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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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OBAN AIRPORT EXCLUSIVE

Cut in opening hours may force pub to close

A POPULAR Oban night-spot may be forced to close after its opening hours were slashed to 11pm.

However, O'Donnell's Irish Bar in Breadalbane Street was thrown a lifeline when fed-up nearby residents agreed to withdraw their proposal for Elaine Cameron to have her licence taken away completely.

Oban solicitor Edward Thornton told Argyll and Bute Licensing Board on Tuesday that residents in the street have had to put up with noise nuisance from O'Donnell's customers for many years.

'Every night seems to be party night at O'Donnell's', he added. 'It is affecting the business of nearby guest house owners whose visitors often leave after only one night due to the shouting and fighting.

'It would be another 20 months of hell for them if the opening hours were extended again.'

Strathclyde Police also objected to the extension, describing Ms Cameron as the most 'uncooperative licensee they had ever come across'.

From January 1, 2007 until December 26, a total of 49 incidents of general disorder were reported to have taken place outside the bar.

However, Ms Cameron's lawyer told the board they would be killing the business if they refused to extend the opening hours as it would not be able to survive closing at 11pm.

Despite his pleas, the board were in agreement that the application should be refused.

This is where we are – Kilchrenan pupils point to Argyll on a giant map of Scotland.

Putting Taynuilt on the map

A GIANT map of Scotland, the size of a badminton court, has been pieced together by Kilchrenan Primary School pupils before its official launch in Edinburgh yesterday (Wednesday).

Taynuilt company Mapland Scotland launched the map, measuring 10.8 metres by 7.6 metres, with an additional 2.5m by 1.6m of map to cover Shetland, at Dynamic Earth.

The map, made up of giant plastic jigsaw pieces, has been produced as an educational tool with Mapland's Suzanne Hills and Chris Cromey planning to tour Scottish schools with it.

Kilchrenan pupils were the first to piece the map together in the village hall last month.

Suzanne said: 'It came about because children love maps and jigsaws, so we thought about putting the two together and you have a fantastic learning resource where children can have fun and learn at the same time.

'We worked closely with the Ordnance Survey to produce the map which the Kilchrenan pupils just loved; it took them about 40 minutes to put together. We are developing some education projects with the map and hope to attract sponsorship from businesses at the launch so we can offer it to schools at a discounted rate.'

Paula Langford-Smith, Ordnance Survey's marketing manager, said: 'This is a genuinely innovative use of our mapping data which brings together not just geography but maths, science, language and history. The different ways that children can interact with the map make it fun, entertaining and educational.'

Mull mail in extra 130-mile marathon

INSTEAD of sending mail bound for the Isle of Mull on the first sailing from Oban Royal Mail is spending nearly £17,000 a year hiring two vans to take the island's post on a 130-mile round trip to meet a ferry two hours later.

Mull Community Council heard last week that on Fridays Royal Mail was using the 10am ferry from Lochaline to get the post on to the island instead of an 8am sailing from Oban, even though 75 per cent of the mail was in the Oban depot by 7.15am.

A petition has now been raised on the island to persuade Royal Mail to change its mind and reinstate the postal service on the 8am ferry from Oban each weekday.

The problems have arisen after changes forced on Royal Mail by new European regulations which stipulate that all the service's vehicles must travel at a maximum of 56mph.

This means that since October last year the island's mail arrives in Oban one hour later and misses the first sailing to Mull at 8am. The mail has since been taken on the 10am sailing.

However Mull Community Council also heard last week that 75 per cent of the island's mail arrives in Oban by 7.15am while the remaining 25 per cent arrives by 8.45am.

After meeting community councillors, Royal Mail is now considering putting the mail that arrives in Oban by 7.15am on the 8am ferry.

Community councillor Tony Proud said: '75 per cent of the mail is already in Oban. The other 25 per cent could be classed as second class mail and come the next day. We have sent a letter to Royal Mail to that effect.'

A Royal Mail spokeswoman said: 'Sending on a proportion of mail to Mull earlier would have an impact on our service. If we don't deliver all of the mail together this could lead to Royal Mail being heavily fined.'

Royal Mail plans to put in a new delivery unit at Craignure to 'help revert delivery times to those before the network changes'.

Packed meeting backs plan

Huge public support for pontoon

Report by JACKIE GRANT

OBAN could become the sailing capital of the UK — if ambitious plans for a pontoon and breakwater development in the town go ahead.

That bold statement was delivered to a packed public meeting last Friday night to discuss the proposed development. The meeting marked the start of a 14-day consultation period on the plans.

It was standing room only in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls, and members of the community company behind the plans – Oban Bay Marine – were stunned at the high level of public display of support shown for the project.

Chairman of Oban Bay Marine, local businessman John MacGregor, welcomed ideas from the audience, and promised that while plans are at a very early stage 'things are genuinely moving forward'.

Mr MacGregor was adamant Oban should take its rightful place of becoming a key hub in a network of ports and harbours, and return to being the 'jewel in the crown of the west coast'. He added: 'Oban is now a bus party location and we need to bring back people who are going to spend money in the town.

'Every journey must start with one step and only together can we do it.'

Mr MacGregor urged councillors not to sell the 'White Building' on the north pier until the pontoon development is complete. 'Businessmen don't sell off buildings like that. It could prove very popular to this project, so think again', he told them.

Oban Bay: big plans. t52bay01

It was revealed at the meeting that Oban Bay Marine intend to follow in the footsteps of Tobermory Harbour Association (THA). Brian Swinbanks, chairman of THA, told of the huge success the revamped harbour has brought the town in the 25 years since it was established. Last year, a total of 6,208 boats visited Tobermory including 13 cruise liners, with the 24,000 tourists spending an estimated £930,000.

'You need a pontoon to attract visitors and cruise liners, and investment in basic infrastructure is the key to success,' he said.

Raymond Hyams, owner of the town's Queens Hotel, said: 'Fort William is establishing as the outdoor capital of the UK. There is no reason why Oban cannot become the sailing capital.'

Calls were also made for a harbour authority to be set up to control the new facility, where boats up to 24 metres long can come in to dock for up to three days in one of the 80 berths available.

Local sailor, Billy Forteith, said Oban is long overdue a pontoon facility, and that 'yacht spending should not be underestimated'.

However, another local said he believed Oban Bay Marine is not being ambitious enough, and it must include berthing for cruise ships. Douglas Lindsay added: 'For 40 years we have been looking forward to something like this but I have a tremendous feeling that you are not being ambitious enough. There are a lot of bigger boats around, far bigger than 24 metres, and these are the boats that are going to bring in money.'

The only note of caution during the evening came from a group of Oban fishermen, who questioned the robustness of the pontoons in gale conditions.

John MacAllister added that although he is 100 per cent behind the plans, he feels like the fishermen are being pushed into a corner and treated like second-class citizens despite contributing a huge amount to the local economy. 'Fishing is still the key to Oban businesses,' he said.

A final suggestion was that Oban could also eventually be a multi-purpose port for cargo vessels to operate from, if desperately needed work on the road infrastructure is carried out.

The next step in the pontoon development will be a survey of a small area of the harbour.

Safety concerns over new ferry terminal

WORK on the new £3 million Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) ferry terminal in Oban may not receive a building warrant after Argyll and Bute Council expressed concerns over its safety.

The work will allow passengers to go directly from the terminal, through a walkway, onto ferry vessels without going outside.

But the council took issue with the number of people who would be using the walkway, in relation to the number of fire exits.

CalMac has since produced a report from a fire engineering consultant to look at the evacuation proceedure in the building. The council is considering the report before making a final decision over the building warrant.

New dentist will ease crisis

OBAN'S dental crisis could soon be over.

The town's Argyll Square Practice is open for business again.

Dr Syed Askari has filled the gap left by Dr Mat Kashi, who closed the doors of the practice last June leaving hundreds of NHS patients without a dentist, and the nearest NHS dental surgery 40 miles away in Lochgilphead.

Dr Kashi deregistered from NHS Highland as he felt he could not meet its demands.

Dr Askari, who is registered with the General Dental Council (GDC), moved from Northampton and opened the surgery for emergencies and check-ups on January 7.

NHS patients and the 1,300 people on Dr Kashi's books will be able to register with Dr Askari after a routine inspection of the practice on January 30.

David Whiteoak, locality manager for Oban Community Health Partnership, said: 'I hope this is a long-term solution to the problem we have faced in Oban.'

It is believed that Dr Askari will practice from the premises in Argyll Square until March next year, when he will move to an empty ward at Oban, Lorn and The Islands District General Hospital. By that time, the premises in Argyll Square will be deemed outdated. The Community Health Partnership said that using the hospital ward as a dental access unit would be more cost effective than building a new practice.

Dr Askari, originally from Pakistan, is employed by a dental partnership from south of the border, and said he is looking forward to improving dental care in Oban.

Dr Syed Askari is already dealing with emergencies. t04den01

Strike will hit council services

FERRIES, schools, road and home care services could be hit next week with another round of industrial action scheduled in Argyll.

The action comes after the deadlock in negotiations over the controversial single status pay offer between Argyll and Bute Council and trade unions.

More than 2,000 UNISON and UNITE members in Argyll and Bute Council could take part in strike action from January 29.

Cleansing, road sweeping, cemeteries, community services and Cardross Crematorium are also expected to be affected in the staggered timetable of strikes.

Trade union members worked to rule last week and football matches at Oban and Lochgilphead had to be cancelled.

Councils hit back over Glencoe Hospital closure plan

THE FIVE South Lochaber community councils who met last week to discuss health secretary Nicola Sturgeon's decision to back NHS Highland's plan to close Glencoe Hospital have agreed a plan of action.

The group, comprising Duror and Kentallen, Ballachulish, Glencoe and Glen Etive, Nether Lochaber and Kinlochleven community councils, issued a nine-point statement detailing their next moves.

They will seek: an explanation from Ms Sturgeon on why the service change was not referred to a scrutiny panel and how she arrived at her decision that this was a robust proposal;

- a meeting with the chairman of NHS Highland to address the problems with patient admissions to the hospital, where there are currently only four patients, and 'the broken promises/agreements which have adversely affected care for our elderly in recent months';
- a demonstration by NHS Highland of the Hospital At Home scheme, which the action group believes to be 'expensive and unworkable' in rural areas;
- a meeting with the director of social services to determine the extent to which they are committed to a partnership with NHS Highland and Abbeyfield, Ballachulish;
- the plan for the relocation of the ambulance station. A letter has been sent to the manager in Inverness confirming that local communities wish it to remain in Glencoe;
- an increase in the number of nursing beds allocated at Abbeyfield;
- representation from the communities at Abbeyfield board meetings;
- more seats on the reinstated NHS Highland Implementation Committee, on which South Lochaber has been offered a 'totally unacceptable' one place;
- and consultation about the recently announced change affecting district nurses.

Paintings stolen

POLICE are hunting thieves who stole four high value oil paintings from the Glengarry Castle Hotel between 9am on Monday and 4pm on Tuesday.

The stolen pictures include one depicting a well-known scene of Dandy Didmont dogs stealing food from a table. Anyone with information regarding the robbery is urged to contact the CID office on 0800555111.

Newsdesk
01631 568060

Dawna Connolly of the SSPCA with the scorpion that is thought to have been transported from Columbia to Morrison's in Fort William in a box of bananas. Insert, a close up view. f04sco02

Scorpion loose in Morrison's

STAFF at Morrison's supermarket in Fort William had to tackle an unwelcome guest on Monday - a poisonous scorpion.

Store personnel were on one of their regular clean-ups when they spotted the two-inch animal scuttling about the floor and managed to sweep it into a plastic container.

The Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) was called in and, after inquiries, the scorpion's most likely vehicle to Lochaber was identified as a box of bananas that arrived last Saturday from Columbia.

It is believed the scorpion managed to escape from the box and remain undetected in the store for two days. Dawna Connolly, the SSPCA's Fort William based officer, said: 'I don't know much about scorpions myself but I've been told that if they have small pincers and a large tail they can be very venomous.

'This one does have quite small pincers and a large tail so if anyone had been bitten it would certainly have been a call to 999.'

Dawna's used to dealing with all sorts of animals with the SSPCA but it's the first time she has faced a scorpion.

'You just never know what you're going to get,' she said. 'I had hen neglect yesterday and I've had a lizard from Turkey in the past but never a scorpion.'

A spokesman for Morrison's said: 'The quality and safety of all the products we sell is of paramount importance to us. Our banana supplier undertakes a thorough inspection process to ensure that the fruit reaches our customers in optimum condition. We would like to reassure our customers that this is an isolated incident. We will carry on with our investigation into how this occurred.'

The scorpion has been transferred into the care of reptile specialist Nick Martin in Inverness.

Deal eases Lochaber dental crisis

LOCHABER'S dental crisis is set to ease after a ground-breaking deal between NHS Highland and a Fort William private practice.

The health authority has agreed to sell its former community clinic buildings next to Lochaber Leisure Centre to M&S Dental Care in a move that will see the expanded practice taking on many more NHS patients.

NHS bosses met last week with Gregor Muir, a partner in M&S dental care, to discuss relocating the practice from the High Street to the former clinic, currently lying empty since services were transferred to the new medical centre last year.

Crucial to the deal being struck between NHS Highland and M&S was that the expanded practice would increase its NHS provision.

Mr Muir said no numbers had yet been agreed, but indicated the move would enable his practice to take on a significant chunk of the current waiting list.

'We are hoping to tackle the number of people waiting for NHS treatment,' Mr Muir told *The Oban Times*. 'There's 3,500 people waiting and we are aiming to try and sort that out. It's been a long haul but we are hopefully getting to the other end of it now. We're getting to a mutually beneficial outcome where we can provide care to everyone.'

It is hoped the new dental surgery will be open in around six months during which time new dentists will be recruited to staff the extra surgeries.

Dental services development manager for NHS Highland Alex Fraser said: 'We have had very promising discussions with a local dentist.

'We are duty bound to get a good price for any building we no longer require but it would be ideal if we could see it used, at least partly, to provide NHS dentistry to people in the Fort William area.'

There are still thousands of people in the Lochaber area who cannot register with an NHS dentist and are being advised to add their names to a waiting list.

Many have been forced to register as private patients, but demand has been such that now even places for private treatment have run out.

Currently the only way to get any kind of dental treatment in Lochaber is as an emergency patient.

Assistant general manager of Lochaber area for NHS Highland Theresa James told *The Oban Times*: 'Part of the negotiations is about how many NHS patients we can expect them to take.

'The dentists we currently have are working their socks off.

'The situation has improved with 486 more NHS patients being taken on but with all the will in the world we can't provide a service for all the people in Lochaber.'

Although they have welcomed the move, some councillors and community representatives expressed concerns that the public could lose out in the long run if the buildings end up being used for commercial services.

Councillor Brian Murphy said: 'I feel if it does go to the local dentist it should be a lease. We want to keep the building as an NHS building. If it's not a lease then in 20 years time it could be lost to other services.'

Gaelic fails to make the grade

BARRA'S biggest school has been rapped for failing to reach required standards in its teaching of Gaelic.

In a report published this week, HM Inspectorate of Education found the overall attainment in Gaelic at Castlebay Community School to be 'weak' with no pupils reaching appropriate national levels in reading or writing by the end of P7 and S2.

Inspectors found there was no formal approach to recognising pupils' attainment in listening and talking, noting that pupils were making good progress in their classwork but needed greater challenge. But there were 'signs of improvement' in the primary section, with pupils reading with fluency and enthusiasm, and the few pupils sitting standard grades and highers all passed, inspectors found.

'The school in consultation with the education authority will now prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and they will share the plan with parents,' said a Comhairle nan Eilean Siar spokesperson.

Arran bay set to become marine conservation area

ARRAN'S Lamlash Bay is set to become Scotland's first Community Marine Conservation Area.

Richard Lochhead, the Scottish government's cabinet secretary for rural affairs and the environment, made the announcement on the island on Monday.

If the proposals are accepted, part of the bay will become a marine reserve where all fishing activity will be prohibited. The rest will be a fisheries management area focusing particularly on scallops.

Mr Lochhead said: 'This is a hugely significant proposal. The Scottish government is delighted to support community driven projects and that has been the key to their success. This is a fantastic example of what can be achieved when we all work together.'

It follows a 10-year campaign by conservationists from The Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) who have long argued that statutory protection is needed.

Howard Wood, chairman of COAST, said: 'The island community is delighted with the announcement by the cabinet secretary and is looking forward to continuing to work with the fishing community of the Clyde in this exciting project to address the regeneration of the marine environment.'

The organisation has argued that if the area is allowed to return to its natural state, fish and lobster will become twice as abundant and the number of species will increase by a third.

Kenneth MacNab, chairman of the Clyde Fisherman's Association, said: 'The association is pleased that, after a lengthy process, a satisfactory outcome has been reached in the Lamlash Bay process. We are ready to play our role in the management of the bay.'

Plans for the conservation area will now go to public consultation before being presented in detail for approval by the Scottish parliament. It could be in place by the summer.

Oban lifeboat kept busy rescuing 47 people last year

Oban lifeboat cox Ronnie McKillop. t04ron01

THE latest figures released by the RNLI show that Oban lifeboat was again the one of the busiest in Scotland last year.

Lifeboats around Scotland launched a total of 1,028 times in the third busiest year for the Scottish service since records began.

Oban lifeboat launched 57 times rescuing 47 people compared to Scotland's busiest station, Kinghorn in Fife, which launched 69 times rescuing 39 people.

Elsewhere on the west coast Campbeltown launched 24 times, Tobermory 25 times and Islay and Tighnabruaich launched 16 times.

RNLI will be holding a special fundraising day tomorrow (Friday) with events throughout the country.

John Caldwell of RNLI said: 'By taking part in the fundraising day you could help us prepare and equip these brave people to go on saving lives.'

High school is losing rector

OBAN High School rector Linda Kirkwood has confirmed she will be leaving the school this year after a decade at the helm.

Mrs Kirkwood, who has seen the school's reputation grow under her stewardship, will leave for a new job but details of her new post are not yet finalised.

The rector said: 'I will be leaving with great regret as this school has been my home for the last 10 years and I have enjoyed my time here. I will miss the children and the staff.'

Chamber restart will be discussed

A MEETING to discuss restarting The Oban and District Chamber of Commerce will take place next Friday.

Oban North and Lorn councillor Neil Mackay is hoping to revive the town's chamber of commerce in a bid to move the area forward.

Councillor Mackay said Dick Walsh, leader of Argyll and Bute Council, will be joining Norman Quirk, chairman of the Scottish Chamber of Commerce, as one of the guest speakers. The meeting is in the Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Oban from 7pm. Anyone who is interested in helping the area move forward is very welcome to attend.

Traffic lights to stay on A83

THERE will be plenty of rest, but not much reason to be thankful for drivers after it was revealed that temporary traffic lights installed on the A83 after October's landslide may be in place for some time.

In response to a question from Argyll MSP Jamie McGrigor transport minister, Stewart Stevenson, told the Scottish parliament last week that the scale and cost of improvement work will not be known until investigations are complete. The lights were put in place after the road was closed for days.

Ferry talks point to link in future

A DIRECT Mallaig-Lochboisdale ferry looks a real prospect after talks between Uist community representatives and transport minister Stewart Stevenson - but not this year.

Community company Stòras Uibhist and Lochboisdale Community Council met the minister in Edinburgh on Tuesday and came away satisfied a way will be found to provide the link they regard as crucial to the island's future.

Mr Stevenson said he would consider 'affordable' options. 'We are keen to give all the support we can to CalMac Ferries Ltd, CNES and Storàs Uibhist in their efforts to implement a Mallaig - Lochboisdale ferry service,' he said.

Chairman of Stòras Uibhist Angus MacMillan re-stated the need for improved transport links to the islands to support the ongoing plans of Stòras Uibhist to redevelop Lochboisdale and the wider economy of the community-owned South Uist Estate. Ronald MacKinnon, Lochboisdale Community Council chairman, said the introduction of the Lochbosidale-Mallaig ferry service would 'kickstart economic and social regeneration'.

CalMac's Hugh Dan MacLennan said: 'We will examine all the options available within the current fleet. It's a matter for the minister to decide what's affordable. But I would say no, the service will not start this summer. The logistics would defeat us.'

Memorial fund nears target

THE FUNERAL of Fort William cycling star Jason MacIntyre was held at Duncansburgh MacIntosh Parish Church yesterday (Wednesday) following a week of tributes and donations to the memorial fund set up in his memory.

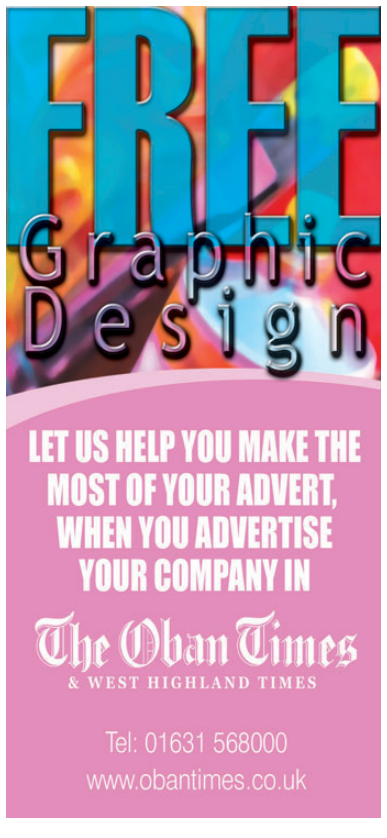
A memorial ride has been planned for Saturday, in which friends, colleagues and supporters of Mr MacIntyre will honour the cyclist, whose recent form had brought him to the brink of Olympic selection.

Organiser Donald Paterson, a close friend of Mr MacIntyre, said: 'We are planning to ride for Jason this Saturday. This is an invitation for those who also knew Jason or who are just touched by the tragedy to join us for the ride out to Carr's Corner to pay our respects. Support is much appreciated. We will be leaving from Fort William swimming pool this Saturday at noon. From Carr's Corner we will probably - weather depending - head north to Spean Bridge, up to the Commando memorial and come back to Fort William via Gairlochy, about 25 miles. Longer, shorter and off-road routes will be available for those who want them.'

Cycling friends and colleagues of Fort William cycling star Jason MacIntyre left cycling tops and flowers at the site of his fatal accident on the A82 at Carr's Corner near Fort William.

Mr MacIntyre leaves behind his wife Caroline and eight-year-old twin daughters Morgan and Chloe. The Braveheart Cycling Fund has set up the Jason MacIntyre Memorial Fund to help the family and the £20,000 target is already close to being met. More than £12,000 was received within two days of being opened and on Tuesday that figure had risen to £18,000 with donations coming in from as far afield as Malaysia, the United States, Canada and Australia. Mr MacIntyre's family said in a statement that messages of support had given them great comfort. 'Jason's untimely death is a devastating loss for the family. He was a wonderful son, husband, brother and father. His achievements in the world of cycling were nothing short of wonderful too.'

Lochaber Provost Allan Henderson said: 'Jason was one of Lochaber's finest sportsmen. He was a talented cyclist who brought great distinction to his family and to Lochaber.'



You can email your Lorn news to lornlines@obantimes.co.uk

LORN Beekeepers met in the Parish Church Hall, Glencruitten Road, Oban, on January 10, under the chairmanship of Mitch Dobson, Oban.

The evening took the form of a quiz. Two teams of three answered questions posed by club secretary and question-master for the evening Tiggy MacDonald, Camus Beag, South Cuan.

Members of the winning team were Steve Sunderland, Oban, who holds a position with the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs department; Rob Lightfoot, Kilmore, who teaches biology at Oban High School; and Dougie MacNab, chiropodist, Oban.

Mitch Dobson said: 'It was a highly entertaining evening.'

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A NATURAL history group founded on the island of Seil by islander Richard Wesley, a retired countryside ranger, is attracting support

Launched on November 14, the organisation, which has already attracted 62 members, meets monthly in Seil Island Hall at 7.30pm to hear a range of highly knowledgeable speakers. Giving a fascinating talk at the last meeting was Oban businessman Bob Grove who at one time operated a wildlife safari business in Dorset. The previous month's guest was Robert Race, head of Westward Quest, an Oban-based charitable company which takes young people on cruises. His talk was on a trip from Seil to the Treshnish Islands.

Mr Wesley has been nominated chairman of the new group.

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THEY may have lacked the wasp waists and shapely legs of their catwalk namesakes but there was no lack of interest in the models on view in Benderloch Village Hall on Thursday January 10.

Promoted by Oban Model Club and Oban Diecast Club, the exhibition saw 120 models on display, the biggest number yet shown at this event. Virtually covering every corner of the venue were fire engines, steam engines, locomotives and a vast range of seaplanes and boats. Aside from a large number from the Oban area itself, exhibitors had travelled from as far afield as Perth, Lochgilphead and north of Fort William. Chairman Harry Clyne, Lochailort, said: 'We were delighted with the support.'

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MEETING in the Regent Hotel on Monday last week, members of Oban Photographic Club were baffled by the unexplained non-appearance of that evening's guest speaker, Dave Beaton of Aberdeen Photographic Club.

One of the club's own members, Bob MacCulloch, Oban, stood in to give a first class digitally-illustrated talk on 'Old Oban'.

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HELD in the Regent Hotel on January 12, Oban's annual coffee morning on behalf of Children First drew a crowded attendance raising a magnificent £1,133, the highest total to date and a sum which included a number of generous donations.

For organisers Ishbel Banks and her husband, Robin, it was a well-earned reward for all their remarkable efforts, for the couple have been promoting the event since it was first launched 45 years ago, raising many thousands of pounds for this excellent cause. For most of that period, Robin Banks, a retired lawyer, has been the committee's secretary.

As always at this event there was no shortage of delicious home baking to be enjoyed with cheerfully served teas and coffees.

Ishbel Banks said: 'We thoroughly enjoy doing it and are very appreciative of the great support we get from the public.'

The couple are especially grateful to the Regent Hotel and its staff for their enthusiastic cooperation and kind assistance over the years.

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HELD in the Argyllshire Gathering Hall on Friday January 11, Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club's annual supper dance was a sell out.

Following an excellent supper, club chairman Michael Garvin, Oban, welcomed everyone and paid tribute to the Argyllshire Gathering for the supper and service. He then welcomed on stage Blairgowrie-based Ian Hutson and his Scottish Dance Band with Ian on lead accordion, Alistair MacLeod on second box, Scott Gordon on drums, Jim Nicol on keyboard and Marie Fielding playing fiddle.

The evening closed with everyone singing Auld Lang Syne and Michael Garvin thanking Ian Hutson and the band for a great night.

Earth-sheltered houses bid refused

A CONTROVERSIAL planning application that caused a split in a small community has been refused.

Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands area committee turned down Viv Dobbie's application to build two earth sheltered houses on the banks of Loch Craignish in the centre of Ardfern. But Mrs Dobbie revealed she will appeal the decision, and fight on to build what she describes as 'environmentally friendly' shelters.

When Mrs Dobbie first made the application, it led to a war of words between herself and the new owners of the Galley of Lorne Inn.

The houses were to be erected directly in front of the Galley's restaurant with a private right of access over the hotel car park, and owner Andrew Stanton claimed they would block views of the loch for his diners and could even put him out of business.

At a public meeting last Wednesday before the decision was made, Mr Stanton said: 'There is a lot financially at stake for my family if the application is granted. Our clients believe this to be a horrific proposal and we have been inundated with support from disgruntled members of the community.

'We are only one of 126 objectors. No one is against ecological housing but the reason there is so much opposition to this is where they would be placed.'

Another objector at the meeting said the buildings would ruin the 'unspoilt shoreline' and that all evidence indicates that sea levels will rise at an accelerated rate, leading to flooding issues with the houses.

A former owner of the hotel, Mrs Dobbie kept a piece of land for development when she sold the premises. She refuted claims by Mr Stanton that he was not made aware of the planning application until five days before he was due to sign the missives for the inn.

Mrs Dobbie said: 'A meeting was held with the new owners and they were made aware of the application before they purchased the hotel. The shelters would do little to impair the view from the restaurant. There are many successful pubs without a view.'

Mrs Dobbie also claimed that Mr Stanton had used 'emotional blackmail' on villagers by telling them he would have to sell the hotel to developers if permission was granted for her buildings, leaving the village without its only pub.

Making a last-ditch plea to councillors, she told them: 'Our house is up for sale and my daughter will be homeless if we don't get permission.

'I understand peoples fear of change but if we don't do something now about global warming there will soon be no views to block.'

Argyll and Bute Council head planner Richard Kerr said the application would be refused, as most earth sheltered dwellings are pushed back into a slope but in this case they would be raised out of the ground to protect them from flooding and then covered in soil. 'Our view is that the ground doesn't lend itself to this form of development and they would detract from the setting of the hotel.'

Hospice founder praised

FOUNDER member of Friends of Oban Hospice, Joan MacGill, was thrilled to be presented with flowers at a recent meeting in Glencruitten Church Centre.

Joan received the flowers in recognition of her long association with Friends of Oban Hospice, and for her tireless fundraising over many years.

Large cracks keep Bunessan community hall out of use

Mull anger over lack of landslide action

By DAVID WALKER

A COMMUNITY on Mull is seeking answers after large cracks appeared in a large landslide which has put a hall out of action since October last year.

Bunessan Community Hall has been closed since the landslide which occurred where West Highland Housing Association (WHHA) is building eight houses on land above Bunessan Community Hall. Work was started on site last May and is due for completion this May.

Bunessan community councillor Ronnie Campbell said 'frightening' cracks had appeared in the landslide which also had 4,000 tonnes of rock on top of it. Residents are demanding action be taken.

Mr Campbell, who was awarded an MBE in the 2008 New Year honours list, told a meeting of Mull Community Council last week: 'The hall has been shut since the landslide in October. Some of the cracks in the landslide above the hall are about 18 inches wide and 10 feet deep. Some of it is quite frightening. Cracks in the landslide go right to the back of the historical centre.

'There's also 4,000 tonnes or rock which they have dug out sitting there as well which is not helping. Its just ridiculous. No-one is accepting any responsibility.'

Fiona Caper, secretary of Bunessan Hall Committee, also told the meeting: 'WHHA has contacted the surveyors, Fairhurst Engineers, who were not the original surveyors and a report will go back to WHHA.

'We have to wait on that. Fairhurst thinks it might need only remedial work, but I have no idea what will be in the report. But at present there is no access to the hall which makes it very difficult for the bookings system.'

Bunessan resident Nigel Shannon, coach of Mull Harriers athletics team, said: 'The hall was used by the youngsters for training. There is nowhere else for them to train. No-one is taking responsibility, no-one saying we can move back or whatever.

'My son goes to Bunessan Primary School, and they haven't done any PE at all since October. Nothing seems to be getting done.'

Lesley MacInnes, WHHA chief executive, said: 'It is one of those unfortunate things that happen when you are developing an area but we are well aware that it has been problematic to people in Bunessan.

'We have spoken to the hall committee about making some form of donation to them.

'The engineers are saying we just have to wait and see. My understanding is that there has to be a waiting period, given that there has been so much rain recently, and that will dictate the solution. We can understand it must have been frustrating for them and there may have been a lack of information from us over the Christmas period.'

• Do you have a Mull story? Contact *Oban Times* reporter David Walker, tel 01631-568000.

A fallen tree bridges a massive gap in the ground.

Some of the cracks are ten feet deep.

Couple right to report blind-bend driver, says sheriff

A SHERIFF has praised the public spiritedness of an Argyll couple who reported a motorist who overtook them on double white lines on a blind bend just outside Taynuilt — and encouraged more members of the public to do the same.

Douglas Todd, of Dunfermline, was found guilty after a trial at Oban Sheriff Court this week of careless driving on the A85 at Taynuilt on April 7 last year.

Todd had been charged with dangerous driving but was found guilty of the reduced charge of careless driving.

The court heard how Todd had overtaken Argyll couple, Kenneth and Helen Groom, at a blind left-hand bend in the road known as the 'switchback'.

Mr Groom said he was driving his Vauxhall Astra west on the A85 towards Oban and had just passed through the village of Taynuilt.

He said: 'As I was going around a left-hand corner I caught sight of something on the right hand side overtaking me. I couldn't see around the bend and couldn't see traffic coming in the other direction. I was terrified.

'He was on the right hand side of the road and had crossed the white lines in the middle of the road. I knew it was a blind corner. If there was a car travelling in the other direction there would have been a three-car pile-up. The car that overtook us was going at considerable speed.'

Mrs Groom said: 'We were so shocked. We felt it was justified reporting because there have been so many accidents in this area with overtaking on blind bends. I've been driving for 41 years and never reported an incident before.'

Giving evidence, 24-year-old trainee engineer Todd said he had caught up with two cars, a silver Saab and Mr Groom's Astra at Inverawe.

He said: 'I was approaching a right hand corner going up a hill. I started to accelerate heavily to overtake the Saab but the Saab accelerated harder and closed the gap between himself and the Astra. I managed to pull in front of the Astra just as the double white lines were starting.'

Sheriff Derek Livingston said: 'I am not satisfied as to where the overtaking manoeuvre started. It is possible that it was safe to overtake when the manoeuvre was started and there is evidence that the two cars sped up. Therefore I find you guilty of careless driving. You are quite fortunate from what I have heard today.'

Todd was fined £500 and nine penalty points were placed on his licence.

Sheriff Livingston added: 'I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Groom for their public spiritedness. It is important that members of the public report incidents of bad driving to the police.'

Teenager injured in crash

A YOUNG Benderloch man was seriously injured when his car went off the road and overturned several times on the A85 between Oban and Dunbeg on Sunday around 8.35pm.

