

The Oban Times

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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Making a splash

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Also inside this week: My village, Glencoe • New Year Honours list • Independent schools • Biker snapped up by top team

'Argyll' killed in Afghanistan

A FIJIAN-born member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders has been killed on duty in Afghanistan.

Private Joseva Saqanonedau Vatubua, 24, died in an explosion on New Year's day while taking part in an operation to target known enemy firing positions to the north of the village of Saidabad Kalay.

It is thought an improvised explosive device placed in the wall of a compound was detonated, killing Pt Vatubua. He is survived by his wife Claudette.

Youth in court after Campbeltown fires

AN 18-year-old man appeared on petition at Campbeltown Sheriff Court on December 29, on one count of wilful fire-raising and another of reckless fire-raising on December 28 in the town. He made no plea or declaration. The case was continued for further examination and he was released on bail.

Skykon factory remains closed

THE troubled Skykon wind turbine manufacturer in Kintyre did not reopen after the Christmas and New Year break on Wednesday morning.

Gates to the factory were locked and security staff have been told to allow only authorised personnel. The factory's parent company in Denmark went into administration in December, but the Kintyre factory, which has a new extension waiting to open, has a healthy order book. There are more than 100 jobs at stake and the promise of up to 300 if the extension opens.



Sylvia Wilson supports the campaign to reopen the Oban cinema. She is pictured with Campbell Cameron, vice-chairman of the cinema steering group. 15_101cinemasylvia02

Cinema group aims for £20,000 fighting fund

SYLVIA Wilson has seen Oban's cinema rise from the ashes once before – and she's determined to do her bit to see the picture house restored to its former glory. As a 16-year-old, Sylvia Grant, as she was then, witnessed the huge blaze which destroyed the cinema in the late 1950s.

More than half a century later she heard about the campaign to reopen the George Street complex and the couple offered to sponsor two seats as part of the fundraising effort.

Severe fire Sylvia, who was brought up on Mull, said: 'I remember it quite vividly. It

was a pretty severe fire.' Now a grandmother, Sylvia, who lives in Stockport, Lancashire, is backing the recently formed cinema steering group's efforts to relaunch the complex. As part of fundraising efforts, the group is asking for donations along with an innovative campaign to

sponsor seats - £200 each for individuals and £1,000 from the business sector. Campbell Cameron, vice-chairman of the steering group, explained the ambitious plan had reached a critical stage. 'Ownership of the cinema has reverted back to the bank after it went into liquidation,' he

said. 'We really need to raise £20,000 to be serious about it.' Mr Cameron said the response had been tremendous, and he was confident that amount would be raised. A meeting of the steering group is to be held tonight (Thursday) to outline the current position.

Parking 'free for all' warning

Plan to remove wardens could cause chaos in Oban

PARKING in Oban could become a 'free for all' if Strathclyde Police plans to withdraw traffic wardens comes to fruition, Argyll and Bute Council's transport spokesperson has claimed. Police are in the process of carrying out a 90-day consultation on the cost cutting proposal as it faces losing a quarter of its budget over the next four years.

But, with Argyll and Bute Council also having to make considerable savings, there is a prospect that nobody will be able to pay for the service. While wardens aren't always the most popular people, their removal could result in drivers parking where they want, for as long as they want. Councillor Duncan MacIntyre believes that would create chaos in Oban, particularly during the busy summer months.

The transport spokesperson said: 'Parking in Oban is becoming increasingly difficult. It has always been an issue, so this is going to be a real problem for us.'

'There is a 90 day consultation, at the end of which there will be a 12 week notice period, taking us into June and the busy summer months.'

"The council has no intention of taking this on."

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre

'Our understanding is that police would take responsibility for breaches of parking such as parking in hazardous areas and on double yellow lines. The situation with regard to patrolling the streets checking parking bays – well, that might not happen. 'My opinion is that it could start a free-for-all, but we don't have the resources to take on the traffic wardens. 'The council has no intention of taking this on.'

Mr MacIntyre ruled out the council setting targets for wardens to offset costs. Nine traffic wardens are currently employed by Strathclyde Police in the Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire division, with two serving Oban.

Strathclyde Police's Chief Inspector Glen Bland said: 'At this stage, it's only about consulting people and asking them for their views. There is no end result, as such.'

Councillors force meeting to re-think school plans

Authority urged to abandon consultation into threatened rural primaries

UNDER fire councillors were this week being urged to abandon controversial proposals which could lead to the closure of up to 25 rural primary schools in Argyll and Bute.

As *The Oban Times* went to press on Wednesday, a special meeting of the full council was being held after a motion was signed by an

alliance of SNP, Independent and Argyll First councillors demanding that the school closure proposals be thrown out.

Standing orders The council was being asked to use powers contained in the authority's standing orders to over-rule its decision of November 25 to consult on the closures.

Members were due to discuss a report drawn up by the Scottish Rural Schools Network (SRSN), which claims to provide new facts, extra detail and alternative findings to the consultation documents put before councillors on November 25.

The report covers all issues involved in drawing up the

closure proposals, including the council's school roll projections, occupancy levels and proposed transport arrangements, which the SRSN states have created 'considerable community concern'.

The SRSN's report adds: 'Errors and inaccuracies stretch into almost every facet of the consultation

proposal. 'It would be financially and politically prudent to withdraw and reassess these proposals now, rather than incur unnecessary expense and damage to the reputation of the council.'

For a full report on the meeting and its outcome, log on to www.obantimes.co.uk.

Katie gives Oban hospital early start to New Year celebrations

A LITTLE girl in Oban became one of the first Scottish babies delivered in 2011, arriving 10 minutes after the bells.

Little Katherine 'Katie' Brown arrived eight days before her due date, at 12.10am on New Year's Day in Lorn and Islands Hospital, weighing 7lb 3oz.

Mother Ann Brown, who is originally from Tayvallich, said it was 'fantastic' to have had her daughter at New Year, her favourite time of year. In fact, it was Ann who noticed the clock strike midnight, while she was in labour.

Dad Hugh added: 'Ann was the calmest person in the room and she wished everyone a Happy New Year. The maternity staff said she was a bit early but when they looked at the clock they saw she was right.' Hugh, a diver based at Dunstaffnage, said: 'We both want to thank the maternity staff in Oban who couldn't have done any more for us. They took care of everything.'

In Paisley, Lochgilphead couple Marte MacBrayne and her partner Lorne welcomed daughter Elin at 2.13am.



Katherine Brown became one of the first babies born in Scotland this year. 15_101baby01

Power cuts affect homes and businesses

POWER cuts welcomed in the new year both on the mainland and the isles.

Oban suffered two blackouts. The first, caused by a blown fuse at Mossfield sub-station, took place at 8.18pm on Sunday, January 2, and lasted for three-and-a-half hours. The second incident occurred on Tuesday, January 4, starting at 9.52am, this time lasting about an hour-and-a-half.

Supermarkets and filling stations were among businesses forced to close their doors.

Scottish and Southern Energy say engineers traced the fault to an underground cable, which they are trying to rectify.

Meanwhile, both Coll and Tiree suffered power cuts on Monday, January 3, from 11.05am. While the majority had their power back within an hour and a half, it wasn't until 6.25pm that a generator restored complete supplies.

Engineers returned to the islands on Tuesday to carry out further investigations.

A spokesperson for Scottish and Southern Energy said: 'We would like to apologise to all of those affected and ensure everyone that we will remain on site until normal supplies are restored.'



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Pupils learn about fourth emergency service



Children from Rockfield Primary School, Oban, found out about life on the ocean wave as part of a topic on the emergency services. After visits from police and ambulance staff, children from primary four visited Oban Community Fire Station. Bringing the topic to an end, the class was treated to a visit from Oban Royal National Lifeboat Institution coxswain Ronnie McKillop. 16_152rock1

Beachd Ailein Ailean Caimbeul

CHAILL SINN IAIN UASAL, Fear Eilean Iarmain, latha na Nollaige; agus chail Alba ceatharnach! Thèid mòran ath-sgrìobhadh is ath-aithris mu Iain agus choisinn e a' chliù sin agus, mar a tha an sean-fhacal ag radh, " 's fhiach deagh sgeul aithris dà uair!"

Bidh cuimhne aig duine sam bith a bha eòlach air Iain air cho rag 's a bha e aon uair 's gun gabhadh e rud na cheann.

Agus 's e an diorrasachd sin a dh' fhàg gun do shoirbhich Iain an aghaidh iomadh dùbhlann agus gun do dh' fhàg e uimhir de dh'leab às a dhèidh.

Inntinneach! Sin facal air an robh Iain measail agus b' e duine inntinneach a bh' ann fhèin cuideachd. Duine comasach a dh' ionnsaich eòlas eaconamachd.

Fear-gnothaich a chunnaic cothrom sònraichte gus seirbheis bancadh-marsanta a stèidheachadh ann an Alba aig àm as an robh gnìomhachas na h-ola a' fàs an seo agus a bha companaidhean mòra eadar-nàiseanta deònach an cuid bàigh dhan dùthaich a dhearbhadh. Bha an seòrsa taic sin dhan dùthaich cudromach dha sàr Albannach mar Iain. Ged a rugadh e as a' Ghearmailt agus a fhuair e a chiad fhoghlam ann an Ròimh agus ann an Argentina agus ged a chuir e crìoch air fhoghlam ann an Sasainn, bha e moiteil às a dhearbhadh-aithne mar Albannach.

'S ann is e air cuairt mar òraidiche eòlas-eaconamachd le Urras Nàiseanta na h-Alba, air bàta-turais, a ràinig Iain Torshàven as na h-Eileanan Fàrach an toiseach agus chuir e eòlas maireann air luchd-gnothaich is poiliteigs an sin.

Bha Iain air a bheò-ghlacadh leis an spèis a bh' aig muinntir nan Eileanan Fàrach nan cuid cànan is dualchais fhèin agus an ceangal a bha eadar sin agus neart is fàs eaconamaidh an àite. Air sgàth eisimpleir nam Fàrach bha Iain daingeann na chreideas sa cheangal eadar fèin-spèis dhaoine agus leasachadh eaconamach.

Tha leithid sin de fheòil-spèis a' toiseachadh le cànan agus dha Iain Noble bha sin a' ciallachadh Gàidhlig.

Tha mòran fhathast ann an saoghal gnìomhachais, agus eile, nach eil a' creidsinn as an fheallsanachd sin a bh' aig Iain, ach tha coimhearsnachd Shlèite, leis a' Cholaiste Gàidhlig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig na meadhan, a' dearbhadh firinn a lèirsinn. Tha dileab Iain nas fharsaingeach na sin gun teagamh, ach bhrosnaich e mòran againne gus moit às ùr a ghabhail nar cànan agus tha sinn fada na chomain airson sin.

Do chuid de Phàrras dhut, a charaid. Bidh sinn gad ionndrainn!

PART of the considerable legacy of Iain Noble's life is the recognition of the link between linguistic cultural identity and economic development.

Drawing on the Faroese example, Iain determinedly pursued policies which linked Gaelic with business and while he didn't always succeed he encouraged many towards new confidence in Gaelic. Some remain unconvinced of Iain's philosophy but the economic regeneration of the Sleat peninsula in Skye, with the Gaelic College Sabhal Mòr Ostaig at its heart, is incontestable proof of his vision.

Farewell, and thanks, Iain!

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

Le taic bho SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG www.smo.uhi.ac.uk

Sea anglers' 'vital' conservation work

REPORT by STUART LAUNDY slaundry@obantimes.co.uk

ALMOST 200 sea anglers have contributed to a project which aims to tag and record data on the many species of shark, skate and ray found in Scottish coastal waters.

The Scottish Shark Tagging Programme now has 2,390 entries on its database covering species such as the common skate, spurdog, tope and thornback ray.

The programme is part of the Scottish Sea Anglers Conservation Network (SSACN), whose most recent activities included a weekend tagging event on lochs Etive and Sunart.

The most commonly tagged species by sea anglers is the tope, 1,340, followed by spurdog, 433, and common skate, 332.

Ian Burrett, projects director with the SSACN, thanked all anglers who had



James Thorburn, who is leaving the Scottish Shark Tagging Programme in February.

taken the time to contribute to the programme.

'It has been another fantastic year of growth for the tagging programme,' he said.

'It is now acknowledged by the Scottish Government, government scientists and the academic world that the data of the shark tagging programme is vital to increasing the understanding of Scottish shark stocks and will also provide valuable input into any shark management plans.'

Mr Burrett said the SSACN was attempting to find funding for a study into the effects of wind farms on sharks.

World first

'The government has introduced consultations on the placement of wind farms that fall in the middle of migratory routes of spurdog and tope.

'The effect that electro magnetic fields have on migratory routes has never been assessed and this research will be a world first.'

tribute to the efforts of James Thorburn, the Oban-based project leader of the shark tagging programme, who will leave the post in February.

During the past year, James has run many of the tasks associated with the tagging programme, from organising education days in schools to designing research programmes, such as acoustic tagging in Loch Etive.

James plans to complete his PhD, looking at the state of Scotland's inshore sharks.

'As he has enjoyed working with anglers so much, he intends to use the tagging programme and angler support as an integral part of his PhD - the first time anecdotal data and angler tagging will have been used to support a scientific paper,' said Mr Burrett.

James' successor will focus on analysing the shark tagging programme's data.

Bus firms warned over performance

THREE Highlands and Islands bus firms have been given formal warnings by the traffic commissioner for Scotland for maintenance and reliability issues.

The conjoined ruling against Orkney Coaches, Highland Country Buses Ltd - both trading as Stagecoach in the Highlands - and Bluebird Buses Ltd by Joan Aitken was made last month following a public enquiry in Edinburgh last June.

In addition to warning the firms, Highland Country, which has a depot in Fort William, was fined £500 for early running of services and Bluebird Buses was fined £7,000 for early and late running of services and incorrect destination boards.

Empty homes

WESTERN Isles and Argyll and Bute councils have the highest proportion of vacant properties in Scotland, according to a survey by the Bank of Scotland, which says the number of empty houses is at a seven-year high. Western Isles has 1,876 vacant properties (13.3 per cent), while Argyll and Bute has 5,440 vacant properties (11.4 per cent).

Injured eagle released into the wild

A YOUNG sea eagle has been released back into the wild on Mull after recovering from a broken wing and leg.

The eight-month-old bird was taken to the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) in September by a local farmer.

The species - also known as a white tailed eagle - is being re-introduced to Scotland as part of the Sea Eagle Project, involving the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland. Sea eagles are particularly important to Mull, contributing £2million a year to the island's economy.

The eagle hide at Loch Frisa is open all year round and 50 per cent of its income goes to support island projects and good causes. Colin Seddon, manager of the SSPCA's Wildlife Rescue Centre in Fife, said: 'This eagle is an inexperienced youngster who probably injured himself by trying to land and tumbling from a tree. Luckily his injuries were healing naturally so we kept contact to a minimum and allowed nature to take its course.'



Scottish SPCA Wildlife Rescue Centre assistant manager, Colin Liddle, prepares to release the young sea eagle back into the wild on Mull.

The eagle was returned to his nesting site and will be monitored by Mull Eagle Watch.

'To our amazement, after about half an hour sitting on a shingle beach, he was joined by his mother, who we identified via her wing tags,' said Mr Seddon.

'There was a real chance that she'd have tried to chase him off. 'The following day they were joined at the release site by the father and again there was no squabbling. Food is being put out for him for a short time and we've seen him feed, which is very encouraging.'

The young bird has been fitted with a radio transmitter and coloured rings so the RSPB on Mull can monitor his activities. Mull's RSPB officer Dave Sexton said: 'It's been touch and go for this young eagle and, although it's early days since his release, we're delighted that he's recovered. Now it's up to him, we've done all we can.'

New Kintyre ferry service

NEXT summer will see a ferry service return between Campbeltown and Ballycastle, thanks to Campbeltown-based Kintyre Express.

The new passenger-only service will run on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays from May 27 to September 26.

There is no government subsidy for the route; the original plans to reinstate a passenger and vehicle ferry have fallen foul of the cutbacks in public spending.

This is despite massive local pressure to reinstate the service and the fact that in February 2008 both Northern Irish and Scottish first ministers signed an agreement over providing a ferry service.

Kintyre Express is part of the West Coast Motors stable of companies. Managing director Colin Craig said: 'We have been running Kintyre Express between Campbeltown and Troon as a private charter vessel, mainly for the golf tourism market.

'We have enjoyed a busy summer operating between Troon and Campbeltown; the route has been very popular and we have built up our contacts and experience.

'From that we have looked at the possibility of operating between Campbeltown and Ballycastle.

'Given the increasing doubt over whether the service was going to be reinstated, we had to make a decision to go for it or not and get the marketing in place to do the service justice when it begins next summer.'

Mr Craig said a new boat is on order and due for delivery at the end of March. It will be another Redbay Stormforce 11 metre RIB with fully enclosed heated cabin, to seat 12 passengers.

The firm will be taking on two extra members of staff plus relief crew and skippers.

Flights resume after 'freak' accident

FLIGHTS to and from Barra were restored after the plane damaged by a de-icing truck at Glasgow Airport was successfully repaired.

The Twin Otter aircraft was tested on Tuesday December 21 and resumed full service the following day. The freak

accident occurred while the other Twin Otter that serves Barra was in for its annual overhaul, meaning no flights were available to or from the island for nearly a week.

Operator Loganair said their engineers worked round the clock to ensure services were restored as quickly as possible. The company's spokeswoman said: 'Loganair wishes to offer its apologies to those customers whose journeys have been disrupted.'

ARGYLL - BUTE SPORTS COACHING 2011. Two days of sports coaching courses and personal development in indoor, outdoor sports to help communities offer new opportunities in sports participation. Courses are subsidised and cost from £35 full day to (£22 half day) through support from sports.scotland. All attendees will receive free delegate pack and refreshments. FREE community transport will be available from most areas of Argyll and Bute on a first come basis. Courses for - Sports Coaches, Club Officials, Youth Leaders, Community Groups, Volunteers, Individuals and YOU! Including: Trail Cycle Leader, Jog Leaders, Kayaking, Netball, Zumba Instructor, Table Tennis, Badminton, Basketball, Tennis, Rugby, Triathlon, First Aid, Disability Sport, Mountain Navigation, Child Protection, Canoeing, Dance Instructor, Kayaking, Felling Performer, Shinty, Coaching Children, Football, Core Stability, Cricket, Circus Skills, Swimming, Coach Mentoring, Athletics, Analysing Coaching. FREE TRANSPORT from areas of Argyll and Bute. OBAN 4th - 6th February. To book go to www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and follow link to Sports Conference, or e-mail sportscoaching@argyll-bute.gov.uk for a copy of the programme. Book early to avoid disappointment! Argyll and Bute Council in partnership with sportscotland.

Deeply dippy sailing club members welcome 2011 by making a big splash

THE TEMPERATURE gauge in the car said it was 4°C. It felt colder. But that didn't matter to a group of hardy Oban Sailing Club members who decided to welcome 2011 by plunging into the bay. Fourteen people of all ages made a splash, to the delight of organisers, club commodore Toby Sherwin and social events organiser Ylva Powlett.

'We had no idea how many people would turn up - it could have just been Ylva and myself,' said Toby. Most of those who dived in did so in swimsuits and trunks - although one or two did accept the offer to wear wet suits. **Freezing** After shivering her way back to the clubhouse, Ylva said: 'It was freezing!' But she added: 'I can't

believe how many people turned up. I was very happy with that. We'll do it again next year.' John Sinclair admitted he had 'wimped out' by donning a wet suit, but said: 'Next year, I will do it properly.' Oban Sailing Club celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2010 and Toby said that with all boats ashore and the club currently

in its winter hiatus, the event had been a good way for members to get together during the winter. The club offers dinghy training and racing between April and October, along with keelboat cruising and racing during the summer. 'The club has about 130 members - juniors and adults - which is quite typical for the west coast of Scotland,' added Toby.



All smiles - the hardy band of New Year dippers. 15_t01dip07



Hat, goggles and trunks - all Colin Kupris needed for his swim. 15_t01dip06



Taking the plunge - Margaret Powell enjoys her swim. 15_t01dip02

Passengers endure two-hour delay

PASSENGERS on the Oban to Glasgow train endured a two-hour delay after heavy snowfall made part of the track impassable. The Sunday evening service, which left Oban at 6.10pm, took five hours and 15 minutes to reach Glasgow Queen Street, arriving at 11.25pm instead of the usual 9.30pm.

The train ground to halt at Dalmally where passengers waited for almost an hour whilst Network Rail worked to clear overhanging trees, created by the heavy snowfall, from the track. Kirsten Nicolson, who travels on the Oban to Glasgow train regularly, said: 'Although the track was clear you could feel the train was going much more slowly than usual, especially approaching Tyndrum and Crianlarich.'

'The staff were really good at keeping us informed. There were lots of people who were getting connecting trains but other ScotRail services were made aware of these people and that we were running late.'

Snow causes bank holiday road chaos

WINTER returned with a vengeance on bank holiday Monday.

A band of rain from the north west was preceded by snow which caused chaos on the roads.

On Monday afternoon, the A85 between Dalmally and Tyndrum was closed due to heavy snow, while police were warning motorists to drive with extreme care on the stretch between Oban and Dalmally.

Conditions were no better on the A819 between Dalmally and Inveraray, which was only passable in 4x4 vehicles and only then with extreme care.

The forecast for the end of the week is for the weather to turn cooler with the threat of snow showers.

Lifeboat called to Mull patient's aid

A FEMALE patient was taken from Mull to the mainland by Oban's lifeboat, the *Mora Edith Macdonald*, late last Thursday night.

The lifeboat was launched just before 10pm, arriving at Craignure half an hour later.

The patient was taken on board, brought to Oban and transferred by ambulance to Lorn and the Isles District General Hospital just after 11pm. A lifeboat spokesman said this was the 17th medical evacuation from Craignure in 2010.

