achleac and Kinlochsunart.

For weeks ditches and pools as high as 1,100ft above sea level have been overflowing with frogspawn which, in time, will provide tasty morsels for travelling otters and wandering herons.

**Frustation over BT failures**

BRITISH Telecom did not excel itself in Morvern recently.

For almost a week there was no internet connection with the outside world as a result of, we believe, a gust of wind moving a microwave dish by a few millimetres at the local exchange above Lochaline village or on one of the masts overlooking Craignure.

It seems odd that while one nation can put a robot on Mars 140 million miles away, another is incapable of aligning two basic bits of equipment six miles apart across the Sound of Mull. The delay, I am told, was as a result of BT engineers being unable to get over to Mull from Oban. Had they not heard of the Lochaline to Fishnish ferry which was providing its customary excellent daily service? To some who use the internet now and again for social purposes, the interruption was probably neither here nor there. To others who depend on it for their livelihood, it amounted to significant inconvenience and loss of earnings. Super fast broadband for Morvern? What a joke.

Iain Thornber  
[iain.thornber@btinternet.com](mailto:iain.thornber@btinternet.com)

**Plockton**

HONOUR: John Falconer receives his certificate



SERVICE: Charlie MacRae receives his award

TWO OF the longest serving members of the Lochalsh branch of the Royal British Legion (Scotland) were presented with a branch certificate for their efforts over the decades.

John Falconer from Inverinate, who has been a member of the branch for more than 50 years and is presently on the committee, and Charlie MacRae, Plockton, who has also been a member for more than 50 years, received their awards from branch president Lieutenant Commander Andy Will.

Mr MacRae has been on the committee for 45 years and secretary for the past 28 years.

park to provide showers and other services for local fishermen; improve facilities at the pier end of Cooper street and only ground available for housing would be below the war memorial.

The community council was glad to hear Kyle service point is to remain open but hope Broadford

and Lochcarron will be saved from closure.

PLOCKTON hotel organised a race night in the hotel on March 20 which raised £1,200 for Macmillan cancer funds.

The next village clean up is scheduled for April 24 but a community council application for a

warmest day was 11.2°C and coldest was 1.1°C.

A COFFEE morning in Plockton hall on Saturday March 14 raised £710.

It was organised by Jane Macdonald in aid of Nkhoma mission hospital, Malawi, in conjunction with Edinburgh medical missionary society.



GOOD EFFORT:  
Kinlochleven primary school's eco committee collected jumble which will be recycled to raise money for school funds.

**Arisaig**

MINUTES of Arisaig and district community council meeting, held on February 16:

As three members were absent, the meeting was not quorate.

Arisaig medical centre: It was agreed that the community council should accept the offer by Tracy Ligema of NHS Highland to attend a meeting, to be arranged at a time to suit everyone.

Community emergency plan: A desktop exercise had been planned to take place at the Sunart Centre, Strontian, on March 25. It was agreed the exercise was a good thing but questions were raised regarding the distance from Mallaig and Arisaig.

Notice board: A new board with a black frame will be ordered as the old one has been damaged in bad weather. The new board will be

positioned on the old library east facing porch wall.

Safe route: Confirmation has been received that the safe route will be rolled out in Arisaig as soon as possible.

A830 50mph speed restriction: A letter was written on behalf of the community council raising concerns about the introduction of the limit before the impact of the recently introduced safety measures have been assessed.

A reply has been received from Transport Scotland listing reasons for the implementation and asking the community council to withdraw the objection. Councillor Allan Henderson is in the process of arranging a meeting between Transport Scotland, Highland councillors and community councillors from the areas affected by

the proposal, date to be confirmed.

Christmas lights: Some new lights need to be bought so this item will be kept on the agenda.

Recycling: Highland council paper and can banks have been removed from local recycling centres. This may free up some space for additional bottle banks in Arisaig, to be discussed further at the next meeting.

West Highlands and Islands local development plan: It was agreed Highland council will be notified that the community council would like to update its development plan.

Winter maintenance: There will be a reduction in Highland council's winter road maintenance programme from next winter. Roads will be assessed to decide whether the 6-9pm gritting run is required.

Vehicle numbers will be monitored at night and if they are low gritting at this time may be stopped.

ARISAIG women's institute held its March meeting on March 24.

The speaker was Violet Hogg gave a demonstration on cake decorations.

Club members all took home the fruits of the demonstration.

Competition winners: Tray bake - 1 Vera MacDonald; 2 June Cairns; 3 Ann Cameron. Plate - 1 June Cairns; 2 Ann Cameron; 3 Vera MacDonald.

The raffle was won by Rosie MacEachen.

The meeting next month will be an open meeting, on April 16 at 2.30pm in Astley Hall. Everyone welcome. The speaker will be Iain Thorner.

## Argyll robots will explore deep seas

ROBOTS are to begin exploring the undersea environment off Dunstaffnage - and beyond - as Argyll's sci-fi scientists look to transform the way the ocean is studied.

The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) at Dunstaffnage has opened the new Scottish Marine Robotics Facility in a bid to better understand the deep seabed.

The Scottish Marine Robotics Facility is equipped with futuristic kit including seven sea gliders, two autonomous underwater vehicles, a remotely operated vehicle, static long-term moorings, seabed landers, drifting sensors, mapping technologies and various polar technologies.

These robots can observe the oceans from the sea surface to the deep seabed, from Scottish coastal waters to ice-covered polar seas.

Dr Finlo Cottier, head of the marine physics and technology department at SAMS, explains: 'Advances in marine technology are essential to allow us to study the marine environment on which life on our planet depends.'

'Robots will help us greatly in this venture and we are proud to have such a fantastic new facility.'

# Court date gives stranded Connell seaman hope for a Spring return

**EUAN PATERSON**  
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

ARRESTED and accused of arms smuggling in India, jailed for six months in squalid conditions and separated from his partner and newborn son despite being cleared of any wrong-doing.

But Connell man Billy Irving has high hopes that his 18-month 'nightmare' could soon be over after a date of April 10 was given for his case to be heard at the Supreme Court in India.

Billy, 34, and five fellow ex-British soldiers were among the crew on board the anti-piracy ship MV Seaman Guard Ohio when they entered Indian waters in October 2013.

Although charges against the crew were quashed last June, an appeal against the verdict by the Tamil Nadu police means the men cannot leave the country.

A court hearing last Tuesday to have their possessions returned proved successful but they have still not received their passports.

This could all change after next month when the supreme court hears the police appeal.



END IN SIGHT: Billy Irving is ready for another day in court

Billy, who has missed the birth of his son, William, to his partner Yvonne MacHugh, 26, told the *Oban Times*: 'We were informed by our lawyer in the Supreme Court that there will be a hearing on April 10, so we hope this will put an end to this nightmare and they reject the appeal.'

'We should find out if the High Court's decision to quash the charges stands, and it's the end, or if they accept the appeal and we go to a trial.'

Billy's lawyer will argue the crew's human rights have been



**WAITING FOR BILLY:**  
Yvonne MacHugh and baby William are hopeful  
Billy will return soon

breached throughout the process.

The former Campbeltown man, an accomplished piper and shiny player for Taynuilt, has been given clearance to leave India by courts and immigration officials but Indian police have refused to issue a No Objection Certificate (NOC), meaning he cannot leave the country.

Meanwhile, Miss MacHugh, has left Connell to get the support of her own family in Neilston, Glasgow, as she cares for the couple's month-old son.

Yvonne said mother and baby could not visit Billy in India until little William - or Uilleam Beag - is at least three months old because he has not had the necessary vaccinations.

Yvonne said: 'Just now it is difficult to concentrate on what is going on over there because William has to come first but I know he needs his dad home.'

## TIMELINE

### Support to cancer patients in Argyll

PROSTATE Cancer UK and The Movember Foundation have joined forces with Relationships Scotland to offer free counselling services to anyone affected by the prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment in Argyll.

The service is to be delivered by Relationships Scotland - Couple Counselling Argyll. Face-to-face counselling will be available in Oban and the surrounding area and a telephone counselling service will be available to those who live some distance away.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men and is predicted to become the most common cancer of all by 2030.

To book an appointment contact Relationships Scotland on 0845 119 2020 or email enquiries@relationships-scotland.org.uk

### Bookbug event

A POPULAR children's sing-along reading session at Oban library is running a special event next Thursday.

The Gruffalo-themed Big Lunch Bookbug Event starts at 11am at the library on Albany Street.

## Glittering prizes for countryside's dazzling heroes

**EUAN PATERSON**  
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

THE VARIETY of premium services and products from the West Highlands and islands was clear to see following the successful Scottish Rural Awards gala dinner.

The new awards ceremony was the first major event of a five-year partnership between the *Oban Times*' sister publication Scottish Field magazine and the Scottish Countryside Alliance to celebrate enterprising rural businesses.

The awards were announced last Thursday at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh. More than 200 public nominations were received, for businesses and people from as far afield as the Outer Hebrides and the Borders.

And among the winners were two brothers from Mull, a fish production company from Gigha, a butcher from Arran and a Mull-based shellfish company.

Judging took place at the end of January to select a winner, runner-up and highly commended in each of the 10 award categories, encompassing every aspect of rural enterprise, from aquaculture to artisan food producers. A special award was given to brothers Brian and Duncan Swinbanks, from Mull, who jointly won the Rural Hero award



WARM WELCOME: Hospitality winner Ardnamurchan Estates



ETHICAL: Mull's Guy Grieve, left, was a winner



AGRICULTURE: Gigha Halibut received a top award

for a level of community work which means, between them, they are involved in almost every activity on the island.

Another prize going to Mull was the conservation and the environment prize to Guy Grieve of

The Ethical Shellfish Company. Gigha Halibut won the agriculture and aquaculture section, while The Arran Butcher Ltd was named the best rural butcher.

Ardnamurchan Estate won the much coveted hospitality prize

and Taynuilt's Ballet West and the Lochaber Rural Education Trust were named runner up and highly commended, respectively, in the education category. Judging panel member Richard Bath, editor of Scottish Field,

said: 'Showing our readers the joys of the Scottish countryside is one of the main aims of Scottish Field, so our sponsorship of the Rural Tourism award is a perfect fit. I was amazed by the quality and attention to detail shown by the nominees across each hard-fought category.'

The judging panel also included: Jamie Stewart, Countryside Alliance director for Scotland; Rory Kennedy, finance and business planning specialist; Charlie

Shentall, development manager for the Scottish Countryside Alliance; Brian Cameron, commercial director for Wyvern Media, publisher of Scottish Field; and Paddy Crerar, chief executive of Crerar Hotels.

## Move with the Times

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MARATHON MUSICIAN: Accordion player Ross MacPherson with fiddler Calum MacPhail and drummer Liam MacLean.

## Ross hits the high notes for charity in marathon event

HE'S USED to playing long sessions at ceilidhs up and down the West Highlands.

But even Ross MacPherson, a well known accordion player from Appin, needed help with his five-hour marathon play last Saturday in Oban.

The event, held in the Royal Hotel, was used to raise money for this year's Royal National Mòd in Oban.

Musicians and singers joining Ross on the day, included Siela Sinclair, Alistair MacDonald, Sandy Carr,

Michael and Joanie Garvin, fiddle player Calum MacPhail, drummer Liam MacLean and double Mòd gold medal-winning singers Paul McCallum and Mary Catherine MacNeil. Following the musical marathon, the hotel also hosted a stovies ceilidh dance.

Mòd organising committee treasurer Danny MacRae reckoned that £1,788 was raised on the day. This total was taken before sponsor forms were returned.

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OT

# Cemetery access gate is barrier too far for graveside visitors

RESIDENTS of a rural Lochaber village have found themselves unable to enter the local cemetery, writes Emma Crichton, after a heavy gate was put up across the only access road.

Angry Strontian villagers say the owners of Drimnatorr Farm, who also own the road, have been causing problems with entry since they moved there three years ago.

But the ongoing row reached a peak last week when the large gate was erected 300 yards from the entrance to the cemetery, preventing anyone getting through without help.

Strontian resident Tony Dobson called the behaviour 'unacceptable'.

He said: 'There is no lock on the gate yet and I've been told they won't be allowed to put one on because it's a public access road but even erecting the gate is causing major problems.'

'The gate swings closed by itself and there's nothing to keep it open so to get through with a car you need to have two people there, one to hold the gate open while the other drives the car through.'

'The alternative is for people to leave their car on the main road and walk 300 yards to lay flowers for their late partner, family or friend. I find this totally wrong and unacceptable for an elderly, infirm or disabled person to be put through.'

A Highland council spokeswoman confirmed farm owners Melvin and Sally Shaw own the road and were entitled to put a gate across it, but public access to the cemetery should 'remain at all times'.

But it is not only entry to the graveyard concerning Mr Dobson: his elderly friends live on the cemetery side of the gate and now can't leave their home alone.

Mr Dobson said: 'It's terrible, Mr and Mrs Oddy are in their 80s but because of this big gate they must always go out together because one of them needs to

hold the gate open.'

'They're effectively trapped and I just can't understand why the Shaws would do this.'

'Since they moved in they've been putting up signs saying 'private road' and 'no dogs' and the community council has been trying to work with them on this but when the gate went up that was the final straw for me.'

It is understood the owners had allowed their goats to roam into the cemetery and visitors were devastated to see the animals had eaten flowers and plants left at the graves of loved ones.

Brian Evans, chairman of Sunart community council, said he thought they had been making progress in negotiations with the Shaws until the gate appeared last week.

He said: 'After the incident with the goats, someone from the community council spoke to the owners and they have been contained since, so we thought we were getting somewhere but the fact the gate is now up shows we're not.'

'We've written to them, emailed them and even invited them along to a community council meeting so they can explain their behaviour but they've refused to respond.'

'Although the gate isn't locked, it's stopping people getting in and it's really heavy so that's no use for elderly or disabled people.'

Now Mr Dobson has decided to arrange weekly visits to the cemetery to emphasise their right to visit.

He said: 'In order that we don't lose our right of access by default I would invite all locals and anybody it may concern to accompany me on a weekly visit to the cemetery either on foot or by car accompanied by their dogs.'

'We must not allow the Shaws to alter a right that has existed for centuries.'

When contacted by the *Oban Times*, Mr Shaw declined to comment on the issue.



## Wind band exhibits the Midas touch

Lochaber high school senior wind band received a 'gold plus' award at a competition in Perth. The group was one of seven bands from across the country competing at the Scottish concert band festival final on Sunday. But only Lochaber and one other band were awarded 'gold plus' by the adjudicator, who praised the wind band for 'team work and musicality'.

## Future spoken for in new languages

COUNCILS in the Highlands and islands are to benefit from £467,000 in Scottish government funding to support language learning.

The money has been allocated to Highland, Argyll and Bute and Eilean Siar authorities to boost bilingualism in their regions as part of a national investment of £7.2 million.

Each council can decide how their share is spent: from teacher training to employ-

ing language assistants. Highland council received £323,000, Argyll and Bute was given £109,000 and £35,000 went to Eilean Siar.

Dr Alasdair Allan, the Scottish government's minister for learning, announced the funding.

He said: 'In today's multi-cultural world it is more important than ever that young people have the opportunity to learn languages from an early age. We want to

ensure the enthusiasm for languages starts at an early stage in a child's education.'

'The ability to speak different languages will equip Scotland's young people with the skills and competencies needed in a 21st century global marketplace.'

'This additional funding will help schools and teachers in the Highlands and Islands plan for and continue their good work inspiring and supporting children to learn new languages.'

## TIMESLINE

### Hopes of power to Morvern people

A COMMUNITY group in Morvern has applied to lease an area of woodland to develop hydro power schemes.

Morvern community development company (MCDC) hopes to generate low carbon electricity from Barr River and Alt Achadh Forsa in Fiunary forest to create an income to support local projects.

But first Forestry Commission Scotland must approve lease of the national forest land and run an open consultation about the plans.

A full report can be found on the Forestry commission website and comments should be sent to malcolm.wield@forestry.gov.uk by April 27 or to Malcolm Wield, Forestry Commission Scotland, Highland Conservancy, 'Woodlands', Fodderty Way, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9XB.

### Education award

THE HARD WORK of volunteers at the Lochaber Rural Education Trust was recognised at a national awards ceremony at the weekend.

It was one of six organisations shortlisted in the education category of the Scottish countryside rural awards and received a highly commended accreditation for their work with local schoolchildren.

### All change at pub

AN APPLICATION to change an old pub in Fort William to a shop has been lodged with Highland council.

The former Station Bar on High Street, popular for karaoke and open mic nights, closed its doors in February and this week owners submitted a change of use application to the local authority.

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## Independent is new councillor for Benbecula

A NEW councillor for Benbecula and North Uist has been elected to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Independent councillor Andrew Walker was named the successful by-election candidate on March 26.

With a turnout of 33.2 per cent, 437 votes went to Mr Walker while his opponent, Scottish national party candidate, Roslyn MacPherson, had 302 votes.

Mr Walker said: 'I wish to record my appreciation to all those who have supported me throughout this by-election campaign, in particular my election agent Roddy MacKay and those who followed me on my Facebook campaign page and who decided to vote for me.'

'I consider it an honour and privilege to be voted in to office to serve as a councillor until the next elections in May 2017. I will endeavour as an independent councillor, with no party affiliation, to work co-operatively with all other councillors and officers of the comhairle, to best represent the needs of all our citizens.'

## Window smashed at medical centre

POLICE in Lochaber are appealing for information about the following crimes in the area.

A window was smashed at the Pines medical practice, Acharacle, between 6.45pm on March 24 and 2.43 the following morning.

Between 4.10pm and 4.30pm on March 25 a purse was removed from a handbag in the reception area of the Isles of Glencoe hotel, Ballachulish, and items from the purse were stolen.

An unknown person threw a rock at the window of a property in Brown Court, Fort William, at around 10.15pm on March 27, damaging the window.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to contact local police by calling 101 or contacting Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800555111 or [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).

## Patient comfort questionnaire

A FOUR-WEEK trial is being carried out by senior nurses at Raigmore hospital in order to make more people comfortable in hospital.

People attending the Inverness hospital for planned surgery will be sent a questionnaire to be completed before their admission asking them what their five 'must dos' are when they are in hospital.

The questions include who and what matters to the patient, what information is needed and how care can be personalised to the individual.

NHS Highland lead nurse for Raigmore Iona McGauran said: 'When someone is coming in to hospital, we want that experience to go as smoothly as possible. We want to work with the patient to ensure that their experience is the best it can be.'

# Staff recruitment delays Mallaig care home re-opening by months

A LOCHABER elderly care home may remain closed into the summer if new staff are not employed quickly.

The Mackintosh centre in Mallaig has been closed since July last year amid allegations of resident abuse by some staff members and has yet to reopen, despite original assurances by NHS Highland it would only be closed for four to six weeks.

Now, nine months later, a spokesman for the health authority said it was 'looking at reopening' the care home in May, but only if new staff can be found.

## Lochyside's Easter fund raiser helps Mary's Meals

LOCHYSIDE RC primary school pupils enjoyed a fundraising Easter competition in aid of Mary's Meals.

Pictured with the pupils are church sisters Diane (left) and June, who judged the decorated eggs and bonnets.

Also pictured are Father Roddy McAuley of St John's church, Caol, and head teacher Violet Smith.

Mary's Meals is a Dalmally-based charity which provides meals to children attending schools across 12 countries in the developing world. The aim is to get the children into education by providing a free meal each day.



Meanwhile, residents and remaining staff have been transferred to Invernevis house in Fort William, forcing friends and family to travel round trips of more than 80 miles to visit.

Bill Clark, pictured right, Highland councillor for Caol and Mallaig, called the delay 'very disappointing'.

He said: 'Why hasn't this been resolved yet? Councillors had a meeting with people from NHS back in December and after that we fully expected the care home to be up and running again by March. If there have been any

further hold ups with getting staff in we haven't been informed and I hope there haven't been any more hold ups - that would be very disappointing. I have no idea why there is still an issue with staff but it needs to get sorted.'

'The sooner this is resolved the sooner residents can get back because relatives and staff are having to travel quite a distance.'

Councillor Thomas MacLennan, leader of Lochaber area committee, added: 'This situation has gone on for far too long. Serious steps have to be taken

to solve this problem and solve it soon.'

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'NHS Highland continues to progress the recruitment and training of staff to allow us to reopen the Mackintosh centre.'

'We are looking at reopening in May. This will only be on the premise we have appropriate staffing levels to support delivery of a safe service to residents.'

NHS Highland temporarily closed the home for investigations after anonymous allegations of 'institutional abuse' and suspended some members of staff.

## Right time to review committees

'ONE-SIZE does not fit all' was the message given at the last meeting of Highland council as members agreed to a review of area committees over the next two years.

Reporting to council, Carron McDiarmid head of policy and reform, thanked those who helped compile a report on local committees.

She said: 'There are new duties coming to public bodies this summer under the communities empowerment legislation.'

'These will support new rights for individuals and communities and we need to find new ways to respond to these locally. The review of area committees is coming at a time when we need to look at local community planning arrangements and help partnerships to evolve.'

'Taken together we have an opportunity to encourage more people to be involved in decisions affecting them, bring more public services under local democratic scrutiny, and create more local solutions.'

Members agreed to take into account various forums for local decision-making.

## Call to lift 'unfair' 2p surcharge

THE LEADER of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has welcomed a UK government consultation on equalising electricity prices.

But councillor Angus Campbell called for action to be taken quickly to remove the 2p unit surcharge that consumers in the north of Scotland face.

Speaking in Stornoway at a conference on fuel poverty, he said: 'This surcharge of 2p per unit is unfair and uncalled for and has had a serious impact on fuel poverty in the islands.'

'The comhairle, along with other bodies such as the Outer Hebrides poverty action group and the Highlands and Islands affordable warmth campaign, has made the case to both the Westminster and Holyrood governments to have the surcharged removed.'

'This has been challenging, but I am pleased to hear that the chancellor has announced a consultation on this issue.'

'This is due to take place over the summer with a view to implementing any recommendations by next year.'

'The consultation is, of course, welcome, but I would urge the government to act swiftly on this.'



## Caledonian canal breach plugged

A BREACH on the Caledonian Canal, south of Fort Augustus, has been closed.

Passage through the canal has been stopped for almost a month after heavy rain and snow-melt saw a weir near Cullochy partially washed away.

A spokeswoman for Scottish Canals said the breach had been successfully closed on Tuesday and work was ongoing to open the water to navigation on April 30.

She said: 'Further piling is now being installed past the breach and tied into the embankment and will also be installed along the opposite side of the weir to protect it from the River Oich. Material will then be placed either side of the sheet piling to stabilise it.'

'Once this has been completed, we will be in a position to start removing the temporary dam at Aberchalder bridge.'

'We are still confident of opening to navigation on April 30.'

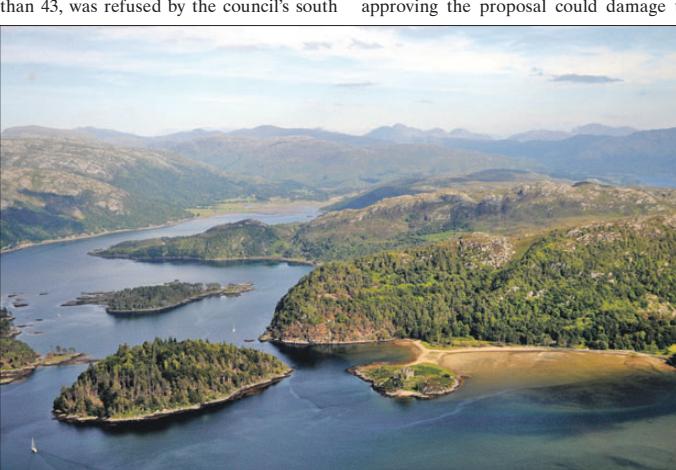
## Shellfish farm decision on the table

HIGHLAND councillors were due to decide yesterday (Wednesday) whether to approve a controversial proposal to expand a shellfish farm in a scenic Ardnamurchan loch.

