

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Additional work done at A83 landslip site

TRANSPORT Scotland has installed a number of new mitigation measures at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful following recent slippage.

Floodlights and tilt meters have been installed at the slippage area, while patrols of the hillside in the event of a deterioration forecast have been readied.

Meanwhile, work continues to identify further measures to mitigate against impact of landslides wherever they occur.

Transport Scotland's Graham Edmond said: 'Around the Rest and Be Thankful in particular, we are looking at protective netting, shelters and the potential for planting on the hillside. The improvement and strengthening of the nearby forestry road, as an emergency alternative, is also being investigated as discussed at previous meetings.'

Man arrested in Oban retail outlet

A MAN was arrested on Monday after breaking into the Oban branch of clothes retailer New Look. Police found the man in the George Street premises after he had set off an alarm.

He was due to appear in court on Tuesday.

Taynuilt Hotel bid raises village hope

HOPEs that Taynuilt Hotel could be taken over by a private owner were boosted this week with the news administrators had received a bid for the property.

The hotel is part of the Glenorchy Lodge Hotels group, which went into administration last year.

Administrators RM Tenon are currently marketing the Taynuilt Hotel and Tyndrum Lodge Hotel, which remain open for business but Glenorchy Lodge Hotel, in Dalmailly, remains closed.

A group had been set up in Taynuilt to discuss a potential community buyout, if no commercial offers were received.

A spokesman for RM Tenon said: 'We are currently pursuing active offers for the property.'



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Aquapharm's senior scientist, Dr Dorothee Gotz, collects samples from the waters at Dunstaffnage.

Major boost for Dunbeg bio-tech firm

Marine microbes could be key to future skincare products

A DUNBEG firm leading pioneering research into using natural marine ingredients instead of petroleum in skincare products announced a lucrative major partnership agreement this week.

Marine biotechnology firm Aquapharm, has signed a deal with Norway's Aqua Bio Technology (ABT) to work towards developing sustainable, environmentally friendly products for the lucrative cosmetic and skincare market – one of the world's most valuable industries.

Scientists at Aquapharm believe marine microbes are the key to finding the bio-active ingredients of the future, and have developed specialist fermentation processes to source and produce such extracts.

Now they will undertake a development programme in conjunction with ABT, sharing their expertise in a bid to prove these extracts can be produced with minimal environmental impact – and successfully commercialised for the personal care market.

Aquapharm's Jon Williams, said: 'We have an ageing population and one that is more environmentally aware. Both factors

"Our approach could lead to significant economic and environmental benefits."

Jon Williams Aquapharm

Arvid Lindberg, chief executive of Aqua Bio Technology ASA, said: 'The collaboration with Aquapharm will enable ABT to tap into the knowledge and lucrative pipeline that Aquapharm holds.'

'Together with ABT's technical know-how on product development and ability to commercialise marine ingredients through its vast distributor network around the world, this paves the way for a true win-win collaboration.'

have led to increasing demand for personal care products with proven scientific benefits.

'As such brand owners and retailers in this sector are seeking out new sources of innovative, naturally-derived, anti-ageing ingredients – and we believe we have an answer.'

'Our approach could lead to significant economic and environmental benefits over existing petroleum-based ingredients, as well as being cost-competitive.'

'By working with ABT we plan to develop one or two possible ingredients from sustainable sources, show our ability to up-scale production, and will work together to commercialise them.'

Innovation Norway has provided grant funding of nearly £55,000 to help develop the project.

Aquapharm's cutting-edge techniques have paved the way for the culturing of microbes previously thought 'unculturable', allowing its scientists to create an impressive bank of unique marine bacteria and fungi which can be harnessed as a source of novel functional ingredients.

According to the firm, these could be used to create a diverse range of 'next-generation' products including: anti-ageing ingredients with anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties as well as natural preservatives.

Oban High School aims to build fence to combat rising problems with strangers and dog dirt

School draws community council's attention to increasing incidents of 'unauthorised adults'

STRANGERS walking through the premises, and pupils and staff clearing school grounds of dog mess before lessons can start, are becoming the norm at Oban High School.

That was the message delivered to a meeting of Oban Community Council by head teacher Peter Bain on Monday.

Mr Bain, who also addressed Oban councillors in attendance, said he had a substantial

problem with 'unauthorised adults' walking through the school grounds during school hours and with dog owners allowing their pets to defecate and urinate on the property.

Murray Hamilton, the new head of PE, and three of the school's senior pupils also spoke of the problems they encounter.

Mr Bain now wants to erect a new fence, extending the fencing of the Oban Community

Pitch, to prevent dogs accessing, and defecating on, the grassy slope opposite the pitch.

He said: 'There have been occasions where two dogs have been fighting in front of a PE class outside and PE teachers have had to form lines of pupils to check the pitches for dog mess before a lesson can start.'

'No unauthorised adults should be on the school grounds during the day, ever. We also

want dogs on a lead at all times and we definitely don't want owners to let them defecate.'

Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'I am 100 per cent in support of Mr Bain and as much as the dog mess concerns me, I am more worried about the incidents of unauthorised adults walking through the school.'

The school is this week launching a public consultation on the erection of the fence.

Villagers furious after rumours that Bonawe bus service faces axe

VILLAGERS in the small rural community of Bonawe have launched a campaign to save its 'lifeline' bus service after drivers were told it was to be cut.

While Argyll and Bute Council insists no decision has been taken on the future of the 408 service, villagers believe they have just three weeks to save it from the council's chopping block.

"People will lose their jobs if this lifeline service is cut."

chairman, Ardchattan Community Council

Council officials last year agreed to reduce discretionary funding for community and

rural transport by £451,000 from £726,000 to £275,000 – however these savings have not yet been achieved.

Ardchattan Community Council has now launched a petition and Facebook page to drive the campaign to save their bus, while names were collected on a petition presented during Saturday's Oban Phoenix Cinema bring and buy sale at the

Corran Halls.

Chairman of the community council, Iain MacDonald, believes the Bonawe route is being considered instead of the Easdale and Kilmore service. He said: 'There has been no community consultation on this, nothing at all. The council don't seem to realise people will lose their jobs if this lifeline service is cut. Kids won't be able to go

to after-school activities.

'I'm absolutely furious about it.'

Fellow community councillor, Jill Bowis, said: 'The council is looking at what they arrogantly call an 'appointment and shopping' service, three days a week, outside of school term times. That would simply not be good enough. What about hospital appointments, for example?'

Oban North and Lorn councillors, Elaine Roberston and Louise Glen-Lee are supporting the villagers.

Councillor Glen-Lee said: 'There has been no word of this, no papers, no consultation. People should never hear from bus drivers that their bus service could be cut.'

Councillor Robertson added: 'This would affect the well-being of the whole community.'

Meanwhile, it is understood the Sunday extension of bus services to Benderloch is to be discontinued.

Argyll and Bute Council say no decision has been taken on any bus service, but confirmed the matter will be on the agenda of the Oban, Lorn and Isles Area Committee meeting on February 15.

Oban court hears claims co-owner massaged breasts of gym job applicants

Accused denies indecent assault claiming defence of consent

A CO-OWNER of an Oban gym rubbed the breasts of two young women during massages organised to give advice ahead of job interviews, Oban Sheriff Court has heard.

Indecent assault denied

Four women, who cannot be named for legal reasons, gave evidence on Monday and Tuesday during the trial of 49-year-old Robin Morton, of Tigh na Craig, Clachan Seil, who denies indecently assaulting all of them on separate occasions between September 2009 and June 2011.

All four of the witnesses explained how they had enquired about a job and had been asked

by Mr Morton for a CV before being told to come in for a massage, where they could secretly be advised ahead of their interview. Two of them were asked to fully undress during the massage and had their chests 'rubbed'.

One witness said: 'I feel stupid now. I don't know why I didn't say stop but it just felt horrible.'

'When you massage you apply some pressure but it was like he was just feeling my boobs.'

After the massage she lied to Morton on three occasions that she was receiving treatment for an injury in order to avoid a repeat of the massage, despite repeated requests from the gym owner.

The witness explained how Mr Morton then offered her £50 to allow him to massage her, claiming he said: 'I've been feeling really down. It's just something to cheer me up.'

One witness claimed Mr Morton said the massage had been the best part of his day, while another described her experience as 'perky'.

In cross-examination, defence solicitor Gary McAteer, who launched a special defence of consent, confirmed none of the women told Morton to stop, or indicate they were uncomfortable with the massage.

The trial was due to continue yesterday.

Tenants lose right to buy homes in Argyll

HOUSING association residents across Argyll and Bute had their right to buy suspended this week.

Argyll and Bute Council's decision to restrict right to buy in 'pressured areas,' where social housing stocks are limited, came into force on Tuesday of this week for a 10-year period.

The decision, which does not affect Bute or Kintyre, was made in partnership with the Argyll Community Housing Association and Dunbritton Housing Association.

Tenants who moved in on or after 30 September 2002 are affected. It affects properties in almost every built up area in Cowal, Mid Argyll, Lorn, Mull and Iona, Coll, Tiree, Helensburgh and Lomond, Islay, Jura and Colonsay.

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Row over Barra marine park plan escalates

SCOTTISH Natural Heritage (SNH) has been accused of manipulating data to force through contentious environmental designations for waters off Barra.

The chairman of island campaign group SHAMED, Angus MacLeod, has written to the charitable body to ask for clarification on various points raised through freedom of information requests and correspondence.

He alleges that SNH has effectively confirmed it recommended the Sound of Barra as a suitable site for a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) status as a cost saving measure.

In support, he quotes from emails between SNH officials and the Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government) in 2004 apparently trying to develop other ways in which it would meet the criteria after noting that 'the case for taking the site forward for seals alone was not improving.'

Issue has also been drawn with the description of Sound of Barra as an 'outstanding site' of common seal population, given SNH staff proposing in 2008 that a substitute site could be proposed, pointing out that this information was not passed by SNH to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment.

Mr MacLeod has further asked for clarification on the justification for earmarking East Mingulay as a SAC, saying the criteria used by SNH does not seem to match up with Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)'s 2009 paper, Selection criteria for marine Special Areas of Conservation.

The letter comes a week after Comhairle nan Eilean Siar called on the Scottish Government to immediately abandon proposals to designate Sound of Barra as a marine SAC, saying the lack of investigation into alternative sites may be unlawful.

Webster wins right to appeal sentence

WIFE-killer, Malcolm Webster has won the right to appeal his 30 minimum year jail sentence.

Last week, the Judicial Office for Scotland confirmed Webster's appeal against his sentence has been allowed, although a separate application to overturn his conviction has so far been refused.

Webster was, in May last year, found guilty of murdering Claire Morris in an Aberdeenshire crash in 1994, and of intending to bigamously marry Simone Banarjee, of Oban, to gain access to her estate. He was also found guilty of attempting to murder Felicity Drumm in New Zealand in 1999.

SNH host 'awareness' meeting in Benbecula

SCOTTISH Natural Heritage is inviting local residents to an informal evening reception in the Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula next Thursday (February 9) from 7-9pm.

SNH chairman Andrew Thin will host the event along with board member David Crawley and local adviser Iain Mackinnon. Andrew Bachell, operations director, and David MacLennan, area manager, will also attend.

Mr Thin said the evening would give people the opportunity discuss with senior staff SNH's work in the area, and to raise issues about the natural environment of interest to them.

He added: 'It is also a really useful way for us to keep in touch with public perceptions of the organisation. We certainly hope that many people will be able to come along and we look forward to meeting them on the night.'

The event is free and light refreshments will be provided. For more information, contact the SNH Uist office on 01870 620238.

Young Gaelic song writers wanted by Watercolour Music

ARDGOUR-based Watercolour Music is offering six young Gaelic songwriters a helping hand with tunes and lyrics.

The project, supported by Fèisean nan Gàidheal, takes place in two phases - a group weekend at Watercolour from March 10-11 and recording sessions in the studio from March 30 to April 2.

In the first workshop, experts and writers will help develop songwriting skills, giving students the chance to work on their material and collaborate with other participants.

The second phase provides a day and a half in the studio with one other participant to hone songs and demo record them to a high standard.

The sessions will be videoed to accompany the songs, and all finished material will be publicly available online on FnG's and Watercolour Music's sites. Participants will leave Watercolour with a CD/DVD of their work.

Anyone interested in taking part can contact Calum Ailig MacMillan, Fèisean nan Gàidheal 111 Academy Street, Inverness IV1 1LX, or by email to calumailig@feiscan.org before February 17.

Applicants are asked to include information on their experience to date. Samples of demo material are also welcome.

Watercolour is run by Gaelic broadcaster and musician Mary Ann Kennedy and her husband Nick Turner, co-writer of the songs of Findlay Napier and the Bar Room Mountaineers.



Return journeys across to Uist from Skye may cost haulage contractors 270 per cent more from April if proposed changes to the RET fare structure go ahead

Uist road hauliers face 270 per cent fare increase

REPORT

by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

UIST haulage contractors face a whopping 270 per cent increase in fares on the Lochmaddy-Uig ferry route from April 1 if plans to exclude lorries from the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) scheme go ahead.

A Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) salesperson at the Uig ferry terminal on Skye con-

firmed to The Oban Times that a return journey for a 17-metre heavy goods vehicle (HGV) would cost £758.88 compared

to the present fare of £278.80, inclusive of VAT.

The figures come as a Western Isles delegation prepares for crunch talks on the issue with transport minister Keith Brown in Edinburgh next Tuesday.

Campaigners, Outer Hebrides Transport Group (OHTG), want RET retained for all vehicles on

the isles' routes and warns of dire economic consequences if it is removed from HGVs.

The Scottish government, with less cash available from Westminster, proposes RET for HGVs to be replaced with a previous discount scheme, with discounts for hauliers going up from 15 to 25 per cent.

However, it has pledged to extend RET for smaller vehicles to Colonsay, Islay and Gigha this year, to Arran in 2014, and to all other west coast and Clyde islands, including inter-island routes such as the Sound of Harris and the Sound of Barra, before 2016.

OHTG campaign co-ordinator, Gail Robertson of DJ Buchanan Haulage on Benbecula, and David Wood, owner of Stornoway-based Woody's Express, will be present at the Edinburgh talks.

Ms Robertson said more than 80 hauliers and other interested parties had joined the campaign.

£400 increase She told The Oban Times: 'We currently pay £232.32 + VAT return for a 17m lorry between Lochmaddy and Uig - but from April we will be expected to pay £632.40 + VAT - a whopping increase of £400.08.'

'Specialist producers such as fish farms will be hit with a double whammy because they will have to pay extra to bring in feed - and to send the finished product back out again. 'It will be a scandal if the SNP

continue with their flawed policy and impose on families and businesses in the islands an increase of these proportions.

'We need our MSP Alasdair Allan to put the islands before any other consideration. His primary loyalty must be to the people of the Western Isles. This is a time to stand up and fight for the islands and oppose this scandalous haulage and household tax.'

Mr Allan said: 'I have been busy as MSP for the Western Isles in making the hauliers case and can well understand why they wish to make their views directly to the minister.

'On the back of the meeting with hauliers I chaired, I have now organised the meeting with the minister and hauliers and believe that they have every right to ensure the fairest deal for their businesses.

'To answer the point about my role in government, Ministers are not allowed to make decisions personally about their specific constituencies, but wearing my MSP hat, I intend to make sure that this matter gets pushed very hard and that the Transport Minister is left in no doubt of what my constituents feel.'

RET, which sets fares to what it would cost to travel the same distance by road, was introduced to the Western Isles, Coll and Tiree in 2008. It proved popular, cutting ticket prices and boosting traffic flow to the islands involved.

New fire engine to be based at Lochboisdale

SOUTH Uist has taken delivery of a new fire engine custom built for stations providing emergency cover in rural areas.

The new Mercedes 816D 'Vario' vehicle, based at Lochboisdale, at 8.2 tonnes is smaller than the typical fire appliance to improve access and manoeuvring.

The vehicles can carry a crew of five.

A similar appliance is being based at Sandwick on the Shetlands Islands and delivery of seven more 'Varios' is expected by April for deployment in other rural areas.

Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service chief fire officer Trevor Johnson said the new modern appliances would be 'the backbone' of the service in rural areas.

He said: 'At a cost of £150,000, this is more than £70,000 less than the standard fire appliance, representing excellent value for money.'

Tiree parents hear about Gaelic option

PARENTS of those pupils heading into P1 at Tiree High School attended a meeting last week to help them decide if their child should enjoy a Gaelic or English medium curriculum.

Council welcomes building standards verification decision

ARGYLL and Bute Council has welcomed a decision to keep the verification of building work with the remit of local authorities.

The Scottish Government's decision means building standards teams will remain the only government endorsed verifier of new homes and buildings in the country.

Argyll and Bute Council's chair of the planning, protective services and licensing committee, councillor Daniel Kelly said: 'I am delighted at the Scottish Government's decision recognising the skills and experience of council building standards teams throughout Scotland.'