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New Year honour for modest Magnus

Mary's Meals founder 'humbled' by OBE

REPORT by STUART LAUNDY slaundy@obantimes.co.uk

THE FOUNDER of Mary's Meals, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, received an OBE in the New Year honours list for his services to the charity.

He said he was 'humbled' to have been recognised in this year's list.

'I feel that the honour is recognition of the hard work of everyone who has been involved in the Mary's Meals journey, giving their time, resources and love to help us to grow from a tiny group of volunteers carrying blankets to Bosnia, to an international charity that is feeding more than 450,000 school children worldwide,' he said.

'After the shock of seeing our schools in Haiti destroyed by the earthquake last year, it is wonderful to be able to start 2011 on a positive note, knowing that they are up and running again, and that more people than ever are embracing our goal of providing every hungry child with a meal a day in their place of education.'

The 42-year-old started his career as a fish farmer, but in 1992 after seeing TV pictures of the Balkan conflict he and his brother, Fergus, gathered



Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, pictured in Haiti with some of the children helped by Mary's Meals.

a jeep load of aid and joined a convoy that travelled to Medjugorje in Bosnia.

On his return home, Magnus expected to resume his job, however, he came back to discover that the public had carried on donating, filling his parents' garage in Dalmally with goods.

Magnus decided to give up his job for a year to drive the aid out for as long as the contributions were needed and kept being given.

They did not stop and it soon became necessary to set up as a registered charity, Scottish International Relief.

Soon after the charity started, Magnus met Julie, a nurse, who volunteered

better known - also received an OBE for his services to art and charity.

There were MBEs for Isabella McNair Edgar, from Islay, for voluntary service to Highland and Scottish Country Dancing, and Kingussie shinty player Ronald Ross, the first player in the sport's history to score 1,000 senior goals.

'I'm delighted to get this honour, it's something I've not expected at all,' said Ronald.

'I think it's great for the sport, and it's good I'm being recognised for what I've done on the pitch.'

The Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute, Kenneth Alasdair MacKinnon, was made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order.

A Kinlochell man has been made a Member of the Victorian Order for his contribution to outdoor activities in Lochaber.

Tony Shepherd has worked in the outdoor industry for 35 years, including a spell as director of the Outdoor Capital of the UK. He was a founding member of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors of the UK and has recently been appointed as a director at West Highland College.

Minister claims school email was 'normal response'

EDUCATION Secretary Mike Russell has refuted claims he breached the Minister's Code of Conduct by appearing to advise local SNP members on proposed school closures in Argyll and Bute.

Mr Russell, who is the party's prospective Scottish parliamentary candidate for the constituency, claims he has done nothing wrong and said his comments, contained in an email, were a 'normal response' to an issue raised by a councillor.

In the email - marked urgent and in confidence - sent a week before the council was due to vote on the proposal to close 25 schools, Mr Russell expressed concern that the SNP group seemed to be supporting the consultation. He also stated that backing the proposed closures would cause 'severe problems which could be very destructive to our reputation and prospects'.

He also branded council officials 'obdurate'; states the SNP group should leave the coalition, if the council leader would not withdraw the proposals; and said there were eight or nine schools that could be closed 'with minimal difficulty'.

Call to resign Alan Reid, MP for Argyll and Bute, called on Mr Russell to resign as a result. He said: 'Mr Russell was acting officially on behalf of the Scottish Government when he wrote that eight to nine schools in Argyll and Bute should close

and that council officials were 'obdurate'. This is unwarranted interference by the Scottish Government in council business.'

Normal response Mr Russell said: 'I have made it clear from the beginning that I wouldn't make the final decision if this issue was called in [to the Scottish Government].'

'I was not advising councillors on how to vote, I was having a normal conversation. I think it's a normal response.'

Villagers see red as traffic lights work goes to tender

THERE is outrage in Connel after *The Oban Times* learned tenders to install traffic lights at the village's most scenic location had been received by Transport Scotland on Christmas eve - despite ongoing talks with residents.

The proposed toucan crossing on the A85 next to the Falls of Lora viewpoint now seems destined to be installed as part of a cycle path from Inverness to Campbeltown, despite the community repeatedly asking Transport Scotland to consider alternatives.

While tenders still have to be assessed, it is understood work - the cost of which is still unknown - could start within weeks.

The news has angered

both the community council and the Oyster Inn Hotel and Restaurant, the latter of which was due to have a meeting with Transport Scotland on December 23 to discuss alternatives before the agency's head of standards, traffic and economics Neil Wands cancelled at the last minute.

Furious The meeting will now take place this Thursday (today) - but Oyster Inn manager James MacEachern is furious the tender was kept secret from the community. He said: 'This just shows the professionalism of these people and what their agenda is. Their so-called co-operation with the community is just

a farce - they've been totally two-faced.

'They want this money spent and they don't care about the effect it will have. They don't live here and don't have to live with it. People have wasted their time and effort to try and co-operate with these people and put forward alternatives. I ask: what standards has Mr Wands shown?'

Despicable The secretary of the community council, Les Stewart, said: 'It is despicable. They are riding roughshod over us - especially when they've never even answered our last letter. Why didn't they tell us that they had already put the

work to tender? Why keep these things up their sleeves? Transparency? There is none.

Unprofessional

'They were going to come back to us and tell us what other poles would be installed, what the lights would look like and what the road surface would be. We have had zilch. I will send a letter and ask why they're not talking to us. It all seems very inefficient and unprofessional.'

While Transport Scotland can still reconsider its position, Mr Stewart isn't holding out much hope given the latest developments. *The Oban Times* attempted to contact Mr Wands at Transport Scotland, but were unable to at the time of going to press.

Mission accomplished as Tom runs up Ben Lora for 200th time

Friends surprise athlete with bubbly at summit

AT THE beginning of 2010, Tom Smith's resolution was to get to the summit of Ben Lora 200 times before the year was out.

On New Year's eve, he achieved his goal - with a little help from his friends.

The 36-year-old from Connel, a keen runner with Lochaber Athletics Club, said he had set himself the challenge as a disciplined way of keeping fit.

Taking into account time away from the area, he averaged about five runs to the top a week.

'A lot of times, I ran it from my house in Connel,' he explained.

With his 200th run approaching, Tom's friends, organised by best mate John Grant, decided it was an occasion to celebrate.

Amazement

To Tom's total amazement, he was joined at various points on the route to the top by his friends and together they all made their way to the top, where a bottle of bubbly was opened and he was presented with a picture to commemorate his achievement.

'It was total surprise - but a very nice surprise, and I was presented with a lovely picture.'

Also joining in the



Tom Smith at the foot of Ben Lora 15_t01smith02

celebration were Tom's parents and his girlfriend, Jo Maguire, from Dumbarton.

Impressed

John said Tom's effort was well worth celebrating.

'Everyone was very impressed by what he has done and the fact he has done 99 per cent of them

running is a special feat.' Tom said he still hadn't decided what challenge to set himself during 2011.

But surely, a quiet New Year's Day awaited him?

Quite the opposite - he was planning to mark January 1 by taking part in a run at Fort William.

No arrests as hundreds gather to see in new year

MORE than 1,000 Hogmanay revellers gathered in Oban town centre to see in 2011 at various parties.

The now annual Station Square gathering attracted about 1,000 people, who brought in the New Year to the sound of fireworks and the CalMac ferry horns.

Organisers John MacGregor and Alan and Calum MacLeod said this year's event attracted twice as many people as the previous year and showed the need for a 'low key' event at Hogmanay.

The organisers thanked Argyll and Bute Council

for allowing them to use the power supply at the clock tower. However, just along George Street the parties were in full swing at Skipinnish Ceilidh House and Cuan Mor, where live bands entertained into the small hours of New Year's Day.

Oban Pipe Band played at the ceilidh house on the stroke of midnight before marching over to Station Square, where they also played. Oban Police said there were no arrests made at any of the organised New Year celebrations.

Warning after spate of thefts

POLICE have warned householders to keep their homes secure overnight, following thefts over the New Year break.

Sometime between 2am and 4am on December 31, thieves entered a house in Morvern Hill through an unlocked door and stole a number of items, including a camera. About the same time the following day a man was stopped from stealing a vacuum cleaner from a common close in Colonsay Terrace.

Inspector Julie Edwards of Oban Police said: 'Don't make it easy for opportunist thieves.'

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Oban man charged on Christmas Day

A MAN appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday, December 27, after being arrested for an alleged offence on Christmas Day. Steven Alexander McLaughlin, 28, of 14 Shuna Terrace, denied that he acted in a threatening or abusive manner and shouted and swore, placing a woman in a state of fear or alarm. McLaughlin is set to go on trial on April 18.

Highland charity 'Gallop n Grind'

ORGANISERS of a Highlands cancer charity are urging supporters to get the New Year off to a healthy start - by getting into training for their 2011 fundraiser. The Sharon Fraser Memorial Trust will hold its annual 'Gallop n Grind', a combined run and cycle around Cow Hill and Glen Nevis near Fort William, on Saturday, August 25.

Committee member Karen MacInnes said: 'Beat the post Christmas bulge and get training now for this year's event!'

The third Gallop 'n' Grind on September 25 raised over £14,000. The trust supports individuals and families in affected by cancer.

Defendant bailed

AN OBAN man denied acting in a threatening manner and wilfully or recklessly damaging property when he appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff Court.

Struin Doull, 20, whose address was given in court as c/o 30 Glenfoot Terrace, denied that, on December 27, at an address in High Street, he committed the offences while on bail.

Doull was granted bail with special conditions and will go on trial in March.

Lochaber haulage firm under threat of losing operator's licence

A FORT William haulage firm has been ordered to take three lorries off the road for a fortnight and find a new transport manager.

The sanctions on Boyd Brothers (Haulage) Ltd, of The Pier, Annach Point, Corpach, were imposed by deputy traffic commissioner for Scotland, Richard McFarlane, after an unannounced inspection.

REPORT

by STEVEN FLANAGAN sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

Inspectors found vehicles were not properly maintained and there was improper record keeping.

Boyd Brothers were told to remove three vehicles from service by no later than 11.59pm on December

31 and must find a new transport manager within six months after the incumbent, Christine MacColl - sister of directors Calum, Alexander and Duncan Boyd - was found to have falsified records.

Threat to licence

Failure to comply with the deputy traffic commissioner's ruling would result in complete

revocation of the company's operators' licence.

It is the second time the company has been subject to a public inquiry. In 2009, a driver had his licence suspended for eight weeks and each director warned regarding their future conduct as drivers after discrepancies were found in their record keeping.

In his written judgement

delivered in December, Mr McFarlane said: 'The findings in respect of the maintenance systems are such that I am satisfied that the operator has again failed in its obligation to ensure that vehicles and trailers are kept fit and serviceable.'

'It also failed to keep full records and to make records available when requested. 'The actings of Mrs

MacColl are such that she is no longer of good repute.

'Accordingly I afford the operator a period of six months from the date of this decision to nominate a transport manager on the licence.

'In the event that a new transport manager is not nominated in that period then the licence would fall to be revoked for lack of

professional competence.

'In respect of the shortcomings in the maintenance systems, the drivers hours offences and other shortcomings detected and against the background that this is the second time that this operator has been called to public inquiry, I curtail the authority of the licence to three vehicles for a period of two weeks.'

Troops say thanks for support

Socks, desk fans, magazines and shower gel prove a big hit

TROOPS serving in Afghanistan have paid tribute to the generosity of Argyll after receiving countless packages in time for the festive season.

Locals Bex and Graham Beuschier started gathering donations for soldiers serving in Lashkar Gah after Bex's brother, Lieutenant Colonel Andy Welsh, was sent to Helmand on a nine-month tour of duty with the Royal Artillery.

With a number of Oban soldiers also serving in the region with 5SCOTS, the couple felt it would be a good idea to send packages out to make their tour more comfortable. Among 'essentials' requested by the troops were socks, desk fans, magazines and shower gel.

The gifts have already proved extremely useful to the troops.

Aspokesman for Task Force Helmand, representing both 5SCOTS, 2SCOTS and the Royal Artillery, said: 'Thank you very much to the people of Argyll who sent these gratefully received packages to Afghanistan.'

'It's getting very cold here at night despite still being warm during the day - tough

conditions to deal with as most of the time we are out on the ground patrolling.

'We are all missing our friends and families, especially at this time of year, but are almost halfway through this tour.'

Graham, who works for the Royal Mail in Oban, has been taken aback by the generosity of the community.

He said: 'The response from the people of Oban has been absolutely superb; from the local businesses to the little old lady who struggled down to the Post Office through the ice and snow to drop off a bag of socks.'

'People have been dropping things in ever since the article in *The Oban Times*, so a lot of parcels have been sent out.'

Graham said they will resume sending the 2kg packages - which are being sent free by Royal Mail - at the turn of the year.

If you would like to donate goods to be sent to Afghanistan, you can contact Graham at the Albany Street Post Office on 01631 563626.



A SPECIAL delivery of publications from Wyvex Media is making its way to Afghanistan at the request of troops serving with the Scottish Regiments, particularly 5 SCOTS and 2 SCOTS.

Packages, containing copies of the company's publications *The Oban Times*, *Scottish Field*, *Mull Life*, *The Arran Banner* and the *West Coast Review*, are the first of many, with more to be sent out throughout the regiment's tour of duty. Soldiers from 5SCOTS said they are delighted that they'll be able to keep up with all the goings on at home while serving in one of the world's most dangerous places. Wyvex Media's own Laura Campbell is pictured preparing the parcel of *The Oban Times* destined for Afghanistan last week.

Highland drink drivers charged on the increase

THE NUMBER of drink drivers caught in the Highlands by a police festive safety campaign has risen for the third successive week.

Northern Constabulary detected eight offenders in Christmas week, compared to six during the same period last year. Week two of the campaign saw eight drivers caught drink driving compared with five in 2009, and in week one 11 people tested over the limit, four more than last year.

More than half of those caught over the past week were identified after members of the public contacted police.

Northern Constabulary roads policing inspector



Public reporting drink drivers in greater numbers

John Smith said: 'The message still doesn't appear to be getting through to some people and it is disappointing to see a rise in the number of people caught compared to last year. This increased police activity will continue into the New Year.'

Auction to land a salmon fishing bargain goes online

SOME of the west coast's most stunning fishing attractions are among the lots on offer during this year's Atlantic Salmon Trust auction 2011.

The auction - the charity's principal fundraising event of the year - has fishing permits up for grabs at locations across the world, ranging from the Varzuga in Russia and the Rio Gallegos in Argentina, to Loch Scammadale, near Oban and on the south bank of Dervaig

on the Isle of Mull. Lots range in guide price from under £50 to more than £10,000.

The online bidding system has also been made more straightforward, thanks to an interactive map and revamped bidding system.

With the exception of those few fishing lots for dates early in the year, all bidding closes from February 14.

To bid, go to www.atlanticsalmontrust.org/auction.

Carers 'go the extra mile' amid worst winter weather

CARERS across Argyll and Bute have been going the extra mile to ensure that some of the area's most vulnerable residents stay safe and warm in the freezing conditions.

Council care staff have been working flat out to make sure that all clients are regularly contacted and are receiving visits if necessary.

Councillor Andrew Nisbet, Argyll and Bute's social affairs spokesperson, said the weather conditions had presented significant challenges.

'Given the size of the area we cover, severe weather conditions such as those we have been experiencing recently make things very difficult not just for the elderly and other vulnerable people, but also for the people who care for them,' he added.

'Among those people are hundreds of our staff, who are working tirelessly to ensure that people continue to receive the help they need.'

'I am regularly hearing how staff are going the extra mile to provide for our clients, and I am proud that they are managing to meet the significant challenges the weather and road conditions present.'

Many carers have to abandon their cars on main routes and visit their clients on foot. In the few cases where it has not been possible to reach clients, they have all been contacted and all have been okay to miss a visit, or have family or neighbours attending to them.

In cases where a client who takes regular medication cannot be reached, home care staff have telephoned them at the appropriate time to prompt them to take the medication.

And if a carer can only visit a client once a day when they would normally do so twice, they have sometimes prepared an evening meal in advance, and followed this up with a phone call to ensure the client has enjoyed the meal and is safe and well.

In a number of cases, the council is working very closely with neighbours and clients' families to ensure that people are being monitored and cared for.



Councillor Andrew Nisbet

"No better time for people to come together and show their community spirit."

Councillor Andrew Nisbet

Councillor gets lucky in annual ACHA draw

AN ARGYLL and Bute councillor was among lucky winners when Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) held its annual member's prize draw.

Oban councillor Neil MacKay's name was one of four to come out of the hat to win a festive hamper.

This year's winners, as picked by David King of Helensburgh, are: G Sutherland from Helensburgh; W Dickson from Strachur; Neil MacKay of Oban and J Muir from Lochgilphead.

Application forms for ACHA membership are available in all ACHA offices, at www.acha.co.uk and by phoning Lesley Lindsay on 01436 673436.

Mull's sea eagles take to the shores

MULL'S white-tailed eagles may have the edge over their golden cousins when severe cold winter weather strikes.

The sea eagles can hunt waterfowl or fish or scavenge for carrion along the shore whereas the golden eagles are restricted to the high tops and may be lucky to find an occasional ptarmigan, red grouse or hare which breaks cover - or perhaps a dead deer or sheep.

For all wildlife these are harsh and testing times. It really will be the survival of the fittest.

Whilst these severe icy conditions persist, vehicle access up the Loch Frisa forestry track to the Eagle Hide is not possible.

If you're on Mull, please check with the ranger to see if any trips are possible. Call 07920 817362.

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String quartet to play St John's Cathedral



The Glasgow String Quartet, which will perform at St John's Cathedral on Sunday.

MUSIC by Haydn, Brahms and Samuel Barber will fill St John's Cathedral on Sunday, January 9.

The Oban Music Society has arranged a performance by the Glasgow String Quartet at the Cathedral, starting at 3pm.

The performance replaces that originally scheduled for Tuesday, January 11.

The programme for the afternoon comprises Haydn's Quartet in Dm Op.76/2 ('The Fifts'); String Quartet Op.11 by Barber and Quartet in Am Op.51/2 by Brahms. Formed in 2001, the Glasgow String Quartet musicians are all principal players in the internationally renowned Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

A spokesman for the Oban Music Society, said: 'This will be an exciting concert to start the new year with and we hope that by holding it in the afternoon on a Sunday our supporters will appreciate the convenience.'

Canna House to open to the public for first time



Dr John Lorne Campbell who died in 1996

CANNA HOUSE, the former home of renowned Gaelic song, poetry and story collectors Dr John Lorne Campbell and Margaret Fay Shaw, is to open to the public for the first time in March.

Isle of Canna owners, the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), has been carefully conserving the building's interior and exterior since Ms Shaw died in 2004 and will make available the two front rooms and the front hall for viewing.

Items on display will include the Canna Collection, which includes archive material gathered by the couple throughout the Hebrides and Nova Scotia from 1937 to 1964.

NTS property manager Stewart Connor said great care had been taken to retain everything just as it was when Dr Campbell and Ms Shaw were living there.

He told The Oban Times: 'It is as if they just shut the door and walked out.'

'For the past five years we have been restoring the house in its entirety.'

More than 1,000 Gaelic recordings made by the couple on their travels can be listened to on the Tobar an Dualchas website.

Dr John Lorne Campbell died in 1996.

Gazebo stolen

A GAZEBO has been stolen from the Oyster Brewery, in Ellenabeich.

It had been erected at the rear of the property and was taken overnight between Thursday and Friday last week.

Anyone with any information relating to the incident should contact PC Andrew Simpson on 01631 510 500.

West coast fishermen celebrate no three-mile limit on Clyde

FISHERMEN in Tarbert received a boost as the Scottish Government confirmed it has no plans to introduce a three-mile fishing exclusion zone on the Clyde shoreline.

A government spokeswoman announced this week that it has 'no plans at present to

reintroduce a three-mile limit, either in the Clyde or elsewhere, or to introduce widespread spatial fisheries management measures.'

The move comes after the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST), together with static fishermen, sea anglers and community councils, launched an online

petition calling for all forms of mobile fishing, bottom trawling and dredging to be prohibited from the area within three miles of the Clyde shoreline.

Kenny MacNab, owner of Flying Fish in Tarbert and former chairman of the Clyde Fisherman's Association, said: 'We are

pleased that the government has no plans to introduce the fishing ban at the moment but we would like a guarantee that it will not happen in the future. We would like to see it permanently removed from the agenda.'

Jenny Carlile chair of Tarbert and Skipness Community Council, who

wrote to Fisheries Minister Richard Lochhead stating the proposal threatened the village's economy and identity, said she is pleased with the reassurance.

Whilst the government has ruled out the three-mile limit it has recognised problems with fish stocks in the Clyde.

She said: 'There is concern about the state of the Clyde. A study will consider whether there are similar scenarios elsewhere and what steps could be taken to help improve the area.'

One hundred are directly employed on Clyde fishing boats and a further 300 are employed on-shore.

Report highlights need to protect rural postal service

GOVERNMENT assurances over the future of postal services to Scotland need to be reinforced prior to Royal Mail privatisation, a new report has recommended.

The Scottish Affairs Committee says promises over the future of the Universal Service Obligation (USO) and the Post Office network should be enshrined in law by amendments to the Postal Services Bill or, at least, by clear statements during the bill's passage through parliament.

The committee's Postal Services in Scotland report also states that Post Offices could yet be at risk of closure if the UK Government, Scottish Government and local authorities don't channel as much work through the organisation as possible.

However, it welcomed in particular comments from postal services minister Ed Davey that the USO protecting the six day a week delivery and collection service and universal tariff could only be changed by a vote in both Houses of Parliament.



Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid

'The future owner of Royal Mail will not be able to reduce the service to more remote areas.'