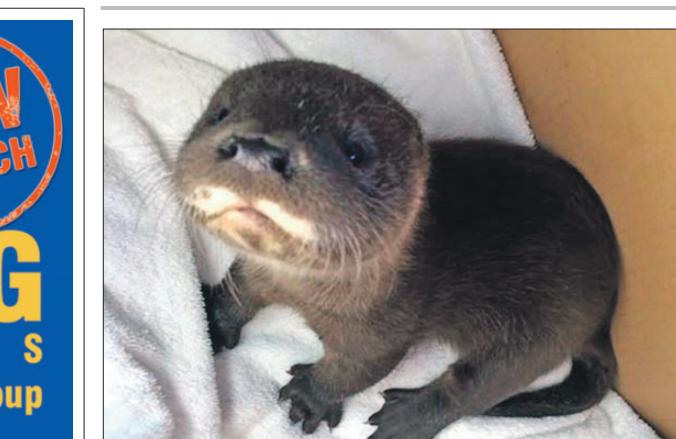
A similar planning application lodged by aquaculture company, Measan na Mara limited, to increase the oyster farm at Loch Moidart from just under five acres to more than 43, was refused by the council's south

planning committee in September last year. This time, the site has been reduced to 26 acres but has still prompted more than 60 objections from nearby residents, Acharacle community council and visitors.

Those opposed say the scenic loch, which will be home to 9,500 oyster trestles, is inappropriate for production of this size and approving the proposal could damage the



Loch Moidart, the site of the proposed extended oyster farm. Photo Iain Thornber



Puddle: a rescued otter cub who is moving from Cumbria to Skye.

## Puddle jumps to isle of Skye

AN OTTER from Cumbria has been given a new home in Skye in the International Otter Survival Fund shelter.

The cub was found on a steep-sided ditch full of water last Saturday, and cared for by a volunteer in the area before he was brought to the island.

Paul Yoxton, head of operations at the Skye-based charity, said: 'On Saturday evening we had a call to say a tiny cub had been found in a steep-sided ditch full of water in

Cumbria. We immediately contacted our friend Sarah Neill, who has helped with many cubs in the area, and of course she was straight on to the case. 'Liz Still, who had found him, was able to care for him overnight and Sarah picked him up yesterday morning. Although he is very small he is already eating mashed up trout and he will soon get a check over by the vet. 'Liz wanted to call him Puddle because of where he was found, and we all agree this is a great name.'

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# hebrides

## part 1: the inner isles

**T**HEY boast some of the world's most inspiring and tranquil settings but Scotland's inner Hebridean islands are often a mystery - even to people on the country's west coast.

Their beauty and status have been given immortality through hundreds of songs, poems and stories, with nicknames such as 'Queen of the Hebrides' and the Jewel of the Hebrides'.

But how much do people know about this unique gathering of islands, each one with its own traditions and claims to fame.

### Gigha

The Isle of Gigha, off Kintyre, received national recognition in 2002 when the community bought the island and set about reinvigorating the population.

The subsequent mix of native islanders and skilled settlers makes for a lively and thriving community that has used its influence to spark a recovery most islands would envy.

The island's breathtaking beauty brings visitors back again and again and those who want a glimpse of Hebridean wildlife will be spoilt for choice here.

### Islay

The nearby Isle of Islay is well known for its booming whisky industry - it is hard to believe an island of little more than 3,000 people sustains eight (soon to be nine) distilleries.

These globally-distributed brands such as Laphroaig, Lagavulin, Bowmore and Bruichladdich give the island a unique selling point for tourists from across the globe.

But the 'Queen of the Hebrides', which has countless songs written about its beauty, surely offers more than distilleries? You bet it does.

Modern-day Islay has also become known as a hive of cultural activity and natural wonder.

There is so much to explore on the island and it is a great place for those who love the outdoors.

The west side of the island, so exposed to the might of the Atlantic Ocean offers up some truly awe-inspiring sights. The scale and power of Mother Nature is demonstrated in natural beauty and richly-coloured sunsets, punctuated by the roar powerful waves rolling in.

Islay's inspirational landscape has produced a thriving cultural scene of arts and music, with festivals held almost every month of the year.

The island's malt and music festival, beach rugby tournament and agricultural show bring thousands of people to the island throughout the spring and summer months.

### Jura

The neighbouring island of Jura is a different animal altogether - perhaps a stag, if the local wildlife mix is anything to go by. It is said the island's population of just under 200 is heavily outnumbered by around 3,500 deer.

Jura is reached by vehicle ferry from Islay or passenger ferry from Tayvallich on the Argyll mainland and has a world-famous distillery of its own.

But that is where the comparison to Islay ends. Jura has undergone a renaissance in crofting in recent years, bringing young families back to the island and helping the small community to thrive.

The island's estates form the backbone of the community but Jura is also synonymous with the world-famous whirlpool, the Corryvreckan.

Its main settlement of Craighouse hosts a hotel, community shop, village hall, church and the distillery but it is easy to lose yourself in this wild and largely undeveloped island.

### Colonsay

A little further north is the Isle of Colonsay. Just 10 miles long and two miles wide, there are around 130 people on the island. Colonsay has become a popular day trip destination through its ferry and air links to Islay and Oban.

Whether you're seeking a relaxing break away from it all, an experience of nature at its best, or a cultural experience with a difference, Colonsay has something for you.

It may be small, but Colonsay punches well above its weight and can rightly be considered one of the Hebrides hidden gems.

### Mull and Iona

The islands of Mull and Iona are often linked in tourist brochures and maps but these neighbouring land masses as very different in atmosphere and setting.

The tranquil Isle of Iona, the cradle of Christianity, is only 1.5 miles wide by three miles long, but it would be easy to spend a day or two there and still have more to see.

A pilgrimage to Iona Abbey is a common reason for as visit, so say around 130,000 visitors to the island every year.

There is plenty accommodation on the island but booking well in advance is advisable if you are planning a trip to an island steeped in history and spirituality.

Mull, the largest island in the inner Hebrides, is a popular tourist destination, partly because of its close proximity to Oban - a ferry trip is just 50 minutes long from the mainland port.

There is something for everyone on this island full of variety. From the bustling village of Tobermory, to the peaceful beaches and proud castles, an abundance of sealife and wild birds and award-winning restaurants and local produce, there is something to satisfy everyone's tastes.

The island regularly enjoys huge numbers of visitors to annual events, such as the Mull Music Festival and the Isle of Mull Rally, but a steady stream of visitors makes Mull one of the most visited islands on Scotland's west coast.

For the more athletic among you, Mull offers a swimming pool, numerous walks, golf courses and some challenging hill climbing routes.

### Kerrera and Lismore

A little closer to the mainland are the islands of Kerrera, Lismore, Luing and Easdale. These are all within the area of Lorn and are a short travelling distance from Oban.

The tiny island of Kerrera has two ferries linking it to Oban and visitors can be on the island in minutes. It is a self-sustaining island, with most residents offering services or working the land - a real island lifestyle.

Lismore, or 'The Great Garden', which also has two ferries and can be reached from Oban or Port Appin, is aptly named. Its lush green landscape and fertile land lends itself well to the island's agricultural industry.

But Lismore is a popular day trip island and the heritage centre there includes a cafe and museum.

### Easdale and Luing

The picturesquely Isle of Luing must be seen to be fully appreciated and boasts lush pasture, abundant wildlife and stunning views to Mull, Scarba, the Garvellachs.

A real island community, many of the residents still work the land and are involved in fishing and farming.

But many also commute to Oban via ferry for work, meaning Luing is another fantastic island to visit for the day, or longer.

Easdale is the smallest island on our list and you can't go far without meeting somebody. This friendly island has a bar and restaurant and a community hall, which is the venue for regular concerts, ceilidhs and productions.

In recent times the island has gained international status as the host of the Easdale Stone Skimming Championships. This annual event brings competitors from all over the world and is a must see if you're in the area in September.

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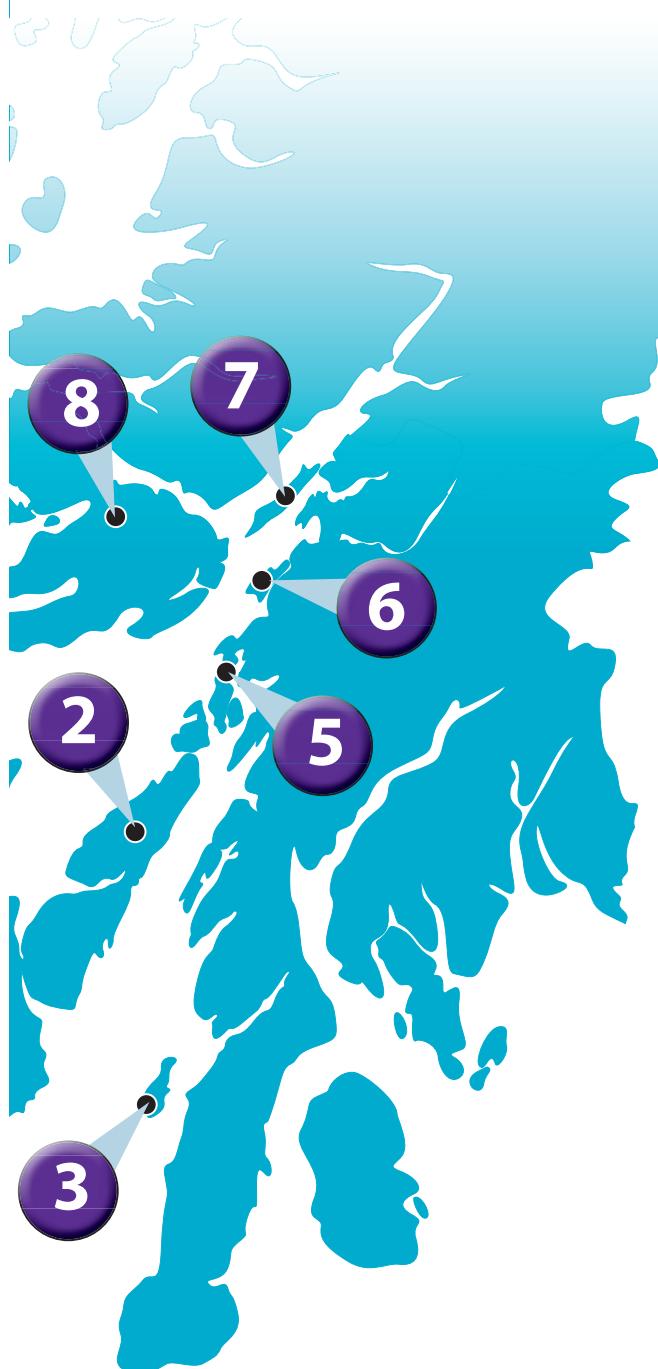
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**KEY****ISLAY GROUP**

1. Islay: Ìle
2. Jura: Diùra
3. Gigha: Giogha
4. Colonsay: Colbhasa

**SLATE ISLANDS**

5. Luing: Luinn, Easdale: Eilean Eisdeal, Seil: Saoil

**FIRTH OF LORN**

6. Kerrera: Cearara
7. Lismore: Lios Mòr

**MULL GROUP**

8. Mull: Muile
9. Iona: Ì Choluim Chille
10. Coll: Cola
11. Tiree: Tiriodh

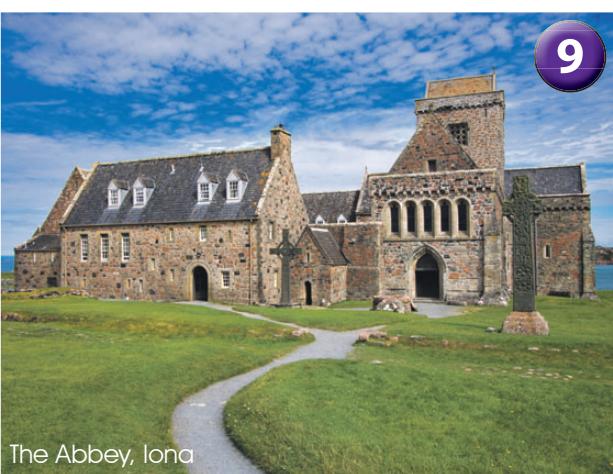


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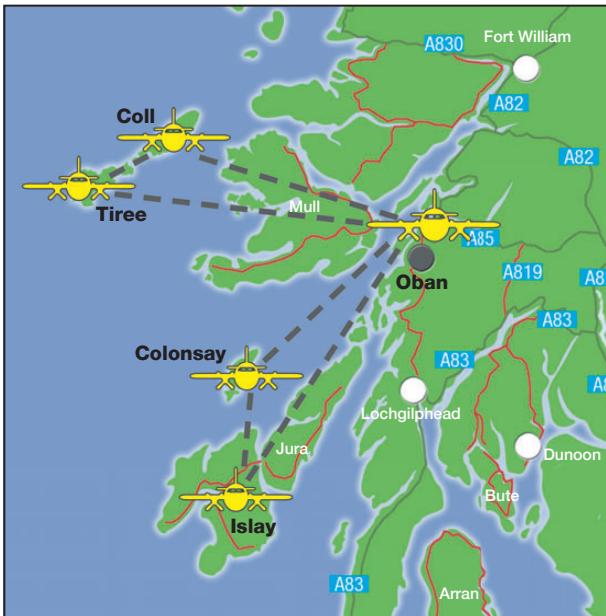
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The Abbey, Iona



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From left: JoJo, otherwise known as Katryn Muir, Gertrude McFuzz, played by Aileen Green, and Sheena Coul as Mayzie La Bird.

## Fergus' outstanding flair recognised at FilmG awards

ISLANDERS would have cleared the table at this year's Gaelic short movie competition, FilmG, had it not been for budding Lochaber actor Fergus Munro.

Most prizes went to groups and individuals from Skye and Lewis, with pupils from Castlebay school on Barra picking up best youth film for 'An Gealadh Mealtá' (The Deceitful Promise) and best music video for Saighdear (Soldier).

Lochaber high school had also been shortlisted for the best film award for 'An Agallamh (The Interview)' and although they lost out on this prize, the talent of sixth year Fergus - who also featured in Lochaber Show Stoppers Seussical production - was recognised when he picked up best young performer for his powerful role as a self-harming student in the piece.

Shannon MacLean from Tobermory, Mull, also impressed the judges with her post-referendum documentary 'Geallaidean airson na Gàidheil (Promises made to the Gaels)', which earned her the new award for best young filmmaker.

Well-known faces in television and film, including Still Game actor and comedian Sanjeev Kohl and Ken Stott, known for his roles in The Hobbit and Chronicles of Narnia, dished out the prizes in Glasgow's Old Fruitmarket on Friday night.

Other winners among the 79 films entered included Skye Highland dance group, Dannairean an Eilein Sgitheanaich, which won the people's choice award and best community film for its music video Siuthad a Sheònaid (On you go, Seònaid) and Portree high school, winner of best production for 'An Gèam' (The Game). Television student at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO), Rachel MacLaren won student film for Crisdean Cunnartach (Dangerous Crisdean) and fellow SMO student Keir Greatorex won best documentary for Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlidh Phort Righ (Portree's Gaelic School).

Short film Briste (Broken) earned three awards, the FilmG theme award, best drama and best performance for Erica Morrison.



Fergus Munro won best performance at this year's FilmG awards



The Whos as played by Samantha Wilson, Jane Angus, Stephanie McKenna, Caitrin Edmond, Karen Hosey, Cameron Falconer, Katryn Muir, Maddie Lennon, Charlotte Cunningham and Beth Fyfe.

All photos by Debbie Day and Kyle Murchison

## The Cat in the Hat up to mischief in Lochaber Showstoppers' musical

IF THE mark of a good musical is the number of people walking away with smiles on their faces, then there is little doubt that Lochaber Showstoppers' recent production of Seussical was a roaring success.

This madcap musical based on the stories of Dr Seuss tells the tale of Horton the elephant, JoJo and his family of tiny Whos, and the many weird and wonderful denizens of the Jungle of Nool.

The Cat in the Hat instigates trouble, but this being Seuss, it all works out well. The moral of standing up for the little guy never feels preachy.

The cast of birds, monkeys, hunches and Whos all threw themselves into the show

with gusto. There were also a number of excellent solo performances, including Amy Leider as the Sour Kangaroo, Aileen Green as Gertrude McFuzz, Sheena Coull as Mayzie La Bird, Eric McKenzie as General Genghis Kahn Schmitz and Keith and Liz Falconer as Mr and Mrs Mayor.

Holding it all together was a lot of imaginative choreography and a local orchestra of exceptionally talented musicians.

The music channeled everyone from Aretha Franklin to the Beach Boys and it was almost impossible not to be singing along.

Set design, costumes, lighting, sound and special effects were all

'Made in Lochaber' and compared well with professional companies.

Central to the show, and no less professional, were four great performances in the main roles.

Chris Jones, as Horton the Elephant, was the good guy for whom the audience couldn't help but root.

Alternating the role of JoJo were two young performers, Maddie Lennon and Katryn Muir, whose musical and acting abilities impressed.

But it was The Cat in the Hat who stole the show. Fergus Munro's huge energy complemented the sheer range of acting and singing styles his performance of Showstoppers' musical

On that note, Seussical is a fantastic discovery of a show and a brilliant production on which Susan and her husband Donnie, the retiring president of Showstoppers, can bow out.

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 & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Chris Jones portrayed Horton the Elephant.

Fergus Munro stole the show as the Cat in the Hat.

Amy Leider shone as the Sour Kangaroo.

## Incredible talent at Lorn drama fest

Annual event sees full house every night



ON REFLECTION: Andrew Ritchie of Appin drama club with The Oban Times salver.

16\_t14drama01

IMPRESSIVE performance from junior entries at this year's Lorn drama festival left organisers proclaiming the future of Argyll's amateur dramatics scene was in good hands.

But festival committee chairman David Price warned that a lack of up-and-coming producers and directors might threaten the longevity of the event.

This year's event proved there was still great interest in the Oban-based festival, as tickets sold out on all three nights, from Wednesday to Friday last week.

Lochgilhead drama club won The Robin

Banks Trophy for first place and also took the J R Smith for stage set and The Dan Cleland Accent Trophy for dramatic production back to Mid Argyll.

Runners-up Dalmally and Lochawe drama club won the Chalmers of Oban Quaich and the Oban FM/Ian MacKay Memorial Trophy for a moment in theatre.

Third place, and The Oban Times Salver, was won by Appin drama club with its production of Daylight Robbery.

The Anne Broughton Memorial Trophy for a moment in comedy was awarded to Mid Argyll drama club.

Benderloch and North Connel drama club's

production, Peas, won the adjudicator's award and Campbeltown's Accent Players won the stage management cup - awarded by the festival's backstage team - without even competing.

The Campbelltown-based drama group performed their production of That Old Black Magic outwith the presence of adjudicator Paul Dougall, who will be adjudicator at the Scottish national competition.

Accent Players had hoped to achieve a place in the national final but narrowly missed out at the regional final in Kilmarnock last Saturday.

Much of the Oban audience's acclaim was reserved for the plays in the youth section: Taynuilt and district drama society finished first ahead of Benderloch and North Connel juniors.

Mr Dougall said: 'The junior entries were very good, on a par with anything I have seen at national level. They are very talented and are clearly well directed.'

The festival committee is inviting members of the public who have an interest in drama to attend its annual meeting in October in order to share new ideas.

Mr Price said: 'The number of plays were down this year - we

had eight plays over three nights - but we had a full house every night and the standard was extremely high, especially in the junior category.'

'The talent in the youth section bodes well for the future but in order to get the festival back up to four nights we need more directors, someone with the vision to put on a production, to pull it together and run rehearsals.'

'We need new blood, fresh ideas, people that want to push the boundaries and take risks with productions.'

'If they challenge themselves, they challenge the audience and everyone benefits.'



WINNERS: Prizewinning producers from this year's Lorn drama festival.

16\_t14drama01

### Musical treat at Inveraray accordion club

NEARLY a full house packed the Argyll Hotel for the March meeting of the Inveraray and District Accordion and Fiddle Club.

Treating the audience to many varied selections, supporting players included Fyne Folk, with Nick MacFarlane on accordion, Sally Hall, Alex John MacLeod and Jake MacKay on fiddles and Agnes Liddell on keyboard. Also on accordion was Peter Stewart, all the way from Logierait, as well as Johnny Fisher,

Rothesay duo Jimmy Duncan on accordion and Charlie Soane on fiddle, Seumas MacArthur on melodeon, Jake MacKay on harmonica and Jimmy MacDonald on keyboard.

Guest artists were the Davie Stewart Trio from Kirriemuir, with Davie on lead accordion, Steven Carcary on second accordion and Malcolm Ross on drums.

They entertained with about 20 sets ranging from Gaelic waltzes to rousing reels, with Davie's cheery banter in between. The trio presented two special tunes that Davie composed recently, a lovely waltz called Agnes Liddell of Inveraray and a lively jig called The Inveraray Accordion and Fiddle Club, a gesture appreciated by the crowd.

Chairman Niall Iain MacLean thanked all the artistes for a great night of music. Next week the club welcomes back Jack Delaney from Alloa and his superb six-piece band for the grand finale of the season.

### Huntingtons Association ceilidh



ENTERTAINERS: who took part in the Huntingtons Association dinner ceilidh dance in the West End Hotel Fort William. The event has been running for about 15 years and is organised by Hecky Henderson (front right)

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## Entertainment Guide

### Cinema

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#### LISTINGS FOR 3RD APRIL - 9TH APRIL

Showings will be the same time each day

##### SCREEN 1

###### HOME 3D (U)

11.10, 13.00

###### CINDERELLA (U)

15.00

###### FURIOUS 7 (12A)

17.30, 20.40

##### SCREEN 2

###### CINDERELLA (U)

11.00, 13.30, 18.00

###### HOME 2D (U)

16.00

###### SUITE FRANCAISE (PG)

20.00

### FILM SYNOPSIS

#### CINDERELLA

When her father unexpectedly passes away, young Ella finds herself at the mercy of her cruel stepmother and her daughters. Never one to give up hope, Ella's fortunes begin to change after meeting a dashing stranger...

#### HOME

When Oh, a lovable misfit from another planet, lands on Earth and finds himself on the run from his own people, he forms an unlikely friendship with an adventurous girl named Tip who is on a quest of her own. Through a series of comic adventures with Tip, Oh comes to understand that being different and making mistakes is all part of being human. And while he changes his world and she changes his world, they discover the true meaning of the word HOME.

#### FURIOUS 7

Dominic Torretto and his crew thought they left the criminal mercenary life behind. They defeated an international terrorist named Owen Shaw and went their separate ways. But now, Shaw's brother, Deckard Shaw is out killing the crew one by one for revenge. Worse, a Somalian terrorist called Jakande, and a shady government official called "Mr. Nobody" are both competing to steal a computer terrorism program called God's Eye, that can turn any technological device into a weapon. Torretto must reconvene with his team to stop Shaw and retrieve the God's Eye program while caught in a power struggle between terrorist and the United States government.

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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 McClelland 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 TF1 Friday with Jim Law**

#### SATURDAY:

0900 Maggie's Swingin' Sixties, **1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crowther, 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**

# Viewpoint

**The Oban Times**  
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Established 1861 No 8216

It's time to take a lead from Oban resident Kenny MacLennan. He's had a proverbial eyeful of dog dirt and has compiled a substantial dossier - complete with factsheets and pictures - to prove the point.

From his home on picturesque Pulpit Hill, he has witnessed day and daily the foul mess inconsiderate and thoughtless dog owners leave in the trail of their much-loved pets. These owners show a complete disregard for others and have even deposited their animal's mess in Mr MacLennan's wheelie bin.

Oban-based councillor Roddy McCuish is now taking

up Mr MacLennan's cause and has invited residents to write to him, or any of his colleagues on the council, when they are confronted by dog fouling.

This is laudable and it is important that councils throughout the West Highlands take this matters seriously. It's a recurring complaint and one that clearly diminishes the quality of life for many residents.

What would drive the point home is a dramatic increase in the use of fines and prosecutions for owners who fall foul of the law. It's time to dish the dirt on this small but obdurate band of irresponsible people.



## Days gone by

This week's flashback photograph features Appin Drama Group (Team A) taking time out from rehearsals before appearing in the Appin drama festival in March 1993. 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.