Call to enter social services' awards

ORGANISATIONS that provide social services are being asked to enter the Care Accolades 2012.

Run by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the Care Accolades take entries from all social service organisations across the voluntary, private and public sectors including community services, care home services, early years, children and young people and older people services.

The closing date for entries is February 13.

This year the awards ceremony is in Perth Concert Hall on June 22.

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I may never meet you personally, but there is something I want to tell you.

It is of such importance that I would be unkind if I didn't let you know; yet it is so simple that you can read it in a few minutes.

It is so vital that it may change your entire future: yet it is available to you at no cost whatever.

It is a message that you may not like: yet you will never be able to forget it.

And whether you believe it or not, it will affect you in life and in death.

First of all let me emphasise that this message is absolutely true, because it is God who said it. When God makes a statement you can afford to accept it, because He cannot lie. When God makes a promise, you can rest upon it, because His promises can never fail. God will not make you believe this message - that is your choice - but He will hold you responsible for having heard it.

Then let me tell you that this is a personal message to you. You cannot escape it. It brings you to the place of decision. You must either accept it or reject it. You must either say "I will" or "I will not". You cannot be neutral.

Here, then, is the message. It is an exact quotation from God's Word, the Holy Bible:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Now, did you ever hear such wonderful words as these before? Are they not amazing? Just think for a moment what they say! They reveal three marvellous and thrilling facts.

First, "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD!" since you are in the world, it means that He loved you. If that does not startle you, remember that when God loved you, He loved a sinner, because that is what you are.



The bible says that you are a sinner (Romans 3:23), and if you are honest you will agree. Now, although God loves you. He hates your sin. Sins will keep you out of Heaven, because God is holy and He must punish sin. Thus a holy God must find a holy way of saving sinners. Otherwise the sinner must pay for his sins, and that would mean spending eternity in Hell.

The second great fact is this: "HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON" The first statement tells you that God loved you. This statement tells you how much He loved you. He loved you so much He gave His only begotten Son! Do you know what that means? It means that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered on the Cross of Calvary so that you might be saved. He shed His blood so that your sins might be put away. He died for you so that you might live in Heaven forever. You see - someone must pay the penalty for sin, either you or a sinless substitute. God gave His Son so that He could be your sinless substitute.

And now for the third tremendous fact: "WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE".

What could be more wonderful? Think of it! God gives eternal life to those who believe in Christ. The Saviour has finished the work. He has died, has risen from the grave and gone back into Heaven.

Now your part is to believe in Him. This simply means that you should confess that you are a sinner, realise that Christ is willing and able to meet your need, and then receive Him as your Lord and Saviour.

This is the message which I had to tell you. Now you must make a decision. Will you accept Him or reject Him? Will you believe on Him or will you refuse Him? Will you bow humbly before Him or will you turn away in pride?

I may never meet you upon earth, but I hope I will meet you in Heaven. If you too will accept the sinner's Saviour, then you will be surely saved.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:35,36)

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" Acts 4:12



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LORN LINES



Oban Inspector Julie McLeish, left, accepts the cheque from Graham MacQueen, Oban in Bloom's Anne Stewart and Andy MacDowall. 15_105bloom1

SPURRED to act after his greenhouse was vandalised, Oban's Andy MacDowall has raised more than £1,000 for police community engagement schemes.

At 80, Mr MacDowall is himself a tireless servant to the community, helping arrange the town's colourful floral displays for the busy tourist season.

Instead of reacting angrily to being a victim of crime though, he decided the best thing to do was organise a raffle to help, and his gesture has been warmly welcomed by local police inspector, Julie McLeish.

She said: 'We'll be speaking to our partners in education and the council etcetera to weigh up suggestions as to how this money could be best used.'

'We're really grateful to Andy and Oban in Bloom for raising this money.'

Andy said: 'Some kids broke my greenhouse and I thought if I could do something that gets them involved in activities and makes them less likely to get into trouble then that'd be brilliant. 'Everyone at Oban in Bloom has worked very hard on this and Graham MacQueen has been a big help - he's done an awful lot to support us.'

'I'd like to thank everyone that has contributed to the raffle and supported us, without their support this wouldn't have been feasible.'

The final cheque of £1,120 was presented to the police last week.

Graham MacQueen, whose charitable trust supported the raffle, said: 'This is just another wonderful example of the terrific community spirit we have here and how we can achieve exceptional results by working together.'



STEPHEN Lipton of Campsie Camera Club was a popular guest speaker at the recent Monday night meeting of Oban Camera Club on January 23.

In a humorous digital photo presentation with a most comprehensive collection of images ranging from portraits, the Waverley, flowers, landscapes, buildings, birds and animals, Stephen kept his audience entertained and educated on what it takes to be a successful photographer.

Alex Clark gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the club. The club meets each Monday and new members most welcome.



Pupils from P1 and P2 of Lochnell Primary School in Benderloch enjoyed a day out entertaining at The Lynn of Lorne Nursing Home in the village. The school pupils regularly sing and entertain in the village and this was the first of three recent visits. The pupils entertained The Tuesday Group at Ford Spence Court and also the new 'friends' group, Club nan Caraisden, who meet monthly in the church hall.



THERE is always a wide variety of subjects covered by speakers at Oban Speakers Club and last week's meeting was no exception.

The main speakers were John Maclean who spoke on Rev John Witherspoon, Ian Crawford who spoke about Living with Polio and Frank Walton who spoke on Howard Carter.

They and their immediate critics Willie Melville, Roy Wood and Malcolm Black were introduced by Donnie Graham.

The topics session which formed the second half of the evening was introduced by Iain Fullarton. He gave a variety of topics to Willie Melville, Eamonn Arthur, Jim Fraser, Alec Clark, Roy Wood and Archie McPhail.

Timekeeper for the evening was Tom Clegg and a fair and sympathetic evaluation was given by Bill Leech.

The next meeting will be the annual Ladies Night which will be held on Thursday 9 at 8pm in Soroba House Hotel.



CONNEL Parish Church held a charity lunch in aid of the famine victims in East Africa via Mary's Meals last Saturday when around 150 people enjoyed lunch together.

As a result, the event raised £1261.36, which is enough to provide food for a further 43,000 meals in Africa.



Park Primary School pupils presented Glynis Dewar with a bouquet of flowers after a morning of tributes to wish her well in her retirement.

PARK Primary School bid farewell to one of its longest serving staff members last week when Glynis Dewar retired after 20 years.

Pupils arranged a whole morning of celebratory events to pay tribute to the popular figure, who struggled to hold back the tears as former pupils returned to play bagpipes for her special day. Pupils presented Glynis with jewellery, a gift voucher and flowers, while the staff presented their presents at a special tea on Friday.

Head teacher, Gillian Carney said: 'We will all miss her greatly and wish her a long and happy retirement.'



Would you like your news from the Lorn area in LORN LINES? You can send all the news from your family, organisation, club, society or group to editor@obantimes.co.uk

£8.2 million to come off A&B budget over next three years

ARGYLL and Bute Council will today (Thursday) debate proposals to save £8.2million over the next three years.

The executive committee will consider the measures set out in the 496-page draft budget before they are presented to the full council for a decision on February 16.

Save £1.8m this year

This year's draft budget has been prepared after one of the authority's most extensive community consultation exercises, which saw a number of meetings held locally and two live, online web-chats.

According to the council, among the areas likely to benefit from significant capital spend over the next three years are roads and amenity services, education, social work, affordable housing and culture and leisure.

This year's service review proposes savings of £1.8million for 2012/13, £2.75million for 2013/14 and £3.645million for 2014/15.

Most of these relate to management and operational cuts and efficiencies, although it is proposed to increase council fees and charges by three per cent for each of the next three years. In addition, the package of revenue savings agreed last year will continue to deliver savings over the next three years. These amount to £4.6million in 2012/13, £5.1million in 2013/14 and £5.1million in 2014/15.

Funding allocated to Argyll and Bute Council by the Scottish Government over the next three years amounts to £224.1million in 2012/13, £222million for 2013/14 and £220.3million for 2014/15.

This compares to £221.592million in the current financial year.

Council tax remains frozen, meaning the local authority will continue to collect just over £45million per annum over the next three years.

Meanwhile, the council say £83million of capital investment will be made over the next three years. Of that, grant funding from the Scottish Government will be £9.65million for 2012/13, £8.9million

for 2013/14 and £13.2 million for 2014.

Council leader, Dick Walsh, said: 'Our prudent approach to financial management and our decision last year to scrutinise our spending up until March 2015 has meant we are in the best possible position to meet the financial hurdles we will continue to encounter in the coming years.'

Argyll and Bute's residents and communities should not underestimate the scale of the ongoing challenges which all local authorities face.

'However, they can be assured we will not let up in our efforts to explore every avenue in our bid to improve the efficiency of our organisation so as to shield those services which people care about the most from the

effects of the financial squeeze.

'As a council, we need to continue to ensure that we create the conditions and infrastructure to support economic development and regeneration, that housing stock is sufficient to support economic development, that we have the leisure, culture and sports facilities to attract residents and visitors to our area, that our towns are

attractive places to live in and visit and that our transport infrastructure allows access throughout Argyll and Bute in a safe and convenient way.

'We now have the task of agreeing how best to take account of what people have said they would like us to safeguard and invest in, while at the same time identifying the necessary savings.'



Local volunteers for the RNLI gathered at the Oban branch of the Yorkshire Building Society on Monday after it was selected by members as the building society's chosen charity. Pictured are, from left, Andrew Mead, Sally Jackson, Peter MacKinnon, Carol Darling, John Hill, Jason Philp and Billy Fortieith. 15_105rnli1

Oban building society aims to keep RNLI afloat

YORKSHIRE Building Society's Oban branch is on a mission to raise funds for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) after picking it as its chosen charity.

Staff at the branch are set to organise events throughout the year to help raise money for the voluntary life-saving service, while collection tins will be on hand at the branch for customers to contribute to.

Nautical themed toys will also be sold at branches throughout the year to help raise funds.

The timing of the association with Britain's second largest building society couldn't be better, with the RNLI rolling out new lifejackets to improve the safety of rescuers.

The cost of kitting out volunteers across Scotland's 45 stations is £100,000. Yorkshire managed to raise £175,000 for its chosen charity last year, the Alzheimer's Society.

Oban branch manager for Yorkshire, Sally Jackson, said: 'I am delighted we have chosen the RNLI as our 2012 Charity of

the Year. The RNLI volunteer crews in this area play a vital role in keeping our seas and beaches safe, so I'm proud we will be doing our bit in supporting them and giving something back to thank them for all their hard work.'

'I am hoping our customers and members of the public in Oban are going to get behind us in 2012 and help us raise a fantastic amount of money for the RNLI.'

The Yorkshire Building Society Charitable Foundation,

which is the focal point for all Yorkshire, Barnsley and Chelsea Building Society's charitable giving, will also be making a significant contribution to the total raised.

The RNLI was chosen after a members' vote.

Oban RNLI's Willie Melville said: 'It's brilliant timing. We're introducing these lifejackets now and they're designed not just to be more comfortable, but to be more practical and useful for rescues. Yorkshire's support is much appreciated.'

Police spot checks feature in road safety campaign

MOTORISTS in Connel and Benderloch were being pulled over by police this week as spot checks were carried out throughout the Lorn area.

Vehicles were being checked for road worthiness while drivers were subject to random breathalysing.

Roadside speed checks were also carried out as part of a local road safety operation.

Oban roadworks

THERE will be disruption to traffic using Soroba Lane Bridge from next week.

Work may mean diversions for buses and taxis. Work starts on Tuesday and is expected to last two weeks.

Man 'accidentally' shot at fishermen

A MAN who accidentally fired an air rifle at two fishermen on Loch Earn has been fined £600 at Stirling Sheriff Court.

David Dickson, 29, from Wishaw in Lanarkshire, admitted recklessly discharging the .22 weapon.

The two anglers, Thomas Gilmour and Kyle Little, were in a boat 40 yards from the shore when they heard the pellet strike the hull.

Stirling Sheriff Court was told that the pair immediately recognised the sounds as those made by an air rifle being fired, and headed for land to phone the police.

Oban surgeon decision on hold

A DECISION on whether or not convicted insurance fraudster Dr Ramesh Gupta will be struck off the medical register may not be taken until next year.

The £100,000-a-year Oban cancer surgeon had already been suspended by the General Medical Council (GMC) on other matters prior to his conviction at Glasgow Sheriff Court in December for trying to steal £25,000 in an insurance scam.

A spokesperson for the GMC said they could not comment on any live investigation, but added: 'The service standard for investigations is approximately 15 months from start to finish.'

'Criminal matters take precedence on any investigation by ourselves.'

Kilchrenan has say at windfarm meeting

A LARGE turnout of Kilchrenan residents left a windfarm development company in no doubt that its actions are having a negative impact on the village.

Representatives from engineering firm Blackwell attended a busy meeting of Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council in Kilchrenan Village Hall on Tuesday, at which Greenpower's Carriga Gheal windfarm development was discussed.

While a stakeholders committee has been set up, involving the contractors, police, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forest Enterprise, Argyll and Bute Council, residents have complained about a lack of communication about the project.

During construction, vehicles have ripped up grass verges on the B845 and C29 and blocked these roads to local traffic, a resident's car has been damaged and on one occasion 18 homes were without water after a lorry caught a water pipe, causing it to burst.

Residents also complained about the number of smaller vehicles using the roads and the standard of driving by some of the workers.

Blackwell's contracts manager Jim Wilkinson told the meeting that 80 large loads have been brought to the site since construction began but Blackwell would now be reducing the number of plant vehicles at the windfarm site by 10 per cent.

He added the community would be warned of heavy vehicle movements through the company's website and stated Blackwell had commissioned a dilapidation survey, which recorded the state of the road and verges before construction began.

Mr Wilkinson added: 'We are here and we want to be tolerated, if that is the right word. We want to be courteous and if anyone sees examples of workmen not doing that then please report it.'

The windfarm is to be constructed by the end of this year, having begun in October 2011. It includes 20 wind turbines, between 65 metres and 80 metres in height.

Peacocks' staff await news

STAFF at Oban and Stornoway branches of clothing chain Peacocks were awaiting news of a potential buyer as *The Oban Times* went to press.

Rumours are circulating online that administrators, KPMG, are considering a number of offers for the international business, which owns 611 stores and 49 concessions across the UK alone.

The Cardiff-based retailer fell into trouble after reportedly failing to persuade its lenders - including Barclays and Royal Bank of Scotland - to enter a debt for equity deal.

While the company has struggled with debt, retail performance has been positive. The company reported its like-for-like sales rose for Christmas 2011 by 17 per cent on the same period last year.

Water pours down Oban roadway

SCOTLAND Transerv says it is working with Scottish Water to discover why water has been constantly running down Oban's Connel Road since October last year.

Oban resident Kathryn Spence launched an appeal on *The Oban Times'* Facebook page to encourage as many people as possible to complain about the problem on the Bealach an Righ having grown tired of an apparent lack of action.

A spokesperson for Transerv said: 'Our staff has checked the drainage there and while our gullies are running clear we are working with Scottish Water to trace the source of the problem.'

Only two complaints had been received about the problem.

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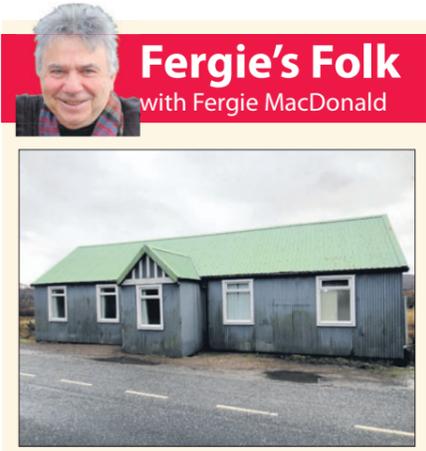
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with Fergie MacDonal

Mingarry Hall, Acharacle was hotbed of wartime liaisons

WITHOUT divulging my age, which everybody already knows, wartime weddings and dances stick vividly in my memory.

The Moidart and Ardnamurchan area was a key training battleground for British, American, Canadian and Polish assault troops. Tens of thousands passed through the area in preparation for the D-Day Normandy landings.

For me, living next to the local village hall was an education in itself. Dances were named hops and were held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1941 up to 1944. Local girls had a field day as one can imagine. Aye, maybe ten boys to one girl, a recipe for big trouble.

I remember one beautiful evening in July when a fight broke out between American GIs and British Commando Units. The scrap started inside the hall but finished out on the road.

A fight of that magnitude is almost beyond ones wildest imagination. I remember my mother Mima, attending to a young English soldier who was slashed and battered. It was like a battlefield. Indeed it was a battlefield.

When HMS Dorlin became operational, then we had sailors and marines in the equation. The dances were dynamite. Fiddles and bagpipes provided the music. That caused problems in itself.

Can you imagine tough guys from downtown Manhattan or New Orleans, used to honky-tonk dives, trying to jitterbug to old Joshua Johnstone or Aonghas Dubh playing the Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre on the bagpipes - with all due respect.