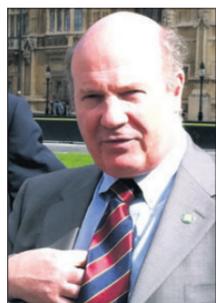
Alan Reid MP

In addition, Ofcom, which will take over regulation of postal services from Postcomm after Royal Mail is privatised, has promised not to alter the current pattern of geographical exceptions outlined in the existing USO. Argyll and Bute MP Alan Reid is a member of the committee that prepared the report. He said: 'I am satisfied with the

assurances given by both the government and the new regulator Ofcom that the USO will be enshrined in law even after Royal Mail is privatised.

'This means that the future owner of Royal Mail would not be able to reduce the level of service to more remote areas.'

'The main concern that I have is to ensure that government departments, the Scottish Government and local authorities give business to the Post Office to ensure that all our Post Offices remain viable businesses.'



Chair of the Scottish Affairs Committee, Ian Davidson MP

Chairman of the Scottish Affairs Committee, Ian Davidson MP, said: 'Good intentions are all very well, but the lack of solidity in assurances regarding the postal network is worrying.'

'Postal services and the postal network are the life blood of many rural, remote and island communities throughout Scotland and the survival of many small businesses depends on the network.'

'Yet it remains unclear how the Postal Services Bill will protect consumers in deprived urban, rural and remote areas of Scotland.'

The committee has also proposed a 10 year Inter Business Agreement between Royal Mail and the Post Office, and recommended an urgent programme of upgrades to the Outreach Post Office network, which they say are not sufficiently robust or reliable to provide an adequate service.

Do you have a view on the privatisation of postal services in Scotland? Is enough being done to protect rural post offices? Contact Steven Flanagan: sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk



Oban Lifeboat coxswain Ronnie McKillop

Oban lifeboat ends busy year with Mull medi-vac

OBAN Lifeboat ended 2010 with the highest number of call-outs for three years.

The Mora Edith Macdonald was launched 57 times - up from 51 in 2009 and 55 in 2008.

Medi-vacs to mainland Medical evacuations accounted for 17 patients taken from the Isle of Mull to the mainland and a further six carried from vessels. The lifeboat was also called to 10 grounded vessels and had to deal with a further 11 craft which had either suffered engine failure or got into other trouble.

There were three calls to diving incidents, three to reports of red flares and one call-out to help search for a person reported missing. Two people in the water required help and two canoeists also needed the lifeboat crew's assistance.

The crew also had to deal with one fatal incident and there was one suspected Mayday hoax which led to the launch of the lifeboat. Coxswain Ronnie McKillop paid tribute to the enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment of the boat's volunteer crew. He said without them the service could not operate. 'Increasing sophisticated equipment necessitates ever higher levels of training, at college and locally, resulting in an every increasing drain on leisure time.'

Oban lifeboat spokesman, Patrick Maclean, said although the number of call-outs in 2010 was slightly up on the past two years, the overall trend was downward.

'Call-outs have reduced steadily in recent years from a peak of 104 in 1999 and it is hoped this year, in part, be due to the RNLI's Sea Safety initiative which began about that time,' he said.

Anti-social behaviour has impact on Argyll and Bute eviction figures

SOCIAL landlords in Argyll and Bute evicted 115 people during the last three years.

While the number of people evicted from social housing across Scotland has dropped by a third, the figure has remained at a peak locally, with 42 people evicted in both 2008/09 and 2009/10, up from 2007/08's 31.

Disappointed Officials from homelessness charity, Shelter, say they are disappointed the region has not followed the national trend and urged social landlords to be more proactive to avoid evictions.

However, evictions for anti-social behaviour and not rent arrears have added to the statistics.

Shelter's director for Scotland, Graeme Brown, said: 'Our analysis shows that progressive landlords are reducing evictions and arrears at the same time.'

'However, with 75,000 threats of eviction issued last year, too many social landlords are still using the threat of eviction as a rent collection tool rather than a

real last resort. 'We congratulate those local authorities and Registered Social Landlords who have made major progress in reducing evictions and urge those who are falling behind to look again at their policies and practices.'

ACHA The largest proportion of evictions in Argyll and Bute were by the Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA), which also has the largest housing stock.

In both 2007/08 and 2008/09, 31 people were evicted for rent arrears with a further two each year for anti-social behaviour.

In 2009/10 the number of evictions for rent arrears dropped to 28, but there were three evictions for anti-social behaviour.

ACHA say they are now on track for the lowest number of evictions since it took over the council's housing stock, with only 13 evictions made for rent arrears in the year until November 30.

Its chief executive, Alastair MacGregor, said eviction is always the very last resort and a step only taken in extreme circumstances.

'In rent arrears cases, ACHA makes every effort to help the tenant come to a suitable repayment arrangement,' he said. 'ACHA employs welfare rights staff who assist tenants and give money advice to those struggling with debts.'

Zero tolerance 'In the case of anti-social behaviour, the association takes a zero tolerance policy. This involves the association proactively seeking a decree for eviction against any tenant found guilty in a court of law of drug dealing from their home, or, involved in serious anti social behaviour, including violence, in our communities.'

'However, in both instances the case must be heard in court and a Sheriff will decide, based on the evidence presented, if it is reasonable to award a decree to evict.'

Power cut brings shutter down on photographer

EVEN tourists didn't escape the adverse effects of this week's short-term power cuts in Oban - stalling one Brazil-based photographer from getting his hands on a long-awaited new camera.

Native Scot Alex Floyd was staying in Glasgow with his Brazilian partner, Marthina Zoz, for a festive holiday and had visited Oban last week while en route to his mother's home in Lochgilphead.

While in Oban, he ordered a discounted camera from the town's Argos store and planned a special trip back to the town as a result.

Unfortunately when he arrived, Oban was in the midst of a power cut and the store was closed.

He said: 'I planned the whole day around this trip. We get all the way here and there's a power cut. Typical.'

Thankfully, power was later restored and Alex was able to get his camera.

The couple will return to Brazil on Friday.



Alex and Marthina find themselves locked out of Argos in Oban during Tuesday's power cut. 15_0101argocut1

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2011 Scottish Series launches at London Boat Show

CLYDE Cruising Club, organisers of Scotland's largest yachting regatta, the Brevin Dolphin Scottish Series, will launch plans tomorrow (Friday 7) at the London International Boat Show for their 2011 event.

The annual weekend regatta, which centres on Tarbert, Argyll, and the surrounding area of Loch Fyne, will take place from Friday to Monday, May 27 to 30, and will attract up to 200 entries sailing in three fleets, with over 1,200 crew and visitors.

This year's competition will see a number of changes which will be revealed in forthcoming months.

New Appin sports park look likely

A PROPOSAL to install an all-weather sports pitch at Strath of Appin Primary School now looks to be a certainty.

Announcing that nearly all the necessary funds had been raised, head teacher Gerry Boyle said it was hoped that the final £30,000 would be forthcoming early this year following an application to SportsScotland.

He thanked the Parent Council for their work in procuring grants from other organisations to fund the £130,000 project. These included £81,000 from LEADER, £10,000 from Appin Community Trust and £5,000 each from Argyll and Bute Council and Hugh Fraser Foundation.

The new ground will replace the existing one at the school, which is unusable in poor weather.

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LISMORE

Your correspondent is Pauline Dowling: 01631 760293

Quiz night

A PACKED hall enjoyed a lively quiz night run competently by Katy Crossant who had assembled interesting questions covering a wide range of interests giving people of all ages a chance to contribute. Northern Lights Plus One were the winners. Thanks go to the hall committee for organising and running the event and offering tea and coffee.

Seniors

Christmas tea

THE ISLAND'S senior citizens were invited to their annual Christmas Tea in the hall, hosted by the Guild.

A good number attended and were most appreciative of the effort Guild members had made to entertain and offer a fine spread.

Wintry weather

LISMORE saw no snow until the third week in December, despite a great deal of the country being snowed in and many schools closed.

Travelling on the island has so far been relatively unimpacted but going further afield has posed some difficulties and there were inevitable delays to delivery of oil, animal fodder, mail and Christmas gifts.

In the meantime Lismore has been enjoying a great many sunny days with hard frosts.

Nativity with carols

THE EIGHT pupils of Lismore Primary School treated islanders to an entertaining and original nativity story which they had scripted themselves.

Most of them played multiple parts leaving the audience with the impression they were a much larger troupe.

Directed by head teacher Catherine Davies and with pianist Anne Livingstone accompanying the carols on the piano, the story was narrated by Sophie King who also played the innkeeper and a wise man while Shannon Watson was Mary with Shona Wright Joseph.

Katy Cook and Rachel MacCormick made heavenly angels, Shane Stewart a shepherd and a wise man, with Lewis MacColl and Vance Cass shepherds.

The costumes were imaginative and the cast were word perfect.

Before the performance, Catherine Davies presented the school's catering manager Hazel MacCormick with a gift in thanks for the wonderful Christmas meal she cooked on December 15 for the children, parents, staff and guests, 31 in all, despite the school having no water at the time.

After the play, mince pies and tea were served.



Rachael McFarlane, Anna Preston, Fiona-Jean Arnot and Catriona Arnot.

Tarbert concert delights audience

THE TARBERT community held a Christmas concert on Monday December 20 in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Children's Hospice Association Scotland, with stunning performances from local young performers.

Those braving the chilly evening temperatures were treated to a delightful evening of Christmas songs and music from top performers aged between six and 18.

With Templar Hall filled to capacity, there was almost no more room at the inn for the latecomers!

An outstanding vocal group featuring Rachael MacFarlane, Fiona-Jean Arnot and Anna Preston, all aged 17, wowed the audience with their beautiful harmony singing of traditional Christmas carols and upbeat jazzy Christmas songs.

The award-winning Tarbert Academy Folk Group - Emma MacFarlane, Niamh MacKaveney, Lucy Kemp-Smith and Emma Kok, aged 14, 13 and 11, also gave heart-rending and stunning performances of traditional Gaelic and Scottish songs.

Other acts included star guitar and song duo, 16-year-old Caragh Sinclair and Lauren Prentice, with their rousing version of Caledonia and Santa Claus is Coming to Town.

Members of the folk group also performed brilliantly in duets and Niamh MacKaveney gave a lovely solo performance of the Ashokan Farewell on the violin.

The youngest performer, six-year-old Jean McPhee, ensured there wasn't a dry eye in the house with her beautiful duet-singing with Emma Kok.

STAFFIN

Diesel and petrol supplies runs dry

STAFFIN motorists ran out of diesel and petrol last week as vital fuel deliveries failed to materialise.

MacKenzie Stores in the village operates the only pumps for miles around and ordered 4,000 litres of petrol and 2,500 litres of diesel in the week leading up to Christmas.

Owners Peter and Marion MacKenzie finally received the delivery from their supplier last Wednesday afternoon, but until then had been forced to turn customers away. Marion told *The Oban Times*: 'We ordered fuel the week before Christmas and were told we might not get it until the Thursday or Friday, but they did not come. We had a wee bit of a struggle. If we have no fuel we are losing business because people come in for fuel and buy other things.'

DUROR

Village hall ceilidh success

MORE than 40 people braved the wintry weather conditions to attend the Christmas Ceilidh in Duror Village Hall.

Popular local musicians the Glenfinnan Ceilidh Band provided the music as the group of mainly local dancers got into the festive spirit.

The night was organised by the village hall committee and committee member Jonathon Baxter told *The Oban Times* the dance was a success. He said: 'It was a great night. They band were terrific and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves. The road conditions weren't great but quite a few people still made it through the snow.'

KYLE OF LOCHALSH

Your correspondent is Charlie MacRae: 01599 544359

Community council

PLOCKTON and District Community Council met in Plockton Hall on Tuesday December 14.

Among the items discussed were:

Police matters: The community council was disappointed that the culprits who removed 22 car aerials in Plockton recently have not been caught.

Roads: The much-needed resurfacing work for Harbour Street, the road past the toilets and Station Road was highlighted again.

Railway station: The community council was pleased that ScotRail has now provided a seat there.

Loch Lundie: The community council again questioned spending money on this loch as no problems were envisaged.

Public toilets: The community council assumed that Plockton Harbour was to take over the toilets but the Highland Council has now said The National Trust wants them although with the proposed reduction of financial support the future of a public toilet in Plockton is now in question.

Bin collections: Concern was expressed that a collection every two weeks of the green bins might lead to problems

in the summer especially from retail food outlets.

Village maintenance: Despite no financial help from Highland Council the community council spent £1,140 keeping the grass cut and the village tidy during the summer.

Refurbishment of Broadford Hospital: The community council agreed to donate £150 towards this project.

Sheds at Plockton car park: The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) has submitted a planning application for change of use of the sheds to become a NTS information point. This was a surprise to the community council.

Primary school play-area: A request for funding for this project was deferred until further information was acquired.

Next meeting: The next meeting is in Plockton Hall on Tuesday February 1 at 7.30pm.

Birthday congratulations

CONGRATULATIONS to Plockton's oldest resident who celebrated his 93rd birthday on December 21.

Watchnight service

AT THE watchnight service in Plockton Church of Scotland on Christmas Eve, Alastair read one of the two readings, the other was by Dr Iain Matheson.

Andy and Catherine Will provided the music.

Loch Striven back on usual route

THE LOCH Striven is back on her usual Sconser-Raasay route after undergoing her annual refit at the Ardmaleish boatyard on Bute.

The vessel arrived back in the Narrows of Raasay around 11pm on December 27 after stopping off at Oban en route, and made her first crossing to Raasay the following morning.

The Loch Striven's relief boat, the Loch Linthe, is now on duty at Gigha as replacement boat for the MV Loch Ranza, which is undergoing her annual service, Loch Striven motorman Paul Camilli told *The Oban Times*.

SCALPAY

Your correspondent is D Morrison: 01859 540217

Fishing

TWO LOCAL creel boats had a haul of saithe, which will be used for creel bait.

One boat also had a haul of pollock at Sgeir-a-Ghobainn, a rock near Glas Island Lighthouse.

A few more herring have been netted also.

Festive time

AS WE enter 2011 we hope all Oban Times readers had a Merry Christmas and wish them a happy New Year.

Uncut peat banks

ONLY unearthed turf can be seen on former peat banks on Scalpay.

Many of those who were once engaged in cutting the peat for fire fuel have since discontinued the practice because of old age.

Because of this the peat has been left uncut over the years.

There is no doubt that oil and electric heating systems have all but taken over on the island.

Freezing temperatures

THE NIGHTS throughout December have been freezing cold, with snow and icy conditions outside.

Local mail distribution was also affected as roads from Stornoway to Tarbert were often impassable.

However, the main roads seem to have been well gritted.

On the quieter roads that remain untreated, children have been taking advantage by sledging on them.

JURA

Search begins for new doctor

A NEW doctor is being sought for Jura.

Dr Frank Teunisse is to leave his post on the island at the beginning of February.

A meeting has been held between Jura Community Council and the health board at which assurances were given that a new resident doctor for Jura will be sought.

An advertisement will be drawn up this month, with input from the community council and a member of the council will sit on the appointment board.

Transport forum

THE next meeting of Islay and Jura Transport Forum will be held at 10.30am on Wednesday March 9.

It will take place at Islay Airport.

For further details and to include items on the agenda, contact Rowan Simpson, community transport officer, on 01546 604418.

Down Your Way

Welcome to Down Your Way - a new feature bringing *The Oban Times* closer to you and your community. Each week, our reporters will be out and about helping to keep you up to date with what's happening in one particular area. We begin with a look at Dalmally and Lochaweside.

Dalmally and Lochaweside

TWO GLASGOW businesswomen have taken over the running of Dalmally Pharmacy, more than a year after they first conceived the idea.

Boots chemist pharmacist Isma Yaqoob and Inland Revenue chartered tax inspector Rukhsana Akbar have both retained their respective jobs in the city and have been given special permission from their employers to run the new venture for a year.

Isma said: 'We wanted to try something new and we had been looking at the pharmacy here for the past year and three months. It took a while because of the uncertain economic climate. I am quite medically minded and Rukhsana is more business minded, so we have a good starting point for this business.'

The business partners, who met while doing charity work, say they are looking forward to their new venture.

From working in busy city offices and branches, the pair will now get to know the same few faces and share their workplace with the village post office.

They succeed Malcolm Bruce, who retired in December, but have retained pharmacy dispenser Ann Moore, who is showing the new owners 'the ropes'.

'The place has been very well run, so there is not a lot to change,' said Isma. 'One thing we will be pushing is to make sure everyone knows what pharmaceutical services they are entitled to.'



Pharmacist Isma Yaqoob outside the pharmacy and post office with post office sub-postmistress Gilli Chrystal, left, and pharmacy dispenser Ann Moore. 15_101phar01

RESIDENTS of St Conan's Road in Lochawe brought in Christmas and New Year in style with their own Christmas tree and lights.

For a number of years the residents have built up a collection of lights to rival any street in the country and meet every year in the middle of the street for a switch-on ceremony and to bring in the New Year.

This year eight members of Inveraray and District Pipe Band, who are based in Lochawe and Dalmally, played at the switching on of the lights and the residents reciprocated with a donation of £135.

And up to 50 residents gathered in the street at the weekend to bring in the New Year.

Resident Alan Campbell said: 'People around here are very community minded and we always have a good wee night.'

THE NEW head chef at the Portsonachan Hotel has pledged to gain the establishment an AA Rosette as he overhauls the menu.

William Brodrick has previously worked at the Port Charlotte Hotel on Islay and the Eilean Iarmain on Skye, where he maintained the restaurant's two AA Rosettes.

The 40-year-old Tarbert native lives in Campbelltown with his wife and two daughters and travels home in his days off.

The Portsonachan Hotel has been better known for its location on the shores of Loch Awe, rather than its food but William, who took up the post in November says he plans to change that.

He added: 'I have already changed the menu and I am aiming to get an AA Rosette for the restaurant.'

THE thaw following the recent freezing temperatures has caused damage to roads all over Glenorchy and Lochawe. Further cracks are developing in the already badly damaged Craig Road, pictured, which leads to Craig Lodge, the base for international charity Mary's Meals. Temperatures in Dalmally have been as low as -16°C over the past few weeks. 15_101craig01



PUPILS at Dalmally Primary School got into the festive spirit on the final two days of term with a nativity play and Christmas party at the school.

On the last day of term (December 22) the primary seven children held afternoon and evening performances of The Story of Christmas, which they conveyed to the audience through readings, poetry and songs.

There was a Christmas service by school chaplains the Rev Liz Gibson and Father Bill Fraser, followed by a Christmas lunch and party.

The previous night the whole school took part in the nativity play, The Hopeless Camel.

The nativity was held at the school, as the weather prevented the children getting to the church safely.



The cast of Lismore Primary School's Nativity story.

Mull councillor thanks road workers

COUNCILLOR Mary-Jean Devon thanked road workers for all their hard work on Mull over the festive period.

She said this year was much improved on last year when many roads were impassable because of the weather.

Ms Devon said: 'The roads were kept clear in the most part and our team of road workers, based on the island, should be thanked for all their hard work.'



Funday School entertains congregation

Muckairn Parish Church in Taynuilt was as busy as it has been for a number of years when the Funday School performed a nativity play, Michael Mouse, to a sizeable congregation on December 19.



Santa calls in at Tobermory children's party

Children at the Tobermory Children's Party getting presents from Santa during their annual Christmas Party in the Aros Hall.



Primary pupils deliver Iona Lunch Club festive cheer

Iona Lunch Club welcomed some unexpected visitors in the run-up to Christmas when children from the primary school appeared at the door. They entertained the diners to songs from their Christmas show which was performed that evening in the village hall.

Your Dalmally and Lochaweside reporter is Euan Paterson, telephone 01631 568000, email: epaterson@obantimes.co.uk



Donald Shaw, from Taynuilt, has been awarded a doctorate from Glasgow University for his services to music.

Artistic director's work recognised by university

CELTIC Connections artistic director Donald Shaw is to receive a doctorate from Glasgow University for services to music.

Donald made his name with the Celtic band *Capercaillie* and, along with his wife Karen Matheson, has helped the band gain international acclaim.

The Taynuilt couple, who now live in Glasgow, have also pursued other projects and Donald works with students and school pupils on top of his Celtic Connections commitments.

Donald told *The Oban Times*: 'I am delighted to have been offered this doctorate and to have it from

Glasgow University, which has so much history and has produced many great artists and writers throughout the years, is extra special.'

However, Donald admits things could have been so different had he pursued his plans to attend university as a teenager.

I missed out on university, although I had applied to do electrical engineering because I didn't think a music career would work out.

'But after I left Oban High School I was touring with the band and music just took over my life.'

Donald is to receive his doctorate in June this year.

Thousands bid to save Highland Folk Museum

THOUSANDS of people have added their names to a petition demanding Newtonmore's award-winning Highland Folk Museum be saved from closure.

Highland Council is considering whether to shut the attraction in a bid to save the £450,000 a year it costs to run. The museum could even be sold off as the council strives to find more than £30million in budget savings.

The museum was named the best visitor experience in the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions awards in November.

Its fate is set to be sealed at a meeting of the council in February.

There has been vehement opposition to the plans and the Friends of the Highland Folk Museum hope the petition will demonstrate the importance of the facility to the community.

Former employee and now a member of the group of Friends Angela Cox said: 'There must be a few thousand names on the petition now. We've still got

to collect a few back in for a final count, but there's more than 600 names added to the online petition alone.

'People recognise how terrible it would be to lose the museum.

'One little boy, he was nine, was so upset when he found out it could close that he came up to me after he had been there. He had £10 holiday money and asked if it would keep the museum open.'

Visitor numbers are growing too. This year, 51,245 people visited the museum - an increase of more than 10,000 on the previous year.

As a result of its increasing popularity, the council is currently installing a new car park at the cost of £260,000.

Angela said: 'It is very difficult for the council because cuts have to be made from everywhere. But the reality is that if this is lost it will be lost forever.'

'If the council did close it now, all the money that's been spent on it recently would be a waste and extremely silly.'

Congratulations to competition winners

WELL done to the winners of our recent competition for tickets to the Glasvegas gig at the Corran Halls on January 10.