## Beachd Ailein

**ALLAN CAMPBELL**  
ailean@obantimes.co.uk

BHEIL cuimhe agaibh cho farmadach's a bha sinn ann an 1993 nuair a stèidhich an dàrna Achd Cuimris prionnsapal co-ionannachd inbhe eadar Cuimris agus Beurla ann an rianachd poblaach na Cuimrig?

Le cuideachd cead ga thoirt Cuimris a chleachadh anns na cùrtean, bha seo uile a' cur ris na bha Cuimris a' buinnig mar-thà tro iomairtean foghlaim agus ri linn Bòrd Cuimris a bhith aca. Dè an dòchas, bha luchd-neidheadh a' faighneachd, gum faighneachd Gàidhlig leithid seo de thaise? Nach robh an aon chòraichean aig Gàidheil air aithne agus inbhe dhan a' chuid cùainin is cultair?

Cha robh teagamh a thaobh sin, ach bha aìreamh luchd-cleachdaidh na Gàidhlig mòran na bheil lugha agus b'e firinn na cùise an uairsin, agus fùi's fhathast, gun robh mòran fheileachadh nach robh a' cleachadh Gàidhlig.

Chaidh againn air Achd Gàidhlig, agus Bòrd, fhaoatainn aich tha Gàidhlig fhathast fo bhuaidh laigse àireamh luchd-labhairt agus cha ghabh còraichean sheirbhisean anns

a' chànan gealltann san lagh mura bheil daoinne ann gus na seirbhisean sin a libhrigeadh. 'S e dubhlan darribh a tha seo dhan Ghàidhlig agus theagamh gun feumar töiseachadh ri seirbhisean a libhrigeadh aig irean gu math bunasach gus cùisean a chumail a' gluasad.

Tha cunnart ann gun dèanadh leithid sin an tuilleadh cron air ire cainain a tha mar-thà gu math lapach aig mòran. Am bheil sinn tuilleadh is mi-fhoighidneach? Am bheil sinn ag ionnsachadh bho leithid na Cuimrig?

Faisg air leth-cheud bliadhna an dèidh a' chìad reachdas cànain, tha Coimiseanair na Cuimris a' töiseachadh air ire a' chànan a rèiteach. Bho chionn trì bliadhna chuir iad as dha Bòrd na Cuimris agus chaidh an uallach an urra ri Coimiseanair agus buidheann-comhairleachaidh beag.

Chuir sin iongnadh air mòran agus tha dragh air cuiid gun do chaili' a' choimhairsachd tomhas de smachd air poileasachaidh leis gun deach obair-leasachaidh Cuimris a thoirt a-staigh dhan Riaghaltas. Am bheil seo nas fhéarr? An e seo an t-slige dhian Ghàidhlig cuideachd, neo an ionnsaich sinn bho mhearachdan who led before?

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

## Ailean Caimbeul

Chuimris, ag obair dha luchd-labhairt a' chànan. Sin mo ghealladh! Cha bhithte a' stileachadh a chaochadh bhon Choimiseanair Meri Huws, ach am bheil an guth seo gu bhith nà treasa na guthan nan ceatharnach a chaidh roimhpe?

GAEILIC language activists should perhaps take some comfort from the fact that it has taken almost 50 years of robust development activity in Wales before the Welsh Language Commissioner begins the process of establishing language standards on organisations.

While envying the protection and support which Welsh language legislation delivered, Gaelic learned from their experience and we noted the concern of some Welsh speakers as their language board was abolished in 2012 and replaced by a Welsh Language Commissioner. Will Gaelic development follow?

I will be a voice for the Welsh language, acting on behalf of Welsh speakers. That's my promise.'

Commissioner Meri Huws could hardly say otherwise, but will that voice be stronger than the champions who led before?

**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 either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

## A short-term marina vital to Oban's future

Sir,

As a result of the lack of a short-term marina in Oban, many ships and small craft sail past Oban to use the new services at Lochaline, Tobermory, Mallaig, Stornoway, Lochboisdale, Lochmaddy and elsewhere up the west coast.

This continues as a dreadful indictment of the councillors and officials who have not had the imagination to seize the opportunities which have been presented during last 20 years and in addition to missing substantial funding chances, they have also thwarted some of the proposals which have been submitted.

Clearly other communities have convinced councillors, officials and funders that short-term walk ashore facilities would bring significant additional trade to their businesses so it is to be hoped the current proposals will be given the serious consideration they deserve.

**Stephen Thomas, Connel**

## Communities trust to be praised for efforts

Sir,

It is great news one of our most iconic buildings, the old Rockfield primary school, has been saved from demolition by Argyll and Bute councillors.

Members of Oban communities trust have to be praised and thanked for their commitment and hard work in getting this project off the ground and I am sure that, with the continuing support of the community and our local newspaper,

**Derek Coope, Oban.**

the Rockfield centre will become a hub of community activity.

**Joyce Coope, Oban.**

## Appalling state of old building a disgrace

Sir,

While it is good news Argyll and Bute council has sold the former Rockfield primary school to Oban communities trust, I am appalled it has been allowed to deteriorate to a state that will cost a considerable amount to renovate.

A small amount of maintenance could have avoided the dry rot and water damage that now exists.

Hopefully we can now move on and develop the site as a cultural hub.

**Derek Coope, Oban.**

## Frustration continues over slow broadband

Sir,

I have just read the article on broadband speeds at Corrie Road, Kinlochleven, on the front page of the *Oban Times* dated March 19.

I live seven miles north west of Invergarry and my broadband speed has never been better than 0.483 mbps. I would like a speed of 0.985mbps. Also, we don't get a mobile phone signal where we live.

When the broadband breaks down, which it frequently does, I have to drive three or four miles before I can get a signal to pick up my emails on my mobile phone. Yet we are still required to pay the same rate as people who receive a good speed.

When are we going to get a reasonable broadband speed and a mobile phone signal?

**Mike Potter.**

## Restoration of Hector MacLean memorial

Sir,

I was delighted to read that the life and work of Hector MacLean, Ballygrant, Islay, 1818-1893, is receiving the recognition it deserves and it is good news his monument at Kilmeny has been put in order, Islay Letter March 5.

The Clan MacLean heritage trust has been pressing for some years for the monument to be repaired and restored, so we are delighted the monument has been renovated.

But it was disappointing there was no mention of the Clan MacLean heritage trust's significant financial contribution to the work done. The trust paid for a third of the cost of the restoration, which was so well co-ordinated by the Glasgow Islay Association.

New cairns, monuments and information boards are grist to the mill for heritage trusts, but repairing existing monuments, put up in more affluent days of the past, often needs expensive renovation to keep them going.

The Clan MacLean heritage trust attempts, within its resources, to do both.

Our latest two projects have been to remember the life of J Angus Maclean, former premier of Prince Edward Island, 1914-2000, cousin of Sorley Maclean, and to mark 'Fort Dewart' in Pennsylvania, built and named by Sir Allan Maclean, 22nd chief.

The latter was unveiled by the present chief, Sir Lachlan Maclean, on his recent visit to the United States.

**Canon Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch, trustee.**

## Glasgow Letter

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**  
rrobertson@obantimes.co.uk

## Film G

A GREAT night of celebration was had by everyone attending the star-studded Film G awards on Friday March 27.

Among the celebrities awarding the prizes were Skye cycling hero Danny MacAskill; Still Game's Sanjeev Kohli; River City's Jordan Young; Detective Inspector Rebus, Ken Stott; and author of The Lewis Trilogy, Peter May.

Other celebrities included BBC Alba's Gaelic grammar geek, Torquil, played by Tony Kearney; Cherry MacDonald and Barbara Rafferty from Katie Mòrag; and Alana MacInnes and Caitlin MacNeil - renowned for their discovery of #thredress.

The night was presented by Fiona Mackenzie and Niall Iain MacDonald.

I only heard a small part of the ceremony because I was getting ready to play a short slot on stage.

But for the half hour that I was sitting at our table, I got a clear sense of the atmosphere, glamour and hilarity of the event.

I particularly enjoyed the speech from television presenter Des Clarke, who recalled his childhood days being brought up in Glasgow when he and his friends all thought Donnie Dòttaman was the Gaelic news reporter.

Congratulations to everyone who won an award.

## Ceil Mòr Òstaig

ON SATURDAY April 11, the musicians of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO), the Gaelic college on Skye, will hit Glasgow for a night of traditional music for a Ceil Mòr.

Craic' evening in the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA).

The spectacular 13-piece band of music students will be performing music arranged especially for them by SMO musician in residence Blair Douglas, founding member of Runrig, Mactalla and Cliar.

Performing after the students will be Gaelic supergroup Dàimh, which also has close links to Sabhal Mòr - the band members act as mentors to the students. Tickets are £12, or £10 for concessions, and the music starts at 8pm.

## Park bar

I PLAYED in the Park Bar on Saturday night with the full, six-piece Skipinnish line-up for the first time in almost two years.

What an enjoyable gig! Those who know the Park Bar would be forgiven for wondering how on earth we managed to fit six of us, plus a drum kit, onto the small Park Bar stage. It was certainly a tight squeeze.

The bar was about as packed as the stage and the great atmosphere was enhanced by a big Tiree contingent who were in to celebrate Ann Langley's 70th birthday.

The party had begun the previous night to the sound of Trail West and, in true Tiree style, had rolled on into the Saturday.

## Coinneamh Bhliadhnaill 2015

THE GLASGOW University Comunn Oiseanach AGM was held last Friday March 27.

Katie MacDonald, from Uig in Skye, was voted president (ceannard) for the coming year; Annabelle MacLennan from Lewis was voted vice president (lar-ceannard); Robbie MacLeod from Edinburgh news reporter.

Congratulations to everyone who won an award.

## 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 address-

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

A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

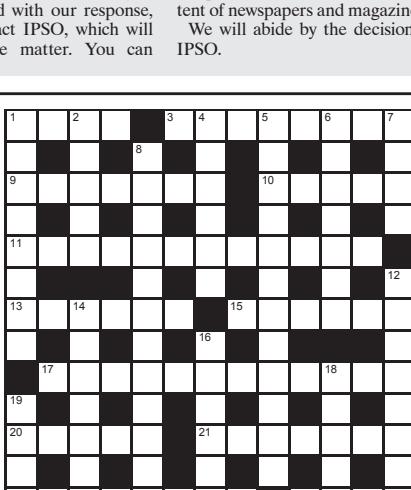
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**Robert Robertson**  
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# Young musicians tune in to annual Lochaber piping society contest



**Y**OUNG musicians from across the West Highlands gathered in Fort William on Saturday for Lochaber piping society's annual juvenile competition.

Lochaber pipers Laura Robertson and Ally Weir were among those to pick up silverware at Lochaber high school as well as Finlay Cameron from Roy Bridge, who picked up five prizes. The youngsters were also joined by musicians from further afield, including Kyle, Plockton, Skye and Benbecula.

Rona Nicolson from Ardgour was awarded the Fort William town council cup for the Lochaber girl with the highest points, while Finlay Cameron from Roy Bridge picked up the male equivalent, the John MacLennan trophy.

Results: Miss MacRae Conchra cup for youngest competitor, Caitlin McGillivray; Hugh MacPhee memorial quaich, Laura Robertson; Buchanan shield, Archie Clark; Fort William town council cup, Rona Nicolson; John MacLennan trophy, Finlay Cameron; Evan MacRae trophy, Ally Weir; Roddie MacDonald memorial quaich, Rona Nicolson; Eilean an Fraoich cup, Brighde Chaimbeul; Donald MacLeod memorial trophy, Finlay

Cameron; Allan MacPherson memorial trophy, Archie Drennan; Cameron of Lochiel challenge cup, Finlay Cameron; Robertson memorial cup, Finlay Cameron; Wiggins Teape Limited challenge cup, Archie Drennan; Ceol Mor cup, Megan Campbell; Fort William railway social club challenge cup, Calum Craib; Donald 'Cleon' MacLeod memorial cup, Jamie-Lee Laverty; Jim Pryce memorial cup, Millie Alexis Smith; Jim Grace trophy, Archie Clark; Alistair MacKellar memorial quaich, Archie Clark; West Highland junior piping trophy, Finlay Cameron; A MacDougall cup, Laura Robertson; Lord Dulverton cup, Liam MacDonald; Carmichael quaich, Laura Robertson; Lochaber district council cup, Angus MacPhee; Bradley Gillanders challenge cup, Brighde Chaimbeul; Highland Homespun company challenge cup, Brighde Chaimbeul.

TRIPLE: Brighde Chaimbeul from Kyle picked up the Eilean an Fraoich, Bradley Gillanders challenge and Highland Homespun company challenge cups



SNARE: Jamie-Lee Laverty won the Donald 'Cleon' memorial cup for snare drum



WORTH THE TRIP: Calum Craib travelled from Benbecula to win the Fort William railway social club challenge cup



DRUMMER: Millie Smith picked up the Jim Pryce memorial cup for novice drumming



DOUBLE: Rona Nicolson from Ardgour won the Roddie MacDonald memorial quaich and the Fort William town council cup



LOCAL: Fort William's Ally Weir picked up the Evan MacRae trophy



CEOL MOR CUP: Megan Campbell for senior piping



YOUNGEST: Caitlin McGillivray was youngest competitor and took second place in the A MacDougall cup for under 10 chanter



TRIO: Laura Robertson won the Hugh MacPhee memorial quaich, A MacDougall cup and Carmichael quaich, all for chanter



SUCCESS: Lochaber boy Finlay Cameron won five prizes



ARCHIE CLARK: Winner of the Buchanan shield, Jim Grace trophy and Alistair MacKellar memorial quaich



## Easter opening hours:

Fri 3rd 7.30am - 5pm

Sat 4th 8am - 12 noon

Mon 6th 7.30am - 5pm

# Farming

## Public encouraged to say 'yes please' to local cheese

AS PART of the growing campaign to encourage people to buy - and supermarkets to stock - local produce, a campaign is being launched in Kintyre to get the public to purchase Mull of Kintyre cheddar.

Next week National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) president Allan Bowie will be visiting Campbeltown to take part in the 'Kintyre Cheese? Yes Please' campaign, alongside Kintyre dairy farmers.

Promotional bumper and car stickers and roadside banners will be used to spread the word, as well as free samples being given out at the Co-operative Food store in the town next Tuesday, April 7.

As well as the two major supermarkets now stocking Mull of Kintyre Cheddar and Campbeltown Creamery, other smaller outlets

in and around Campbeltown are also stocking the cheese within their stores.

The campaign, created by the local Kintyre branch of NFUS, has been prompted by the recent milk price crash whereby the price paid to farmers for their milk has decreased.

John Smith of Drumalea Farm, near Campbeltown, said: 'Having Mull of Kintyre Cheddar available locally once again is fantastic.'

'Providing the option for consumers of buying local cheese is a very positive step, and we thank all those who have been instrumental in making this happen.'

Mr Bowie said: 'All farmers have a fantastic story to tell and this is demonstrated by the relationship that farmers in Kintyre have with Mull of Kintyre Cheddar.'

'But we need to take this into

the wider market too.'

'In the Year of Scotland Food and Drink it is a pertinent reminder of the high-quality produce that is on offer locally.'

'The buck doesn't stop with promoting the cheese locally, however, we need to push for further marketing both nationally and internationally and we look forward to hearing from First Milk about how this will be achieved.'

'From field to fork everything that is grown on farms across the country tells a story of hard work, passion and flavour.'

'This campaign shows that farmers want to get their story across, and the increase in local demand for Mull of Kintyre which has been generated by this campaign tells us that consumers want to buy fantastic locally-produced food.'



**Audrey McKillop, Campbeltown Co-op customer team member, enjoys a piece of Mull of Kintyre cheese which is now on sale in the store.**

## Scottish parliament backs struggling dairy industry

A NEW Scottish dairy brand will be launched later in the year to help the beleaguered dairy industry.

Rob Gibson MSP, convenor of the Scottish parliament's rural affairs climate change and environment committee (RACCE), said on Tuesday at the start of a debate at Holyrood on the industry: 'We need to help people buy Scottish.'

'Why do many Scottish consumers choose not to buy Scottish yoghurts and creams? Because they are either not being produced or not being pushed hard enough in our shops.'

'There are great opportunities to develop and brand-added value premium

Scottish products - butter, cheese, yoghurt, cream - and to innovate new products such as bio drinks, puddings, and children's snack products.'

'We also need to look at the way we label products. If they are to be labelled as Scottish then that must mean that they are made from Scottish milk.'

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affairs, food and environment. 'I am delighted the committee's views are being taken into account in the Scottish government's dairy action plan.'

'It was unfortunate that there was initial reluctance by some of Scotland's biggest supermarkets to appear before us, but I am pleased that in the end all nine main retailers in the country gave very valuable evidence to us.'

'It was apparent to us very quickly that there were some very serious challenges facing the dairy sector in Scotland and that urgent action is required if we are going to address these challenges. Many people who spoke to us felt that there were reasons to believe that the medium to long term outlook was positive.'

Mr Gibson said lessons had to be learned from First Milk's decision making and management which had been criticised, and steps had to be taken to protect the likes of the Gigha farmer, who has to pour away milk if it cannot be taken to the mainland in time for collection due to bad weather or other circumstances. He told how eight points made

by the RACCE committee had been taken up by the dairy plan: investment in infrastructure; measures to keep producers in the market; dedicated in-market export resources and a marketing push on all products; improvement in the quality of management at First Milk; exploration of the potential for partnership agreements with local authorities and agencies; examination of the pension legacy liabilities from the previous milk marketing board; consideration of the size of First Milk and opportunities to work with others; and initiating research and development for new products in Scotland to stimulate innovation.

Mr Gibson said: 'We must improve transparency on pricing.'

'The public has a right to know what producers are being paid. £1 for four pints of milk in many supermarkets is an attractive proposition for consumers, but where does that leave those producing the product?'

He also pointed out that the committee was appalled at the list of abhorrent supermarket practises that the UK Groceries Code Adjudicator described.

A SCHEME recommended by the Beef 2020 industry expert group to improve the efficiency, sustainability and quality of beef herds is to be taken forward by the Scottish government.

It will include a national livestock data base, backed by the £45 million Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) of which £40 million, if approved in detail by the European Union, will be used to

examine the pension legacy liabilities from the previous milk marketing board; consideration of the size of First Milk and opportunities to work with others; and initiating research and development for new products in Scotland to stimulate innovation.

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Using the new online Rural Payments and Services system, applicants are being sought for the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) and Agri-Environment

future breeding decisions.

Ahead of next year's calving season, it will also support farmers to find key actions they need to take like improving cow fertility, reducing disease, getting the best nutrition through feed analysis and making sure the best soil and grass management takes place.

The Beef 2020 group was chaired by Quality Meat Scotland chairman Jim McLaren.

He said: 'The implementation of these recommendations will present a fantastic opportunity for the beef industry in Scotland to move forward with confidence.'

'The adoption of these measures will strengthen our industry's resilience to the wide range of factors, many outwith our control, which influence the beef market.'

'Importantly, the increased technical efficiency which will be delivered will also allow Scottish beef producers to further reduce waste and improve our industry's environmental credentials.'

Rural affairs minister Richard Lochhead last week announced the Scottish government's backing for the scheme.

He said: 'This extra support from the Scottish government will give the beef sector the opportunity to adapt and prosper as the full impact of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regime takes effect.'

'I am delighted to announce that the Scottish Government will play a full part in taking this forward, and to confirm our plans for the new £45

million Scottish Rural Development Programme beef efficiency scheme.'

'This is a significant investment and commitment to the beef sector given the notoriously inadequate share of the CAP budget handed to Scotland.'

The Scottish Rural Development Programme is still subject to formal approval by the European Commission.

The Beef Efficiency Scheme will provide support to beef breeders on the farm from 2016.

## Scottish beef given fighting chance for future

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## Rural grants open to applications

A FURTHER round of rural funding has been opened up for applications from farmers, crofters and land managers.

Using the new online Rural Payments and Services system, applicants are being sought for the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) and Agri-Environment

Climate Scheme (AECS).

Announcing the funding schemes, Scottish rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead said: 'Fifty-five per cent of our customers have now registered with our new system.'

'But for those who haven't, they must remember that in order for

us to process payments for FGS and AECS, and all other CAP funding, everyone must register for the Rural Payments and Services system by May 15 2015.'

The AECS helps land management practices which protect and enhance the natural heritage, improve water quality, manage

flood risk and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

It will be open for applications until June 12 2015.

The FGS is to support woodland creation and sustainable management of existing woods.

It is hoped that this will have

jobs and businesses, increased opportunities for recreation and access.

It should also lead to more diverse woodlands so that they are better for wildlife and more resilient to new pests and diseases.

The FGS is open for applications all year.

# Special



our place in the UK market.

### What opportunity do you find most promising/exciting?

For me, it is the transition from commodity to premium. As an example, we've got peripheral creameries and some of them, to date, have just been producing a lot block cheddar for UK supermarkets, competing with commodity cheddar from abroad. In my view, that is a road to nowhere. That is competition based on price and other countries can run that race if they want.

Excitingly, these very creameries have a phenomenal provenance story and when you meet buyers in the Far East or North America they instinctively want to source from a country with a rich provenance story - that means high standards of production,

heritage as well as innovation and a pristine environment for food production. A perfect fit for Scotland. So the opportunity is about making the most of a growing national identity for our food and drink - an identity other countries would kill for.

### How do you think farmers will benefit from increased exports?

It is back to this point about choosing how we position Scotland. We need to forget about the idea that we just produce agricultural commodities. We are a small player in world markets but we can position ourselves as the home of some of the finest products in the world. The export strategy is not about trying to conquer China - we don't have enough product to feed Shanghai, let alone China! But it is about being in-

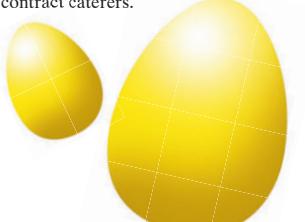
credibly focussed. Whatever happens in global markets in terms of economic growth, the demand in top-end markets won't change any time soon. So what does that mean for farmers? It means better value for our products and spreading our risk by developing a customer base which reaches beyond a few big businesses in the UK.

### Does Scotland Food and Drink work directly with farming businesses? What are your favourite examples of this?

NFU Scotland is one of the founding partners in SFD. The NFUS team ensures that the whole food and drink strategy has at its core sustainable

primary production. Without that raw material, there is no food and drink industry in Scotland.

We also work directly with a number of farm businesses, but as a rule, they tend to be those that are involved in directly processing or retailing. So, we have a number of farm shop owners who are members of ours and others that we work with more widely. In addition, we have some larger agri-businesses that are members and who we support in the development of their businesses with the major retailers and contract caterers.



### JAMIE McGRIGOR MSP



61 Chalmers Street,  
Ardrishaig, Argyll, PA30 8DX  
Tel: 01546 606586  
Email:  
Jamie.Mcgrigor.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

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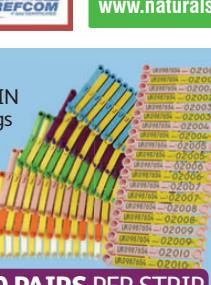


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The Highland Council seeks to appoint a permanent Head Teacher for Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced Teachers who are fluent Gaelic speakers and who can also read and write Gaelic.

Faoadar ceisteann neo-fhoirmiell a chur gu Calum Mac an Tòisich, Manaidsear Cùram agus Ionnsachaidh na Scire air 01463 702074.

Cuiribh a-steach IARRTAS AIR-LOIDHNE aig www.myjobscotland.gov.uk. Mura h-urrainn dhuibh iarrtas a chur a-steach air-loidhne agus sibh airson pasgán iarrtais far-loidhne fhaighinn, cuiribh fios gu Business Support HR Hub C&L, Fòn: 01349 868640 (post-gutha 24 uair) a' toirt seachad àireamh fiosrachaidh na dreuchd.

Mus tèid an neach-dreuchd a dhearrbhadh, feumaidh tagraichean soirbheachail ballrachd a ghabhail ann an Sgeama Dion nam Buidhean So-leònte.

Tha pasgan ath-shuidheachaidd cuimseach aig a' Chomhairle agus dh'fhaodte gum bi seo ri faothainn dhan tagraiche shoirbheachail airson dreuchdan maireannach.