Scoons and sandwiches were provided by the girls, along with tea. The cups came round in a bathtub. Every girl in the place was someone's sweetheart. Eventually, but sometimes quite suddenly this led to marriage.

War-time weddings were unique. It was usually a morning wedding service, with the wedding breakfast in the beautifully decorated hall. Tablecloths were bed sheets. Because of food rationing, everybody just chipped in with what food they could provide.

This daytime activity was followed by the wedding dance at night. My father John, was usually the barman. There was no bar as such, just rounds of drink going round at intervals. There was always one wooden barrel of beer, six bottles of whisky and two bottles of port.

Alcohol rationing was severe, yet there were guys paralytic and 'out of their box' right, left and centre. You see each unit had their own canteen, selling beer, cigarettes and chocolate. Strong beer and lager were easily obtained 'on the side' as they say. No need to elaborate further.

A honeymoon was not an option. A family member would give their home to the young couple maybe for two nights and that was it. The house location was always top secret.

The local policeman running around in his baby Austin car, apprehended nobody during this period. You see, all the dancehall incidents in relation to GBH, serious assault, disturbance of the peace, fighting etc were dealt with by the military police. Then suddenly in early 1944, almost overnight, the area was deserted. The boys were on their way to channel ports in southern England - destination Normandy on D-Day, 6th June, 1944. Many of these brave boys were on a one-way ticket! This is disturbing indeed, when one thinks of the enjoyable nights many of these boys must have had in our little village hall before paying the ultimate sacrifice.

Fergie Domhmallach

National park celebrates 10th birthday with showcase DVD

A NEW DVD showcasing the assets of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs has gone on sale to celebrate the National Park's 10th birthday.

Produced by the Friends of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the 48-minute film was written and narrated by Craig Anderson and filmed by Norman Strachan, with additional narration from Iain Agnew.

It showcases all the assets of Scotland's first national park

from a host of original angles, taking full advantage of all its stunning natural attributes.

Funded by contributions from the National Park board and sponsor, Optical Express, the DVD captures the evocative moods and spirit of the area featuring an original musical score by Phil Cunningham.

All proceeds will go towards funding Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs projects, including native tree

planting, restoring footpaths, education activities and red squirrel protection.

James Fraser, chair of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs said: 'We are delighted with the quality of the film, which really does do justice to the special qualities of Scotland's first national park, in this, the 10th anniversary since its formation.'

'We are grateful to both the National Park Authority

and Optical Express for their support, which has enabled us to produce large quantities of film to promote the area as well as raising much needed funds from sales for important conservation work in the Park.'

Fiona Logan, CEO of the National Park, said: 'We know Loch Lomond and The Trossachs has some of the most spectacular scenery in the world and I would recommend you take a look at the new film

to get a bird's eye view of the whole park.'

'From Loch Lomond in the south, Cowal in the west, over to the Trossachs and across to Breadalbane, the aerial footage is breathtaking and gives you a real sense of the diverse landscape we are lucky to have in this National Park.'

Optical Express' David Moulds said: 'This film captures the magical qualities of what is one of the most beau-

tiful places in the world and we are proud to support the Friends with this.'

The DVD is available to buy for £11.99 from the Friends' main office at 63 West Princess Street, Helensburgh, the National Park online shop www.lochlomond-trossachs.org and from other outlets in and around the Park.

For more information about the Friends visit lochlo-mondtrossachs.org.uk.



price watch

Fuel bills to rise

Increasing haulage costs will counter any fuel duty relief

Glencoe Petrol - 135.9p Diesel - 143.9p
 Invergarry Petrol - 139.9p Diesel - 147.9p
 Fort William Petrol - 130.9p Diesel - 140.9p
 Portree Petrol - 140.9p Diesel - 149.9p
 Newtonmore Petrol - 135.9p Diesel - 143.9p
 Lochcarron Petrol - 144.9p Diesel - 149.9p
 Lochaline Petrol - 149.9p Diesel - 149.9p
 Sleat Petrol - 149.2p Diesel - 156.0p
 Stornoway Petrol - 144.9p Diesel - 155.9p
 Oban Petrol - 135.9p Diesel - 142.9p
 Campbeltown Petrol - 138.9p Diesel - 147.9p
 Lochgilhead Petrol - 134.9p Diesel - 143.9p
 Tiree Petrol - 156.0p Diesel - 161.0p
 Coll Petrol - 171.0p Diesel - 171.0p
 Arran Petrol - 151.0p Diesel - 159.9p
 Uig Petrol - 147.7p Diesel - 159.0p
 Barra Petrol - 147.0p Diesel - 155.0p
 Benbecula Petrol - 148.9p Diesel - 158.5p
 Inverness Petrol - 130.9p Diesel - 139.0p

THE manager of Scotland's most expensive petrol station has said the Scottish Government's handling of island economies is 'a mess.'

High costs mean John Wheeler-James, manager of Coll's community-owned fuel station, is forced to sell petrol and diesel at 171p per litre - over 40p more per litre for unleaded than filling stations in Fort William.

However, the imminent arrival of the UK Government's fuel discount scheme and the Scottish Government's proposed changes to RET mean the price of fuel is set to rise even further on the islands.

He said: 'There is going to be a 5p per litre duty relief from the UK Government, but then the changes to RET will wipe that saving out.'

'Every penny saved per litre of fuel will go towards the increased cost of commercial haulage.'

'In real terms, fuel will be more expensive.'

Most of the west coast's island communities have signed up to the fuel duty discount scheme, although some are holding off fearing the extra administration involved would alone eat up the 5p per litre 'saving.'

Isle of Coll's community owned station has already signed up, but Mr Wheeler-James admits the workload is problematic.

'This just hasn't been thought out. It's just a mess.'

Meanwhile, fuel prices across the west Highlands and islands fluctuate without apparent reason.

While Fort William is one of the cheapest places to fill up on the mainland, with petrol at 130.9p per litre, Lochaline's community-run station is one of the more expensive mainland outlets, at 149.9p per litre for both unleaded and diesel.

Filling stations in the Oban area average at 137.9p for unleaded and 142.9p for diesel.

Stornoway meeting Meanwhile, the boss of a national oil distribution company returned to Stornoway on Tuesday night to explain why his company is not to blame for the high cost of fuel in the Western Isles.

Sam Chambers, managing director of Warrington-based GB Oils Ltd, the parent company of islands' main distributors Scottish Fuels, addressed a public meeting at the council headquarters on Sandwick Road.

Shouts and jeers greeted Mr Chambers' arrival last October for a meeting with local politicians and fuel retailers.

Western Isles forecourt prices are 20p more per litre than on the mainland, claim campaigners. Mr Macmillan said a 'proper, independent investigation into wholesale distribution costs and profits' was needed.

A petition calling for an investigation into pricing by distributors has attracted more than 1,600 signatures and was lodged with the Scottish Parliament.

Scotland Office minister Michael Moore said he intends to get the Office of Fair Trading to launch a 'wide-ranging' investigation into alleged profiteering.



Oban brothers Ashton, 4, and Ethan Campbell-Black, 2, showed their support for the Phoenix Cinema's restoration, sporting the picture house's colours by becoming tigers for Saturday's bring and buy sale at the Corran Halls. 15_105phoenixsale2

Bring and Buy success for Oban cinema group's funds

A TREMENDOUS turnout of locals helped the Oban Phoenix Cinema group raise almost £1,000 at their latest Bring and Buy sale on Saturday.

Home-baking Almost every corner of the town's Corran Halls was taken up by the event, with stalls and face-painting complementing home-baking and the ever-popular bouncy castle.

As well as taking in the stalls, visitors enjoyed the prize raffle and perusing the selection of movie posters on sale.

A spokesperson for Oban

Phoenix Cinema said: 'The bring and buy sale was a great success and we're grateful for everyone that supported this event.'

Volunteers are still being sought for work this weekend, when the not-for-profit group rip out the last of the damp, sodden furniture from the old Highland Cinema.

The spokesperson said: 'Bring gloves, work clothes and some elbow grease and we'll rid the cinema of its remaining damp past.'

'We will set up tea and cof-

fee for everyone, but perhaps volunteers could bring food items with them so we can have a mid-afternoon break and snack?'

'Some cake, sandwiches etc and if everyone brings an item there will be enough to share round.'

'Any of your time is greatly appreciated, five minutes to an hour, everything helps.'

For more information on the cinema's restoration and the phoenix project, log on to the group's website at obanphoenixcinema.co.uk.

Morar Gala Day to return as community reveal action plan

RESURRECTING Morar Gala Day is taking pride of place in Morar Community Trust's (MCT) ambitious action plan for 2012.

The popular community day out was last held in the 'camera field' next to the old village around 30 years ago - but the trust feels the time is right to revive the event.

Chairperson Tiina Heinonen told *The Oban Times*: 'We are going for a date in May together with Lady Lovat Primary School. It will start up as a small

venture with children's games, sports and alternative Highland dancing.'

It will be more fun than serious - there's Mallaig and Morar games later in the year and we don't want to compete with them.'

Objectives Ms Heinonen said this year MCT objectives included:

- Continue to raise funds for the demolition of the old village hall and for the new proposed building, the pavilion. Events will include crepes and coffee days, slave auction and 200

Club, amongst others. Promote and help our local Lady Lovat Primary School. Fundraising events will, at times, be shared.

Encourage social events, such as the yearly Bonfire Night, which will bring the local residents together and strengthen the community spirit.

Resurrect 'working groups' such as the gardening group, which will help to promote 'Morar in Bloom'.

Investigate the possibility of starting up community allotments.

Publish material collected and compiled on the history of Morar and its populace by the Heritage group on the website.

The Environment group will continue to encourage responsible use of Morar beaches and the wider environment and improve and create accessibility through paths between Morar and Mallaig.

Investigate the possibility of creating a renewable energy scheme for the community.

Create employment opportunities, e.g. for a development officer

Expand and promote the website www.morar.org.uk

Engage with stakeholders via our facebook page and our quarterly newsletter.

Asked about the feasibility of achieving these goals, Ms Heinonen said: 'It's do-able - in terms of starting up it's achievable, but some of the projects are longer term and it will take more time for them to materialise.'

She added: 'As soon as we have funds identified for the demolition of the hall, we will demolish it.'



Morar Community Trust members, left to right, Anna Cornelius (director), Tiina Heinonen (chairperson), Gemma van der Zanden (vice chairperson), Audrey MacEachen (secretary) and Keith Elwell (treasurer). Not pictured is director Eleanor MacVarish.

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Police warn of bogus workmen operating in Argyll

ARGYLL residents are being urged to be on the lookout for bogus workmen following the arrest of two men for fraud in Campbeltown last week.

Oban's police inspector, Julie McLeish said that the men may have been operating throughout the county for some time.

The arrests come as police continue to investigate complaints about other bogus workmen operating locally.

Inspector McLeish is urging locals to be aware of the possibility of fraudsters, calling anyone with doubts about work done or suspicious individuals to contact the police immediately.

She said: 'Bogus workmen will pressure you to have work carried out that is often unnecessary or carried out to a poor standard. They will use different methods to try and persuade you to part with your money and you may feel under pressure to pay cash in advance of any work being completed.'

'The best advice I can give is to use companies which come with a personal recommendation, are established, or are locally based companies or workmen.'

If you have concerns, contact police immediately. To speak to community policing in the Oban North and Lorn area, phone 01631 510540, for Oban South and The Isles phone 510551.

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Heritage trail project to encourage visitors to explore folklore of Killin

VISITORS will soon be able to discover much more about Killin thanks to a new heritage trail currently being developed. Part of the Killin Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), the aim of the trail is to encourage people to explore the whole village and enjoy

the rich history it has to offer. Interpretation panels will be located along the trail illustrating the landscape, architecture and local folklore. A leaflet will also be produced to guide visitors along the trail and will feature wider events and activities in the local area.

Some interesting features of the trail include how the building styles in Killin evolved, the stories of the people who helped shape the village and the legends that surround the area. CARS is jointly funded by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and Historic

Scotland. Stirling Council is also making a contribution to the project. Susan McGowan, Built Environment Adviser for the National Park explains: 'The recent closure of the Breadalbane Folklore Centre has meant the completion of the interpretation

panels and heritage trail will be particularly important, providing the many visitors to Killin with a permanent and easily accessible source of information on the history and development of the village.' Gilean Ford of Killin Heritage Society added: 'The aim of

the boards and the leaflet is to encourage visitors to explore, on foot, the whole of the village rather than just gathering around the Falls and then departing. They can follow the trail, starting and finishing at the Falls of Dochart or the McLaren Hall, and will be encouraged to extend

their walk and explore the wider area.' If you are a local business owner and would like to display a Killin Heritage Trail sticker and guides, contact, Kirsty Callaghan on 01389 727743 or email Kirsty.callaghan@lochlomond-trossachs.org.

Life to return to former railway station

STATION Cottages, Killin, which have lain in ruin for years, could be partially demolished to make way for a new house. Daniel Gardiner, of Edinburgh, has lodged a planning application to convert the ruins into a three bedroom home. The existing cottages, which are not listed, would be re-roofed while the associated outhouse would make way for an extension to the rear of the property. Permission was granted to a previous owner in January 2009 for the restoration of the cottage without an extension, again for domestic use. Built sometime between 1861-1895, the existing cottages and outhouse were associated with Killin Junction Station on the former Callander and Oban railway line; now forming part of the Rob Roy Way trail.



Station Cottages.

Highland put extra cash into potholes

HIGHLAND Council is set to inject an extra 'seven-figure sum' in 2012-13 into filling potholes and other road repairs. The recommendation will be made by the Administration to the council at its budget-setting meeting in Inverness next Thursday. Budget leader, Councillor David Alston said: 'The council is acutely aware of the deterioration of road surfaces due to wear and tear and adverse weather. We recognise this is an issue in many communities. This is why we need to allocate additional funds from our balances to repair the potholes as soon as weather permits. Decisions about funding beyond 2012-13 will be for the next council, which will be elected in May.'

Society AGM

KILLIN Heritage Society will hold its annual general meeting at 7pm in the Lesser McLaren Hall tomorrow (Friday).

Drivers face month of disruption for A828 roadworks

MARCH will be a month of roadworks for those travelling north of the Connel Bridge, with two separate schemes planned over a three week period.

Scotland Transerv first wants to resurface the A828 at South Ledaig between 7am-6pm, March 5-9 to avoid weekend disruption. Traffic will be managed by a 10mph convoy system.

If the work cannot be completed on those days, work would not take place at the weekend, but instead be finished from the following Monday.

On completion, engineers will move to Benderloch, however work there is more complicated. Scheduled to run between March 12-23, again excluding weekends, there will be a 7am-6pm convoy system in place.

However, the scheme incorporates resurfacing a narrow section of the road, meaning there will be two days' of overnight work.

With no suitable diversion in place, queuing traffic will be escorted through the works every two hours during 15 minute windows.

These windows will start at 8pm, 10pm, midnight, 2am, 4am and 6am. Because this second stage of works is dependent on the South Ledaig resurfacing being completed on time, the exact start date cannot be confirmed until the day.

Electronic signs on the route will give up to date information and, where possible, dates will appear on The Oban Times website. Provision will be made for emergency service vehicles throughout the schemes.

Iain MacDonald, chairman of Ardrachattan Community Council, said: 'We're fully supportive of the work being carried out. If you want roads to be safe, work like this requires to be carried out.'



Kinlochleven Primary School kids: looking for local volunteers to help with their community garden.

Kinlochleven primary pupils ask residents for garden help

KINLOCHLEVEN Primary School children are asking local people to help them develop a plot of land as a vegetable garden.

The school has been leased the ground on Callart Road by Kinlochleven Community Trust and last week pupils hand delivered letters to nearby residents asking for assistance.

It stated: 'The idea is to make a community/primary/nursery garden that is designed, made

and maintained by members of the community and the school. The garden will give the children valuable hands on experience in seeing how food is grown, as well as giving them a better understanding of nature and their environment. As your property is very close to the piece of ground we are hoping that you will take an interest in its development.

'However, we cannot start the project without community volunteers who can give time, experience or garden tools to help the project get underway. You may give your time as often as you wish, you may only be interested in the designing aspect of the garden or you may be able to offer garden tools you no longer use.'

Clerical assistant Morag Kemp said: 'Any help will be greatly appreciated and not only the children will benefit, the community will too.'

At the time, Sheriff Douglas Small had ordered Scottish Sea Farms - which has an annual turnover of £94million - to pay a fine of £600,000 and Logan Inglis £40,000 for their part in the deaths.

However, at the Court of Criminal Appeal in Edinburgh, judges were told Sheriff Small failed to take account of factors that should have made the fines more lenient.

Lord Mackay of Drumadoon, sitting with Lord Menzies and Lady Dorrian agreed. Scottish Sea Farms had its fine cut to £333,334, while Logan Inglis' fine was reduced to £20,000.

Former MSP promoted to top Euro post

A FORMER MSP for Argyll and Bute has been promoted to one of the European's Parliament's most powerful positions.