The lucky winners were: Ian Turner, of North Connell; Kenny Geldard, of Oban; Shirley Milligan, of Oban;

Jacqueline Beaton, of Oban; Tina Wilson, of Oban; Andrena Young, of North Connell; Janine Calder, of Ardferr; Anne Mackay, of Onich, by Fort William; Kenny Merilees, of Mallaig and Lauren Stewart, of Benderloch.

Win tickets to three top concerts at Celtic Connections

THE OBAN Times has teamed up with the organisers of this year's Celtic Connections festival to offer a pair of tickets to three fantastic shows.

First up is Fiddlers' Bid with special guests and The Quebe Sisters Band, on Saturday January 15 at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall main auditorium.

There won't be many bands this youthful celebrating 20 years together in 2011, but Fiddlers' Bid first formed at school in Shetland.

With a hugely accomplished, formidably welded line-up of four fiddles, piano/clarsach, guitar and bass, their 2009 release *All Dressed in Yellow* won top honours in both the Scots Trad Music Awards and the Spiral Earth Awards.

All the way from small-town Texas, the Quebe Sisters

promise exquisite three-part harmonies and matching feisty fiddle work.

Secondly, we have a pair of tickets for *Skerryvore*, Mànran and Calum Iain MacCorquodale and Malcolm Jones on Sunday January 16 at 7.30pm. This event is for over 14s only - under 16s must be accompanied by an adult - and is at the O2 ABC Glasgow.

Folk-rock outfit *Skerryvore* released their third, self-titled album to rave reviews last July 2010, winning yet more fans with a mix of soulful original songs and rousing traditional melodies.

Mànran is a new line-up of well-kent young talent - Norrie MacIver, guitar/vocals; Gary Innes, accordion; Ewen Henderson, fiddle/pipes; Calum Stewart, flutes/uilleann pipes; Ross Saunders, bass;

and Scott Mackay, drums - performing songs in Gaelic and English alongside fiery instrumental sets.

Completing the showcase of the Highlands and islands' finest, renowned North Uist fiddler and accordionist Calum Iain MacCorquodale, a leading champion of older Gaelic playing styles, is joined by Runrig's Malcolm Jones.

Formidable band

Finally, we have a pair of tickets for The Highland Sessions on Saturday January 22 at 7.30pm at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall main auditorium.

Blazin' Fiddles, whose innovative contemporary arrangements showcase regional traditions from Shetland to Lochaber, are joined by North Uist's multi award-winning Julie Fowles

with her formidable Scottish/Irish band.

The line-up is completed by Barra-born pioneer Catherine-Ann MacPhee, one of the finest traditional singers in Scotland today; Lewis native Margaret Stewart; Darren MacLean, as well as Calum Alex MacMillan of Dàimh.

To win a pair of tickets, simply answer the following question:

Where did the members of Fiddlers' Bid first meet?

Fill in the coupon and send it to: Celtic Connections Competition, Newsdesk, *The Oban Times*, Crannog Lane, Oban PA34 4HB.

Entries must be received by noon on Wednesday January 12.

For more information on Celtic Connections or to book tickets visit www.celticconnections.com.

Celtic Connections Competition:

Where did the members of Fiddlers' Bid first meet?

Answer:.....

Name:.....

Address:.....

Daytime phone number:.....

Preferred tickets (tick one box):

Fiddlers' Bid

Skerryvore

Highland Sessions

Please post your entries to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Entries to be in by 12 noon Wednesday 12 January 2011. Normal Oban Times rules apply. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. No cash alternative.

Sir Tom heads an eclectic line-up at annual folk festival

SIR TOM Jones is the surprise package in an eclectic mix of musicians at this month's Celtic Connections Festival.

The staple diet of Scottish traditional and folk music at the Glasgow event - January 13 to 30 - will be enriched with a selection of traditional music from around the world.

However, Sir Tom's exclusive performance of his latest album, *Praise and Blame*, is sure to be a crowd puller and will go a long way to addressing concerns there is not enough of a Welsh influence at the Celtic festival.

Donald Shaw, Celtic Connections artistic director, said: 'Tom Jones is a true musical icon and we are honoured to be able to bring him to Celtic Connections.'

'This month, the festival pays tribute to the influence of the great gospel tradition,

and Tom Jones' performance of his stunning gospel, roots and blues album, *Praise and Blame*, forms part of this strand.'

Best cultural event

The festival is expected to attract visitors from Brazil, Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, Colombia, Canada, the USA and from across Europe over the 18-day programme, which features *The Waterboys: An Appointment with Mr Yeats*, Rosanne Cash, Grant Lee Buffalo, Fran Healy, Richard Thompson, Zakir Hussain, Cheikh Lô, Fiddlers' Bid, Treacherous Orchestra, Lau, and Forever Young - A 70th birthday tribute to Bob Dylan featuring Rosanne Cash, Josh Rouse, Kris Drever, Tim O'Brien, Roddy Hart and the Lonesome Fire.

Named Best Cultural Event at the prestigious UK Event Awards last October, Celtic

Connections will host 300 gigs, one-off collaborative shows, ceilidhs, talks, workshops, free events and late night sessions taking place in 14 venues across Glasgow.

Festival worth

The festival was worth £11.9million to Scotland in 2010, according to a market research study carried out by Glasgow Grows Audiences.

Last year, visitors to Glasgow's annual folk, roots and world music festival, which is sponsored by ScottishPower, generated a total of £10.1million of new output to the Glasgow City Council area and £11.9m to Scotland, a marked increase on the £5.6 million and £6.6 million of new output generated to Glasgow and Scotland respectively during the festival in 2009.

Donald Shaw said: 'I

think the increase in Celtic Connections' economic impact this year demonstrates its global reputation as a vibrant music festival and underlines Glasgow's status not just as one of the greatest cities in the world for live music but also as a major tourist destination.

Real buzz

'It's fantastic that despite the difficult economic climate and in the midst of a freezing January, people visited Scotland from all over the world to come to Celtic Connections - in fact, this year we learned of a festival fan from California who has bought a flat in Glasgow for visiting Celtic Connections every year.'

'There's a real buzz in the city every January and we are delighted with the continued success of the festival,' added Donald.



The team from Mull with host Angus Purden.

Tobermory team takes up TV challenge

A TEAM from Tobermory will appear on STV's quiz show *Postcode Challenge* tomorrow, Friday, January 7, hoping to scoop the big £25,000 jackpot.

The four team members are Gordon Chalmers, Andy Malcolm, Paddy McKenna and Steve Malcolm, who all work together at a local

retailer. They will go head-to-head with a team from Irvine in the show, and if the Mull team wins, they will donate £500 to their chosen charity, Aros Hall.

Postcode Challenge is sponsored by charity lottery People's Postcode Lottery.

Every Friday night, *Postcode Challenge*, which is hosted

by Angus Purden, brings viewers an entertaining mix of nail biting competition and team banter, as two teams from across Scotland battle it out for a £25,000 jackpot. Each team is made up of four friends who are linked by the same postcode.

The competing teams are tested on their general

knowledge in two nerve-racking rounds and answer postcode related survey questions which reveal amusing facts about the lifestyle of people within a certain area.

The game culminates in a tense final, where the last team standing pull together to try to scoop the jackpot.



ARGYLL ANIMAL AID

SWEEP

Two year old ex farm collie. Nice friendly dog. Needs a nice home and a bit of patience whilst he gets used to the finer things in life!

Please contact Jean on 01631 566406 after 8pm. aaa.rescueteam@btconnect.com <http://www.smallpaws.co.uk>

Reg. charity SCO13211

OBAN MUSIC SOCIETY CONCERT

Sunday 9th January 2011
at 3.00 p.m. in St John's Cathedral
The Glasgow String Quartet playing Haydn, Barber and Brahms.
Admission free to members,
Mon members welcome tickets at the door
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www.argyllcommunities.org

Comunn Gàidhealach an Òbain

OLD NEW YEAR BUFFET CEILIDH

Saturday 8th January, 2011 7.00pm
Masonic Hall, Oban
Artists: Kirsteen Grant M.G.M.
Iain MacLean M.G.M. Hugh MacQueen M.G.M., Andreas Wolfe, Piper Euan Dewar, Music Sileas Sinclair and Deirdrie MacDonald, Fear An Taighe: Cameron Fletcher

Admission £8

To advertise in the

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Solution must be found

WE may not like them, but life in Oban without traffic wardens could indeed become a 'free for all' as has been warned this week.

The service, which is currently funded by the police is under review (is there any service which isn't?).

And with Argyll and Bute Council's well documented budget problems, it seems unlikely the authority could take the service on.

However, a solution must be found and wardens must be kept as the lack of a properly organised parking system in the town will be to the detriment of both those who live here and those who visit.

GLASGOW LETTER

Looking ahead

WITH 2010 in the past, it is time for local associations in and around the city to look forward.

What does the next year hold for them?

I may have posed the same question last year at this time and, if so, I don't think my comments this year will differ to any great extent.

Attendances at functions have stayed at much the same level, with audiences being made up mainly of those in the older age groups although, interestingly, the artists at many of the ceilidhs have never been so young.

We have many wonderful young musicians, singers and instrumentalists and the answer would be to encourage more of their age group to attend functions.

The format of Ceol's Craic is one which attracts the younger generation and perhaps that is the direction which will have to be taken if the traditional music scene is to survive.

Let's look forward with anticipation and that is certainly what happens in January with Celtic Connections starting on Thursday January 13.

Celtic Connections

IT IS time for more than 1,500 artists to descend on the city to take part in 18 days of concerts at various locations in the city.

This is the 18th festival and it is now very much a global experience with music from top artists as outlined in the full programme. This column could not possibly list all the concerts one might wish to attend and so my advice is simple.

Get a copy of the programme, pick as many concerts as you can and remember that one of the main attractions of the festival is the surprise element of wonderful music, perhaps where least expected, depending on your individual taste.

There is something for everyone and if you have to limit your visits why not attend the Danny Kyle Open Stage which is free and takes place most evenings at 5pm in the Exhibition Hall within the Concert Hall.

Some of the top acts of the present day traditional scene first came to prominence at these early evening events.

Late night sessions will take place from 10pm in the Exhibition Hall featuring many of the artists who will have performed that day and the Festival Club will be held in the Art School on each of the Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays of the festival.

Tickets for the festival are available by calling

0141 353 8000 and online at www.celticconnections.com.

Looking back

WE ARE all now very familiar with the presence of Stornoway Black Pudding on menus in most quality eating establishments and there is now the opportunity to sample some of the recipes which incorporate this traditional dish.

Seumas MacInnes, proprietor of Cafe Gondolfi and who first introduced the delicacy to Glasgow diners, has shared his recipes in the recently published Stornoway Black Pudding Bible, a volume of 50 dishes.

How times change for a Glasgow boy!

My recollection from more than 50 years ago is of trying to hide the fact that my mother sourced the ingredients for the marag dubh in Glasgow and yet today I am proud to relate that this delicacy, which is much sought after by my friends, was a frequent meal in our household. Mind you we were not treated to such variety as listed in the Bible!

Diary dates

Friday January 7: Glasgow Skye Association Family Ceilidh, Partick Burgh Halls, 7.30pm. Paisley and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh Dance, Elderslie Village Hall, 7.30pm.

St Mungo's Bairs Concert, St Andrew's in the Square, Multicultural Concert featuring Maggie MacInnes, Adam McNaughton, the Ideal Band, Neilston and District Pipe Band, the African High Life Band, Four Provinces Irish Ceilidh Band and Akaya, West African drummers.

Thursday January 13: Celtic Connections Opening Concert. **Friday January 14:** Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, 7.30pm.

Saturday January 15: Piping Competition Final, Islay Inn. Highlander's Club Dance, Partick Burgh Halls, 8pm, Susan MacFadyen Band.

Pub scene

GUNNA Sound will be playing in the Islay Inn on Friday with the Keeleys on Saturday, while in the Park Bar it will be Pneumatic Drills on Friday, Willie Cameron on Sunday with Saturday still to be confirmed.

Remember also that on Thursday nights both the Park and the Islay have jam sessions and Mondays in the Islay is a fiddlers evening.

Neil Murray, Telephone 0141 954 8105. Email: neilmurray@yahoo.co.uk.

YOUR LETTERS

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith.

A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed.

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



Oban and the Sound of Kerrera

This week our flashback photograph features a view of Oban and the Sound of Kerrera. It was submitted by Colin Armstrong of Coventry. We invite readers to send in flashback photographs. Please send prints to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Daft targets

Sir, Mr Sneddon, Argyll and Bute Council, reassures us of the probity of his plans to close one third of primary schools in Argyll.

He points to the council's website where, in a masterful display of sophistry, he defends the 'dodgy dossier' approach to the closure proposals.

He conclusively demonstrates to his own satisfaction that his interpretation of two reports is superior to the actual authors of the reports, one of whom, Mr Donaghue, of Hall Aitken, wrote: 'The inference Argyll and Bute draws about schools is not one that the vast majority of those reading the report or even that section would draw.'

Sadly, Mr Sneddon's rather cavalier attitude to accuracy is evident throughout the closure documents with their errors, misleading statements, omissions of factual information that may 'embarrass' the presumption for closure and bold statements that are both un-evidenced and contradictory to contemporary educational research. In short: 'mince'.

Mr Sneddon writes: 'The council...can no longer afford to continue operating schools which are at less than half capacity and in which the education of some children is costing £30,000 per year...'

Most readers would reasonably assume that all of the schools slated for closure are at less than 50 per cent capacity and have very high per pupil costs.

Barcaldine is at 96 per cent capacity and is in the top third of primary schools with the lowest per pupil cost. It is rated as Argyll's most cost effective school building and has an 'A' rating for educational suitability.

Despite all of this, Barcaldine is slated for closure.

And it is not alone in being a daft target. We look no further than the same edition of *The Oban Times* to find that Keills Primary is at almost 60 per cent capacity with average per pupil costs but is also on the list and its 24 children would be put on expensive buses for at least 70 minutes each day.

Mr Sneddon's letter was headed 'Education Service Must Change'; a sentiment I endorse but perhaps not in the way he intended.

Dr Douglas McKenzie, vice chairman, Barcaldine Primary Parent Council and chairman, Barcaldine Community Association, Tantallon, Barcaldine.

Claims were not made by ARSN

Sir, Mr Cleland Sneddon, Argyll and Bute's Director of Community Services, wrote to the local press attempting to defend himself from the documented proof that he had misrepresented

academic studies on the closure of village schools. He attacked the Argyll Rural Schools Network (ARSN) for distributing the evidence of this scandal.

However, it was not ARSN that called Mr Sneddon's use of the studies 'highly misleading' or 'wholly unjustified', it was the authors of the documents he was using. One of them added: 'The inference they [Argyll and Bute] draw about schools is not one that the vast majority of those reading the report [or even that section] would draw.'

In other words, Mr Sneddon either entirely misunderstood the report or he was misrepresenting its conclusions. I'll leave him the choice.

Murdo MacDonald, Convener, Argyll Rural Schools Network.

Sneddon must go

Sir, Cleland Sneddon's letter of December 23, like so much of his output, is shot through with errors, omissions, glaring inconsistencies and downright misrepresentation.

He has fooled the council just as now he is trying to fool your readers.

Just one example will have to suffice here.

Barcaldine School has 96 per cent occupancy, an assured demographic base, glowing HMIE reports, and is one of the most cost-effective schools per pupil

in the whole of Argyll. Yet it is on Sneddon's hit-list for closure.

Even in his own terms this is madness. We deserve better than this from a public official charged with the future of our children.

He is right about one thing though: 'the education service must change'. His time in Argyll and Bute has been a catalogue of disaster. Sneddon must go - and the sooner the better.

John Gosling, Siskin, Barcaldine.

Housing crisis

Sir, I note with interest the admission by Councillor Ellen Morton that Argyll and Bute faces a disastrous shortage of housing, which threatens the viability of communities and outweighs any other challenge the council faces.

What took them so long to recognise this?

Argyll and Bute Council chief executive officer Sally Loudon is often quoted as wishing Argyll and Bute to be seen as a great place in which to live and work.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss with her the immorality of the council's enforcement policy against those who, through no fault of their own, are unable to access suitable housing, yet are contributing in many ways to making Argyll and Bute a great place.

Christopher Thornhill, 4, Ardfern Cottages, Ardfern.

Bowmore sports

A SUCCESSFUL attempt has been made to revive the Bowmore sports day and the revamped event will take place on July 16.

Former committee chairman John MacIntyre has stepped down but the group will continue to benefit from his experience and enthusiasm.

Taking over as sports chairman is Duncan MacGillivray who plans to keep up his predecessor's impetus.

Kate Ross and Mairi MacArthur retain their secretary and treasurer responsibilities and the new committee's first successful fund raising event was a well supported bingo night. This will be repeated in Bowmore Village Hall on Saturday January 15 at 7.30pm.

New website

AS WELL as appointing a new chairman in Neil Woodrow, Ionad Chalum Chille Ile, the island's St Columba Gaelic Centre, has launched a new website.

The contents include details of the existing staff, a list of the current directors and information on the courses available which range from Ulpan and Higher Gaelic to conversation classes for Gaelic learners. Check it out by logging on to www.islay-gaelic.net.

Carols by candlelight

HEAD teacher Florence MacDougall welcomed the large congregation who attended Bowmore Primary School's 'Carols by Candlelight' service in Bowmore's Round Church on December 21.

The pupils performed a full programme of popular Christmas music and the items were introduced with great aplomb by the youthful narrators. The 'language of the Gaels' selections from scholars in the school's Gaelic unit were greatly enjoyed by parents and friends and even the 'paper angels' smiled benignly on the proceedings.

The event concluded with a Christmas blessing from parish minister the Rev Dr Rob Barlow.

Christmas fundraising

BOWMORE'S Lochside Hotel was the setting for a successful winter fair which raised £548 jointly shared by Croileagan, the local Gaelic playgroup, and Comann nam Parant Ile agus Dhiura.

This included a generous £100 donation from Roberta and Duffie MacNeill, popular mine hosts at the Bowmore hostelry. There was even a visit from Father Christmas who bore a strong resemblance to Gaelic singer Islay MacTaggart, a favourite 'Lochside' performer. More seasonal cheer was on the agenda at

the IDEA Christmas Fair held in the group's Resource Centre. Thanks to the generosity of those attending and donations received almost £900 was added to the coffers.

Port Ellen Primary School also got into the Christmas Fair act and the steady stream of shoppers saw the pupils' creations selling like hot cakes and raising £2,285. This will be used to finance school trips and events.

Alpha courses

A SERIES of Alpha courses begins in the St Columba Church Hall, Port Ellen, on January 11 at 7.30pm.

A further course follows at the Baptist Church, in Bowmore, at the same time the following evening.

The courses, open to everyone, are masterminded by the Rev Dr Rob Barlow and are expected to last for 10 weeks.

Coastguard retires

LOCAL garage owner John MacKenzie has retired from the Port Charlotte Coastguard detachment after 36 years' service.

His commitment and dedication was marked with the presentation of a tide clock handed over by colleague Neilan MacLellan who has had 44 continuous years service with the island coastguards.

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

A view from the tower

by McCaig

Welcome to 2011

BY THE time you read this I hope to be out of Gartnavel General Hospital in Glasgow.

Overwhelmingly, I can report that our NHS is in good, kind and efficient hands.

Naturally, there have been blips especially given the time of year and the heavy demands from those who are drawn to accident and emergency like iron filings to a magnet - 'what's a scrap between friends', some of them argue, as long as there's someone else to do the patching and help them in the early hours of Saturday/Sunday morning.

Don't believe me? Ask any policeman who has to pick up the pieces initially. Suddenly, the combatants become like long-lost brothers - until the next time.

Before we leave the NHS and nurses let me say unequivocally there is still far too big a pay-gap between the medics and most of them. To add to the hurt, of course, nurses are now subject to the public sector pay freeze and that riles them most of all. They fall just outside the exemption range and therefore get nothing.

I have often said that Nicola Sturgeon is the best Scottish Health Secretary and I firmly believe that.

However, on this occasion she needs a bit of help from Finance Secretary John Swinney and probably from 'paddock face' as I understand a growing number of his constituents call him.

Those in the know are tight-lipped but go on and on about 'paddock face'. Obviously, he hasn't been as skilled as they think he should have been in EU fisheries and is paying the price!

Sir Iain Noble BT of Ardkinglas

IAIN'S death greatly saddened me although I knew there was no recovery possible from his cancer.

He was a truly great Scot in so many aspects from his creation, along with Sir Angus Grossart, of the first stand-alone Scottish merchant bank and the Gaelic College in Skye - Sabhal Mor Ostaig.

When he started his great Gaelic crusade he was scorned and laughed at.

Well, who is laughing now?

I will remember the tribute to one of my former teachers - Ian Crichton Smith - who was a leading Gaelic and English poet and novelist - in the Great Hall at the college.

A splendid night carried on through till dawn and later as befitted a son of Lewis. Proof, if any were necessary, that the language of the 'Garden of Eden' is thriving and attracting world-wide attention from those whose 'meat and drink' is preserving and protecting such from disappearing.

Although the college now has new premises, the farm buildings which housed it initially are still there.

It delighted Sir Iain

to show me round and, without saying so, indicated that 'from these humble origins Sabhal Mor Ostaig has grown.

A fine estate in the Sleat peninsula, a distillery producing good malt, an excellent hotel and many more businesses, not least in the financial sector, kept Iain busy but he was never happier than when entertaining friends although he would forget to tell the receptionist that they were his guests!

Fortunately, it never happened to me, but our Gaelic columnist became a victim although it was a long time ago.

Politics fascinated Iain and I was not surprised when he announced he was standing for the Scottish Parliament as an independent.

I was delighted to chair a lunch at which he spoke in Ardrishaig.

It was a lively meeting, made more so by snow falling outside which extended the duration by an hour and a half.