Ceann-latha – Diluin 6 Giblean 2015

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TSL requires an experienced Site Manager to work on new-build developments in the Oban area.

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We require a QS to assist with a number of building and civils contracts across various sites throughout North Argyll, Mull and Stirlingshire. Ideally the successful candidate will be based in Argyll, however as the role will require travel across these sites, we can offer some flexibility on this. You will be required to travel on a regular basis to the Oban office, and will operate as part of the QS team that is based there, servicing all TSL contracts. Experience of estimating would be an advantage. Applications are welcome from those interested in freelance work, as well as employed positions. A generous package is available, including a vehicle if required.

Closing date for applications for both posts is 17th April 2015.

To apply, please send your CV to:  
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Pauline Donnelly H.R. Administrator at pdonnelly@biomar.co.uk.

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### Oban Times



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ACHA welcomes applications from all sections of the community and is committed to promoting equal opportunities. All posts will be subject to a Disclosure Scotland check.

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# west coast recruitment

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The following vacancies have arisen:

**Customer Service Agents**  
Delivery drivers for delivery of bottled gas for West Highland Gas Ltd Vacancies at our Lochgilphead Depot & Fort William Depot

**Trainee Concrete Batcher**  
Required for our Oban batching plant

**HGV Driver required**  
For general haulage based at Oban depot

All interested parties please send in a CV or download an application form from the people and vacancies section on our website [www.aryllresources.co.uk](http://www.aryllresources.co.uk) and send to Susan MacLachlan, Argyll Resources, Torran Gorm, Industrial Estate, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4PL  
Tel: 01631 566370 or Email: susan@aryllresources.co.uk

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A full job description and person specification which outlines the essential and desirable criteria for this post can be downloaded from our website, [www.rbge.org.uk/about-us/vacancies](http://www.rbge.org.uk/about-us/vacancies)

Applications should state which post you are applying for and be made by way of CV and covering letter which outlines your suitability for this post. A completed equal opportunities questionnaire should also be sent to the HR Department at The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 20a Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR or recruitment@rbge.org.uk by 5pm on Monday, 20 April 2015.



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- You will have sound technical and engineering skills having worked previously in an engineering type role

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For a more detailed job description and to apply please visit our website [www.sgn.co.uk](http://www.sgn.co.uk) or request one from [jobs@sgn.co.uk](mailto:jobs@sgn.co.uk). Please quote reference number 14209EXT.

Applications must be received by close of business on Friday 17 April 2015.  
SGN is an equal opportunities employer

## public notices

[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**  
**PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined 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://www.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
15/00686/FUL	Land 125m NE of Firbank, Achnacarry, Spean Bridge	Proposal to alter the location and design of the required weir structure
15/00943/FUL	Land North West of Caslum, Isle of Canna	Formation of campsite, provision of toilet block & solar panel and use of septic tank
15/00990/FUL	Station Bar, Station Square, Fort William	Proposed change of use from public bar to shop and alterations
15/01022/LBC	Kinlochaline Castle, Ardornish, Morvern, Oban	Alter two existing window openings to accommodate two larger windows, one with a balcony

Time period for comments is 14 days. Application 15/01022/LBC is 21 days. ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ [www.aryll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.aryll-bute.gov.uk)

**Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid**

## NOTICE OF ELECTION

UK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION  
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNTY CONSTITUENCY

An Election is to be held for a Member of Parliament to serve in the Argyll and Bute County Constituency.

Nomination papers may be delivered to the Returning Officer at the Election Office, Council Offices, Kilmorey, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RF between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday after the date of this notice, excluding the public holidays on Friday 3 April (Good Friday) and Monday 6 April (Easter Monday) but not later than 4.00pm on Thursday 9 April 2015.

Forms of nomination may be obtained at the place and times mentioned above. The Returning Officer will at the request of any elector prepare for signature a nomination paper.

A person shall not be validly nominated as a candidate for return as a constituency member unless the sum of £500.00 is deposited by him/her, or on his/her behalf, with the Returning Officer at the place and during the time for delivery of Nomination Papers. The deposit may be made either (a) by the deposit of any legal tender; (b) by means of a banker's draft; or (c) with the Returning Officer's consent, in any other manner including by debit or credit card or by BACS transfer (a transaction fee of 1.89% will be charged in respect of the use of a credit card).

If the election is contested, the poll will take place between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm on Thursday 7 May 2015.

### Postal or Proxy Voting

Applications to cancel or alter existing postal or proxy votes, or to change from postal to proxy voting MUST reach the Electoral Registration Officer, Kilbrannan House, Bolgarn Street, Campbeltown PA28 6HZ no later than 5.00pm on Tuesday 21 April 2015.

New Applications to vote by post MUST reach the Electoral Registration Officer at the above address no later than 5.00pm on Tuesday 21 April 2015.

New Applications to vote by proxy MUST reach the Electoral Registration Officer at the above address no later than 5.00pm on Tuesday 28 April 2015.

If as a result of a disability an elector becomes incapacitated after 5.00pm on Tuesday 28 April 2015 or discovers that they will be unable to go to the poll for occupational, employment or service reasons, an application to vote by proxy MUST reach the Electoral Registration Officer at the above address no later than 5.00pm on the day of the poll.

For advice on postal or proxy voting contact the Electoral Registration Office 0800 980 0470, Website: [www.dab-yb.gov.uk](http://www.dab-yb.gov.uk); E-Mail: [ero-abc@dab-yb.gov.uk](mailto:ero-abc@dab-yb.gov.uk)

### Sally Loudon Returning Officer

Council Offices  
Kilmory  
Lochgilphead  
31 March 2015  
Note

The attention of candidates and electors is drawn to the rules for filling up nomination papers and other provisions relating to nomination contained in the Parliamentary Election Rules at Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended.

Every person guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice will, on conviction, be liable to the penalties imposed by the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended.

Nomination Papers may also be downloaded from [www.aryll-bute.gov.uk/elections](http://www.aryll-bute.gov.uk/elections). The website gives other election information.



To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ [www.aryll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.aryll-bute.gov.uk)

**Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid**

## PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4WW, 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.aryll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.aryll-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 No	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
14/02988/PP	Alterations and conversion of attic to form 2 en-suite bedrooms and increase in parking provision	Mackay's Guest House Corran Esplanade Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5AQ	Oban Area Office
15/00190/PP	Formation of jetty and hard standing	Campus Brauica Ruaidh Connell Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office
15/00293/PP	Extension to existing slipway	Gallanach Slipway Gallanach Road Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
15/00484/PP	Alterations and extension to existing visitors centre	Cruehan Power Station Lochawe Dalmally Argyll And Bute PA33 1AN	Sub Post Office Dalmally
15/00498/PP	Erection of warehouse/storage shed	Unit 15B Crannog Lane Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4HB	Oban Area Office
15/00574/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and formation of new vehicular access	Land To West Of Portnacross Portnacross Appin Argyll And Bute	Sub Post Office Ledaig
15/00598/PP	Erection of 2 affordable dwellinghouses	Land South Of Lephan Devaig Road Taymore Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6OD	Sub Post Office Devaig
15/00640/PP	Change of use of existing sui generis unit to Class 3 food and drink unit for use in conjunction with existing fish and chip shop/takeaway	86-89 George Street Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5NN	Oban Area Office
15/00736/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, formation of vehicular access and installation of sewage treatment plant and soakaway	The Stackyard Knockan Ardtun Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA67 6DP	Sub Post Office Burren Isle of Mull
15/00772/PP	Erection of detached garage with loft store	Land West Of Crannich Farmhouse Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll PA72 6JP	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
15/00773/PPP	Site for the erection of 5 dwellinghouses	Land North East Of Tigh Na Creag Pulpit Rock Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
15/00775/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, detached garage and storage shed, installation of septic tank and associated works	Land At Former Zoo Car Park Arroigan Leger Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
15/00779/PP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land South Of Ardtornish Crannagh-a-Mhinnist Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
15/00828/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 11/00362/PPP - Site for the erection of a croft house	Land East Of Gate Cottage Airds Bay Taynuilt Argyll And Bute PA35 1JR	Sub Post Office Taynuilt

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09.00 - 17.00hrs Monday to Friday at 1A Mansie Lochgilphead Brae PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at [www.aryll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.aryll-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.

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://planning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintains a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Central Validation Team, 1A Mansie 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. Any anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

## COUNCILLOR'S SURGERY

Councillor Roddy McCuish (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles)  
Councillor McCuish will be holding a surgery on Friday 10th April 2015 in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 3.00pm - 5.00pm.  
He can be contacted by email - [Roderick.McCuish@aryll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Roderick.McCuish@aryll-bute.gov.uk) and by telephone 01631 567854.



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**First Registration of a Croft**  
John Boyd MacEachen has registered their croft 5 Bunacaimb, Arisaig & Moidart, PH39 4NT, on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by December 10, 2015.

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts/ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts/ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C926

**First Registration of a Croft**  
John Boyd MacEachen has registered their croft 5 Bunacaimb, Arisaig & Moidart, PH39 4NT, on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by December 10, 2015.

Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts/ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts/ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C845

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# Easter Property Guide

Your guide to 'cracking' the market and finding your perfect property

LETTINGS  COMMERCIAL PROPERTY  SALES  PROPERTY REVIEWS  PROPERTY NEWS  LOCAL ESTATE AGENTS

## Optimism returns to the UK housing market

THE FUTURE for property purchase looks bright, with over one third (36 per cent) of people saying that now is a good time to buy, the Building Society Association's March property tracker survey has identified. The rebound since September is marked by a substantial drop in the number of people who think now it is a bad time to buy. Taken together, the property tracker index has bounced back from a nine per cent low in September 2014 to 23 per cent.

Regardless of potential uncertainties such as the General Election, results show that optimism has returned to the market after the mid-2014 dip. This coincided with the introduction of new mortgage regulations and the announcement by the financial policy committee of actions to limit lending in the housing market. Results now indicate that transaction volumes may begin to slowly pick up after cooling off late last year.

Commenting on the results, BSA head of mortgage policy, Paul Broadhead, said: 'Optimism in the housing market is back after a long, slow winter. Conditions in the mortgage market and the wider economy are improving and this confidence is driving consumer sentiment – especially those looking to purchase a home.'

'Consumers and providers are also cheered by the fact that house building is starting to increase, household finances are less squeezed and inflation has fallen to zero per cent. Even if deflation happens - provided it is short lived

and is not generated by a fall in demand in the economy - it should not be damaging.'

First time buyers are getting cut-through in the market, as just under a third (30 per cent) of house sales in February were made to those getting that first foot on the property ladder, according to the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) February housing market report.

NAEA member agents found that 30 per cent of homes were sold to first time buyers in February, the highest amount since September 2014. Findings in February also show that demand for property is up, with 366 house hunters registered per NAEA member branch, up from 353 in January. With supply marginally down from 44 houses per branch last month, to 43 this month, there's still a significantly higher demand for than supply of housing, a problem that is unlikely to be solved anytime soon.

'It's clear from the findings in the report that things are starting to ease for first time buyers, which could be down to reduced property prices or more accessible funding, especially following December's stamp duty reforms,' said Mark Hayward, managing director of the National Association of Estate Agents. 'We will all be waiting with baited breath to see if the first time buyer figures increase following the new help to buy ISA, and whether we see real momentum in the market. It still remains notoriously hard to get cut-through in the property market, especially for first time buyers, so any green shoots are encouraging. It will be interesting to see the outcome of this year's General Election, but whoever wins it is vital that building more affordable homes is top of their agenda.'

The number of cash sales on houses worth over half a million pounds was up 19.6 per cent in 2014,



according to figures from Registers of Scotland (Ros). 'These figures indicate an increase in cash-rich buyers at the high end of the property market,' said Kenny Crawford, director of commercial services at Ros.

'Across Scotland, 32.4 per cent of homes worth over £500,000 were paid for in cash last year, compared to 34.4 per cent in 2013. The picture with properties over £1m is very different, with cash sales accounting for 48.9 per cent of the market in 2014 compared to 42.3 per cent the previous year.'

## The Oban Times COMPETITION

### 1 OF 5 PAIRS OF TICKETS TO THE IDEAL HOME SHOW SCOTLAND

**The Ideal Home Show Scotland makes a welcome return to Glasgow's SECC from 22nd – 25th May 2015.**

The award-winning home show brings together more than 400 exhibitors and 8 show sectors under one roof, offering visitors a unique one-stop shopping experience across all areas of the home. From interiors to home improvement, gardens to gadgets, the show will be packed with home solutions, show discounts, entertainment, celebrity guest appearances and fantastic shopping opportunities.

The centre piece of this year's Ideal Home Show Scotland, The Super Theatre, represents each of the 8 sections of the show with talks and demonstrations from the nation's most loved home experts. And the Ideal Home Show wouldn't be iconic without one of our stunning full size Show Homes for you to explore!

Join our celebrity ambassadors: TV interior guru John Amabile, architect and presenter George Clarke, award-winning gardens expert Diarmuid Gavin, foodie favourite Gregg Wallace, and popular television presenter Amanda Lamb - who will be on hand for useful tips and advice on their area of expertise.

Tickets can be either booked online or by calling the 24 Hour Ticket Box Office on 0844 854 2014 or by visiting [www.idealhomeshowscotland.co.uk](http://www.idealhomeshowscotland.co.uk). For further information about the show, visit the website [www.idealhomeshowscotland.co.uk](http://www.idealhomeshowscotland.co.uk).



The Ideal Home Show Scotland is offering 5 lucky readers of The Oban Times the chance to win a pair of tickets to this year's event in Glasgow's SECC from 22nd – 25th May 2015.

To enter simply answer the following question, complete the coupon and post it to: Ideal Homes Competition, Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Entries must be submitted by Friday 1st May.

**QUESTION: At which venue is this year's Ideal Home Show Scotland taking place?**

Answer .....	<b>The Oban Times</b> WEST HIGHLAND TIMES
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Terms and conditions: The prize is as stated. No cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. The winner may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvern Media publication and website. This competition is not open to Wyvern Media and associated company employees and their families. The prize is not transferable or redeemable for cash equivalent. Tickets will be posted to the winners nearer the date of the event.



The Super Theatre at the Ideal Home Show. Visit this year's event at Glasgow's SECC from 22nd – 25th May 2015 and get some great ideas for your new home.

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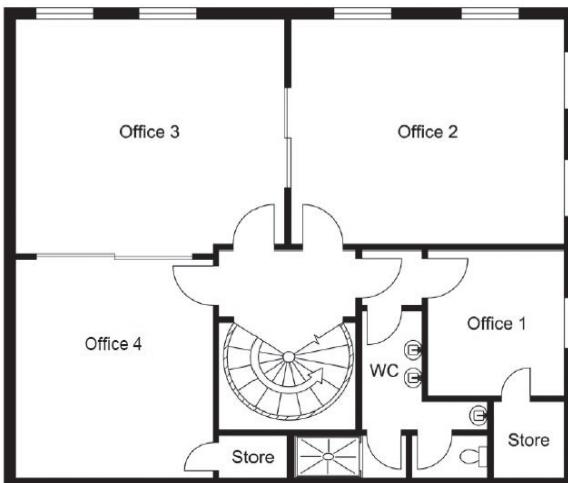
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Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the floor plan contained here, measurements of doors, windows, rooms and any other items are approximate and no responsibility is taken for any error, omission, or mis-statement. This plan is for illustrative purposes only and should be used as such by any prospective purchaser or tenant.

The services, systems and appliances shown have not been tested and no guarantee as to their operating or efficiency can be given.

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- DOUBLE GLAZING
- GARDEN WITH GARDEN SHED
- DRIVEWAY WITH PARKING
- EPC RATING: C 73



**11D TWEEDDALE  
STREET, OBAN,  
PA34 5DD**

**GUIDE PRICE:  
£75,000**

- WELL-PRESENTED DETACHED HOLIDAY CHALET

- RECENTLY UPGRADED
- RURAL VILLAGE LOCATION



**10 CARNAN  
ROAD,  
ARINAGOUR,  
ISLE OF SEIL,  
PA78 6TA**

**OFFERS OVER:  
£399,000**

- WELL PRESENTED SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGHOUSE

- GARDEN TO FRONT AND REAR
- PRIVATE PARKING FOR 2 CARS
- GARDEN SHED AND WOOD STORE
- 10 YEAR NHBC GUARANTEE
- EPC RATINGS: C 79



**18 ISLAY ROAD,  
OBAN, PA34 4YG**

**OFFERS IN THE REGION OF:  
£119,000**

- END-TERRISED HOUSE

- CHARMING DETACHED BUNGALOW
- DESIRABLE LOCATION
- SPACIOUS LOUNGE WITH DINING AREA



**FLAT 2, ALBANY  
TERRACE, OBAN,  
PA34 5NY**

**GUIDE PRICE:  
£125,000**

- SECOND FLOOR FLAT

- PARTIAL VIEWS OF OBAN BAY
- TOWN CENTRE LOCATION

## Moving checklist

Some say that moving is one of the most stressful events of all, so be prepared for the whole process long before you begin.

- Decide on a moving date (usually the completion date) as soon as contracts have been exchanged. Try to avoid Fridays and bank holidays when removal firms are in high demand and may be stretched. For a less stressful move, opt for off-peak times such as mid-week. It's more likely your chosen removal firm will be available for that day.
- Call in the professionals. Ask friends or relatives who have moved recently to recommend removal firms.
- Get at least three estimates from different firms and don't automatically accept the cheapest.
- Establish a written timetable with the removal firm and check the foreman has all the necessary details.
- Make sure the removal firm has a clear map showing how to find your new home.
- Ensure your possessions are insured for transit. Most removal firms provide such insurance. Check what it covers and whether there are exclusions. Remember that anything you pack yourself may not be covered by the removal firm's insurance. If you are planning to transport any precious items yourself, check that these are covered when in transit by your contents insurance.
- Hire professional cleaners to give your new place a thorough going over before you move in. Some removal firms will arrange to do this. This will make the whole move a more comfortable process.
- Before the big day, have a clear out. Valuable items that are no longer needed can be auctioned or sold to a dealer in second-hand furniture. Other items can be donated to charity shops or recycled.
- Get someone to look after the children for the day. The same goes for pets – or book them into kennels or a cattery. Make sure they have identity tags with their new address.
- Compile a fact file for the people who are moving into your property, such as instruction leaflets and service information for the heating system and appliances you're leaving, together with details of rubbish collection etc.
- Round up all the keys to your home, including those left with neighbours, nannies and relatives, and give them to your solicitor or estate agent.
- If the move is going to be spread over a couple of days, arrange accommodation and pack a bag for an overnight stop.
- Make a scale plan of each room in your new home to give to the removal team so, in theory, they know exactly where everything is to go. Colour-code packing cases and furniture in the hope that this will mean it ends up in the right rooms.
- Make a complete inventory of everything to be moved.
- Advise the post office to redirect your post.
- Cancel milk and newspapers.
- If you are moving to a different area, register with a new GP.
- Get change of address cards printed.
- Notify Utilities: water, gas and electricity providers; Telephone and Internet service providers; Contact TV licensing in order to transfer your licence to your new address; Bank, building society, pension provider and company you have loans or investments with; Credit card and store card companies; Local council regarding council tax; Subscriptions to magazines, charities, etc; Employers; The schools your children attend; DVLA; It is a legal requirement to notify DVLA. You will need to renew your driving licence and vehicle registration document; Friends, family and colleagues.
- Upon arrival, read the meters and check that the phone, security alarm, electricity, gas, central heating and water work.



**Even if everything is in order and has run smoothly, the chances are by the end of the day you'll be too shattered to move, so collapse on the sofa, order a takeaway and crack open a bottle of champagne.**

# ANDERSON BANKS

Solicitors : Notaries : Estate Agents  
22 Argyll Square, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4AT  
Tel: 01631 563158 : Fax: 01631 565459  
[www.andersonbanks.co.uk](http://www.andersonbanks.co.uk)

### Drumriggend, Drummore Road, Oban

- Substantial detached family home, situated in a quiet and convenient location
- Exceptionally well maintained and upgraded with extremely attractive accommodation over two floors
- Annex/granny flat with private entrance door.
- The original house offers a hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen and three bedrooms (all with En-suite).
- Significant extension to the rear offering a further hall, lounge, study, kitchen, double bedroom and bathroom.
- EPC Rating E50
- Offers in the region of £275,000



### Plot 2 Achnacairn, North Connel, By Oban

- Sizeable building plot (0.432 acres) in desirable, sought after location
- Breathtaking views across Loch Etive to Ben Cruachan and beyond
- Detailed planning permission for one architect designed substantial 4 bed detached home with detached double garage
- Nearby to local amenities and services
- Electricity and water are available for connection close by.
- Floor plans and elevation drawings will be made available on request
- Guide Price £130,000



### Tigh An Aiseag, 2 Ferryfield Drive, Connel

- Well maintained detached bungalow situated in popular village of Connel
- Good state of maintenance and repair throughout
- Fully double glazed, Electric Heating
- Hall, Lounge, Dining Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Cloakroom
- Easily maintained front and rear gardens. Single garage/workshop
- Garden Shed, Private Drive, EPC Rating D59
- Offers in the region of £195,000



### 3 Ellenabeich, Easdale, By Oban

- Charming mid-terraced cottage in the picture-postcard village of Ellenabeich.
- Immaculate condition throughout and deceptively spacious benefitting from a newly installed kitchen, well fitted bathroom and neutral décor.
- A private garden (adjacent to the cottage) is exclusive to the property and offers an appealing and useful outdoor space.
- Comfortable permanent home or equally well suited as holiday accommodation.
- EPC Rating D62
- Offers in the region of £145,000



### 1 Cruachan Buildings, Lochawe

- Spacious flat situated on outskirts of Lochawe Village
- Good state of maintenance and neutral decoration
- Fully double glazed, electric heating + open fire in lounge
- Large Lounge, Double Bedroom, Dining Kitchen & Bathroom
- Garden, Coal Shed, Garden Shed, Residents Private Car Park
- EPC Rating D57
- Offers in the region of £78,000



### Heatherbrae, Snishival, Isle of South Uist, Western Isles

- Spacious detached single storey property
- Lounge, 3 bedrooms, Kitchen/Diner, bathroom
- Oil fired central heating
- Double glazed throughout
- EPC Rating E47
- Offers in the Region of £120,000



### Sealladh Mara, 479 South Lochboisdale, Isle of South Uist, Western Isles

- Detached two storey property with enviable views
- Double glazed with oil fired central heating
- Lounge/Kitchen/Diner and separate dining room
- Four bedrooms (one En-suite) and two further bathrooms
- Quiet rural location
- EPC Rating E44
- Offers in the region of £155,000



### 4a Rushgarry, Berneray, Isle of North Uist, Western Isles

- Traditional croft house on the idyllic Isle of Berneray
- Lounge, large kitchen/diner
- Three bedrooms plus accommodation in loft
- Stunning location
- EPC rating G9
- Offers in the Region of £120,000



### 9 Ashdaill Cottages, Bayhead, Isle of North Uist, Western Isles

- Spacious semi-detached single storey property
- Fully double glazed, Electric storage heating
- Vestibule, Kitchen/Diner, Lounge
- Shower room, 3 bedrooms, Mature garden
- EPC Rating E40
- Offers in the region of £69,500



### Luib Cottage, 6 Griminish, Isle of Benbecula, Western Isles

- Attractive single storey property with enviable views
- Central location within township and close to amenities
- Fully double glazed, newly installed electric heating
- Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Utility Room, Rear Porch
- 3 Bedrooms (Master En-Suite), Bathroom, Garden, Parking
- EPC Rating E50
- Offers in the Region of £120,000



### Seabreezes, Bruernish, Isle of Barra, Western Isles

- Unique business opportunity or versatile family home
- 2 adjoining self-contained properties with option to create an internal access through
- Main property has 3 bedrooms (Master En-Suite), Bathroom
- Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Utility Room, Open plan living area
- Double Bedroom, Shower Room
- EPC Rating E48
- Offers in the region of £195,000



### COMING SOON

#### FOR SALE - Semi-Detached Villa, Ardconnel Road, Oban

- Elevated, central location with views to Oban Bay and beyond
- In need of complete modernisation and refurbishment
- Front Porch, Hall, Utility, Lounge, Kitchen, Dining Room, Bathroom,
- Small Study/Boxroom, Bathroom, 3 Bedrooms
- Garden to front, side and rear