Liberal Democrat MEP for Scotland George Lyon has been elected as the vice president of the European Budget Committee. It comes at a time when the Eurozone is experiencing the worst financial crisis in its history.

Mr Lyon has also been re-elected as the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe

(ALDE) co-ordinator and lead spokesperson for agriculture and rural affairs.

The ALDE group is the third largest in the European Parliament.

Mr Lyon said: 'I'm delighted to have been elected to the European Budget Committee.

'While tough decisions have to be taken on the budget I want to make sure that agriculture does not have to shoulder a disproportionate share of any cuts in the 2014-2020 spending period.'

Firms win appeal to cut fines after fish farm deaths

Oban court fines greatly reduced as Loch Creran deaths appeal decided in Court of Criminal Appeal in Edinburgh

TWO FIRMS fined after horror deaths at a North Lorn fish farm had their penalties reduced by almost half after appeal judges reviewed the case last week.

Employees Robert MacDonald, 45, of Kirrton, Appin, and Maarten Den Heijer, 30, of Longsdale Terrace, Oban lost their lives under the deck of a Scottish Sea Farms' barge in Loch Creran, Argyll, in May 2009.

Guilty

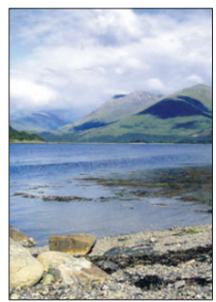
Both the barge operator and Cumbernauld-based contractor, Logan Inglis, pleaded guilty to breaching safety rules at Oban Sheriff Court last year.

At the time, Sheriff Douglas Small had ordered Scottish Sea Farms - which has an annual turnover of £94million - to pay a fine of £600,000 and Logan Inglis £40,000 for their part in the deaths.

However, at the Court of Criminal Appeal in Edinburgh, judges were told Sheriff Small failed to take account of factors that should have made the fines more lenient.

Lord Mackay of Drumadoon, sitting with Lord Menzies and Lady Dorrian agreed.

Scottish Sea Farms had its fine cut to £333,334, while Logan Inglis' fine was reduced to £20,000.



Loch Creran became a scene of tragedy in May 2009

In May 2009 the fish farm was having trouble with a hydraulic crane on a storage barge moored in the loch. It was thought the fault might lie in pipe-work under the deck in chambers closed by rubber waterproof seals which were bolted down.

Dizzy

Campbell Files, 42, from Oban began to feel dizzy as soon as he reached the bottom of the chamber and passed out.

Volunteer firefighter Rab MacDonald, 45, from Appin, found a respirator then went

down to try to rescue Mr Files. He was able to give a thumbs-up sign, then slumped in a corner. Maarten Den Heijer, 30, from Oban, then went into the chamber with a length of rope, but collapsed as soon as he reached the bottom of the ladder.

Emergency services were called in but Mr Den Heijer and Mr MacDonald had perished. Mr Files was airlifted to hospital.

The deaths were blamed on lack of oxygen in the confined space. This was the first time anyone from either company had needed to go below decks.

Scottish Sea Farms admitted they had failed to assess the risks involved to their workers - despite having 300 employees at 44 sites throughout Scotland. They also admitted failing to provide information and training. Logan Inglis admitted similar failings but the charge against them did not allege they were responsible for the deaths.

Both firms had good records on health and safety matters, while appeal judges heard Logan Inglis, which has a turnover of more than £2.7million, had been hit hard by the economic downturn and redundancies may be on the cards if fines were too heavy.

Advertisement

SCOTTISH COMPANY DEFEATS BANKS

THOUSANDS of people across the UK who have been mis-sold payment protection insurance (PPI) by banks could be due compensation - and YOU could be one of them! That's where Payment Protection Advice Centre (PPAC) come in, because as previously reported, the Hamilton firm are continuing

the fight against the banks. Anyone who has taken out a loan or credit card within the last 10 years may have been sold a payment protection insurance policy - and sometimes without realising it. Payment protection insurance - which was used to cover loan and credit card payments if the customer was out of work - is now banned

in the UK after the British Bankers' Association (BBA) lost a crucial judicial review by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). There are an estimated 20 million mis-sold policies throughout Scotland, and to cover the outlay, Lloyds Banking Group (which includes Halifax, Bank of Scotland, Black Horse and Lloyds TSB)

have set aside £3.2billion. Working in conjunction with the Hamilton Advertiser, Payment Protection Advice Centre have had an overwhelming success rate in helping people to get their money back, and are delighted to have come to the rescue on behalf of so many of our readers. Reader Mrs McCall recently picked up the phone to call

PPAC and has since received over £21,000. She said: "I saw the advert in the paper and wasn't sure if it applied to me. "Since I called PPAC one of their guys came to see me at my house and I have now had a cheque. "It couldn't have come at a better time, with Christmas just around the corner!" If YOU think you have a

case then look no further than Payment Protection Advice Centre, who are situated at the newly-refurbished former gatehouse in Bothwell Road, Hamilton. PPAC work in conjunction with Moore MacDonald Solicitors in Motherwell, giving you peace of mind with the knowledge that you're dealing with a lawyer who

specialises in this type of case. PPAC owner Andy Frame said: "We can't believe the amount of readers who have responded to the last report. "It goes to prove that all you have to do is pick up the phone. "But so many people still need to be made aware that they could be eligible to reclaim this. "Although the response

has been great there are still millions of policies to be reclaimed. "I cannot stress enough how important it is to call us to see if you are eligible." As was the case with Mrs McCall, a PPAC employee can visit your house to discuss your claim, or you could visit their office at a time that suits you.

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then chances are you have been mis-sold Payment Protection and could be due £0000's in compensation. Call us now on 01698 897655 to reclaim what is yours.

INVERGARRY

A FUNDRAISING concert is being held in Invergarry to help finance the village's Guy Fawkes Night celebrations. One of the country's most popular ceilidh bands, *The Vatersay Boys*, will perform at Glengarry Village Hall next Saturday night from 8pm, with tickets available at the door.

GLEN NEVIS

EVIDENCE of red squirrels in Steall Gorge at Glen Nevis has been recorded for the first time, according to conservation group the John Muir Trust. Nevis conservation officer Lewis Pate spotted a perfectly split hazelnut shell believed to have been left by one of the furry rodents. He said: 'I was walking through the birch and ash wood on the path when I found it. The only animal that can do this is a red squirrel and while we have never observed any reds in the gorge, it is reasonable evidence of their presence despite the habitat not being particularly suited to them.' Red squirrels are regularly seen in the pinewoods further down the glen.

TORLUNDY

CROFTER Neil MacBride of Muirshearlich will deliver a slide show and presentation of Old Lochaber at the Lochaber Rural Education Trust, Torlundy, tomorrow night (Friday). Memorabilia from the old Ben Nevis Auction Mart and Lochaber Agricultural Show from the 1970s will also be on show. For more information on the open evening phone 01397 703819.

FORT WILLIAM

FORT William Community Council held its monthly meeting in the Nevis Centre on January 21. Excerpts from the draft minutes: Steering Group - D Purdon. Meeting January 13 2012: Discussion on A82/Trunk Roads and continuation of closures for repairs. Two cruise boats booked for September - 800 and 600 passengers. It is hoped that the BA pier can be used to berth the ships. Fort William needs to make visitors feel welcome when they come ashore. Bunting might make the town look cheerier. Cinema - possibility of cinema on the Blar Mhor development. Caledonian Rail Service - D Purdon. Advised that he had emailed Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Housing and Transport, asking how much capital investment there has been on the West Highland Line infrastructure and rolling stock improvements. The more recent information



Left to right: Shona Wright, Sophie King, Beth Layton and Shannon Watson served up a treat at their Cozy Cakes Café.

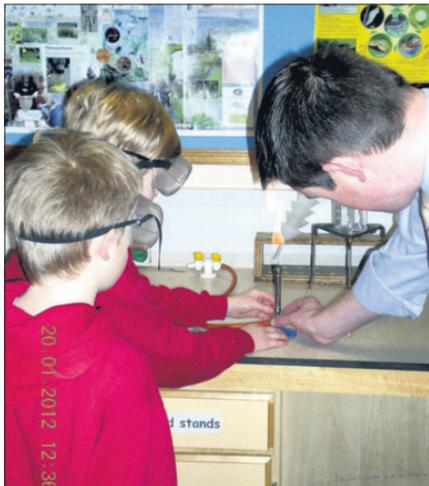
LISMORE

LISMORE'S four primary seven girls - Shona Wright, Shannon Watson, Beth Layton and Sophie King - gave the island a treat recently when they opened their Cozy Cakes Café for one day only with an enticing lunchtime and snack menu. The project had been weeks in the preparation with the girls managing every part of the venture under the guidance of classroom assistant Hazel MacCormick. They soon discovered that running a café, even for a day, needed a range of financial, communication and design skills as well as the ability to serve the public. First they needed to get a backer - the Parent Council - who would lend them the initial outlay and then find a charity to receive their profits. But the bulk of the time was needed to work out how much food and drink they could afford to order and how their café would be branded which meant deciding on the name, the menus, the logo, the table decoupage and the staff clothing.

received would indicate that there is commitment to invest in the sleeper service and upgrade the rolling stock. A good response to the Rail 2014 Public Consultation is required and all community council members were urged to encourage people to respond before the closure on February 20. Secretary to email all Lochaber community councils urging them to respond to the

On the day everything was perfect and they greeted and served very professionally. It was hard work but a great learning project and they were proud to have raised £250 for their two charities, Mary's Meals and Asthma UK. This was not their first chosen café day. That was planned for last December on the day Lismore was battered by the now famous storms when not only was there no power but the school had to close and everyone was advised not to travel. Even then, before the weather was really bad, they decided to deliver the soup and sandwiches around the island and, with the donations received, they were able to repay the money borrowed and did not have too much unsold food. Congratulations primary seven, it was a great café. And thanks and congratulations to classroom assistant and catering manager Hazel MacCormick who prepared the delicious food.

LISMORE Primary School enjoyed an exciting morning at Oban High School's science labs on Friday January 20. Principal teacher Iain Fulton led the children through a variety of experiments, lighting a Bunsen burner, burning magnesium along with some hair-raising demonstrations using the Van der Graaf generator. Mr Fulton even lit



Two of the Lismore pupils are shown how to light a Bunsen burner during their visit to Oban High School.

a Bunsen burner using a spark from his finger! Mr Porter then demonstrated some explosive and impressive chemistry after which the children tucked into lunch in the school dining room.

AOCB K Gadsby reports overgrown shrubs at the entrance to the railway station off the A82 obstructing view of cars. S MacLennan: The tar repairs in the high street in place of loose cobbles especially by the old Post Office looks terrible. Can it be confirmed that this is temporary and the cobbles are going to be replaced? M Dempsey: Cars parked

on the pavement in Claggan at Carn Dearg. Works vans parked on the double yellow lines outside Claggan Stores. School bus was held up as unable to pass and the children were late arriving at the school. No bus service in Claggan on January 12 and reports from passengers indicate that buses are dirty. Julian Greaves facia front in the High Street in a state of disrepair. Can planning service

ask for repairs to be carried out? A McPhee: Can we have confirmation that the Fassifera Road repairs are to be carried out and when? D Purdon: Gordon Square - Temporary barriers need to be placed around the area to ensure that works vans do not use the area as a temporary car park during building and to stop vehicles entering High Street from the West End. Secretary to write to Dot Ferguson, Senior Area Wards Manager. I Kennedy: A large number of the roofs in the flats throughout Lundavra have lost ridge tiles and (more) slates during the bad weather. The problem of lack of repair is now going to be much more serious. Have Councillor Cameron and the representatives from the housing service been able to make progress through the tenants meetings with regard future repair work/funding. Is this now a matter for health and safety? Next meeting: February 21, Nevis Centre.

BROADFORD

HIGHLANDS and Islands Enterprise is to hold a public consultation event in Broadford Village Hill next Friday, February 10 on initial proposals to open up a further area of land on the village's industrial estate for business development. Local residents will have the chance to ask questions and make comments at the drop-in session between 12noon and 5pm. Results from the event will form HIE's application for outline planning permission to Highland Council.

KYLEAKIN

KYLEAKIN Local History Society will welcome Donald John MacLennan to its monthly meeting in the village hall on February 8. Broadford man Donald John, a former interviewee for *The Oban Times*' 'My Village' series, will talk on his 50 years as a vet on Skye. Everyone is welcome to the evening, which starts at 7.30pm. Members free, non-members £5.

Around the Rurals

KILMORE SWRI president Isabel Smith welcomed members to the January meeting. After business, including the Ruralitypics, Isabel introduced Roddy McCuish who gave an interesting and entertaining talk 'From Schooldays to Councillor'. The vote of thanks was given by Fiona Dickie and tea was served by Ann Ferguson and helpers. Competitions: Shortbread - 1 Marie Morrison; 2 Isabel Smith. Limerick - 1 Sona Campbell; 2 Helen Brotherton.

Appin

APPIN SWRI Drama Group recently held its pudding night and ceilidh in Appin Hall. A mouth-watering selection of puddings was available and plates were piled high with a little of this and a little of that. Tea, coffee and biscuits and cheese rounded off the first part of the evening. Alan Carmichael got the ceilidh off to a rousing start with a selection on the pipes. Chairman Donald MacKinnon kept the proceedings going in his own inimitable manner and

had everyone chuckling. There were songs in Gaelic and English from Morag Smith and Freddie MacKenzie, musical selections from Ann Gibson at the piano and Gregor MacCormick and Winnie McNicol on accordion and keyboard and Grace MacLeod entertained with her excellent monologues. Margaret Ross warmly thanked all the artistes and everyone who had helped in any way to make the evening so enjoyable. A total of £279 was raised for drama club funds. The first institute meeting of 2012 was held in Port Appin Hall. When business was completed, president Doreen Evans introduced the speaker for the evening, Graham MacQueen, of the community charity shop who was accompanied by his associate Linda Fraser. Graham began with a fascinating account of some of his early experiences in various parts of the world and explained how the plight of people he had encountered led him to begin his charity work in the community. Linda then took over to tell about the day to day working of the charity shop, the volunteers, the drivers and the many donations received. She also gave members an idea of the many organisation to have benefited from the charity. It was an extremely interesting evening and Graham and Linda were thanked, poetically, by Agnes Thomson. After tea, the raffle was drawn, the proceeds of which were donated to the trust. Competition results: Dumpling loaf - Gold, Alison MacCorquodale; Silver, Christie Malone; Red, Jessie Gilkes; Blue, Ellen MacCorquodale, Brenda MacLeod, Jessie MacKenzie and Cartriona MacKenzie. Curtain fabric - Red, Alison MacCorquodale.

KILCHOAN



Kilchoan man Jon Haylett's novel invention for getting seaweed from shore to garden.

Novel invention takes the strain

KILCHOAN man Jon Haylett was finding the strain of transporting seaweed 250 metres up from the shore to his garden in a rickety wheelbarrow too much - so he invented and built his own device, using a wicker log basket. The idea, Jon tells us, came from the old sedan chair, last seen in use in the UK during the 19th century. The new contraption comes just in time, as the effort involved using the barrow was taking its toll. Jon said: 'We managed four barrowloads before we collapsed. There are probably quantum laws of physics which explain why mass and volume are reduced by transport because, once we'd spread our weed across the beds, it seemed to have shrunk. At this rate it's going to take us weeks to fertilise our vegetable patch.'

BALLACHULISH



St Bride's Nursery children enjoy Burns Supper

Youngster Ramsay Stubbs piped in the haggis, carried by his nursery classmate Linnea Livingston, to St Bride's recent Burns Supper celebrations. The kids dressed in tartan sashes they made themselves out of paper and toasted the haggis with glasses of Irn Bru. Nursery teacher Kate MacIntyre said: 'We held a wee ceilidh dance afterwards and they all really enjoyed it.' The primary pupils at the Ballachulish school held their Burns Supper yesterday (Wednesday).

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Left to right, Su Coyne, winner, adult age group; Helen Race, judge; Keira Boyce, winner, up to 7 age group; Alison Stewart, Local Development Officer, Arisaig Community Trust. #05arisaig01

Arisaig trust displays logo entries

ARISAIG Community Trust (ACT) recently staged an exhibition of the designs entered in their competition to find a logo for the trust. More than 70 varied entries were submitted with some really excellent ideas - and choosing a winner in each of the four age categories proved a difficult task for the judges. They were looking for good designs which conveyed two important aspects - the special place which is Arisaig, together with a sense of Arisaig as a strong community.