Unfortunately, Iain didn't get the necessary seven per cent of votes cast which was a great loss to the nation.

Iain Noble was a veritable Renaissance man in the style of the Scottish Enlightenment and I and many others mourn his passing.

At the same time, we remember fondly his widow and hope she finds comfort in tributes to her wonderful husband.

Al Birrell

FROM one great man to another.

I was deeply sorry to learn that Al Birrell, port assistant extraordinaire with CalMac for many years, had been found dead in his flat.

Thousands of CalMac passengers over many years have been grateful to Al for his chat and his advice.

I remember seeing him talking animatedly to the late Lord (RAB) Butler as he headed for his holiday home on Mull.

In more recent years, he seemed to be on hand when Mary Lady McGrigor plus son Sir Jamie and his brood of children took to the seas to head for Coll or North Uist. One could say Al marshalled the troops and made sure that the same number left the ferry as boarded it.

My strolls across Oban's Railway Pier were always made more lively if I met Al and he was in sparkling form.

The banter was self deprecating and never hurtful. I'm sorry he had so little time to enjoy his retirement and see his daughter happily married. Her engagement was announced just before her father died.

Jolomo OBE

CONGRATULATIONS to Jolomo on being awarded on OBE in the Queen's New Years Honours List for his services to the arts and charities.

McCaig

PRESS POLICY

WE AT The Oban Times do our utmost to make sure that all our reports are fair, accurate and balanced, but we accept that, on occasion, mistakes can occur in the hectic process of producing the biggest local newspaper in the West Highlands.

It is the policy of The Oban Times Group to correct any errors in print. If you find an error of fact on our pages please write to The Editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB giving your daytime telephone number where possible. This statement of policy will appear on this page every week along with any corrections or clarifications. The Oban Times adheres to the Press Complaints' Commission's Code of Conduct.

The views expressed in The Oban Times are not necessarily those of this newspaper.

Sneak thieves steal meat

SNEAK thieves stole a quantity of meat from outside a Portree hotel on Hogmanay. Portree police said the meat had been delivered to the back door of the Marmalade Hotel and was taken sometime between 3am and 9am. The meat had a value of £200 and was within a cardboard tray, brown on the bottom with a white lid, possibly marked 'Grants'.

Anyone with information should contact Portree Police Station on 01478 612888 or CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111.

Rum croft interviews to be held this month

RUM DEVELOPMENT Trust will interview candidates later this month for three new crofts on the island.

The bare land crofts were created under a deal brokered by the then environment minister Mike Russell, which saw 16 houses in Kinloch village transferred to the trust from the island's owners Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

A similar exercise last year failed to find suitable applicants, but trust chairman Charlie King is hopeful the interviews, to be held on January 24 and 25, will result in new families moving to Rum. The island's permanent population stands at only 20. 'It's to get more people into the community,' Mr King told *The Oban Times*.

Community ownership of land and assets is seen as vital to the island's regeneration, with jobs independent of SNH a key objective. Growing demand for nature tourism has already led to the creation of a ranger's post.

**NEWSDESK
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Residents back plan to reform Kilmallie Community Council



The proposed biomass power station at Corpach: catalyst for moves to reform Kilmallie Community Council.

Corpach power plant application a catalyst for local activists

LOCAL democracy in Lochaber could be set for a boost after it emerged a group of local activists is moving to reconstitute Kilmallie Community Council (KCC).

The area, which includes Corpach, Banavie and Tomonie, has been without grassroots representation since KCC folded in 2007.

But recent planning controversies have strengthened a belief that the community council is needed more than ever.

Local feelings ran high over the recently approved Druim Fada wind farm plan, while it took the formation of the Neptune's Staircase Action Group to make British Waterways Scotland shelve plans to build houses next to the historic Telford House on the Caledonian Canal at Banavie.

Now that Manchester-based Peel Energy has unveiled plans for a wood-burning biomass power station at

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
STEPHEN NORRIS
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Corpach, local people are determined to have their say in the decision-making process.

Gillian Clark from Corpach told *The Oban Times* the Neptune's Staircase issue had convinced residents it was time to bring back the community council.

A list of names of those willing to contribute was compiled and Highland Council contacted to help with the election, which will be held by postal ballot for 12 available places.

Mrs Clark, a tutor at West Highland College in Fort William, said: 'I would expect nomination forms would be out early this month, handed in and the elections held so the community council is up and running by February. 'We want to be active in

time before the biomass plant planning application is submitted. We don't want to miss that one.'

'The least number we can have is eight people, but Highland Council wants at least 15 names so there can be an election. There are 15 or 16 people who have come forward already.'

She added: 'Currently any planning issues are being referred to Kilmallie Hall committee, so the community council does need to be brought back in order that issues not directly affecting the hall can be discussed.'

'There is definitely a lot of interest. I'm quite confident that it will happen. The community council has been really missed - it did a lot of good.'

'There was a monthly newsletter, a gardening competition and a Christmas party, which all helped to pull people together and keep them informed.'

Nevis Radio's 'exciting' expansion plans

NEVIS Radio has revealed plans to update its transmitters and increase the service it offers to a wider Lochaber audience.

Stage one of the upgrade will see the Tresaig transmitter shut down and moved to a new site, possibly at Nevis Range, to give greater coverage towards Invergarry and the north. It is also planned to extend coverage to more peripheral areas under later phases of the plan.

Approaches to funding agencies are

being made to find the bulk of the £600,000 required - although Nevis Radio itself will have to fund part of the cost.

Chairman Iain Ferguson said: 'At present a large proportion of Nevis Radio income goes to paying for existing transmitters and the new plans will cut this expenditure - very necessary in these times of general economic cutbacks.'

'The figure may seem unattainable, but by breaking things down into

sections and prioritising the areas where work needs to be done quickly, we will all be doing our best to make sure that it happens.'

All Nevis Radio presenters are volunteers, but Government regulations prevent it from being a charity, Mr Ferguson said. 'This is a very exciting and very necessary project, which will need to be undertaken if Nevis Radio and the vital service we provide to Lochaber and beyond is to continue into the future,' he added.



Nevis Radio: depends on its volunteer presenters.

Villagers invited to play shinty in Glenfinnan

RESIDENTS of Glenfinnan will celebrate the New Year this Saturday using an old tradition - a shinty game involving as many villagers as possible.

The match will be played on a rough pitch under the famous viaduct at about 3pm, with any local men, women and children welcome to take part.

Joyous Jayyous players sport Argyll's colours

ARGYLL'S newest volleyball team has taken delivery off a set of strips and will be sporting the county name - in the war-torn region of Palestine.

The Jayyous Volleyball Team, based in the West Bank area, is one of the few distractions for young men in the area, according to Oban's David Mitchell, who has recently returned from the region.

David had taken on the potentially dangerous role of ecumenical accompanier in the region to observe the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Having seen the good work of the team he asked the Oban Concern for Palestine group if they could offer assistance.

Member Jim Still, from Kilmore, came up with the idea to donate a set of strips.

David said: 'Oban Concern for Palestine gave the equivalent of nearly £300 so the team could buy some strips.'

'I was there to present the strips on their behalf and to mark the occasion they arranged a special game against Ramallah. The whole village turned out for the match and I'm pleased to say they took the opponents to the cleaners.'

The Jayyous team had a certificate of thanks made for Oban Concern for Palestine.



The Jayyous Volleyball team in their new Argyll strips.

Water workers push boat out to get isle back on tap

SCOTTISH Water repair workers literally pushed the boat out to restore drinking water supplies for 50 households in one of the remotest communities in Scotland - just in time to celebrate New Year.

The operation took place on Colonsay after the water company received reports on Tuesday, December 28 of interruptions to the supply.

The following day, packs of bottled water were sent over while an investigation into the problem continued.

On Thursday the Scottish Water squad discovered a faulty valve had been restricting supplies.

Specialist equipment was needed but no more ferries

were due to visit the island.

The company then hired a fast ribbed boat normally used for wildlife spotting. This enabled an additional team of staff with specialist kit to get across from the mainland that night.

The valve repair was carried out within a few hours and customers' water started to come back on by Friday morning, Hogmanay.

The repair came as a relief to islanders who had heard rumours there would be no repair until January 5.

Islander Angus MacPhee said: 'For three days a lot of people didn't have any water but no-one knew what the problem was.'

'A special mention must go

to our part-time water board worker Ross Moodie and his assistant George Leppard, who seemed to be working around the clock to try to find the fault.'

'Anytime anyone saw them they were covered head to toe in mud.'

'Thanks must also go to the three Scottish Water workers who came over and fixed the problem within hours.'

Meanwhile, Brogan Fuels agreed to bring forward an oil delivery to the island to yesterday (Wednesday), as many properties were running low because of disruption to deliveries before Christmas.

The next delivery would have been January 18.

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Care home campaigners celebrate as £2m upgrade gets go-ahead

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to save a Lochaber care home look certain to be celebrating an early New Year victory next week.

Highland Council-run Invernevis House in Fort William has been facing an uncertain future since June 24 last year, when the council shelved plans to build a new Invernevis in Caol.

But at a closed-doors summit on Tuesday, Independent/LibDem/Labour ruling group leaders agreed instead to support a £2million upgrade of the 24-bed home.

Administration committee chairmen and vice-chairmen then met yesterday to agree to submit a report on Invernevis to next Wednesday's housing and social work committee recommending:

- An increase in beds to 28;
- At least a £1.6m refurbishment on top of the £302,000 works currently under way;
- That the major



Michael Foxley: good news on Invernevis House.

refurbishment be phased within Invernevis and the adjoining Belhaven Ward to minimise disruption to residents;

That some rooms be ensuite and many made suitable for hoists for nursing care.

Should the committee rubber stamp the move, the decision will go before full council in February or March for ratification.

Highland Council leader Michael Foxley and fellow Lochaber councillor Brian Murphy led moves to 'ensure that there will be a major £2million refurbishment for Invernevis in the New Year'.

In a joint statement to *The Oban Times*, they said: 'As council administration members we have done what we promised. A £2million major investment will ensure Invernevis is fit for purpose for many years.'

'In this we have the support of our Lochaber colleagues. This will become a good example of joint working with the NHS locally.'

The news represents a major victory for Invernevis Action Group (IAG), which has been campaigning for five years to save the care home, where many of their loved ones were looked after.

Initially the group pinned its hopes on a new Invernevis, but when Highland Council pulled the plug on the project activists switched tactics to fight for a

major upgrade. Hundreds of Lochaber people attended a protest march and rally in Fort William, while IAG supporters picketed the council's Inverness HQ and circulated thousands of car stickers and leaflets.

Fort William and Ardnachan councillor Donald Cameron singled out Invernevis Action Group members as 'the real heroes of the day'.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'Each and every one of them had a relative in Invernevis and over the years they have stuck with it for the greater good, despite the fact that many of their loved ones have passed on.'

'They have done a great job to keep the pressure on. It is a fantastic result from 2006, when the home was going to be closed.'

IAG committee member John MacIntosh said: 'If this is going ahead we are over the moon about it - it's been a very long fight. We have been let down so many times before, but this sounds really positive.'

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Plockton celebrates Hogmanay in style

THE ANNUAL bonfire and fireworks Hogmanay at Plockton was once again a great success with a rocket, fired from the street, lighting the bonfire on the island.

A large crowd attended and then proceeded to a dance in Plockton hall, which raised £2,400 for Computers for Africa.

The event is organised annually by Terry and Pat Heavside who thank everyone for their support.

A recent dance in Dornie hall raised more than £1,000 for the same cause.

Meanwhile, Plockton saw snow on the ground for 20 days during December, with the coldest temperature -6.5°C and warmest 9.6°C.

Nineteen nights had temperatures below 0°C.

Only 2.5 inches of rain fell, making 2010 the driest year for a long time with 43 inches, 20 inches less than 2009.

Alleycats top Nevis Centre league

LOCHABER ten pin bowlers at the Nevis Centre in Fort William go into 2011 with Alleycats top of the scratch division, the only team with maximum points.

The Underdogs are second and Council remain third.

Underdogs lead the handicap division from Alleycats and Rotavators.

Alleycats' Pam Weller holds the top scratch average with 147, with Brian Stewart (Council) second on 144.

Lochaber Showstoppers back in action for spring show

JUST weeks after the curtain has come down on their pantomime 'Robyn Hood', Lochaber Showstoppers are getting back into the action.

Rehearsals for their spring show, a performance of sixties Broadway musical 'Sweet Charity', will get underway next week.

The show - which includes the hits 'Big Spender' and 'The Rhythm of Life' - will be staged in May.

Anyone interested in taking part can attend an information night at the Nevis Centre on Monday evening.

New solar panels for Isle of Eigg

THE ISLE of Eigg will boost its renewable energy capacity at the end of this month when it takes delivery of new solar panels.

The installation of the photovoltaic screens will triple Eigg's solar power from 10 kilowatts to 30 kilowatts and further cut dependence on expensive diesel generators.

Eigg Electric director John Booth said: 'The bases are in place and it's just a matter of putting the frames and the panels up.'

'They will be entirely funded by part of the money we won in the Nesta Big Green Challenge and the Ashton gold award last year.'

'We are not applying for any external funding.'

'The PV cells really come into their own in the summer months but can generate power, given bright conditions, even in December and January.'

Sunshine-wise, we are on a par here with west Wales and Cornwall.'

He added: 'The panels will directly reduce our dependence on diesel.'

'They will supplement our system at times when we might otherwise have less than the renewable power we need to run our system in its entirety.'



Snow mayhem: the gridlocked A82 at Rannoch Moor on Monday afternoon. 10_f01snow01

Blizzard wreaks havoc on Rannoch Moor

HUNDREDS of motorists were stuck in blizzard conditions on the A82 for about three hours south of Rannoch Moor on Monday afternoon.

The worst affected section was the steep incline at the viewpoint above Loch Tulla, just beyond the Lochaber boundary.

Southbound traffic tailed back for three miles at one point after cars failed to negotiate corners coming down off the moor and slid off the ice and snow-covered road.

The route was closed for a short time as police and gritters fought to get traffic moving as snow continued to fall.

Many northbound motorists turned back to Tyndrum to try to reach Lochaber via the A85 only to find the road through to Dalnally also closed by snow.

Inspector Dougie Allan of Lochaber police said the blizzard 'had caught everybody on the hop'.

'The intensity of the snow caused us a few problems,' he said.

'TranservScotland cleared the road as quickly as they could and had traffic flowing again as soon as they were able.'

Fight goes on to save out-of-hours nurses

FORT William and Ardnamurchan councillor Donald Cameron has questioned NHS Highland over moves to remove the community nursing team from out-of-hours cover in West Ardnamurchan.

In a letter to general manager for Lochaber Tracy Ligema, Councillor Cameron acknowledged the 'pressure being borne' by NHS managers during current economic difficulties, but said the plans for Kilchoan and the surrounding area had caused 'consternation' locally.

He stated: 'It would appear that a relatively inexpensive and tested model of cover which has proved its worth in the past and brought comfort to residents is being abandoned for a more remote system of cover. West Ardnamurchan does not enjoy the same medical cover as Acharacle, Strontian and Lochaline and, whilst recognising your professional knowledge and expertise, I believe it is wrong to inflict a 'one-size fits all' policy in the rural Highlands.

He added: 'Kilchoan and the surrounding area are blessed with residents who actively support each other and who provide a sustainable community through volunteering to participate in lifeline services.'

'Over the years the community has adapted but what is proposed here is a step too far. There needs to be more discussion regarding the proposal as I fear that if the NHS does not have the support of the residents then the volunteer ethic could be damaged and overspill into other areas.'

Councillor Cameron is to pursue the issue with his fellow ward councillors once he receives a response from NHS Highland, who say present arrangements for out-of-hours cover 'are neither safe nor sustainable' and should be carried out by GPs or paramedics.

Ms Ligema has indicated she is prepared to meet local residents to discuss the matter.

Marine Harvest hatchery expansion plan delayed

MARINE Harvest's plans to expand its hatchery operations at Lochailort have been held up and will not be considered by Highland Council's planning committee until spring.

The salmon farming firm expected its plan for a huge new smolt production factory near the village would go before Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning committee before Christmas, but it will now not be seen until March at the earliest.

Marine Harvest business support manager Steve Bracken told *The Oban Times* the setback had been due to a number of changes made to the original plan.

He said: 'There was a slight delay because we had to make a few small alterations after consultations. One change we made was the colour of the building. Councillors asked us to make it darker than the original plan so it blends in better with the surroundings.'

If approved, the new facility will replace the existing unit at Lochailort which has been in place for 16 years. It will provide around six million young salmon for four open-sea farms the firm is planning to develop in 2012 and will create six new jobs.

The company already operates four freshwater hatcheries at Loch Garry, Loch Arkaig, Loch Sheil and Loch Lochy. Combined with Lochailort they produce 10 million salmon fry and smolts every year for their sea loch farms on the west coast. The new hatchery will be capable of producing an additional five million smolts, effectively increasing production by half.

Mr Bracken also said extra examination work had to be carried out on the land to make sure it is safe, as it was the site of Special Operations Executive training during WWII.

'We had a survey carried out on the land by a group of experts who came up from England. They were looking for any metal buried in the ground in case there are explosives there. Anything they find will have to be excavated,' he said.

Feedback from local people and public consultation meetings to gauge the response had been mainly positive so far, said Mr Bracken.

Record low temperatures recorded

DECEMBER 2010 in Lochaber was the coldest month this century.

At Andrew Bootman's weather station at Achnabobane near Spean Bridge, temperatures for the month averaged a frigid -2.6°C, a full five degrees below the average of 2.5°C and colder even than January and February this year.

Coldest night-time temperature was on the 22nd, when the mercury plunged to -12°C, while the 23rd was the coldest by day, when a maximum of -8.0°C was recorded.

The month was also exceptionally dry, with rain and snowfall less than one fifth of average. Over on the milder west coast at Arisaig, Randal Coyne measured average daily temperatures over the month at only 1.9°C, almost 3°C below the norm of 4.7°C.

The coldest night was -7°C on the morning of December 18, the coldest night this century. Rain and snowfall, at 32mms, was barely one quarter of the average.

'We certainly had some extreme weather over the last six weeks and technically winter only started ten days ago,' Randal told *The Oban Times*.

Plan sparks new challenge over seabed

PROPOSALS for a tidal power scheme in a narrow channel between the Isle of Skye and Lochalsh have sparked renewed challenges to the Crown Estate's control over Scotland's coastal seabed.

EXCLUSIVE

REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Bristol-based Marine Current Turbines (MCT) is aiming to create Scotland's first tidal energy farm in the fast-flowing Kyle Rhea by 2013 under a £35million project to provide 4,000 homes with green electricity.

Before work can begin the firm must first negotiate a lease with the Crown Estate, which controls rights over the seabed in Scottish territorial waters to the 12 nautical mile limit.

As the law stands, fragile coastal communities such as Glenelg are not due a penny - despite the development being on their doorstep.

However, the Crown Estate - whose profits flow to the London Treasury - stands to gain millions in rental income from Kyle Rhea and dozens of other planned offshore wind and tidal projects. The Scottish and UK government are planning a massive expansion of the sector.

Highland Council and Western Isles Council have called for a review of present arrangements, which date back to 1760 when George III agreed to give up Crown revenues in exchange for the Civil List.

Now Glenelg and Arnisdale Trust is demanding local people have a voice in negotiations over Kyle Rhea.

Chairman Mike Francis told *The Oban Times*: 'We are keen to get the Crown Estate to agree a community like ourselves to have some form of leasing of the seabed. You have got to allow Glenelg communities to have a say in the seabed around them.'

'We are a very remote area and we need to be able to support ourselves financially as much as we possibly can.'

'It is going to be a major uphill battle - but we are in it for the long haul. We will be as aggressive as we can be without overstepping the mark in trying to claim part of the deal for local people.'

'The community is generally in favour of something happening, but we want to make sure we get some revenue from this situation.'

He added: 'To be honest, the Scottish Government has got to become much firmer with the Crown Estate and say look, this situation is just not acceptable.'

'Power has been given away in a very laid back manner. Why is the Scottish Government not demanding more say? It is very puzzling.'

Highlands and Islands SNP MSP Dave Thompson said 'a strong case' existed for power to come down to community councils or community companies.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'You have to wrest power away from the Crown Estate Commissioners and get it down to a Scottish level.'

'The current set up gives undue influence and power to them and I don't think they operate it to the advancement of local communities. Their

role is simply to make money for their coffers.

'They don't need to consult Scottish Ministers on anything they do. They don't just have control over seabed, they own properties in Scotland and just made £80 million from selling buildings in Edinburgh. The quicker we can get control away from them the better.'

He added: 'The problem with the Crown Estate Commissioners is that they are beholden only unto themselves and make income for themselves and the UK state. They are not going to have a high priority for local communities.'

'It strikes me that the role of the Crown Estate in 21st century Scotland is out of tune with what everyone is looking for in this country. That is, greater local control and benefits from renewable energy developments going to local communities. They stand for the very opposite of that.'

The Crown Estate confirmed MCT had applied for a lease for a demonstration project at the Kyle Rhea site.

A spokesperson said: 'In general, The Crown Estate is pleased to see developers of marine renewables projects - offshore wind, wave and tidal, engage directly with local communities on local community benefit issues.'

'Matters concerning the allocation of the Crown Estate surplus revenue (profit) is a matter for the UK Government and is not for the Crown Estate to comment on.'

MCT expects to lodge a planning application later this year.

The Crown Estate, the spokesperson said, was committed to investing in offshore renewables and expected to invest around £20m in Scotland over the next five years, depending on industry requirements.

"The Scottish Government has got to become much firmer with the Crown Estate."

Mike Francis, chairman, Glenelg and Arnisdale Trust



Brave swimmers take Loch Shiel plunge

Brave swimmers aged from three to 70 years old took a dip in the chilly waters of Loch Shiel at Glenfinnan on New Year's Day. Despite the temperature sitting at 0°C, 26 local people got into the water to take part in the annual event. Organiser Duncan Gibson said: 'It's a very informal thing. We just get in the water and splash about, then you can get out and enjoy a glass of champagne next to the fire.'