The 18-year-old was taken to Oban, Lorn and the Islands District General Hospital in Oban.

The car was extensively damaged.

A Strathclyde police spokesperson said this week that the cause of the accident was under investigation.

Drivers caught in crackdown

A NUMBER of drivers have been reported to the procurator fiscal for road offences following a high-profile police patrol in Oban last weekend.

District police in conjunction with the road-policing department stopped around 30 drivers to check their documents during the latest crimebreaker in the town.

Offences included drink driving, possession of controlled drugs, no licence and insurance and not wearing a seatbelt.

The patrols will be a regular occurrence in the area, and Sergeant Neil Owen of Strathclyde Police, Oban, said: 'Patrols of this nature detect offenders across a broad spectrum and it has been noticeable that despite recent local publicity, there are still motorists out there who flout the law in relation to seatbelts and the use of mobile phones.'

Theft from ferry

AN EAST Kilbride woman has been charged with theft after personal property and items belonging to Caledonian MacBrayne were stolen from a ferry moored at Oban linkspan around 2am last Saturday.

Assault alleged

A 35-YEAR-OLD Oban man has been arrested after a 43-year-old man was allegedly assaulted and a quantity of money stolen on Sunday at around 10.45am at Ganavan.

Young man arrested

AN 18-YEAR-OLD Oban man was arrested for breach of the peace and resisting arrest after a disturbance in the town's Breadalbane Street around 3.30am last Saturday.

Free classes in English

ENGLISH classes for speakers of other languages are now being held, free, in the Corran Halls, Oban, on Tuesdays 2-4pm, and in Oban Primary Campus on Tuesday evenings, 7-9pm. For further details contact community learning on 01631-562466.

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Proposed rent rise is through the roof claims housing association tenant

A PORT Appin man is claiming that housing association tenants are being 'bulldozed' into accepting a seven per cent rent hike.

Andrew Dairon received a circular from West Highland Housing Association before Christmas telling him of a proposed 7.2 per cent increase.

But Mr Dairon, aged 63, claims the proposed rise is too much for people on low incomes, particularly with the recent national increases in gas and electricity charges.

'The housing association is suggesting this increase, but I think it's too much when you consider Gordon Brown is pegging public sector wages to two per cent. We are getting bulldozed into this at a time when electricity and gas prices are going up dramatically. If you are on a low income, it just seems that everything is going out of control. There is going to be people short of money.'

Mr Dairon claims the housing association has so far only received six replies out of 500 tenants.

'It all seems to have been hidden behind Christmas when people had other things on their mind,' he added.

But Lesley McInnes, chief executive of the not-for-profit housing association, defended the proposed increase saying it needs the money to carry out a 'long-term' maintenance programme on its properties'.

She added: 'Obviously the association has to run its business like everybody else. We have got a long-term maintenance programme which we will have to fund. We carried out a substantial refurbishment of houses at Dunollie, Oban, where we were awarded grant funding. But it's unlikely we will be able to access this in the future.

'Our roughly average rent is £60 per week but in the private sector it's £100. It is a good quality product. The association will consider all the views of tenants who have written or phoned us at our meeting on February 28.'

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Jury clears Caol man of serious assault

A JURY has unanimously cleared a Caol man of serious assault after a three-day trial last week.

Michael Kane, aged 37, of 34 Ardgour Road, Caol, was accused of assaulting Dean Lopez, 29, and cutting him on the neck with a scalpel in a scrap in Kilmallie Road on July 27 last year.

The two had been pallbearers at the funeral of Mr Lopez's cousin and Mr Lopez thought Mr Kane's presence was inappropriate.

Mr Lopez told the jury he had approached Kane late in the evening outside a bar in Caol, and wished to speak with him.

Mr Lopez alleged that Mr Kane then attacked him and the two had been involved in a brief scuffle before he walked away.

He told the jury that Mr Kane then came after him with a scalpel and the scuffle resumed, with one of Mr Lopez's friends eventually pulling him away. Mr Lopez said he was cut below the jaw line and on his throat.

Mr Kane's defence agent Gillian Allardyce suggested that Mr Kane was the victim in the matter, as he had sustained two black eyes, a cut lip and bruising to his arms and chest.

The jury also found Mr Kane not guilty, by a majority decision, of being in possession of an offensive weapon.

Cocaine with street value of £70,000 seized on Uig to Tarbert ferry

Police net major haul in isles' biggest class A drugs bust

POLICE in the Western Isles seized a £70,000 cocaine shipment on Harris last week in a carefully planned drugs bust.

The haul - the biggest ever class A drugs seizure in the Western Isles - was found in Harris after officers intercepted the cocaine on the Uig to Tarbert ferry.

Chief Constable Ian Latimer said the consignment had been traced through a carefully planned search, involving specialist officers and sniffer dogs.

'I'm constrained in what I can say because the investigation is ongoing, but I can confirm this was an intelligence led operation,' he said. 'I have to be somewhat cautious, because it has to subject to forensic examination but, at this early stage, we believe it to be cocaine, with an estimated street value of at least £70,000.'

Following the operation, Western Isles councillors raised concerns the islands' location made them an ideal target for drug traffickers.

Councillor Peter Carlin said he was both pleased and horrified at the amount of cocaine seized by police.

He said: 'It's good news that the police found the drugs and made an arrest. But it's terrible news as far as the islands are concerned, that there was a substantial amount of hard drugs en route to our islands.

Vulnerable

'The islands are vulnerable because of their geography and the amount of traffic coming through.

'There are a lot of ferries and planes and of course private yachts and other boats.'

Mr Latimer said that the police were aware of the situation and that they offered the same protection to the islands.

Councillor Carlin called on the community to rally together to fight the rising drugs menace and give information to the police.

He said: 'If they don't want to phone the police for any reason, then they should phone their local councillor - we don't mind standing up to be counted.'

Councillor Norman MacLeod, convener of the Northern Joint Police Board, said the drug trade in the area was a huge worry for parents.

He added: 'We know quite often there is a network of people involved in supplying drugs and the work to catch them will continue. There is much more transport movement now but we get a lot of co-operation from the transport companies if they have any suspicion.'

Court

John MacDonald, aged 41, of Breasclete, Lewis, appeared in Stornoway Sheriff Court in connection with the drugs haul on Friday, on contraventions of the misuse of drugs act.

MacDonald was remanded in custody while the case is continued for further examination.

Beating the blues at Nevis Range

A UNIVERSITY boffin claims he's found a formula proving Monday January 21 is the most depressing day of 2008 – but on the black day itself staff at Nevis Range were having none of it.

Dr Cliff Arnal of Cardiff University used variables such as weather, debt, monthly salary, time since Christmas and low motivation levels to come up with the year's low point.

But up on Aonach Mor, pom-pom girls Jenny Walker, Lisa Scott and Kerry Kerr took to the slopes to brighten up Blue Monday, winning smiles and laughter from passing skiers and snowboarders.

And further cheer came when Nevis Range announced that anyone visiting the ski slopes today (Thursday) will receive a free pass for tomorrow as part of a special offer this week.

Jenny Walker, left, Lisa Scott and Kerry Kerr do their best to brighten up Blue Monday at Nevis Range.

New award celebrates mountain culture

NEXT month's Fort William Mountain Festival will see the introduction of The Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture - the first award of its kind in Scotland.

The award will celebrate achievements of one individual and his/her contributions to Scotland's mountains, encompassing sport, theatre, photography, film and literature.

Mike Pescod, chairman of festival organisers The Highland Mountain Culture Association, said: 'By awarding one exceptional individual every year we will create a list of ambassadors who will represent the best in mountain culture in Scotland and beyond.'

A DVD will be shown at the award ceremony, showing film and still photographic highlights of the recipient's achievements.

The award is sponsored by Rio Tinto Alcan and has been set up to promote mountain culture within Scotland and beyond.

Lochaber smelter manager Mark Routledge said the company was 'very proud' to support the new accolade.

Chance to speak out on Skye and Lochalsh land plans

SKYE and Lochalsh residents are being invited to have their say on Highland Council proposals on how it believes land should be earmarked for building or development over the next five to ten years.

The land will be shown in the new Local Plan and will become the council's principal framework for deciding planning applications. Exhibitions have been arranged in Skye and Lochalsh to allow the public to discuss the plan with officials.

The exhibitions are as follows, 3pm to 7.30pm unless otherwise stated: January 24, Kyle Village Hall; January 29, Achmore Community Hall; January 30, 4 to 7.30pm; January 31, Tigh na Sgire, Portree; February 11, Dunvegan Community Hall; February 12, Uig Community Hall; February 14, Staffin Community Centre; February 18, Kyleakin Community Centre; February 19, Broadford Village Hall; February 25, Edinbane Primary, 4.30 to 7.30pm; February 26, Raasay Day Care Centre, 4 - 7.30pm; March 3, Glenelg and Arnisdale Community Hall; March 4, Ardvasar Village Hall; March 5, Dornie Village Hall.

Objections

Any objections to the plan should be sent in writing to the director of planning and development, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX before 5pm on Friday March 14.

Objections should state the name and address of the objector, the matters to which they relate and the grounds on which they are made.

A more formal opportunity to ask questions about the plan will be available at the ward forum at 7pm on Monday February 4 at Tigh na Sgire, Portree.

Get out and enjoy the Great Glen

A £200,000 public access and interpretation project along the Caledonian Canal and Great Glen Way was completed last week.

Forty-nine information panels have been put up as part of 'The Great Glen Ways Initiative' at 31 locations along the route from Corpach to Inverness.

The panels form part of a major project to increase and improve public access along the glen and feature text, illustrations and photographs covering history, archaeology, folklore, forest management, natural history and wildlife.

Locations for the new panels include the termini at Corpach and Inverness Castle, Banavie, Strone, Moy Bridge, Clunes, Kilfinnan, Laggan Locks, Invergarry Station, Well of the Seven Heads, Loch Oich Tunnel, Fort Augustus, Allt na Criche, Crannog Viewpoint, Allt Sigh, Foyer's view, Lewiston, Temple Pier, Tychat, Craig Nay Sawmill, Craig Nay Forest, Blackfold, Dochgarroch, Tomnahurich, Muirtown Locks and Basin.

Chairman of Highland Council's planning, environment and development services Councillor Drew Hendry said: 'We want people to get out of their cars and get further afield by boot, boat or bike.'

The work was managed by Highland Council in partnership with British Waterways Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Cleaner water in pipeline

AROUND 30 people in remote Arnisdale, Glenelg, are to get cleaner water in a £1.5 million Scottish Water scheme.

Work including the installation of sand and carbon filters and disinfection equipment to ensure water from the Allt an Fhuarain burn meets public health standards started this week.

A small tank will also be built to store treated water to keep customers supplied at all times.

A road to new the new treatment works will be built as part of the project, which is expected to be finished by October.

Project manager Stewart Samson of Scottish Water Solutions said: 'This work is important for local residents and for tourism. We're proud to be delivering these improvements.'

Scottish Water Solutions, local planners and Scottish Natural Heritage agreed designs to blend in with the surrounding scenery, part of the Knoydart National Scenic Area.

Highland Council tenants face 5.3 per cent rent rise

HIGHLAND Council tenants' average rents are likely to go up to more than £61 after councillors agreed a £3.09 increase for 2008/09.

The rise, agreed by the housing and social work committee last week, represents a 5.3 per cent jump from £58.29 to £61.38.

David Goldie, interim director of housing and property, said the increase was within the council's stated aim of pegging rent rises to the retail price index (RPI) plus one per cent.

A move by Lochaber councillor Brian Murphy to use extra balances to reduce the increase by one per cent failed.

Councillor Murphy said: 'We are all facing large increases in energy costs and people on low incomes are going to be struggling. For this next year we should try to keep rents as low as possible.'

But Mr Goldie advised councillors: 'I would not recommend that course of action.'

The committee voted 14-3 to recommend a 5.3 per cent increase to the full council meeting on February 14. The committee will also continue to lobby to have Highland Council's £160 million housing debt, which tenants' rents pay for, wiped out. Committee chairman Margaret Davidson said the housing department had done extremely well to keep rent rises down. 'At one stage we thought the increase might have to be up to three per cent above RPI. The albatross round our neck is the housing debt of around £160m,' she said. 'We don't have a level playing field. The housing debt has been wiped out in some areas and I am becoming increasingly concerned about how we service the housing debt.'

Councillor Davidson added: 'This is not a matter for the Scottish government - it must be done by the Treasury. We have also been talking to Edinburgh, Stirling and Renfrewshire councils, which are in a similar position.'

Wide support for new Gaelic school

Dòmhnall Morris of Comunn na Gàidhlig presents the new Gaelic map of Lochaber to Gaelic medium head teacher at Fort William RC Primary School Alison Heger, head teacher Lilian MacDonald, Fiona Byrne and Karen Gibson. f04gael01

WIDE support exists for a new Gaelic medium school in Fort William, say leading members of the Gaelic community.

Scotland's Gaelic development agency, Commun na Gàidhlig, launched Fort William's first Gaelic map last Thursday - a move many see as a further step in restoring the language to its former status in Lochaber.

Staff from Commun na Gàidhlig believe the current high profile of the Gaelic-only school issue only serves to show how quickly public opinion is moving. 'The discussion session at the launch event demonstrated that there is widespread support for the establishment of a dedicated Gaelic school in Fort William,' Dòmhnall Morris, of Commun na Gàidhlig told *The Oban Times*. 'There is no doubt various factors are combining to create a huge opportunity to expand Gaelic medium education as has been achieved elsewhere.'

That view is backed by the Highland Council Gaelic Committee which is already on record as saying that demand for Gaelic schooling outweighs current provision. Highland Council education director Hugh Fraser said: 'There is already a capital funding programme for Lochaber. We can look at the possibility of creating a Gaelic school.'

Options include the amalgamation of Caol and Banavie, and a review of provision in the greater Fort William area.

Ballachulish centre fun day boosts RNLI

BALLACHULISH Visitor and Information Centre will be running a number of activities tomorrow (Friday) in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) national fund-raising day.

Money raised will go towards the life-saving work of RNLI's volunteer lifeboat crew. Events arranged so far include a sudoku challenge, SOS word search for children and a raffle with prizes including signed picture prints of Ben Nevis and Loch Leven as well as CDs and DVDs.

Stewart Borland, centre manager, said: 'We have never had a full day event before. When I saw this advertised, it just seemed such a good cause to help. It's possibly one that gets overlooked or forgotten, so we decided to give it our best shot.'

Anne Martin, RNLI SOS campaign manager, said: 'The charity relies on voluntary contributions so activities like this are hugely appreciated and the funds raised will help the RNLI to continue saving lives at sea, on the beach and during inland floods.'

On average, the RNLI rescues 22 people at sea every day across UK.

Soup and snacks will be available throughout the day.

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New nursing home won't have enough beds, warns councillor

A YET-TO-BE-BUILT replacement nursing home for Fort William will not have enough beds to meet demand, a councillor has claimed.

Councillor Donald Cameron warned Highland Council's proposed 30-bed unit to replace Invernevis House may not be big enough after other local nursing homes closed.

Councillor Cameron said: 'We are happy with the progress that has been made on the care homes since last May, but in the last couple of years, three private homes in the Lochaber area have closed.

'This creates pressure in our area and my concern is that the proposal for 30 beds in a new Invernevis House won't be adequate.

But Councillor Margaret Davidson, chairman of the housing and social work committee, warned she could not give a commitment that capacity would be increased.

She said: 'This is a particular issue in Lochaber. When we took the decision to build the care homes at our own hand, it was a tight decision. There are revenue implications that we have to be careful with. The demographics mean that we need lots of money in care for the elderly, particularly in home care and support services for people at home.

'Our colleagues in the NHS are looking seriously at how they help us with the building of these care homes and how they can develop their own services.

'There is scope to look at the numbers but I am saying there are real revenue implications here.'

Councillor Cameron said: 'I appreciate we don't have a bottomless pit of funding but while negotiations are ongoing with the health board, this is the time to review the 30-bed provision.'

Five new care homes costing £21.5m, providing 168 beds in total are planned for the Highlands – 32 beds each in Tain and Muir of Ord, 30 beds each in Fort William and Grantown and 44 beds in Inverness.

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Argyll Air Services' Oban Airport has cost more than anticipated but will be supported by Scottish government funding.

'What Oban has done is what other communities would want to do . . .'

Clearing the air around Oban Airport

EXCLUSIVE REPORT By DAVID WALKER

Interview with Andy Law, director of operational services, Argyll and Bute Council

IN RECENT weeks the letters page of *The Oban Times* has been at the centre of one of the most robust debates in Argyll in the past few years – the subject, Oban Airport.

This week a top council official speaks to *The Oban Times* in an attempt to answer some of the criticisms of Argyll and Bute Council's new air service to the islands and provide the detail of funding and the service people can expect.

The council contends that its new air service will link the islands to Oban, widen choice and makes economic sense.

In an exclusive interview this week the council's director of operational services, Andy Law, said the Scottish government will provide grants to pay for the majority of the project which will include scheduled services from Oban to Coll and Colonsay with flights to start in early spring this year.

In future the service could also expand to Tiree, Inverness and Glasgow.

The council was also able to reveal that the price of a return ticket from Oban to Coll and Colonsay will be £65, with schoolchildren travelling for £1.

There has been much debate on the question of funding the project, with some critics suggesting that despite spending £9 million, the project would not be able to provide anything that was not there before.

Andy Law said: 'When the first light bulb idea for an Argyll Air Service was mooted there were capital costs of £4.8 million proposed initially. But when we looked at what it would mean to upgrade facilities and runways and did an initial business case we got a figure of £6.5m. The project then went out to tender and prices increased to the order of £9m. Some of the difference between the initial cost proposed and the final price came out of the tendering process, but most came out of the building process where you do one thing and uncover another thing to do. For instance we found out we had to change the direction of the runway on Colonsay. We also had to repair roads on Coll because of the amount of materials we had to take on to the island.

'The cost is being met by the council but the council is fully supported by the Scottish government which has assured us that loan charges will be paid.

'There is European funding and there is funding from the former Argyll and the Isles Enterprise (AIE). There is a gap which comes out of council funds and the vast majority of that is secured by the Government. Effectively they give a grant to the council to pay that off. From an Argyll and Bute point of view that's good because there is no impact on the council tax payer.

'The running costs are paid for on the same basis that the capital costs are paid for. The project was done on the basis that the government would provide revenue funding support if the licence was procured and an air service provider was in place. It is on that basis we are going forward.'

On the question of scheduled services, Mr Law said: 'We are able to provide scheduled services to Coll and Colonsay. It is open to the operator, Highland Airways, to expand on that, and I'm sure they want to do more than just scheduled services.

'In the past people may have been able to fly to Coll and Colonsay but both had grass strips for runways and were very weather dependent. The standard of the runway at Oban as well is certainly better than it was. The scheduled service draws in the government support. Without the investment in airfields and terminals and without the Argyll Air Service franchise with Highland Airways we would not have been able to draw government money. The project would never have gone ahead unless it was on the basis of a scheduled service.

'We never planned to put scheduled flights to Glasgow from Oban into the project.

'We didn't factor that into the Argyll Air Service tender, but any operator might choose to do that in future. There is no agenda that we 'must have' a flight to Glasgow, but neither would we oppose it. We welcome the seaplane between Oban and Glasgow for instance.

'Some of the difference between the initial cost proposed and the final price came out of the tendering process, but most came out of the building process where you do one thing and uncover another thing to do'

'This project aims to expand transportation in Argyll. There is the potential for flights to Tiree and Inverness and that's a good thing. Oban is a developing area. We have the facility at Dunstaffnage for example, and this is another link in the chain of joining up with other parts of the Highlands and islands. What Oban has done is what other communities would want to do, for instance Broadford on Skye.

'When you are spending a lot of money it is sometimes hard to see what is the clear benefit. This is about investment in trying to widen the range of opportunities people have to travel in Argyll and the islands. It is a project to link in island communities so that anyone can get there and back in one day.'

Figures from Paul Keegan, managing director of Total Logistics Concepts which formerly managed the airport on behalf of the council, on landing numbers at Oban Airport, were questioned by Mr Law.

Mr Keegan claimed that there were 2,400 visiting aircraft at Oban in 2005 which had fallen to 1,100 by last year.

The council say from May to September 2007 there were 2,540 aircraft movements, a total of 5,262 people in and out.

Mr Law said: 'We wouldn't sign off to the numbers quoted by Paul Keegan. The throughput and landing income doesn't show a reduction in the same way as his figures appear to show. It is something I wouldn't make a lot of. Obviously during the construction phase there was a reduction in numbers.

'We are quite happy to see the leisure flyer coming in to Oban. We are delighted to have them, as Paul is, as he has the fuel concession at the airport and we are quite happy to see those numbers continue to grow. There are figures for the income for the last three years for Oban Airport. There may be gaps because there was a transition phase between our management and Paul Keegan's management.'

Another criticism of the project has been high staffing costs.

Mr Law said: 'Staff costs are big. For a licenced service you need fire cover and majority of staff costs are fire cover. We have taken on staff, trained them, bought fire engines. We wouldn't need the same level of cover if didn't have licenced service.

'If you don't have that you can't develop it. If didn't have it wouldn't have backing of government to fund it. That's where the bulk of the costs come from. We have a manager in place there to develop the three airfields to the point of being licenced, but that's a fixed-term contract. We will review the management arrangements in due course, but our manager is aware that he is there as a development manager, and it is not an issue.'

Mr Law added that the council had a meeting planned with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on February 7.

He said: 'There is a buoy system to be put in place just below the Falls of Lora where the approach to the runway at Oban Airport goes over the water. That will be done this week. The fuel service is also to be audited and that is being done by BP on behalf of Paul Keegan. There is no reason to assume that won't be OK. There are also final training issues around the staff to provide fire cover at Colonsay and Coll. It is very likely that we will have a final round-off inspection. We hope to be up and running by early spring.'

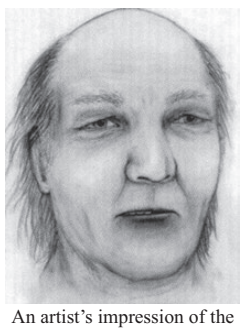
The new bouy system which marks where the runaway approach goes over the water at the entrance to Loch Etive.

Police renew appeals in bid to identify Islay body

A MAN, whose body was washed up on Islay nearly two years ago, is still to be identified, say Strathclyde Police.

The man was found on April 10 2006 on the beach at Lossit Bay, near Portnahaven, but no-one has come forward to identify him.

As a result, Strathclyde Police have created an artist's impression of the man and have made fresh calls for anyone who might know the man to come forward.



An artist's impression of the man washed up on Islay.

Detective Inspector David Hardie of Strathclyde Police Campbeltown, said: 'Despite extensive police enquiries, including checking missing person reports, the man has not yet been identified.

'I appreciate that it is now nearly two years since his body was discovered but I would still like to bring closure to this enquiry.

'It may be that friends or family members did not see the first appeals and this is a final attempt to identify him.'

The man is aged between 45 and 60, is around five foot nine inches tall and has collar length brown hair but was bald on top.

He was missing several top teeth and had no lower teeth and had tattoos on each forearm arm; one is a thistle with a scroll and the word, Scotland. There is also a third tattoo on the lower front of his left arm with the initials DF.

When found he was wearing a blue, beige and white vertical striped cotton jumper, a short-sleeved blue and white checked Farah shirt, a black t-shirt and brown lace-up shoes. He also wore a Celtic-design ring on the middle finger of his right hand and may have worn a modern-style kilt.

Anyone with information should contact Campbeltown Police Office on 01586 862201.

Argyll's social work must improve say inspectors

FOLLOWING a critical report on social work services in the area, Argyll and Bute Council has been set an improvement plan by inspectors.

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) set an action plan following the report last October which highlighted weaknesses in leadership and a failure to deliver key services among its findings. Overall, the report evaluated six areas as adequate, three as weak and only one area as good. However, it recognised recent progress and a capacity for improvement in the department.

Alexis Jay, chief inspector of SWIA, was confident that improvements were attainable with only one local authority failing to reach targets in previous examples.

The action plan was put to a meeting of Argyll and Bute Council last Thursday, for approval.

The 24 recommendations include working with community groups to better target resources, supporting the active involvement of service users and reducing the need for children to be placed outwith the authority.

Many councillors demanded close monitoring of developments and it was agreed that they would receive quarterly progress reports rather than the original plans for six-monthly updates. The motion was passed unanimously.

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Mid Argyll physiotherapist keeps driving licence after sleeping in his car

A PHYSIOTHERAPIST at Mid Argyll Hospital was allowed to keep his driving licence after admitting failing to provide two specimens of breath to police officers.

David Lachlan Gibson, aged 23, whose address was given at Oban Sheriff Court last week as Aros Residence, Mid Argyll Hospital, Lochgilphead admitted committing the offence on July 22 this year at Oban Police Office.

Procurator fiscal Justin Farrell told the court that police received an anonymous report that a man under the influence of alcohol had entered a car at the Corran Halls car park in Oban at around 11.50pm on July 21 last year.

Mr Farrell said: 'He was asleep. After police woke him up they noticed he smelt strongly of alcohol.

'The keys were located between his legs.

'He was breathalysed with a roadside test which proved positive and was taken to Oban Police Office for the intoximeter procedure. He failed to provide a reasonable breath test and was blowing down the side of the tube and stalling for time.'

Gibson's defence agent said: 'It was his friend's birthday and he thought he had consumed excess alcohol already and decided not to go to a further public house.

'He was waiting in his motor vehicle until he received a phone call from his friends.

'He had no intention of driving the car that night.

'He requires to travel between Lochgilphead and outlying areas.'

Sheriff James Hendry endorsed Gibson's driving licence with 10 penalty points and fined him £560.

Phil Higson with his cup after becoming champion.

Mull coxswain knows his mince and tatties

THE COXSWAIN of Tobermory lifeboat has won the 2008 World Mince and Tatties Championship.

The event at Tobermory's Mishnish Hotel sees entrants cook and serve up their interpretation of the dish which was 'Oor Wullie's' favourite dinner.

First time entrant Phil Higson scooped the title even though he left his ingredient shopping until the last minute.

In common with past winners Phil has been keeping tight-lipped about his ingredients and the recipe he used.

The event is now in its fifth year and was keenly contested by both amateur and professional cooks from as far afield as New Zealand.

Tesco celebrate another bumper Christmas in Oban

OBAN'S Tesco store, one of the most profitable in Britain, recorded sales worth more than £4.5 million over the festive period.

The store registered sales of £4,614,959, a rise of two and a half percent on the previous year and five per cent above budget expectations.The biggest increases were in meat and in-store bakery items. Over the four week period covering Christmas and New Year 151,129 shoppers came through the doors compared to 147,453 in 2006/07.

Tesco Oban general manager said Neil Armour: 'We are very grateful to our customers for their support over the festive season and hope to retain their confidence and loyalty over the coming year.'

The Oban store opened 11 years ago and, although not officially confirmed, it is believed that the company tends to expand it in the near future.

Old Oich Bridge in Fort Augustus f03bri04

Historic Scotland backs Old Oich Bridge

A PROJECT to protect and conserve the Old Oich Bridge at Fort Augustus has received a major funding boost from Historic Scotland.

The grant of £185,000, which amounts to one third of the £555,000 scheme, was made to the Fort Augustus Preservation Trust (FAPT) and means work to conserve Scotland's oldest surviving timber bridge, can go ahead.

The bridge, which was built in 1746 and reconstructed in 1850, has not been in use since the 1970's.

Old Oich Bridge will be restored in its timber state and be for the use of pedestrians, pedal cyclists and equestrians, but not motorists.

The bridge would be maintained as a national monument and a public utility, and would be the responsibility of the council and the FAPT.

Graham Biggs, FAPT chairman, said restoration of the bridge would relieve pedestrian congestion on the modern A82 road bridge and would offer alternative access to the village from the tourist office and public car park.

Old Oich Bridge is situated several hundred yards away from the road bridge, and also crosses the canal running through the town.

'There have been a number of injuries over the years when people have been crossing the road bridge and have been bumped by cars, particularly in the summer when it is busy,' he told *The Oban Times* on site.

Mr Briggs said there were plans for the bridge to form part of a 'tourist circuit' in Fort Augustus, and because of its location, may encourage visitors to stop in the town and stay longer than they normally would.

Liz Proudlock of the FAPT said the bridge would be in use sometime in 2010.

'The way things stand at the moment, restoration work would start next year,' she said.

Mr Biggs said he was amazed at the strength of the bridge, having withstood constant floods throughout the decades.

In 1849, two of the bridge's masonry spans were washed away in 'the great floods.'

Local joiner Joesph Mitchell sought funding from Westminster, appealing to them that the livestock industry could not cope without it.

Old Oich Bridge was considered essential to the Highland economy because it was a major route for cattle droving.

Mr Mitchell was successful in his application and completed repairs within a year.

According to Mr Biggs, Mitchell had only intended his reconstruction of the bridge to be temporary but had said: 'it should last a while.'

A spokesperson for Historic Scotland said: 'The development and survival of this bridge is a very rare. Specialist masonry and joinery skills will be required to repair the bridge.

'Once work is complete it will provide alternative access to village shops, surgery, school and church.'

Graham Biggs and Liz Proudlock of the Fort Augustus Preservation Trust, are thrilled with the grant made available to restore Old Oich Bridge f03bri03

Acharacle school underway

WORK has started on the Highlands' first fully sustainable school in Acharacle, Ardnamurchan.

Residents looked on as pupils and local councillors cut the first sod on on the landmark project, which will feature environmentally friendly features such as state-of-the-art insulation and non-toxic materials.

Councillor Michael Foxley, who has pushed for the school for 21 years, was delighted work has started. 'It's not just extremely energy efficient but it's also a completely non toxic environment for the children,' he told *The Oban Times*.

'Non-toxic paints will be used internally and externally so the school will avoid having all of the normal toxic fumes which are emitted in a modern building.

'It has exceptionally high levels of insulation and a massive heat store internal wall. Once it has been heated from a wind turbine then body heat is enough to keep it heated.'

The school is planned to be open by the end of the year.

Acharacle primary school pupils Mairi Duncan and Max Prescott celebrate work starting on their new sustainable primary school with Ardnamurchan councillors Bren Gormley, left, and Michael Foxley.

Sawmill gains £45,000 boost from HIE

BSW Sawmills has been granted £45,500 by Highlands and Islands Enterprise for a review of combined heat and power and biomass potential at its Corpach operation.

In other awards, Lochaber College was granted £43,000 for 'managing business', 'positive personal development' and 'building 4 life (construction)'. The grant will also part-fund 'a sustainable future for its marine training centre at Mallaig.

Viking Fish Farms in Ardtoe, Acharacle was awarded £30,723 to fund research into the development of commercial scale production of sea urchins and seaweed and the establishment of captive wrasse broodstock.

Christopher Barnes from Drimnin was awarded £6,000 to launch a pottery business and workshop, Barnardo's Springboard in Fort William, an organisation that provides care and support for 15-20 year olds who are in the custody of Highland Council, was awarded £565 for management training, while Eilidh MacLuskey from North Laggan was awarded £321 to train for a certificate in counselling supervision.

Achnacarry flats project boosts local housing stock

ACHNACARRY is set for a mini population boom as a conversion of the Achnacarry Castle stables into five modern flats for long-term letting nears completion.

The new flats represent a major addition to the local housing stock and the conversion of the formerly derelict buildings, built in the 1850's, could go some way to addressing acute housing shortages in the remote area. It is thought that estate workers and local people will be among those seeking to rent the new homes.

Achnacarry, like many small Lochaber settlements, is suffering from long-term population decline – partly due to the unavailablity of affordable housing.

Achnacarry residents will also benefit from a new water supply being created to service the new flats, which will also be connected to all existing homes.

Village houses will be connected to the new pipeline from the River Arkaig shortly after the conversion is completed in early March.

Property consultants Bidwells have managed the Achnacarry estate for a number of years.

A spokesman for the company said: 'The most challenging task was to re use as much of the existing listed building structure as possible, and to retain its original character, while creating attractive modern homes which would appeal to the letting market.'

Bill Scott, who is an architect for Bidwells in Fort William, Bill Scott confirmed to *The Oban Times* that the properties would be leased on a long-term lets basis.

The C-listed buildings were originally constructed in a square formation for horses used on the estate for farming and stocking.

The adjacent Achnacarry Castle, the ancestral home of the Cameron of Locheils, is also undergoing refurbishment. Inverness based contractors William Gray are currently employing around 20 local tradesmen to carry out repairs to the castle roof and interior work.

Site agent Mark MacLennan said work was progressing very well and may finish earlier than expected, adding that the flats' completion date would be 'no later' than early March.

Work on the castle is expected to finish in late summer.

Bidwells will be seeking tenants in the coming weeks.

Site agent Mark MacLennan with some of the tradesmen at the castle stables in Achnacarry, which will soon be converted into five new homes. f04ach01/02

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Canadian author to top Fort William conference bill

Outdoor expect joins host of speakers

ORGANISERS of a major tourism conference to be held in Fort William were celebrating a coup this week as a top Canadian author was announced as the keynote speaker.

Dr Simon Hudson from the university of Calgary will lead the speeches at the Advancing Adventure conference to be held during the finale weekend of the Fort William mountain festival.

He is the author of 'Sport, Tourism and Adventure' and an expert in the field of outdoor tourism.

Also speaking at the annual conference is Brian Wilshaw from the Nevis Partnership, Colin Houston from Visit Scotland and David Key from Footpath Consulting.