ARISAIG

Helen Race, teacher of art at Mallaig High School, commented that she was delighted to be asked to judge the competition, and extremely heartened to see ACT involving the community in the project in a very tangible way. Full list of winning and commended entries: Age group 1 up to 7: 1 - entry no. 23, Keira Boyce (Lady Lovat PS); Commended 1 - entry no. 17, Mia White (Arisaig PS); Commended 2 - entry

no. 20, Erin Gillies (Arisaig PS). Age group 2 8-11: 1 - entry no. 52, Angus Moss (Arisaig PS); Commended 1 - entry no. 53, Elsie Tevendale (Lady Lovat PS); Commended 2 - entry no. 50, Cara Kilpatrick (Rum PS). Age group 3 12-15: 1 - entry no. 56, Damian Bowman (MHS); Commended 1 - entry no. 58, Niamh Henderson (MHS); Commended 2 - entry no. 62, Finn Robinson (MHS). Age group 4 over 18: 1 - entry no. 70, Su Coyne; Commended 1 - entry no. 67, Su Coyne; Commended 2 - entry no. 65, Charlie MacDonald.

10 Years Ago

Those Were The Days
The Oban Times
Thursday, January 31, 2002

Islay bottles its own

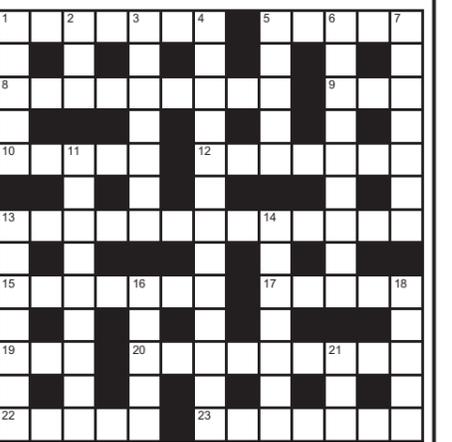
HISTORY will be made on Islay with the opening of a bottling hall at Bruichladdich Distillery. For the first time, one of the island's internationally famous malts will actually be bottled on the island, if Argyll and Bute Council gives permission for a scheme to alter, extend and re-roof one of the distillery buildings and fit it out as a bottling hall. At present the Bruichladdich, like the produce of all the other Islay distilleries, goes to the mainland. It is bottled at a plant in Glasgow. The whisky is not the only thing that makes the journey. Along with the precious spirit goes tankers full of fresh Islay water, necessary to add to the vats before bottling. 'There has certainly never been a bottling hall on Islay,' said Jim McEwan, production director of Bruichladdich. 'Our plan is to take a building in the courtyard which lost its roof in a storm in 1994, extend and re-roof it and install vats for vatting prior to bottling, along with bottling and packing equipment. It would mean Islay whisky going straight from the island to its destinations around the world.' The bottling hall at Bruichladdich would also be used to bottle Islay spring water - a perfect companion for anyone wanting to take their water with whisky. 'We have found a very nice spring above Port Charlotte which has the most incredible crystal

clear, beautiful water,' said Mr McEwan, who also hoped that other distilleries on the island would give the bottling hall contract work for smaller, special runs. If it all goes well with the planning application, the bottling hall could be in action by summer; a government grant is already in place. Apart from the installation of the specialist equipment, all work would be done by Islay-based tradespeople. After the bottling hall comes plans for the Bruichladdich to have its own academy, so that people can go along and learn about malt whisky. **Whipping up a storm** THE WEST Highlands was rocked on Monday, along with the rest of the country, by storm force winds which reached their peak around lunchtime. Winds gusting up to 84mph were recorded on Tiree by the Met Office, with speeds of 120mph measured on the top of Ben Nevis and up to 141mph on the top of Cairn Gorm. At its peak, Argyll was completely cut off as roads were closed because of accidents. Police had to control traffic crossing the Connell Bridge, which was closed to high-sided vehicles for two or three hours. Oban, Lorn and the Isles area roads manager Neil Brown, of Argyll and Bute Council, said the A819 road between Cladich and Dalmalny was blocked for several hours by fallen trees - with a police car stuck between two blockages. Neighbours of Hugh and Sarah MacIntyre

in Dunollie in Oban alerted police when they became worried about the safety of a tree on a slope above their houses. One tree came crashing down, hitting their house and damaging their shed. **AA danger report offers ammunition for A82 campaign** THE A82 between Tarbet and Tyndrum is one of the most dangerous roads in Europe, says the Automobile Association (AA). The AA is currently working on the UK part of the European Road Assessment Programme, being undertaken by 14 similar motoring organisations across Europe under the heading of road safety. Part of the work is to produce an accident risk rate map, covering fatal and serious accidents per billion vehicle kilometres driven between 1997 and 1999 on the main roads outwith built up areas. The AA has written to Argyll and Bute Council saying that statistics show the A82 between Tyndrum and Tarbet grouped in the highest accident rate and asking if the council can 'shed any light on why it is so'. 'Too old, too narrow, too poor a state of repair,' said councillor Duncan MacIntyre, the council's roads spokesman, who sees the AA report as added ammunition in the fight to get the road improved.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- Across**
- Cultivated (7)
 - Beat (5)
 - Nickname (9)
 - Rent or stop prematurely (3)
 - Teenager maybe (5)
 - Number of printed rows (7)
 - Not giving good results (13)
 - Funnel shaped flowers (7)
 - Watery discharge (5)
 - Road coating (3)
 - Ranking order (9)
 - Grant (5)
 - High pointed roof (7)
- Down**
- Hazardous (5)
 - Watch chain (3)
 - Nor (7)
 - Those who cross (6-7)
 - Behemoth (5)
 - Know what one sees (9)
 - Cotton fabric (7)
 - Not normal (9)
 - Solvent from distilling petrol (7)
 - Rigging (7)
 - Not in any manner (5)
 - Possibly (5)
 - Ceiling (3)



Last week's solution

L	E	A	T	I	C	L					
T	E	A	S	E	T	M	Y	R	I	A	D
G	L	H	A	G	D						
S	O	M	E	E	D	G	E	W	A	Y	S
S	I	C	N	L							
U	N	H	O	R	S	E	S	P	R	O	G
E	F	M	O	R	I	V					
C	U	I	S	E	O	R	B	I	T	E	R
R	C	M	A	N							
P	O	S	I	T	I	O	N	A	N	E	
S	L	C	I	N	E	I					
P	I	L	L	A	R	U	N	S	U	N	G
S	Y	O	M	S	E						

Talking Shop with Claire



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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Withdrawing honours for right or wrong reasons

THIS week's announcement that former head of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) Fred Goodwin has been stripped of his knighthood has met with a mixed reaction from both the public and business sector.

Few would describe the man as a 'poor soul'. Goodwin was at the helm of the Scottish-based banking giant at the height of the financial industry crisis in 2007. He oversaw the multi-million pound deal to buy Dutch rival ABN Amro which in turn led to RBS being bailed out by the British taxpayer, but the stripping of the honour he received in 2004, under a Labour government, for services to banking has perhaps set a dangerous precedent.

Will others who have received honours within the same business sector now have their contributions to British industry re-evaluated?

If the 'gong' was presented solely on the basis of business performance, then does the removal of the honour signify an intolerance of failure?

Perhaps the Sir Fred - now just Fred - announcement is but a mere smoke screen to divert attention away from the current schedule of bankers' bonuses which highlight just how much of the profit from the banking sector is being channelled into the early retirement funds of senior executives.

GLASGOW LETTER

Last weekend of Celtic Connections

OVER the years the range of music has widened at Celtic Connections but the Scottish and west coast influence is still to be found at many events.

Early in this year's festival, for example, the packed Old Fruitmarket showcased the vast array of traditional musical talent from Lochaber. The following night Braebach, with its new line-up which included Megan Henderson from Fort William and James MacKenzie from Lewis, delighted a packed Strathelyde Suite. A subsequent concert featuring the group sold out over a week before the event and this proved to be the situation for many of the festival concerts. Further examples of top quality performances were concerts featuring the Deadly Duo of Finlay MacDonald and Chris Stout and then Session A9 when on both occasions the ability to engage with the audience with humour was a huge factor in the success of each concert.

As we move into the last weekend of the festival, west coast music will be much to the fore.

Tomorrow evening (Friday) *Skippin'ish* will take to the stage in the Strathelyde Suite and the following evening *Ceolas* will be in the same venue.

A feature of previous *Skippin'ish* concerts over the years in Glasgow has been the element of surprise they bring to their concerts and it will be interesting to see who the programmed 'Friends' will be. This element of surprise will also be a component of the *Ceolas* concert.

Since its inception in 1996, this summer school has spread the culture, with strong links to Cape Breton, and many of the tutors and graduates are likely to make an appearance.

As has become customary, the final of the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year will be broadcast live from the City Halls on Sunday February 5 and this year, for the first time, it will be televised on BBC Alba, 9pm to 11pm, on Monday February 6. This year's finalists are Kirsty Watt, Lewis, Gaelic song; Katie Boyle, Glasgow, fiddle; Catriona Price, Orkney, fiddle; Roisin Anne Hughes, Glasgow, fiddle; Rona Wilkie, Oban, fiddle, and Alistair Ogilvie, Strathblane, Scots Song.

Last international at Kelvin Hall

FOR THE past 20 years, an international athletics meeting has taken place in the Kelvin Hall with world class athletes

being attracted to the city and this year's event, the last to be held in that venue, was one of the best yet.

The home team were the eventual winners against opposition from Russia, Germany, the USA and the Commonwealth but the real winner was the city of Glasgow.

Such large events require meticulous organisation and once again the city excelled. Next year's event will take place at a new Commonwealth Games 2014 venue and it will be interesting to see if the unique atmosphere, as experienced in the Kelvin Hall, can be replicated.

Ceilidh dance

FOR THE last few years the Glasgow Uist and Barra Association has held its first ceilidh dance of the year towards the end of January rather than during the festive season as in the past and once again this proved to be a successful decision.

More than 170 attended the recent function in the Glasgow University Union and danced the night away to the excellent music of *Deoch 'n Doras*. This must have greatly encouraged the association's committee at a time of dwindling attendances.

Diary dates

Friday February 3: Closing date for entries for Junior Piping Competition at National Piping Centre. *Skippin'ish*, Celtic Connections - see above.

Saturday February 4: Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association Marag Supper, Partick Burgh (Lesser) Hall, 7.45pm. Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, Perth Concert Hall, 7.30pm. *Ceolas*, Celtic Connections - see above.

Thursday February 9: Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm - Tich Frier.

Friday February 10: Mull and Iona Association Annual Gathering and Dance, Glasgow University Union, Concert, 7.30pm, dance 10.30pm. Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh, Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, 7.30pm.

Saturday February 11: Paisley and District Association Burns' Ceilidh, High Parish Church, Johnstone, off Ludovic Square, 7.30pm.

Pub scene

MUSIC in the Park Bar this weekend will be played by Ballochmyle on Friday, Eriskey Lilt on Saturday and the Scott Harvey Band on Sunday while in the Islay Inn it will be Black Velvet on Friday and the Keelies on Saturday.

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

YOUR LETTERS

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

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including an email, 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.

PRESS POLICY

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

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

The Oban Times adheres to the Press Complaints' Commission's Code of Conduct.

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



Family photo mystery

This week's flashback photograph was submitted by reader Tony McKillop of Wokingham. Tony and his family were checking some of his late father's personal effects when they came across this photo. He said: 'It is very old and 'Googleing' the technology we see it is a 'tintype' photo which precedes film technology and was used from 1860 to about 1890. It is of a family group and was in a nice silver frame so it must be a family that was respected and remembered. We suspect it is a group of my great grandfather's side who were born and grew up in Oban at around that time. I wonder if any of your readers recognise the individuals? We think the uniform is a postman's as we had strong connections to the Post Office in those days.' You can email Tony on tony.mckillop@nokia.com or write to him at 2 Moores Green, Moores Green, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1QG. Please send prints to The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Anger at Bonawe bus cut threat

Sir,
I am writing to protest most strongly against the threat to cut the Oban to Bonawe bus service and ask for your support in saving this essential community life line.

I use the bus for shopping, going to the doctors and hospital appointments and for going to social events.

My daughter is at Oban High School and goes to after school activities. How will she be able to get home? She also meets up with friends in Oban and was looking forward to going to the new cinema when it opens.

There is also the impact on the people who use it to get to work, see their families and the elderly - the list is endless. What makes it worse is the hypocrisy of a council that extols the virtues of its rural communities and professes to support them then betrays them by cutting off the services necessary for their survival now and in the future.
Katrina Morrison, Bonawe.

Vital transport for education and job

Sir,
I use the 408 bus service on a Saturday to get to and from my job in Oban and to get back from supported study at Oban High School during the week.

Without the bus service I will lose my job that could become full time when I leave school.

Not being able to go to supported study after school will effect my education and the chance of getting a good job in the future. The future of this bus service will have a great impact on my future and the future of others.

Holly Pallas, Bonawe.

An essential service - not a luxury

Sir,
I have lived in Bonawe for 50 years and have raised my family here. My wife and I are elderly as are some of the other residents here and were on a regular bus service into Connell and Oban for various reasons, as not everyone drives or has a car.

The proposals put forward by Argyll and Bute Council to put in place an 'appointment service' would not be viable as many appointments would be outwith the proposed times, especially for getting a doctor's appointment at Connell Surgery where we are all registered.

If the 10.45 and 17.45 ex Oban services are withdrawn, that will only leave the school service which does not run during the school holidays, effectively cutting us off from civilisation.

The 17.45 service is essential for the people who work in Oban and suspension of this service would mean they would have to give up working, adding yet more to the unemployment figures. Oban High School pupils also make use of the 17.45 service after taking part in after school activities. The bus service to Bonawe is not a luxury, but an essential service.

James Sinclair.

Dedicated Argyll roads team

Sir,
With regard to Councillor MacCuish's contribution on electioneering, it is interesting to note that over the past few weeks he has achieved his desired publicity in promoting ill informed and outrageous proposals - not only regarding road tolls but also the wholesale transfer of land to Registered Social Landlords at nil value.

For a number of years local authorities have been delivering their services against a background of increased spending pressures and limited budgets. However, following consultation with our communities, the current Argyll and Bute administration increased last year's budget spend on roads to £15m. Despite the effects of the last two winters, this allocation has started to address road improvements and it is anticipated that this year's budget spend will again be significant.

Reconstruction work has been progressing in Mull, Seil, Kilmelford, Kilmore, Dalmally-Inveraray and Oban - Longsdale, Albany Street, Shore Street, Argyll Street, Dalintair, Miller Road, Sinclair and Glencruitten Drives to name a few.

The backlog of road improvements across the entire country is huge and we have constantly campaigned for the release of additional funding from Scottish Government. However, the Scottish Government's response has been to ask all local authorities to re-profile their capital spend to accommodate its own Central Belt infrastructure priorities.

Meanwhile, the Argyll trunk roads (Transport Scotland/Scottish Government responsibility) A85 Perth to Oban (Oban town centre), A83 Rest and Be Thankful and A82 Loch Lomond are now at the critical stage regarding long overdue improvement.

To suggest that road tolls be introduced is mischievous and would be the death knell to the already hard pressed Argyll economy.

Fortunately, the majority of our communities - unlike, it seems, some of our elected members - recognise the fact that resources today are limited and that our roads team is dedicated to doing its very best for us all in exceptional weather conditions to keep our roads network in order.

For interest, Argyll and Bute Council's roads department is shortlisted for a COSLA award for the most innovative in the country.
Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, Transport and Infrastructure spokesperson, Argyll and Bute Council.

Impractical pontoon plan

Sir,
Having just returned from holiday I have become aware of Argyll and Bute Council's proposal to spend £1.8 million on traffic plans and the provision of a pontoon at the North pier to facilitate the landing and embarkation of cruise ship passengers.

While anything which may ease traffic congestion in Oban is to be welcomed, I would trust that no further money is

to be squandered on so called 'consultants'.

Given that we are in a recession, I would suspect our roads engineers are not currently working at full stretch. Surely these gentlemen have the expertise and, more importantly, the local knowledge to undertake the production of any reports required without spending any more. There is only a short section of pier available for berthing smaller vessels at the seaward end of the north face. The rest of the pier dries out. That section will be restricted, or sterilised, for many of the commercial vessels that currently pay pier dues to the council to use the North pier. If the pontoon is also not to dry out, it will have to be installed at right angles to the pier. That will make it vulnerable to wave action from both the south west and north west and potentially dangerous for passengers using it.

Has there been any kind of feasibility or safety study done for this? In my opinion, it would not be tenable and, furthermore, would result in a net loss of berthing revenue. Use of the front face is patently a non starter for the same reasons and the use of the inside of the pier would require extensive dredging.

This option would also require expensive sheet piling to prevent the undermining of the pier foundations. This suggestion is pointless at present given that Oban Bay Marine's proposal for berthing pontoons will provide sheltered and, more importantly, safe, landing for cruise ship passengers.

Ditch this ridiculous and impractical pontoon idea and spend the cash saved on further improvements to the traffic system with the consultations being carried out 'in house'.
Patrick Maclean, Oban.

Get it right Oban

Sir,
As a regular visitor of more than ten years, I am struggling to see how the CHORD group's proposals will rejuvenate Oban.