Caol church scraps car park plans following strong public protest

A CONTROVERSIAL plan to build a church car park in a grassy area in Caol has been scrapped following strong public opposition.

Kilmallie Free Church on Glenpane Street has withdrawn its application for planning permission to create 18 to 20 car parking spaces on a 600 square metre area of land across from the church between Erracht Drive and Loch Linnhe.

The submission attracted 23 complaints from local residents, who claimed the proposed site of the car park was one of the few remaining green spaces in the village and should be free for everyone to use.

Church minister Chris MacRae told *The Oban Times*: 'We have withdrawn the

REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK fort@obantimes.co.uk

application on advice from the council following consultation with them.

'Hopefully this is the end of any row and we can get on with rebuilding, refurbishing and extending the good work we have been doing.'

The move was in conjunction with a separate plan to expand the church building that was approved by Ross, Skye and Lochaber planning committee in September. Instead of the car park, the church is now applying for permission to put up signs directing parishioners to

existing parking spaces at the nearby Caol Shopping Centre.

The new application, which the church hopes will go before the planning committee in January, has been welcomed by local resident Bruce Cregan and so far received no negative comments.

Mr Cregan, who opposed the original application, told planners: 'The idea of parking at the Caol Shopping Centre is a good one and I have no objection to the erection of signs directing the congregation to said parking area.'

Meanwhile, the church is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2011, and is planning to hold a number of events throughout the year to mark the occasion.

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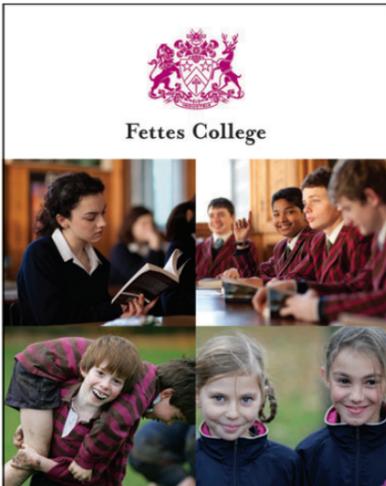
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In the words of Captain of College Jack Cadzow, who's from Argyll, Glenalmond College is a "very special place."

Set in 300 glorious acres of Perthshire countryside, this historic school gives boys and girls between 12 and 18 a first-class education that allows them to fulfill and often exceed their potential.

Both boarders and day pupils are supported by a House system which cares for them throughout their time at the school.

"There is a really close community here. Everyone helps each other out, whether you're in your first year or in Sixth Form," Jack explains. "You make friendships for life at Glenalmond."

One recent Glenalmond leaver, now studying History and Politics at Oxford, adds: "Being at school in the countryside means you can really focus on your studies. My teachers made me fall in love with my subjects and really got me to open up my mind."

There is a modern science block, a Music School, Art School and acres of sports pitches including a golf course. Development programmes are provided for those who are especially gifted academically or at sport.

Glenalmond pupils take GCSEs and A Levels and the vast majority go on to universities all over the UK and abroad.

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Underpinning successes in all areas of the curriculum are excellent IT and Science facilities, technically advanced Music rooms, a magnificent Arts, Drama and Sports facility, and a brand new all-weather pitch for hockey and tennis.
 In addition, this year saw completion of a major refurbishment of one of the girls' boarding houses, together with a brand new dedicated facility for our Sixth Form pupils; this iconic study and social space will help our final year pupils make the all important transition from school to university.
 There can be few schools as welcoming and friendly as Dollar: perhaps that explains why pupils make friends for life here, and why so many former pupils come back to visit us.

Lathallan School

LATHALLAN SCHOOL is set in spectacular private grounds in a baronial castle overlooking the sea at Johnshaven in Angus.

Lathallan is not a large school but is one of quality rather than size. We can boast that every member of staff knows every child by name and nature and the reverse is also true!

With an established reputation in preparatory school education of over 75 years, in September 2006 the school extended the provision of education upwards to S2 pupils, with provision for the school to grow by one year group each year until 2011. Lathallan senior school is able to offer 17 different examinable subject options ranging from French, Spanish and the single science options of biology, chemistry and physics to business studies and managing environmental resources.

This year, we are delighted to have opened a new IT Lab in the Senior School, a new library and upgraded boarding facilities.

Alongside the academic curriculum there are extensive opportunities for outdoor education, which forms part of the normal school curriculum in association with a local specialist company. The programme of extra-curricular activities at senior level include the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme With maximum class sizes of 16 right through the school from P1 to S3/S4, Lathallan is able to foster the individual talents of each child.
 Lathallan is unique in the local area in offering not only weekly and full boarding facilities, but also flexi-boarding where pupils can opt to stay for occasional nights.

Glenalmond College

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Strathallan School

Strathallan School is a boarding and day school for girls and boys aged 9 to 18. Our ethos is to provide opportunities for all pupils to excel, challenging them and also offering support and building confidence through a range of experiences. Central to this is academic success – 23% of the results in A level were A* grade with 100% pass rate ("Top A Level School in Scotland" – FT Sept 2009 & 2010). The School is also committed to high standards in sport, music, theatre and a wide range of other activities. Our focus is very much on the individual who is appreciated for his/her contribution in all areas of school life. Located in 150 acres of Perthshire countryside our campus offers a safe and secure environment for pupils to grow and develop. We are proud of our reputation for outstanding pastoral care and our unrivalled facilities include an indoor Swimming pool, two synthetic Hockey pitches, eight Tennis courts, Clay Pigeon and Rifle shooting ranges, Fitness and Weight training room, purpose built Computing, Art, and Design Technology centres.

Being a member of the Strathallan community is a wonderful experience in itself but vitally it is also an outstanding preparation for the future.
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Our senior school boys and girls are educated in a single sex environment tailored to meet different needs and help adolescents achieve their true potential. Our co-educational Sixth Form provides a practical, challenging preparation for further education. Boarders join us for this final year as we offer a huge range of Higher and Advanced Higher choices. Our boarding houses are home to around 25 boys and 25 girls. The atmosphere is friendly and staff have time to take an interest in each individual.

We value all our boarders who gain in maturity and independence in their time with us. Staff develop a close relationship with parents and work with them to encourage the boys and girls to work hard and discover new talents. Whatever your reason for considering boarding, please get in touch to arrange a visit. The two houses are run by caring and enthusiastic staff, have excellent facilities but most of all, they are places where your son or daughter will feel safe, happy and valued. Why not visit our website on www.esms.edin.sch.uk to find out more or Email: admissions@esmgc.com or call 0131 311 1111




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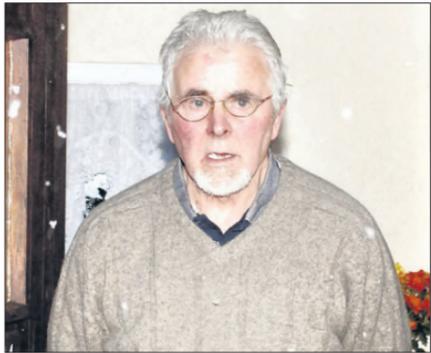
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My Village Glencoe

RETIRED shepherd Alistair MacDonald is Glencoe through and through. A descendant of the famous MacDonalds of Glencoe, he was born 71 years ago in the house he currently shares with his wife Roslyn and has spent most of his life in the village. After serving in the Scots Guards, Alistair became a shepherd and eventually had a flock of 1,000 sheep at Glen Etive. He retired in 1996 and has kept himself involved in local issues, including setting up the Glencoe Heritage Trust in 2002.



Alistair is now a director of the trust, which has purchased land around the village, including Eilean Munde – the ancient burial isle where many of his ancestors are buried. As well as looking after the village, the

trust holds several fundraising activities throughout the year, such as the Halloween party and the Glencoe and District flower show. Alistair explained to The Oban Times' RICHARD HADDOCK why Glencoe is so special to him.



The war memorial in Glencoe. 10_f53glencoe02

Were you born in the village, Alistair?

'I was born in this house, which goes back five generations in my family. Glencoe is a special place. It has a kind of magic all of its own that no one can explain. I think the mountains are pretty special. When I was a shepherd I was in the mountains all the time. I wanted to be a shepherd from when I was a young boy. After I left the Scots Guards, I started out with 40 sheep and built it up until I had 1,000 and my own croft in the glen.

Is there anybody famous from the village?

A man called Archibald MacDonald was born Leacantuin Farm, Glencoe. He was quite an amazing man. He left Glencoe in 1815 with about 100 men and they went to Canada for a better life. His son, Ranald, went with him and in the 1830s he travelled to Japan and became the first man to teach the Japanese English. When he was in Canada, I think Archibald met Lord Strathcona, who built Glencoe hospital. And my son, Alexander, is a leading historian. A few years ago he wrote a book called 'MacDonalds of Glencoe' about the history of the clan in the village.

"The biggest problem for the village is the decline in wildlife. When you remove deer and sheep like they have done here, all the wildlife suffers."

Alistair MacDonald

Do you have a favourite time of the year in Glencoe?

Autumn would be my favourite time of year, when the stags are out. You can hear them roaring from our house. They used to stay up in the glen, but now they come right down to the village. And my favourite place is the falls in the river. They're so natural, they've never changed.

What are the challenges facing the village?

The biggest problem for the village is the decline in wildlife. When you remove deer and sheep like they have done here, all the wildlife in the area suffers. They are attempting to cover us with trees. The glen has a culture all of its own, and there has never been trees there. The money they have spent on trying to plant trees in the

glen could have maintained the hospital for another 100 years.

But a lot of people don't even notice that kind of thing now. They go out to work, they come home and they don't think about the wildlife. And that's fine, but I used to have 1,000 sheep on those hills, but now that's all gone.

The 'Lost Valley' at the Three Sisters used to be a wild place.

There were wildcats, foxes, rabbits, sheep, deer and lots of birds. There used to be a wildcat which came to my croft during the day. It would just sit on the fence and watch the rabbits.

But they took away the sheep and deer and everything else died out. They don't seem to understand how important these animals are to the whole area.

There used to be lovely wild flowers as well, but without the animals there to fertilize them, they've nearly all gone as well.



St Mary's Church in the centre of the village. 10_f53glencoe03

How much has Glencoe changed since you were a child?

It has changed dramatically, it has expanded. When I was young, there were 4,000 sheep on the hills and a healthy supply of deer – both animals were the foundation stone of all the wildlife in the area. It has gone from being a wild rugged wilderness and it's not for the good. There are more people here now - I think the population is about 300, I'm not sure - But there are fewer shops. We've just got the one shop now.

Does the village have an interesting history?

Nobody knows when the village was first inhabited, but the MacDonalds have always been the main clan here. It is a bit isolated because of the geographical set-up, and they didn't suffer visitors gladly. It's a feather in your cap in the MacDonald clan if you are from Glencoe. My wife Roslyn can trace her roots back to the MacDonalds who were killed in the Glencoe massacre in 1692.

How would you describe the village to someone who has never been there?

It's the sort of place that once you've been to it, you'll

always want to come back. A lot of people who have visited come back and make their homes in the village, and we welcome this fresh injection.

There's great walking, there's great climbing, there's great skiing. It's just so special.



A view down the centre of the village. 10_f53glencoe04

26 Years Ago

Those Were The Days
The Oban Times



Thursday, January 3, 1985

Lochaber wants a share of £2million jobs cash

THE SCOTTISH Office has been slammed for ignoring the Highlands and Islands in a new £2million experimental scheme aimed at improving employment prospects in Scotland. Lochaber District Councillor Brian Murphy and council chairman Colin Neilson both feel Lochaber should have had some cash. The Scottish Office money is being dished out by the Scottish Development Agency who are not including the Highlands and Islands because, they say, there are already schemes running there to help new businesses get off the ground. Mr Murphy said: 'I think Lochaber should have been considered. The unemployment seems to be getting worse all the time with very little prospect on the horizon.' Mr Neilson added: 'We don't seem to be getting anything, we seem to be losing out all the time.'

'We seem to have been deprived while Wester Ross and Easter Ross seem to be getting all these oil related grants.'

Year of the Oban Line – BR promise

BRITISH Rail in Scotland, ScotRail, is to make a major push on the Oban line this year. Final details are still to be announced but Mr Chris Green, ScotRail general manager, said plans included a new station for the town, the reopening of Loch Awe station and more rail tourist facilities in the area. Of the plans for the Oban station, Mr Green said the idea was to build a new one on the site of the present station. 'If permission to demolish is refused,' he said, 'we see the new station being located alongside the existing building. Oban is a thriving tourist centre, and it needs a modern railway station which would be a focal point for the town and for passengers transferring between train, ship, bus and taxi or private car.'

'The present station, which is old, lacking in modern facilities and costly to maintain is of no use to ScotRail,' declared Mr Green. To increase the appeal of the area for tourists, BR's local area business group, based in Fort William, has identified a demand for an Oban-Fort William round day trip by bus and train. 'The business group are looking at the possibility of connecting tourist specials with Fort William trains at Crianlarich. This will not only make the round trip easier for tourists, but also increase the Oban-Glasgow service,' said Mr Green. Looking further ahead, Mr Green said he wanted to extend the new technology of Radio Electronic Token Block signalling, which was successfully launched on the Dingwall-Kyle route last year, to the West Highland line. 'It would open up all sorts of possibilities for the West Highlands, for Sunday trains, with excursions dovetailing with the tourist orientated operations to Mallaig and Oban, he said.'

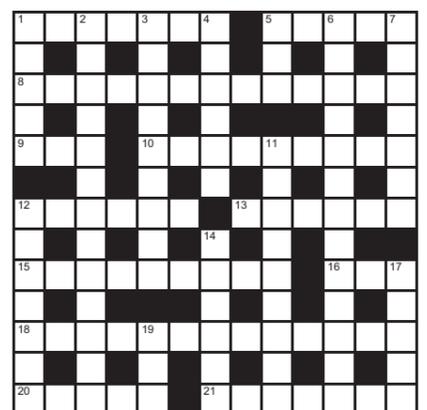
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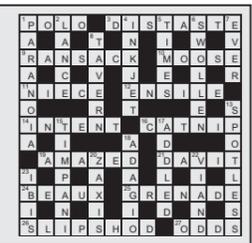
- 1 Heavy Spars (7)
- 5 Visible (5)
- 8 rustworthy (13)
- 9 Blast (3)
- 10 Brown rodent (6,3)
- 12 Hostile attitude (6)
- 13 Manage to leave (6)
- 15 Ruin with intent (9)
- 16 Warm bath (3)
- 18 Being dazzled (4-9)
- 20 Send, as payment (5)
- 21 Overact (3,2,2)

Down

- 1 All out attack (5)
- 2 Welcoming area (9,4)
- 3 Wolf spider (9)
- 4 Rush (6)
- 5 Edible grass seed, traditionally eaten by the Scottish? (3)
- 6 Overabundance (13)
- 7 Support (7)
- 11 Port of the Netherlands (9)
- 12 Consultant (7)
- 14 End line (6)
- 17 Author of fables (5)
- 19 Fly larva (3)



Last Week's Solution



HEAT your HOME this WINTER

At this time of year, many motorists take their car for a winter check to help it withstand the worst of the cold, damp weather. But how many people ever think to do the same for their most valuable asset - their home - so they can stay warm and avoid emergencies?

According to the AA's Home Emergency Response experts, a burst pipe is the most common cause for a call-out during winter. Last year, homeowners faced an average bill of £343 for home emergencies, as a result of winter weather - but the total cost of a burst pipe incident often far exceeds this.

The damage and distress it would cause also makes a burst pipe the most feared winter. Tom Stringer, head of Home Rescue for the AA, says: 'A burst pipe needn't be such a worry, though. Help yourself by spending an hour giving your home a basic 'MOT'. 'As with your car, it does make a difference and could save you from the cost and distress of a household emergency.'

The AA's Home Emergency Response team has drawn up the following tips: (If in any doubt, seek professional advice and assistance.)

INTERIOR OF THE HOME

- Get your boiler serviced regularly by a qualified Gas Safe-registered engineer.
- If you regularly use an open fire or log-burning stove, get the chimney swept.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of your mains water stop valve (it's usually under the sink or stairs), in case you need to shut it off in the event of a burst pipe.
- If you know how to, bleed your radiators, as air pockets reduce their efficiency.
- Check pipes and water tank for missing insulation and arrange replacement if necessary.
- Check windows and doors for draughts - fit draught excluders or repair seals as necessary.
- When required, wipe condensation off windows to help prevent build-up of mould and damp - consider buying a de-humidifier if the problem is persistently bad.
- If your home is going to be empty for a while (for more than a few days) or if you have a second property, keep the thermostat set to low, to stop the temperature dropping too low.
- Keep a torch and spare batteries in a convenient place and have emergency contact numbers to hand, including a local plumber, electrician and gas engineer.



EXTERIOR OF THE HOME

- Walk round and do a visual check of the roof for any missing tiles or damage.
- Check guttering from ground level by looking for signs of water overflowing during heavy rain. Get someone in to rectify if you're not confident on a ladder
- Check exterior walls for any damage that could let water in and inspect windows for cracked panes - arrange repair work as necessary.
- Make sure that brick air vents are clear from obstruction.
- Clear as necessary any drain gratings and pathways.
- Consider purchasing sand/salt and shovel to clear driveways and paths.
- Turn off and drain external water taps and store garden hoses in a frost-free place.
- Lubricate external locks and padlocks with a water dispersant.

If in any doubt, seek professional advice and assistance.

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Feeling the cold this winter? Struggling to pay winter fuel bills?

Depending on your personal situation and the construction of your home there may be financial assistance available from the government Energy Assistance Package or from your energy provider to help you. Speak to the ALIenergy Affordable Warmth in Argyll team to find out more.

The Affordable Warmth in Argyll project is run by Rebecca Lewis and Tara Livornese and covers the whole of Argyll, Bute, Alexandria and Balloch in West Dunbartonshire, and all the islands. Monthly surgeries are provided in ten locations which are free of charge, confidential and, crucially, impartial. These surgeries re-start in February 2011 - look out for details. Contact the team by email at rebecca@alienergy.org.uk, or tara@alienergy.org.uk or by phoning 07867 681990 or 07876 037650.

Nationwide building society have recently awarded ALIenergy a grant to deliver training to carers and support groups on affordable warmth issues and the support that is available to vulnerable groups. Workshops will be available in the New Year, please contact 01631 565183 for further information.

The ALIenergy Argyll Energy Information and Awareness project offers energy advice and assistance with energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for communities and individuals. This project has seven energy information and advice points around Argyll:

- **Re-Jig: Recycle Jura/Islay Group**, Unit 11, Whin Park Bridgend, Isle of Islay PA44 7NZ
- **Mull and Iona Community Trust**, Unit 2, Bunessan, Isle of Mull PA67 6DP
- **Bute Advice Centre**, 22 Bishop Street, Rothesay, Isle of Bute PA20 9DG
- **Campbell's Paint & Hardware Shop**, 124-126 Argyll Street, Dunoon PA23 7NA
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**, Oban Road, Lochgilphead PA31 8NG
- **Inveraray Visitors Information Centre**, Inveraray, Argyll PA26 8BL
- **Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Headquarters**, Carrochan Road, Balloch

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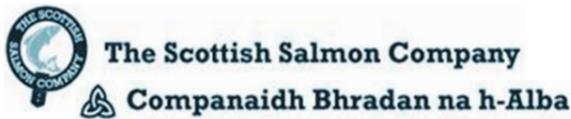
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The Scottish Salmon Company is a leading independent producer of high quality Scottish salmon. We are committed to high standards of animal welfare, sustainable operations and promoting a responsible environmental policy.

We are currently recruiting for an HR Assistant post to be located at Cairndow, Argyll.

HR Assistant (Ref: HRA/CW/10/6/C)
(Salary £18,000 - £22,000 based on 40 hours per week)

The ideal candidate must be able to demonstrate the ability to work within a small team; should be enthusiastic, self-motivated, confident and approachable in their manner as well as comfortable in dealing with people at all levels throughout the company. Having good interpersonal skills, along with the ability to manage their own workload effectively, through well developed IT skills in Word, Excel and Outlook, along with strong written and verbal communication skills are also essential key skills for this post.

The role will involve supporting the day to day running of the HR Department which will include an involvement in a wide range of HR Administration duties including assisting with maintaining the HR Database, updating personnel information and training & development of personnel. In addition to providing support in response to day to day HR enquiries, the candidate will assist with everything from the new starter process through to recruitment including sourcing references and involvement with grievance and disciplinary matters. The successful candidate will play a vital role in ensuring best practice is maintained and adhered to at all times.

Previous HR experience and an appreciation of the importance of delivering an efficient HR service are essential.

CIPD qualification, or currently working towards, would be an advantage. A full, clean driving licence is also essential

In return, the Company offers a comprehensive pay and benefits package including entry into the Company pension scheme after the qualifying period.

For an application form and job description, please contact:

HR Department, The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd, Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, Argyll, PA26 8BH

Tel. No. 01499 600 435 / 415

Email: cairndowhr@scottishsalmon.com

Closing date for applications: 5.00pm Friday 14th January, 2011

Visit our website at www.scottishsalmon.com

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND)
ACT 1997 AS AMENDED
THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1999**

Redevelopment of Lochailort Recirculation Fish Farm
Planning application for demolition of the existing fish farm buildings and the installation of a new recirculation fish farm at Lochailort.

Ordnance survey grid reference:- easting 176619, northing 781814

Planning Application Ref: 10/04797/FUL

The Highland Council has received a planning application accompanied by an Environmental Statement for the redevelopment of the existing fish farm site including the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of a new building with a footprint of 30,000 square metres (150m x 200m) with a maximum height of 12.1m, together with associated access, parking and ancillary works at Lochailort.