Morvern Cameron from Highlands and Islands Lochaber and Lochaber College's own Dan Morgan will give a 'Squamish Report' and Lochaber high school students will be staging their inaugural debate, supported by Charles Kennedy MP, on the matter of 'Should those who partake in outdoor sports and require to use the rescue services contribute towards the costs of the service?'

Organisers are expecting around 100 delegates from all sectors of the outdoor tourism industry to attend the daylong event on February 22.

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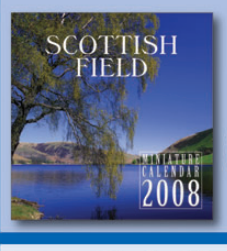

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Community group gains £90,000 cash windfall

Final piece of sensory garden jigsaw slots into place

A MASSIVE cash windfall will ensure the success of a long-running Oban project.

Oban Community Sensory Garden group have been awarded the £90,000 needed to complete the project that has been in the planning stages for five long years.

The group volunteers, many of whom have physical disabilities and learning difficulties, have been celebrating news of the award from The Big Lottery Fund, with chairwoman Catriona Campbell describing it as 'wonderful.' She added: 'It is like the final piece of a jigsaw slotting into place. We are now looking forward to enjoying the colours, aromas and the whole ambience of our new community garden.'

The sensory garden evolved from a community-building event, which asked people to choose something which they felt would develop greater community capacity and reduce the social exclusion of people with disabilities. The aim was to create the garden on the site of the Corran Esplanade Church, and despite the award, members still intend to carry on with their tireless fundraising.

Delighted volunteer Caroline Silkowski said: 'We can now start planning to get contractors in and start planning colours and flowers. We are hoping to have the garden completed by spring and are over the moon that we have been awarded this money.'

Big Lottery Fund Scotland chairwoman, Alison Magee, said the money will give the group, local schoolchildren and the wider community the chance to get involved in an all round project. 'I am delighted that people with physical disabilities, learning difficulties and mental health concerns are at the forefront of this exciting project in Oban', she said. 'Not only will this garden be a hub of activity for the community but it will open new volunteering opportunities for many local people.'

Rockfield pupils help boost local hospice funds

A CHEQUE for £727.52 has been presented to Friends of Oban Hospice by pupils at Rockfield Primary School.

The money was raised by a variety of event including the primary one-three Christmas nativity play, festive hamper donations and a collection at the school's church service before the Christmas holidays.

The hospice is the school's nominated local charity for the year.

Rockfield Primary School pupils Martin Rennie, Zoe Cook and Calum Garvin were on hand to help present the fundraising cheque to representatives of the charity Catherine MacKenzie and Anne May. t03roc01

Cold thief stole van

AN OBAN man was fined after admitting stealing a van which was parked with the keys placed in the sun visor.

John MacDonald, aged 19, of I Ledaig Caravan Park, Benderloch admitted stealing the vehicle between July 25 and 26 this year at Breadalbane Lane, Oban.

Procurator fiscal Justin Farrell told Oban Sheriff Court last week: 'The witness parked the van in the car park and placed the ignition keys in the sun visor. At around 3am the witness heard a vehicle being started. He went to the car park and discovered the van was missing. '

Police saw the accused walking on the A85 and detained him.

Defence agent David MacNeill said: 'He realises how very stupid this was. He got into the van to get some heat and moved it some 50 yards to get it to heat up faster.

'He lives some eight miles from Oban and when stopped by police he was walking home.

'The van was unsecured. He was in the area as he has a friend who has bedsit accommodation. He couldn't rouse his friend so he had got into the van.'

Three on drugs charges

SENTENCE was deferred on one Oban man who admitted dealing in drugs and another who admitted possessing class A drugs.

At Oban Sheriff Court last week Andrew Docherty, aged 38, of 10 Columba Court, Oban admitted being concerned in the supply of cocaine and possession of diazepam with intent to supply while Stuart John William Scott, aged 26, of Flat 1, 17 Airds Crescent, Oban admitted possession of cocaine.

All the offences occurred at 10 Columba Court on June 17, 2006.

Co-accused Christopher Robert Rowan, aged 24, of Dungallan Court, Railway Pier, Oban denies charges of being concerned in the supply of cocaine, possession of heroin with intent to supply and possession of diazepam, also on June 17, 2006 at 10 Columba Court.

All three are set to appear at Oban Sheriff Court on January 22 where Docherty and Scott are due for sentencing.

Senior citizens enjoy dinner date

IT WAS THE perfect forerunner to Oban's festive season.

Around 100 of Oban's senior citizens were entertained to their annual Christmas dinner in the welcoming setting of the Regent Hotel on Monday, December 17.

Organised by Oban and District Old People's Welfare Committee, the cost of the treat was partly met by the North British Hotels Trust which donated a cheque for £625.

Musical entertainment was provided free of charge by Counciller Neil MacKay, Tom Adams and Donny Files, who also accompanied singer Ann Watt, all of them Oban.

For the purposes of the dinner anyone who is a pensioner is regarded as a senior citizen.

Oban Rotary Club generously donated raffle prizes and provided transport home. Many of those who attended are resident in local care centres.

Graham MacQueen, secretary of Oban and District Old People's Welfare Commitee, said that in future years it was hoped to include senior citizens from a much wider area. The committee's president is Wendy Redpath, Dunbeg; and the treasurer is Frank Walton, Oban.

Meeting calls for more time for former school

RESIDENTS and local groups were last week pleading for more time before councillors decide on the fate of a key Oban building.

Argyll and Bute Council intends to sell the old Rockfield school site to the highest bidder with the money going to its education department.

But in recent weeks the momentum has been gathering for the building to be taken over by the community.

A public meeting at Oban fire station this week saw residents put forward a host of suggestions for possible uses including an arts centre, library, community centre, senior citizens club, toy cupboard, indoor visitor attraction and farmers' market.

The council's David Logan told the audience: 'I understand the building is a focal point within the town.

'We have already had some notes of interest from the private and public sector, principally concerned with housing. Whether it is sold for market value will be determined by councillors.'

But *The Oban Times* understands that it is difficult to value the site as the Rockfield building is listed and any possible housing would have to be a conversion of the building, which affects its attractiveness to developers.

Oban resident Joanie Garvin said: 'Oban really needs this site and I don't believe that the council should be selling it. We don't expect the council give us a bargain. We are just asking for time to progress.'

Eleanor MacKinnon, training manager at Oban Volunteer Centre was impressed with the large turnout of young and old members of the community at the meeting, and at the selection of proposals.

She added: 'There are other things going on in the town that would link into the feasability study that is going to be done on the building, such as the projects taking place at Oban youth and community centre.

'There is still a lot of investigating to be done but the volunteer centre would like to see it as an information access point – a one stop shop – for the public.'

> 'The meeting was very positive and lots of good ideas were put forward'

Sandy Dunlop, who is a member of the steering group put in place to drive the project forward, is also keen for locals to be realistic and not to view the building with too much nostalgia.

'We have to be practical. The building needs a lot of money spent on it and it is very expensive to maintain. A lot of thought has to go into a use for the building and this will take time.

'However, the meeting was very positive and lots of good ideas were put forward, but we will have to be practical about the final outcome.'

Oban North and Lorn Councillor Neil MacKay said: 'Obviously it would be a wonderful asset for the town but as Mr Logan so eloquently put it; it's all down to the figures involved.'

His colleague Roddy McCuish, who was in attendance along with councillors Donald MacDonald and Mary Jean Devon, added: 'We are here to listen as meetings like this are invaluable because you get a feeling for what people want.'

Oban businessman Roy Clunie, who was involved in the community-led Atlantis Leisure, said: 'We have to find out what the community needs because the Rockfield building is secondary to this. Don't put the cart before the horse.'

Neil Matheson, who is the chairman of Atlantis, agreed: 'Most of us are here to save Rockfield. But how will all these suggestions actually work?

'I wouldn't like the town to lose it because it's in a strategic location. But there is no point in putting something up which is not used.'

Community councillor Neil MacIntyre said: 'I don't want to be a doom merchant but let's not be romantic.

'We have to realise who we are fighting. It will come before all the councillors in Argyll and Bute and the council will vote and take as much money as possible for the site.'

Anybody who was not at the meeting but would like to be involved in a steering group to examine the proposals can email Lorna Elliot tangava@tiscali.co.uk

'Swedish' houses come down as Oban begins to rebuild

Six new houses go on the site as part of 150 throughout Argyll

FOUR Swedish-style timber houses built in Oban in 1952 are being demolished to make for new homes.

The houses in Croft Avenue were part of Argyll and Bute Council's stock transfer to Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) in November 2006.

ACHA now plan to build six new houses on the site, commencing in October once the houses are demolished by McFadyen Contractors, Campbeltown, and planning permission is granted.

The work signals a small step in the association's objective to build 150 new homes across Argyll between April 2008 and March 2009.

The affected tenants have all been rehoused to allow demolition to take place over the next four weeks.

Alastair MacGregor, ACHA chief executive, said: 'The association is delighted to be able to start its new build work in the Oban area on the Croft Avenue site.

'This will enable the association to start making a contribution towards tackling the substantial housing need in the area.'

McFadyen Contractors have assured ACHA that the remaining tenants in Croft Avenue will not be obstructed by the work.

Pictured with workmen from MacFadyen Contractors are ACHA representatives, from left: regeneration manager Matthew MacAuley, area committee vice chair Mary MacLeod, chief executive Alastair MacGregor and area manager Iona MacPhail. t04acha01

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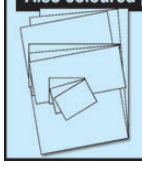
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The Oban Times
& West Highland Times

It is time to be bold

OBAN is crying out for a new injection of life. Who says so? The people who made it standing room only at the packed public meeting last Friday to discuss proposals to establish a pontoon and breakwater development in the bay.

Yes, this has been an idea that has been mooted yet never acted upon for decades, but this time in can be different. The energy and drive appears to be there to see it through. The members of the community company behind the plans — Oban Bay Marine — were stunned at the level of turnout at the Argyllshire Gathering Halls and must be greatly heartened by the positive response they received. Good on them for showing the initiative in the first place; it is now beholden on everyone else to support their plans at every opportunity. Oban badly needs a bold idea like this to become a reality.

Glasgow Letter

Celtic Connections opening

THE SELL-OUT opening concert of Celtic Connections 2008 certainly had the 'wow factor'.

The formula was based on the successful late night sessions at the club when 'jam' sessions materialise and Donald Shaw and John McCusker put together a programme that got the festival off to the best possible start. Indeed, after the first couple of sets of tunes, from a 13-strong band, one wondered if such a high standard could be maintained.

It certainly was and our own traditional musicians were well to the fore. On stage we had Julie Fowlis, Donald Shaw, Aidan O'Rourke, Lauren MacColl and Iain MacDonald contributing to the proceedings, ably accompanied by an array of traditional music stars with individuals being allowed to showcase their solo talents. And what talent there was on show. Picking highlights would be an individual exercise especially when you consider that the singers on show included Julie Fowlis, Kate Rusby, Karen Casey, Karine Polwart, Mike Scott from the *Waterboys* and Chris Tile making his first Celtic Connections visit and also demonstrating his virtuosity on the mandolin. Add in Sharon Shannon and her band, Mike McGoldrick and an amazing bodhran solo by John Joe Kelly and you will appreciate the high quality of this concert.

An important feature of this evening, and this was ably assisted by John McCusker who was in charge of proceedings, was that it was apparent from the outset that the artistes were also having an evening of great fun with the music being the most important thing on show. Their levels of skill, their modesty and their appreciation of their fellow musicians was, for me, a memory of this excellent concert.

I was also privileged to be in attendance in the City Halls at the world premiere of Ronald Stevenson's symphony, Praise of Ben Dorain.

Described by Yehudi Menuhin as 'one of the most original minds in the world of the composition of music' Stevenson, now in his 80th year, was able to be present at what he described as his 'work in progress for many years'. For the packed hall it was well worth the wait as the music, composed to Duncan Ban MacIntyre's poem Moladh Beinn Dobhrain, and in the capable hands of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and a chorus assembled by Scottish Opera, the Chapel Choir of the University of Glasgow and the Edinburgh Singers, had the audience enthralled.

Prior to this performance they had been treated to a Gaelic celebration of Duncan Ban MacIntyre featuring Kenna Campbell, James Graham, Gillebride MacMillan, Norrie MacIver and accompanist James Ross. Mary Ann Kennedy, introducing the proceedings which were being broadcast live on radio, sang and accompanied on clarsach and piano. Each artiste, individually and as a group, gave top class performances and were wonderful ambassadors for the huge amount of talent currently participating in the Gaelic music scene. Both of the above concerts had me travelling home experiencing a 'feel good factor' and I had hoped I would feel the same after the Lewis and Harris concert.

This was a sell-out event but, and I may very well be in the minority, it did not reach the expected heights. The absence of Donnie Murdo MacLeod because of unavoidable circumstances was regrettable and may have led to much reorganisation of the programme but was it necessary to have several tall music stands on the stage with artistes like seated accordionist Iain Angus MacLeod and Jenna Cumming hidden behind them especially when neither of them needed to refer to the music?

For me, a minor blip in three weeks of musical expectation but there's still time to savour the rest of Celtic Connections.

Ceol's Craic

ON SATURDAY January 26 Mary Smith from Lewis will be joined in the Centre for the Contemporary Arts by Irish Gaelic singer John Spillane at the culmination of a Scottish/Irish weekend of music.

During the day, in the Gaelic School on Berkeley Street, there will be the chance to learn the language of each country and on Friday night there will be an informal social night in Sharkey's Bar in Glasgow. Special guests on Saturday will be Maeve MacKinnon, Barra, and Calum Alex MacMillan and Ceol's Craic is delighted to announce the appearance of its own house band. It looks as if it is intent on holding on to its title of Club of the Year!

Clydebank and District

THE RECENT ceilidh at Clydebank featured singers Norman MacKinnon, John Boa, Sineag MacIntyre and George Ferguson.

Murdo John MacLeod was the accordionist and Colin Lawrie was on the pipes in what was an excellent evening's entertainment chaired by Alasdair MacCush. During the evening members Andy and Mary Michie who recently celebrated their Golden Wedding were congratulated.

Diary dates

Friday January 25: Glasgow Uist and Barra Association ceilidh dance, Community Centre, Whitefield Road, 9pm. Helensburgh and District Highlander's Association, Burn's Night ceilidh dance with Donnie & Diane's Band. **Saturday January 26**: Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association, Marag Supper, Partick Burgh Lesser Hall, 7.45pm. Motherwell and District Highlander's Association, ceilidh/dance, Dalziel St Andrews Church Hall, 7.30pm. Glasgow Tiree Association, Burn's Night, Ralston Community Halls. Milngavie ceilidh dance, Milngavie Town Hall. CLASP Competition, National Piping Centre, 10am. An Lochran - see above.

Pub scene

IN THE Park Bar on Friday, Duncan Hutchison's Band will play with Fergie MacDonald on Saturday and Shindig on Sunday while in the Islay Inn it will be the Believers on Saturday, Benidorm Rovers on Sunday with Friday still to be confirmed.

Neil Murray. Tel: 0141 954 8105. Email: neilfmurray@yahoo.co.uk.

Visit to The Rest and Be Thankful

Gloria Young of Studio Cottage, Benderloch, sent us this week's flashback photograph which shows young boys, including Derek Young, on a visit to The Rest and Be Thankful in days gone by. We would like 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. Each month a photo will win £10.

Letters to the editor

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Read the Highway Code

Sir,

It is disappointing S J Campbell of Dunstaffnage considers cyclists who use our roads as ignorant and foolish, *The Oban Times*, letters, January 17.

I suggest he/she reads paragraph 64 of the Highway Code, which states: 'You must not cycle on a pavement', Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, section 129.

In the absence of a specific cycle lane, it is illegal to cycle on the footpath. Mr Campbell and his fellow motorists must therefore expect to meet me and other responsible cyclists for the foreseeable future.

I would therefore urge him - and all vehicle drivers - to respect paragraph 213 of the Highway Code: 'Motorcyclists and cyclists may suddenly need to avoid uneven road surfaces and obstacles such as drain covers or oily, wet or icy patches on the road. Give them plenty of room and pay particular attention to any sudden change of direction they may have to make'.

Remember, hit a cyclist and you may appear in court. I will appear in the cemetery!

Jonathan M Allen, North Connel, Oban.

Put this driver to the test

Sir,

As a motorist and cyclist I feel obliged to respond to the anti-cycling letter in *The Oban Times* last week.

The assertion that a cyclist was to blame for a near-collision when a clearly impatient lorry driver chose to overtake on a bend, shows a worrying lack of respect to fellow road users on the part of S J Campbell and demonstrates the sense of contempt shown to vulnerable road users by some motorists such as the lorry driver.

There are also a number of interesting theories in the letter which point to a lack of awareness of the Highway Code.

Perhaps S J Campbell has forgotten rule 64 which states that 'you must not cycle on a pavement' and rule 147 about being 'careful of and considerate towards all types of road users'.

It would be interesting to find out if this driver could pass a theory test.

Perhaps of more immediate concern is the lack of an alternative route for those cycling through necessity, particularly for those travelling from Oban and Connel to work at Dunstaffnage.

Rather than ostracising cyclists, would it not be more constructive to suggest a widening of the pavement between Oban and Dunbeg to incorporate a cycle track and to see an extension of this to Connel.

It would be interesting to cost such a venture in comparison to, say, the sum spent so far at Oban Airport. Whilst I have nothing against improvements to infrastructure and transport links, one wonders if the principle of 'best value' still applies in Argyll.

John McLuckie, North Connel.

Ignorant and foolish

Sir,

S J Campbell, 'Roads for cars not bikes, *The Oban Times*, January 17, says cyclists are 'ignorant and foolish' if they dare to use the thoroughfare when threatened with a tragic end by motorists.

The ignorance and foolishness are in the author of that letter.

Local councils have no power to forbid people to cycle on roads, or to make them ride on pavements. Pedestrians and cyclists have an absolute legal right to use the public highway, unlike drivers of motor vehicles, who may only use it under conditional licence. Pedestrians have the exclusive right to use a pavement where it exists, whereas cyclists are legally forbidden to do so, since all wheeled vehicles - with four wheels or two, with or without an engine - must use the traffic lanes. 'Traffic' does not mean 'cars'; the pavement is not 'available for bicycles'.

Drivers of motor vehicles, dangerous machines, have a grave obligation to respect all legitimate road-users, especially the vulnerable. All reasonable drivers understand this and on our local roads there is normally care and courtesy on both sides.

If some driver, as described in the letter, overtakes a bicycle 'at high speed round a bend on a narrow road amidst heavy traffic in rain', the fault is not in the cyclist.

S J Campbell only shows how much we need to make some drivers aware of their duty to cyclists and to counter the aggressive motorist who just wants to drive them off the road.

If any change in the law was needed - to encourage the use of cycles, for everyone's benefit - it would be to provide that any motorist who betrays the attitude expressed by S J Campbell should be allowed to drive a car on the highway only if preceded by a man on foot carrying a red flag as warning.

Ian White, Bowmore, Isle of Islay.

Simple way to prevent tragedy

Sir,

A tragedy could be prevented by a simple act writes S J Campbell.

How true. Lifting your foot off the accelerator pedal and applying it to the brake pedal at the appropriate time is a simple but effective act.

To try to link a dangerous driving incident to cyclists on the road is ludicrous. Anyone who drives regularly on the A85, particularly between Oban and Connel, is only too well aware that the 'ignorant and foolish' referred to by your correspondent are on four wheels and not two.

I have several times been overtaken at high speed on the blind corners between Dunbeg and Saulmore. The drivers of the overtaking vehicles could not possibly see far enough ahead to be sure of overtaking safely and there was not a bicycle in sight.

To return to the anti cyclist theme, it is my understanding that it is illegal to cycle on the footpath and I have yet to see a footpath between Dunbeg and Connel or further afield. Are cyclists to be banned from all roads with no footpath? It is sadly true that on the roads today there is an attitude of might is right and any lesser beings should just clear off and not use the roads.

As a regular driver I find no problem in slowing down to wait for a suitable opportunity to pass any slow vehicle ahead.

Bruce Blackadder, Tobermory, Isle of Mull.

Lorry driver to blame

Sir,

As someone who regularly cycles the A85 into Oban, I feel I must respond to S J Campbell's letter entitled 'Roads for cars not bikes'.

S J Campbell correctly observes that the road is narrow and winding. I have cycled that road for more than 15 years from Connel into Oban, and am fully aware of the problems this presents.

There is a pavement or 'footpath' available from Dunbeg onwards. However, a 'foot' path is what it is, and should S J Campbell refer to the Highway Code, he would discover that it is illegal for a cyclist to ride along footpaths or pavements at any time. Indeed, the Highway Code details the rights and responsibilities of all road users, and I would recommend this piece of literature to S J Campbell.

As to the fact that the writer came within feet of a collision because of a lorry overtaking a cyclist 'on a bend, in heavy traffic, in the rain at a high rate of speed', I suggest this could be the result of a dangerous manoeuvre on behalf of the lorry driver, rather than the fault of the cyclist.

All this comes at a time when family and friends of champion cyclist Jason MacIntyre mourn his untimely and tragic death following an accident on Scotland's roads.

The A85 is not a nice road to ride. At times, I have taken to the pavement, when I felt that the traffic was particularly heavy.

However, when I have done so, I have come across stones, glass, curbs and, yes, even pedestrians. Maybe they should be banned from walking on the pavement to allow us cyclists to be there?

We need a sensible discussion, away from knee-jerk reactions such as that of S J Campbell's, where a coherent policy of inclusive road planning takes into account footpaths for pedestrians, cycle paths for cyclists and roads for motor vehicles.

Then maybe Argyll can enter the 21st century with pride.

Chris Hoon, North Connel.

❒ Editor's note. Thanks to everyone who wrote in on this subject. More responses to S J Campbell's letter will appear in next week's *Oban Times*.

Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

IN LAST week's *Oban Times* story about Loggerhead turtles on Islay, it was wrongly stated that any sightings should be reported to the Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals when it should have read the 'Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals'.

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.

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A View From The Tower

By McCAIG

Pontoons herald new era for Oban

ORGANISING a public meeting in Oban is difficult at any time.

Just ask those of us who tried to get people to turn out for hustings meetings at election time.

In recent years, only those designed to protect all the services at our local hospital have attracted substantial numbers.

But that changed last week at the public consultation on Oban Bay Marine's proposals to have a 80-berth pontoon development in the area between the North and Railway piers. It was standing room only in the Argyllshire Gathering Hall, even before latecomers arrived.

Local MSP Jim Mather set the scene and acted as an additional chairman when required. Seeing a long top table normally causes inward groans but these were not necessary as those who spoke from it were outstandingly good.

Apart from Jim Mather, Brian Swinbanks of Tobermory Harbour Association inspired most of the audience with detail of what had been achieved there and what could be achieved in the future.

Mike Robertson, Oban Bay Marine company secretary, was excellent on the specifics of the current situation and what could and should be required in the future, including the need to find a new berth for Oban Lifeboat if harbour improvements envisaged by the local authority go ahead.

As befits a chairman who believes passionately in the strength and viability of the pontoon proposal John MacGregor, managing director of MacGregor Hotels, spelt out how the proposal was essential to the future development of Oban as a way of bringing in much-needed revenue not only for Oban but the surrounding area as well. It was a masterly speech which drew round after round of applause and, subsequently, praise from local MP Alan Reid and Sir Jamie McGrigor, Tory List MSP for the Highlands and Islands.

The packed audience was asked to list their aspirations by Jim Mather. Unfortunately at least one or two who spoke early did not appear to know what the word 'aspirations' meant and indulged in the usual Scottish cringe with: 'it won't work' and 'it's not what we - a sectional interest - want for ourselves'. Fortunately, they were in a small minority. There were a great many positive contributions from very knowledgeable people and overwhelming support for the plans of Oban Bay Marine.

When I spoke to Mr MacGregor he was naturally delighted and assures everyone that by April 2009 there will be a substantial pontoon development in Oban Bay for a large number of 'those who go down to the sea in ships', yachts, pleasure and fishing boats.

'A Man's a Man for all That'

ALL ROUND the world tomorrow night, men - and now fortunately a good number of ladies - will sit down to commemorate the 249th birthday of our National Bard Robert Burns.

Next year - the 250th anniversary - is already being planned. It will be a splendid affair, as it should be. Remember, it is also the 'Year of Home-coming' when the Scottish Government and VisitScotland hope that descendants of Scots who emigrated centuries ago will come to see how the 'old country' is doing.

But, back to Rabbie. He's described as womaniser, alcoholic, excise man, rustic bumpkin and potential slave trader yet no poet, especially from a relatively small nation, enjoys the status that he has, be it from Ayr to Alaska, Mintlaw to Moscow or Thurso to Tasmania.

What is it that gives him this positive universal appeal? All around January 25 thousands of those proposing the toast to his Immortal Memory will attempt with varying degrees of eloquence to define that magic quality which gives his poetry world-wide appeal, even to the 'hard man' who scoffs at poetry in general but exempts Burns as someone who gets through to his otherwise steely soul.

If you are fortunate enough to be at a Burns supper where 'Tam O' Shanter' is being recited, note how many of the guests are murmuring quietly the words along with the orator. As long as Burns' verse lives, poetry as a universal language will never die.

'The Kilt is my Delight'

I DOUBT that at the time Robert Burns lived there would be few who would dare to wear a kilt as we think we know it.

After all, it was proscribed after the 1745 Rebellion and there were painful penalties for those who dared to flaunt a hairy knee below what was not tartan but a rough material in which the wearer rolled himself and tied the ensuing 'skirt' with a belt, or if poverty was rife, with coarse rope.

The modern tartan kilt comes with rising prosperity, a pride in being a Scot, or having at least a Scottish granny if you are American, and wearing it whenever possible.

But the whole outfit is expensive, somewhere in the region of £600 minimum.

No longer: a supermarket chain is offering the full outfit, minus jacket, for just £54. That will also allow enough to afford a couple of drams and haggis, neeps and tatties.

By going 'commando,' there will still be change from £60!

McCaig

Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 200 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.

The call of the sea remains strong

Scotland already punches above its weight in the merchant navy as it produces more than half of the UK's officer intake but there is a quest to attract even more

Skye merchant seaman Calum Hunter off Vernadsky Research Station, Galindez Island, Antarctic Peninsula.

Report by HUGH ROSS

LEAVING Barra to sail to South America is a marathon voyage in anybody's language.

But when you are a raw '17 year old' making your first journey to another continent as the Second World War still rages on; it is challenging to say the least.

That was Captain Roddy MacKinnon's introduction to the merchant navy as a teenager in 1945 which came early because the bold boy from Barra was actually 16.

'I joined in May and it was the last six months of the war. I sailed on a tanker and at the time the royal navy had broken the back of the German Wolf Back U-boats. You weren't supposed to sail until you were 17 but nobody ever found out I was actually 16.

'When I left the island of Barra I had never seen a train until the age of 14. And going to sea, it really was a world for discovery; awe inspiring and interesting – I wasn't blasé about anything.'

Captain MacKinnon had a colourful life on the waves sailing all over the world and his passport is probably littered with more stamps than Michael Palin as he visited 87 countries before his retirement in 1983.

The UK is very much an island country with 95 per cent of trade travelling by sea.

Scotland already punches above its weight in the merchant navy as it produces more than half of the UK's officer intake but there is now a quest to attract even more.

A campaign to triple the number of officer recruits in Scotland has started in earnest as Scottish Enterprise and the Glasgow College of Nautical Studies bids to supply the fleet with fresh blood.

The average age of a UK officer has risen by around 10 years in the past 25 years and the number of cadets in training is not enough to meet demand.

Barra-born Capain Roddy MacKinnon who had a 38-year-long merchant navy career. t03rod01

'I sailed with someone from practically every island on the west coast' - Capt. MacKinnon

The campaign will target the Highlands, Argyll and Western Isles which have traditionally been rich recruiting grounds for merchant seafarers.

Captain MacKinnon went to sea in the trail of his father and two brothers.

'So many people from the islands and the west coast have joined up through the years. I sailed with someone from practically every island on the west coast; Mull, Islay, Jura and so on.

'I think the merchant navy is attractive because people are living on the fringes of the Atlantic coast here and are so close to the sea. If you are born and brought up with the sea, maybe fishing or whatever, you are perhaps more likely to join.

'I met a different breed of people at sea,' he said. 'You need to get on together because every ship is like a small community. It is a very fine life for young unmarried men and it's a very good career because shipping goods to this country is essential.'

Calum Hunter from Kilmuir, Skye, joined the merchant navy when he was 17 and is now a second officer/navigator for the British Antarctic Survey which carries out most of the UK's scientific research on and around the Antarctic continent.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* from the Falklands, Calum, now aged 32, followed in the footsteps of two generations of his family when he went to sea.

'I joined the merchant navy because I wanted to see as much of the world as possible. My father had been at sea as was his father, so that certainly played a part and it is very often a factor with other people you meet at sea,' he said.

'I believe there is an element of being surrounded by, and being close to the sea when you're growing up. I wasn't fully aware of just how many seamen came from the Highlands and islands when I first joined. There is less employment opportunities back home compared to other places in the UK so younger people tend to look to careers way from home.

'On our current crew of 30 people; eight are Scottish and five are from the Highlands and islands which is a big percentage!'

Captain MacKinnon's trips at sea could be up to two years long and congested cities could prove to be suffocating for the Barrach who was more used to open spaces.

'Sometimes you missed space and ambience because the cities you visited were very crowded. But I was always interested in how the indigenous people lived and would always speak to them. The most awesome sight for me was Rio de Janeiro at night. It is a beautiful harbour as it is a blaze of light and there is the statue of Christ and the Sugar Loaf mountain.'

Millions of television viewers will have watched footage of the majestic blue whale in the David Attenborough series Planet Earth.

But Calum was lucky enough to see the world's biggest mammal up close which is something he says he will never forget.

The endangered species can be more than 30 metres long, live for more than 100 years and its tongue weighs more than two-tonnes – heavier than an elephant.

'I was on the ship's bridge off the Greenland coast in 2004 and one of the crew saw it by the side. It was massive – in fact it was bigger than the ship. There are people who have spent their whole lives at sea who have never seen one, so I was very lucky.'

But Captain MacKinnon feels some of the mystery and perhaps excitement of discovering the world by sea might be somewhat diluted for youngsters today.

He said: 'There is now the medium of television and computers and schools have trips to eastern Europe, France and Germany and the like, so travelling won't be so much of a surprise. 90 per cent of the children in Barra will go onto to university and then those that go to sea will be well qualified.'

Calum believes that the merchant navy as a career is 'probably not the job it once was.'

'There is lots more paperwork for officers, limited crew numbers and time in ports. Four months away from home can be tough and it's not for everyone. I miss my friends and family but with modern-day communications this is not the problem it once was. But the ship is quite busy with a full complement of scientists and base personnel and can be quite social.

'As a navigator I have a real sense of satisfaction when the ship makes it to the destination safely.'

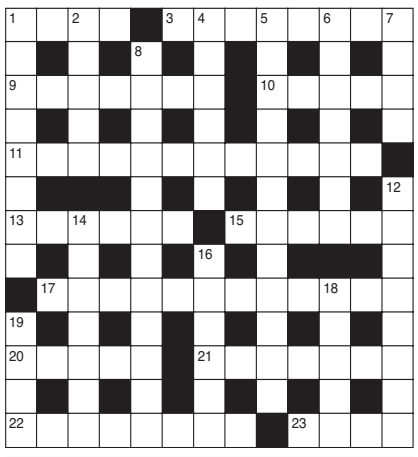
Captain MacKinnon admits to feeling uneasy when he left the sea behind to work offshore for an oil company.

'There is nobody vying for your job at sea but offshore I felt I was always looking over my shoulder,' he recalls. 'I liked the life. I married in 1963 and my wife was then allowed to come to sea with me for holidays. But the language barrier could be difficult among crews, particularly in emergencies and the UK training is better.'

Known as the 'fourth arm' for its contribution to the defence of the UK, the merchant navy, bolstered by Scots from the west coast, is entering a critical period in its history as it stands on the cusp of a new decade.