A specialist pontoon to allow passengers to disembark from cruise ships to board buses to visit Inveraray Castle and return to wine and dine on their ship does nothing for business in the town, and a permanent traffic diversion at the high school will not re-energise the town.

The lazy politics of just throwing money at plans hatched up in closed meetings has failed other towns in Scotland.

I hope Oban does not make the same mistake. Oban has a lot of strengths, its restaurants are as good as any in UK and the scenery is breath taking.

Councillors need to up their game and support the private individuals who organise events such as craft fairs and local produce markets. Sporting events such as the Kerrera Kayak race and the Kerrera Triathlon attract visitors.

A little imagination, a little money and council tourism and leisure officers upping their game is all that is needed to build upon the great tourist potential Oban has.

I hope the area I love gets it right.
Annette West, Blackwood, South Lanarkshire.

Stricter guidelines needed

Sir,
The use of taxpayers' money by Argyll and Bute Council and other public bodies on employing external consultants is arguably not as transparent and democratically accountable as it should be.

This may be the time for the Scottish Government to issue stricter guidelines on public bodies' use of consultants and for the said bodies to be legally bound to publish the amount they have spent on consultants, what the projects were that advice was sought on and if the projects were instigated.

The only way we can protect services and the jobs of the staff that provide them is by increasing the accountability of the public bodies we rely on to provide our essential public services.

Frederick Hall, SNP Council Candidate for Ward 4 Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

Don't rule out affordable housing

Sir,
I would agree it is in the community's interest for the future of Oban's old Rockfield School to be resolved sooner rather than later.

It is also reasonable that a range of different community benefits should be considered by Argyll and Bute Council.

It is therefore strange that there appears to be an opinion covered in your article that recommends excluding a housing association involvement.

Affordable housing is at the heart of community need in Argyll and Bute.

With more than 738 families and single people on housing waiting lists in the Oban and Lorn area, that need is entirely relevant at the present time.

Housing associations in Scotland over the last few years have made many successful conversions of redundant, historic buildings into quality affordable homes, and, on occasion, where a building has regrettably had to be demolished developed compatible and sympathetic new build housing on the vacant site.

In these challenging, financial times, it is surely inappropriate to rule out an option which could provide much-needed affordable homes in Oban. I think it could also be the case that a housing option on the site should not preclude other initiatives being explored.

Perhaps it is time for Argyll and Bute Council to sit down with credible organisations who can bring something to the table and see what can be taken forward in the best interests of the community.

The alternative of a building continuing to sit vacant while everyone talks about it, as it continues to physically deteriorate, does not appear to be a particularly practical or attractive option while there are pressing community needs including housing that could be developed.

Bill McIntyre, Chairman of the Board of Management, Argyll Community Housing Association.

More of your Letters on Page 19

Times Diary

BLIND faith and satellite navigation systems joined forces this week and resulted in a 60-year old lorry driver losing his job, being fined £50 and having three points added to his licence.

The experienced truck driver had relied wholly on his sat nav to negotiate his way through the historic, narrow streets of rural Bruton in Somerset. His lorry ended up wedged tight between two listed buildings, causing damage and becoming an overnight internet sensation on YouTube.

WE ARE reminded of another truck driver who rolled off a Caledonian MacBrayne Ardsrossan to Brodick ferry onto the Isle of Arran with a load of supermarket trolleys bound for a well known European retail chain.

Islanders scratched their heads and rumours of a new supermarket were rife as the large truck, with colourful company logo emblazoned on the side, navigated Arran's narrow roads searching for a non-existent store.

The lorry's destination was Shiskine Drive, Maryhill, Glasgow - but having keyed Shiskine into his sat nav, the driver's electronic gismo duly directed him overseas to the small village of Shiskine, Isle of Arran.

ALSO IN the 'missing presumed lost' category was the lorry driver who pulled his huge container lorry alongside a couple as they walked through the streets of Brechin, Angus.

The driver asked: 'Excuse me, mate. Can you tell me how far I am from this address?'

He handed a delivery note to the couple.

They looked at the paperwork, looked at each other, looked back at the driver - then burst out laughing!

'Oh, I'm sorry son,' the man eventually said. 'But, you've a wee bit to go yet. You see, that doesn't say BRECHIN - it says BRECON, and I think that's about 450 miles away in South Wales.'

The couple left still giggling at the driver's dilemma.

WE NOTED last week United States military prosecutors had, after six years of administrative effort, brought Marine Corps Staff Sergeant Frank Wuterich, 31, to court at Camp Pendleton, California, on manslaughter charges.

Wuterich was accused of leading his platoon in an incident in 2005 which led to the death of 24 unarmed Iraqis, 10 of which were women and children. The conclusion on the trial was that military court ordered the 31-year old soldier to be reduced in the ranks after he pleaded guilty to ordering his squad to 'shoot first, ask questions later'.

A WEST coast farmer was accused of paying his farm staff less than the minimum wage while expecting them to work long and unobtainable hours.

An inspector from the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, accompanied by officers from HM Customs and Excise, were ordered into the hills to investigate and interview the farmer.

'How many people work on your farm?' asked the man from 'the department.'

'Four,' replied the farmer. 'Three on the land and a housekeeper in the farmhouse.'

'Do they all work the same hours and are they all paid the same?' asked the 'department' man.

'No,' said the farmer. 'The cattleman works a 40-hour week. He's paid £1,500-a-month, plus he gets his house, car, coal, electricity, work clothes allowance and his food paid for. And he has five weeks holiday a year.'

'The shepherd works a 38-hour week and he gets £1,400-a-month plus a lambing bonus, his house, electricity, dog food and clothing allowance. But only four weeks off each year.'

'And the housekeeper lives-in on full board for free, she gets paid £300-a-week for a 35-hour week and she gets a car with the job, plus three-weeks paid holiday.'

'That's only three workers,' pointed out one of the Customs men. 'What about the other one?'

'Ah well,' said the farmer. 'The other is, what you might call, 'nae right in the heid'.'

'And I suppose he gets paid less than the others,' accused the officials.

'Eh, well, aye he does,' admitted the farmer.

'He works a 60-hour week and he pays rent. He bought his own car and he pays for all his food, plus he buys his own work clothes. He hasn't had a holiday since he came here but he gets £20 to go to the pub with the rest on a Friday - and sometimes he gets a bottle of whisky if I think he's havin' a really hard time.'

'That's the man we want to talk to,' said one of the officials. 'Where do we find this poor soul?'

'You're talking to him,' said the farmer.

Share your humorous gems, comments on life or amusing tales with the Diary. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to Diary, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

'S E DEAGH CHEIST A THA SIN ars' am fear eile!
Tha Ailig Salmond airson faighneachd am bheil sinn airson gum bi Alba neo-eisimeil? 'S e fear de dh'amasan Rìghaltas Bhreatainn smachd fhaotainn air cogaisean shocharaean sòisealta na dùthcha agus tha an cruas a thathas a' faicinn as na h-amasan sin a' dùsgadh dùbhan cruaidh nan aghaidh! Chan eil ann an tìotal is urram ach greadhinnach thuir Raibeart Burns, 's e mac an duine tha cumantas agus cò tha bruidhinn a-mach an aghaidh sin? Agus cha mhòr nach canadh tu gun robh Hamlet aig Shakespeare a' faicinn a' bhrochain cheistean seo roimhe nuair a thog esan ceist a bhith, neo gun a bhith!

Chan eil dad ceàrr air argamaid ach 's e deasbad as fheàrr agus far am bheil fìor cho-luadar a' gabhail àite, saoilidh mi fhìn gum bheil barrachd dòchais air co-dhùmhach agus adhartas air choreigin. Ged a bha Salmond agus na Nàiseantaich air innse bho chionn greise gun robh an referendum seo aca mar amas, cha mhòr nach canadh tu nach robh na partaidhean eile a' creidsinn gun tigeadh an latha, a dh'aindeoin 's ged a bhuannaich na Nàiseantaich an aghaidh.

Chan eil mise a' cur taic ris na Nàiseantaich ach tha e tàmailteach dhomh gum bheil na partaidhean poiliteagheach nàiseanta, agus cuid de na meadhanan nàiseanta cuideachd, a' dèiligeadh ris a' cheist seo le faoinneas agus mar nach robh duine a' dol leis ann amasan nan Nàiseantaich ach Ailig Salmond agus a chuid Mhinistearan. Nach iongantach gum bheil sinn cho dèonach fortain a chosg gach bliadhna a' cur Mhinistearan, Buill Phàrlamaid agus oifigearan de gach seòrsa air feadh an t-saoghail a' suirghe air co-phàirteachais marsantachd ur agus a' searmonachadh an luach a tha Breatainn a' cur air co-brachadh is càirdes! Nach iongantach nuair a thig e gu ceist a bu chòir a bhith air a deasbad gu reusanta agus gu ciallach gum bheil cinn-theagais marsantachd is dioplomaisaidh Bhreatainn a' dol leis an t-sruth agus daoine ciallach a' bruidhinn air sgairhdhean sluaigh mar gum robh sinn beò ann an dùthaich gun bhiobhaltais!

Air an làimh eile, 's dòcha nach eil cus adhbhar moit againn ma tha clann gu bhith acrach agus amasan caomhaidh an Rìghaltais a chòileanadh. Carson nach eil barrachd a' bhòthadh?

AN IRISH political journalist put it in a nutshell when he said that more Jeremy Paxman interviews on the Scottish Independence Referendum would be hugely beneficial to Alex Salmond!

I say again that our national political parties and media really must get their respective acts together on this issue and rise above petty and puerile discussion on passports and asking where Scotland's gold reserves might be held. We have a distinguished national history and our national pride is strength, and we have a right to have our views considered democratically. So let us please have some reasoned and adult discussion, the first few days have been disappointing and might well explain why so many people don't bother to vote.

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

Police files

MACPHERSONS Welding on North Road, Fort William, was entered sometime between 12.30pm on Saturday January 21 and 8am on Monday January 23.

Some equipment was damaged and some was stolen. WIND deflectors were stolen from the windows of a Ford Puma parked in Viewforth car park, Fort William, sometime between 9pm on Saturday January 21 and 1.30am on Sunday January 22.

A FLAT door was damaged in Moray Place, Fort William, by an unknown male at 2.20am on Saturday January 21.

ANYONE with any knowledge of these incidents is asked to contact Fort William Police Station on 01397 702361 or the confidential line on 01397 702000.

Members of the public may also report any crime, offence or anything suspicious by telephoning Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Race on to find sponsor

THE ORGANISERS of the annual Ben Nevis Race are looking for a local sponsor to help with their plans to expand the event this year.

Six hundred runners from across the country were picked to take part in last year's event from more than 900 applicants, and similar numbers are expected for this year's race on September 1.

The race committee plan to give a free, specially designed t-shirt to each competitor, and want a local company to help subsidise the cost.

Committee member Damian Forster said: 'This is a fantastic opportunity to become involved with the premier race on the UK hill running calendar.'

Lotto jackpot winner

A LUCKY winner picked up £400 at the Fort William Football Club lotto draw on Saturday.

The numbers were 02-08-17. Next week the jackpot will be £100.

Western Isles Conservatives host Burn Supper

THE Western Isles Conservative Association held their Burns' Supper in at Stornoway's County Hotel on Saturday.

Guests enjoyed a traditional Burns' night meal, with the haggis being piped in by Anna Fraser and addressed by association chairman, Murdo MacLeod.

The evening was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Construction workers to get free advice

CONSTRUCTION workers across Argyll and the islands are being urged to pick up free lifesaving advice at Oban High Scholl on Valentines' Day.

Health and Safety Executive inspectors, alongside leading members of the construction industry, will give practical advice on how to prevent death and injury when carrying out key activities on site.

To reserve a place, contact Allan Mulholland at allan.mulholland@hse.gsi.gov.uk or call 0141 275 3062

Food from Argyll goes to Berlin

REPRESENTATIVES from Food from Argyll took their produce to Berlin last weekend, for International Green Week.

Virginia Sumison from Argyll Food Producers travelled with Fergus Younger from the Argyll Agricultural Forum/SAOS to the ICC Exhibition centre, taking with them local venison, whisky, salmon, haggis, shortbread, chutneys, sauces and cheeses.

The group had been invited by the European Commission and supported by the Scottish Government.

NEWSDESKS
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Lochaber Burns Club gathers to honour Bard

Members of Lochaber Burns Club gathered at the Alexandra Hotel in Fort William on Friday night to celebrate their annual Burns Supper. Club president Jim Sutherland chaired the evening and after pipe major Sandy MacKenzie piped in the haggis, Mr Sutherland addressed it. Angus Grant and John Lawrie were among those who provided music and songs during the evening. John Hynd toasted the ladies, with the reply coming from Allan Reid. Hugh Dan MacLennan delivered the Immortal Memory, Hector MacLean said the Selkirk Grace and John Hutchison toasted the club.

John plans marathon bike ride to Moscow

Lochaber man gears up for gruelling 7,000 mile motorbike trek to raise cash for Kirsty's Kids

A LOCHABER man who circumnavigated Great Britain for charity last year has laid out plans for his next fundraising trip - a marathon motorbike ride from his Lochailort home to Moscow and back. John Bryden plans to tackle the 7,000-mile route to raise money for Kirsty's Kids, the charity he and his wife Jan set up in memory of their daughter Kirsty who died in a car crash on the A830 Road to the Isles in 2010, aged 20. Mr Bryden will set off from his Craiglea home on his

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

lengthy journey on July 4, 2013, the anniversary of the charity's official opening.

The planned route will see him round the northern coasts of Norway and Sweden before heading to the Russian capital. Mr Bryden told *The Oban Times* he was expecting a 'gruelling' journey.

He said: 'We've estimated it will be around 6,000-7,000

miles, but we thought the UK trip would be 5,000 and it ended up being 8,000.

'People would be welcome to join me, but it's not a holiday, it's not for the faint-hearted. It's going to be quite gruelling. I've got experience of sleeping rough in the cold and wet.'

English company JC Exhausts have donated a new tracking system which will allow Mr Bryden to update his exact position to people back home via the charity's Facebook page.

Meanwhile, a three-foot cuddly

toy which accompanied John on his round the country trip has set off on a year-long journey of his own.

Eyore, which Kirsty gave to her mum as a present, will make his way around the world being passed hand-to-hand, and last week flew out to Alexandria in the USA to start his journey.

John said: 'People can sponsor him and have him for a week then pass him on.'

'We'll put pictures of his trip on Facebook and hopefully it will encourage people to donate.'



Fundraising trip: John Bryden.

Councillors hold talks on stopping the spread of Japanese knotweed

STOPPING the spread of Japanese knotweed in Fort William will be the focus of discussions at Lochaber councillors' business meeting on February 13.

Stands of the alien invader have taken root along the Achintore shore, behind the primary school and in areas of Lundavra, leading Fort William Community Council (FWCC) to express concern to Highland Council and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The invasive nine-foot shrub is capable of breaking through concrete and tar and can re-grow from a tiny sliver of rootstock, which can reach

two metres down. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency classes any material containing pieces of knotweed as contaminated soil and strictly regulates its removal.

FWCC has also received an unconfirmed account that a mortgage can be refused if the weed is within 50 metres of a property.

Lochaber wards manager Dot Ferguson told *The Oban Times* one option open to councillors would be to write to all landowners along Achintore Road to make them aware of the problem. She said: 'We would hope after that to work with the landowners

to raise awareness of the difficulties of removal and the damage knotweed can cause.' SNH Lochaber area officer Martin Faulkner said knotweed had also been noted on Union Road and in Corpach. He told *The Oban Times*:

'If you want to get rid of it the most effective way is to use herbicide - but you may be at it for quite a few years.'

'Because we live in such a wet climate, you may have to pick your day as well. If it is causing a problem, it is the landowner's responsibility, not the council's - but once it gets into the natural environment, it is unclear whose responsibility it is.'



The new dental clinic in Portree saw its first patients this week.

New Portree dental clinic opens

A NEW £1.2million NHS dental clinic in Portree opened its doors for the first time on Monday morning.

The facility at Sraid An Eorna holds three dental surgeries and a room for oral health education. Two full-time dentists work at the clinic with another to join part-time in March, but health bosses say they will continue looking for another full-time team member.

Dentist Graham Smith said: 'We were delighted to put the new clinic to its proper use for the first time. It is a state of the art facility and provides an excellent environment for both patients and staff.'

The first patient treated at the new clinic, Duncan MacFadyen of Fiscavaig, said: 'The new dental clinic is great. It's really

spacious and it's good that the staff have got such a lovely place to work. Just what we needed in Portree.'

There are currently 2,244 people on the Skye and Lochalsh NHS dental service waiting list and NHS Highland dental service development manager Alex Fraser said the new clinic would help bring this number down.

He said: 'We are delighted that the opening of this clinic will significantly improve access to NHS dental care for people living in Skye and Lochalsh.'

'Once the new dentist is in post, NHS Highland will be able to offer some of these patients access to NHS dental care, starting with those who have waited the longest.'