The applicant is Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd, Farms Office, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William PH33 7PT

Copies of the Planning Application and Environmental Statement can be inspected during normal operating hours at the following locations:-

1. The Area Planning and Building Standards Office, Fulton House, Gordon Square, Fort William.

2. On the Council's website, following the link <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> and using reference 10/04797/FUL

Copies of the Environmental Statement may be purchased from Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd, Farms Office, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William PH33 7PT, Tel 01397 715071 at a cost of £55 for a paper copy and free of charge for a copy on CD. Copies of the Non Technical Summary are available from the same address. The application is advertised as a potential bad neighbour and as a potential Departure from the Development Plan as well as an application accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Any person wishing to make representations to the Highland Council should make them in writing to the Area Planning and Building Standards Manager, Ross, Skye and Lochaber, Fulton House, Gordon Square, Fort William PH33 6XY by the close of business on Wednesday 2 February 2011. Representation can also be made online following the link <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> and using reference 10/04797/FUL.

Dafydd Jones

Area Planning & Building Standard Manager



NOTICE OF THE PREPARATION OF ARGYLL & BUTE CORE PATHS PLAN

FINALISED DRAFT PLAN LAND REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003

Argyll & Bute Council has prepared the Finalised Draft of the Core Paths Plan. The Plan has been drawn up to provide the public with a system of paths to give reasonable access throughout Argyll & Bute. The plan also details Launching Points where non-motorised users can launch canoes and other small boats. The plan covers the whole of Argyll & Bute outwith Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park.

The Plan is available on the Council's website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/oldp. The document, detailed maps and comments forms are available online. Comments can be made directly from the website. Copies of the Plan including the maps, may be inspected free of charge during business hours at the Council Offices at 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT.

Help with making Comments or Objecting - The Outdoor Access Team can help you in a number of ways including sending you a copy of the documents by post. Feel free to call us to discuss the process and clarify any issues that may concern you. We can send copies of the Core Paths Plan maps for small areas around a house, farm or community by email or by post. Call 01546 604 140.

All representations in support of, or objecting to, the Finalised Draft must be made online or using the Comments Form available with the draft plan. Representations must clearly state the name and address of the commentator, the matters to which the comments relate and the grounds on which they are made. They must be returned to: The Outdoor Access Team, Development & Infrastructure, FREEPOST: RSL - ZG0X - TJRH, Argyll and Bute Council, Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RT, corepathenquiries@argyll-bute.gov.uk, Fax: 01546 604 643

All representations must be received before 12.00 hrs on Monday 4th of April 2011. Representations received after this date will not be taken into consideration by the council.

COUNCILLOR SURGERIES

Councillor Mary Jean Devon (E.W 4 Oban South and the Isles)

Constituents can contact Councillor Devon on Tel: 01688 301215 or email mary-jean.devon@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Councillor Gordon Chalmers (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles)

Constituents can contact Councillor Chalmers on Tel 01688 302689 or email gordon.chalmers@argyll-bute.gov.uk or gordon.chalmers@btinternet.com

Councillor Donald McIntosh (E.W 4 Oban South and the Isles)

Councillor McIntosh's constituents can contact him on Tel: 07788 882200 or by email donald.mcintosh@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Councillor Donald Macdonald (E.W.5 Oban North and Lorn)

Councillor Macdonald's constituents can contact him on Tel: 01631 566367 or by email donald.macdonald@argyll-bute.gov.uk

PLANNING

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted within the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging onto the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning and Regulatory Services Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban PA34 4AR by the 27/01/2011.

● Ref No: 10/01367/PP

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Hilton
Proposal: Formation of pond
Site Address: Land to North West of White House of Aros, Aros, Isle of Mull, Argyll and Bute PA72 6JP
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office, Aros, Isle of Mull

● Ref No: 10/02060/PP

Applicant: Mr Alan and Ann Jones
Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse
Site Address: Land South East of Tradewinds, Lochawe, Argyll and Bute
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office, Dalmaily

Argyll and Bute Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST. An extant list of planning applications can be viewed on the Councils website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST and Argyll and Bute Council Libraries.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Take notice that the applications in the following schedule may be inspected during normal office hours at Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban PA34 4AR, at the location detailed below and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Anyone wishing to make representations should do so in writing to Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban PA34 4AR within 21 days of the appearance of this notice. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

SCHEDULE - DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION PLANS

● Ref No: 10/02020/LIB

Applicant: Erika Enterprises
Proposal: Erection of conservatory
Site Address: Isle of Erika Hotel, Isle of Erika, Benderloch, Oban, Argyll and Bute PA37 1SD
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office, Ledaig

Any letter of representation the council receives about a planning application is considered a public document. Please therefore note that representations will be made available for public inspection and, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, will be copied on request. They will also be published on the council's web site.

The author of such a representation is solely responsible for its content and accuracy.

Anonymous representations will be 'shredded' and those marked confidential will be returned to the sender. Neither will be taken into account when the application is being considered.

Details of representations we receive on planning applications can be viewed on the council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publicaccess



OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY IN SCOTTISH TERRITORIAL WATERS - DRAFT PLAN AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

CONSULTATION WORKSHOP
13 January 2011: An Talla, Tìre, 6.30 - 9.00pm
(refreshments available from 6.00pm)

All members of the public are invited to attend this workshop on the outcomes of the consultation on Scotland's draft plan for offshore wind at this Scottish Government event.

Scottish Government officials will present information on the outcomes of the consultation exercise and an update on further work on offshore wind. Officials will then be on hand to answer questions and hear your views.

The analysis of consultation responses has been published on the Scottish Government website: www.scotland.gov.uk/publications

Please contact the offshore wind consultation team at offshorewindconsultation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or on 0131 244 1617 for more information.

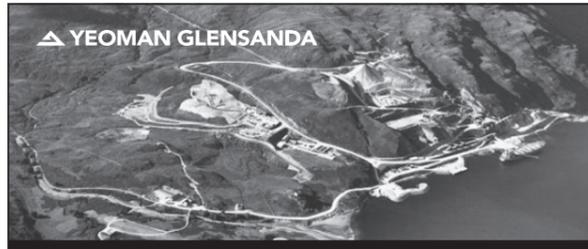
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, FULTON HOUSE, GORDON SQUARE, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6XY; online at www.highland.gov.uk and, where given, the alternative location(s).

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	Alternative locations where application may be inspected
10/05073/FUL	Liddesdale Loch Sunart	New Mussel Farm consisting of 6 x 300m Longlines	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days) Stronlach Post Office (14days)

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
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We are looking to recruit two Community Living Workers who live in the Oban and Lorn area



Salary: £14,470 pro rata (£7.42 per hour) for a flexible 16 hour week
Full induction and good development opportunities will be provided

Do you think that you might have what it takes to work as part of an innovative Network of people with disabilities and support needs who live in your community?

We are looking for two special people who feel passionately about the rights of others to live full and included lives, with real mutually supportive friendships.

Are you willing to travel within Oban and Lorn as part of your everyday work? Travel within the wider Argyll area and occasionally to other parts of Scotland is also a necessary part of the role.

We have well-established and successful Networks in Argyll, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire and are currently expanding the work of the organisation. SVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care (or equivalent) desirable, or willingness to work towards qualification.

If you would like to find out more about this exciting post, please phone 0141 314 0027 for an Application Pack.

Closing date: Friday 21st January.

Interviews: Wednesday 9th February (provisionally)

Registered Charity No: SCO28984; Web: neighbourhoodnetworks.org

Email: info@neighbourhoodnetworks.org



Tel: 01631 567399 | www.obanyouthcafe.co.uk

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Flexible evening and weekend youth workers required for our bank of staff

£8.50 - £9.50 hour

Youth work training course (distance learning) and other relevant training courses offered.

Successful applicants are subject to an enhanced disclosure check

Please submit a CV and letter of application to:

Kirsty McLuckie (Project Coordinator),

4 Albany Terrace, Oban, PA34 5NY

01631 567399

kirsty.obanyouthcafe@hotmail.co.uk

(Emailed applications accepted)

Please phone or email for Job Description

Closing date for applications Monday 17th

January 2011

Interviews will be held in January 2011

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Bealach An Rìgh, Oban

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Enhanced Disclosure checks apply

Closing Date Monday 10th January 2011

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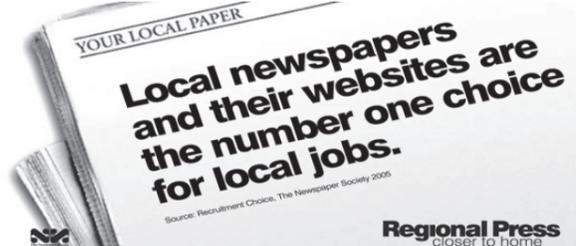
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Community Health Partnership searches for Lochaber representative

MID HIGHLAND Community Health Partnership (CHP) is looking for a Lochaber resident who is interested in local health services and wishes to become involved in shaping how they are delivered in future.

The individual would represent Lochaber on the patient public partnership forum Highland Health VOICES and sit on the Mid Highland CHP committee, which oversees planning and delivery of local health care services in Skye and Lochalsh, Ross and Cromarty, and West Ness and Lochaber.

Committee meetings are held on alternate months, with the venue moving around the three areas on a rotational basis. Health VOICES members need only to attend meetings being held locally to them although they are welcome to attend all the meetings if they so wish. The role is

voluntary but NHS Highland can provide practical and financial support. Retired district nurse Isobel Macdonald, of Staffin on the Isle of Skye, joined the committee as the Health VOICES member for Skye and Lochalsh in March 2010. She said: 'Different people

know different things and there's a lot to be said for life experience and common sense. 'I'm finding being on the committee very interesting and I'm learning a lot more about how the system works and how decisions are taken. 'I'm just a wee cog in

the wheel, but I like to think that I might just have that important piece of knowledge or insight that could help the committee in the decision making process.' Mid Highland CHP general manager, Gill McVicar said: 'We are committed to working with

our local communities and responding to their needs and we recognise the valuable contribution that patients and members of the public make to the work of this committee.' For more information contact Karen Burnett on 01463 704702 or at karen.burnett1@nhs.net

Skye 'lift' boosts Turkish relations

A SKYE businesswoman did her bit for international relations recently when she picked up Turkish newlyweds outside Broadford. Skye Fudge Company director Carole Inglis was making her way home to Harloch when she noticed the couple thumbing a lift for Portree.

The young lovers, who were from Istanbul but had worked for the past year in Edinburgh, told Carole on the way that they had decided to forego the formalities of a traditional Turkish wedding - and got married in Kyle instead before hitchhiking to Skye to explore the island.

Top of their 'must see' list, according to Carole, was Rebel's Wood in Orbost, which was planted in living memory of the legendary punk group Clash lead singer and guitarist Joe Strummer.

Strummer was born John Graham Mellor in the Turkish capital of Ankara - and the couple were making a pilgrimage to the woodland dedicated to their hero.

'They never found it, so they will have to come back,' Carole told *The Oban Times*.

'But the real moral of the story is that you should always pick folk up, because it makes you realise there are no barriers between people - no matter where they are from in the world.'

Strummer died suddenly in 2002, leaving his plan to visit the Raasay home of his grandmother Jane MacKenzie the following summer unfulfilled.

Green light for south Loch Awe hydro scheme

A HYDRO scheme that can power around 1,000 homes in Argyll and Bute has been approved by the Scottish Government.

The 1.7 megawatt (MW) scheme at Ederline, south of Loch Awe, will create some seven jobs during construction.

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, John Swinney, said: 'This hydro development

follows Scotland's long tradition of harnessing green energy from our vast water resources.

'This scheme will feed enough green power into the grid for around 1,000 homes - while a relatively modest scheme, this will provide sustainable economic benefits and is an excellent example of using our natural assets in harmony with the environment to create new,

low carbon jobs.' Mr Swinney determined the application as it falls in the constituency of Energy Minister Jim Mather.

No public representations were received during the planning stage of the project, which was carried out by Gilkes Energy Ltd.

The Scottish Government's target is to meet 80 per cent of electricity demand from renewables by 2020.



Trainee hairdressers from throughout Argyll and Arran at Argyll College's Oban college awards ceremony

DRIVE TIMES

Argyll College hosts hairdressing awards

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TRAINEE hairdressers from across Argyll have been fighting it out to be named the best at cutting, colouring and styling in an Argyll College competition.

Motivation Hairdressers from Argyll College's Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Oban, Islay and Arran bases took part in the contest.

It is hoped the competition, the first to include students from all over Argyll, will motivate, encourage and boost the confidence of the students.

The hairdressers, with varying levels of experience, descended on the Oban campus hair salon for an awards ceremony where the winners of three categories

were announced. In the Skills for Work category, in which students had to put hair up, Oban's Robin McMahon Harris won first place. Oban's Jodie Lee Goldie came second and Samantha Leiper of Lochgilphead third.

Arlene Simpson won the SVQ level two category, with Chloe Davis placed second

and Lauren Dickinson in third. In the SVQ level three competition, for students, in the final year of the training programme, Lochgilphead's Cheryl Taylor took first place whilst Oban's Maria Robertson and Sam Kilmurray second and third respectively.

Former Oban hairdresser Mary MacKenzie judged the competition. Speaking at the awards ceremony she told the students: 'You are a great advertisement for the trade. 'Your work was excellent,' she said.

'The standard achieved in such a short time is amazing; you should be very proud of yourselves.'

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PERSONALS

Happy 40th Daddy



Love you lots Innes and Erin x

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Jesus says, "I give unto them eternal life (those who by faith have made Him both Lord and Saviour) and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

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Oban Times PERSONALS

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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 reach 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon Tuesday.
You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules
No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.
The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.
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Address _____
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Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

ENGAGEMENTS

PAYNE - FORSYTH - John and Edna Payne are delighted to announce that their son Matthew and Alexandra Forsyth, daughter of Alan Forsyth and Natalie Hervir were engaged on 24th December 2010.

DEATHS

ARCHIBALD - Ian Campbell Richmond, died peacefully at Stirling Royal Infirmary on December 28, 2010 aged 91. Husband of the late Peggy, father of Iain, Niall and Alastair, father-in-law of Theresa, Felicity and Maridel, grandfather of Adam, Mark, Finlay, James, Mairi and Ian Max, great grandfather of Iain and Lydia. Served in The Glasgow Highlanders, HLI, KAR, EACMP; in the Malayan Police during the Emergency, and in Nyasaland and Tanganyika. Sometime Scottish secretary of the National Fund for Research into Crippling Diseases (now Action Medical Research). Funeral at Buchlyvie Church, West Stirlingshire on Friday, January 14 at 11am. All welcome. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Action Medical Research, online or Vincent House, North Parade, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2DP.

KERR - Barbara died suddenly on December 27, 2010 in the Belford Hospital. Beloved wife of George, mother of Amanda, Allison and the late Raymond, granny and great granny, will be sadly missed by all. Funeral service in Inverness Crematorium on Tuesday, January 11 at 2.30pm. Memorial service in St. Columba's Church, Mallaig on Wednesday, January 12 at 2pm.

MACDONALD - Peacefully at Leachoid Hospital, Forres on Friday 31 December, 2010, Margaret (Peggy) MacDonald (nee MacLean) of Benmach House, Forres, formerly of Duart, Fasaig, Torridon, beloved wife of the late Donald, a much loved mother of Nina, Isabel, Fiona and Rhoda, a dear mother in law and a devoted grandmother of Shonadh, Eilidh, James, Grant, Ross and Kirsty and a sadly missed sister of Alistair. Funeral service at Tom Ross & Sons Chapel, Orchard Road, Forres on Friday 7 January at 10.30am followed by a service at Torridon Village Hall at 1.30pm thereafter at Annat Cemetery. All friends respectfully invited. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu if desired may be given at the services to the Howard Doris Centre Lochcarron.

McKILLOP - Suddenly at home on December 25, 2010, Matilda, (Cissie), beloved wife of the late David, much loved sister and aunt. Funeral to be held at 11am on Friday, January 7 in the chapel of rest at John MacLellan & Co, Funeral Directors, Fort William. To be followed by graveside service at New Kilmalloe Cemetery. All are welcome. Open for flowers.

MCPHEE - Suddenly at home, 3 Iona Drive, Dunollie, Oban, in her 78th year, Isa (nee McAllister), wife of the late John, mother of Donnie, Archie and John. Will be sadly missed. Funeral arrangements to be announced.

MILLER - Suddenly, after a short illness, at his home, on January 1, 2011, 1 Ardloch Cottages, Glenburn Road, Ardriashaig, Robert (Robbie) Miller, aged 79 years, formerly of Whitehouse, Tarbert. Loving husband of Flora and much loved father of Robert, Fiona and Amanda, respected grandfather of William, Sarah and Calum, and great grandfather of Milly, David and Amber. A dear brother and uncle to all the family, and a good friend to many. Funeral service will be held in Tarbert Parish Church on Tuesday January 11, 2011 at 1pm, thereafter to Carrick Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to Cancer Research UK. All friends are respectfully invited to attend.

NIELSEN - In Copenhagen on Boxing Day, Dennis aged 44 years, beloved husband of Kathryn (nee Sturas), devoted dad to Connor and Reece and much loved brother in law.

SCOTT - Peacefully after a long illness at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, Ted Scott, Craignure, Isle of Mull aged 79 years. Much loved father, and grandfather. Sadly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral service to be held at Torosay Parish Church, Isle of Mull on Friday, January 7 at 11.30am. Thereafter to Kilpatrick Cemetery, Duart.

STUART - Teresa Catherine Moira (nee Matyjasek) of Spean Bridge, formerly of Rylands Road, Dunblane and Balquidder, widow of the late Alasdair Kenneth Stuart, Braes of Glenlivet, passed away peacefully in the Belford Hospital on the evening of December 27, 2010, with her family by her side, after a brave battle. Known to loved ones as Tia and Tess, a beloved mother, grandmother, sister, auntie and friend, she will be missed by all who knew her. The funeral will be held at Perth Crematorium on Friday, January 7 at 3pm. A short memorial will be held at 5 Morrison Avenue, Spean Bridge at 11.30am before departure for Perth. Refreshments will be available after the service in Perth and later in the evening at Spean Bridge Hotel. All welcome. All donations to Cancer Research gratefully received.

WALZAK - Elizabeth, deeply loved wife of BJ and mother of Joanne and Katie, passed on peacefully in the early hours of New Year's Day at Roxburgh House, Aberdeen, surrounded by family and friends. Sadly missed by all. Funeral at Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church, Fort William on Saturday, January 15 at 1pm, followed by interment at Glen Nevis Cemetery. All friends and relatives invited. No flowers, no collection, cards only by Liz's request.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BROWN - The family of the late Archie Brown wish to thank family and friends for their messages of condolence and floral tributes and to all who attended the church and graveside. Thank you to the Rev Dr Kenneth Ross for a moving and comforting service, to Hamish Hoey & Sons for dignified funeral arrangements and to Dr Glen who cared for dad in his final days. To Tigh-an-Truisth Hotel for catering so well and to Donnie MacDougall for playing the pipes so movingly. Finally a very special thank you to all staff at Eader Glimm whose loving care and devotion to dad over many years made his time spent there very happy and comfortable.

MACLEAN - The family of the late Lachie, Knock Farm, Mull, wish to express their gratitude to the carers, District Nurses and all those at Salen Surgery and Dunarons who looked after Lachie during his illness. We are grateful for the unending support of family and friends throughout this time. We would like to thank the Rev. Jeff McCormick for conducting such a fitting service, Mrs Elizabeth Jack for her beautiful music, Mr Billy McClymont for helpful and efficient arrangements and Gerry, Claire and staff at the Salen Hotel for their care and attention. We thank all who made the journey to Balure safe in such adverse weather, we are comforted by the many expressions of sympathy we have received and thank all who attended the funeral and all whose thoughts were with us on the day. Lachie's friends and family have donated a generous sum to the Salen Resource Centre Friday Lunch Club.

McMILLAN - The family of the late George McMillan would like to thank all family, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy, cards, telephone calls and flowers. Thanks to Dr Morley of the Canniesburn Unit at Glasgow Royal Infirmary and Dr Watson of the Beatson Oncology Centre. Thanks also to Dr Glen, Dr Jespersen and Hilary Brown. A special thanks to Rev Catherine Knott and Donald MacKinnon for a moving and uplifting service. Thanks also to all who attended the funeral service and graveside, D & A Munn, Torquill Telfer and the Rowantree Hotel. The sum of £1044.95 was collected for Macmillan Cancer Support.

RODGER - The family of the late Elsie Rodger (nee Gemmill), would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their support and kind expressions of sympathy at their sad loss. Sincere thanks to Rev Donald MacQuarrie for his support and comforting service. Thanks also to Mike McFall for his caring and professional services and thanks to the Railway Club, Inverloch. £545 was raised at the church for the Oncology Ward, Raigmore Hospital. She is with her sunshine again.

MEMORIAMS

CAMERON - Precious memories of our dear father, Duncan who died 6 January, 2003. Forever in our thoughts Irene, Junie, Catharine-ann and families.

CARMICHAEL - In loving memory of our dear father, father in law and grandfather, Neil who died 4 Jan 1993. Forever in our hearts and always in our thoughts. - Irene, Donald, Nigel and families, Islay and Glasgow.

JACKSON - In loving memory of my dear mother Liz, who died so suddenly on January 6, 2006. Always in my thoughts. - Iain.

KOBIELA - Remembering Bolek, a loving husband, dad and grandpa. 20 Years have passed since you left this land. Times have changed but not a day passes by without thoughts of the special times we had. Cherished memories of you will be in our hearts forever.

Loving thoughts, Mamie, Anna, Ewan, Violet and Nigel
MACDONALD - In loving memory of my dearest niece Eileen Susan who died 6 January, 2008. A quiet thought, a silent tear. A quiet wish that you were here. Cherished memories.

- Aunty Irene and Cousin Rhea
MACDONALD - Treasured memories of Eileen. Dearly loved mum of Philip and precious daughter of Margaret. Sister of Colin and Karen. Taken from us January 6, 2008.