From the hills of Kilmuir on the Isle of Skye to the jagged peaks of ice and rock of Galindez Island, Antartica, the merchant navy has carried Calum Hunter across the world

The Oban Times GENERAL KNOWLEDGE DOUBLE CROSSWORD No. 524



ACROSS

1. Ancient kingdom east of the Dead Sea in what is now the S.W. part of Jordan (4)
3. Mother of Alexander the Great (8)
9. Louis, Paris-born automobile manufacturer who died in 1944 (7)
10. Member of a cattle-rearing people of southern Africa (5)
11. 1993 Russell Mulcahy film starring Kim Basinger and Val Kilmer (3,4,5)
13. See 4 Down.
15. The basic SI unit of electric current (6)
17. 1981 fantasy film featuring Sir Ralph Richardson as a sorcerer (12)
20. Julian, London-born guitarist and lutenist (5)
21. 'Honest old Councellor' loyal to Prospero in Shakespeare's The Tempest (7)
22. 'Death of a —', play by Arthur Miller (8)
23. The main axis of a plant which bears the leaves and flowers (4)

QUICK CLUES ACROSS

1. Neat (4)
3. Jam (8)
9. Speedy (7)
10. Banal (5)
11. Teacher (12)
13. Lottery (6)
15. Hesitate (6)
17. Impolite (12)
20. Boredom (5)
21. Wordy (7)
22. Commonplace (8)
23. Pluck (4)

DOWN

1. Plain in Attica which was the site of victory by the Athenians and Plataeans over the Persians in 490 B.C. (8)
2. See 4.
4, 13 Across, and 2. Comic strip creation of Harold Gray (6,6,5)
5. World heavyweight boxing champion 1930-32 (3,9)
6. One of two or more atoms with the same atomic number that contain different numbers of neutrons (7)
7. Another name for the cormorant (4)
8. One-act play by Joe Orton produced in 1970 (7,5)
12. Sir Max, English author of Zuleika Dobson (8)
14. Charles Stewart, 19c Irish politician forced into retirement by a divorce scandal (7)
16. Elgar's Variations on an Original Theme, for Orchestra are usually called the '— Variations' (6)
18. Single-celled fungus which is able to ferment sugars (5)
19. Any of various wading birds of the family Threskiornithidae (4)

QUICK CLUES DOWN

1. Store-house (8)
2. Profundity (5)
4. Recommence (6)
5. Adequate (12)
6. Apparel (7)
7. Pitcher (4)
8. Memory (12)
12. Outlook (8)
14. Simulated (7)
16. Tremble (6)
18. Smell (5)
19. Nil (4)

SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE - Across: 6 Citadel; 7 Kerry; 9 Paine; 10 Citrine; 12 Princess Ida; 14 Mustardseed; 18 Barn owl; 19 Apple; 21 James; 22 Marryat.

Down: 1 Silas; 2 Marner; 3 Lev; 4 Sèvres; 5 Granada; 8 Finesse; 11 Andrews; 13 Curacao; 15 Tandem; 16 Empire; 17 Iliad; 20 Cal.

QUICK - Across: 6 Hateful; 7 Bound; 9 Storm; 10 Artisan; 12 Crestfallen; 14 Everlasting; 18 Profile; 19 Marry; 21 Agent; 22 Collect.

Down: 1 Waste; 2 Terror; 3 Cut; 4 Social; 5 Engaged; 8 Profits; 11 Assault; 13 Average; 15 Refine; 16 Nearly; 17 Price; 20 Row.

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20 Years Ago — Those Were The Days — The Oban Times

Thursday, January 21, 1988

Guide in bad taste

THERE was a bad feeling in the Oban area this week after the publication of a new guide entitled 'Where to Eat Well in Scotland'.

For the guide has this to say: 'Oban may offer one of the most famous seascapes in Scotland, but as a place for food it is alomst a write-off.'

Author Conrad Wilson could only find one place to mention under the Oban heading - Knipoch Hotel, six miles south of the town.

He states, 'Knipoch hotel, though a few miles out of the town, is a real oasis. prices, admittedly, reflect this fact.'

Premises which have been highly commended in many other prestigious food guides are ommitted from the book - including such noted restaurants as Airds Hotel at Port Appin, and the Isle of Eriska Hotel.

Mr Iain Nicholson, chairman of the Oban, Mull and Lorn Tourist Board, saidthat he had not seen a copy of the guide.

He commented: ' Many hotels and restaurants in our tourist board area provide excellent service and excellent food. In the Consumer Association's Good Food Guide 1988 and in the Egon Ronay guide there are at least seven good places to eat listed in our area. - I need not say more.'

Lochaber councillor resigns

FORT William councillor Abby Kitson has resigned in a storm of protest from his position as vice chairman of Lochaber's Environmental health Committee.

Councillor Kitson handed in his resignation in protest about what he claimed was a lack of action over important environmental health matters.

In particular he is angry about what he claims is a complete lack of action over sewage problems facing householders in upper Achintore.

He told his shocked fellow councillors of his decision at a committee meeting and said,: I wasn't at all happy about the way in which the sewage problem was been handled in Upper Achintore. I felt that I should come out of the environmental health team. I am just a wee bit disillusioned about a number of things in the department. I feel that we have got three environmental health officers and we don't seem to be getting over the problems of caravan sites, sewage at Achintore - that is just one of the problems.'

Council house sales

Approximately 900 houses, roughly 10 per cent of the local authority's housing stock, have now been sold to council tenants in Argyll and Bute, it has been confirmed.

Over the past three years sales of coulcil houses in the district have averaged 120 to 130 per annum. And with applications to buy continuing to come in steadily, the figure is expected to exceed 1,000 by the end of the year.

Taking the discounts available to council tenants into consideration, the average selling price per house has been in the region has been £11,000.

During th fiscal year's 1986 and 1987, sales of local authority houses netted the council in excess of £1.3 million.

As a proportion of the council's capital allocation, this revenue is then used to improve existing housing stock and to build new council houses.

Lismore

Your correspondent is Pauline Dowling: 01631 760293

New Year Dance

EVERYONE agreed that the New Year's dance was another great success for the hall committee.

Visitors, returning families and relations all had a great time.

The band was 'Off The Rails' with guitar and accordion and locals Davy Garrett, Murray Willis and Colin Black played two sets, Davy on small pipes, Murray on the accordion and Colin on acoustic guitar.

Draught horses rescued

IT IS some decades since the last working horses died on Lismore.

But now Nicky and Simon Lewis have rescued two small Comtois draught horses from France who were on their way to the butcher in Italy which, Nicky said, seemed a tragedy at only seven months.

So, rashly or otherwise, they rescued six and had them brought over by Gordon the horse transporter. Four now have homes in Aberdeen and two females arrived on Lismore on the Oban ferry on January 8. They are very pretty - chestnut with flaxen manes - and in three years they will start work on the land again.

In France they are used extensively for ploughing, logging and pulling carts as they are hard working and powerful but also calm and sociable. They have very short back legs which makes them great for the rugged Lismore terrain which is not unlike the mountainous area they come from in Franche Comte.

Lismore's two new residents who were brought to the island by Nicky and Simon Lewis.

Amy Ramdsen

THE RECENT death of Amy Ramsden brought great sadness to the island.

Amy and her husband David moved to Lismore from Glasgow 12 years ago and found peace and a caring community.

Earlier their mutual love of sailing had meant they had sailed round Lismore many times but it was only when they decided to move that they came ashore, saw Argyll Cottage and Amy's mind was made up.

Unfortunately, latterly, illness had put a stop to what had been a very active life in which she ran two Glasgow marathons, sailed in sail training ships and walked the West Highland Way.

The community extends its deepest sympathy to David and the family.

Pictured at the Fairtrade launch are, from left: Neil Harvey, manager of St Columba Hotel and steering group member; Gillian Cummins, steering group member; Moira Copeland, Oban Fairtrade Steering Group; and Alison Holmes, steering group member.

Iona first Hebridean island to get Fairtrade status

THE ISLE of Iona has become the first Hebridean island to gain Fairtrade status.

Fairtrade supports Third World farmers by ensuring they receive a fair price for their produce.

Communities that gain this status have shown that Fairtrade products will be sold in their shops, is used by local workplaces and is backed by a steering group, which will ensure continued commitment to the Fairtrade movement.

In November 2006 Oban was declared a Fairtrade town and an official celebration on January 12 this year marked the achievement of Iona.

Gillian Cummins of Iona Fairtrade Steering Group said: 'Not only did we reach the targets required, in some cases we exceeded them.

'The Fairtrade Foundation was also impressed with the level of involvement and commitment from different organisations and individuals on the island.

'There were celebrations all round at the official launch when residents of Iona and supporters from Mull and Oban gathered in the St Columba Hotel, Iona, for a party where we enjoyed snacks, wine, juice and cake - all Fairtrade of course.'

Jura

Community council

AMONG the items discussed at a recent meeting of Jura Community Council were:

Kilearnadil Cemetery: Councillor Currie reported that it is unlikely Argyll and Bute Council money for the restoration of gravestones could be used for the Campbell Mausoleum.

Confirmation of how often the grass is to be cut is being sought.

Eilean Dhiura: A retirement party for James Jamieson was to be held early this year to thank him for years of service on the Jura ferry.

A meeting is to be arranged for the community council to discuss ongoing issues with ASP Ship Management and Argyll and Bute Council. The community council is to write to Argyll and Bute Council requesting further thought being given to a replacement for the *Eilean Dhiura*.

Roads: There are many items still outstanding and the community council is awaiting confirmation of when repair materials will become available.

Jura National Scenic Area Landscape Capacity Assessment: Scottish Natural Heritage and Argyll and Bute Council held public meetings recently. The community council is concerned about some of the content and will write to Argyll and Bute Council pointing out that it does not take account of land issues and may even restrict development

Public payphone, Feolin: This phone had now been converted to card only. The community council agreed with the complaint from a member of the public that the importance of the ferry slip area is such that this public phone should not be restricted and will write again to BT and to their MP and MSP about the situation.

Water capacity: Clarification is to be sought from Scottish Water regarding the capacity for future building in Craighouse.

Secretary: Sharon Hoverty has resigned from her post as community council secretary. The community council is to thank her for all her work. Donald Ewen Darroch is to act as secretary for two months until a replacement is appointed.

Jura Care Centre

JURA Care Centre, which opened last July, is looking forward to 2008.

Janet McArthur made history when she became the first tenant to move into Croit a' Chala and pupils from Small Isles School visited the centre to mark the occasion. They brought artwork, completed after a trip to Jura House Gardens, to show members of the lunch club and Nicky Mulholland presented Janet with flowers on behalf of pupils.

The children also entertained everyone by singing.

The pupils will continue their gardening interest by linking in with plans for landscaping around the care centre grounds, together with proposals for landscaping parts of Craighouse village.

Four of the five flats are now occupied. The respite flat has been used and has received great feedback.

A large part of Croit a' Chala's remit is to encourage social activity. To this end, outreach worker Sharon Hoverty is able to provide transport and arrange social events, as well as arranging the lunch club, assisted by Linda Mulholland.

It is hoped the centre will also be used by local groups or individuals for meetings and social occasions.

A successful musical afternoon was held during the music festival, with the acoustics in the winter garden proving first class.

The Jura Care Centre Group continues to raise funds for further improvements and ongoing costs.

Anyone wishing to add their name to the Jura Care Centre waiting list should contact West Highland Housing Association at Crannog Lane, Oban, telephone 01631 566451.

Further information about the centre can be obtained on 01496 820386.

Around the Rurals

Killin

MEMBERS of the Killin Scottish Women's Rural Institute (SWRI) celebrated the branch's 83rd birthday in January with a dinner in the Bridge of Lochay Hotel.

There was a good turnout of 30 ladies, who had a wonderful meal at the Lochay. Entertainment was provided by the hotel and it was a very enjoyable evening. A birthday cake was cut by Babs Gordon.

Competition winners: Limerick, 1 Linn Ferguson; 2 Margaret MacGregor; 3 Margaret Galloway. Edible necklace: 1 Jenny Huntley; 2 Margaret Ogilvie; 3 Margaret Galloway.

Appin

APPIN SWRI Drama Group held a Pudding Night and Ceilidh in Appin Hall on Saturday January 12.

The good crowd was welcomed by president Margaret Ross who invited everyone to tuck into a wonderful selection of delicious hot and cold puddings. There was also a selection of cheese and biscuits and tea and coffee.

Chairman for the evening was Ian Weir, who was in excellent form as he introduced the talented and varied programme.

Young Duncan Buchanan got the evening off to a lively start with his selection on the bagpipes and the singing of Audrey Paterson, David Paterson and Kirsteen Buchanan was greatly enjoyed. Pat Wyeth-Webb entertained with her updated A A Milne.

The other instrumentalists were Kirsteen Buchanan on keyboard, Rowan Paterson, clarsach, and Ann Gibson, piano, who all delighted the audience with their various selections.

At the end of the evening the artistes, pudding makers and everyone who had helped in other ways to ensure the evening was such a success were warmly thanked.

The event raised more than £275 for the drama group.

Lochawe

THE DECEMBER meeting of Lochawe Institute was held on Wednesday December 12 2007 in Lochawe Village Hall.

Speaker for the evening was Deirdre Henderson of Touchwood, Oban, who gave an informative talk on how and where she sources the beautiful furniture and artefacts on sale in her shop. The wood comes from forests in Java, Sumatra, India and Vietnam, where harvested trees are replaced by new young trees thereby ensuring the forests will provide lovely woods such as acacia, mahogany and teak for future generations. There were other items made by craftsmen, beautifully carved to a high standard, and lovely wall hangings made from colourful scraps of material. Nothing is wasted.

Lochawe Institute member Jean Wylie displayed a variety of Fair Trade items available in Oban. Producers of these items are paid fair prices for their produce. Jerry Orr, president, thanked both ladies for an interesting talk and display of goods.

Competition: A decorated Christmas bag, judged by Mrs Henderson: S McLaughlan, Gold; P McLeod, Silver; M Mackenzie, Red; J Orr, Blue.

An excellent tea was provided by members.

The next meeting, on Wednesday January 30 in Lochawe Village Hall, will be a Burns social evening with guests from Glenorchy SWRI.

Kyle of Lochalsh

Your correspondent is Charlie MacRae: 01599 544359

Plockton weather

DURING December 2007, there was 7½ inches of rain at Plockton compared with 10¼ inches in 2006.

The warmest day was 15°C and coldest was -2.6°C.

During 2007, 65 inches of rain was recorded in Plockton compared with 70 inches in 2006 and 68 inches in 2005. This compares favourably with Fort William where 93 inches was recorded in 2007.

Lochan AGM

LOCHAN held its annual general meeting in Kyle Hall on January 11 with a good attendance of 20. Afterwards more people arrived for the one man performance by top British climber Andy Kirkpatrick, entitled 'Psychovertical' which was much enjoyed.

Lochan recently bought new tiered seating and this was used for the first time with great success.

Kinlochshiel Shinty Club

KINLOCHSHIEL Shinty Club held its annual dinner dance in Inverinate Hall on January 11, with 70 members enjoying a meal at the Jacobite Restaurant.

John Mackenzie, President of the Camanachd Association, addressed the company and Albert Loades, secretary of Kinlochshiel, acted as MC, as he has done for the past 40 years.

Kinlochshiel had a successful season with the first team winning the Balliemore Cup for the first time and the second team winning the North Division 3 title.

Jessie Fraser and Councillor Biz Campbell presented the following awards: Players Player of the Year - first team - Paul MacRae; Players Player of the Year - second team - John Don MacKenzie junior; Committee Player of the Year for the Kenny Wilson Trophy - Finlay MacRae; Young Player of the Year - Calum MacLean. Dancing followed to the music of the Sligachan Ceilidh Band.

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AS THE temperature plummets again this January remember to stay warm and, if possible, make your home as energy efficient as you can.

This winter nearly £2 billion and 18 million tonnes of carbon dioxide could be wasted as thermostats and electrical heaters are turned up full in a bid to heat the 21 million homes in the UK which have inadequate insulation.

There are many ways you can reduce the energy you use while saving hundreds of pounds every year on your bills;

- Turn down the thermostat by one degree - this could cut your heating bills by up to 10 per cent.
- By fitting a jacket on your hot water tank you can reduce heat loss by around 75 per cent.
- Insulating your loft to a depth of at least 27cm is a great way of cutting down heat loss and, if you are handy around the home, you can even do it yourself.
- Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
- Use energy efficiency light bulbs. They last up to 12 times longer than ordinary light bulbs and can reduce your lighting cost by up to £78 over the lifetime of the bulb.
- Do not leave appliances on standby and remember not to leave appliances on charge unnecessarily.
- Have a shower instead of a bath and use two-thirds less water and energy.
- Upgrade to an energy saving recommended fridge freezer and save up to £37 and 150kg of carbon dioxide per year.
- Washing clothes at 30 degrees instead of a higher temperature can use around a third less electricity and a third less carbon dioxide.
- Draught proofing windows and doors could save around £20 every year.
- Around 33 per cent of the heat lost in your home is through the walls, so insulating them can be the most cost-effective way to save energy in the home. Installing cavity wall insulation can save up to £120 per year from your heating bills.
- Replace boilers over 15 years old with a new energy efficient one. High efficiency condensing boilers are the most energy efficient and can save around a third of annual heating bills.

Completing the Energy Saving Trust's home energy check online will provide further information on how to prepare the home for winter.

- Boilers account for around 60 per cent of all domestic carbon dioxide emissions. By fitting a new high efficiency condensing boiler with heating controls, you will significantly cut your emissions and could save around £200 a year.

There are also many environmentally friendly ways to heat your home.

You could install a small wind turbine, solar water heating or a wood-chip boiler.

All these methods would mean installation costs but the benefits include cheaper heating and less carbon dioxide emissions.

However, simply fitting an insulating jacket around the hot water tank could save £20 and 160kg of carbon dioxide per year.

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My village – Bowmore

Hugh Smith, who wrote The Glasgow Letter for *The Oban Times* for many years and now contributes The Islay Letter, talks about life in Bowmore on the Isle of Islay.

What makes Bowmore special for you?
I have the highest regard for Bowmore as it was here that I spent my formative years and an important part of my adult life.

This special feeling for the place was the catalyst that brought me back almost three years ago to spend my retirement in the village.

Does it have an interesting history?
The village was established in 1768 by Daniel Campbell the Younger of Shawfield and was one of the first planned villages in the Highlands and Islands.

Bowmore replaced the earlier settlement at Kilarrow, where Islay House stands today, and was laid out on the basis of two rectangles, crowned by the distinctive Round Church.

How important is it to the island? What does it offer that other villages on the island can't?
Bowmore is the island's capital and the business centre of the island. It houses the main banks, local authority headquarters, the island's hospital and high school, as well as a variety of other services. It is also the main shopping centre and greatly benefits from its central position in the island.

How would you describe the village to someone who has never been there?
Although it is now a fairly modern village, you cannot but be aware of a sense of history and yet be conscious of its continuing evolvement and vibrancy.

Were you born in the village? How long have you lived there?
Although I was born on the shores of Loch Gruinart, I have spent 30 years in Bowmore.

How much has Bowmore changed since you were a child or moved to the village?
The village has altered greatly over the past 50 years. Improved properties have replaced tired buildings, ugly gap sites have gradually disappeared, hotels now provide a high standard of service and comfort and local authority housing has seen the village expand. The upgrading of the local junior secondary school to high school status was a distinct plus as was the community drive to establish the local swimming pool.

Do you have a favourite place or building in Bowmore?
Undoubtedly, the Round Church, with its eye-catching architecture and commanding position overlooking the village. It continues to be one of the area's main tourist attractions.

Do you have a favourite time of the year in Bowmore?
I particularly like springtime in Bowmore and in its surrounds.

The days are lengthening, hopefully the weather is clement and there is a sense of re-awakening all around after the dark days of winter and the wind which seems to blow unceasingly.

What are the challenges facing Bowmore or how could it be improved?
There are many areas where there is room for improvement. Despite the advent of the high school, we still lose too many of our young people through lack of local job opportunities. The lack of car parking in the village continues to frustrate, the lack of affordable housing for first time buyers remains a problem and in recent times the increase in acts of vandalism throughout the village by, allegedly, disaffected youths, is regrettable.

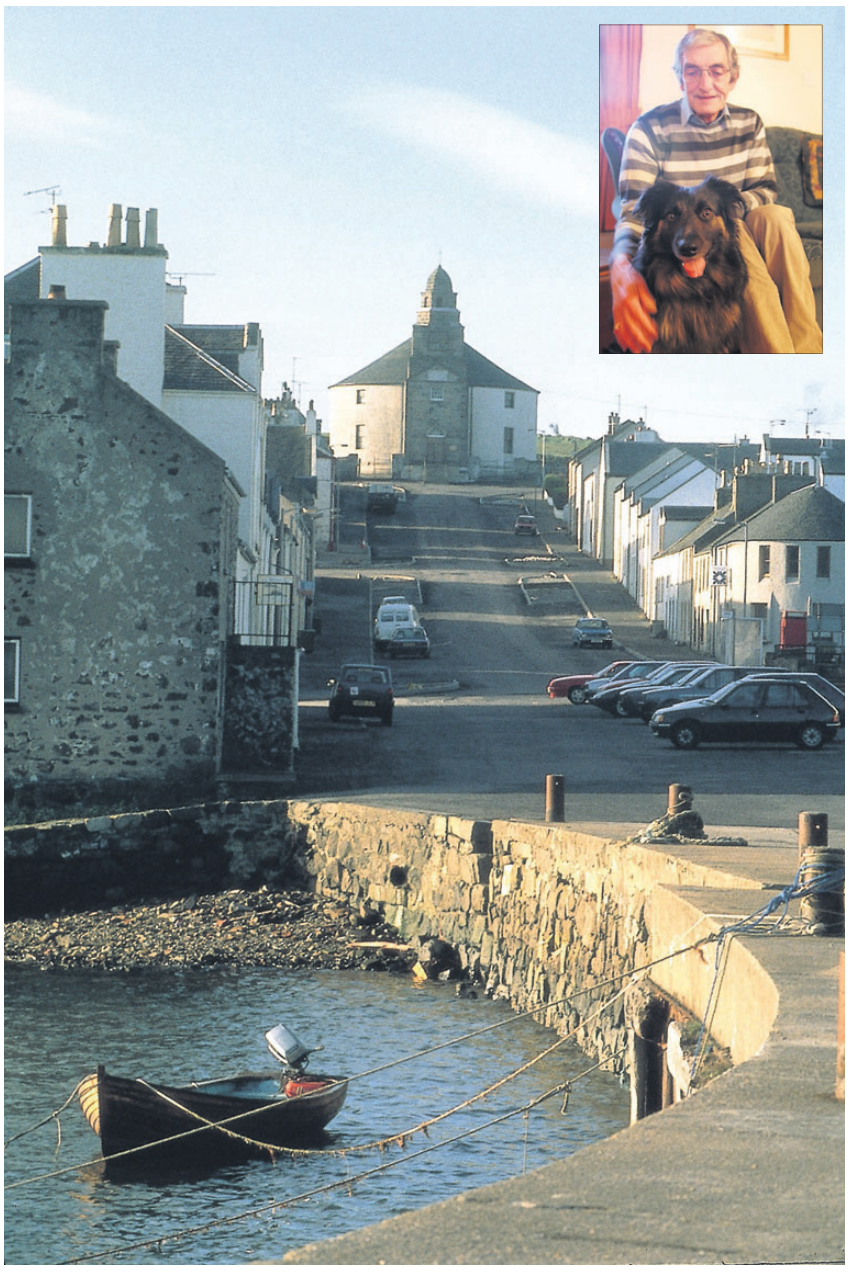
These problems are not insurmountable and, heaven knows, there are concerned people working tirelessly to address these issues.

Despite a number of quality shops, more food outlets would be welcome as much griping is heard about monopoly and the resultant sangfroid attitude to service and variety.

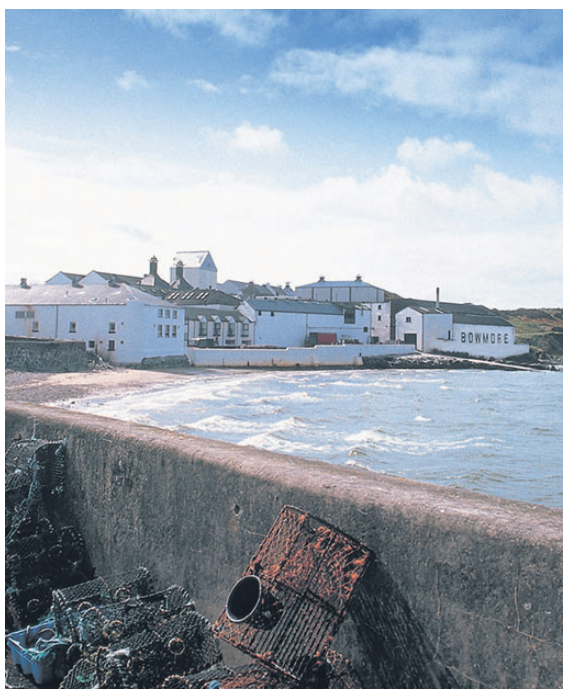
What do visitors like about Bowmore?
The choices in tourist orientated shops, the increase in eating out places and a visit to the Bowmore Distillery is a must. Most of all they enjoy the peace, tranquillity and the very different pace of life.

Is there anybody famous from the village?
Our most notable son is the Rev Dr Donald C Caskie, minister of the Scots Kirk in Paris, who throughout the Second World War arranged, at great personal risk, the escape of close on 3,000 Allied personnel from occupied Europe.

The war hero, who was born in the village and is buried in Bowmore cemetery, wrote of his exploits in his best-selling autobiography 'The Tartan Pimpernel'.



Bowmore's Round Church, one of the area's main tourist attractions. Insert, Hugh Smith with his dog Spiro.



A visit to Bowmore Distillery is a must for tourists.

'The village has altered greatly over the past 50 years. Improved properties have replaced tired buildings, ugly gap sites have gradually disappeared, hotels now provide a high standard of service and comfort and local authority housing has seen the village expand.'

Kilchrenan

Your correspondent is: Marilyn Henderson: 01866 833201

Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council

AVICH and Kilchrenan Community Council recently enjoyed an informative talk on fire safety.

It was given by Iain McMeechan and Paul Finnigan, fire safety officers from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, at a recent community council meeting.

The officers explained various fire prevention methods and said they would visit homes, on request, to make fire safety checks.

They also outlined new fire safety rules for bed and breakfast establishments.

After many questions and answers, the officers took names and telephone numbers of anyone requiring a home visit.

The chairman thanked them for their visit.

Other items discussed at the meeting included:

First Responders: The chairman informed the meeting that many people want to become involved with the First Responder Scheme. Last month, Jeff Dawson of the Scottish Ambulance Service had given a presentation on training for this scheme but the turnout at the meeting in Dalavich had been poor. David Watson suggested further meetings are held - perhaps one in Dalavich and one in Kilchrenan. He emphasised that if these courses are completed, First Responders would be under the insurance cover of the ambulance association and that one would not have to be available 24 hours a day. It was agreed the secretary should inform all householders by letter of the forthcoming meetings for this scheme.

Report on Stacain hearing: Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council was disappointed that the Stacain Wind Farm application had gone to committees of Argyll and Bute Council and been given the go-ahead, against the planners and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) recommendations for refusal. He said he felt Argyll and Bute Council had let the community council down badly as it also had objected. The chairman asked Graham Henderson to give a report on the hearings.

Mr Henderson said that he had given a power point presentation, along with SNH, the planners and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). He claimed the hearing had been 'a shambles' and that the secretary had written to Charles Reppke, Area Corporate Services, and to the Chief Planning Officer at the Scottish Government. On summing up at the hearing, he said it was unfair that SNH and the RSPB were not allowed time. At the Public Services and Licensing Committee Hearing, the community council felt its case was pushed aside by the councillors for its ward, who were on the side of Glen Orchy and Innishail Community Council. Mr Henderson said ward 5 would have a problem with the high visual intrusion of this wind farm. Mr Henderson said he suspects this application will be called in by the government. He said it could be a written submission or a public inquiry.

At this point David Price asked why it had to be called in and why did the developers not just start building. Mr Henderson explained about the conditions that had to be agreed and that the result of the application had to be sent to Government ministers because the committees had gone against a government body, SNH.

Before asking Councillor Robertson to speak, Iain Alexander said that the councillors of ward 5 had listened to Glen Orchy and Innishail Community Council's reasons for approval of this application, but not to Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council, which would have more visual intrusion of the wind farm.

Councillor Robertson said she appreciated it was a disappointing result for the community council and that it was not a case of one community council against another. She said it was not an easy position to be in. She said that, like the community council, she had thought it through herself.

Regarding the flight path of the golden eagles, she said: 'Make no mistake, wild life is important. Sustainability is important as well.'

She also said that at the second hearing on the subject of fatalities around wind turbines, there were no recorded golden eagle deaths from turbines. A day had been spent travelling between viewpoints and the turbines would have more impact in some areas than others.

Planning applications: David Price said he was becoming anxious about planning applications in Kilchrenan. Applications for 21 houses and nine for holiday lets had been applied for in Kilchrenan. Mr Price wondered how the community council could get a census of how the community feels.

Mr Price said he had been in touch with Taynuilt Community Council which did a census in its area. Funding for the census was through community links. He said that perhaps Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council should co-opt a sub-committee to deal with planning matters. The chairman said this could be investigated and he thought there were merits into what David Price had said.

The secretary reminded Mr Price that people with concerns should come to community council meetings and voice their views.

Mr Price added he would like people who had made a planning application for a house in Kilchrenan to come along to community council meetings to talk about their plans.

David Watson interrupted by saying that when Dalavich had a problem with a planning application, residents attended community council meetings for help.

Graham Henderson mentioned looking at the Local Plan.

David Crook said he had received a letter from West Highland Housing Association saying it was building six houses next to his two new houses. The chairman said most councils do not want ribbon development. Councillor Robertson asked if West Highland Housing had attended any community council meetings. The answer was yes but that was to explain about two new houses in Dalavich.

It was pointed out that the community council is a consultee and speaks as one voice. It can agree or disagree with the planning application. Any one individual can object.

David Price reminded the meeting of the quarry grant for a footpath from the new houses to the centre of the village and that the application for this grant had been rejected. He suggested that anyone who wanted to build new houses should help in the endeavour to secure a grant. David Crook offered his help. David Price will re-apply for this grant. Councillor Robertson asked why we were rejected and said that she would investigate this.

Pre-School playgroup: David Watson said there were concerns in Dalavich that the nearest nursery school to them was in Taynuilt and that there was no transport to get them there, which would take them 45 minutes to arrive there and 40 minutes return. There are four or five children of nursery school age in Dalavich. One of the parents has already had a meeting with the headteacher of Kilchrenan Primary School. The parents were at the community council meeting to ask for help.

David Price told them to get in touch with Argyll Community Volunteer Services.

Councillor Robertson said she would help them with this.

Horticultural show: The secretary asked if she could have a meeting with horticultural show volunteers soon. This was agreed.

Bus shelter in Kilchrenan: The had spoken to Blair Fletcher at the recent hearing, and he had not forgotten about the bus shelter.

Water: David Price said he had attended a meeting of Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council. He said that the Hydro Board had given a presentation about the level of water in Loch Awe. He also said he would be attending the executive committee of the Association of Argyll and Bute Community Councils in Inveraray on February 2.

Roads: The chairman expressed concern about the crumbling condition of the B845 Taycreggan road and pointed out that another four houses were to be built down this road. He also mentioned that on the C29, the road was rutted badly between Craigloiste and Collaig.

Irene MacClounnan said that she was still anxious about speeding in Dalavich. Councillor Robertson pointed out that Argyll and Bute Council had a speed machine.

Next meeting: Wednesday March 5, Kilchrenan Village Hall, 7.30pm.

Scalpay

Your correspondent is: D Morrison: 01859 540217

Wind power

THE SUBJECT of renewable energy and, in particular, wind power is much discussed on the islands of Lewis and Harris but perhaps these 'rotors' could be appropriate on the hills of Scalpay.

Fishing

A ONE-man crew fishing boat had a nice haul of pollock at the rock *Boenig* recently.

However, hand lines have been the norm for fishing pollock.

Fishermen are also advised not to be discouraged in the hunt for herring as fishermen out prawn creeling took a good look at what appeared to be herring in an area of home waters. We will keep our fingers crossed to hear of some herring being netted.

Houses

A NUMBER of houses are being built and sold on Scalpay at the moment but, having a look around, it is easy to find roofless walls or collapsed walls from houses where people of the island lived in the past.

Yachts

WHEN will be welcoming yachts back to our shores?

'Let that be sooner rather than later,' say islanders. The yachts' companionship in Scalpay harbour with the fishing boats is an attraction indeed.

Student teacher raises £1,500 to refurbish Honduran school

A STUDENT teacher was so shocked at the squalor facing pupils in a Honduran school, she raised £1,500 to pay for the building's refurbishment.

Jilly MacDonald, from North Connel, took a gap year after school to help at Jean Isbell Bilingual School, on Roatan Island, Honduras, in 2005 on the recommendation of a friend.

Jilly said: 'When I was there the classrooms had no electricity, which meant there were no fans, so conditions were too hot for the kids to work in.

'Mosquitoes were biting them because there were no doors or windows to keep them out and they had no access to running water. On top of that the blackboard was broken and there were not enough tables and chairs for the children. It certainly wasn't conducive to education.'

When Jilly returned to Scotland she planned a Hogmanay event for 2005 into 2006, in Ardchattan Priory, which raised £1,000.

A number of fundraising efforts followed and the total of £1,500 was reached.

On a visit back to the school, Jilly saw first-hand what the money had done for the school.

She said: 'The children now have their own workspace and the doors and windows close.

'There is electricity for lights and fans and one of the classrooms has been turned into a library, which has books passed on from Rockfield Primary School in Oban.'

The school has since e-mailed Jilly to thank her for her efforts but the 22-year-old had her own thanks to pass on to the people who came to the Hogmanay ceilidh and, in particular, Jamie and Sarah Troughton for use of Ardchattan Priory.

'I would also like to thank Rockfield Primary School for donating books and the 1st North Connel Guides for their fundraising,' said Jilly.

Rockfield Primary School head teacher Jack Degnan said: 'Jilly had a teaching placement here and when the staff heard what she was planning they were only too happy to help.

'We were having a clear out in preparation for the move to the new primary campus so Jilly was happy to take some of the books. She was a very popular member of staff while she was here and we congratulate her on her fundraising effort.'

Jilly teaching pupils at Jean Isbell Bilingual School, before the refurbishment.

Got a story for The Oban Times? Call our reporters on 01631 568000

Islay thief pays £1,000 compensation

A FORMER employee of an Islay transport firm handed over £1,000 to Campbeltown Sheriff Court on Wednesday as compensation for goods he had taken.