### COMING SOON

#### FOR RENT - Upper Flat, Soroba Park Terrace, Soroba Road, Oban

- Rent £525.00 per calendar month plus Council Tax (band B) and Utility bills.
- Deposit £525.00
- Non-Smokers Only, Pets on application
- References required

07872 986 164  
info@fiuran.co.uk  
www.fiuran.co.uk



Please visit our website [www.fiuran.co.uk](http://www.fiuran.co.uk) for further details and images of all of our properties

# Fiuran PROPERTY

## Exclusive Building Plot, Oban



- \*\*\*New to Market\*\*\*
- Rarely available building plot w/ outline planning consent
- Over one-third of an acre
- Spectacular views of Oban bay & islands beyond
- Tranquil garden setting with private lochan views
- 10 minutes walk from Oban Town Centre
- Viewing strictly by prior appointment

Offers Over £145,000

## The Bothie, Airds Bay



- Charming 3 Bedroom semi-detached cottage
- Sought after location with partial loch views
- Hall, o/p Lounge, Dining Room & Kitchen
- En Suite, Bathroom, Dressing Room
- Slate flooring with underfloor heating
- Multi-fuel stove in Lounge area
- Glazed French doors leading to front garden
- Attractive features & double glazing throughout
- Easily maintained garden with private parking

Offers Over £230,000

## 33c Combie St. Oban



- Well presented 2nd floor flat
- Situated in Oban town centre
- Convenient for all amenities
- Hall, Kitchen/Diner, Lounge
- Bathroom, 2 double Bedrooms
- Effective electric heating system
- Fitted Kitchen and modern Bathroom
- On-street permit parking
- No chain

Fixed Price £95,000

## 15 The Glebe, Kilmelford



- \*\*£5,000 below Home Report valuation\*\*
- Well presented 4 Bedroom detached villa
- Popular rural village close to Loch Melfort
- Double glazing, multi-fuel stove
- French doors leading to decking
- Good storage including partially floored Loft
- Large garden with 2 sheds and pond
- Range of appliances included in sale
- Planning permission for garage
- Parking for several vehicles

Offers Over £190,000

## Achnacarry, Glenmore Road, Oban



- Appealing detached 4 Bedroom house
- Quiet, sought after location with sea views
- Versatile accommodation over 5 split levels
- Study, Loft/Playroom, Utility Room, En Suite
- Gas central heating, open fire in Lounge
- Double glazing throughout, ample storage
- Sea-facing windows in Lounge & Bedroom 4
- Attractive features & lighting throughout
- Large garden with decking, shed & playhouse
- Off-street private parking, close to town

Offers Over £295,000

## 39 Cruachan Cotts, Taynuilt



- 2 Bedroom mid-terraced house
- Hall, Kitchen/Diner, Lounge
- 2 double Bedrooms, Shower Room
- Good storage including substantial Loft
- Electric storage heating, stair-lift
- Double glazing throughout
- Garden with shed & countryside views
- Free residents parking
- Improvement potential
- Popular village location

Guide Price £130,000

## Clachaig, Morvern Hill, Oban



- Attractive 3 Bedroom semi-detached Bungalow
- Porch, Hallway, Lounge/Diner, Kitchen
- Bathroom, 3 Bedrooms, Utility Room
- Ample storage including partially floored Loft
- Double glazing, electric storage heating
- Fitted Kitchen with breakfast bar & stools
- Easily maintained, enclosed garden, shed
- Private driveway/parking area
- Convenient to Oban Primary Campus
- Excellent regular bus service

Guide Price £180,000

## 94 Nant Drive, Oban



- 2 Bedroom semi-detached bungalow
- Sought after residential area
- Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Bathroom
- Good storage space throughout
- Fitted Kitchen and modern Bathroom
- Double glazing throughout
- Electric storage & panel heating
- Good-sized Loft space
- Easily maintained garden
- Walk-in condition

Guide Price £160,000

## Fair Haven, Oban



- \*\*£40,000 below Home Report valuation\*\*
- Centrally located 4 Bedroom family home
- Conservatory, Family/Dining Room, En Suite
- In excellent order throughout
- Attractive fireplace with gas fire
- Good storage, double glazing throughout
- Off-road shared private parking
- Gas central heating, floored Loft
- Garden surrounding property, decking
- Range of appliances included in sale

Guide Price £250,000

## 3 Kenmore Cotts, Bonawe



- \*\*£3,000 below Home Report valuation\*\*
- Well laid out 2 Bedroom property
- Porch, Lounge/Diner, Kitchen, Bathroom
- Modern fitted Kitchen with appliances
- Good storage and sizeable Loft
- Easily maintained garden with parking
- Multi fuel stove, heating radiators & water
- Double glazing, temperature alarm
- Benefits from recent re-wiring and new roof
- Smoke alarms connected to the mains

Guide Price £95,000

## Springbank, Oban



- Well presented 5 Bedroom detached villa
- Close to town centre with partial sea views
- Gas central heating with fireplace in Lounge
- Double glazing, good storage with Loft
- Spacious living accomm, high ceilings
- Large, modern Bathroom, separate shower
- Range of appliances included in sale
- All flooring, blinds, & some curtains included
- Good sized garden surrounding property
- Private parking for several vehicles

Guide Price £300,000

## 12 Hazeldean, Oban



- Appealing 3 Bedroom semi-detached house
- Hall, fitted Kitchen, Lounge
- Bathroom, 3 double Bedrooms
- Large fitted out Loft space
- Range of appliances included in sale
- Ample storage with built-in wardrobes
- Double glazing, oil central heating
- Good sized, enclosed garden
- 12ft x 8ft shed, greenhouse
- Free on-street parking, convenient to town

Offers Over £155,000

## Tynwald, Oban



- Appealing 3 Bedroom semi-detached house
- Walk-in condition, in convenient location
- Good storage, including large Loft space
- Double glazing, electric storage heating
- Range of appliances included in sale
- Garage with sink & plumbing for w/m
- Easily maintained, enclosed garden
- Curtains, blinds & floor coverings included
- Private off-road parking
- Convenient to Oban Primary Campus

Guide Price £175,000

## Heather Crest, Pulpit Rock



- 3 Bedroom detached house with sea views
- In sought after residential area
- Rare development opportunity
- Fully floored Loft space with lighting
- Double glazing throughout
- Effective electric heating system
- Attractive fireplace with open fire in Lounge
- Range of appliances & flooring included
- Sizeable garden with detached garage
- Convenient to town centre and amenities

Guide Price £200,000

## Machrie + Cottage, Oban



- \*\*£41,000 below Home Report valuation\*\*
- Detached 4 Bedroom stone-built villa
- Separate 1 Bedroom detached bungalow
- Central location with elevated views
- Double glazing, LPG central heating
- Multi-fuel stove, underfloor heating
- Established garden surrounding property
- Decking, workshop and summer house
- Private parking areas for both properties
- Income of up to £400/week from cottage

Offers Over £289,000

## Rowan, Glenmore Road, Oban



- Beautiful 3 Bedroom detached villa
- Close to town centre in quiet location
- Porch, Hall, Kitchen/Diner, Family Room
- Study, WC, Lounge, 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom
- Gas central heating, multi-fuel stove
- Double/secondary glazing to most windows
- Good storage, including 2 Loft spaces
- Good-sized garden surrounding property
- Glimpses of Oban Bay from top of garden
- Private parking for several vehicles

Guide Price £250,000

## Sunnymede, Oban



- Immaculate 3 Bedroom detached cottage
- Elevated views of Oban Bay from garden
- Potential for 4th Bedroom
- Good storage including Loft
- Dressing area with 2 mirrored wardrobes
- Double glazing, electric storage heating
- Easily maintained garden to front
- Summer house, timber workshop
- Detached garage, car-port
- Convenient to local services & amenities

Guide Price £195,000

## 2 Annat, Kilchrenan



- Appealing 3 Bedroom semi-detached house
- Rural village, 15 min drive from Taynuilt
- Sizeable Studio/work space to side of house
- Fitted country-style Kitchen
- Range of appliances included in sale
- Ample storage with built-in wardrobes
- Double glazing throughout
- Multi-fuel stove in Lounge/Diner
- Easily maintained, enclosed garden
- Separate garage, 2 parking spaces

Guide Price £140,000

## Tigh Na Faidh, Appin



- \*\*£15,000 below Home Report valuation\*\*
- Substantial 5 Bedroom detached house
- Magnificent views towards Loch Creran
- Kitchen/Diner, Lounge, Utility/Shower Room
- Modern features throughout, En Suite
- Double glazing, French doors onto decking
- Oil central heating with open fire in Lounge
- Great storage throughout, including Loft
- Attractive staircase & Jacuzzi bath
- Sizeable garden with private parking

Guide Price £260,000

## Glencruitten Golf Course Plot



- \*\*\*NEW TO MARKET\*\*\*
- Elevated building plot with spectacular far-reaching views across golf course
- Detail Planning consent for a bespoke architect-designed luxury dwellinghouse
- Over one-third of an acre
- Services immediately adjacent to site
- Significant groundworks already completed
- Rural location, yet close to town centre
- Desirable location

Guide Price £99,500

## Lamancha, Pulpit Rock



- \*\*£5,000 below Home Report valuation\*\*
- Spacious 4 Bedroom detached house
- Walk-in condition, in quiet residential area
- Double glazing, oil central heating
- Excellent storage throughout
- Upgraded insulation & replacement boiler
- Attractive fireplace with electric fire in Lounge
- Blinds & flooring included in sale
- Private enclosed garden with detached garage
- Convenient to town centre and amenities

Offers Over £230,000

✓ Lowest fees in the area - from just £595 or 0.95%

✓ Excellent local knowledge of market and area

✓ Friendly, professional and efficient service

The smart ~~new~~ way to buy and sell property in and around Oban



## Estate Agency Team

At Bell Ingram our Estate Agency Department is gearing up for the predicted upsurge in the residential market as we head into the spring and summer months by presenting a selection of our portfolio across Argyllshire and the West Highlands and islands for your perusal. Hopefully we have something to suit all your requirements from first time buyers to purchasers of larger town centre homes and rural properties, however if you cannot see anything within this selection please do not hesitate to pop into the office where our friendly staff will be delighted to provide you with our comprehensive listing and local advice.



The Company always endeavours to provide the highest quality and value which can only be achieved by providing an exceptional service based upon delivery and attention to detail at all times. If you are considering selling then why not contact the office where one of our staff members will arrange a no obligation market appraisal, where we can assess your particular requirements and tailor a strategy suited to your needs and timescales. The Estate Agency Team comprises Clayton McGuiness, Sandie Duffy and Mairi Kennedy.

In addition to the tried and tested websites such as Rightmove (widely regarded as the market leader) and bellingram.co.uk, Bell Ingram has taken the opportunity to become a member of a new and exciting website which was launched in January called OnTheMarket.com. This extensively published launch created considerable interest which appears to be growing rapidly into a very productive addition to our marketing programme. We are delighted to be the only member within Oban and look forward to its coverage and enquiry rate adding to our successes throughout the year ahead. Our innovative and market leading LED window display has helped to highlight the wide range of properties we have for sale and to let, resulting in significantly greater purchaser awareness.

Easter heralds the launch for our new and innovative sales and letting initiative with an increased focus on social media and web-based advertising coupled with straightforward good old-fashioned customer service from a company with detailed local knowledge and offices throughout the United Kingdom, all backed up by our dedicated marketing department.

Bell Ingram prides itself on its transparency with simple no nonsense quotes for our services and no hidden charges or upfront costs, we are paid only for success.

### Birchbrae Lodges Onich, Fort William



Six luxury, 3 bedroom self catering lodges and separate owners accommodation situated in the beautiful countryside close to Glencoe  
Rural location. Lifestyle opportunity  
Each accommodation comprises, lounge/dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom and shower room  
Current parking for 14 vehicles with each lodge having dedicated spaces  
Spacious and well maintained grounds.  
Double glazing. Electric heating.  
EPC Rating: D58

**Offers over £625,000**

## Help to Buy

The year ahead is likely to provide an improving market which should continue to build over the next few years with Scotland widely expected to outperform the remainder of the UK as the Referendum issue begins to settle down. As the post-Referendum dust continues to settle, changes to stamp duty and the recently announced first time buyers' initiative should further encourage activity.

The Help to Buy ISA is predicted to have a positive impact upon the property market in Scotland as it will help to overcome the burden of deposits for a number of first time buyers who have been in short supply since the credit crunch. The savings accounts will become available at high-street banks and building societies this autumn and will offer savers a £50 bonus for every £200 they save towards a deposit. A couple buying a property will benefit from two Help to Buy ISA accounts and both will be paid a bonus where the state will pay out a maximum of £3,000 on savings of £12,000 over a four year period.

The help to buy ISA can be opened with a maximum deposit of up to £1,000, with monthly savings capped at £200. A 25 per cent bonus is accumulated on both savings and interest earned each month. This can only have a positive effect as it impacts ripples through to the higher value sectors releasing greater numbers of potential purchasers onto the open market.

Our well established Lettings Manager Jackie Moore provides extensive local knowledge and experience within this sector. Jackie welcomes new properties to quench a buoyant residential letting demand which is reaching new levels of interest as Spring approaches. Jackie and her office colleagues are always on hand to answer questions or provide sound marketing advice to landlords and tenants alike.

Sophie Handley and Caroline Isaac are delighted to offer a management service of the highest calibre to complete the service giving the landlord a stress free experience which is second to none!!



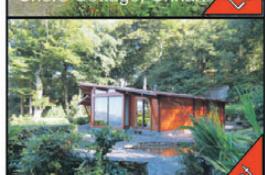
Jackie Moore  
Lettings Manager



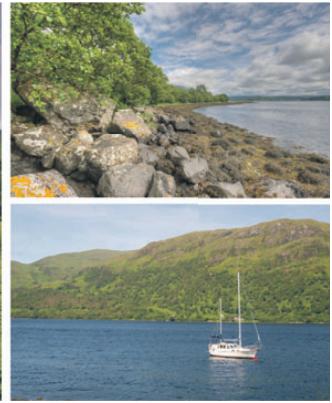
Sophie Handley  
Assistant Land Agent



Caroline Isaac  
Assistant Land Agent



### Waterfront Living Bonawe, Argyll



**Guide price £130,000**

A rare opportunity to acquire a large building plot with sea frontage and Planning Permission in Principle within the popular village of Bonawe. The sites benefit from a north easterly aspect and are gently contoured to maximise privacy, yet benefit from the views over the sea. Each plot runs down to the sea and offers the opportunity to create a jetty or simply lay a mooring to allow the full benefit of the sea to be enjoyed. All four plots each have different attributes but should with flair allow a purchaser to create a most attractive environment around their house. The plots which vary in size from 0.17 to 0.27 hectares can be landscaped to cater for individual requirements. The sites are currently un-serviced although each of the plots has been delineated. Vendor will provide a common entrance road electricity, water and a septic tank to each plot. The planning consent gives latitude for an innovative design which may be interpreted as modern but with a Scottish vernacular twist.

### Bun-an-loch Achnamara, Lochgilphead



Well presented, detached property, set within a superb location with stunning unobstructed views over the Sound and Paps of Jura. Accommodation comprises of: Kitchen, dining/lounge, three double bedrooms, two family bathrooms and loft studio. Superb open views. Rural location. Approx. 2.02 acres of hillside garden. Double glazing, large workshop/garage. EPC Rating: E43

**Offers in the region of £325,000**

### Heatherbank Cairnbaan, Lochgilphead



Last few remaining, immaculately-presented end and mid-terrace, two-bedroom houses in the picturesque hamlet of Cairnbaan. Recently completed by Messrs M & K MacLeod Limited [and with full NHBC Guarantee]. Attractive views towards the Crinan Canal and surrounding countryside. The spacious accommodation comprises: Ground Floor: Entrance hall, lounge, dining/kitchen, WC. First Floor: Master bedrooms (en-suite shower room), double bedroom and bathroom. Double glazed throughout. Modern electric heating. Private gardens and designated off street parking. EPC Rating: C77



**Fixed Price £140,000**

**Bell Ingram, Boswell House, Argyll Square, PA34 4BD**

**01631 566122**

**oban@bellingram.co.uk**





**Bell Ingram, Letting and Estate Agents, Charted Surveyors, Valuers and Land Agents.**  
**Providing you with an excellent service, along with professional and free advice.**  
**Free appraisal's, competitive rates, local knowledge, eleven offices throughout Scotland and Northern England, free Holyrood marketing and national coverage.**

### For sale properties



#### Kintail, Taynuilt

Modern, five bedroom detached family home situated in the popular village of Taynuilt  
Elevated position with rural aspects. Spacious/ flexible interior  
Double glazing. Oil fired control heating. Double garage  
EPC Rating: D59  
Offers in the Region of £365,000



#### 3 Achinreir, Barcaldine

Extremely well presented three bedroom semi-detached property set in the desirable village of Barcaldine  
Well-maintained garden grounds. Driveway offering ample parking  
Double glazing and electric heating through-out  
EPC Rating : D56  
Offers in the Region of £150,000



#### Schiehallion, Isle of Tiree

A rare opportunity to acquire a 5 bedroom, traditional black house-style dwelling in a pleasant island location  
Extensive, versatile and spacious accommodation 0.3 acre plot with planning in principle close by for separate negotiation  
Off roads parking and easily maintained garden area.  
EPC Rating : C74  
Offers Over £239,950



#### Seaview, Ardrishaig

Characterful and well presented, four-bedroom, semi-detached, Victorian villa  
Close to all local facilities and amenities and within easy distance of Lochgilphead  
Private, easily maintained garden to the front and rear.  
Workshop and wood store.  
EPC Rating: E46  
Offers in the Region of £195,000



#### 17 St Clare Way, Ardrishaig

Modern, 4 bedroom detached property that is set in a superb location with beautiful far reaching views over the Crinan Canal and beyond  
Well maintained garden grounds. Single garage. Large shed.  
6Mbps Broadband Connection  
EPC Rating: C72  
Fixed Price £249,000



#### Calla, Appin

Beautifully presented, 4 bedroom architects designed detached property situated in the popular village of Appin with lovely countryside views  
Double glazed, fully insulated and in walk in condition  
Attractive garden with private parking  
EPC Rating: G  
Guide Price £230,000



#### 6 Struthan Terrace, Isle of Tiree

Modernised, 2 bedroom semi detached cottage situated at the head of a cul-de-sac complete with sea views  
Modernised interior  
Oil fired central heating  
Open views towards the sea  
EPC Rating: G  
Offers in the Region of £78,000



#### 21A Combie Street, Oban

Very well presented 2 bedroom, ground floor flat in central Oban conveniently situated close to all local amenities  
Walk in condition. On street parking available  
Double glazed. Total control heating  
EPC Rating: D58  
Offers in the Region of £92,000



#### Springfields, Isle of Tiree

Detached, traditional 3/4 bedroom dwelling in the picturesque island settlement of Balemartine with beautiful sea views  
Lovely permanent or second home with excellent letting potential situated close to the sandy beach  
Easily maintained garden grounds. Off street Parking  
EPC Rating: F38  
Offers in the Region of £150,000



#### 9 Port Ramsay, Isle of Lismore

A character 19th century mid terraces croft house in a picturesque island location  
Development potential (subject to local authority consents)  
Delightful rural setting enjoying a sunny open outlook over towards Loch Linne  
Services available for connection close by  
Offers Over £85,000



#### Ar Taigh, Portsonachan

Finnish, 3 bedroom log cabin with shore frontage and uninterrupted views over the beautiful Lochawe  
Large garden grounds. Rural location  
Riparian fishing rights on Lochawe  
Opportunity for mooring  
EPC Rating: D63  
Offers in the Region of £250,000



#### Beinn Carraig

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# West Coast MOTORING TIMES

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## New Peugeot 208: A splash of style with innovative world-first textured paint

PEUGEOT'S reputation for striking exterior design is second to none. With the eagerly anticipated arrival of the new PEUGEOT 208, on sale from June, the brand is launching a world-first technology for a production vehicle – a unique 'textured paint' finish.

Exclusive to the popular supermini and further evidence of the sophisticated style now running through its entire Peugeot model range, distinctive textured paint adds a contemporary twist to the idea of customer choice and individual personalisation.

The textured paint is currently available in two colours, Ice Grey and Ice Silver. For even greater individuality, cars can be specified with an optional Lime Yellow or Menthol White personalisation pack. These are available for the exterior, interior or both.

On offer from launch in June, textured paint offers several benefits. First and foremost, it emphasises the striking, modern lines of the Peugeot 208, reinforcing its dynamism and elegant design.

Secondly, the texture – which is subtly granular to the touch – is more hard-wearing and easier to care for than conventional matt paint. It offers exceptional resistance to micro-scratching and doesn't suffer through frequent car washing.

Thirdly, because it is applied by production robots at the advanced Poissy manufacturing plant in France, outstanding quality is guaranteed for the lifetime of the car.

Peugeot textured paint is a

world-first on a volume production car and is backed by an international patent which is the result of almost four years of technical development. While the initial coats of anti-corrosion, primer and colour base remain the same as for conventional metallic paint, the innovation is in the composition and application of the lacquer.

It features fine particles of silica and micro-balloons of polyamide; the former give the paint its matt appearance, toughness and granular properties, the latter creates its special texture.

Throughout the history of motoring, unique exterior finishes such as these have only been available on limited edition models, or as a very expensive premium hand-applied option. For the new Peugeot 208, it will cost exactly the same as

pearlescent paint – at just £645.

The colour palette for the new Peugeot 208 comprises 13 shades that meet the growing customer demand for differentiation and exclusivity. They include:

- 2 textured colours (new Ice Grey and new Ice Silver)
  - 2 solid colours (Bianca White and Hurricane Grey)
  - 7 metallic colours:
- (new Orange Power, Aluminium, Shark Grey, Nera Black, Virtual Blue, Twilight Blue, Rioja Red)
- 1 pearlescent colour (Satin White)
  - 1 distinctive 'Coupe Franche' design (textured Matt Black / Lacquered Red, exclusively available on the 208 'GTi by Peugeot Sport')

Also making their debut on the new Peugeot 208 are two personalisation packs, an optional extra for both the exterior and interior of the car. They are factory-fitted options and available on Allure trim level and above. The Menthol White pack gives the 208 a touch of elegance, while the Lime

Yellow pack is bright, modern and fun. Both feature various elements in the pack colour, including:

- 'Equalizer' grille with 3D-effect coloured markings
- Gloss black grille surround
- Gloss black front foglamp finishers with laser-engraved coloured line
- Coloured front and rear Peugeot lettering
- Nera Black door mirror shells and coloured side repeaters

The Menthol White and Lime Yellow packs can also be specified for the cabin interior, independent of the exterior pack chosen. Details include:

- Sport seats in prestige leather effect trim and Oxford cloth, with coloured stitching
- Armrests in the door panels with coloured stitching
- Coloured front and rear door handles
- Coloured blade below the instrument panel
- Coloured dashboard moulding
- Perforated full-grain leather steering wheel with coloured stitching
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- Satin chrome air vent finishers
- Passenger's seat height adjustment



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New Peugeot 208: enhanced desirability with strong attention to detail and high-quality:

Revealed to the general public during the recent 85th Geneva Motor Show, the new Peugeot 208 goes on sale across Europe from June. Range enhancements are the result of a comprehensive programme of developments, which include new technology such as Active City Brake and a rear view camera, added for greater comfort and safety.

The 208 is available with four new engines featuring class-leading Pure-Tech petrol and BlueHDi diesel Euro 6-compliant technology, plus a new and impressive quick-changing EAT6 automatic gearbox. All are both eco-

nomical and powerful.

The exterior design has become sleeker due to a larger grille design with new black and chrome two-tone lights that have a distinctive new LED light signature.

Inside is a new soft-touch dashboard material, white back-lighting for the instrument panel and blue LED light guides for versions equipped with a panoramic roof.

Following the lead of Peugeot's award-winning 308 and 508, the new 208 range can now be specified in the new GT Line finish, a design influenced by the sporty looks of the performance GTi model.