Inspiring Burns Supper at Glendale

EIGHTY guests enjoyed an inspiring Glendale Burns Supper at Glendale Hall on Skye, when the traditional Burns theme was given a local twist.

As well as honouring Robert Burns, the Glendale Burns Supper paid tribute to Neil MacLeod, the Glendale bard who died in 1913.

Professor Norman Macdonald gave an expert introduction not just to Neil but his wider family, many of whom were also accomplished poets. Arthur Cormack sang the songs not only of Neil, but his father and brother. The evening was expertly chaired by Allan Campbell, while Norman Macdonald delivered the address

to the haggis in both Scots and Gaelic. Murdo Beaton had the audience rolling in the isles with his highly entertaining and humorous toast to the lassies, which was then matched by an inspiring reply from Mairi Sine Chambeul.

Ian Blackford of the Glendale Trust, who delivered the immortal memory, said: 'A theatrical delivery of Tam O' Shanter from the wonderfully gifted Angus Thorburn and a most well-crafted Holy Willie's prayer from Brian Smith left the audience highly appreciating an evening of great entertainment which was rounded off by a musical rendition of Burns songs by Andy and Catherine Will.'

Lochaber charity takes part in 'virtual' meeting pilot scheme

A LOCHABER charity has been invited to join a nationwide pilot project to hold 'virtual' support meetings using webcams.

M.E. Lochaber, which supports people with post viral fatigue syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome and myalgic encephalomyelitis, were invited by Action for M.E. The project will use the free computer programme Skype to allow people who are too ill to attend meetings to be a part of a support group. Skype allows users to communicate by voice and video over the internet.

The first group meeting is due to be held at the end of March. For more information email susan.webster@actionforme.org.uk.

Big bands in concert

LOCHABER High School Big Band will once again join forces with St. Augustine's Big Band from Blackburn to put on a concert in Fort William later this month.

The English band has travelled north for a number of years to rehearse and perform with some of the finest young musicians in Lochaber.

The concert, featuring jazz music from the past 50 years including Duke Ellington, Glen Miller and Ray Charles, will be held at the main hall in Lochaber High School at 7.30pm on Thursday, February 16. Admission is free and any donations will go to local charities.

Last ditch talks on nurse crisis

WEST Ardnamurchan residents fighting to retain their out-of-hours 999 cover will have a final meeting with health bosses in an attempt to resolve the issue as the deadline looms.

Representatives from West Ardnamurchan Community Council (WACC) will meet the chairs and chief executives of NHS Highland and the Scottish Ambulance Service on February 21. The following day they have a meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon.

One of the two district nurses who currently provide cover for the area, Jessie Colquhoun, will

retire on February 20, with her replacement due to join a west Lochaber team instead of being based in Kilchoan.

NHS Highland advertised the position a number of weeks ago, and the candidates for the job will visit the area today (Thursday). WACC has decided not to take part in the visit.

Around 70 local residents attended a meeting in Kilchoan Community Centre last week to be updated on the latest situation.

The meeting unanimously approved the decision to continue fighting to have the nurses based in west Ardnamurchan.

Isle of Skye campsite voted best in Scotland

AN ISLE of Skye campsite has been named the best in Scotland by an annual awards group.

The Skye Camping and Caravanning Club Site in Edinbane was given the honour by the AA Campsite of the Year Awards. Editor of the AA camping guide said the campsite had been given the award for 'exceptional quality and attention to detail'.

David Weller and his partner Nicky Cellier took over the site in late 2007 and Mr Weller told *The Oban Times* it was an 'honour' to receive the award.

He said: 'We are highly delighted. It is in recognition of the work both myself and my partner Nicky have put into the business and building it up.'

'We took over a fantastic site in a great location that was in need of a bit of modernising.'

Golf clubs agree half price deal

THREE Lochaber golf clubs have struck a deal with Crieff Golf Club to allow members reduced entry to the Perthshire course.

Fort William, Dragon's Tooth in Ballachulish and Spean Bridge Golf Club members can now use any of the other courses for half price.

Fort William announced the agreement with Crieff at its annual general meeting last week, when it was also stated membership fees would not be increased for 2012.

Meanwhile, the club will hold a fundraising dance at the Moorings Hotel, Banavie, on Saturday February 18. Local band *Wonderland* will provide the music.

The Oban Times
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ARGYLL ANIMAL AID

FOUNDED around 20 years ago by a small group of animal lovers, Argyll Animal Aid has already helped re-home thousands of rescued pets.

But that commitment shows no sign of wavering, something that has helped develop the charity from its humble beginnings to becoming a rescue and re-homing centre taking in animals from all along Scotland's west coast.

The need for a rescue centre was established after a local vet revealed most unwanted animals were destroyed, whether they be kittens and puppies or pets that their owners can simply no longer care for.

Strays were also destroyed, something that the charity's volunteers vow should never be allowed to happen.

Completely self-funded, Argyll Animal Aid has a

'no-kill' policy, unless advised to do so by a vet on health grounds.

Dogs are accommodated at Lochandubh Kennels, which is based on site. With four kennels, it can look after four dogs, or more if two or more dogs are compatible.

Because the dogs are incorporated in a professional environment, they are regularly fed, watered and walked - meaning the dogs are fully socialised and friendly.

To continue to operate, Argyll Animal Aid requires donations from well wishers and support at its fundraisers. All workers are volunteers, while all monies raised is spent on the animals.

The charity is always looking for volunteers to help with looking after its pets, including dog walking. If interested, contact Jean Sutherland on 01631 566406.

<p>Tom</p> <p>supported by Kerrera Tea Garden & Cosy Byre Open for the season Good Friday (Gallanach Ferry) 01631 570223 www.kerreraunhouse.co.uk</p>	<p>Dream</p> <p>Comfort, Warmth and Style In a bed from Highland Blindcraft. 38 39 Ardconnel Street, Inverness Tel: 01463 233662 www.highlandblindcraft.co.uk</p>	<p>Bessie</p> <p>supported by Wylie + Bisset LLP 4 High Street, Oban, Tel: 01631 562478 Email: info@wyliebisset.com Web: www.wyliebisset.com</p>	<p>Fergus</p> <p>supported by D FERGUSON Glengallan Road, Oban 01631 563136</p>
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Young Heron Valley entertain at Inveraray

INVERARAY and District Accordion and Fiddle Club met in their usual venue of the Argyll Hotel for the first night of the New Year and was given a warm welcome by Chairman, Niall Iain MacLean.

Supporting players were - Fyne Folk, with Alex John MacLeod and Jake MacKay on fiddle and Agnes Liddell on keyboard; James MacArthur from Oban on melodeon; Alex MacKinnon, Carradale, on button box accompanied by Jimmy MacDonald, Tighnabruich on keyboard; Jake on 'moothie' with Agnes on keyboard.

Guest artists were the multi-talented youngsters 'Heron Valley' - Alex and Arlene MacKechnie and Iain Wilson from Strachur and Euan MacNab from Sandbank.

Alex played accordion, fiddle and guitar, Arlene on keyboard and accordion, Iain on small pipes and cajon drum and Euan on guitar and banjo - and what an amazing sound!

They entertained the audience to a very well rehearsed programme for the remainder of the first half with a great selection of marches, jigs, waltzes and reels - keeping everyone informed as they went along.

Then for the whole of the second half they played - changing instruments as required - for well over an hour, to the great delight of the audience, who were hearing a new 'west coast' sound.

It was terrific - the only word for it - given that their average age is 15½!

The club certainly look forward to watching the progress of this highly talented quartet for what promises to be an exciting musical journey ahead and all at the club wish them every success in the years to come.

The chairman thanked all the artists for their contributions to the night and next week the club welcomes another rising star with his trio - Craig MacFadyen from Oban, son of well known bandleader, Hector. See you there.



The Burns Club of Oban's top table on Friday. Back row from left are, Peter Sinclair, Eamonn Arthur, Torquill Telfer, Ken Oxland and Jack Degnan. Front row: David Mitchell, Michael Russell, Roy Wood, Dr Mac Armstrong and Ken Stark. 15 105obburns1

Oban Burns club chairman announces last supper in charge

THE CHAIRMAN of the Burns Club of Oban announced his decision to step down from the position after 15 years on Friday.

Roy Wood intimated towards the end of the club's annual Burns' Supper in the Regent Hotel in Friday that he would be handing the baton to a younger man, introducing John MacClean as the next chairman.

It was Roy who set the evening in motion with the traditional Selkirk Grace and Address to a Haggis, followed by the traditional meal.

Argyll and Bute MSP, Michael Russell, was the guest for the evening and proposed the toast to 'The Immortal Memory', recalling with much humour the history of how Scotland's Bard came to be

honoured in virtually every corner of the world.

Music for the evening was provided by piper Torquill Telfer, fiddler Maurice Duncan and singer, Peter Sinclair.

Eamonn Arthur proposed the vote of thanks and presented Roy with a quich as a token of the club's appreciation for 15 years of service.

Ladies' Burns night at An Clachan



Around 40 people attended the annual Ladies Burns Supper at An Clachan, Torlundy recently. The haggis, carried by Jean MacGee, was piped in by Raj Smith before Rotarian Hector MacLean addressed the Haggis and gave the Selkirk Grace. Lochaber High School teacher Bill Cameron made a witty Toast to the Lassies to which Linda Campbell replied with much humour. Isabel Campbell chaired the event.



Pupils in Strath of Appin Primary School welcomed former pupil and piper Alan Carmichael back to pipe in the haggis at the school's Burns Lunch. The Primary 1-3 pupils then entertained everyone with a choreographed dance based on Tam o'Shanter while Primary 4-7 pupils read some of their favourite Burns poems.



Piper Megan Campbell, dancer Kayleigh Howden and fiddler Corran Wineberg entertained at Lochside's Burns Supper. 10_105loch

Burns in the afternoon at Lochside primary

LOCHSIDE RC Primary School Primary 3/4 enjoyed an afternoon Burns Supper in school last Wednesday.

In a full and entertaining programme, Megan Campbell piped in the haggis, which was addressed by Tegan Dennison.

After the whole class recited the Selkirk Grace, Declan Aitchison gave the Toast to the Lassies and Kiah Ferreira the Toast to the Laddies.

Michael White delivered the Immortal Memory, Kayleigh Howden and Jenna MacLean recited To A Mouse, then Shannon Gall and Cara Henderson sang My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose.

Kayleigh performed Flora MacDonlad's Fancy and Corran Wineberg played Ye Banks and Braes on the fiddle before the whole class sang Auld Lang Syne.



Ulva Primary School's Burns Lunch

By Kate Millward and Martha Charrington, P7, Ulva Primary School The children and staff of Ulva School invited all the parents to a fantastic Burns Lunch on the 24th of January. We had three hours of fun.

Everyone enjoyed the haggis, piped in by Iain Munro and addressed by Mrs Waller, and the neeps and tatties made a tasty meal.

There were enjoyable performances of music, riddles, and poems from the children. The laddies toasted the lassies and the lassies wrote an original and amusing poem in reply. Then everyone

stripped the Willow and performed the Ulva Dance, an energetic and joyful dance created by the children.

We all enjoyed tea, coffee and delicious shortcake, made by one of the P7 pupils. Everybody had such good fun that we hope they will all come again next year.

We cooked a meal for 40 people this year! The cooking was made a lot easier because of our new oven. We would like to say a very big thank you to Oban Electrics who put in the wiring for us in the summer holidays. It made a huge difference!



A great time was had by all at Ardchattan Primary Schools' annual Burns Supper and ceilidh night, which was well attended by the local community. The children recited Tam O' Shanter alongside George McNab, with Andrew Campbell doing the Immortal Memory, Jimmy Sinclair Toasting the Lassies and Jacqui McLarty replying from the Lassies all chaired by Ritchie Robb. After a delicious haggis supper there were songs, music and dancing, supported by Ann Barlow and her fiddle.

Arinagour Primary School enjoys Burns Supper at Island Cafe

EACH of Arinagour Primary School's 30 pupils attended their Burns Supper at the Island Cafe last Wednesday.

Every pupil wore a kilt for the ceremony, with those that didn't have their own wearing those supplied by school secretary, Mrs Fay Anderson.

Pupils recited poems, sang songs, played fiddles and danced the Highland Fling.

Senior pupils recited the 'Address To A Haggis', the 'Immortal Memory' and toasted the lassies and lads.

The annual event is supported by the staff and owners of the The Island Cafe.



Brass targets Oban and Kinlochleven for youth bands

THE SCOTTISH Brass Band Association (SBBa) is planning to start two new youth brass bands based in Oban and Kinlochleven and is looking for adults who would like to get involved to help organise and run the new bands from both a musical and administrative perspective.

The SBBa first embarked on its youth development programme in 2007 when there were only six youth brass bands in Scotland. After just five years there are now 57 youth bands across Scotland. The Association now want to bring this opportunity to Oban and Kinlochleven by setting up two further groups and hope that the surrounding communities will help support these projects.

Andrew Duncan is SBBa's development manager and responsible for ensuring the ongoing growth in youth band numbers, advising and guiding at the set-up stage and helping to protect the sustainability of the new bands along their journey.

Andrew said: 'In addition to the 57 youth bands now currently in operation, I'm receiving expressions of interest all the time and am currently working with another 10 fledgling bands from the very north of Scotland to the very south, and in the Western Isles.'

'After preliminary research, we have highlighted the Oban and Kinlochleven areas as having great potential for such a youth brass band initiative.'

'However, the successful future for a band is dependent on having the appropriate infrastructure in place from the outset, and so we are now looking to rally support from interested adults in the areas to help set the projects in motion.'

The active youth brass band scene throughout Scotland clearly indicates a renewed interest in brass band music by the younger generation. This was particularly apparent at the 2011 Scottish Youth Brass Band Championships held in Perth Concert Hall in late November, which saw record youth band entries and over 1,000 young brass musicians attending the festival from all over Scotland.

There are also proven educational, social, self-esteem and teamwork benefits associated with group music-making and the overwhelming success of SBBa's development programme is bringing these opportunities to youngsters far and wide across the country.

If you are at all interested, or even curious, to see how you could get involved in setting up a new youth brass band in either Oban or Kinlochleven, please contact Andrew Duncan direct by telephone: 07970 797 161, or by email: AndrewDuncan@sbb.org.uk.

Further information about the many brass band activities taking place across Scotland can be found on SBBa's website at www.sbb.org.uk.

Mumford & Sons, Biffy Clyro and Deadmau5 to headline Rockness

THE HIGHLAND'S biggest music festival Rockness has confirmed Mumford & Sons, Biffy Clyro and Deadmau5 will be among the headliners for this year's event.

The event, which won the 'best small festival' award at the NME Awards last year, is now in its seventh year and attracts tens of thousands of festival-goers to the shores of Loch Ness every summer.

Festival director Jim King said: 'I'm really happy with the list of acts we're announcing that I now just can't wait for the first tent peg in the ground and for the party to start.'

Rockness will be held on June 8-10 at Clune Farm, Dores, near Inverness.

Mary Ann Kennedy brings musical opening to mountain festival

INTERNATIONALLY renowned Gaelic singer and television presenter Mary Ann Kennedy is to open the 2012 Fort William Mountain Festival, organisers have announced.

Arggour-based Mary Ann and accompanying singers will perform 'Bladhna an t-Sneachd Dhuibh' (The Year of the Black Snow) in the Pinemarten Restaurant at Nevis Range on February 15.

The vocal/electronic work has at its heart the fearful Highland winter of 1829, when the snow laid so long it turned black.

The piece was created for the 11th International Symposium on Antarctic Earth Sciences.

The five-day festival, presented by the Outdoor Capital of the UK, includes lectures from top climbers and mountaineers, mountain bikers, and mountain filmmakers, and runs from February 15-19.

Two New Youth Brass Bands

The Scottish Brass Band Association is planning to facilitate two new youth brass bands in Oban and Kinlochleven.



As a first step, we are looking for enthusiastic adults who would like to help organise and run the new bands (musically and administratively).

Interested? Curious? To find out more, please get in touch with:

Andrew Duncan, Development Manager
Tel: 07970 797161
Email: AndrewDuncan@sbb.org.uk

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Saturday 4th February > Clubnight
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10pm till 2am

Tuesday 7th February > Cabaireachd Abaireach
Fort William Skipinnish Ceilidh House 7pm till 9pm
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Glenug Hall Opera Highlights - 8pm
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CD review

The Vatersay Boys - The Sound Of Vatersay

Third album - this five piece band have a huge following, regularly selling out the Barrowlands in Glasgow, playing energetic, raw ceilidh music.

Emily Bourn - Fate

Emily, the 14-year-old singer-songwriter, has already supported X-factor's Matt Cardle for his Orkney concert. Here she sings a dozen of her own songs, songs full of meaning - taken from her own experiences.

Isobel Ann Martin - Duslach Is Or

Debut album from the Lewis born winner of the Traditional Gold Medal at the 2005 National Mod, Scotland's Premier Gaelic Festival. Distinct and versatile vocals on both traditional and self-penned contemporary Gaelic songs.