Robert Ferguson Dundas, whose address was given as 28 West King Street, Helensburgh, had pled guilty six months ago to breaking into Duffies Transport, Bridgend, Islay, on three occasions.

Between May 01 2006 and January 13, 2007 he took a quantity of goods, alcohol and tobacco; the value of goods taken was £3,384 and goods to the value of £2,360 were recovered. Between May 16 and June 2 2006 he stole a television, which was recovered. Between Jan 13 and 15 this year he took two computers and a quantity of alcohol and these goods were all recovered.

The court was told then that he had never returned a set of keys to his former employers and used them to go back and steal from their premises.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson heard then that these were the first offences Dundas had committed and that Dundas had been suffering from depression at the time and 'went off the rails'.

As well as paying the compensation of £1,000, Dundas was fined £100 for each of the three offences.

'You let yourself down and have given yourself a criminal record,' Sheriff Anderson told Dundas.

Residents and friends of Ford celebrate the announcement that they have their land

Ford celebrates community buy-out

Four-year deal with Forestry Commission is finally complete

RESIDENTS of Ford celebrated the news this week that they finally own the area of land they have been working towards since 2004 with confirmation that the purchase from the Forestry Commission was complete.

The big breakthrough came last summer with a combined grant from The Big Lottery and Highlands and Island Enterprise (HIE), which along with a contribution from the community was enough to cover the purchase price of £170,000.

Project Chair Lorraine MacIntyre said: 'It has taken a while to get through the complex conveyancing process to complete the purchase.

'Fortunately, and despite a number of problems and obstacles, this procedure is now complete and we can look forward to the next exciting phase where we will be designing the new community centre to fit the needs of Ford's residents now and into the future.'

The land, formerly owned by the Forestry Commission has been purchased via the National Forest Land Scheme whereby communities can bid to buy forest land on the basis that it provides increased public benefits.

In Ford's case these will include a multi-purpose community centre to replace the current uneconomic hall incorporating sporting facilities, a playpark and youth club, a central recycling service, educational facilities such as internet access and remote learning courses and public toilets.

The social enterprise aspects of the project, that could include a cafe, social club and community store, will assist the upkeep of these amenities.

The 2.6-hectare plot in the middle of Ford was first brought into state ownership in 1907 with its purchase from Colonel Edward Malcolm of Poltalloch Estate; it then passed to the Forestry Commission following its creation in 1919.

Phil Hemmings, vice-chair of the project speaking on the history of the plot said: '2008 marks a return to community ownership; the land has been owned privately and by the Crown, and the existence of a cairn on the site suggests that at sometime in the distant past it was a special place for a previous community, we have come full circle.'

The project committee will now seek designs for the new centre from a number of architects whilst seeking funding for the next phase of the project.

Once all the plans are received the community will be consulted to enable the most appropriate design to be chosen.

Task force is separate from marine park

Fishermen positive about new bill to tame the seas

Report by DAVID WALKER

A TASK force has been created to advise the government on new, streamlined marine legislation to simplify regulation and conservation of Scotland's coastal waters.

The aim of the task force is to introduce a new system of planning for the sea, better conservation and improvements to licensing and regulation of the marine environment.

The Scottish Government also stressed that the task force for the new marine bill is entirely separate from the issue of a marine national park in Scotland, which will not be included in the task force's remit.

The group, which includes the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF), the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland, aims to provide a broad spectrum of opinion and represent the main users of Scotland's seas.

Cabinet secretary for rural affairs and the environment, Richard Lochhead, maintains that there is currently too much legislation regulating seas around Scotland's 11,000km of coastline.

He said: 'Scotland has a unique coastal and marine environment. It provides an important natural resource upon which so many communities depend.

'To protect this valuable natural resource we must promote the sustainable use of our coasts and seas. There is a greater and growing awareness of the importance of sound management of our marine environment.

'I will also look to the task force to consider what additional powers need to be devolved to Scotland. I believe in the offshore zone – between 12 and 200 nautical miles from the shore – and further devolution, especially for functions such as marine planning and nature conservation, is a much needed priority.'

The first meeting of the task force was held yesterday when the group considered the work undertaken on marine legislation up to now and a work programme.

Over the following months the detailed work of the group will be undertaken at five 'workshops' with a final group meeting in April. A full consultation will be undertaken shortly afterwards.

A spokeswoman for the Scottish Government said: 'The Scottish Government is committed to bringing forward marine legislation and consulting on these issues. The marine park issue will be revisited once this work is completed. Marine parks will not be included in the marine bill.'

John Hermse of Mallaig and North-West Fishermen's Association, said it was important that a marine bill was introduced but that he would be keeping a close eye on developments.

He said: 'Over the last few years the fishing industry has done an awful lot to try and work sustainably within all the different guidelines. We will be looking to ensure that the indigenous industries and commercial stakeholders are protected.'

Mr Hermse added that he thought it would be suicidal for the SNP Government to to try and re-introduce the idea of a marine national park in the north-west.

He said: 'It would be a suicide scenario if the marine national park idea was brought back by the Government because it was such an unpopular measure.'

Spud, Pudding, Chippy, Robert, Brandy, Twix and Copper can all be viewed at the Milton Animal Welfare Centre of the Scottish SPCA.

Please telephone: 01389 761208 for more details.

The Scottish SPCA rehomes nearly 9,000 animals a year from its animal welfare centres throughout Scotland. Animals rehomed include all types of domestic pets, such as dogs, cats and rabbits, exotic animals and even farm animals.

If you think that you would be able to provide a safe, loving environment for an animal then please visit one of our centres and our staff will be happy to help you find a new addition to your home.

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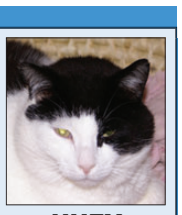

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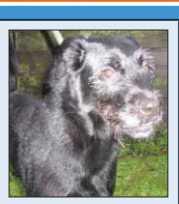

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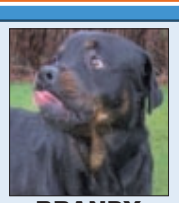

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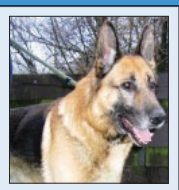

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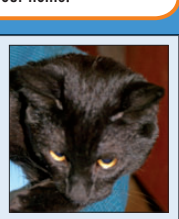

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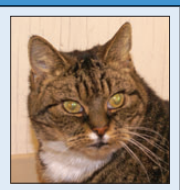

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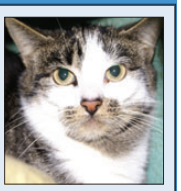

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FOR years Argyll Animal Aid has been the first port of call for pets in need of everything from medical care to love and attention.

Despite very basic beginnings the charity has now built up a facility that can provide four kennels, an isolation kennel, four large cat pens, a hospital for sick cats and a large cat maternity unit.

Many pets have come from loving and secure homes but have suddenly found themselves ownerless or homeless through a variety of circumstances.

Some poor animals are brought to them after suffering abuse, neglect, abandonment and all manner of unpleasant backgrounds but no matter what fate has been experienced in the past, every pet is guaranteed a warm, safe and loving home at Argyll Animal Aid.

The sanctuary has a strict no kill policy, except on veterinary advice, ensuring every animal will be given the chance to go on and enjoy a happy life.

Although more common, dogs and cats are by no means the only types of boarders that can be found resting at Argyll Animal Aid.

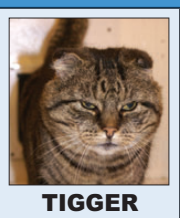
Over the years carers have found themselves nursing and looking after ferrets, rabbits, deer, hedgehogs, birds, fish and even bats and turtles.

As well as acting as a temporary home, for animals in need of specialist attention, Argyll Animal Aid can also play a vital role in passing them over to the appropriate agencies.

Thanks to the much loved place that Argyll Animal Aid holds in the hearts of local animal lovers, they have managed to survive on donations and volunteering for essentials such as food, bedding and equipment however there are still many pets looking for owners to continue the good work of the facility.

They can often be seen manning a stall at local events and games so please take the time to support this much needed facility as ALL money is guaranteed to be spent on the animals.

Argyll Animal Aid has and always will provide a safehaven for unwanted animals from the Argyll area but space is limited and for most animals the home can only ever be a stepping-stone.



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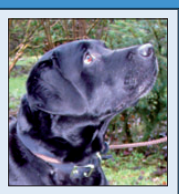

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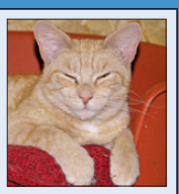

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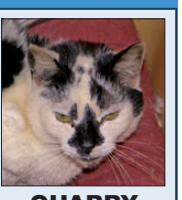

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How you can help

There are always animals waiting for people to give them a second chance so if you have the room and the inclination, make an appointment with Pat to see if there is an animal waiting for you.

There is also the possibility of sponsorship whereby people can adopt a cat and be kept informed of his or her progress for a small amount of money each year.
For more about Argyll Animal Aid contact Pat on **01852 300362** or visit the website:**www.smallpaws.co.uk**

Official inquiries to look at Lochaber planning

PUBLIC inquiries are to be conducted by the Scottish Government into the outcomes of two Lochaber planning applications.

Under scrutiny will be Aldi's application for a food store in Nevis Square, which councillors backed against officials' recommendations in September last year.

Also going to an inquiry is Morbaine Ltd's appeal against planning restrictions imposed on its North Road site, which limit retail development there to bulky goods and one small electrical store.

Caol and Mallaig councillor Bill Clark cites the waterfront development as being a major factor in the decisions.

'I supported both applications and when I heard about the Aldi enquiry I was absolutely flabbergasted' he said.

'The waterfront is the reason it's going to a public enquiry.

'Most of these things are because of the waterfront. It shouldn't be stopping other developments coming into the Lochaber area for the benefit of the Lochaber people.'

Fort William councillor Brian Murphy supported the Aldi application but said he did not want to see 'shopping developments strung out along the North Road.'

'The waterfront has nothing do to do with this.

'You find that most of the people who cite the waterfront in this are the ones who oppose it.'

A government spokesman said both enquiries were at an early stage and time limits had not yet been allocated.

Maurice Wilkins at Arduaine Garden which is still open despite the discovery of a plant disease. t03gar01

Deadly fungus attacks Argyll garden

Arduaine Gardens had to cut and burn shrubs which were affected by Phtyophthora Ramorum

A HEAD gardener at one of Argyll's most renowned gardens is urging people to keep their eyes peeled for a deadly fungus which could devastate horticulture in the area.

The National Trust of Scotland owned Arduaine Gardens, near Kilmelford, had to cut and burn shrubs which were found to be affected by Phtyophthora Ramorum last year.

The fungus, which is infectious, can kill trees and shrubs and have a catastrophic affect on gardens and nurseries if it spreads.

A related fungus has now also been found in a private garden in Argyll at an unspecified location.

Maurice Wilkins, head gardener at Arduiane, is this week asking domestic gardeners to keep a close eye on their plants and not to stay quiet if they suspect shrubs are affected.

'I would just suggest that they keep their eyes open on their plants and look out for any differences,' he said.

'They might be worried that SGRPID (Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate) would come out and destroy their garden but they would only remove any affected shrubs. We can't be assisting the infection.'

At Arduaine, Mr Wilkins noticed a shrub had become brown in colour and its foliage had shrivelled up at the end of last summer.

'I thought it was strange for the time of year,' he said.

'We immediately contacted SGRPID and the shrub was cut back and burnt and all the leaves removed. If the Scottish Government had asked us to close, we would have closed. But we are still very much open for business.

'We now have to pay a great deal of attention to garden hygiene and visitors are not allowed to veer off the footpath or take any cuttings away from the garden.'

The garden suffered a further setback as 37 trees were felled by the gales which struck Argyll last week.

Mr Wilkins said: 'We have got to take each tree apart piece by piece because the paths are so narrow in here, we can't take in tractors to remove them.'

'It's time they put something back into the community' says local chairman

Ballachulish Co-op comes under fire over access

THE CO-OP in Ballachulish has come under fire for allowing the grounds round its store to fall into disrepair – but is already taking steps to remedy the situation, *The Oban Times* has learned.

A shared access used by Co-op delivery wagons has become potentially dangerous to pedestrians and floods regularly because drains have broken, says Ballachulish Community Council.

In an attempt to find a solution the council wrote to the Co-op and adjacent owners Royal Bank of Scotland.

The bank wrote back to say they had already carried out road repairs in front of their premises and had no responsibilty for the access road – but the Co-op has yet to respond.

It its letter the council said: 'We are not entirely sure who is responsible for this road and we are writing to all parties surrounding it in the hope that a collective solution may be found.

'The road condition is a problem not only because it affects the general appearance of the village but more importantly it poses a potential danger to users. We would be grateful if you could arrange to have this issue addressed.'

Chairman Mel MacAskill felt it was time for the Co-op to act given its economic standing in Ballachulish.

'They are taking all the money out of this community and it is time they put something back,' he said.

The community council demanded action after they received a complaint from a member of the public who had tripped and fallen on the broken road surface.

A spokeswoman for The Scottish Co-operative said: 'This matter is already in hand and we will be carrying out repair work as soon as possible. The contract for the work is currently out to tender.

'Unfortunately, we have no record of the letter from the community council but we will be writing to the council to confirm that we intend to have the necessary work carried out. While The Scottish Co-operative does not own all the land, as the majority owner we will take on the responsibility of the repair work.'

TOP 20 POETS

Shayla, aged 11
Submitted by Linda Gunn, Caol, Fort William.

Novo, aged 3
Submitted by Tracy MacInnes, Kerrera Terrace ,Oban.

Skye, aged 7
Submitted by the Margaret Aked, London.

Millie, aged 2½
Submitted by Rena MacPherson, Balliemeanoch, Dalmally.

Bramble, aged 6
Submitted by Shannon MacKinnon, Keills, Isle of Islay.

Buster, aged 7
Submitted by Fiona Dunnachie Grangemouth.

Tanssi, aged 12
Submitted by Neil Black Ardgour, by Fort William.

Tara & Keira, 3yrs & 3mths
Submitted by Christine Cameron, Onich.

Doodles,
Submitted by Mr and Mrs Watt, Oban.

Lucky, aged 1½
Submitted by Nicole MacKinnon, Oban.

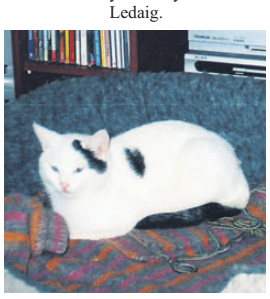
Sioux, aged 1
Submitted by Dorothy Womack Ledaig.

Suzi, Feya and Stella
Submitted by Anne Ferguson, Benderloch.

Woody, aged 1½
Submitted by Rosemary Stroyan, Duror.

Larry, aged 9
Submitted by Anne Fraser, Killiechonate, Spean Bridge .

Johnny, aged 13
Submitted by Kathleen McKenzie, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay.

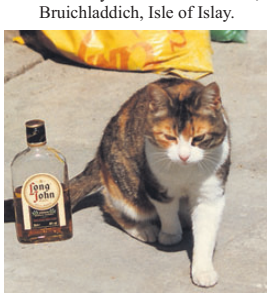


Pudsey, aged 5
Submitted by Angela MacLean, Port Ellen, Isle of Islay.

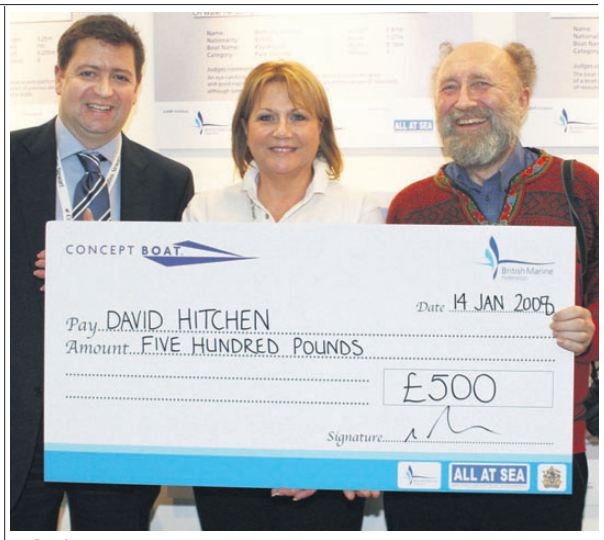
Ollie, aged 6
Submitted by Margaret MacLaren, Callander.

Precious Bonny, aged 8
Submitted by Mary Fish, Upper Achintore, Fort William.

Tiger, aged 5
Submitted by Catherine Campbell, Inverness .



Cheeky, aged 6
Submitted by Mary Graham, Port Ellen Isle of Islay.



Oban man is a winner at London Boat Show

OBAN man David Hitchin received a cheque for £500 recently for taking second place in the Pure Concept category of the Concept Boat Competition at the 54th Collins Stewart London Boat Show.

The show, in association with the Daily Mail, took place from January 11-20 and is London's largest annual event with over 500 exhibitors and 140,000 visitors. Guests this year include HRH Princess Royal and well-known sailors Geoff Holt and Mike Golding OBE.

David Hitchin, far right, is pictured with BMF technical director Nik Parker and managing director of CSL Publishing Sue Baggaley.

Argyll pupils to work with Scottish Opera during tour

SCHOOL pupils from all over Argyll will get the chance to work with singers and musicians from Scottish Opera during a primary schools tour.

Pupils from Easdale, Coll, Colonsay, Oban, Dunbeg and Achaleven will take part in the opera company's spring tour in April this year.

Pupils will perform First Class: Passport to Paris, a 30-minute long opera at their own schools with a little help from Scottish Opera's education department.

The opera is designed to assist teachers and, in particular, to support modern language teaching as well as personal and social development skills.

Head of Scottish Opera Education, Jane Davidson, said: 'The custom of singing opera in the original language of the composer and librettist is a highly accomplished aspect of the art form; so what better vehicle to enhance children's understanding of European languages and culture than participation in our primary workshop performance?

'Developing creative opportunities to support the teaching of languages in our schools is a priority area for the company's education team so watch this space for more language initiatives in the coming years.'

Pupils from Easdale, Coll and Colonsay primaries will perform on April 1 with Park and Lochnell primaries taking part the following day and Dunbeg and Achaleven primaries performing on April 3.

In your Oban Times next week
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LUST, CAUTION	Cert 18 - 157mins 8.30 Daily
PS I LOVE YOU	Cert 12A - 125mins 7.00 Daily. 2.00 Sat & Sun

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ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) ☎ 09111 767 272
As far as your ambitions are concerned, a fated meeting with someone influential can have an impact for a long time to come. If you've been dating someone, the decision to become more serious could also be made. This could see you looking at property or meeting a partner's parents. Friends can be linked to luck - especially professional associates. Call for more on a magical Mars/Mercury mix...

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) ☎ 09111 767 273
The doors of opportunity can be flung open and whether this is through the things you're proactive about or fortune that just seems to drop into your lap, it matters not. However, when dealing with the world at large, to capitalise, an ability to understand what other people want from you is going to be a big asset. Keep an eye on the horizon! Call to hear why love and travel are so very entwined...

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) ☎ 09111 767 274
Financial and business prospects are under very favourable stars. A new beginning is possible, one that could thrust you in a whole new direction, but a partnership can be key to this. Watch arrogance. Neptune is creating a blurry vibe, and Mercury can lead to mix-ups. You must ensure the terms of reference are ultra clear between you & others. Call to hear how someone can be lucky for you...

CANCER (June 22 - July 22) ☎ 09111 767 275
Your romantic sector heats up and a wonderful meeting of mind and soul could see you swept off your feet by someone new. Alternatively, an existing union can reach a pivotal moment. Some new growth may be needed to reactivate this involvement. If this doesn't look like happening, a faltering tie could be catapulted out of your world. Cancer, call for more on this make or break potential...

LEO (July 23 - Aug 23) ☎ 09111 767 276
Go on, admit Leo, you can be a bit stuck in your ways. But if you can just let go a bit, something can be reformed in your life, be it a pattern of work, the everyday elements of a close relationship or the chance to enter more fulfilling employment. Yet crossed wires are possible - unless you take the time and trouble to properly hear someone out. Call for more on Mercury's potent retrograde...

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) ☎ 09111 767 277
All week your ruler, the fleet-footed Mercury, forms a stunning link with Mars, the planet of drive. If you apply yourself you can show both self-confidence and attention to detail. But the move of Venus and Pluto is the big story. The weekend could be sensational for certain involvements. Solo? Someone very tantalising can come to your attention. Call to hear how dreams can come true...

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23) ☎ 09111 767 278
Changes can occur in a practical way in your world and especially concerning where you live. Being more comfortable and snug can be a priority but then feeling ensconced in a loving embrace can provide the security you crave. Equally, you can just do a lot of thinking about your own inner emotional world. This can be deep, but laughter is also possible. Call for your love scope in full...

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22) ☎ 09111 767 279
All year I've flagged up the importance of words to you, be they spoken or written. At the start of this week, something will happen which will inform you even more of this potential. You could even find yourself talking to a person, the like of which you have never met before. Relationships within the family or your locality can also be transformed. Call to hear why a course can spark attraction...

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 21) ☎ 09111 767 280
I promote the concept that astrology is the art of timing, rather than the traditional view, of it being based on luck. And yet if you wanted to look at squeezing just a bit more out of your resources, or shuffling your financial pack - or have a punt, the start of this week could see you with a success story. Just don't risk money you can't afford to lose. Call for more on Venus and Pluto's move...

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 20) ☎ 09111 767 281
I'm really excited. For myself? Well, no, I'm truly excited for all Capricorns, because this can be a seminal week. Of course, astrologers can trot this kind of stuff out in a trite kind of way, but not this one. Genuinely, this can be turning point. A time to really move forwards in a completely different sphere or to reinvent yourself in an existing one. Call me for more on a very special new dawn...

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19) ☎ 09111 767 282
Lots of things are going on because you're making them happen. Yet lots of other things can happen which are less obvious, but are no less important. In fact, this week the subtle stuff can become central. Confidential discussions are highly possible, as are discreet attractions. Capricorns can be influential for you. Keep an eagle eye out for them. Call me to hear why secrets can abound...

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) ☎ 09111 767 283
Friendship and teamwork can be important ingredients ordinarily but a person can become so much more. Now this could be someone who you will become closer to in a purely platonic sense, but equally a meeting or minds and hearts is possible with someone who shares the same kind of values and vision for the future. This could be big. Call to hear how to trigger new hope and expectation...

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At the Cinema

SWEENEY TODD
CERT '18'

Johnny Depp and Tim Burton join forces again in a big-screen adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's award-winning musical thriller.

Depp stars in the title role as a man unjustly sent to prison who vows revenge, not only for that cruel punishment, but for the devastating consequences of what happened to his wife and daughter. When he returns to reopen his barber shop, Sweeney Todd becomes the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

Joining Depp is Helena Bonham Carter as Mrs. Lovett, Sweeney's amorous accomplice, who creates diabolical meat pies. The cast also includes Alan Rickman, who portrays the evil Judge Turpin, who sends Sweeney to prison and Timothy Spall as the Judge's wicked associate Beadle Bamford and Sacha Baron Cohen is a rival barber, the flamboyant Signor Adolfo Pirelli.

ENCHANTED
CERT 'PG'

A classic Disney animated fairy tale meets with modern live-action romantic comedy. Featuring an all-star cast, the film follows the beautiful princess Giselle as she is banished by an evil queen from her magical, musical animated land, and finds herself in the gritty reality of the streets of modern-day Manhattan.

Shocked by this strange new environment, that doesn't operate on a "happily ever after" basis, Giselle is now adrift in a chaotic world badly in need of enchantment. But when Giselle begins to fall in love with a charmingly flawed divorce lawyer who has come to her aid, even though she is already promised to a perfect fairy tale prince back home, she begins to wonder: can a storybook view of romance survive in the real world?

ALIENS Vs. PREDATOR REQUIEM
CERT '15'

A little town in the hills of Colorado will become the battleground between two of the deadliest extra-terrestrial lifeforms - the Alien and the Predator.

When a Predator scout ship crash-lands in the hills outside the town, Alien facehuggers are released in the crash, and an even more evil creature - a hybrid Alien/Predator - is also released.

A man & his son hunting in the forests near the crash site soon become the first victims, and when a Predator receives data about the crash on his home planet, he comes to Earth.

One at a time, the inhabitants of the town become targets of the Aliens and the Predator with terrifying results.

LUST, CAUTION
CERT '18'

A Venice Golden Lion winner, Lust, Caution is the latest work from Ang Lee (Brokeback Mountain, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon).

Set in occupied Shanghai during the Second World War, the film is a political thriller, a melodrama and a dark tale of obsessive love.

A young woman, Wang Jiazhi (Tang), is persuaded to join a plot against government minister and Japanese collaborator Mr Yee (Tony Leung), but she fails in her mission.

Years later she gets a second chance; she successfully seduces Yee and they embark on a passionate affair.

PS I LOVE YOU
CERT '12A'

Academy Award winner Hilary Swank and heart-throb Gerard Butler star in this touching romantic comedy, based on the best selling novel . Swank is Holly Kennedy; beautiful, smart and married to the love of her life So when Gerry's life is taken by an illness, it takes the life out of Holly.

But before he died, Gerry wrote a series of letters that will guide her, not only through her grief, but in rediscovering life. The first message arrives on Holly's birthday in the form of a tape recording from Gerry ordering her to get out and celebrate! In the weeks and months that follow, more letters from Gerry are delivered in surprising ways, each sending her on a new adventure and each signing off in the same way: PS I Love You.

Holly's protective mother and best friends worry that this link with the past is stopping her from moving on, but with Gerry's words as her guide Holly embarks on a touching, exciting and hilarious journey of rediscovery.

Elidh MacInnes with her Highland dancing pupils after their exams.

Young dancers pass exams to modern music

YOUNG Highland dancers from Oban have passed their performance exams performing to a song by a New York pop group.

The youngsters all passed at the Scottish Dance Teachers Association exams which saw them complete their display with teacher Eilidh MacInnes as they performed a 'vigorous' Highland choreography to a song by The Scissor Sisters.

Eilidh's charges gave a very confident display with the trophy, donated by Nonnie and Karen MacInnes, going to the younger class being won jointly by Lucy Croakin and Katie MacPherson. Jenna MacInnes was awarded the trophy for the most successful competitive dancer in 2007 which was donated by Mike and Elaine Robertson.

Sell out for band's mid week show

THE Skipinnish Records Showcase concert on Wednesday, January 30 sold out at record speed weeks ago, but for those lucky enough to have tickets it sounds like a superb night.

The event, sponsored by Black Bottle Whisky, takes place in St Andrews in the Square in Glasgow and is being televised by Mac TV.

Performing will be Gaelic singers James Graham, Rachel Walker and Calum Alec MacMillan, Dance band Deoch 'n Dorus, fiddle virtuoso Archie MacAlaister, accordion and shinty star Gary Innes, the mighty and wild Skerryvore and of course Skipinnish themselves. The night will be chaired by John Carmicheal of the BBC and as an extra surprise there will be complimentary drams for the audience as they come in between 7.30 and 8pm courtesy of Black Bottle and Skipinnish Records! – Just to put everyone in the mood for what will be a very memorable night.

Andrew Stevenson of Skipinnish said: 'We're absolutely delighted that the event sold out so fast and we're all really looking forward to it. It's a pity the venue wasn't bigger but hopefully next year we'll be able to get somewhere that can take more people. There's been a huge number of people trying to get tickets who can't and we would like to apologize for not being able to accommodate them.'

A review will be appear in *The Oban Times* in due course for those who couldn't make it.

Taynuilt Swinging Band debut at ceilidh gig

The recently-formed Taynuilt Swing Band gave its first performance on Saturday night in the village hall. The band was playing at January's An Comunn Gaidhealach Taynuilt ceilidh. The eight-piece consists: Paddy Shaw, tenor sax; Dr John Lyon, alto sax; Dr Jo Landon, clarinet; Alan Smith, trombone; Donald Harrison, double bass; Frank Beaton snr, keyboard; Audrey Paterson, vocals; and Freddie Nicholson, drums. Among the songs perfromed were *La Mer* and *Paper Moon.*

Bog Ray Band entertain at Fort William

FORT William Accordion and Fiddle Club's New Year Club Night served up a great variety of west coast music.

First timer guest artiste for the evening was ex-Lochaber man Archie MacPhee with the The Bog Ray Band from Kirkhill, Inverness which attracted a large crowd at the Railway Club venue on January 8.

Supported by local musicians, the event delighted the foot-stomping, hand-clapping appreciative audience.

Compere Jimmy Smith introduced local players Ali MacKenzie, Karen MacLean, Hector Henderson, Jimmy Smith, Larry Byrne and Andrew MacDonald on accordion; and Ewan Henderson, Kirsty Harrower and Kevin Cameron on fiddle. Accompianists were Simon Andrews and Hugh MacCallum, drums, and Sheila Henderson and Hector Henderson, keyboard.

Making up The Bog Roy Band were Archie MacPhee on keyboard; Louise Hay, fiddle; and George Bremner, drums.

The club's annual dinner dance is on Friday February 22 at the West Hotel, Fort William, with the Neil Sinclair Band from Oban.

Colin MacIntyre's first album for four years

A MULL popstar says his fourth album, launched next month, has given him the same proud feeling he had before the release of his first.

Colin MacIntyre's The Water, is his first album for four years, following success with Loss, Us and This is Hope, and has been produced by Lemon Jelly's Nick Franglen.

However notable guest appearances include the Girls Choir of Tobermory High School and Glasgow Philharmonic Male Voice Choir.

There is also a narrative from politician Tony Benn, over the chimes of Tobermory clock, on the final track, Pay Attention to the Human.

Although it is Colin's fourth album, it is the first under his own name after he dropped the pseudonym Mull Hsitorical Society.

Colin said: 'It feels a bit to me now like I felt before Loss came out, where you're really proud of something you've created, and just need the world to hear itt.

'It has been really important to me all along the way with this album that I made no comprimises and I can honestly say that I haven't.'

Send your stories and pictures to editor@obantimes.co.uk

Argyll and Bute Council, Sport & Leisure Services

SPORTS COACHING & CLUB DEVELOPMENT WEEKEND

Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th February 2008

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Copy of the Weekend Programme and Details of all courses available from www.argyll-bute.gov.uk or your Local Leisure Facility.

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THE WIDE MOUTHED FROG

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at
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Friday 25th January 7:30pm
4 Course Meal
Adults £14.50 Children £7.50
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Special Offers on Malts
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The Oban Times & West Highland Times
What's On Guide

Friday 25th January
Traditional Burns Supper, The Wide Mouthed Frog, 7.30pm. 4-course meal.
Friday 29th February
Leap Year Supper Ceilidh, Royal Hotel, Oban, 7.30pm. £10.

WHAT'S ON GUIDE
CONTACT - 01631 568000

COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

Vegetarian & Vegan Cookery
with Terry Burt
Friday 1 & 8 February
6.30 – 9pm
To book a place or find out more contact 01546 510278
www.kilmartin.org

N Argyll Cancer Support Group
Next meeting
Wed 31st Jan, 6-7pm
Dunmar Ct, Oban
New people always welcome to drop in for coffee and a chat
Info: Lucy 01631 789040

Oban Congregational Church
Coffee Morning
Saturday 26th January
10.30am – 12.30
Homebaking, Teas, Coffee
Proceeds in aid of Church Funds

Advertise in the Community Notice Board for just £12.45 (plus VAT)
This section is available to charitable organisations with a charity number.
All AGM's will be placed on the Public Notice Page
Please ask for details

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Pressure grows for A82 improvements

THE Fort William Steering Group (FWSG) will tomorrow (Friday) night host a closed doors meeting with transport officials on the timescale for improvements to the A82.

FWSG has invited representatives from Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership, Transport Scotland, Transerv, the emergency services, the community councils and Argyll and Bute Council to attend.

Stewart MacLean, spokesman for the A82 Partnership, an umbrella group formed to lobby for an A82 upgrade, welcomed the inspection and the meeting.

He said: 'I'm glad there is now momentum behind this.'

A statement from FWSG said: 'The Fort William Steering Group is calling for the promised major upgrade of the A82 to be actioned as quickly as possible and on the back of recent road tragedies, for safety improvements to be implemented immediately.

'It is our intention to meet with neighbouring authorities about this and seek the support of our MSPs to push this matter forward.'

At Fort William Community Council's meeting last Tuesday members agreed that urgent action was required.

Councillor Murphy, chairman of FWSG said: 'I don't want to see any political posturing on this. It's too important. We need a community-based, high-profile campaign that's going to get to the ministers. The ministers need to be encouraged more to stand up within their own groups.

'It is our intention to meet with neighbouring authorities about this and seek the support of our MSPs to push this matter forward.'

FWSG member Drew Purdon told *The Oban Times* that councillors, business leaders and politicians have been campaigning for 20 years for A82 upgrades to reduce casualty rates on the notorious road.

He said: 'We've had the Conservatives, Labour and now an SNP government and nothing seems to have progressed.'

The latest move to kickstart upgrades on the killer road comes after shock figures showed that in the past 12 months there were 125 accidents between Ballachulish to Fort William alone — three of which resulted in a fatality.

The figures also revealed that the accident rate had worsened significantly in comparison to the previous year.

Last week police experts inspected sections of the road between Fort William and Ballachulish and will pass on their findings to Transort Scotland.

The Oban Times understands a public meeting will be called shortly after tomorrow night's meeting.