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### Dacia reveals pricing for Lauréate Prime special editions

DACIA has announced UK pricing and specification for the top-of-the-range Lauréate Prime special edition versions of the Sandero, Duster and Logan MCV, which were unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show at the beginning of March.



These luxuriously appointed models, featuring an exclusive colour scheme, are being introduced to mark 10 years since the Romanian brand re-launched in Europe in 2005, and are available for just £500 more than the existing Lauréate versions.

It offers buyers the chance to own a more distinctive, more personalised car while remaining faithful to Dacia's exceptional 'shockingly affordable' value-for-money ethos. All Lauréate Prime special editions are finished in exclusive Cosmos Blue metallic paint, which pays homage to Dacia's traditional livery. This is reflected inside each car, with blue fabric inserts on the front and rear seats, blue detailing on the floor mats and blue

seat belts. Other distinguishing exterior features are smart dark metal alloy wheels and dark metal grey door mirror shells. Additional equipment over Lauréate versions includes a front central armrest, electric rear windows, leather steering wheel and the latest MediaNav Evolution multimedia system.

This has been redesigned with a full-colour menu screen and now features Apple's Siri voice recognition function, full seven-digit postcode recognition and TMC live traffic information. There have been hardware improvements, and the system allows access to the AHA cloud platform via a free smartphone app. Through the seven-inch multi-media touch-screen users have access to navigation, infotainment and hands-free telephone services; can stream music via Bluetooth or a USB

or AUX connection; and can connect to social networks via a smartphone. Collectively, the addition of metallic paint, MediaNav Evolution and the Comfort Pack would cost up to £895 as options on the Lauréate (on Sandero and Logan MCV), yet they are all standard on the Lauréate Prime for a premium of just £500, embodying the very spirit of Dacia's 'you do the maths' strapline.

All features that are standard on Lauréate versions have been retained on the Lauréate Prime. These include climate control, cruise control with a speed limiter, heated and electrically adjustable door mirrors, central locking and, on the Duster, satin chrome roof bars, side sills and front and rear scuff plates, as well as ESC and ASR (traction control) – both of which are standard across the whole Dacia range.



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**ENGAGEMENTS**

**PATERSON - DELANEY** - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Karen, daughter of John and Zena Paterson, Oban to Ben, son of Michael and Karen Delaney, Fort William.

**GOLDEN WEDDING**

**MACKINNON** - **MACDOUGALL** - At Oban Parish Church on March 29, 1965 by the late Rev. William Macdonald, Donald to Mary. Present address:- Kirkapol, Morvern Hill, Oban, PA34 4NS.

**PHILLIPS - EVANS** - By Rev. William Macdonald on March 30 1965, David to Christine.

**DEATHS**

**CAMERON** - Suddenly at home, 20 Cruanach Cottages Taynuilt, on March 29, 2015, in his 74th year, Archibald, (Ginger), loving husband of Margaret. Will be sorely missed.

**CRAIG** - Very peacefully at home, Tighnara, High Askomil, Campbeltown, surrounded by his family, on March 28, 2015, William Gold Craig, in his 75th year, much loved husband of Jennifer McIlchere, loving dad of Ian, Caroline, Colin and John and a much loved grandad. Service will take place in the Lorne and Lowland Parish Church, on Friday, April 3, 2015 at 1.00pm, funeral thereafter to Kilkerran Cemetery. Friends please accept this intimacy and invitation. Family flowers only please. A retiring collection will be held in aid of Palliative Care, Kintyre Locality and the Beatson Cancer Charity.

**GRAHAM** - Alexandrina (Rina) Graham (87), Scannasdale, Ballygrant, Islay, passed away peacefully on Tuesday March 24, 2015 at Orasay Inn, South Uist. Beloved wife of the late George Graham. A loving mum, granny and great-granny. Will be sadly missed.

**HEWARD** - Peacefully on Sunday, March 29, 2015 in Killin, Jim formerly of Oban, Beloved husband to Chris, father and grandfather to the family. Funeral service will be held in Killin Parish Church on Tuesday, April 7, 2015 at 12 noon, thereafter to Killin Cemetery to which all friends are respectfully invited.

**PATRICIA JONES  
(McCONNELL)**

8/9/1949-19/3/2015

(Raised in Claggan, Melantee)



Died at home in Northwich - Cremation 8th April 2015 at Stockport Crematorium. Suffered a stroke, after blood clots, after chemo's for cancer over the last 2 years.

From my arms out of pain at last and moved on to brighten another world!

Love as always for my best friend and wife, from Steven X X X

& family.

From stardust to stardust . always smiling to the end.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**MACKINNON** - David, Eileen and family would like to thank all family, friends and neighbours for the support and kindness after the sad loss of Jessie. Sincere thanks to all NHS professionals, district nurses, carers, Belford and Lynn of Lorne Hospitals and finally Abbeyfield Care Home, Ballachulish. Special thanks to Mike McFall and staff for the compassionate funeral arrangements, also McDonald Bros for beautiful floral arrangements, most importantly Rev Dr Malcolm Kinear, the Very Rev Norman

MacCallum for the lovely service and tributes, organist and church elders, Four Seasons for catering and all who came to pay their last respects at church and graveside and who generously donated £705 going to Abbeyfield Resident's Fund.

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# Tarbert Church looks forward to welcoming new minister

THE CONGREGATION at Tarbert Church in the Presbytery of Uist is set to welcome a new minister to the parish.

Reverend Ian Murdo Macdonald will preach to the Tarbert congregation on May 3, after accepting the invitation from the congregation to be sole nominee.

Mr Macdonald graduated from the University of Aberdeen and has been minister of Cross Ness Church in the Presbytery of Lewis for nearly 14 years.

A Gaelic speaker, Mr Macdonald hails from Bernera in Lewis. He is married to Alison and they have three children. Ian Murdo expected to move to Tarbert in the summer once his appointment has been formally approved.

Reverend J Colin Caskie, Interim Moderator of the Kirk Session at Tarbert, said: 'Ian will fit in to Tarbert like a hand in a glove. He is greatly respected in the Hebrides and there is a widespread sense of anticipation for his future ministry in Tarbert.'

Tarbert church has not had a minister since the retirement of Reverend Norman Maciver in 2011. Services have been

led by visiting ministers while the search for a minister was ongoing. The congregation suffered a setback last year when some members chose to leave.

Mr Caskie said: 'There has been a strong sense of the Lord's hand in Ian's appointment, and whilst understanding the sense of loss the people of Cross Ness must feel, the congregation look forward to the new ministry of Ian Murdo Macdonald. His appointment brings peace of mind to the congregation. Now they have a minister to lead them after such a long time without.'

Although the Presbytery of Uist in the Outer Hebrides is one of the remotest parts of Scotland, a renewed spirit and optimism in the church is taking place.

Within the last month, the congregation of Manish-Scarsdale has welcomed a new minister, and Benbecula Church is about to advertise their vacancy.

Despite recent challenges, these welcome developments show the ministry of the church and church life in the islands remains in good heart.

## Pupils perform own rendition of Snow White

ST COLUMBA'S primary school recently held its own take on the classic fairytale Snow White.

Primary four to seven pupils put on a production of Snow White and the Eight Dwarfs on March 18, guided by teachers Imogen McKenna and Lorraine Wotherspoon.

The pupils undertook the whole production and

put a modern twist on the tale, including music from bands such as Coldplay, The Pet Shop Boys and Alice Cooper.

Imogen, who teaches primary four and five, explained: 'The performance involved acting, staging, costumes and props.'

'Designing the whole performance basically.'

The school also enlisted

the help of Chelsea Higgins from Oban high school, who choreographed two dance routines with the young stars.

Lorraine, who teaches primary six and seven, added: 'It was a great turnout - we had a lot of parents and grandparents keen to come as they saw all the individual effort that was put in by the kids, such as learning



## Oban Lions support community playpark



**CHEQUE THIS OUT:** Oban and Lorn Lions Club members, from left, president Bill Coutts, vice president Raymond Wallace and Jim Edge handed over a cheque for £2,000 to young supporters of the Oban Community Playpark Fund. Playpark committee member Lyndsay Elliott said the Lions were one of the early supporters which helped build momentum for the fundraising effort. 15\_t14cheque01

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## Baptist church Easter celebration

A SPECIAL Easter celebra-tion will be held in Fort William Baptist Church this weekend.

The praise celebration 'I

am the Resurrection and the Life' will tell the Easter story in words and music which will begin at 6.30pm on Easter Sunday, March 5.

## Thought for the week

### Maundy Thursday?

HOPEFULLY most folk will still have some idea of what Easter is about within the Christian faith.

But Maundy Thursday?

Apparently the word comes from the Latin for 'command' based on Jesus' words to his disciples the night before his death - 'a new command I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you.'

That same night Jesus also washed the feet of his disciples saying he had set an example the whole of his life culminating in his death on the cross.

On another occasion amidst the squabbles of disciples about their status in God's kingdom Jesus

washing the feet of some prisoners in a prison in Rome.

The Queen will be distributing specially minted Maundy money to 89 men and 89 women chosen to receive this gift. Not since the 17th century have the monarchs washed any feet.

Jesus' action, normally a task reserved for the lowest servant, has been understood as an example of the humble service that characterised the whole of his life culminating in his death on the cross.

On another occasion amidst the squabbles of disciples about their status in God's kingdom Jesus

James Beaton

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### Editorial

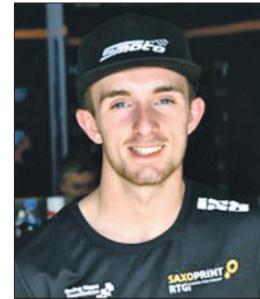
**News**

# Good start to the season as McPhee finishes 5th in Qatar

'I just couldn't pass anyone until that final lap'

STARTING in fifth position on the grid at Qatar, John McPhee would have hoped to gain a podium place in his opening race of the Moto3 World Championship 2015.

But the 20-year-old was plagued by engine problems for most of



John McPhee

the race, giving him less power to work with.

McPhee eventually fought his way back up the field to finish in position, giving him a solid start to the season.

The RSF-backed Saxo-Print-RTG rider made up two places at the start of Sunday's race to circulate in third but the chances of making further progress were quickly dashed by a mystery top-end power delivery glitch.

The gremlin, which plagued the Connell man for all but the final lap of the race, left him at the mercy of his fellow front-runners.

With five laps to go he had slipped down the order to 13th as attempts to make up lost ground through the corners were thwarted by the cut and thrust of the 17-strong lead group battles.

But McPhee's luck finally took

## Motorcycling

a turn for the better on the last lap as he found a way through the packed field from 12th to fifth.

'I just couldn't pass anyone until that final lap,' he said. 'When I got passed there was just no way I could regain the places. It was a real struggle.'

'We don't know what caused the problem at this stage,' he said. 'But it certainly made life difficult. Fortunately, in the end I was able to carve a way through to take fifth.'

RTG team-mate and pole-sitter Alexis Masbou claimed the race win after scything his way through from sixth on the final madcap lap to take the chequered flag by fewer than three-hundredths of a second ahead of Gresini's Enea Bastianini.



ACTION MAN: Connell's John McPhee in action during the Qatar Moto3 Grand Prix



COACHING: Oban Athletic players Steven MacLeod, David Smith, Craig Campbell and Paul Carmichael are pictured with Argyll and Bute football development officer Martin Rae during an SFA Level 1.1 development coaching course held at Oban high school last Sunday. Athletic's away league game against Antonine was called off last Saturday due to an unplayable pitch. The Oban side are at home this weekend when they take on Third Lanark at the Oban Community Pitch with a 2pm kick-off.

## Lewis turns out for SAFA Select Football

### Football

OBAN Saints front man Lewis Cameron turned out for the Scottish Amateur Football Association Select against an Ayrshire Select at Colville Park Country Club in Motherwell last Sunday.

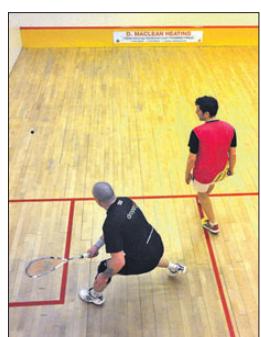
Although he didn't get on the scoresheet, Lewis, one of four new players brought into the international squad, played the full 90 minutes and turned in a good performance.

Scottish team manager Bruce McNaught praised the lads featuring in the squad for the first time and was delighted with their performance.

He said: 'We scored five high quality goals which was a morale booster. All the new players contributed positively to a strong select performance.'



NEW KIT: Sunday primary football league team Oban Saints Ajax and their coaches are pictured in their new playing kit kindly sponsored by Oban contractors D & K Lafferty.



ACTION: Squash players Allan Moore and Paul Kersley in action on the Donald MacLean Heating-sponsored court. 16\_113squash01

## Oban businesses sponsor squash courts

TWO Oban businesses have added their support to Oban squash club by sponsoring the courts at Atlantis Leisure.

MacQueen Bros Self Storage and Donald MacLean Heating have also given the club, which comes under the banner of Oban Tennis and Squash Club, trophies for tournaments.

The sponsorship was announced at the club's

### Squash

recent mixed team tournament and Graham MacQueen of MacQueen Bros was present to also hand over club hoodies he has sponsored.

Mr MacQueen said he was encouraged by the growing numbers of people participating in the sport in Oban.

## Big turnout at gun club's open shoot

AN EXCEPTIONAL turnout of 43 guns took part in this year's Glendaruel and Colintraive Gun Club spring open shoot.

The club's new shooting ground at Glendaruel has been steadily improving and now has a reputation for offering great targets against a clean background.

This has been brought about by a group of hard working members who converted a bare hillside into an established shooting ground in a little over a year.

This year's competition on March 21 saw competitors traveling from as far afield as Stirling, Duror and Oban.

There were two trophies on offer, the Dunans Challenge Open Trophy, originally presented to the Club in 1949, and the Ormidale Trophy, which is restricted to club members.

As well as the 'down the line' event there was a pool trap competition off four pegs giving a more sporting type of target.

The weather was kind and the

### Shooting

light held on well into the afternoon.

The Dunans Challenge Trophy, open to all comers, was won by Gordon Griffiths, Garlochhead, with a score of 144, ex 150 points.

Stuart McNeill, East Kilbride, was second on 142 points.

George Lynn, Dunoon, tied for third place and took the Ormidale Trophy with Kenneth Seath, Bute, and John Kennedy, Stirling, who all scored 138 points.

A very creditable fourth place and top junior was taken by Archie McBride, Dunoon. Archie has made exceptional progress over the last year and is developing into a fine shot.

Fifth place on 136 was another tie between Angus MacDonald, Duror, and Hector MacFadyen, Oban.

Alex Gray, Dunoon, was joined by Ian Beath, Oban and Stuart Davis, Oban in a tie for sixth place with 135 points.



BIG SHOTS: Spring shoot prizewinners, from left: Hector MacFadyen, John Kennedy, Alex Gray, George Lynn, David Mundell, Gordon Griffiths, Stuart Davis, Archie McBride and Kenneth Seath.

## SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

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This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:

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THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £2100

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

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

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.

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## Kilmore do the double Indoor bowls

KILMORE secured the Lorn Bowling League title following the final round of matches last Thursday.

The Lorn side, who won the title just two points ahead of second-placed Cairnaan, had also claimed the Knockout Cup just two days before.

The cup final was played at North Connel on March 24 and Kilmore emerged the winners by defeating Benderloch 9 – 3.

## Dunaverty Am-Am Golf

DUNAVERTY Golf Club is holding its Am-Am competition on Saturday April 11. Tee times are available from the clubhouse on 01586 830677.



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# South shinty decimated by the wet weather

## Marine Harvest Premiership

**LOCHABER** celebrated their first victory of the season on Saturday, when a late goal at Spean Bridge secured the 2-1 win against Kingussie.

After a recent phase of bad luck things seem to be looking up for Lochaber, as goals from Stuart Callison and Findlay MacDonald saw them go through to the next round of the MacTavish cup.

This weekend Lochaber's focus returns to the premiership as they travel to face Kinlochshiel.

Reigning league champions **NEWTONMORE** will be hoping to get their league campaign back on track this Saturday when Oban Camanachd travel north to face them.

Newtonmore's season got off to an impressive start with a 7-1 against Lochaber, but a 1-0 loss away to Inveraray leaves them mid-table after two games.

The side progressed to the quarter-final of the MacTavish cup on Saturday with a 4-1 win at home against Lovat, with goals from Cameron Binnie, Paul Macarthur and two from Glen Mackintosh in the last three minutes sealing the win.

Saturday's game throws-up at 2.30pm in Newtonmore.

**OBAN CAMANACHD** manager Gussie Campbell says this weekend's opponents Newtonmore are still the team to beat, despite 'More slipping up against their previous south opponents.

The defending league champions lost 1-0 at Inveraray a fortnight ago but a 4-1 MacTavish Cup win last weekend saw them back on form.

Ahead of his team's trip north, Campbell said: 'As we have seen from the results so far this season, anyone can beat anyone in this league but I still think Newtonmore are the team to beat if you want to win anything.'

'We will be going there to get something. If we do, it is a bonus but if we don't, then we need to know we have played our best.'

Camanachd will be without defender Keith MacMillan, who has impressed in the early part of the season, but the man he replaced, James MacMillan, has served his suspension and will come back into the team.

**KINGUSSIE** travel to Kiltarlity to face Lovat this Saturday in the Marine Harvest Premiership.

The side currently sit in sixth place, with one win and one loss in the league this season.

There was disappointment on Saturday when they lost 2-1 to Lochaber in the RBS MacTavish cup. A goal in 35 minutes from Savio Genini was not enough to overcome a strong Lochaber side, who now progress to the quarter finals of the tournament.

Saturday's tie with Lovat will throw-up at 2.30pm at Balgate.

**FORT WILLIAM** are set to welcome Inveraray on Saturday, following a free weekend last week.

## Shinty

The An Aird boys will be looking for their first win of the season after losing their only two fixtures of the premiership so far, going down 2-1 in games against Lovat and Kingussie.

It will also be Fort William's first game of the season at An Aird. Throw up at 2.30pm.

**KYLES ATHLETIC** will be hoping a cancelled fixture last weekend will not derail what is looking a promising season already.

Kyles sit top of the Marine Harvest Premiership - the only team with a 100 per cent record intact - and travel to Drumnadrochit to face Glenurquhart this weekend.

Last weekend's tie at home to Kinlochshiel was rained off.

**GLENURQUHART** have the chance to go top of the Marine Harvest Premiership this Saturday, when they take on league leaders Kyles Athletic.

Billy McLean's men currently sit second, equal on points with Kinlochshiel and Lovat.

The side have progressed to the quarter-finals of this year's RBS MacTavish cup after a 1-0 win against Beauly on Saturday, Billy Urquhart's strike in the 24th minute separating the sides.

Saturday's tie will throw-up at 2.30pm at Blairbeg park.

**LOVAT** fans won't be celebrating three-in-a-row in the MacTavish Cup after the side crashed out to Newtonmore in the first round on Saturday.

Greg Matheson's 66th-minute strike was a consolation for the Kiltarlity side as Newtonmore managed to put four past John MacRitchie's men.

The side play host to Kingussie this Saturday, and MacRitchie wants to keep the momentum going in the league, with the club sitting joint-second.

'Obviously we're disappointed after winning the cup the last two years in a row,' said MacRitchie.

'They got two late goals, but in the first half we played well and the game was pretty even. The strong wind across the park kind of ruined the game, but all credit to Newtonmore, they were the better team on the day.'

Looking to Saturday's tie, MacRitchie said he was quietly confident that his side could come away with the win.

If we play like we have the past two games, we'll be looking at taking the points,' he said.

Saturday's tie throws up at 2.30pm at Balgate.

**INVERARAY** travel to An Aird on Saturday, hoping that a confidence-boosting win over Newtonmore will lead to more success.



CLOSE SHAVE: Connor Cormack, Beauly and Neale Reid, Glenurquhart, in a tussle for the ball during their RBS MacTavish Cup first round tie held at Braeview Park. Glenurquhart won a close game 1-0 Photo: Neil Paterson

'Aray pulled off the shock of the season so far with a win over the Badenoch men but were unable to build momentum, as last weekend's match against Argyll rivals Oban Camanachd was rained off.

Manager Garry MacPherson said last weekend's postponement gave this Saturday's trip extra importance.

He said: 'We were disappointed we couldn't play last weekend because we had everyone available, everyone was motivated and keen to train.'

'When you get a result like the one we did against Newtonmore you have to win your next game to make it worthwhile. That means getting something from this weekend.'

MacPherson said a new management team and a reshuffle of his players had contributed to Inveraray's recent success.

**KINLOCHSHIEL** will hope to keep their undefeated league record alive when they play hosts to Lochaber this Saturday in the Marine Harvest Premiership.

The side's tricky away tie with top-of-the-table Kyles fell foul of the bad weather at the weekend, with the field deemed unplayable.

A win on Saturday for Kinlochshiel could see them leapfrog to the top of the league, dependant on other results, with top-two sides Kyles and Glenurquhart facing each other.

Saturday's tie will throw-up at 2.30pm at Kirkton.

## National Division

A waterlogged pitch was a blessing in disguise for **KILMALLIE** as two key players recover from their game.

Ryan Stewart has a hamstring injury while Alan MacDonald is suffering from a broken rib and both would have been unfit to play Saturday's home game against Caberfeidh.

Manager Mark MacPherson said: 'The weather was shocking. Our park was like a swimming pool. There's no way we could have played.'

'In a way it was lucky for us because we were missing two strong players but we've just got to get on with it.'

This weekend Kilmallie will play Saturday's postponed MacTavish Cup clash at Canal Park.

MacPherson said: 'I'm quietly confident as usual. We're likely to still be missing Ryan and Alan but I think the young boys are capable of stepping up to do it for us if need be.'

**SKYE** will head to Inverness on

Saturday for what will be their second game of the season.

The islanders have only played one fixture in the national division so far and had a free weekend after securing a point from the 1-1 draw against Caberfeidh the previous week.

Despite the slow start, manager John MacLeod thinks his team has what it takes to perform in the Highland capital.

He said: 'There are no easy games in the league but we'll go in and give it a good go. Inverness are under new management under Drew MacNeil so will be well-organised but we're hopeful.'

The first team have a full squad but the second team, also to play Inverness in national division two, will be without Jamie Gannon.

**BALLACHULISH** will attempt

players a run out this week and I'm sticking to that.'

**KILMORY** will try again to play their Celtic Cup match in Oban Camanachd and Inveraray, based on the ages of players in these two junior sides.

Like Lochside, Inveraray seconds currently field a large number of players from that final, in which Inveraray defeated Oban Camanachd.

The Mid Argyll side will welcome a game, having only played once this season, a defeat to Lochside Rovers at this Saturday's venue, Mossfield.

**OBAN CELTIC** will again attempt to play Kilmory this Saturday for a place in the next round of the Celtic Cup and for the club's Robert Wylie memorial trophy.

The annual Robert Wylie trophy match this year will be the first to be played since Robert's father, Bob, died last year. A special man-of-the-match award will be presented in Bob's memory.

**STRACHUR** face a stern test this weekend at home to Ballachulish in the Celtic Cup in what could be a major turning point in either team's season.

The nether Lochaber side have found it tough going in the national division but will be keen to get a result in Cowal.

Strachur, meanwhile, have found South Division One especially difficult and sit bottom after two games.

**BUTE** will face a tough test at Glenorchy this weekend as the two teams who opted to drop down from the national division this season face off in the Gregor Cameron Consultancy Celtic Cup.

**South Division Two**

**OBAN LORN** face their toughest test of their maiden season so far when they host Glasgow Mid Argyll this Saturday in a top-of-the-table clash.

GMA currently lead Marine Harvest South Division Two, with the new boys from Oban taking up second spot with a 100 per cent record.

This perfect start was aided last weekend by a walkover against Ballachulish.

**North Division Two**

**GLENLORCHY** will be without their top scorer Stuart Gregory on Saturday due to work commitments.

Despite this, manager Ewen Cameron has high hopes for the away game against Strathspey.

He said: 'We're looking forward to it, we didn't have a game this weekend so it'll be good to get back into it.'