To us you were so special. What more is there to say. We only wish with all our hearts that you were here today. Sorely missed.

- The family, Kerrera Terrace, Oban.
MACDONALD - Precious memories of Malcolm, a beloved dad, papa, great papa and father-in-law. Died 27 December, 2009 formerly of Bayhead, Knockline, North Uist.

"God saw you getting tired so he put his arms around you and whispered 'come with me'. With tearful eyes we watched and saw you pass away. Dad you had a heart of gold and I was truly blessed to have you. Life is so empty now. You yearned for mum for so long your wish has been granted. Forever missing you Mum and Dad.

May god bless and keep you both till we meet again.
- Catherine (Katie), Mike, Laura, Jamie, Thomas, and Anya. Xxx
MACGILLIVRAY - In loving memory of my dear mother, May (nee Wilson), who died January 10, 1995. There is a bridge of memories

MEMORIAMS

From here to heaven above
That keeps you very close to us
It's called the bridge of love
As time goes by without you mum
And days turn into years
We hold a million memories
And a thousand silent tears.
Inserted by her loving son Jim and Helen.

MACKINNON - In loving memory of my dear husband Charlie MacKinnon, who died suddenly on December 28, 2005, also remembering those gone before and since. Time may pass and fade away

But silent thoughts and memories stay
Always in my thoughts
May, Colonsay.

MACPHAIL - In memory of our precious son and big brother Ryan, tragically taken from us on January 7, 2003 aged 16 years. At sixteen years of age Ryan's life here is done. It is hard to accept he was just having fun
Growing to a man but still a wee boy
But we know to our lives he brought us great joy
We love and miss you so much
Mum, Dad, Jenna and Jason xxxx

MACLELLAN - Precious memories of our darling infant son Christopher called to Heaven on January 1, 1991 aged 4 months
Our Little Flower
Just Lent not Given
Who Bud on Earth
And Blooms in Heaven
Forever in our Hearts
Mum, Dad, Craig and Calum x

MORRISON - In loving memory of Johnny, husband, father, grandpa and son,
Sadly passed away January 3, 2008, aged 60.
Always in our thoughts
- Catherine, John, Karen, Alan and families.
Loved and remembered everyday.

- Mum.
STODDART - In loving memory of our dear brother Malcolm Livingston died January 10, 1972. Always in our thoughts.

- Inserted by family Glasgow
TESTER - In loving memory of our dear father Robert (Bobby) Tester, died January 6, 1995. Loved and missed every day

Alasdair, Sandra, Joan and families
YOUNG - Flora, January 9, 2005, precious memories of a loving mum and granny.
Catriona, Callum, Lorna and Iona xxxx
A good friend
Iris and Don x

Bishop oversees children's confirmation



Children of St Mary's RC Church, Fort William, pictured with Bishop Joseph Toal when they were confirmed. The children said prayers in English and Gaelic.

Help at hand for those resolving to kick the habit

REPORT
by EDEL KENEALY
ekenealy@obantimes.co.uk

QUITTING smoking is always among the top New Year resolutions - but is also one of the toughest to keep. To help make 2011 a successful year, smoking cessation nurse Jean Glen, from Kilniver, quashed some of the myths and misconceptions about smoking and how best to kick the habit. 'It is so difficult to stop smoking,' said Jean. 'For many people it will take several attempts. People smoke when they are happy, sad, stressed and upset as a tool to make them feel better. It is an emotional crutch for some people so the loss of that crutch can be severe. A cigarette is often seen as the answer to a problem so when that is removed people feel at a loss.'

Addiction
However there are a number of ways people can address a nicotine addiction, often by looking at their behaviour and through nicotine replacement medicines.

Known as nicotine replacement therapy, patches, gum, microtabs, inhalers, lozenges and nasal sprays all provide a small amount of nicotine without the toxic chemicals, such as tar or carbon monoxide, found in cigarettes. 'We have seen huge success with a new drug called Champix,' said Jean. 'This is a drug that stops the receptor cells looking for nicotine and so helps stop cravings.'

Unlike nicotine replacement drugs, which help to satisfy the craving for a cigarette with a lesser amount of nicotine, Champix helps stop the craving in the first instance. It is not just the addiction to nicotine that needs to be addressed but your habits also,



Quitting smoking is among the top New Year resolutions - but also one of the hardest to keep.

will say it was because they did not need to eat as much and that smoking increases the metabolic rate. The associated risk of putting on weight when stopping smoking is a major concern for young women in particular, Jean explained. But many people taking Champix have not reported over eating. Jean said: 'Because they do not have as many cravings they have less need to satisfy that urge with something else.' Attending a smoking cessation group and setting a specific date to quit smoking are also among Jean's top tips to kick the habit. People who use NHS support and a stop smoking medicine are up to four times more likely to be successful. At this, the busiest time of year for smoking cessation nurses, Jean described her job as rewarding. 'I feel we can change our habits,' she said. 'I have hope that we can change habits, sustain that change and keep it going.'

For more information on quitting smoking and to find a local support group log on to <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>.

"A cigarette is often seen as the answer to a problem. When that is removed, people feel a loss."

Jean Glen
Smoking cessation nurse

For more information on quitting smoking and to find a local support group log on to <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>.

Paramedics called to incident on board Clansman

OBAN paramedics treating a man who had been involved in a fight on board the MV *Clansman* returned to their ambulance to find a 23-year-old man in the back of it.

When they confronted the man, just after midnight on Sunday, he ran off but was later apprehended by police.

The 23-year-old is subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal.

Another man has also been reported as a result of the alleged fight.

'Scruffy' man threw suitcase into sea

A FAMILY of Hogmanay revellers at a seaside restaurant in Oban were shocked when a man grabbed a suitcase belonging to one of them and threw it into the sea.

The small black suitcase, belonging to one of the women in the party, had been placed on the floor of The Waterfront restaurant when the man, who was not known to the group, threw it into the bay.

The man is described as 'scruffy' and wearing an orange jacket. Any witnesses or anyone with any information relating to this incident should contact PC Joel Edwards at Oban Police Station on 01631 510500.

Charged with possessing drugs

A 28-YEAR-old man who was caught in a staff-only section of the Co-op, Oban, has also been charged with possession of drugs.

Police say the circumstances of the man's presence in a storeroom to the rear of the building was suspicious and staff phoned the police who found a quantity of a Class A drug in his possession.

The man was arrested and is subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal.

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ECCLESIASTICAL NOTICES

LORN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Sunday
Oban High School
Main Hall
10:30am
All Welcome
Telephone
07836 342 622
www.lorncf.org.uk

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Sunday 9 January 2011
Epiphany 1
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Baptism of Christ
Holy Communion.....08.00
Sung Eucharist.....10.15
Sunday School and Creche
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Norman MacCallum,
Provost.
(01631) 562323
St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Eucharist.....11.00
St Columba,
Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist.....10.00

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN

Campbell Street Church
Sunday 9 January 2011
11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.
Phone-In 'Worship Link' available
Rev. Archie McPhail
MA, MTh
(01631) 567076
All welcome

Oban Times ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARITY DONATIONS

Oban Hospice
CARING FOR THE FUTURE
Donations always gratefully accepted
Please contact
David Mudie (Treasurer)
Oban Hospice Ltd
The Croft
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In memory of Dawn Joyce

CANCER RESEARCH UK

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CRC Scotland spends more on research than any other organisation
Commitment of over £15 million each year
Cancer Research UK Scotland
Suite 1/1, Unit 4 Blair Court
Clydebank Business Park
Clydebank, G81 2LA

FOR THE BLIND CHILDREN OF SCOTLAND'S ACADEMIC TUITION AT THE ROYAL SCHOOL IN EDINBURGH

Please give your financial support by donation, deed of covenant or legacy
Please send to Appeals Department, Highland Arts Effort, Royal Blind Asylum School, P.O. Box 500, Gillespie Crescent, Edinburgh, EH10 4HZ

Facing both ways

OUR MONTH of January takes its name from Janus, who the Romans believed presided over the entrance to each year. Janus is depicted as having two faces, one looking back to the year that has gone and the other looking forward to the year that is just beginning. In the opening days of a new year it is natural to cast our eyes back over the things that happened in 2010, some events which still bring a smile to our faces, others which still touch our hearts with sadness, as we remember loved ones who are no longer with us. For myself, one of the highlights of the past year was getting the opportunity to achieve a lifetime's ambition to visit that special island, St Kilda. The Rev Donald John Gillies, born in St Kilda in 1901,

What lies in wait?

I'VE SPENT a lot of the Christmas holiday watching Doctor Who. I particularly enjoy the

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Christmas means the realistic hope of a new start. The hope of the permanent vanquishing of the dalesks of sin and misery and death. Whatever humankind does God's promise is always there. As we look into the New Year I can not offer you better words than those of Edwin Muir:

'Yet strange these fields that we have planted so long with crops of love and hate. Evil and good stand thick around in fields of charity and sin where we shall lead our harvest in. Yet still from Eden springs the root As clean as on the starting day.'
Happy New Year.
The Rev Sarah Brown,
Executive Director,
Farm Crisis Network.

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John snapped up by top racing team

With the backing of RSF John has a better chance of realising his dream

RACING prospect John McPhee is a step closer to realising his MotoGP ambitions after being snapped up by the development team, Racing Steps Foundation (RSF).

RSF will fund John's entry to this season's CEV Spanish 125 Championship, as well as assisting with his general fitness, diet and race tuition.

Impressed
The 16-year-old, who impressed in the British 125cc Championship last season, will also be riding a more competitive Aprilia bike and has set his sights on eventually competing in World Championship MotoGP events.

The Connel youngster said: 'I had an excellent

MOTOR CYCLING

year coming fifth overall in this year's British 125cc Championship and second in the ACU Cup.

'RSF were following me. Now they have offered to fund my entry in the 2011 Spanish CEV Championship, which is the next step up on the ladder to the MotoGP World Championships.'

RSF provides sponsorship for young drivers and riders who demonstrate the skills and determination to succeed in motorsport.

Behind the initiative is founder Graham Sharp, a successful businessman who is keen to prevent British talent falling by the wayside through lack of money.

He is supported by the Foundation's ambassador and ex-racer, John Surtees, whose role includes talent spotting, selection and guidance.

Tougher
McPhee will continue to race with Keen Race Preparations, a front-running British-based team, but will now move up a gear to contest the much tougher Spanish Championship.

'When RSF approached us they made it clear that their objective was to take young talented British riders through to MotoGP' said team owner Mark Keen.

'The natural progression now for our lads is Spain where the racing is tougher and the tracks more like



John racing in Valencia last season. The teenager will be seeing more of Spain this year.

those on the GP calendar. The other benefit is the CEV series is organised by Dorna, who also run MotoGP, so it's just the place to showcase promising young riders'.

Until now, John's family have provided almost all of the help to him get this far and they thanked all of his local sponsors for getting him to this stage.

His father, Alasdair McPhee, who runs local haulage business, McPhee Haulage, said: 'We started doing it for fun, but John is very competitive. This year he really showed he has the talent to challenge the best. In any sport, if you're going to make it to world level you need a lot of expert support around you.'

'Now, with the backing of Racing Steps, John has a much better chance of realising his dream.'

Competitive
John will run with Wiltshire based Fraser Rogers in a two-man RSF squad, switching from Honda to Aprilia bikes to ensure they are fully competitive.

In addition to contesting the Spanish CEV Championship, John will have an extensive test programme, take part in some British Championship races and apply for 'wild card' rides in one or two World Championship MotoGP events.

And if his schedule wasn't busy enough, RSF has insisted he keeps up his school studies too.

New managers for Oban Camanachd

SHINTY

FORMER players Diarmid MacMillan and Andrew Pearson will lead Oban Camanachd into the 2011 campaign.

The new first team managers were elected at the club's recent AGM in the Corran Halls, where former manager Nigel Evans was elected as president, secretary and treasurer. Vice president is Neil MacIntyre.

Lochside Rovers will be coached by David MacInnes and Tony Howlett, the under-17s will be managed by David MacMillan and Gavin Stobbart and the under-14s will be run by Ian Hay, David MacCuish and Robert Howe.

Saints youth games

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints youth teams return to league duty this weekend after the festive break.

EDFC v Under 13s; Kilpatrick v Under 14s; Baljaffray United v Under 15s; Under 16s v Blair Thistle.

The senior team don't start back again till Saturday 15 January, but the lads will be holding a training session on Saturday at noon.

Lorne back in action

RUGBY

OBAN Lorne are hoping to play their first game in six weeks this Saturday against Lanark in the Regional Bowl competition at Glencruitten, kick-off 2pm.

Islay golf

GOLF

ICICLE Trophy, January 3: 1 Graeme Hamilton, 38pts; 2 Jay Doherty, 36pts; 3 Norman MacDonald, 36pts. C5570

Winter league on January 2: 1 Iain MacCuaig, 37pts; 2 Keith MacDonald, 36pts; 3 Ruairaidh MacIntyre, 35pts. C5571

Winter League on December 28: 1 Nigel Carmichael, 31pts; 2 Robert Shaw, 30pts; 3 Jim Rozga 30pts. C5572

Tobermory golf

GOLF

ALASDAIR MacLeod won the New Year's Day one-club nine-hole competition with a net score of 34.5.

Runner-up was Graham Brown, net 40, and third was Paul Langhorn, net 40. January Nine-hole Medal: 1 Jamie Cowe 33-05=28, 2 Mike Campbell 44-11=33, 3 Paul Langhorn 47-14=33.

'Foreigners' win Cruim Leacainn race

LOCHABER Athletic Club's Cruim Leacainn race just beat the thaw with a bright, clear day and temperatures of -10°C greeting the 49-strong field.

In windless conditions and under blue skies, the field ran through six inches of powder snow hiding a smattering of black ice filled puddles and hard-as-iron hoof print divots created by Carver's horses and Berardelli's cattle.

Local favourites Dawn Scott and Davie Rodgers were both narrowly beaten by 'foreigners'.

Emma O'Shea from Deeside and Dawn had a great battle and reached the summit together.

Emma opened up a gap of 200m on the descent only for Dawn to close this down to just one second at the finish. Davie Rodgers was leading for most of the race but Craig Mitchell, formerly of Lochaber but now running for Shettleston Harriers, showed he was as fit as ever by catching Davie in the closing stages and winning by half a minute. Lochaber's Tom Smith was also right up

there finishing only five secs behind Davie.

Richie Collins, former paralympian, veteran, now back in Fort William, got the biggest cheer of the day, showing great determination to cope with rough awkward conditions to finish 42nd.

Alan Smith from Deeside nearly missed the start, didn't get any sort of pre-race warm up, set off cold and fast and dropped out within the first mile with a pulled calf muscle.

Results: Lochaber unless stated: 1, Craig Mitchell (Shettleston) 47:50; 2, David Rodgers 48:34; 3, Tom Smith 48:41; 4, Ewan Taylor (Perth RR) 49:38; 5, George Cairns 50:06; 6, John Hepburn 50:48; 7, Jon Gray 51:02; 8, Oliver Blainfield 52:01; 9, Ben Thompson (u/a) 52:17; 10, Donald Paterson 53:10; 11, Owen Bass (Deeside) 53:46; 12, Stewart Wilson (Inverness) 53:53; 13, Emma O'Shea (Deeside) 54:04; 14, Dawn Scott 54:05; 15, Ali Kennedy 54:12; 16, Nick Sedgwick (u/a) 55:10; 17, Foss Forster 58:33; 18, David Munro 58:34; 19, David Duncan (Ochil) 58:52; 20, Ronnie Turner 58:56; 21, Turk Gunn 58:58; 22, Nix Forster 1:01:20; 23, Colin Denny 1:01:34; 24, Lucy Pring (u/a) 1:02:42; 25, Jonathan Weir (u/a) 1:02:43; 26, Henry Methold 1:04:18; 27, Mick Tighe 1:04:37; 28, Jim Treasurer 1:04:52; 29, Emma Pearce 1:05:09; 30, Fiona Thompson (u/a) 1:05:21; 31, Ed Daines 1:05:42; 32, Ursula Bass (Deeside) 1:09:03; 33, Nick Charlton (u/a) 1:09:30; 34, Scott Langan 1:09:47; 35, Andrew Cameron 1:10:43; 36, Kathy Tighe 1:10:59; 37, Emma O'Shea 1:12:24; 38, J Hynd 1:12:30; 39, Niall MacBeath 1:12:09; 40, Elizabeth Gow 1:12:28; 41, Josie MacGuire (Westies) 1:14:44; 42, Richie Collins 1:17:27; 43, Claire Treasurer 1:24:02; 44, Joanna Hynd 1:25:07; 45, Aileen Duncan 1:25:08; 46, Ian Adams 1:25:11; 47, Ellen Morrison 1:27:39; 48, Elma Murdoch 1:27:40; DNF, Alan Smith (Deeside).



Captain's XV Ross Wallace set up another attack for his side.

Blair back on the mend

LOCHABER RFC team captain Blair MacRaidl made a welcome return to the rugby field last Sunday - as referee.

Blair suffered a fractured skull in a match against Highland Reds in October and needed life-saving surgery in Glasgow.

Now well on the mend, Blair refereed the first quarter of the traditional Boxing Day challenge match between the Captain's XV and the President's XV - dressed in a Santa Claus outfit and an American football crash helmet for extra protection.

Before the match, Blair was presented with a life

membership of the club, paid for by a whip round of club players and members.

A minute's silence was also held for student Callum Mercer, a young up-and-coming player for the club until his tragic death in Glasgow last month.

Fellow player Stevie MacAleer told *The Oban Times*: 'If he had been spared, the chances are Callum would have played on Sunday.'

The Captain's XV comfortably won the game, played in three inches of snow, with both sides cheered on by a large and enthusiastic crowd.

Oban and Lorn prepare for Sports Hall Athletics

THE SPORTS Hall Athletics programme has reached the halfway stage this winter, as athletes in the Oban and Lorn area prepare for their local heats on January 15 in Atlantis Leisure.

This form of indoor athletics has been promoted in the district since 1994 and Mid Argyll Athletic Club, in co-operation with all the local athletic clubs, is organising four area competitions followed by an Argyll Final to be held in Oban at the end of February.

The final area meet will be the Kintyre heats at Campbeltown Grammar on January 30. The first two competitions have already been held on Mull and in Lochgilphead.

Successful athletes from the four area contests will qualify to compete in the Argyll Final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on February 26.

To create some extra interest this year the organisers are introducing incentive awards in the form of money prizes for the two boys and

ATHLETICS

two girls achieving the most Argyll Age Standards in the local area competitions and the Argyll Final.

In addition there will be a £50 prize for the best school with one boy and one girl counting.

Boys and girls entering the Oban competition at Atlantis Leisure on Saturday, January 15, are reminded that the events start at 12.30pm with

entries on the day from noon. There will be an entry fee of £2 for each competitor or £5 for families of three or more taking part.

Age groups start at under-9, under-11, under-13, under-15 and under-17 for boys and girls. For all age categories it will be age as on September 1, 2010 in line with Scottish Athletics rules.

For more information on the Argyll Sports Hall events contact 01546 602664.

Fort lose out to Clach

Highland League Clachnacuddin 5 Fort William 2

DESPITE a spirited display and goals from two debutants, Fort William started 2011 with defeat at Clachnacuddin on Monday.

After a disappointing end to last year, there was much in this performance to cheer Fort manager Calum MacLean in his final season in charge.

His side were unfortunate to go into half time 2-1 down after a hard fought first 45.

FOOTBALL

Clach took the lead before Sean Grant drew Fort level with a fine strike.

Frenetic
A frenetic start to the second half saw Clach take a 3-1 lead.

Young Fort striker Logan Barker gave the Lochaber side hope by pulling a goal back, but two late Clach goals padded the scoreline. Fort next play at home to Naim County on Saturday.

the weather

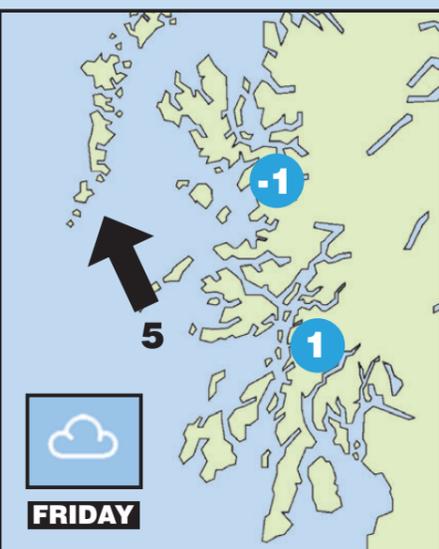
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Thursday
Sunny intervals.
Winds moderate, north westerly.
Temperatures 1°C to 1°C

Friday
Sunny intervals.
Winds light, south, south easterly.
Temperatures -1°C to 1°C.

Weekend Outlook
Cloudy.
Winds light easterly.
Temperatures -2°C to 3°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree - As above
Kennacraig to Islay - As above



Tides

Sponsored by **NANCY BLACK Ships' Chandler**

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, January 6, 2011** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 00.48	1.0 06.44 4.1 13.16 1.2 18.56 3.8	
Fri 01.25	1.0 07.20 4.1 13.52 1.3 19.28 3.8	
Sat 02.01	1.1 07.54 4.0 14.27 1.4 20.00 3.7	
Sun 02.36	1.2 08.29 3.8 15.01 1.5 20.32 3.6	
Mon 03.10	1.4 09.03 3.7 15.38 1.7 21.05 3.4	
Tues 03.45	1.6 09.40 3.5 16.19 1.8 21.41 3.3	
Wed 04.25	1.8 10.21 3.3 17.08 1.9 22.25 3.1	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardershaig	-5.35	Lochboisdale	+0.30
Campbeltown	-5.30	Mallaig	+0.25
Cranran	-0.47	Portree	+0.55
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Tobermory	+0.16
		Dover	+5.30

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