Safety is key issue with Oude bridge, says businessman

A KILMELFORD businessman believes an access road at Oude River Bridge should be improved for safety reasons – not simply to further his business interests.

Melfort Pier Holidays Ltd owner John Christlieb said in *The Oban Times* recently that the road between Kilmelford and Degnish should be re-aligned.

But he dismissed the notion that this was in his business interest and pointed to a letter he wrote to Oban North and Lorn Councillor Duncan MacIntyre where he spelt out the potential dangers of the council taking no action.

In the letter Mr Christlieb says: 'The draft minutes of the Kilninver and Kilmelford Community Council meeting on October 9 quotes you as assuring the meeting that Argyll and Bute Council would not purchase any land to facilitate a re-alignment of the road adjacent to the Oude River Bridge, which I find difficult to understand.

The present, and only, method for vehicles longer than 30 feet to navigate the bridge in either direction, is to go over the bridge in reverse.

'When heading west bound they turn into the access to Fearnach House, and the Milton residence, and reverse westwards, over the bridge, and then continue reversing into the entrance to the Melfort Club, and thence forwards towards Degnish.

'Eastbound they drive forward into the club entrance, and then backwards over the bridge, and swing, still going backwards into the Fearnach House/Milton access, before locking over and proceeding forwards and eastwards towards Kilmelford.

Melfort Pier: sometimes easier to reach by boat than car.

'This process has been going on for very many years, and includes vehicles operated by the council. I have, for years, been amazed that the council would allow such maneouvres, but wrongly, as it turns out, considered it was part and parcel of living in the Highlands.

'The blockade by the club, in September 2005, and the surprise shown by John Downie, who visited in the vain hope of resolving the garbage collection problems that had been created, indicated that he, at least, had no idea what his vehicles had to do to collect garbage. He, quite correctly, refused to let his lorry resume service to Melfort Pier Holidays (MPH), after the club had been served with an interdict preventing them from blocking vehicles bound for MPH, and to this day small, and expensive skip trucks are used instead.

'When Alan Macaskill retired, I consulted him on the problem created by the bridge, and we both felt that it would be highly desirable that a permanent solution be found, that would be of benefit to the whole community. He, and indeed, the whole council seem to have been unaware of the dangers created by the bridge, even after his six years as leader of the council, and 30 years as a councilor.

'There are additional hazards concerning the immediate topography of the area.

Hard alongside the turning access on the east side of the bridge are three holiday cottages owned by the club, which park in the turning access area, and also use a car park area on the opposite of the road. Children and bicycles, move back and forth across the road, and also over the bridge en route into the club. Large lorries operated by solo drivers backing over the bridge can very easily be blind sided and fail to see a small child or indeed any pedestrian, or even a car during the backing process. It is a dreadful place to carry out reversing maneuvres, especially in the summer.

'The situation will be made even worse when the 15 new holiday homes scheduled for construction, with their driveway entrance between the access turning area and the actual bridge. Lorries will be passing in reverse right past their entrance on a regular basis.

'Now that the council has had its attention drawn to this situation, I would respectfully suggest that they have no option but to take some form of immediate action to reduce or eliminate the hazards detailed above. To do otherwise could leave the council wide open to a major claim if, heaven forbid, an accident were to occur, and would be highly irresponsible.

'The solution is very simply, and low in cost. Alan has been in discussions with the owners of Melfort House, to try and persuade them to sell the tiny area needed to allow the road to swing in a gentle curve on the west side of the bridge. It is about 700 square metres in total and very easily constructed. I have told Alan that MPH would contribute towards the cost, in the hope that others who would also benefit might do likewise, if budget constraints were to delay effective action.

'For some reason at the last minute, the land owners appear to have had second thoughts. The design work has been done, Enstone Thistle have been consulted, and a valuation of the land has been commissioned.

'I would strongly urge the council to restrict access along the entire length of the Degnish road to vehicles longer than 30 feet, until such time as a permanent solution has been established, which could happen very quickly with goodwill on all sides.'

Delight at grandson's release from prison

KILCHOAN resident Noel Wallace has expressed 'overwhelming relief' at news of her journalist grandson's release from prison in Niger.

Thomas Dandois Wallace and his colleague Pierre Creisson were facing charges of breaching government restrictions on journalists entering north Niger, a crime which potentially carries the death penalty.

But he was freed with his French colleague last Friday after his supporters raised and posted bail of 15,000 euros for each of them.

Mr Wallace, who has dual French and British nationality, phoned his grandmother soon after he arrived back in France.

Mrs Wallace told *The Oban Times*: 'The sense of relief when I heard the news of their release on Friday was overwhelming, and when Tom spoke to me, I could have cried. It was just so good to know he is safe.'

Thomas told his supporters that he was treated well during his 32 days in prison and he was relieved to be back.

The Wallace family expressed thanks for all the support they have been given by people in the Lochaber area who wrote to politicians on behalf of Mr Wallace.

'The support we've had has been wonderful,' said Mrs Wallace. 'I'm told that more than 800 people joined the Facebook support group in less than a fortnight, and more than 40,000 from all over the world visited the main blog page run by his friends in France.

'I think they all understood that, in doing such an important job in keeping us informed of what is happening in dangerous parts of the world, Tom and Pierre deserved their support.'

Mr Dandios Wallace must still return to Niger to face charges.

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COMMERCIAL

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GLENCRUITTEN, OBAN

For Sale: A very well presented modern Detached Bungalow offering excellent family accommodation in a delightful rural setting on the fringe of the town. Double glazing, LP gas central heating. Accommodation comprising: Hall with Storage, Lounge, Dining Kitchen, Bathroom, 3 Bedrooms. Attractive established garden with parking area. Planning permission for extension. Offers over £210,000

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For Sale: New release of 3 bedroom Semi Detached Houses by MacLeod Construction Ltd in a popular and expanding residential development on the fringe of the town. Double glazing, electric heating, NHBC guarantee. Comprising Hall, Lounge, Diningroom, Kitchen, Bathroom, Toilet, 3 Bedrooms (1 with En-Suite Shower Room). No's 1 and 2 are now available for reservation at a Fixed Price of £176,000.

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Offers over £325,000

KILCHRENAN

PLOTS 3 & 4 MEMORIAL FIELD, KILCHRENAN, ARGYLL

Two recently completed modern detached one and a half storey dwelling houses set in a rural location with open countryside views. Finished to an extremely high standard with modern fixtures and fittings, the versatile and well laid out accommodation over two floors comprises: Entrance hall, sitting room, kitchen/diner, three bedrooms, office/4th bedroom, bathroom, shower room and utility room. High quality hardwood double glazing. Oil fired under floor heating. Private off street parking and easily maintained garden ground to the front and rear.
Fixed Price £235,000 each

OBAN

FIRST FLOOR FLAT, 126 GEORGE STREET, OBAN

Extremely well presented, spacious and modern first floor flat on the town's main thoroughfare and convenient for the centre and local amenities. Superb views to the front overlooking Oban Bay and beyond to the Island of Kerrera with the Isle of Mull in the distance. The well appointed and versatile accommodation comprises: Hall, lounge/diner, modern kitchen, 3 double bedrooms and bathroom. Fully double glazed. Gas central heating. On street permit parking. Communal drying green. Outside store.
Offers over £140,000

3 DRIMVARGIE TERRACE, OBAN

Well-presented top floor flat with a south west facing aspect to the rear and within easy walking distance of the town centre. The accommodation comprises: Hallway, living room, kitchen, 2 double bedrooms and bathroom. Night storage heating. Shared drying green to rear. On street parking available
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114b GEORGE STREET, OBAN

Well situated, mid terraced tenement top floor flat on the towns main thoroughfare and convenient for the centre and local amenities. The accommodation is well appointed and comprises: Hall, lounge, kitchen, bedroom and shower room. Electric Heating. Secure door entry system. Excellent first time buy or buy-to-let opportunity
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BAIRD LUMSDEN

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Spean Bridge 12 miles Fort William 21 miles Oban 66 miles

Loch Lochy Youth Hostel is a stone and slate, detached dwelling, formed over 2 levels with approx. 18 rooms. Set within private policies, with potential for residential and commercial use. Surrounded by associated stables, garages, and outbuildings currently in a derelict state but which, subject to planning permission, may form further residential or commercial dwellings.

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Lot 2: Stables, garages, outbuildings 1.32ha (3.26acres) – Offers Over £195,000
Lot 3: Land 1.60ha (3.95acres) – Offers Over £7,500
Lot 4: Land 4.84ha (11.95acres) – Offers Over £29,500
As a whole – Offers Over £425,000

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Edinburgh Bridge of Allan Oban

HIE
Argyll and the Islands
Earra-Ghaidheal

Business Premises Demand Study

HIE Argyll and the Islands is conducting a survey to establish future demand for commercial and industrial premises and serviced land in the Oban area, Dunoon and Cowal and on the islands of Jura and Tiree.

Business owners are encouraged to participate in the survey to ensure their future property needs and aspirations are considered in HIE's strategic planning.

You can take part in the survey either online or by post.

Registration and details for participation in the online survey can be obtained by emailing: **survey@synergiescotland.co.uk.**

To request the survey paperwork to be posted to you, please telephone Synergie Scotland in Inverness on **01463 227570.**

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

WEST HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS LOCAL PLAN (COVERING LOCHABER, LOCHALSH AND SKYE)

LOCHABER PUBLIC 'DROP-IN' SURGERIES AND WARD FORUM MEETINGS

The Highland Council has published its view on which land should be earmarked for building or development over the next 5-10 years within Lochaber, Lochalsh & Skye. This land will be shown in the new Local Plan and will become the Council's principal framework for deciding on future planning applications and will also shape the investment decisions of other public and private bodies.

A series of "drop-in" surgeries have been arranged throughout February to allow the public and any other interested party to discuss the Plan content with a planning official. The Plan content will be on display at each venue, and is also available locally at all post offices, libraries and principal Council offices. A more formal opportunity to hear and ask questions about the Local Plan will be available via the joint Ward Forum meeting which is detailed below.

Drop-in Surgeries:

Venue	Date	Time	Main Settlements Covered
Kilmallie Hall	4 February	9-11am	Corpach
Braxi Village Hall	4 February	1-3pm	Inverlochy
Caol Community Centre	4 February	3-5pm	Caol/Torlundy
Nevis Centre	5 February	12-2pm	Fort William
Nevis Centre	5 February	7-9pm	Fort William
Glenfinnan House Hotel	8 February	9-11am	Glenfinnan/Lochailort
Astley Hall	8 February	12-2pm	Arisaig
Mallaig & Morar Community Centre	8 February	3-5pm	Mallaig/Knoydart
Lady Lovat Primary School	8 February	7-9pm	Morar
Glengarry & District Community Hall	11 February	9-11am	Invergarry
Spean Bridge Community Centre	11 February	12-2pm	Spean Bridge/Gairlochy
Roy Bridge Memorial Hall	11 February	3-5pm	Roybridge/Inverroy
Onich Village Hall	11 February	7-9pm	Onich/Inchree
Kinlochleven Community Centre	12 February	9-11am	Kinlochleven
St Mary's Hall	12 February	12-2pm	Glencoe
Ballachulish Village Hall	12 February	3-5pm	N & S Ballachulish/Glenachulish
Kentallen & Duror Community Centre	12 February	7-9pm	Kentallen/Duror
Treslaig Hall	18 February	9-11am	Achaphubuil
Ardgour Hall	18 February	1-3pm	Corran/Clovullin
Lochaline Hall	18 February	4:30-6:30pm	Lochaline
Strontian Hall	18 February	7:30-9:30pm	Strontian
Kilchoan Community Centre	19 February	10-12pm	Kilchoan
Salen Hall	19 February	10-12pm	Glenborrodale/Salen
Shielbridge Hall	19 February	2-4pm	Acharacle/Mingarry
Glenuig Hall	19 February	7:30-9:30pm	Glenuig
Isle of Eigg Community Hall	25 February	1-3pm	Small Isles

Public Joint Ward Forum Meeting:

Venue	Date	Time	Area Covered
Caol Community Centre	4 February	6-9pm	All of Lochaber (wards 12 and 22)

Any objections to the Plan content should be sent in writing to the Director of Planning & Development, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX before **5pm on Friday 14 March 2008.** Objections should state the name and address of the objector, the matters to which they relate and the grounds on which they are made.

Further information can be obtained from: Neil Huggan, tel: 01463 702291 or via e-mail to whilp@highland.gov.uk or from the Council's website www.highland.gov.uk/whilp

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd
("Where The Highland Community")

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT SERVICE – LOCHABER AREA

LOCHABER GAELIC MEDIUM ENROLMENTS AUGUST 2008

The Highland Council Education, Culture and Sport Service operate the undernoted Gaelic Medium classes within the Lochaber Area.

Parents who have a child/children who will be five years old by the last day of February 2009 and who are interested in enrolling them in a Gaelic Medium class should do so by contacting the Head Teacher of the school concerned during the week beginning Monday, 28 January 2008. Parents are reminded that they should take their child's birth certificate with them.

Acharacle Primary School
Acharacle
Mrs L Bradley, Head Teacher (Tel: 01967 431645)

Fort William RC Primary School
Fassifern Road
Fort William
Miss L MacDonald, Head Teacher (Tel: 01397 702674)

Mallaig Primary School
Mallaig
Mrs J Smith, Head Teacher (Tel: 01687 462420)

SEIRBHEIS FOGHLAIM, CULTAIR AGUS SPÒRS – SGÌRE LOCH ABAIR

CLÀRADH AIRSON FOGHLAM TRON GHÀIDHLIG LOCH ABAR LÙNASTAL 2008

Tha Seirbheis Foghlaim, Cultair agus Spòrs na Gàidhealtachd a' tabhann chlasaichean Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig anns na sgoiltean a leanas ann an Sgìre Loch Abair.

Far a bheil pàrantan le cloinn a bhios còig bliadhna ron latha mu dheireadh den Ghearran 2008 agus a tha airson an clàradh airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig, bu chòir dhaibh sin a dhèanamh le bruidhinn ri Ceannard na Sgoile san t-seachdain a' tòiseachadh Diluain, 28 Faoilleach 2008. Bu chòir do phàrantan teisteanas breith an leanaibh a thoirt leotha.

Bun-sgoil Àth Tharracail
Àth Tharracail
A' Bh-Uas L Bradley, Ceannard (Fòn: 01967 431645)

Bun-sgoil Chaitligeach a' Ghearasdain
Rathad Fassifern
An Gearasdan
A' Bh-Uas L NicDhòmhnaill, Ceannard (Fòn: 01397 702674)

Bun-sgoil Mhalaig
Malaig
A' Bh-Uas J Smith, Ceannard (Fòn: 01687 462420)

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd
("Where The Highland Community")

EYE AND EYESIGHT TEST FOR DISPLAY SCREEN USERS

Argyll and Bute Council invites registered ophthalmic opticians to tender for work that will allow the Council to continue to fulfil its obligations under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

Application for the tender submission, document specifications and conditions of contract must be made in writing to the undernoted or by telephoning (01546) 604014 or 604015. The last date for lodging of tenders is 12.00 noon on Friday 7th March 2008.

Head of Personnel Services
Whitegates Offices
Whitegates Road
Lochgilphead
Argyll
PA31 8SY

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Notices Under the Town and Country Planning Acts

The applications for Planning Permission listed below, and Environmental Statements where appropriate, together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at the AREA PLANNING OFFICE, FULTON HOUSE, GORDON SQUARE, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6XY between the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and at the location where listed below during normal office hours.

Written comments (whether supporting or opposing the applications) may be made to the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS MANAGER at the address below within the period listed below from the date of publication of this notice.

Applicant Name & Development Address Reference Number	Proposal Description	Location where application may be inspected & reason for Advertisement
Mr H MacDougall Land 200m South East of Oronsay, Back of Keppoch, Arisaig 08/00003/OUTLO	Erection of house	Arisaig Post Office Potential Departure from Development Plan (21 Days)
Mr & Mrs D Michie Old Manse, Onich, Fort William PH336RY 08/00009/FULLO	Erection of pavilion	Ballachulish Post Office Development Affecting Setting of Listed Building (21 Days)

Area Planning and Building Standards Manager, Ross, Skye & Lochaber: Dafydd Jones, Highland Council, Fulton House, Gordon Square, Fort William, PH33 6XY. Tel: (01397) 707015, Fax: (01397) 707022, e-mail: planning.lochaber@highland.gov.uk

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STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LOCH FYNE

Two meetings have been arranged to provide stakeholders with an update on the current status and contents of the draft Loch Fyne ICZM plan prior to the plan going out to public consultation.

These meetings are open to all, but in particular those who live adjacent to, or work on Loch Fyne.

Dates for meetings

Strachur Memorial Hall	Monday 4th February, 7.00-9.00 pm
Lochgilphead Community Centre	Thursday 14th February, 7.15-9.15 pm

The overarching aim of this project is to develop an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan with broad community input and support, which will guide and advise local authority planners, regulators and stakeholders on future development, and secure the long-term sustainable use of the marine resources within Loch Fyne.

Enquiries to Mark Steward, Marine and Coastal Development Unit, Argyll and Bute Council, Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban PA34 4AR - T: 01631 567972 or 565745 E: mark.steward@argyll-bute.gov.uk

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Argyll Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997, RELATED LEGISLATION 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 the location given below, at Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban 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 the undersigned within 14 or 21 days of the appearance of this notice, whichever is applicable as indicated below. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

SCHEDULE – DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PLANS

Ref No: 08/00005/OUT
Applicant: Mr And Mrs Sedgewick
Proposal: Site for erection of dwellinghouse
Site Address: Land North West Of Crannich Farm Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JP
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Salen
Article 9 Vacant Land - 14 Days

Ref No: 08/00057/DET
Applicant: Limekiln Chalets
Proposal: Erection of 6 leisure lodges, laundry room and waste water treatment plant.
Site Address: Land At Tigh-An-Lochan Kilchrenan Argyll And Bute PA35 1HD
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Taynuilt
Section 34 and Article 9 Advert 14 Days

Ref No: 08/00005/OUT
Applicant: Mr And Mrs Sedgewick
Proposal: Site for erection of dwellinghouse
Site Address: Land North West Of Crannich Farm Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JP
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Salen
Article 9 Vacant Land - 14 Days

Area Team Leader Development Control, Planning Services, Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997, RELATED LEGISLATION 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 the location given below, at 67 Chalmers Street, Ardrishaig 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 the undersigned within 14 or 21 days of the appearance of this notice, whichever is applicable as indicated below. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

SCHEDULE – DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PLANS

Ref No: 07/02369/DET
Applicant: Mr Don Dennis
Proposal: Erection of greenhouse
Site Address: Achamore House Isle Of Gigha Argyll And Bute PA41 7AD
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Gigha
S60 Setting of Listed Bldg Ad - 21 Days

Area Team Leader Development Control, Planning Services, 67 Chalmers Street, Ardrishaig, PA30 8DX

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT CONTRARY TO DEVELOPMENT PLAN) (SCOTLAND) DIRECTION 1996

The following planning applications have been lodged for determination with Argyll and Bute Council and are available for inspection during normal working hours at the local area office/Post Office identified below and by logging on to the Council's Website at HYPERLINK "http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk" www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. The proposals contained in the application are considered to be a departure or potential departure from the Development Plan for the area concerned.

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the applications identified below should do so in writing within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice to the Area Team Leader Development Control at the address below.

SCHEDULE – DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PLANS

Ref No: 08/00057/DET
Applicant: Limekiln Chalets
Proposal: Erection of 6 leisure lodges, laundry room and waste water treatment plant - Potential Departure of Policies RUR1 and RUR2 of the Local Plan.
Site Address: Land At Tigh-An-Lochan Kilchrenan Argyll And Bute PA35 1HD
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Taynuilt
A18 Local Plan Potential Depart Adv (21)

Ref No: 08/00107/LIB
Applicant: Mrs Judith Lawson
Proposal: Renewal of stone wall, erection of stud wall and single pitch rear roof
Site Address: 12 Ellenabeich Isle Of Seil Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4RQ
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Balvicar
Regulation 5 Listed Bld Consent - 21 Day

Ref No: 08/00107/LIB
Applicant: Mrs Judith Lawson
Proposal: Renewal of stone wall, erection of stud wall and single pitch near roof
Site Address: 12 Ellenabeich Isle of Seil Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4RQ
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Balvicar
Development in Conservation Area 21 days

Area Team Leader Development Control, Planning Services, Lorn House, Albany Street, Oban

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 repre sentation 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

OPERATIONAL SERVICES

COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
MARINE WORKS: DREDGING AT BRUICHLADDICH PIER, ISLE OF ISLAY

Notice is hereby given that Argyll & Bute Council

has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by the section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, to carry out the above works at Bruichladdich Pier, Isle of Islay:

Description Latitude Longitude

Corner position 55 45.855N 06 21.520W
Corner position 55 45.862N 06 21.520W
Corner position 55 45.862N 06 21.505W
Corner position 55 45.855N 06 21.505W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Kilarrow House, Bowmore, Isle of Islay, PA43 7HW.

Objections relating to safety of navigation, in respect of the application should be made in writing to: Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference: **2SPC\1\4\59**

Argyll & Bute Council

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CULTURE & SPORT SERVICE

NOTICE TO PARENTS ON SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Will your child be five before 28 February 2009?

Yes? Then it's time to enrol them for school.

The next school session starts on Tuesday 19 August 2008. Children who will be five on or before that date must be enrolled for school during Enrolment week commencing 28 January 2008.

Children who will be five between 20 August 2008 and 28 February 2009 may also enrol at this time although it may be decided, after discussion with nursery and school staff, to delay entry to primary school for another year.

Enrolment Details

When	Where	What to bring
3pm 28 January – 1 February 2008	Local School	Child's birth certificate

Where Gaelic medium education is available in a school, parents should indicate their preference when enrolling their child.

If you wish your child to attend a school other than your local school then you will still need to enrol at the local school in the first instance. More information: www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/schools/informationforparents/ or Tel: 01463 702000.

CROFTERS COMMISSION
UGHDARRAS NAN CROITEARAN

Thomas B MacLean is applying to **decroft** part of the croft at Cuin Croft, Kilninian & Kilmore extending to 0.12 ha for the purpose of providing a site for a dwellinghouse. Ref: 4.86.10635

If you consider that the decrofting of this area will adversely affect your crofting interests or that of the local crofting community, please make written representations to the Crofters Commission, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ by 11 February 2008 quoting the above case number. Representations will be copied to the applicant. Comments on any earlier applications cannot be taken into account.

Oban & Lorn Angling Club

A.G.M.

Kings Knoll Hotel, Oban on Sunday January 27th, 2008 at 7pm

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COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
APPLICATION FOR Two Moorings at Loch Spelve

Notice is hereby given that Duncan MacGregor has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Executive, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by the section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, to carry out the above works at the location in the positions(s):

Latitude	Longitude
56 22.991N	005 43.007W
56 22.991N	005 43.012W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspection at Cruachan, Croggon, Isle of Mull, PA63 6AH
Objections relating to safety of navigation, in respect of the application should be made to:
Ports and Harbours Branch, The Scottish Executive, Transport Division 4, Area 2F North, Mailpoint 2B, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference: 2SPC/2/5/308

Duncan MacGregor
Cruachan
Croggon
Isle of Mull
PA63 6AH

COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
PRIVATE MOORING

Notice is hereby given that Iain McGarvie Diamond has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by the section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, to carry out the above works at:

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Mooring	56*21.599N	005*27.600W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Public Library, Albany Street, Oban

Objections relating to safety of navigation, in respect of the application should be made in writing to:

Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference: 2SPC\2\5\323

Iain Diamond, Dunadd, 17 Barran, Kilmore
PA34 4XR

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COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
MARINE WORKS: CONSTRUCTION OF A SEA OUTFALL

Notice is hereby given that Knoydart Construction has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by the section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, to carry out the above works at "The Old Slip", Inverie, Knoydart.

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Start and end positions	7 02 163N	05 40 881W
	57 02 145N	05 40 893W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Knoydart Library, Inverie, Knoydart, PH41 4PL.

Objections relating to safety of navigation, in respect of the application should be made in writing to: Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the notice quoting reference: 2SPC\1\6\56 Knoydart Construction

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Argyll Bute COUNCIL

AQUALIBRIUM LEASE

January 2008

Expressions of interest are sought for the lease of the childcare facility at Aqualibrium, Campbeltown, Argyll.

The subjects of the lease extend to 100 square metres approximately and comprises a kitchen area, toilets, large open area, office/store and 2 side rooms.

The successful operator will be expected to take on a full repairing insuring lease at an initial annual rental of £7,000, incorporating periodic upward only rent reviews.

The length of the lease on offer is negotiable but is expected to be for a minimum period of 5 years.

The successful operator will be responsible for all other occupational costs arising throughout the duration of their lease.

The business must include a childcare element in its operations.

Interest parties should submit an outline business plan by Friday 22nd February, including the following information:-

- Nature of proposed business operation.
- Proposed hours of operation
- Operators current occupation and/or previous experience
- Financial projection

Please return to:- Muriel Kupris, Community Resources Manager, WHHA Building, Crannog Lane, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

Find all these jobs online at our new website

West Coast Jobs www.westcoastjobs.co.uk

Caledonian MacBrayne
Hebridean & Clyde Ferries

CalMac Ferries Limited has a requirement for :

Port Assistant
Port Ellen
Rate of Pay £7.31 per hour **Ref 164-SB**

Applications are invited for the position of Port Assistant mainly based at Port Ellen Ferry Terminal but required to relieve at Port Askaig.

Reporting to the Port Manager, you will need a flexible approach to your day-to-day responsibilities. Your duties will include customer enquiries, sales of passenger/vehicle tickets, ticket collection, cash handling and control of passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking from vessels.

You must be computer literate, with excellent verbal and written communication skills. You are expected to have a flexible approach to working as shift and weekend work will be involved. You must be customer focused, have a clear understanding of the customer interface and have a proactive approach to customer care. A driving licence is essential.

If you are interested in this position, please respond by sending your CV quoting reference number 164-SB no later than Tuesday 12 February 2008.

Port Assistant
Kennacraig
Rate of Pay £7.31 per hour **Ref 165-SB**

Applications are invited for the position of Port Assistant based at Kennacraig Ferry Terminal.

Reporting to the Port Manager, you will need a flexible approach to your day-to-day responsibilities. Your responsibilities will include, all duties connected with ship movements, gangways and securing of vessels sale of passenger/vehicle tickets, ticket collection, cash handling and control of passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking from vessels. Dealing with customer enquiries, use of VHF and PA systems

You must be computer literate, with excellent verbal and written communication skills. You are expected to have a flexible approach to working as shift and weekend work will be involved. Please note a driving licence is preferable. You must be customer focused, have a clear understanding of the customer interface and have a proactive approach to customer care.

If you are interested in this position, please respond by sending your CV quoting reference number 165-SB no later than Friday 1 February 2008.

Seasonal Port Assistants (5 Posts)
Mallaig (3 Posts)
Armadale (2 Posts)
Rate of Pay £6.68 per hour **Ref 169-SG**

Applications are invited for the positions of seasonal Port Assistants based at Mallaig and Armadale from March until October 2008.

Reporting to the Port Manager, you will need a flexible approach to your day-to-day responsibilities. Your duties may include mooring operations, customer enquiries, sales of passenger/vehicle tickets, cash handling and control of passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking from vessels.

You must be computer literate, with excellent verbal and written communication skills. You are expected to have a flexible approach to working as shift and weekend work will be involved.

You must be customer focused, have a clear understanding of the customer interface and have a proactive approach to customer care.

If you are interested in this position, please respond by sending your CV quoting reference number 169-SB no later than Friday 8 February 2008.

Nightwatchman
Mallaig
Rate of Pay £5.71 per hour **Ref 168-SB**

Applications are invited for the position of Nightwatchman based at Mallaig Ferry Terminal.

The successful applicant will responsible for carrying out hourly fire patrols, checking mooring ropes, gangway, safety nets and securing ropes. In this role you will also be responsible for any unauthorised person/s on board, call out of ship's crew when required, maintaining mess and engine rooms, and complying with all instructions as listed in Night Order Book.

The successful candidate will be required to work ten hour shifts. You are expected to have a flexible approach to working as the shift pattern will be variable and dependant on local circumstances. You must be customer focused, have a clear understanding of the customer interface and have a proactive approach to customer care.

If you are interested in this position, please respond by sending your CV quoting reference number 168-SB no later than Friday 8 February 2008.

Caledonian MacBrayne HR (UK) Limited
Ferry Terminal, Gourock, PA19 1QP
t: 01475 650100 f: 01475 650268

CalMac Ferries Limited is an equal opportunities employer.

Scottish Sea Farms

Senior Freshwater Technicians
Mull & Morvern

Scottish Sea Farms Ltd has an immediate vacancy for Senior Freshwater Technicians to work on our freshwater operations in the Mull and Morvern area. The successful candidates will have over 4 years practical experience across a range of disciplines involved in freshwater smolt production from egg input to the final preparation and transfer of smolt to sea in both tank and cage rearing systems. You should be able to demonstrate a strong drive and ability to continuously develop and maintain the best and most secure rearing and welfare conditions for fish stocks

We are looking for highly motivated individuals with good leadership and communication skills and the experience to organise daily tasks and oversee the sites in the Managers absence. The successful candidates should be able to make this happen with a focus always on Health & Safety performance, staff development and a willingness to help Mull/Morvern freshwater sites exceed Scottish Sea Farms internal and customers' quality expectations.

The Mull and Morvern freshwater sites have stable, sustainable production plans and produce smolt of high quality. Both tank and loch sites have had recent investment and development in areas of fish handling, tanks, feeding systems, oxygenation, cage & net infrastructure.

Salary and conditions will be attractive, (with additional payment for Alarm and Duty weekends) and will reflect the skill, experience and responsibility asked of the successful applicants. Assistance can be offered with accommodation.

So, if you have the strengths we need and wish to develop with one of Scotland's leading aquaculture companies then please write enclosing a CV, to **Claire Scott, Scottish Sea Farms Ltd, Laurel House, Laurelhill Business Park, Stirling FK7 9JQ or email claire.scott@scottishseafarms.com.**

For an informal discussion, please contact Mike Bauermeister on 07717 760 722.

Mid Highland Community Health Partnership (CHP) NHS Highland
Belford Hospital, Fort William
Pharmacy Department

Senior Pharmacy Assistant Band 4
Part Time, 18.75 hours per week
Permanent
£16,853 - £20,261 pro rata **Ref ES9/08/05**

This is an opportunity to join an expanding team in this department. Within this new role, you will be expected to develop the role, which is designed to maintain the GP Out of Hours services within Belford Hospital, as well as contribute to the day to day running of the department.

You will ideally possess an SVQ level 2 in Pharmacy Services, or a recognised equivalent, but vocational training to the SVQ Level 2 in Pharmacy Services must be provided for those not possessing this qualification, which is required by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

You will be a team player within either the primary or secondary care settings and you will need good communication skills and networking ability. Computing skills are essential, as is a current driving licence.

For further information, contact: Alex Kelso, Manager on 01397 702481.

Application forms available from Recruitment and Employment Services Section, Human Resources Department, Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, IV2 3UJ, Telephone 01463 705159 or Email: recruitment@raigmore.scot.nhs.uk

Closing date for applications: Thursday 7th February 2008.

Working with you to make Highland the healthy place to be. www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk

OES

Oban Electrical Services Ltd
require
Apprentice Electricians

Apply in writing to:
Mr S Dunlop, Managing Director,
Oban Electrical Services Ltd
19 Stevenson Street, Oban PA34 5NA

North Argyll House
Bealach an Righ, Oban *Care Home for the Elderly*

New Posts

Care Assistant
32 hours per week
Experience not necessary as full training given

Domestic Laundry Assistant
20 hours per week

Pay award pending for both positions

For an application form please contact Mrs M Telfer 01631 562168

MACLEOD
MACLEOD CONSTRUCTION LTD

Require

Reception and Administration Assistant

Knowledge of switchboard and computer software essential.
The successful applicant who demonstrates a willingness to learn may progress to further training within different departments of the company.
Salary based on previous experience
Applications in writing to:

Mrs L. Millward
MacLeod Construction Ltd
Kilmory Industrial Estate
Lochgilphead
PA31 8RR
or
Email: **jobs@mkmacleod.co.uk**

KILMARTIN MUSEUM

Museum Reception / Shop Manager

Excellent customer service, retail skills and supervisory experience required

Further details from: richard@kilmartin.org

Kilmartin
Lochgilphead
Argyll PA31 8RQ
01546 510278

SKIPPER AND CHEF

required for small cruise vessels operating on West Coast of Scotland from Holy Loch and Oban April-October.

Would suit couple.
Minimum skipper qualification
Yachtmaster Offshore Motor or equivalent.

Further details from Andrew Manwell
07917809486
or email andrew.manwell@btconnect.com

ÙRACHADH UIBHIST
Claddach Kirkibost Centre
Isle of North Uist HS6 5EP
Scottish Charity SC 024080

Community Business Manager
Salary £ 18,000 - £ 20,000 per annum, dependent on qualifications and experience. 37.5 hrs per week flexible

Applications are invited for this challenging and varied post in the Claddach Kirkibost Centre, developing services for the community and stimulating business and social development within the Centre.

For an application form, job description and information leaflet please telephone: 01876 580 390 or email office@claddach-kirkibost.org

Closing date for submission of applications: Monday 4th February
Funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Lloyds TSB Foundation

COOK/HOUSEKEEPER
required for Perthshire Family Estate

The successful applicant will be an experienced general cook seeking a permanent post and have a current driving licence. The position comes with usual benefits and excellent accommodation, generous salary by agreement.