Stuart Gregory is working and he's our lead goal scorer. We're also losing Martin Cameron because he's injured but I think we can still get on okay without them. I don't know much about Strathspey. We haven't played them for two or three years. I hear they're playing on a small pitch now [Granton grammar school] and we're used to a big one so we'll need to watch out for that but I think we'll be fine.'



## Fixtures

**Saturday April 4**  
**RBS MacTavish Cup**  
1st Round  
Kilmallie v Caberfeidh  
Ewan MacRae - 12pm

**Gregor Cameron Consultancy Celtic Society Cup** 1st Round  
Glenorchy v Bute  
Robert Baxter  
Oban Celtic v Kilmory  
Billy Wotherspoon  
Strachur Ballachulish  
Ewen MacDonald  
Taynuilt v Aberdour  
Ronnie Campbell

**Marine Harvest Premiership**  
Fort William v Inveraray  
Lachie Wood  
Glenurquhart v Kyles Athletic  
David Stafford  
Kinlochshiel v Lochaber  
Deek Cameron  
Lovat v Kingussie  
Innes Wood  
Newtonmore v Oban Camanachd  
Graham Cameron

**Marine Harvest National Division**  
Glasgow Mid Argyll v Beauly  
David Mitchell  
Inverness v Skye  
Archie Ritchie

**Marine Harvest North Division 1**  
Beauly v Glenurquhart  
Andy MacLean  
Kingussie v Lovat  
Calum Girvan  
Lochcarron v Fort William  
John Matheson  
Strathglass v Kinlochshiel  
Ron Kennedy

**Marine Harvest South Division 1**  
Inveraray v Lochside Rovers  
Euan Pearson

**Marine Harvest North Division 2**  
Boleskine v Aberdeen University TBA  
Lochaber v Caberfeidh  
Alex MacVicar  
Kilmallie v Lewis TBA  
Skye v Inverness  
Martin MacLean  
Strathspey v Glengarry  
Rab MacAskill - 1.30

**Marine Harvest South Division 2**  
Bute v Ballachulish  
Jim Innes  
Col Glen v Glenorchy  
Stuart Carmichael  
Oban Lorn v Glasgow MA  
John Wood  
Tayforth v Aberdour  
Jon Gallagher

(Throw ups 2.30pm unless stated)

## Results

**Saturday March 28**

**RBS MacTavish Cup**

1st Round

Beauly 0 - 1 Glenurquhart

Inverness 4 - 2 Strathglass

Kilmallie P - P Caberfeidh

Unplayable Field

Lochaber 2 - 1 Kingussie

Newtonmore 4 - 1 Lovat

**Gregor Cameron Consultancy Celtic Society Cup** 1st Round

Glenorchy P - P Bute

Unplayable field

Oban Celtic P - P Kilmory

Due to bereavement

Strachur P - P Ballachulish

Unplayable field

Taynuilt P - P Aberdour

Unplayable field

**Marine Harvest Premiership**  
Inveraray P - P Oban Camanachd  
Unplayable field

Kyles Athletic P - P Kinlochshiel

Unplayable field

**Marine Harvest North Division 1**

Fort William P - P Beauly

Unplayable field

Glenurquhart 0 - 0 Newtonmore

Kingussie 2 - 2 Kinlochshiel

Lovat 3 - 1 Lochcarron

**Marine Harvest Division 1**

Inveraray P - P Lochside Rovers

Unplayable field

**Marine Harvest North Division 2**

Boleskine 1 - 3 Lewis

Caberfeidh 2 - 2 Aberdeen Uni

Inverness P - P Kilmall

Hearts will make a return to Oban tournament

## Football



Craig Levein

HEART of Midlothian FC, newly promoted to the Scottish Premier League, will make a welcome return to the annual D & K Lafferty Tournament to be held in Oban on Saturday July 11.

The Edinburgh side last made an appearance in 2012 when they won the impressive trophy but were unable to defend it in 2013 due to the turmoil the Edinburgh club was in.

Oban Saints club secretary David Buchanan who organises the tournament said: 'I received a phone call from Hearts Director of Football Craig Levein last week asking if we had a space for them to return to the competition after an absence of three years and I was delighted to tell him we had.'

Hearts will be taking a squad of 24 players and 10 staff to the tournament and are looking forward to competing in Oban again.

David said: 'Craig is no stranger to Oban and has backed our tournament for a number of years taking the Dundee United first team squad on three occasions when he was the manager at Tannadice so we are delighted that he has decided to come back again, this time with Hearts.'

'This means we have three SPL teams as well as Hearts taking part - Dundee United, St Johnstone and Hamilton Accies along with Scottish First Division Alloa Athletic.'

'Hamilton and Alloa will also be taking their first team squads to Oban with United and St Johnstone fielding mainly under 20 squads strengthened by several first team players.'

Oban Lorne	<b>43</b>
Waysiders Drumpellier	<b>13</b>
BT West Division Two	

IT NEEDED a score from their opponents last Saturday for Oban Lorne to get into gear and eventually deliver the expected victory over Waysiders.

The Green Machine had recorded their biggest win of the season away to Waysiders 55-0 in Coatbridge early in the season, so the Oban side were expecting to take full points from the return fixture at Glencruitten.

Coach Corrie Louw made changes to his side with Carl Lay, Allan Wright and Dave McCabe coming into a strong team.

Oban knew a win would narrow the gap on Cambuslang at the top of the league to two points and they took the lead after 10 minutes of play. After a period of pressure and successive penalties conceded by the away side close to the opposition line, Oban number eight Corrie Louw was taken down just short of the line but arriving opposition players at the breakdown were judged to be slowing the ball down illegally - penalty try for Oban Lorne.

Craig Wright kicked to extend the lead to 7-0.

Waysiders replied after 15 minutes to narrow the gap to 7-3 before Oban scored their second of the day from second row Max Noordenbos. The big second row gathered the ball out wide after some good handling through the

backline and touched down in the left hand corner.

Wright again converted for a 14-3 lead.

Oban looked to build on their lead before the break but were undone with some poor discipline at the breakdown, which kept the visiting team in the game. Waysiders hit back before half time with another penalty to give a score of 14-6 after 40 minutes.

Waysiders made a great start to the second half by narrowing the score to 14-13 with a well worked try. A break from halfway resulted in the Waysiders pack pressurising the Oban line.

After several pick-and-go phases, the visitors eventually found the tryline and got themselves briefly back into the game.

Oban's frustrations at conceding a score seemed to drive the team on as they hit back immediately with their third try of the afternoon.

Lorne MacLachlan touched down from the result of a superb driving maul from a lineout taken 20 metres out and this score opened the floodgates.

Winger Palato Miosiadis scored again shortly after, securing the try bonus point. Oban's Greek winger gathered a fantastic offload from Andy MacDougall to dive over in the corner.

Oban scored three further tries in an entertaining final 15 minutes of play. Man-of-the-match Carl Lay scored as a result of a fantastic, powerful run from

BT West Division Two	P	W	D	L	Pts
Cambuslang	17	13	4	0	64
Oban Lorne	15	12	2	1	61
Stewartby	16	10	6	0	48
Strathendrick	14	9	5	0	42
McLaren *	13	8	4	1	37
Paisley	14	6	8	0	30
Cumbernauld	14	5	9	0	26
Waysiders Drumpellier	16	4	11	1	23
Clydebank	14	4	9	1	21
Uddington *	13	0	13	0	0

\*Points deduction has been applied



SUPPORT: Oban Electrical Services (OES) is supporting local football at all ages after purchasing new strips for its own works team and the primary school-aged Oban Swifts team. The senior team played a CalMac select on March 22 in a highly-charged match and despite trailing 4-0 at half time, OES discovered their creative spark in the second half to salvage a 5-5 draw.



OUCH: Oban Lorne's Calum MacLachlan hands off a Wayside Drumpellier defender during last Saturday's match at Glencruitten

substitute flanker Calum MacLachlan. A break from the Oban backline allowed centre Craig Wright to set up replacement scrum half Graham MacEachan, whose try took the score to 36-13.

The try of the day was scored at the death; a great individual effort from Calum MacLachlan as he took possession at the lineout and easily battered past four opposition defenders from 35 metres out to end the scoring of the day.

Oban's opponents this Saturday

are bottom side Uddington, kick off 3pm at Glencruitten.

The club will be hosting its

## Rugby

annual club dinner this Saturday night in the clubhouse.

Tickets are available at £25 from the Regent Hotel and include a three-course meal and entertainment from guest speakers.

## Oban High are National Bowl champions



CHAMPIONS: Oban High School under-15 girls are National Bowl champions after beating Ayr 50-24 at Murrayfield last Friday. The school's under-18 girls also played at the national stadium but lost out to a strong Caithness team in their final.



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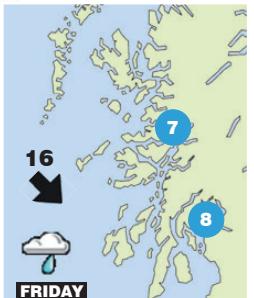
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### WEATHER

Thursday	Cloudy Winds light east south easterly Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.
Friday	Light rain Winds moderate north westerly Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.
Weekend Outlook	Light rain showers on Saturday Cloudy on Sunday Winds light north north westerly Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.



### TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, April 2, 2015 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm	Ardriishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Thur	04.31	3.5	11.18	1.1	16.58	3.6
Fri	05.05	3.7	11.46	1.0	17.31	3.8
Sat	05.39	3.8	12.14	0.9	18.02	3.9
Sun	06.12	0.8	06.10	3.9	12.42	0.9
Mon	06.43	0.8	06.39	3.9	13.10	0.9
Tues	01.12	0.9	07.05	3.8	13.33	1.0
Wed	01.40	1.0	07.32	3.3	13.56	1.1
					19.55	3.6

### Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

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**Big game for Saints this weekend**

## Football

OBAN Saints face a massive game on Saturday when they travel to take on high flying St Joseph's in a premier division league game at William Street Park, Dunoon.

If the Oban side have any aspirations of retaining the league title they won last season, they can't afford to lose this game.

Manager Iain Jackson said: 'This is a big game for both teams. St Joe's beat us 5-2 in Oban earlier in the season and I was very impressed with them, but we've hit a bit of form recently with good wins against Haldane and Jamestown so it should be a cracking game on Saturday.'

Last Saturday's away game against Kings Park Rangers was called off after a pitch inspection found the pitch to be flooded.

## Scottish Amateur League results and fixtures

## Football

LAST Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division - Kings Park Rangers v Oban Saints postponed; Campbeltown Pupils no game; Premier Division One - East Kilbride Rolls Royce 5, Dunoon 1; Premier Division Two - Dunoon Athletic 4, Motherwell Thistle 6; South Camlachie 0, Lochgilphead Red Star 4; Division 1B - Tarbert v Carlton YM postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: Premier Division - St Joseph's FP v Oban Saints; Campbeltown Pupils no game; Premier Division One - Dunoon v Jamestown; Division 1B - Tarbert v Rossvale.

Oban Saints youths results and fixtures

## Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Westerton Utd v Under-13s, postponed; Helensburgh 2, Under-14s 5. Scoring for Saints were Cameron Kerr (3), Sol Smith and Scott Mossman. Milngavie v Under-15s postponed; Blairdardie 3, Under-16s 3. On target for Saints were Ross MacMillan (2) and Cooper. Milngavie v Under-19s postponed.

Both Saints Under 15 and Under 19 teams had travelled to fulfill their fixtures against Milngavie when they were contacted half way through their journeys to say that their games were off due to the pitches being waterlogged.

The youth teams have a break this weekend due to the Easter holidays.

## Fishing season opens on Loch Awe

### Angling

ON A bright and breezy opening day of the 2015 brown trout season, 12 boats ventured out from Loch Awe Boats' yard at Ardbrecknish, returning with mixed brown trout catches.

The best club boat return and winner of the Opening Day Quaich for fly-caught trout was Jane Wright with three trout and two returned.

Also taken from the boats by trolled lure were two brown trout of more than 17lbs, one at 12 pounds and one at more than six pounds, all returned.



Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

# The Oban Times

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## Cemetery access gate is barrier too far for graveside visitors

RESIDENTS of a rural Lochaber village have found themselves unable to enter the local cemetery, writes Emma Crichton, after a heavy gate was put up across the only access road.

Angry Strontian villagers say the owners of Drimnartoran Farm, who also own the road, have been causing problems with entry since they moved there three years ago.

But the ongoing row reached a peak last week when the large gate was erected 300 yards from the entrance to the cemetery, preventing anyone getting through without help.

Strontian resident Tony Dobson called the behaviour 'unacceptable'.

He said: 'There is no lock on the gate yet and I've been told they won't be allowed to put one on because it's a public access road but even erecting the gate is causing major problems.'

'The gate swings closed by itself and there's nothing to keep it open so to get through with a car you need to have two people there, one to hold the gate open while the other drives the car through.'

'The alternative is for people to leave their car on the main road and walk 300 yards to lay flowers for their late partner, family or friend. I find this totally wrong and unacceptable for an elderly, infirm or disabled person to be put through.'

A Highland council spokeswoman confirmed farm owners Melvin and Sally Shaw own the road and were entitled to put a gate across it, but public access to the cemetery should 'remain at all times'.

But it is not only entry to the graveyard concerning Mr Dobson: his elderly friends live on the cemetery side of the gate and now can't leave their home alone.

Mr Dobson said: 'It's terrible, Mr and Mrs Oddy are in their 80s but because of this big gate they must always go out together because one of them needs to

hold the gate open. They're effectively trapped and I just can't understand why the Shaws would do this.'

'Since they moved in they've been putting up signs saying "private road" and "no dogs" and the community council has been trying to work with them on this but when the gate went up that was the final straw for me.'

It is understood the owners had allowed their goats to roam into the cemetery and visitors were devastated to see the animals had eaten flowers and plants left at the graves of loved ones.

Brian Evans, chairman of Sunart community council, said he thought they had been making progress in negotiations with the Shaws until the gate appeared last week.

He said: 'After the incident with the goats, someone from the community council spoke to the owners and they have been contained since, so we thought we were getting somewhere but the fact the gate is now up shows we're not.'

'We've written to them, emailed them and even invited them along to a community council meeting so they can explain their behaviour but they've refused to respond.'

'Although the gate isn't locked, it's stopping people getting in and it's really heavy so that's no use for elderly or disabled people.'

Now Mr Dobson has decided to arrange weekly visits to the cemetery to emphasise their right to visit.

He said: 'In order that we don't lose our right of access by default I would invite all locals and anybody it may concern to accompany me on a weekly visit to the cemetery either on foot or by car accompanied by their dogs.'

'We must not allow the Shaws to alter a right that has existed for centuries.'

When contacted by the *Oban Times*, Mr Shaw declined to comment on the issue.



### Wind band exhibits the Midas touch

Lochaber high school senior wind band received a 'gold plus' award at a competition in Perth. The group was one of seven bands from across the country competing at the Scottish concert band festival final on Sunday. But only Lochaber and one other band were awarded 'gold plus' by the adjudicator, who praised the wind band for 'team work and musicality'.

### Future spoken for in new languages

COUNCILS in the Highlands and islands are to benefit from £467,000 in Scottish government funding to support language learning.

The money has been allocated to Highland, Argyll and Bute and Eilean Siar authorities to boost bilingualism in their regions as part of a national investment of £7.2 million.

Each council can decide how their share is spent: from teacher training to employ-

ing language assistants. Highland council received £323,000, Argyll and Bute were given £109,000 and £35,000 went to Eilean Siar.

Dr Alasdair Allan, the Scottish government's minister for learning, announced the funding.

He said: 'In today's multi-cultural world it is more important than ever that young people have the opportunity to learn languages from an early age. We want to

ensure the enthusiasm for languages starts at an early stage in a child's education.'

'The ability to speak different languages will equip Scotland's young people with the skills and competencies needed in a 21st century global marketplace.'

'This additional funding will help schools and teachers in the Highlands and Islands plan for and continue their good work inspiring and supporting children to learn new languages.'

### TIMESLINE

#### Hopes of power to Morvern people

A COMMUNITY group in Morvern has applied to lease an area of woodland to develop hydro power schemes.

Morvern community development company (MCDCC) hopes to generate low carbon electricity from Barr River and Alt Achadh Forsa in Fiunary forest to create an income to support local projects.

But first Forestry Commission Scotland must approve lease of the national forest land and run an open consultation about the plans.

A full report can be found on the Forestry commission website and comments should be sent to malcolm.wield@forestry.gov.uk by April 27 or to Malcolm Wield, Forestry Commission Scotland, Highland Conservancy, 'Woodlands', Fodderty Way, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9XB.

#### Education award

THE HARD WORK of volunteers at the Lochaber Rural Education Trust was recognised at a national awards ceremony at the weekend.

It was one of six organisations shortlisted in the education category of the Scottish countryside rural awards and received a highly commended accreditation for their work with local schoolchildren.

#### All change at pub

AN APPLICATION to change an old pub in Fort William to a shop has been lodged with Highland council.

The former Station Bar on High Street, popular for karaoke and open mic nights, closed its doors in February and this week owners submitted a change of use application to the local authority.



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### Health centre land tops locations for new Broadford hospital site

NHS HIGHLAND says land between Dr MacKinnon Memorial hospital and the health centre in Broadford is the preferred site for a new hospital on Skye.

But the NHS board has stressed that this is based on quality factors and that a final site selection will be subject to other considerations.

The news comes following a meeting in Portree on March 19, when four possible sites were assessed by the steering group, which agreed a number of criteria last year.

NHS Highland's director of operations for its north and west operational unit, Gill McVicar, said: 'The steering group completed the work on appraising sites

which allowed us to rank the sites and from this work, the land between the Mackinnon Memorial hospital and the health centre emerged as the clear preferred site, followed by Broadford industrial estate.

'Before we come to a final decision, however, other important factors such as development costs, the suitability of the land for construction and the environmental impact also have to be considered.'

'This work will be completed by relevant technical experts.'

NHS Highland recognised that while many people from across the area seemed pleased about the new facility, there remained some concerns in the north

of Skye around what services would be provided from Portree.

NHS Highland clinical director Dr Paul Davidson said: 'I would again like to reassure people in the north end of Skye that the vast majority of services in Portree will remain there – and we will be looking to develop some services further. There will still be the same access to the accident and emergency-type facilities and out-patients that exists now in Portree.'

'We will also be looking at the provision of other services both in the facility and within the community.'

NHS Highland hopes to start work on site in around three years' time and complete the project in two years.'



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**Independent is new councillor for Benbecula**

A NEW councillor for Benbecula and North Uist has been elected to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Independent councillor Andrew Walker was named the successful by-election candidate on March 26.

With a turnout of 33.2 per cent, 437 votes went to Mr Walker while his opponent, Scottish national party candidate, Roslyn MacPherson, had 302 votes.

Mr Walker said: 'I wish to record my appreciation to all those who have supported me throughout this by-election campaign, in particular my election agent Roddy MacKay and those who followed me on my Facebook campaign page and who decided to vote for me.'

'I consider it an honour and privilege to be voted in to office to serve as a councillor until the next elections in May 2017. I will endeavour as an independent councillor, with no party affiliation, to work co-operatively with all other councillors and officers of the comhairle, to best represent the needs of all our citizens.'

**Window smashed at medical centre**

POLICE in Lochaber are appealing for information about the following crimes in the area.

A window was smashed at the Pines medical practice, Acharacle, between 6.45pm on March 24 and 2.43 the following morning.

Between 4.10pm and 4.30pm on March 25 a purse was removed from a handbag in the reception area of the Isles of Glencoe hotel, Ballachulish, and items from the purse were stolen.

An unknown person threw a rock at the window of a property in Brown Court, Fort William, at around 10.15pm on March 27, damaging the window.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to contact local police by calling 101 or contacting Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800555111 or [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).

**Patient comfort questionnaire**

A FOUR-WEEK trial is being carried out by senior nurses at Raigmore hospital in order to make more people comfortable in hospital.

People attending the Inverness hospital for planned surgery will be sent a questionnaire to be completed before their admission asking them what their five 'must dos' are when they are in hospital.

The questions include who and what matters to the patient, what information is needed and how care can be personalised to the individual.

NHS Highland lead nurse for Raigmore Iona McGauran said: 'When someone is coming in to hospital, we want that experience to go as smoothly as possible. We want to work with the patient to ensure that their experience is the best it can be.'

# Staff recruitment delays Mallaig care home re-opening by months

A LOCHABER elderly care home may remain closed into the summer if new staff are not employed quickly.

The Mackintosh centre in Mallaig has been closed since July last year amid allegations of resident abuse by some staff members and has yet to reopen, despite original assurances by NHS Highland it would only be closed for four to six weeks.

Now, nine months later, a spokesman for the health authority said it was 'looking at reopening' the care home in May, but only if new staff can be found.

## Lochyside's Easter fund raiser helps Mary's Meals

LOCHYSIDE RC primary school pupils enjoyed a fundraising Easter competition in aid of Mary's Meals.

Pictured with the pupils are church sisters Diane (left) and June, who judged the decorated eggs and bonnets.

Also pictured are Father Roddy McAuley of St John's church, Caol, and head teacher Violet Smith.

Mary's Meals is a Dalmally-based charity which provides meals to children attending schools across 12 countries in the developing world. The aim is to get the children into education by providing a free meal each day.



Meanwhile, residents and remaining staff have been transferred to Invernevis house in Fort William, forcing friends and family to travel round trips of more than 80 miles to visit.

Bill Clark, pictured right, Highland councillor for Caol and Mallaig, called the delay 'very disappointing'.

He said: 'Why hasn't this been resolved yet? Councillors had a meeting with people from NHS back in December and after that we fully expected the care home to be up and running again by March. If there have been any

further hold ups with getting staff in we haven't been informed and I hope there haven't been any more hold ups - that would be very disappointing. I have no idea why there is still an issue with staff but it needs to get solved soon.'

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'NHS Highland continues to progress the recruitment and training of staff to allow us to reopen the Mackintosh centre.'

'We are looking at reopening in May. This will only be on the premise we have appropriate staffing levels to support delivery of a safe service to residents.'

Councillor Thomas MacLennan, leader of Lochaber area committee, added: 'This situation has gone on for far too long. Serious steps have to be taken

to solve this problem and solve it soon.'

A spokesman for NHS Highland said: 'NHS Highland continues to progress the recruitment and training of staff to allow us to reopen the Mackintosh centre.'

'We are looking at reopening in May. This will only be on the premise we have appropriate staffing levels to support delivery of a safe service to residents.'

NHS Highland temporarily closed the home for investigations after anonymous allegations of 'institutional abuse' and suspended some members of staff.

## Right time to review committees

'ONE-SIZE does not fit all' was the message given at the last meeting of Highland council as members agreed to a review of area committees over the next two years.

Reporting to council, Carron McDiarmid head of policy and reform, thanked those who helped compile a report on local committees.

She said: 'There are new duties coming to public bodies this summer under the communities empowerment legislation.'

'These will support new rights for individuals and communities and we need to find new ways to respond to these locally. The review of area committees is coming at a time when we need to look at local community planning arrangements and help partnerships to evolve.'

'Taken together we have an opportunity to encourage more people to be involved in decisions affecting them, bring more public services under local democratic scrutiny, and create more local solutions.'

Members agreed to take into account various forums for local decision-making.

## Call to lift 'unfair' 2p surcharge

THE LEADER of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has welcomed a UK government consultation on equalising electricity prices.

But councillor Angus Campbell called for action to be taken quickly to remove the 2p per unit surcharge that consumers in the north of Scotland face.

Speaking in Stornoway at a conference on fuel poverty, he said: 'This surcharge of 2p per unit is unfair and uncalled for and has had a serious impact on fuel poverty in the islands.'

'The comhairle, along with other bodies such as the Outer Hebrides poverty action group and the Highlands and Islands affordable warmth campaign, has made the case to both the Westminster and Holyrood governments to have the surcharged removed.'

'This has been challenging, but I am pleased to hear that the chancellor has announced a consultation on this issue.'

'This is due to take place over the summer with a view to implementing any recommendations by next year.'

'The consultation is, of course, welcome, but I would urge the government to act swiftly on this.'



## Caledonian canal breach plugged

A BREACH on the Caledonian Canal, south of Fort Augustus, has been closed.