Write with full details, remuneration sought and current photograph to
Box No:96
Oban Times, Oban, PA 34 4HB.

Gleaner oil and gas

Applications are invited for the following posts: -

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT
Mull Depot

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT
(Temporary 6 months)
Islay Depot

We are looking for persons with office experience. A good telephone manner and communication skills along with competent computer skills (Word and Excel) is required together with an aptitude to work with figures.

Our Company offer good employment conditions and it is essential for the above positions that applicants are, enthusiastic, of smart appearance and have good customer care skills

Our Company operate to the following standards:

Quality	BS EN ISO 9001:2000
Environment	BS EN 1SO 14001
Investors in People	IIP

In the first instance, applications, in writing only, giving brief details to: -

The Managing Director, Gleaner Oils Ltd
Milnfield, Elgin, Moray. IV30 1UU
Or
by e-mail to: sl@gleaner.co.uk

SHELL DISTRIBUTOR

ARGYLL COLLEGE
A' Cruthachadh Oilthigh na Gaidhealtachd's nan Eilean
Creating the University of the Highlands and Islands

Argyll College has a purpose-built childcare nursery adjacent to our learning centre at Dunstaffnage, which is open 5 days per week for 50 weeks of the year. The nursery will not close during local or national public holidays apart from the 2 week Christmas/New Year period.
The opening hours will be Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm.

We now require the following:

Part-time cook

We require a cook for 20 hours per week (10am - 2pm Mon - Fri) over the 50 weeks of the year the nursery will be open, to provide meals for young children in line with healthy eating guidelines and following dietary requirements. Food Hygiene Certificate preferable.
The hourly rate is £8.17 including annual leave allowance.

Applications in the form of a CV (maximum 2 pages A4) and one page covering letter should be sent by **Monday February 4th 2008** to: Angela O'Byrne, Nursery Manager, Argyll College, Dunstaffnage Learning Centre, Oban, PA37 1PZ. Fax: 01631 559501.
E mail: angela.obyrne@argyllcollege.ac.uk

Applications from non smokers preferred.
Full clean driving licence essential.

YOUR LOCAL COLLEGE

Assistant Gardener
Jura House Garden

Enthusiastic, experienced gardener for our organic walled garden and grounds. Main duties, general maintenance of garden and grounds and assisting with nursery. Also part-time work for spouse available. Written applications including C.V to

Peter and Mirjam Cool, Cabrach, Isle of Jura, Argyll PA60 7XX.
E-mail: **mirjamcool@aol.com.**
Tel: **01496 820315**
Web site: **www.jurahouseandgardens.co.uk**

Groom Wanted for Eventing Yard
in Kilbarchan, Renfrewshire.
5½ day week.
We require a keen, enthusiastic person to join in family run yard.
For further details please call: 01505 704531 or 07831 378195

Highland Heathers Ltd

Thank you to all applicants for our recent job advert. We have filled the positions

1

Scottish Sea Farms

Site Manager
Ardtornish Hatchery, Morvern

Scottish Sea Farms Ltd is looking to recruit an experienced site manager to take full responsibility for the operation of Ardtornish Hatchery and its associated freshwater cage site in Morvern, Argyll.

Ardtornish is one of Scottish Sea Farms core freshwater production facilities, delivering the highest quality Atlantic salmon smolts to the company's own marine farms by producing fry & parr. The site is a proven modern tank farm equipped with hatchery, flow-through and full recirculation facilities and production techniques to enable stable egg incubation, start-feeding, grading, vaccination, photoperiod control, on-growing and fish transfer.

The successful applicant will have the ability to establish and develop site infrastructure, manage all incubation, hatching and on-growing procedures, while seeking innovation and always promoting the highest standards of fish welfare and husbandry practice. Additional responsibilities will include a commitment to constantly limiting environmental impact and your role will demand an aptitude to manage the whole relationship of a farm to its local and wider community.

If you have the skills to develop and motivate others and are committed to the highest standards of health and safety then we would like to hear from you. A job description and company background can be obtained by contacting Claire Scott on 01786 445521 and quoting the reference above. If you are still interested and wish to apply for this unique opportunity to work with one of Scotland's leading aquaculture companies, then please write enclosing a CV, to **Claire Scott, Scottish Sea Farms Ltd, Laurel House, Laurelhill Business Park, Stirling FK7 9JQ or email claire.scott@scottishseafarms.com.**

Closing Date: Friday 8th February 2008

highland wood energy

Vacancy: **Project Engineer: Design and project management of heating system installations.**
Location: **Fort William**

Highland Wood Energy Ltd are one of the UK's leading automated wood heating system specialists. Due to increased workload, we are looking to recruit a mechanical and electrical services engineer to assist in the delivery of projects across Scotland.

This is a unique opportunity to play an integral role in a company at the forefront of one of the most exciting areas of the renewable energy sector.

The role will involve design work in the hydraulic and electrical integration of automated wood boilers into new and existing buildings. It will also involve the preparation of tenders, management of in-house labour and sub contractors, and the delivery of complete installations to a high standard.

The role will suit a driven individual with relevant qualifications and experience in the design and contract management of HVAC installations for commercial and public sector buildings. As a small scale company working on numerous and varied projects, this role demands flexibility combined with a creative and hands on approach.

The position is based at our rurally located office, near to Fort William, and situated directly below Ben Nevis and surrounding mountains. Extensive travel throughout Scotland will be required.

Salary is negotiable and a competitive package will be offered to the right candidate.

Please send a copy of your CV and covering letter to **craig@highlandwoodenergy.co.uk, or by post to Highland Wood Energy, Lochaber Rural Complex, Torlundy, Fort William, PH33 6SW.**

Closing date for applications: **6 February 2008**

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New Audi - new desire

AUDI has tried long and hard to make its rival for the BMW 3-Series as desirable, and hasn't quite succeeded in terms of image nor ability.

At least until now.

While the 3-Series may still have the edge on ultimate driver appeal, the 2008 A4 has far greater depth and is a more rounded product.

As beautifully finished as ever, Audi has ensured the A4 saloon is priced a little lower than its equivalent 3-Series rival and is more generous with equipment.

While the BMW is still a fine product - and let's not forget, so is the 2007 Mercedes-Benz C-Class - the A4 now seems to be better at more disciplines than its key rivals.

Styling is subjective, but surely more people will find the A4 more attractive than the contemporary 3-Series saloon.

Build quality was never in question, but now the A4 offers unrivalled interior space, better comfort, improved driving dynamics and excellent refinement.

First impressions are always important and the A4 accommodated our party of four easily.

Interior space is improved vastly over the previous A4, meaning the saloon can now accommodate five adults with plenty of knee room and shoulder room in the back - a result of the wheelbase being extended by about six inches over the previous version of the car.

Electronic climate control is fitted as standard, with a three-zone system available on SE models and above. Four electric windows are standard. Electric adjustment for the front seats is available and ventilated seats can be chosen in the front, too. The outer rear seats can also be heated.

We had five bags, two pairs of wellies and three jackets to go into the boot but there was still plenty of room for more.

Minimum boot volume in the Audi A4 is 480 litres, despite moving the battery to the rear and regardless of whether quattro four-wheel drive versions are chosen. There are vertical side walls in the boot and a flat floor.

An optional luggage pack can be chosen, comprising a net, retaining hooks and a 12-volt power socket.

Luggage capacity is increased to a massive 962 litres with the rear seats folded.

There is an option of a 'ski hatch' from the boot to the passenger compartment through the rear armrest.

The glove compartment is a decent size as are the door bins.

Having settled into the A4, we became quickly accustom to the driving position and the easily seen controls and dials before we took the A4 out on the road between Fort William and Glasgow Airport to put it through its paces.

There is no major revolution in the engine line-up for the A4, but the range benefits from subtle modifications and improvements.

Power is reduced slightly in the 1.8T engine (160bhp instead of 163bhp in the outgoing A4) but maximum torque - real-world pulling power - is increased from 166lb-ft to 184lb-ft, and arrives 450rpm lower down the rev range than before. It means the 1.8T is no slower than the previous version, and feels quite brisk on the road. The popular 2.0 TDI hasn't changed much on paper, but the adoption of 'common rail' technology rather than Volkswagen Group's original 'pumpe duse' or 'unit injector' system results in a huge improvement in refinement.

The 2.0TDI we tested slid effortlessly through the twisting sections of the A82 between Fort William and Corran Ferry although a build-up of heavy commercial traffic didn't allow us to open the throttle properly until across Ballachulish Bridge and into Glencoe when the Audi would hardly have needed the drop from sixth into fifth gear before gliding past slower moving traffic.

All manual transmissions are six speed gearboxes. Quattro models are offered with conventional six-speed automatics, while front-wheel drive versions are given Multitronic where auto is available.

As well as all the safety features you would expect in a car of this type, minimum of six airbags, electronic stability control and anti-whiplash head restraints, there are additional options that move it ahead of rivals. The A4 can be chosen with adaptive cruise control, which maintains a set distance with the vehicle in front, a system that warns the driver when another vehicle is in the blindspot and a lane-departure warning system that vibrates through the steering wheel if the car crosses a line on the road without indicating. A tyre pressure sensor can be chosen, and run-flat tyres that can be driven on at up to 50mph for up to 50 miles even when all pressure is lost are offered on 17-inch wheels. There are Isofix child seat mounting points on the outer rear seats, and additional points on the front passenger seat can be specified at no extra cost.

The braking system was tested when we dropped into Bridge of Orchy as snow on the peaks had encouraged red deer to abandon the hills for the softer lower slopes. Their sudden and pacy detour across the road ahead of us made us brake harder than was actually required but the Audi responded smoothly and gently, even failing to wake two of our sleeping passengers.

Glencoe passed quickly and Tyndrum offered a stop for coffee and a comfort-break. We had considered a fuel top-up but the Audi proved frugal and we had more than sufficient to complete our journey.

The four-cylinder engines in the Audi A4 offer significantly better fuel consumption and lower carbon dioxide emissions than the versions used in the previous A4.

The 3.0 TDI is also claimed to be the cleanest diesel ever produced in terms of other emissions such as nitrogen oxides and particulates. Most A4s will be sold using company money and driven by company car drivers who will be looking mainly to the lower emission diesel versions to minimise their tax liability, so more of the 'greener' versions will end up on the market.

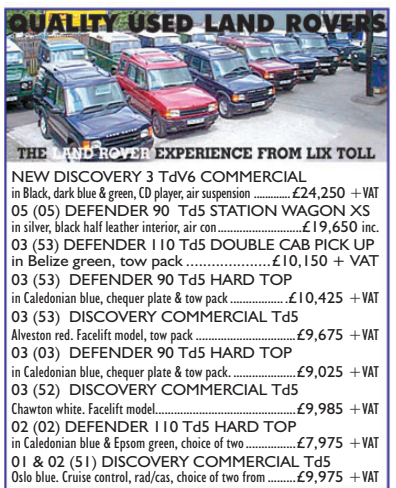
This journey proved somewhat uneventful and even the 'never ending' stretch of narrow, slow, twisting Tarmac between Crianlarich to Tarbet was covered with comparable ease.

Arrival at Glasgow Airport ahead of schedule saw no stiff backs and aching limbs associated with softer suspensions and there was a genuine reluctance on the part of our travellers to leave the spacious leather interior of our Audi for a cramped conditions ahead on our charter flight.

If your considering a family sized car with an added bit of style, the new A4 could be just the ticket. They will be keenly priced so don't expect much of a discount, although there may be room for a dealer to manoeuvre on petrol models. Worthwhile options include Audi Drive Select if you like a sportier feel on the road, upgraded audio system, leather seats and black or metallic paint. Parking sensors are often a way of avoiding low-speed scrapes, and while we don't normally recommend xenon headlamps where fitted as options, on the A4 they come with LED day-time running lights. They make the car very distinctive, although won't please oncoming traffic at night.

New prices look set to undercut equivalent models from BMW and Mercedes-Benz, and offer higher levels of equipment. All engines are frugal given their power outputs, although there is no answer to the clever fuel-saving Efficient Dynamics technology currently being offered by BMW.

Warranties are set at 3 years or 60,000 miles and resale values will be strong, particularly on diesel models, although servicing every 9000 miles, or long-term servicing regime up to 19,000 miles set when ordering, can be expensive.



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RECRUITMENT

Scottish SeaFarms

PART TIME MINI BUS DRIVERS

Scottish Sea Farms Ltd South Shian Connel Oban PA37 1SB are looking for part time mini bus drivers to transport staff to and from Oban to their plant at South Shian.

Applicants must be either in possession of a UK licence issued prior to 01-01-97 or a category D1 driving licence authorising them to drive mini buses up to 16 seats.

PART TIME FILLETING STAFF

Scottish Sea Farms Ltd are looking for part time staff for their new filleting department situated at their premises at South Shian Connel by Oban.

Initially the work would be on Fridays and Sundays with other days becoming available as the workload increases.

Competitive salary and flexible hours are on offer for both positions.

All applicants should contact the company on 01631 574000 and speak to Margaret to arrange an interview.

AC GOLD Services

AC Gold Services will be working on a long term contract in the Argyll and Bute areas and are seeking electricians with good experience.

Please apply by phoning **01786 849099**, and either fax your C.V to **01786 849 098** or e-mail to **mail@acgoldservices.co.uk**

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20 Hours per week
Based in Tobermory

For a detailed job description please contact
Morag Brown on
01688 302876

Ideally the applicant will possess an educational or vocational qualification in office administration or a related subject.

A strong interest in community development and good local knowledge would be beneficial.

Applications available from
Tobermory Harbour Association
Tel: **01688 302876**
e-mail: **morag.brown@tobermoryharbour.co.uk**
www.tobermoryharbour.co.uk

Closing Date for Applications
Friday 8th February 2008

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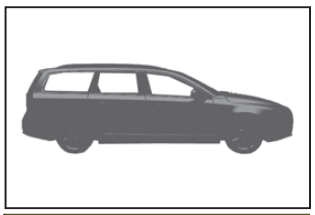

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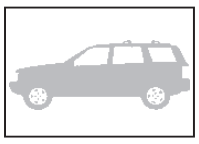

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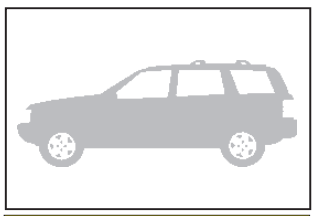

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CARS PARTS AND ACCESSORIES

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RAC Pressure Washer vgc 2200W, £30. Telephone 01631 720219.

ROOF BOX Thule Atlantis 200 440L, used once, £120. Telephone 01631 720219.

CLOTHING

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4ft DIVAN WITH pine head board, £45. Telephone 07873 261056.

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KITCHEN TABLE, pine, four chairs, £25ono. Telephone 01631 788937.

PINE DRESSING table, 6 drawer, £75. Telephone 01546 602764.

PINE TRIPLE dressing table, mirror, very good condition, £40. Telephone 01546 602764.

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PINE BED side cabinets, one drawer £25 each, good condition. Telephone 01546 602764.

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PERSONALS

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ON YOUR 18TH BIRTHDAY ON 30/1/2008

Love Mum, Neil, Martin and Liam

RENA CAMERON

Sincere thanks to all the people of Appin, Duror and Kentallen, who contributed to my retirement presentation and to all those who sent gifts, cards and good wishes.

A big THANKYOU to all who organised my Special night on January 12th. It was a wonderful evening which will be long remembered.

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PLEASE NOTE: DEADLINE MONDAY 4.00pm

TO ADVERTISERS - • Only 1 item per coupon • No cars or parts • No boats or parts • No livestock • No business ads or traders • All adverts will appear space permitting • All advertisements must be on a valid coupon • Coupon must be from the previous weeks newspaper

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thereafter £2.00 per line (+VAT)

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See Trade Classified Page for Rates

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Luing cattle are re-introduced to the Irish Republic

LUING cattle returned to Eire this week when three pedigree heifers, in-calf to the well-known bull, Benhar Dynamite, left the McNees' Woodend Farm at Armadale, West Lothian bound for Naas in County Kildare.

Colin Gleeson from Prosperous has watched the breed for several years now and is pioneering their re-introduction to the Irish Republic having become the first active member of the Luing Cattle Society from that country.

It is understood that in the very early days of the breed Luings were exported to Eire but pedigree status was never maintained and no progeny recorded.

This is all about to change with Colin Gleeson hopeful that some of the heifers will produce heifer calves in the Spring, giving an increase in herd size right away.

These heifers were, in fact, scheduled to reach their new home in mid August, ready to be displayed by the Luing Cattle Society at the Irish Ploughing Match at Tullamore in September - but movement restrictions put paid to that.

The promotion went ahead without live cattle and attracted a lot of interested suckler cow breeders, some of whom have already made follow up visits to herds in the UK.

It is now hoped that the breed can be put on show when the same event is held in Kilkenny in 2008 and anticipated that these three heifers will be the first of many to make their way to the Republic.

Electronic tagging will 'cripple' sheep industry in Scotland

ELECTRONIC tagging will 'cripple' the sheep industry, the National Farmers Union of Scotland (NFUS) is warning Westminster and Holyrood politicians this week.

NFUS vice-president Nigel Miller claims that recording individual movements of sheep is simply unworkable.

The European Commission wants to introduce electronic tagging so it can trace the movement of sheep across the continent.

It is understood that the Scottish Government will announce a trial of the technology for later this year.

But Mr Miller said this week: 'The recording of individual sheep identities on movement delivers no more disease control or food safety benefits than batch recording. That's why it is vital that the EC amends the regulations to allow the recording of batch movements.

'We cannot sleepwalk into electronic tagging in 2009. Unless the trial can satisfy the conditions we have laid out, the sheep industry will be crippled.

'If the trial shows that electronic identification is not ready for full-scale implementation in Scotland, the government will have to return to Brussels and force a re-think.'

Kintyre Blackface breeders host stockjudging at Glencreggan

AROUND 70 entrants took part in the annual Kintyre Blackface Sheep Breeders' Association stockjudging competition.

The contest at Glencreggan Farm, Glenbarr, saw Lochgilphead farmer Robert Shaw judge the sheep which were provided by members.

The sheep judging competition at Glencreggan.

c04shp01

It attracted competitors from across Argyll with a large contingent from local young farmers clubs.

Organisers would like to thank Adam and Lesley Armour for allowing the use of their sheep shed at Glencreggan, Argyll Bakeries for the catering and many local businesses which provided prizes.

Results:

Open competition, 1 Robert Shaw, Mid Argyll, 2 John Casey, Ballywilline, 3 Archie Clark, West Drumore;

Ladies: 1 Lorraine McPhail, Skernish, 2 Lorna Semple, Lochead, 3=Barbara Kirk, Oatfield and Nicola Gilmour, Largiemore;

Junior, 1 Greig Newlands, 2 Graeme Macmillan, 3 Arran McCallum.

Team prize: John Casey, Archie Clark, Andrew Reid, Campbeltown.

Young Farmer's prize: Stuart Campbell, Ormsary, Mid Argyll.

Ronnie and Joan MacLaughlin of Glenachulish recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. f04gol01

Couple find gold together

Ballachulish farmer celebrates a lifelong partnership

AFTER a successful lifelong partnership in work and marriage Ballachulish couple Ronnie and Joan McLauchlan are celebrating their Golden wedding anniversary.

The couple, who have worked together in the farming industry for almost 50 years, celebrated the milestone with close family last Friday, January 17, and are planning a much larger party when their daughter returns from Australia in April.

Ronnie farmed Gordeneorn at Ballachulish and the Ballachulish Home Farm after the couple moved to the area in 1959.

They were married in Logierait Church near Pitlochry and moved to the Ballachulish area from Perthshire as soon as a farm became available.

Ronnie said: 'It doesn't feel like 50 years. We've had a very happy life.

'When you're farming you're together all the time helping each other and working together.

'We're a team.'

Ronnie was a well-known advocate of the Luing cattle breed and for many years was a fieldsman for the Luing Cattle Society, checking on herds and promoting the breed. He was also a high respected figure on the board of directors of West Highland Crofters and Farmers Ltd

After what was intended to be his semi retirement, Ronnie and his son converted one of the former farming fields near Glenachulish into a popular nine-hole golf course called The Dragon's Tooth.

Despite running the course for three years Ronnie said he was still too busy to take up golf himself and decided to sell the course in 2004.

Neighbours, Ballachulish House now own The Dragon's Tooth Golf Course.

Joan, whose maiden name is Marshall, said: 'It just seems like yesterday we were married. We have a son, three daughters and ten grandchildren so we're kept busy.'

The couple now live in Ballachulish farmhouse and still tend to a small number of sheep.

Scottish foot and mouth survey

FARMERS and crofters are being invited to have their say on how the foot and mouth outbreak in Surrey was handled north of the border.

The Scottish Government is seeking comments on how relevant the current contingency planning arrangements are and how the strategy could be potentially developed.

It is also looking to evaluate how effective the co-ordination between local authorities and the Animal Health Agency was and the use of scientific and veterinary expertise at the time of last August's movement restrictions, which saw agricultural shows and sales cancelled leaving farmers in limbo.

Fish farm sites to be examined

THE SITING of fish farms will come under the microscope of a new group tasked with using the coastline in a 'sustainable' way.

Among the members of the expert group include the Scottish Association for Marine Science, Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers, Association of Salmon Fishery Boards and the Scottish Fishermen's Federation.

The Scottish Government will look to the group for advice and Environment minister Michael Russell says aquaculture has become a 'vitally important' industry in Scotland as it generates £350million per year for the economy.

'But there is considerable untapped potential on our shores and with Scotland already famous for its salmon, we should take advantage of this opportunity.

'I look forward to considering the group's recommendations later this year' he said.

Market report

DINGWALL Dingwall and Highland Marts

Lambs:
Cheviot: Rhifail, Strathnaver, £49;
TexelX: Badanloch Estate, Kinbrace, £48.50;
SuffolkX: Achscrabster, Thurso, £48.50;
Blackface: Drynie Farm, Dingwall, £44;
BeltexX: Whitebog, £44;
Mule: Calrossie Mains, Nigg, £39.20;
CharolaisX: Netherside, Castletown, £39.

Ewes:
TexelX: – Charleston, North Kessock, £49;
Cheviot: South Balkeith, Tain, £47.50;
Texel: Lochlait, Abriachan, £47;
SuffolkX: 8 Englishtonmuir, Bunchrew, £45;
CHM: Bindal, Porthmahomack, £44;
Mule: The Cloy, £36.50;
Cross: Sunnylea, Balblair, £35;
Bluefaced Leic: Whitebog, £34.50.
Rams:
Cheviot: Torrish Estate, Helmsdale, £160;
Suffolk: Drynie Farm, Dingwall, £42;
Bluefaced: Lairgandour, Daviot, £37;
Blackface: Moy & Ruthven Farms, £37;
Texel: Badanloch Estate, £37.
Wedders:
SuffolkX: No. 8 Englishtonmuir, £29;
Cheviot: Strathaird, Broadford, £25;
Cross: No. 2 Balbeg, Glenurquhart, £23.50;
Blackface: Fiddlefield, Muir of Ord, £20.50

Nature Times

Snow buntings can be seen on the coast and in the hills in winter, and are surprisingly tame

IF YOU are walking in the hills this winter, even if there is snow lying, you might be lucky enough to come across a flock of snow buntings – as I did last week. We are fortunate that these delightful birds can also be commonly seen on the coast, when large flocks come to Britain from their Arctic breeding grounds to spend the winter.

Snow buntings are similar in size and shape to other buntings, such as the yellowhammer and the corn bunting. They are surprisingly tame and it is possible to approach them quite closely. They feed entirely on the ground in open habitats, and seem to be in constant motion as they search for food – mainly seeds in the winter, but insects are important food in the summer.

The snow bunting is one of Britain's rarest breeding birds, mostly confined in summer to areas of high ground with rocks and patches of late-lying snow, above about 1000m in a few parts of the Highlands. Outside Scotland the breeding range extends across the arctic tundra of northern Europe, Asia and North America, and islands in the Arctic Ocean and the Bering Sea. Indeed the snow bunting has the most northerly breeding range of all songbirds.

The male is unmistakeable at breeding time, with pied plumage - predominantly white, with black wing tips, back and tail. Black eyes and a black beak add to his striking appearance. The inner part of the wings is white and these wing patches show up well in flight. The female has a warm brown and black back, a brown and white head, and white underparts with the same white wing patches as the male. In winter the male is more like the female in appearance, but with a stronger white wing bar.

A flock of snow buntings in flight attracts attention, both visually and aurally. The white wing patches give them a fluttering appearance, earning them the nickname of 'snowflakes'. They also make gentle, tinkling calls as they fly, a musical, rippling sound which is hard to represent on paper - try 'tirrirrirrip'!

Outwith the breeding season the summer population is boosted considerably by birds from more northerly countries. Based on ringing studies it is thought that our wintering flocks come mainly from Iceland, and possibly Greenland, rather than Scandinavia, but more studies are needed to be sure. Whilst some birds frequent the high hills in winter, most occur in coastal habitats, especially sand dunes and saltmarshes. No other bird in Britain spends the winter across such a wide range of altitude and climate – a remarkably hardy species, but how will climate change affect its breeding range?

Highland Darter

Winners of the Nature Times Christmas Quiz were Mrs A Hendry from Strathpeffer and Alex Anderson, from Achnacloich, Connel, who will each receive a signed book from our Highland Darter

Whitehill Limousin to 161.4 p per kilo at Stirling's Wednesday sale

UNITED Auctions sold 636 store cattle at Stirling last Wednesday.

Bullocks averaged 122.97p (-0.35p) and sold to 161.4p per kg for a 254kg Limousin cross from Whitehill, Galston and £690 for a 540kg LimX from Ladylands, Kippen.

Heifers averaged 124.86p (+2.40p) and sold to 141.6p per kg for a 279kg Charolais cross from Gartenbantrick, Gartocharn and £665 for a 542kg Charolais cross from Couplaw, Stonehouse.

Cast cows averaged 78.23p and sold to 101.4p for a Simmental cross from Southwick Farms, Southwick and £795 for a Charolais cross from Daldorn, Doune.

Limousin in-calf heifers from Graystale sold to £850 while Limousin heifers with calf at foot from Gowstone sodl to £1080 and from East Blairquhanan to £800.

Dingwall prime sale

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 76 prime cattle and 989 prime sheep at Dingwall last Tuesday.

Prime bullocks averaged 132.9p (-4.1p) and sold to 143p per kg for a 555kg Limousin from Drummond Farm, Evanton, to Woodhead Brothers, Turriff, and for a 660kg Limousin cross from Findon Mains, Culbokie, to John M Munro Ltd, Dingwall, and £957 for a 725kg Charolais cross from No. 3 Milton of Culloden, Culloden.

The heifers averaged 137.4 p (+2.4p) and sold to 148p per kg for a 540kg Limousin from Drummond Farm, to Fraser Brothers, Dingwall, and £906.25 for a 625kg Blonde D'Aquitaine cross from Mountrich Farm, Dingwall to John M Munro Ltd..

Old season lambs averaged 104.2p (+0.7p) and sold to 120.5p per kg for 39kg Beltex crosses from Alanaha, Nairn, and £51, and 119.5p per kilo, for a pen of 41, 44kg Texel crosses from Charleston, North Kessock, both to Woodhead Brothers, Turriff.

Stirling prime sale

UNITED Auctions sold 5386 prime sheep including 4205 hoggs and 1181 ewes and rams at Stirling last Thursday when Texel hoggs from Luckenburn sold to £58 or 131.8p per kilo.

Suffolk hoggs from Wester Middleton sold to £56; Easter Bucklyvie (Mule) £50; Woodhall (BF) £49 and 113.9p per kilo..

Texel ewes from Kilwhipnach sold to £56; while Dalchirla sold Blackfaces to £26.20.

Lambs meet strong demand

DINGWALL andHighland Marts, sold 4,951 store sheep including the annual sale of 668 cast rams at Dinfwall last Wednesday when all classes met an excellent demand with store lambs and well fleshed ewes meeting a keen enquiry.

Lambs (2,734) averaged £32.32 and sold to £57 for Beltex cross ewe lambs from Whitebog, Fortrose.

Ewes averaged £23.94 and sold to £55 for Texels from Cloy Farm, Fortrose.

Rams averaged £25.15 and sold to £190 for a Cheviot from Balnakeil, Durness.

Wedders averaged £21.12 and sold to £34 for Suffolk crosses from Woodlands, Dingwall.

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BIRTHS

CAMERON

Angus and Elaine (nèe Petrie), are delighted to announce the birth of Alex Andrew Neil, born on January 2, 2008 at the Belford Hospital, Fort William. A brother for Liam, Stewart and Sophie. Special thanks to Roslyn, Caroline, Theresa and Catriona for their excellent care.

MARRIAGES

CARRUTHERS - MACLEAN - On Saturday, January 12, 2008, at Christchurch, New Zealand, Kate only daughter of Pete and Pauline, Burgh by Sand, Carlisle, to Andrew, youngest son of Jimmy and Rena, Pulpit drive, Oban. A wonderful day.

DIAMOND WEDDING

BOYD – BROWN - At Kilbrandon Church, on January 27, 1948, by Rev A MacDougall, Alasdair to Annie (Nan).

DEATHS

AITKEN - Peacefully, after a short illness, at Lorn and Islands District General Hospital, Oban, on January 18, 2008, in her 78th year, Helen Margaret (McConachie), beloved wife of Peter Malcolm Aitken, dear mother of Alasdair, Peter and Mhairi, mother-in-law of Lindsey, Coral and Jim and much loved granny to Craig and Emma. Will be sorely missed.

BUDGE - Peacefully, on January 17, 2008, at the Lorn and Islands District General Hospital, Oban, in his 81st year, Norman Eunson Budge, 3A Lismore Crescent, Oban, dearly loved husband of Doris, Nee Hughes, dear father of Lorraine and Norman, dear father-in-law of Karen and much loved papa of Joanna, Christopher and Lewis.

LAMONT - Archibald, peacefully at Newham University Hospital on January 10, 2008, in his 79th year, Archie, of North Woolwich, London and formerly of Tobermory, Isle of Mull. Son of the late Dugald and Kate, brother of Christina and Campbell. Dear friend and soulmate of Maria.

MACINTYRE - Peacefully, in Invernevis House on Friday, January 18, 2008, in her 96th year, Isobel, beloved wife of the late Angus, a much loved sister, mother, mother-in-law, granny and great-granny. Sorely missed by all the family.Funeral service took place on Wednesday, January 23, 2008, in Kilmallie Church at 2pm, interment was in Kilmallie Cemetery.

MACINTYRE - On January 18, 2008, at Inveraray, Charles Angus MacIntyre T.D., formerly of Alexander MacIntyre and Company, Inveraray, in his 82nd year, dear husband of Sheila, loving father of Fiona and proud grandfather of Louise and Emma-Jane.Funeral service at All Saints Church, Inveraray, on Friday January 25, 2008, at 12noon, cremation thereafter at Cardross Crematorium at 2.15pm, to which all are welcome.Family flowers only please.

MACLEAN - Winifred Fraser. Peacefully, amongst family in Suffolk, in her 93rd year, on January 20, 2008, Winifred Fraser (formerly of Highbank Park, Lochgilphead), beloved widow of the late John T C MacLean and wonderful mother of Fraser, Christina, Fiona, Kenneth and Sandra. Proud grandmother of John, Lesley, Lynn, Richard, Allison, Martin, Allison, Russell and Cameron and loving great-grandmother of nine. Funeral service will be held in Lochgilphead Parish Church on Monday, January 28, 2008, at 1pm, thereafter to Achnabreac Cemetery, to which all friends are cordially invited. Family flowers only please. A retiral collection will be offered at Church Service.

McINTYRE - Peacefully, at Glencoe Hospital, on Wednesday, January 16, 2008, after a long illness, Ina, aged 88years, a much loved mother, sister, granny and aunt. Sorely missed.

McKAY FORBES - At home, Barmolloch, Grogport, Carradale, with his family, on January 21, 2008, John Angus McKay Forbes in his 82nd year, dearly beloved husband of the late Rosemary McKay Forbes and much loved father of Joanna and Robert. May he rest in peace after his courageous fight. Service in Saddell and Carradale Parish Church on Wednesday, January 30, 2008, at 9.30am and thereafter to Clydebank Crematorium at 3.30pm. Friends please accept this intimation and invitation.

McPHERSON - Peacefully, at home on Wednesday, January 9, 2008, Flora, a much loved cousin and friend to many. Funeral service was held on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, at Milton of Buchanan Parish Church, Drymen.

SMITH - Pat died peacefully at Oban Hospital on January 19, 2008. She was 86. She would want to thank all at Eadar Glinn who gave her such care and love during her last years. Her numerous friends will greatly miss a lady of courage and amazing humour who brought joy to all. Cremation at Clydebank Crematorium on Friday, January 26, 2008, at 12 noon. There will be a celebratory service at Eadar Glinn on Wednesday, January 30, 2008, at 2pm. All friends will be very welcome.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ANDERSON - Bobby, John, Marie and family would like to thank everyone for their condolences at this sad time. Sincere thanks to Belford Hospital, doctors and nurses Craig Nevis practice and Home Care staff who looked after Dorothy. Also sincere thanks to Fr MacKinnon for his comforting service, to Ewen for funeral arrangements and Railway Club for catering. The sum of £215 was donated to medical ward, Belford Hospital.

BLACK - Ian and Alison would like to thank all family and friends for their kind expressions of sympathy following the recent death of their dear mother, Alice, sadly missed. Special thanks to doctors, nurses and carers at the hospital and care home in Unna, Germany, to Bestatungen Grob, undertakers in Unna and Ian MacInnes of D and A Munn in Oban, for professional funeral arrangements, this was very much appreciated. A further thank you to Rev. Margaret Miller for her comforting service and to Maud Gray, organist. Finally, thanks to all who contributed to the collection for the RNLI, which amounted to £216.79.

EVANS – The family of the late Catherine Evans would like to thank all relations, family, friends and work colleagues for the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them. Special thanks to the Social Services, especially Maureen Barr and all nursing staff at the Lorn and Islands District General Hospital, also Dr Murray, to Reverend Liz Gibson and Munn's for duties carried out on the day in an efficient and helpful manner. Also thanking Gordon MacNab of Stevenson and Kennedy for his assistance in such a caring and professional way. To all those who travelled from near and far. Thanks also to those who attended the church service and interment at Pennyfuir to pay their respects and to the staff of the Royal Hotel for providing the buffet. The retiring collection for the Lorn and Islands District General Hospital raised £327.94.

MACBRIDE - The family of the late Mary MacBride would like to thank all family, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy, cards and flowers received at this sad time. Thanking also Rev Boyd for a fitting eulogy and service, Brian Armour for funeral arrangements and to all who paid their last respects at the church and crematorium.

McNAUGHT - Deirdre, Sandy and family and Donald and Ingrid, would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their many kind expressions of sympathy, phone calls, cards and letters received at this sad time. Our sincere thanks to Rev Margaret Miller for a lovely service, Daphne Campbell, organist, Uncle Roy for his tribute, Ewan for piping and all who attended the church and graveside and gave donations. Thanks also to home helps, Taynuilt Medical Centre doctors and district nurses and friends who visited at home and in hospital. To staff of Ward 'B', Lorn and Islands District General Hospital, Oban, for their care of Lilly during her last few days and to D and A Munn for efficient funeral arrangements. Finally, our heartfelt thanks to Mary Nicolson and her team, who provided catering in the village hall. We have been overwhelmed by the love and support shown to us by the community. Lilly would have been delighted. The sum of £800 was raised for Argyll Beats Cardiovascular Disease.

MILLER - John and family would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for condolences received in their recent sad loss of Christine Miller. Special thanks to nurses at Ward C, Lorn and Islands District General Hospital for their care, also thanks to D and A Munn, funeral directors for their dignified and sensitive care. Thanks for all donations that went towards Ward C, Lorn and Islands District General Hospital. She will be very sadly missed.

MORRISON - Catherine, John, Karen and Alan wish to thank most sincerely all family, friends and neighbours for the many expressions of sympathy extended to them on the recent sad loss of Johnny. Special thanks to Dr A Davies, district nurses and all staff at Connel Surgery, Ward C, Lorn and Islands District General Hospital and Marie Curie nurses for care and kindness shown to us all. Thank you to Rev Dugald Cameron who along with Margaret Fletcher and Mary Catherine MacNeil gave a comforting and appropriate service. Also thank you to all at H Hoey and Sons for efficient funeral arrangements, Duncan, Donald and staff at Soroba House for catering and a warm welcome and to Maureen at the Flower Basket for beautiful flowers. We were most grateful to all who came from near and far to pay respects at the church and graveside. The sum of £875.38 was collected for Marie Curie nurses. Johnny always appreciated the many who phoned and visited him during his illness; it was a great support to him and all his family.

IN MEMORIAMS

ADAM - In loving memory of our dear parents, Wattie, who died January 25, 2007, and Margaret, who died February 15, 2004.
Remembered always.
- Mary, Christina, Margaret, Isobel, Elizabeth and families.

BREMNER - In loving memory of my dear husband, Bob.
So many people knew you Bob
And that's what makes us proud
You were that special person
That stood out in the crowd
For us who loved and lost you
And whose parting brought such pain
We will cherish your memory forever
In a world that's not the same.
I will always have your smile and laughter in my thoughts.
- Cath.

BREMNER - In loving memory of a dear brother-in-law and uncle, Robert Bremner (Bob), died January 28, 2007.
Always in our thoughts.
- Neil, Jessie and family, Inchree.

CAMERON – In loving memory of our mother, Nan Cameron (née Munro) who passed away on January 28, 2007, and our father Hugh who passed away January 19, 1989.
Gone from our homes but not from our hearts.
- Caroline, Greta and Freda and families, Helensburgh and Tulliemet.

CAMPBELL - Second anniversary. Treasured memories of (Uille), loving dad, brother and Gen.
Miss you so.
R.I.P.
- From all the family.

EDWARDS - In loving memory of our mother and granny Mary Bell, died January 26, 1995, also remembering our dad and granpa Donald, died September 19, 1986.
Forever in our thoughts.
- Donnie, Anne and Family.

KELLY - In loving memory of my dear daughter and our sister, Flora Elizabeth, who died on January 31, 1988, R.I.P.
Time wont heal the heartache
Nor stop a silent tear
Nor dim the treasured memories
Of one we loved so dear.
- 118 Kilmallie Road, Caol.

KENNEDY - In loving memory of Sandy Kennedy, who died January 21, 1990.
Although your soul is now at rest
And free from care and pain
This world would seem like heaven
If we had you back again.
Sadly missed.
- Emily and Ken, Roddy, Kathleen and Jenna, Iain, Louise and family, Bruce, Mairi and family.

KIRSOP - In loving memory of John Kirsop, died January 25, 2007, much loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.
Always in our thoughts.
- Mary and family.

LIVINGSTONE - In loving memory of my dear husband John, who died January 25, 2001.
Fondly remembered.
- Helen.

MACDONALD - Precious memories of David Hepburn (Davie), who passed away January 26, 2001.
Miss you and love you always.
-Margaret, Elspeth, David, Roslyn and Ewan.
Gentle Jesus up above please give grandpa all our love.
-Kyle and Emma.

MACDOUGALL - Precious memories of my darling son and brother, David, died tragically in a road accident on January 24, 1996, aged 31 years.
Also my darling husband, Duncan, father, father-in-law and pappa who died on August 26, 1996.
Behind a smile there's many a tear
For ones we lost and loved so dear
To a beautiful life came a sudden end
He died as he lived, everyone's friend.
- Inserted by Mum, Ann, Darren, Liam, Siobhon and Aiden.

MACDOUGALL - In memory of our friend, David MacDougall, taken from us January 24, 1996.
Missed but not forgotten.
- John, Gary.

MACFADYEN - In loving memory of a dear mum and gran, Catherine, who died on January 23, 2007, also Donald, who died April 24, 1986, a devoted dad and grandfather.
Always in our thoughts.
- Gordon, Violet, Gordon and Paul.

MACFADYEN - In loving memory of a beloved mum and granny, Catherine MacFadyen who passed away January 23 2007, also remembering my beloved dad Donnie, who passed away April 24, 1986.
Loved and missed every day, forever in our thoughts.
- Margaret, Brian, Gemma and Darren, Tobermory.

MACFADYEN - Donald, died April 24, 1986, and Catherine, died January 23, 2007.
In loving memory of two special people.
The years go by so quickly but the pain of losing you seems like yesterday.
Sadly missed.
- From John, Ann, Colin and Paul, Rachael and Ryan.

MACFADYEN - Cathy. In loving memory of a dear mum and granny who died a year ago.
Never forgotten.
- Love Ali, Jennie and Dean.

MACLACHLAN - Precious memories of Flight Lieutenant Neil MacLachlan, beloved son, brother, husband and father who died aged 32 in an accident 20 years ago on January 22, 1988, while serving in the R.A.F. Red Arrows Team.
Years pass
Love is forever.
- Pat, Duncan, Rob, Kate and Mac.

MACLEAN - In loving memory of my darling husband, John MacLean, (Scone), who fell asleep on January 24, 2007.
Our family chain is broken
Nothing seems the same
But when God calls us one by one
We will link the chain again
I love you more than words can say
And miss you more each passing day.
- Love always Val.

MACPHAIL - Precious memories of Norman, beloved husband, father and grandfather, on his anniversary, January 25.
Tenderly we treasure the past
with memories that will always last.
- Penny MacPhail and family.

McDONALD - In loving memory of our dearly loved mother, Mary, died January 19, 2002. Our dear father, Duncan, died February 17, 1997.
Time passes, memories stay
No need for words to say
Still loved, still remembered every day.
- Irene, Ronald, David and Mhairi, Craighouse, Isle of Jura.

McLEAN - In loving memory of our dear dad and grandad, Danny, who passed away January 26, 2002.
In our thoughts always.
- Nicola, Danny, Laura, Ailleen, Mikey and Erin.

PEARSON - Treasured memories of our precious son Jamie, tragically taken from us on January 24, 1996, aged 27.
You left a place no one can fill
We miss you now and always will.
Loved and remembered every day.
- Mum and Dad.
In memory of Jamie, a loving brother, brother-in-law and uncle.
Remembered and missed every day.
- Audrey and Gregor.
Love you and miss you loads.
- Gemma xx and Ashleigh xx

WILMER - In loving memory of Bert Wilmer lost January 30, 2004.
Another year passes and not a day goes by without thinking of you mate. Greatly missed and never forgotten.
God bless.
- Lee.

ECCLESIASTICAL NOTICES

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Sunday 27 January 2008
Epiphany 3
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Conversion of St Paul
Holy Communion 08.00
Choral Mattins 10.15
Sunday School and Creche
Parish Eucharist 11.30
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St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Mattins 11.00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist 10.00

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN
Campbell Street Church
Sunday 27 January 2008
11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.
Phone-In *'Worship Link'* available
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LORN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
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Croft Avenue
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Church NEWS

Please keep sending in the news about your church!
Church News, The Oban Times, PO Box 1
Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB or FAX: (01631) 568001

Thought for the Week

IN SHAKESPEARE'S 'Julius Caesar', Caesar confides to his friend Antony his mistrust of Cassius.

He said: 'Let me have men about me that are fat, yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look...such men are dangerous.' I do not think that any politician today would make this statement. Today, obesity has become a major issue in this country and it is a problem that affects every level of society and every age.

However, it is not a problem that affects millions of our fellow human beings throughout the world. On the contrary, their problem is starvation. Sometimes that starvation is the result of natural disasters. Sometimes it is the result of the misuse of natural resources and the exploitation of the poor and vulnerable by the rich and powerful. Fasting is a feature of Christianity, but also of Islam. For Christians, the prime example is the fast of Jesus for 40 days and 40 nights in the desert before he began his public ministry. We have a saying: 'you never miss the water till the well runs dry'. In times of scarcity or want, we come to appreciate the advantages that we enjoy. It makes us think, and think more clearly. The six weeks leading up to Easter is the season of Lent – time when Christians are called to reflect on their lives and their values, to turn to God in prayer and to amend their lives in any way that falls short of the example given us by Jesus who calls us to perfection. 'Be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.' We are not called just to any kind of goodness but to perfect goodness. All we can do is to strive, even if we never quite achieve that perfection.

The Right Rev Ian Murray.

Pupils Kayligh Fitzpatrick, Laura MacKechnie, Steven McMonangle, Sam Llyoyd and Theo Devine accepted the cheque from Nancy and Aeneas with Eleanor MacKinnon and Linda Tighe looking on. t52pm01

Cash boost for Oban high's XL group

A BUMPER cheque for £700 has been presented to the Prince Trust's XL Group at Oban High School.

The money was raised after the Make a Difference Oban event in the Argyllshire Gathering earlier this year.

The event, organised by the town's volunteer centre and the school' prince's Trust XL group, included an exhibition documenting old Oban and a ceilidh.

A total of £1,200 was raised with a proportion going to Oban Old People's Welfare Association. The remaining £700 was presented by the association's Nancy Macleod and Aeneas Smith to the school's Prince's Trust Group.

Eleanor MacKinnon of the town's volunteer centre which organised the event said the pupils and association members had established a 'great rapport' during the event.

Obituary

The Hon Lady Maclean of Duart, 1943-2007

MARY Helen Gordon was born in 1943 in London, the eldest of six children to William (Sandy) and Helen Gordon of Lude, Blair Atholl, Perthshire.

She was brought up at Lude and she attended Blair Atholl Primary School before moving to West Heath School in England. In 1966 she married Lachlan Maclean, the only son of Sir Charles Maclean, later Lord Maclean, and Lady Maclean of Duart and Morvern, and they had five children, Emma, Sarah, who died as a child, Malcolm, Alexandra and Andrew. Lachlan was in the Scots Guards, later in the SAS, so they were living in various parts of the country before he retired from the army and they settled near Glenfarg in Mary's home county of Perthshire. Here Mary was involved in a large number of community activities including Children First, the Red Cross, the Cub Scouts, her own nursery school at Arngask, the Old Folks Association and Glenfarg Community Council.

In 1990, on the death of Lord Maclean, Lachlan became Sir Lachlan and the 28th Chief of Clan Maclean, and Mary became Lady Maclean. New responsibilities came with the inheritance of the ancestral castle at Duart on the Isle of Mull and a more direct connection with the world-wide Clan Maclean Association and its 3,000 members.

At Duart, with its superb setting and ancient and modern history, Mary brought her keen business sense to the castle, seeing its potential as a major visitor attraction that could give it a secure future.

Work was begun immediately on both making the castle a comfortable place and visitor friendly, with new signs and exhibitions.

She particularly enjoyed welcoming local Mull children so that they could learn about their own heritage. Mary brought a standard

The Hon Lady Maclean of Duart.

of perfection to 'Lady Maclean's Tea room' with home baking and a warm reception, and also to the gift shop, where she went to great lengths to have new items on sale each season, and everything of a high quality, with an outlet on the internet.

The result was a leap in visitor numbers, many returning again and again.

Mary also made a point of hosting charitable events at Duart, including fund raising for the Isle of Mull Mod.

With the Clan Maclean, a decision was made in conjunction with the Clan Association, to start having a regular Clan Gathering every five years, beginning in 1992.

These consist of a week of activities based on Mull, at the end of June, bringing an extra boost to the island economy, with a high point at the Saturday Gathering at Duart, at which Mary was always the star, talking to everyone and remembering their interests. By the Gathering in 2007, nearly 1,000 people were in attendance.

As well as welcoming Macleans who visited the castle, Mary never missed attending, with Sir Lachlan, the annual autumn Maclean Gathering in Glasgow. One special occasion that has not been forgotten was in 1993, when Sir Lachlan and Mary, along with the President of the Association and his wife, undertook a tour of the United States, which ranged from the Pacific North West to California and Georgia. Mary's enthusiasm charmed everyone. She subsequently accepted an invitation to become Patron to the Clan Maclean in Atlantic Canada and enjoyed her special relationship with their members.

Mary was basically quite a shy person but with a great love for people, families and children, and was so happy with her eight grandchildren. She was always thoughtful about others and she had an inner strength that complimented her cheerfulness of spirit. It was therefore with great sadness among a very large number of people that it was learned in 2006 that she had been diagnosed with cancer.

Despite her latterly failing health, she did not wish to disappoint anyone and she made a supreme effort to attend the Maclean gathering last October.

Mary died on December 30. She was buried alongside her father, who died in September, in the peaceful country churchyard at Kilmaveonaig, Blair Atholl, near her childhood home, and a service was held at St John's Episcopal Church in Perth, attended by 600 people, despite it being a day of atrocious weather.

A service will be held in the spring on Mull for her many friends on the island, many of whom were unable to get to the service because of gales.

Canon Allan Maclean.

CHARITY DONATIONS

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Hyndland, Glasgow, G12 9QU
Freephone 0808 100 6000
In memory of Dawn Joyce

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Please contact
David Mudie (Treasurer)
Oban Hospice Ltd
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The Oban Times & West Highland Times
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Shinty teams encouraged to complete fixtures

BLACK armbands and minutes' silences could become commonplace in shinty this season in a bid to avoid postponements following bereavements.

The Camanachd Association has issued a plea to clubs to try to avoid calling off games after deaths in communities to ease the strain on the fixture list.

The association board says it is concerned that coaches believe the current fixture list is too congested and is hindering player development. It has revised some by-laws and issued a circular to clubs this week.

A statement issued said: 'The board is concerned to note…matches were postponed because of the decision to mark a death of a person linked to a club by postponing a match.

'It would wish to seek the support of more shinty clubs to follow the example of other sports and objectively assess the need to seek a postponement, depending on the circumstances. The practice of holding a silence before the

Shinty

start of a match and/or the wearing of armbands could be more widely adopted and recognised as a declaration of respect for the deceased person and his or her surviving family.'

Shinty's ruling organisation believes postponements should only be made if the death is directly related to a player or club official and if the funeral is arranged on match day.

In the Camanachd Cup, it's been decided to move matches to the away team's pitch or a neutral venue should the home team's pitch be unplayable.

The neutral venue will have to be approved by the association's chief executive and means clubs will have to make contingency plans if it looks as if the original venue might be unplayable.

It has also been agreed that the venues for the Bullough, Strathdearn and Sutherland cup finals will now not be decided until the semi-finals are complete.

Semi-final venues, apart from the Camanachd Cup, will now be decided by the toss of a coin with neutral venues scrapped in a bid to avoid fixture problems for both the competing teams and host club. A decision is still to be made on the Celtic and MacAulay cups.

There will be no more replays in knock-out competitions, bar the Camanachd and Sutherland cups, with extra-time and penalties held so games are played to a finish.

Meanwhile, the association has begun the search for a new operations manager following the resignation of Allan MacLeod last month.

The association says it requires an, 'individual with experience in managing the logistics which are required to deliver a busy fixture and competition calendar as well as an ability to manage the interpretation and management of the rules and discipline of the game.'

The operations manager will also be expected to develop and manage membership and links with clubs.

The four teams who played in the friendly tournament in Lochgilphead.

Argyll youngsters play Lochgilphead tournament

Football

LOCHGILPHEAD Soccer Centre Under 11s, sponsored by Anderson Coaches, hosted a friendly tournament at Lochgilphead Joint Campus last Sunday.

Spartans from Oban and Tarbert joined two Lochgilphead teams – the Tangerines and Maroons.

In the first round of games both home teams came out on top, the Maroons winning a tight game against Spartans 1-0 with a Stuart MacLean goal. The Tangerines beat Tarbert 4-0 with two goals from Keir Whitefield and long-range efforts from Aaron Moore and Ben Miller.

Spartans bounced back from their opening defeat to beat Tarbert 7-1, Jason McArthur netting Tarbert's consolation. The local derby saw the Maroons take an early lead when Stuart MacLean netted from a Cameron Hendry cross.

But a fine Josh Coates save from a Coll McCallum drive denied the Maroons a second.

Clean sheet

Despite periods of Tangerines pressure in the second half Ewan McCulloch in the Maroons' goal held out for his second clean sheet of the day and his team's second 1-0 victory. In the final round of games Tarbert restored their pride in a well-deserved 1-1 draw with the Maroons.

Jason McArthur scored his second of the day for Tarbert and Ewan MacNeill was delighted to score against his former Tarbert team-mates - his first goal in Lochgilphead colours.

In their final game Spartans continued their good form taking an early 2-0 lead against the Tangerines.

Two Stuart Munro goals brought the scores level but as the Tangerines pressed for a winner Spartans broke away to regain their lead.

The Tangerines pressed for a second equaliser and it took an excellent save from the Spartans keeper to deny Stuart Munro a hat-trick and seal a 3-2 win for Spartans.

Oban look safe after relegation battle

BT West Division 5
Oban Lorne 17 Loch Lomond 5

Rugby

A FULL strength Oban squad travelled to Balloch on Saturday to face Loch Lomond who sit just a place below them in the league.

Such was the competition for places that of the 22 who made the trip five did not take the field which although disappointing for these individuals is an excellent sign of the strength in depth in the squad particularly at second row and on the wing.

Oban recieved the kick off and were immediately under pressure as a knock on handed possession to the home team.

Despite winning back possession a clearance kick was charged down by Loch Lomond putting Lorne under even more pressure.

However Oban organised well in defence and managed to move play upfield with some good kicking from Thwaites at ten and Wright at Full Back and Beaton on the left wing.

Good driving play from the pack included forcing a penalty just outside the Lomond 22 but the attempt from Wilson went left leaving the score 0-0.

The game hung in the balance and only good tackling from the Oban back row of McLeish, Louw and Rimmer kept the line intact. The McDonald duo in the centre were also covering well out wide forcing mistakes from the opposition.

The first clean break of the game came from a ruck on the half way line from which the Loch Lomond captain, playing at scrum half, broke clean through and looked certain to score.

However Alan Beaton came in from his wing to drag the man down just before the line and save the seven points at a crucial time in the game.

The breakthrough finally came following a number eight pick up which was moved left to Euan Wilson who spotted a gap in the defence to cut through and score underneath the posts, which he converted on the half time whisle to make it 7-0 to Oban.

In the second half it was the forwards' turn to take the points and not long after the restart Micheal McDonald was on hand to score from an excellent catch and drive from Travis Smith which was rolled fully 20 yards to the line. The conversion miss made it 12–0.

Minutes later Oban scored a carbon copy of their first try, this time through Corrie Louw, making it 17–0. Loch lomond grabbed a deserved try in the final quarter following some sloppy handling in the 22 which allowed their full back to dot down on the left making the score 17–5.

The tide of the game nearly changed again when Loch Lomond broke through and with only Alan Beaton between them and the line looked likely to score, but again Beaton took down the attacking player in a man of the match performance.

To the relief of the large Lorne squad the team held out in the remaining minutes and were deserved winners.

The sportsmanship of the opposition was exemplary especially as this result may see them take the drop rather than Oban in a few weeks time.

On Saturday Oban are at home to Shawlands in a match which could all but guarantee their place in West Division One next season.

Kick off is at 2pm at Glencruitten.

Oban Team: MacQueen, Robertson, Downie, Rimmer, McDonald, McDougall, Louw, Van Zyl, McLeish, Smith, Wilson, Thwaites, Davies, McDonald, McDonald, Beaton, Wright.

Thistle looking sharp in new strips

Oban Express Primary Football League junior team, Thistle, pose with their new set of strips presented by sponsor Donald Black of Soroba House Hotel. The youngsters, who have won one of their first three games in the junior winter league, currently sit in a mid-table position. Also pictured are Thistle coaches Gavin Hill and Mark Anderson.

St Columba's are girls champions

Shinty

St Columba's girls shinty team won the First Shinty Girls League at Atlantis Leisure on Sunday. The league included Rockfield and Salen. St. Columba's coach Andy MacMillan said: 'The league gives the girls a chance to play. It obviously helps because there are some good players here.'

Spot The SHINTY BALL Competition

WIN £1450

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE. . .

All you have to do

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. Prizes will be shared between those submitting correct entries.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to reach "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB **by 12noon on Tuesday.**

You may hand it into **The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban** by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are: James Hope, 2 McCracken Court, Lochgilphead and Helen Harrison, Garthbeg, 33 Pulpit Drive, Oban

I enclose £1 (note) for 20 crosses (tick box) ❑ The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules.
How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1.

Name_____

Address_____

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Send to **'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB**

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Council calls off Argyll matches

Football

SCOTTISH Amateur League matches involving Oban Saints, Lochgilphead Red Star and Dunoon were called off by Argyll and Bute Council on Friday because of the current industrial dispute involving the council and its employees' unions.

Oban Saints secretary David Buchanan said he was disappointed that his club's home game against Inverclyde had been called off, although the pitch at Mossfield might very well have been unplayable because of the heavy rain anyway.

However, the club managed to organise a training session at Atlantis Leisure on Saturday afternoon where team manager Iain Jackson put his squad through a tough session.

This Saturday Saints will be hoping to get back into action when they travel to take on Carlton YM in the first round of the Jimmy Marshall Trophy. The match will be played at the Kibble Complex in Paisley with a 1.30pm kick-off. The game has to be finished on the day so extra time and penalties, if required, will be used to see who takes on Arkleston at home in the second round. Referee in charge is John Love.

Iain Jackson should have a full squad of players to choose from for this important cup fixture. He said: 'We need to get a game. We haven't played a competitive match since December 15. The weather forecast isn't too good for this weekend either so we'll just need to keep our fingers crossed'.

Saints are sponsored by AMP Electrical Services, Keyline Builders Merchants and Aulay's Bar. More details on the club website www.obansaintsafc.co.uk

Youth results: Renton Youth v Under 13s postponed; Under 15s 5 St Andrew's Select 0. Scorers for Saints were David Jackson, Aidan Harris, George MacMillan, Angus MacCallum and Ruairidh Black. The game was sponsored by J M Breckenridge. St Mirren BC v Under 16s postponed; Under 17s 2, Port Glasgow 8.

This weekend's youth fixtures: Saints Under 15s v Meadowpark; Elderslie v Saints Under 16s; East End Utd v Saints Under 17s.

Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from
Thursday, January 24, 2008
are listed below with differences
for major ports listed beneath.
All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	00.41	0.7	06.44	4.1	13.27	0.9	19.12	3.9
Fri	01.22	0.6	07.21	4.1	14.05	1.0	19.45	3.8
Sat	02.00	0.7	07.55	4.0	14.41	1.1	20.16	3.7
Sun	02.37	0.8	08.28	3.8	15.14	1.3	20.46	3.5
Mon	03.13	1.1	09.00	3.6	15.48	1.5	21.17	3.4
Tues	03.51	1.3	09.33	3.4	16.27	1.8	21.54	3.2
Wed	04.33	1.6	10.10	3.2	17.16	1.9	22.40	3.0

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Lochboisdale	+0.30
Campbeltown	-5.30	Mallaig	+0.25
Crinan	-0.47	Portree	+0.55
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Tobermory	+0.16
		Dover	+5.30

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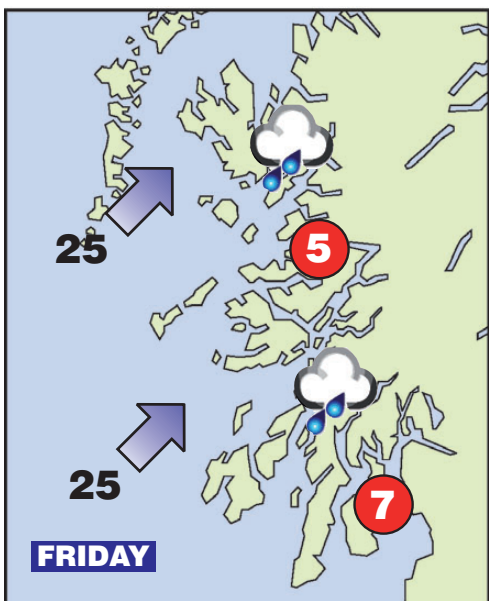

the weather

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NANCY BLACK Ships' Chandler

Thursday, January 24
Cloudy with some rain at times. Winds moderate to fresh south-westerly. Temperatures 2ºC to 7ºC

Friday, January 25
Again cloudy with some rain or sleet at first. Some sunny spells expected later in the day. Winds moderate south-westerly. Temperatures 2ºC to 7ºC.

Weekend Outlook
Cloudy with a mixture of sunny spells and isolated showers. Winds moderate to fresh westerly or south-westerly on Saturday becoming north to north-westerly on Sunday.
Temperatures 3ºC to 7ºC.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree -As above
Kennacraig to Islay - As above

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Scottish rally championship contender, Willie Bonniwell, shows what his Subaru can do.

A need for speed in fundraising rally success

Rally

RALLY fans from Oban and Lorn experienced the thrill of their lives last Saturday when they had the chance to co-drive for top local drivers John Allan and Scottish championship contender Willie Bonniwell.

The pair, along with fellow rally driver Phil Walker of Furnace Car Club, were delighted to take motor sport fans for a high speed spin round a narrow track in the Barcaldine Forest, raising £1600 for charity in the process.

John Allan raised admiring glances from the crowd when he turned up in the late Colin McRae's old Ford Escort. Due to the growing popularity of the rallies, fans paid £25 each for the experience, and the total amount will be donated to Dunbeg Development Group.

Organiser James MacDonald of Dunbeg has already started on plans for the next rally event to be held sometime in May. He said this week: 'The event is really growing in popularity and attracting a bigger crowd each time. It's great to see men, women and children enjoying the sport so much.

'Over 100 people had the chance to go out in one of the three cars last Saturday, and the amount of money raised was unbelievable.

'There are a lot of people who should be thanked for donating services free of charge such as the marshals, the emergency services, Ronnie MacColl for fixing the road, John MacLachlan for the toilets and Flit for providing the free minibus to take the spectators up and down the road to their cars. Also, a big thank you to the Forestry Commission once again, as without its support, the events would not be able to go ahead.'

Oban's warrior mascot

Rugby

Oban schoolboy Gregor Brydon was delighted to be one of the mascots for Glasgow Warriors crunch Heineken Cup tie with Saracens at Firhill last Friday. Gregor was taken to meet three players in the squad where he could ask them questions and then went to the tunnel where he was taken on to the pitch by player Moray Low and appeared on television as a result. The Scottish team were beaten 21 points to 17. Gregor plays for Oban Lorne's mini rugby team and wore his strip to Glasgow.

Argyll to get active

Coaching

ARGYLL folk are being invited to attend a unique coaching weekend at the new joint campus in Lochgilphead on February 9 and 10.

The course, run by Argyll and Bute Council, is the first of its kind in Scotland and includes a number of different sports. Visit www.argyll-bute.gov.uk for more details.

Kintyre kicker is New York hero

American football star was 'soccer' hopeful

American Football

A KINTYRE American footballer has become the toast of New York after kicking his team to the Super Bowl with a dramatic extra time goal.

And his old Campbeltown football coach this week revealed that Lawrence Tynes had been an exceptional 'soccer' player when he played on the left wing for Longrow Boys Football Club under-10s team.

Lawrence fired the New York Giants into the Super Bowl after kicking a 47-yard field goal in overtime against the Green Bay Packers on Sunday.

The kick saw the Giants win 23-20 and they will now take part in the sport's showpiece game against New England Patriots in Arizona next month.

Although born in Greenock, Lawrence attended St Kieran's Primary School where he played football and shinty. He left Campbeltown, aged 10, when he moved to Florida with his family.

Lawrence, aged 29, is now aiming to become the first Scot to win the Super Bowl.

Willie Paterson was coach of Longrow Boys Football Club when Lawrence and his brothers Jason and Mark played in the late 1980s.

'It was 17 years ago when he left Campbeltown with his family,' recalled Willie. 'His parents lived in the high street in the town and his dad Larry was a medic in the American naval base at Machrihanish.

'At the time there were five football clubs representing the different areas and we had under 10, 12 and 14s teams. Lawerence was very good. He had great skill and control and played with us for four years. He had exceptional pace although he was quite a tall boy and played on the left for us.

'Lawerence was our player of the year for the under 10s so we moved him up to the under-12s where he didn't look out of place amongst the older boys. I received a nice letter after the family moved to America from Larry thanking me for working with the boys.'

Willie says it is hard to tell whether Lawrence would have become a professional footballer in Scotland. 'Larry was very keen for Lawrence and his brothers to get involved in football,' he said. 'But it is hard to judge at that age because I had two or three boys before, of a similar age, who you thought might have had a chance of going professional but they lost interest.'

1988: The Longrow under-11s team in Helensburgh with American footballer Lawrence Tynes, second from left in front row, and Rangers manager Walter Smith, the referee and Willie Paterson in the back row. Picture courtesy of www.campbeltown.info

Lawrence, who is a big Celtic fan, is pictured below with current Rangers manager Walter Smith when Longrow played Helensburgh.

Willie said: 'The picture was taken when Walter Smith was assistant manager of Rangers and his son was playing for Helensburgh. He was very good with our boys giving them tips.'

The Super Bowl will be watched by an estimated one billion people worldwide when it is screened on February 3.

Newcomers Ben Lora make a point in first week

Football

THE OBAN Express Junior Winter League got underway at Atlantis Leisure on Sunday and welcomed new side Ben Lora for the first time.

The young side immediately registered a point with a goalless draw against Dunbeg Girls.

Saints won against Benderloch CGL but left it late when they played Dunbeg, with the only goal in the match coming in the dying seconds courtesy of a super strike from Liam Higgins into the corner of the net.

Sitting at the top with Saints are Appin and the Sharks. Appin were the biggest scorers of the day netting an unbelievable 15 goals in their three games against Thistle, K-Oz and Dolphins with the Sharks also recording wins over K-Oz and Dolphins and Ben Lora.

It's back to the drawing board for K-Oz and Dolphins, as both sides failed to earn a point. However, the improvement in these very young teams is there for all to see and it can only be a matter of time before they are both enjoying some success.

The day finished with a game between Benderloch CGL and Dunbeg ending in a sporting 1-1 draw.

Ben Lora with coach Emma Law

Oban Express Primary Football Junior League

	P	Pts
Appin	3	9
Saints	3	9
Sharks	3	9
Benderloch	4	7
Dunbeg	3	4
Dunbeg Girls	3	4
Thistle	3	3
Ben Lora	3	1
Dolphins	3	0
K-Oz	3	0

Islay golf results

Golf

WINTER league matches played on Tuesday: 1 W Ramsay 28pts; 2 A Chasemore 26pts; D Tott 25pts.

Leaders (top six scores to count): 1 A Chasmore 194pts; 2 D Tott 191pts; 3 W Ramsay 180pts.

Open race

Mountain biking

NORTH Argyll Cycle Club is hosting a bike race at Fearnoch Forest this Sunday.

Registration is at the forestry car park from 10.30am for a noon start.