Passage through the canal has been stopped for almost a month after heavy rain and snow-melt saw a weir near Cullochy partially washed away.

A spokeswoman for Scottish Canals said the breach had been successfully closed on Tuesday and work was ongoing to open the water to navigation on April 30.

She said: 'Further piling is now being installed past the breach and tied into the embankment and will also be installed along the opposite side of the weir to protect it from the River Oich. Material will then be placed either side of the sheet piling to stabilise it.'

'Once this has been completed, we will be in a position to start removing the temporary dam at Aberchalder bridge.'

'We are still confident of opening to navigation on April 30.'

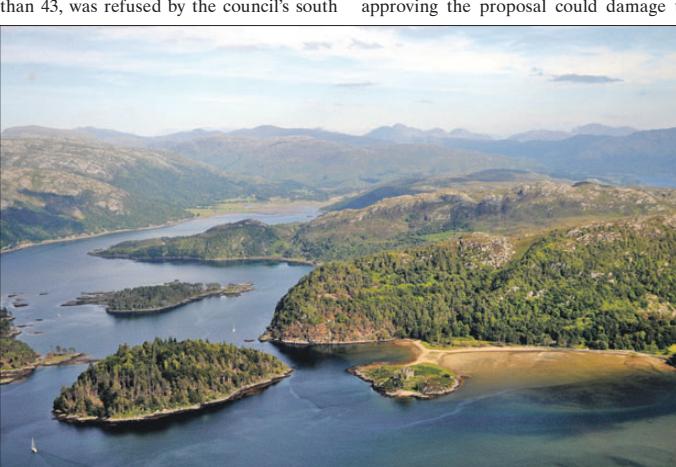
## Shellfish farm decision on the table

HIGHLAND councillors were due to decide yesterday (Wednesday) whether to approve a controversial proposal to expand a shellfish farm in a scenic Ardnamurchan loch.

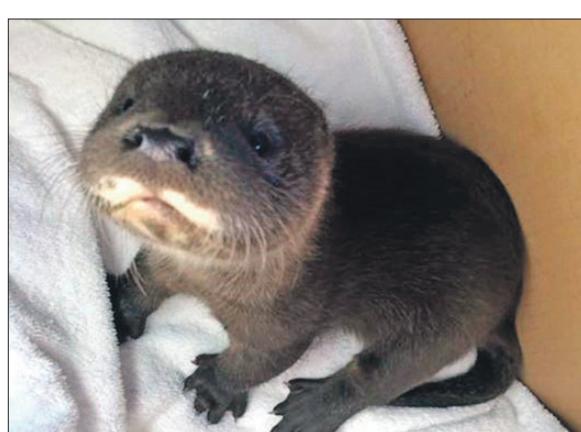
A similar planning application lodged by aquaculture company, Measan na Mara limited, to increase the oyster farm at Loch Moidart from just under five acres to more than 43, was refused by the council's south

planning committee in September last year. This time, the site has been reduced to 26 acres but has still prompted more than 60 objections from nearby residents, Acharacle community council and visitors.

Those opposed say the scenic loch, which will be home to 9,500 oyster trestles, is inappropriate for production of this size and approving the proposal could damage the



Loch Moidart, the site of the proposed extended oyster farm. Photo Iain Thornber



Puddle: a rescued otter cub who is moving from Cumbria to Skye.

## Puddle jumps to isle of Skye

AN OTTER from Cumbria has been given a new home in Skye in the International Otter Survival Fund shelter.

The cub was found on a steep-sided ditch full of water last Saturday, and cared for by a volunteer in the area before he was brought to the island.

Paul Yoxton, head of operations at the Skye-based charity, said: 'On Saturday evening we had a call to say a tiny cub had been found in a steep-sided ditch full of water in

Cumbria. We immediately contacted our friend Sarah Neill, who has helped with many cubs in the area, and of course she was straight on to the case. 'Liz Still, who had found him, was able to care for him overnight and Sarah picked him up yesterday morning. Although he is very small he is already eating mashed up trout and he will soon get a check over by the vet. 'Liz wanted to call him Puddle because of where he was found, and we all agree this is a great name.'

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# Police Twitter merger talk just a 'box-ticking exercise'

**EUAN PATERSON**  
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

THE LATEST part of a police consultation over a divisional merger that would see Argyll's decision makers moved to Paisley has been branded a 'box-ticking exercise' and 'spin'.

Police Scotland, which needs to save £10.9 million this year, proposes to merge L (Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire) and K (Renfrewshire and Inverclyde) divisions, with the new division's headquarters based at Paisley. L Division's headquarters is currently in Dumbarton, which could close as a result of a merger.

The police service said the merger would not affect the number of constables on the beat in Argyll but would reduce the number of senior officers and 'strengthen local policing'. Oban has already lost its permanent chief inspector post.

A consultation on the merger is being conducted by Police Scotland; the latest method of community contact came on Monday during a Twitter question and answer session with the hashtag #commanderchat.

The Twitter exercise and the consultation as a whole have come in for criticism from two MSPs: John Finnie, a retired police officer, and shadow cabinet member Jackie Baillie, who said the public believed a decision had already been made.

Mr Finnie, who represents the Highlands and Islands, said: 'Police Scotland keep using the phrase "strengthening local policing" but I don't think they are doing that by taking the chief inspector out of Oban and moving the headquarters to Paisley.'

The language is very important and it has become apparent that Police Scotland's understanding of the term "consultation" is not mine. They have put out a proposal and sought comments on it



John Finnie

without any suggestion that they have any intention of altering their plan.'

Mrs Baillie, whose constituency is Dumbarton, was very active in the #commanderchat conversation but was 'disappointed' she was unable to get straight answers to questions on officer numbers after the merger.

She said: 'As much as I think Twitter might be the new social medium, I don't think many people engaged. I am genuinely disappointed because with Twitter, which limits each tweet to 140 characters, there is no space for spin. We expected straight answers but we didn't get them.'

Adding the merger would also see the loss of many experienced officers, she said: 'In my view



Chf Supt Helen Swann

this merger is nothing more than a cost cutting exercise. The L and K divisions cover an area from Tiree to Clydebank, it just doesn't make sense. The loss of headquarters in Dumbarton would mean a reduction in service this side of the river (Clyde).'

Mr Finnie said he had not participated in #commanderchat but commented: 'It appears nothing meaningful was shared, however Police Scotland will be able to tick the "we engaged with the public via social media box" on their computer in central Scotland.'

Chief Superintendent Swann, commander of L Division, said the Twitter exercise was just one way of consulting the public and that the force had also engaged with more than 400 individuals, organisations and community representatives including local councillors, MPs, MSPs and community councils.

She said this would ensure the force was 'fully informed of the views and concerns of our communities, and any decisions are based on what best serves the needs of the public'.

Chf Supt Swann added: 'I would like to highlight that the division's local officers are just part of the picture and should not be considered as the only resources available to respond to community priorities. We often access national and regional resources such as specialist units and major investigation teams.'

'I'd like to reassure the residents of Argyll that this proposal is about strengthening local policing. By reducing senior management posts and removing duplication, we can continue to deliver a service which is both efficient and meets the needs of our people and communities.'

'Local policing in Argyll and Bute will continue to be delivered by the two local area commanders, from the current locations embedded in the community.'



RURAL RECOGNITION: Duncan, left, and Brian Swinbanks, centre receive the Rural Hero award

## Brothers are local heroes

TWO BROTHERS from the Isle of Mull have been named rural 'heroes' for their work across a number of community projects in the island.

Tobermory's Brian and Duncan Swinbanks jointly received the Rural Hero award at the inaugural Scottish

The new awards, held last Thursday at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, are the

first major event of a five-year partnership between Scottish Field magazine and the Scottish Countryside Alliance to celebrate rural businesses.

Brian devotes most of his spare time to the Tobermory Harbour Association and arts projects.

Duncan, who has been heavily involved in the island's swimming pool and rugby club

projects, said: 'It was really nice to win the award with Brian. We both just do things because we enjoy working on projects and working with other people.'

Mull-based councillors Mary Jean Devon and Alastair MacDougall hosted a civic reception for the brothers on Sunday in Tobermory's Hebridean Lodge.

For full story on the Scottish

Rural awards, see page seven.

## TIMELINE

### Flooding scheme would cost £4.7M

SOLUTIONS to Campbeltown's flooding problem could cost as much as £4.7 million.

The town suffered severe flooding in November last year and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the islands councillors will discuss next Wednesday how the local authority can deal with future threats.

A report to the council states the town's water courses were unable to deal with prolonged periods of rain.

### Traffic levels are among UK's lowest

PARTS of the West Highlands have the lowest traffic levels in the UK.

The 2015 Halifax Rural Areas survey found that the Western Isles has 67 vehicles per square kilometre. Next was Highland with 100 per and Argyll and Bute with 126.

The UK average is 8,792 vehicles per square kilometre.

### A&E figures below Holyrood target

THE PERFORMANCE of A&E departments in NHS Highland took a dip last week.

Figures from the Scottish government show that departments in the area treated, discharged or admitted 94.5 per cent of patients, down from 96.6 per cent. The figure is just under the 95-per-cent-within-four-hours target.

### Creaming of the cash for Kintyre

THE SCOTTISH government is set to invest £450,000 in Campbeltown Creamery.

The First Milk plant, which produces the famous Mull of Kintyre cheddar, supports almost 40 dairy farms and 100 jobs on the peninsula.

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**OBAN RESIDENT COMPILES FOUR-YEAR DOSSIER ON FILTHY HABIT THAT BLIGHS THE TOWN'S STREETS AND PARKS**

# Kenny dishes the dirt on messy owners

**STEVEN RAE**  
srae@obantimes.co.uk

THOUGHTLESS owners are messing up the town, according to an Oban resident with a dossier on dog dirt.

Kenny MacLennan dished the dirt, at a meeting of the town's community council on Monday, on people who allow their animals to foul Oban's streets.

Mr MacLennan disclosed the contents of his dossier on dog fouling, which he has compiled since 2011, to the meeting in the Salvation Army hall - complete with pictures and information.

He said the situation had been bad for years near his Pulpit Hill home, despite him reporting it on countless occasions to Argyll

and Bute council. Councillor for Oban North and the Isles Roddy McCuish agreed with Mr MacLennan. He said: 'It needs to be remembered that these are members of our community.'

'It seems these people have lost their pride for the town and how it looks.'

Other Oban residents shared similar stories of irresponsible owners not cleaning up after their pets, including Mairi Bryce, who said dog fouling was almost a daily occurrence near her Craignard Road home.

Speaking after the meeting to the *Oban Times*, retired telecom engineer Mr MacLennan said he was running out of ideas on how to deal with the issue.

He said: 'I've given evidence to

the council directly but it seems nothing gets done. Some filthy dog owners will be dumping their pet's dog mess in my wheelie bin. It's a disgrace.'

'I even added pictures of dog dirt on Facebook and asked if anyone could remember when our town wasn't engulfed with this mess.'

Councillor McCuish told the meeting that people should send any evidence of dog fouling they have to the council offices in Lochgilphead and address the letter for his attention or any of the other ward councillors.

Local councillors Neil MacIntyre, Mary-Jean Devon and Elaine Robertson agreed they would look into the matter if it was brought to their attention.



ACTION CALL: Kenny MacLennan still feels nothing is being done about dog fouling

## 'I think they thought the bus was going to drop into the loch below'

**AMANDA CRAWFORD**  
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'PEOPLE were shaking and in a state of shock.'

Those were the words of Brian Ward, who was travelling with a friend to Tarbert, and was one of the first to race to the aid of passengers of the tour coach which crashed last Thursday on The Rest and Be Thankful hill on the A83.

Also one of those to lend a helping hand was Archie Munro, a Scottish and Southern Electric lead project manager within the transmission customer connections team.

He had been at the Crarae substation site near to Minard and was on his way home to the Central Belt.

Both arrived at the scene just moments after the Lochs and Glens holiday coach, with 52 people on board, crashed last Thursday at 2.10pm.

It had been caught by a gust of wind, tipping it off the road where it rolled

down the embankment and came to a stop upright, next to Loch Restil.

Mr Ward, 67, said: 'We were about the fourth or fifth car to stop. Some other cars stopped and the queue of traffic started to build up.'

'Drivers and passengers from those cars went down the embankment to try to get people out of the bus before the emergency services arrived.'

'I think we managed to get the majority of people out. Some were so shocked that they were shaking.'

'People took the walking wounded back to their cars for warmth and to calm people down. I had two ladies in my car.'

'One of them had been so spooked by the movement of the bus.'

'I think they thought the bus was going to drop into the loch below.'

'The front wheels of the bus were just feet away from the water.'

'They were very lucky that it didn't roll into the loch.'

Mr Munro said: 'Every window was smashed, except the windscreen, and I could see that there were already two other passing drivers who had stopped and were heading down the embankment in order to try and give assistance to the people on the coach.'

The first two men who had reached the coach had managed to force the side door open with the help of the passengers.

'We started to help each of them out of the coach and up the muddy embankment to the ever-growing group of cars and drivers who had also stopped on the A83.'

'There were a few people who had little to no injuries at all and they were obviously able to get up the embankment with just a little assistance to help them remain steady on their feet.'

He gave shelter in his car to two sisters in their 80s, before taking them to Arrochar community centre.

Mr Ward added: 'The winds were so

strong there, it could have taken a car door off its hinges.' The bus was understood to be on its way to Inveraray before a stop at the Loch Fyne Hotel.

Police were joined at the scene by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Argyll and Bute council, the Royal Navy and a mountain rescue team.

Mr Ward said: 'The emergency services were amazing, really fast working and organised, and they did not take long to arrive.'

Six people remain in hospital, where they are being treated for a range of injuries.

One patient is serious but stable at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. Two patients at the Western Infirmary in Glasgow and three patients at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley are all in a stable condition.

A spokeswoman for Police Scotland said inquiries into the incident were still ongoing.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE: police, fire and ambulance crews rushed to the aid of the 52 passengers on board the stricken Loch and Glens tour bus

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## Father backs coach over rugby ban

THE FATHER of a promising young rugby player whose selection by a coach led to a nine-week ban has hit out at the way the game is run in Scotland, writes Steven Rae.

Ashley Stones' son, Rufus, 16, was picked to play for Argyll and Bute's under-16s team, despite being 13 days too old.

As a result, coach Tommy Sutherland, who also plays for Oban Lorne, was banned from playing, coaching and volunteering at any level of the game by the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) for suspending Rufus.

Tommy claimed the SRU initially told him he could play Rufus provided the opposition agreed to it. He met SRU bosses on Wednesday at Murrayfield but his appeal against his ban was rejected.

Mr Stones, who lives in Benderloch, said: 'Rather than punishing a keen and dedicated coach like Tommy and a boy who was carelessly born 13 days too early, they should be thinking of ways to improve the sport in Scotland as a whole.'

'Rufus was picked along with two other boys from Oban to go on the West of Scotland training trip to Perpignan last summer as he showed promise, but then not to be allowed to play for a year because he lives in a rural community is ridiculous.'

There is no under-17s team in the area and he is too young to play under-18s.

Mr Stones has said the SRU should look at the model used by New Zealand when selecting and separating youth players of the game.

He said: 'I've watched a number of the team's games and, whilst Rufus is a talented player and a boost to the team, he's by no means the biggest player on the field.'

'Look at New Zealand, consistently the best in the world and also with large areas of rural countryside, who looked at this problem and brought in a size and weight cut-off for juniors, rather than just using their age.'

'Next year, Rufus will have to play against men the size of Tommy, and will be much more likely to be injured. His other option is to play for a team his age, but the two that have been suggested are in Perth and Inverness, so would involve a huge amount of travelling. It's really disappointing he might have to give up the game after showing such promise.'

Tommy was so angry by the SRU ban that he threatened to hand back the BT Volunteer of the Month trophy he received back in September for his contribution to the game.

## TIMELINE

### Oban crew in early morning call-out

THE CREW of the Oban lifeboat were called out on Tuesday afternoon to transport an elderly man from Mull who needed urgent hospital attention.

The seven-man crew of the Mora Edith MacDonald launched at 4.50pm in near gale-force conditions, arriving in Craignure around 30 minutes after leaving Oban.

They were met by a waiting ambulance, which took the patient and a nurse onto the lifeboat for the journey back to Oban.

Because of the adverse weather conditions, the ferry service had been cancelled earlier in the day, which meant that the Oban lifeboat was called upon to carry out the emergency transfer to the mainland, which is usually a night-time routine.

When the lifeboat arrived back in Oban, the patient was taken by ambulance to Lorn and the Islands hospital.

### South American way in Mid Argyll

A MID Argyll farm is offering treks with a South American flavour.

Alpaca trekking is becoming popular in Scotland and will now be available at North Beachmore Farm on the West Loch.

The farm has a herd of 12 alpacas and plans to start supervised walks from Tarbert, Lochgilphead, Inveraray and surrounding areas this month.

### Extra money will help to raise roof

FOUR churches in Argyll and Bute will receive nearly £200,000 for repairs from the UK government's listed places of worship roof repair fund.

The trustees of St Conan's Kirk at Loch Awe will receive a grant of £51,900.

Ardchattan Kirk, on the shores of Loch Etive, has been awarded a grant of £79,000.

St Kieran's Church, Port Charlotte, Islay, gets a grant of £15,800 and Rhu and Shandon Parish Church receives £49,500.

The funding was announced by the government on March 26.

### Bus goes off road at Barcaldine

A BUS is believed to have been blown off the A828 road at Barcaldine around 1.20pm on Tuesday.

The West Coast Motors vehicle, with no passengers on board, hit a fence and got stuck in mud but the road was not closed.

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## Manager looking for wins against Rothes

Two victories should see Fort William finish in 13th place in the Highland League

**Football**

FORT William manager Calum MacLean is hoping for a double win in upcoming games against Rothes to secure 13th place in the Highland league.

As the home fixture against Fraserburgh scheduled for Saturday was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch, MacLean was looking ahead to next week's games.

The Fort men were due to travel to take on bottom of the league Rothes last night (Wednesday) and will be away to Turriff United on Saturday, before facing Rothes again at Claggan Park next Wednesday.

MacLean said: 'The next two games are away and I think we should do okay. We've been performing better away than at home recently and Rothes especially is

a massive game for us.

'If we can get two wins from the Rothes games we should finish in 13th and I'll be happy with that.'

It has been a successful year for the Fort, after finishing bottom of the league for the last two seasons, but the Claggan men were defeated in their last three fixtures.

Speaking of the most recent game last Wednesday, when his side went down 3-2 at home against Clachnacuddin, MacLean said: 'We had goals from Andrew Hardwick and Willie Gemmell. I think the boys played not bad but we had a lot of missed chances. The ball hit the post a few times and things like that.'



RECOGNISED: Prizewinners at the Lochaber athletic club annual awards

## Lochaber runners pick up their prizes

RUNNERS young and old were recognised for their achievements at the Lochaber athletic club (LAC) annual prizegiving.

The event in the Nevis Centre saw awards presented in categories ranging from junior to over 70s.

Winners were decided by combining points given throughout the club's winter league races.

Overall first male went to Finlay Wild and Diane Baum was best female, both with 175 points.

### Best newcomer

Hughie MacIntosh was named best newcomer with 155 points, while Lia Hunter's 86 points earned her most improved member.

Categories: Junior male - 1 Luke Taylor; 2 Bruce MacLean; 3 Steven

Burns. Male - 1 Finlay Wild; 2 Steve MacDonald; 3 Aidan Donnelly. Female - Diane Baum; 2 Marie Meldrum; 3 Vicki McKinnon. Male vet 40 - 1 Stephen Burns; 2 Jon Gay; 3 Neil Wasilidge. Female vet 40 - 1 Amanda Blackhall; 2 Nix Forster; 3 Susan-Jane Ross. Male vet 50 - 1 Tim Brand; 2 Hughie MacIntosh; 3 Ali Kennedy. Female vet 50 - 1 Teresa MacKay; 2 Jo Ness; 3 Morag Aitken.

### Athletics

Male vet 60 - Jim Treasurer; 2 Mike Connolly; 3 Davy Duncan. Female vet 60 - Elma Murdoch. Male vet 70 - Ernie Orr.

Best newcomer - Hughie MacIntosh. Most improved - Lia Hunter.



NEW STRIPS: Davy Duncan and Helen Smith of Lochaber Embroidery and Printing (LEAP) presented new strips to Fort William FC U-17 team captain, Fraser Gray. Training for the team takes place every Friday evening from 6.30pm on the all-weather pitch at Lochaber high school.



PLAYING KIT: Fort Football Club under 15 Stevie Jamieson (second from left) of Scottish Sea Farms presents new strips to the Fort William under-15 team at one of their regular training sessions.

## WHEELERS hold penultimate race

LIAM Moynihan was crowned winner of the penultimate race of the West Highland Wheelers winter season.

The cyclist raced to the finish line of the 11k Glenloy route in just 42 minutes last weekend.

Second place Gavin MacLean was home in 49 minutes and 14 seconds while Ben Thompson took third, finishing just one second behind MacLean.

Yuka Gallagher was first lady home and sixth overall in 57 minutes and four seconds. The final race of West Highland Wheelers' winter league will be held on April 19 at Nevis Range. The competition will include

both junior and adult races, before rounding off the season with the club's traditional barbecue and prizegiving.

Registration will be open at 9.30am for the juniors and 10.30am for the adults.

Top 10 finishers of the Glenloy race: 1 Liam Moynihan 42:00; 2 Gavin MacLean 49:14; 3 Ben Thompson 49:15; 4 Gregor Muir 52:30; 5 Tony Moynihan 56:36; 6 Yuka Gallagher 57:04; 7 Damian Forster 58:30; 8 Roddy Wells 1:00:51; 9 Fiona Mellor 1:04:29; 10 Marek Polowianuk 1:05:40.

## Gary leads Lochaber ten pin bowling scratch division

AFTER the second week of the Lochaber ten pin bowling singles leagues Gary Cowan leads the scratch division with 43 points.

Tim Attack is close behind in second with 39 points with Pam Weller in third with 38.

**Handicap league**  
Attack is leading the handicap league on 42 points, followed by Cowan on 40 points and James Porter in third on 38.

Cowan also leads the chase for

the Nevis Radio high pin trophy with 938 pins, followed by Weller with 924 and Attack in third with 900 pins.

The top individual scratch game this week came from Cowan with 213, who also achieved the top three-game scratch series with 490 and the top three-game handicap series with 634.

### Ten pin bowling



WINNERS: Tammy Cooper, Jodie Daynes, Leah Small and Freya Ward from Kinlochleven high school won a qualifier race at Glencoe on Monday as part of the Scottish Schools Snowsports Association Alpine Series of races. The event attracts young skiers from all over Scotland. The girls took four out of the top five places in some very challenging conditions and poor visibility. They will now go on to represent their school at the finals at Nevis Range.



DODGE IT: A dodgeball competition was held in Duror village hall. The winners were St Brides primary school, with Ballachulish coming second and Kinlochleven third.

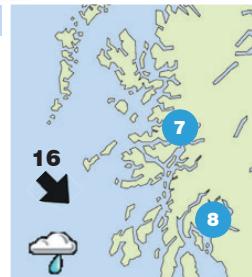
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### WEATHER

**Thursday** Cloudy  
Winds light east south easterly  
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.  
  
**Friday** Light rain  
Winds moderate north westerly  
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.  
  
**Weekend Outlook** Light rain showers on Saturday  
Cloudy on Sunday  
Winds light north north westerly  
Temperatures 5°C to 8°C.



### TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, April 2, 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	04.31	3.5	11.18	1.1	16.58
Fri	05.05	3.7	11.46	1.0	17.31
Sat	05.39	3.8	12.14	0.9	18.02
Sun	06.12	0.8	06.10	3.9	12.42
Mon	00.43	0.8	06.39	3.9	13.10
Tues	01.12	0.9	07.05	3.8	13.33
Wed	01.40	1.0	07.32	3.3	13.56
				1.0	19.25
				3.9	3.8
				1.1	19.55
				3.6	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

### Corporate stationery

Business cards, letterheads, envelopes, comp slips

### Personal stationery

Matching paper & envelopes, postcards, address labels

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