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Oban pipers are better off to the tune of more than £400

OBAN Pipe Band is £408 better off after a busy quiz night, hosted by Tony Cave, at the town's Masonic Lodge last Friday night.

The popular quiz competition was won by the Horne family.

Event organiser, Alistair Dewar, said: 'We are absolutely delighted with the sum raised.'

'It was a very good turnout and the evening turned into both a great quiz night and an excellent social gathering.'

Quizmaster, Tony Cave, during Friday's quiz night at the Masonic Lodge, which raised £408 for Oban Pipe Band.
15_105quiz1

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

NORTH LORN DRAMA FESTIVAL

The 58th Festival will be held from 21-23 March at Appin Village Hall starting at 7.30pm each evening.

Entry forms are available now from the Secretary, Telephone 01631 730309 email nlornfestival@btinternet.com

Entries close on 14 February.

Kilmore & Oban Church of Scotland

Table Top Sale
Saturday 4th February in the Church Centre

2 - 5pm
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Arts & crafts, Talent Auction, White Elephant and lots more
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Free Entry

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Illustrated Talk on Landscapes
By Kirstie Cohen

On Friday 3rd February
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MEUR LOCHABAIR Annual Skye Ceilidh Dance

West End Hotel, Fort William
Saturday, February 18, at 7.30pm

Guest Singers: Catriona Fair, Calum Ross, Maggie MacDonald, Arthur and Ruraidh Cornack
Piper: Brighde Campbell
Fear an Taigh: Alan Campbell
Music: Robert Naim Ceilidh Band
Admission £8

Comunn Gàidhealach an Obain

Local Interest Night
Illustrated talk by Robin Banks on The Appin Murder (in English)

Free Church Hall
Friday, 10th February at 7.30 p.m.
Tea and biscuits
Admission £3

Comunn Gàidhealach An Obain

Ceilidh
Saturday 4th February, 2012 at 7.30pm

Masonic Hall, Oban
Alasdair Whyte, Linda MacLeod, Audrey and David Paterson
Piper, Angus J MacColl
Music, Peat Moss
Ceilidh Band
Admission £5

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Tuesday 7th February, 2012
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3 May - 6 May, 2012

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bonnie babies

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We are now open for entries! Bonnie Babies 2012 is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. To enter by post please send us a photograph along with a signed entry coupon (see left) to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Please make sure you write the name of the child, date of birth and a contact telephone number on the back of the photo. Should you wish for your photo to be returned, please also enclose a stamped addressed envelope. We will do our best to return your photo but please make a copy just in case. To enter online visit www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

After you have entered your child into the competition, look out every week in The Oban Times to see when your baby appears. The closing date for entries will be announced in a future issue. You can find all the competition rules and terms and conditions online at www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies or call 01631 568 000.

ENTRY FORM

Child's name.....

Child's date of birth.....

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Address:

Name of parent/guardian.....

Signature of parent/guardian.....

I agree to all terms and conditions applied to this competition.....

Please post to The Oban Times, Bonnie Babies Entry, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

Terms & conditions: The Oban Times Bonnie Babies 2012 competition is open to babies and toddlers born on or after April 12, 2009. Only one entry per child. By entering the competition and by filling in the parental consent form that is provided with your entry, you - the parent or guardian - consent to the reproduction of your child's photograph in The Oban Times Bonnie Babies features in the paper and online and in any other related Oban Times Bonnie Babies promotions. If you do not wish for your child's photo to appear in the newspaper or online then you should not enter the competition. The Oban Times cannot take responsibility for the safe delivery and safe return of the entrant's photograph. Photos posted in without an enclosed stamped addressed envelope will not be returned. Poor quality photographs, which are out of focus, difficult to see the child's face, ripped, torn or folded, will not be accepted as an entry and will be returned to the sender providing a stamped addressed envelope is supplied by the entrant. By sending us your photograph, you agree that Wyvex Media Ltd and The Oban Times have the right to publish the images and details of the entrant without payment for the purpose of promoting The Oban Times Bonnie Babies campaign (s). The winner must be willing to take part in publicity. Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter. Photocopied entry forms will not be accepted.

OT

Man injured in fall from quad bike

MALLAIG lifeboat team was called to Knoydart after a 20-year-old Morar man injured himself falling from a quad bike on Sunday afternoon. The lifeboat picked up Oliver Weir from Inverie and transferred him to a waiting ambulance in Mallaig. Mr Weir was taken to Belford Hospital in Fort William for treatment to his injuries.

Staff bid farewell to West Highland Museum curator

THE WEST Highland Museum in Fort William said goodbye to its curator Mairi Mooney, who left last week after five years in the position.

Museum trustees, staff and volunteers gathered for a farewell lunch for Ms Mooney and presented her with a framed print of Fort William in 1753. Ms Mooney has decided to use her spare time to go travelling and see the world.

Colleen Foggo will take up the reins as museum curator/manager. Chairman of the museum's management committee Chris Robinson said: 'This year, with Colleen, we hope to encourage even more visitors and volunteers to support the museum and follow on from all Mairi's good work.'

Shinty players gather for 15th annual tournament

FEMALE shinty players from across the west Highlands gathered at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, for the 15th annual five-a-side Johnstone Trophy on Saturday.

Eight teams, including Lochaber, Skye, Ardnamurchan and Glengarry, entered the competition. Glengarry 'A' ran out winners for the 13th time after defeating Badenoch and Strathspey 3-1 in the final, with two goals from Laura Gallacher and one from Lauren Doherty. Gallacher was also named player of the tournament.

Sponsor Ailsa Johnstone handed out the medals and trophies after the final.

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Former Woolworths employees, from left, Catherine Sinclair, Anne Lloyd, Carol Hodgson, Kay MacDonald, Scott Pedan and Evelyn Livingston outside the old shop premises on Fort William High Street. 20. f05wool01

Redundancy ruling leaves Fort workers with nothing

Former Woolworths employees to miss out on share of £68m payout

FORMER Woolworths employees in Fort William who lost their jobs when the company folded are set to miss out on their part of a £68million redundancy payout because of a court ruling from England.

By RICHARD HADDOCK
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) won the compensation package at an employment tribunal last week. But hundreds of Scottish workers, including those in Fort William, will miss out because of a ruling which says any store with 20 or less members of staff does not constitute a mass redundancy.

'I don't know how they can say some of us don't deserve the money but others do. We had a lot more than 20 people working at the shop a few years ago, but they dwindled down over the years and they [Woolworths] let it happen. If people left, they just didn't replace them.'

The Fort William shop had 17 workers when it closed its doors three years ago. Carol Hodgson, who worked in the store for 24 years, told *The Oban Times* she thinks everyone who worked for the company deserves compensation.

She added: 'We'll just have to wait and see what happens. We're not holding out much hope, but if we don't fight, we won't get anything at all. Even if we just get the legislation changed so this doesn't happen to anyone else, that would be something. It's not about the money; it's the principal.'

She said: 'It's a sad situation, to think that they are discriminating between some of us. We all worked for the same company

She said: 'There was two or three younger ones who left a couple of months before when they heard it was closing down. If they had been part of the head count we would have been entitled to get the money.'

Local MSP Dave Thompson said: 'It's extremely disappointing to hear those who worked in these branches are not entitled to compensation purely on the fact they worked in stores with 20 or less people.'

'Politicians must unite to help put a stop to this unfair law and work together to get the best outcome for the 1,000 Scots affected.'

USDAW national officer John Gorle said that the union would challenge the decision at an employment tribunal appeal hearing and, if unsuccessful, to Europe.

Central Scotland MSP Richard Lyle raised the issue at Holyrood last week and is setting up an online petition to gather support for the workers.

Campaign group's pledge to fight ferry fare changes

THE GROUP campaigning against the Scottish Government's proposed changes to ferry fares in the Western Isles held a packed meeting in Benbecula on Monday night.

RET was introduced in 2008, which gives bigger discounts for firms transporting more goods. The RET scheme sets ferry fares to what it would cost to travel the same distance by road.

The Outer Hebrides Transport Group (OHTG) claims government plans to scrap Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) for commercial vehicles will hurt the haulage industry as well as local consumers. The government wants to revert to the bulk discount system used before

OHTG co-ordinator Gail Robertson said: 'Our campaign is focussed on the devastating economic fallout the withdrawal of RET will have on families in the islands. We have to stop this haulage and household tax. The prospect of paying hundreds of pounds extra for commercial

vehicles is a nonsense and any talk of rebates and discounts from the SNP government is a red herring. We have a price structure and it is in the interests of these islands that we retain it.'

household in the islands.' OHTG representatives are due to meet with Transport Minister Keith Brown in Edinburgh on Tuesday afternoon.

David Wood of Stornoway-based hauliers Woody's Express said the cost of a return journey between Lochmaddy, North Uist and Uig, Skye, would rise by £400 - 172 per cent. He said: 'This is a fight for the jobs and living standards of every

A Transport Scotland spokesman said: 'The RET pilot has had a positive impact since it was introduced in October 2008 and we want to see that continue. That is why we are continuing with RET as a permanent feature for passengers and cars on the current routes while extending it to include new routes.'

Lunch club lands £6,000

LOCHABER Action on Disability (LAD) has secured a £6,000 grant to help with the cost of running Caol Community Centre's lunch club.

centre will be given over from Highland Council to public ownership on April 1. LAD manager Laura Cheetham said: 'We are very excited about running Caol Community Lunch Club. We are really pleased to be able to use skills and experience we already have to increase the support we provide for local people.'

Loyds TSB Foundation for Scotland awarded the grant to the Caol-based charity, which provides transport to and from the community centre as well as up to 40 meals a day. The

World War II shells destroyed in controlled beach explosion

BOMB disposal experts carried out a controlled explosion on a popular Lochaber beach by after five live World War II mortar rounds were found.

Navy experts from Faslane naval base arrived at the beach last Wednesday morning to inspect the explosives. A Faslane spokesman said the ordnance were a mixture of 'high explosives and smoke rounds'.

As reported in last week's *Oban Times*, 16 unexploded shells were found on the Singing Sands, Kentra Bay, Acharacle by Salen coastguard member Tom Jackson. Eleven of the shells discovered were found to be spent.

of them in the sand dunes on Wednesday lunchtime.'

The beach was cordoned off for a number of days while detailed searches took place.

the beach. He said: 'There are two signs erected by the landowner warning people of the danger.'

It is believed recent storms stripped the sand off the beach, exposing the shells.

The bomb squad said they had been called out here three times in the past few years, and there is probably more where they came from.'

Mr Wren also said it was likely there was still more WWII relics buried in

The scenic beach was used as a training ground for the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, in June 1944.

THE OBAN TIMES READER SURVEY 2011-2012

Survey highlights our loyal and passionate readership

"The Oban Times is like good whisky - it improves with age!"

The Oban Times is regarded as an institution for the people of the West Highlands, according to the findings from our 2011 reader survey.

Almost 1,400 readers kindly completed The Oban Times survey in October last year - that's nine per cent of our current circulation and significantly higher than our 2.5 per cent target.

You were substantially positive about your community newspaper, highlighting our readers as loyal and passionate. Almost 90 per cent of you told us you read The Oban Times every week. We also learned that you buy the broadsheet weekly because you enjoy its content and like to know what is happening in your local area. Forty-seven per cent of you read your Oban Times twice or more. Over half saw an increase in the quality of photographs in the past few years while a large percentage also thought the newspaper's design, layout and look had improved. We also received a stream of positive comments thanking and congratulating us for our contribution to the West Highlands.

You also like our adverts - 82 per cent agree that adverts in The Oban Times are useful for sourcing

local products and services. As well as looking at the paper's classified section for bargains every week, 60 per cent of you visit events and restaurants after seeing them advertised within our pages.

While focussed local news content was well received, we learned that you would like to see more lifestyle and hobby features.

Readers in rural and island areas expressed a desire for more district news, a view echoed by respondents in Oban. All comments and suggestions are currently being reviewed by the Editor.

Stewart Mackenzie, Editorial Director: "As 2011 marked the 150th anniversary of The Oban Times, it seemed an appropriate time to look to the future and find out what you - our readers - want from your community newspaper. Taking all the feedback on board, readers can expect to see further improvements and we will continue to work hard at meeting the demands of our expansive readership."

He added: "A massive thank you is due to all those who completed our survey last year."



What you said about The Oban Times

- "Just to say many thanks for having a paper of such quality that has been so consistently good over the years."
- "The Oban Times is a key aspect of my week to week life. It serves an important purpose on behalf of a marginal area of Scotland."
- "I find The Oban Times a useful source of local information and congratulate the editorial staff for their interest in local activities."
- "The whole family read the paper from Grandparents to Grandchildren."
- "To many of us it's an institution - The Highland Man's Bible."
- "Thursdays wouldn't be the same without it."

Key Findings

- 1,369 respondents completed The Oban Times survey in October last year
- Almost 90 per cent stated they read The Oban Times every week.
- 82 per cent agreed that adverts in The Oban Times are useful for sourcing local products and services.
- 60 per cent of readers visit events and restaurants after seeing them advertised within our pages.
- 47 per cent read their Oban Times twice or more.
- 75 per cent share their Oban Times with others in their household.

"A massive thank you to all those who completed our survey last year."

- Stewart Mackenzie, Editorial Director for The Oban Times

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MONDAY heralds the start of Go Green Week, an event to encourage people to be more environmentally friendly – but doing so isn't as hard as you think.

It can be easy to underestimate the huge difference little changes can make – there's no need to pull on the green cape and become a full blown 'eco-warrior' to make a difference not just to the world, but to your own household bills.

Start small, it's the easiest way. Start with switching off all lights when you're not using them. Yes, it might only save a few pence a day, but over the year that could save pounds. If everyone followed suit, that small change could save thousands of tonnes of carbon dioxide production a year. Make similar small adjustments – only filling the kettle by how much water you need, turning the heating down by just a few degrees or insulating heating pipes – and you'll soon see the savings add up.

Owning a car is almost essential if you are to work in the west Highlands and islands. As such, making sure you milk every drop of efficiency from it can make a massive difference.

To maximise fuel economy, ensure your car is regularly serviced and the tyres are inflated to the optimum pressure. Also, take items out of the car you don't need every trip. Do you really need the bike rack on Monday-Friday? Is the boot full of useless junk? Clearing it out will lighten the car, ensuring better mpg. Drive conservatively too. Hammer on the accelerator and you'll burn fuel fast.

Why not also consider composting food waste – if not eliminating waste entirely first – shopping locally and recycling glass, paper and cardboard.

These are just small changes and the more we make, the bigger the smaller our impact we have on both our wallets and our environment.

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Appointment of Non-Executive Board Members

Mallaig Harbour Authority is seeking to make appointments of six non-executive members to its Board and individuals with an interest in public service are being sought. Mallaig Harbour Authority is a Trust Port which differs from company or local authority owned ports by its constitution and powers. All port investments are funded from trading revenues supplemented by commercial borrowings. The main duties of the Authority are to maintain, improve and develop the Port. Appointments will be for an initial term of one, two or three years commencing April 2012 and will be part time, typically a few days per month. A modest remuneration is payable.

Competencies/Skills
 Applicants must be able to demonstrate the following:

- That they have achieved results in demanding situations and can demonstrate ability and a proven track record in their chosen profession (or other activities);
- That they have the ability to contribute effectively in group discussions involving a wide range of people, including specialists and professionals. This includes the intellectual ability to extract the essence of an argument from papers and to analyse problems and assess evidence impartially;
- That they have been able to earn the respect of colleagues and been influential as a member of a team working over a sustained period of time towards demanding goals;

Applicants should make clear the level and depth of management or specialist expertise (if any), and of any other experience which demonstrate knowledge and interests relevant to this post e.g. management of harbours, financial management, human resources and industrial relations, laws relating to Scotland. Residence within a reasonable distance of the port, and familiarity with local issues in the region surrounding the port, are highly desirable. The Authority is committed to equality of opportunity and encourages a diverse range of applicants and to the principle of appointment on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process in accordance with the Guide To Good Governance for Trust Ports.

Further details and application forms can be obtained from:
 Mallaig Harbour Authority, Harbour Office, Mallaig, Inverness-shire. PH41 4QB or info@mallaigharbourauthority.com
 Closing date for applications – 2pm on Friday 2nd March 2012

SOUS-CHEF (Full Time)
 Live in Accommodation Available

BAR PERSON (Full Time)
 Live in Accommodation Available

All rates of pay are negotiable according to experience.

Please send your C.V to
 Lorna McKechnie, Manager,
 Bridgend Hotel, Isle of Islay, Argyll, PA44 7LB
 Or Email your details to
 info@bridgend-hotel.com
www.bridgend-hotel.com

UNIQUE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY IN THE CAMPBELLTOWN, KINTYRE AND ISLAY AREAS

Would you like to become part of a team dedicated to providing a much needed support service to survivors of sexual abuse in your area? We offer a comprehensive and in-depth training programme, followed up by personal support, giving Volunteers the skills and confidence necessary to undertake this challenging and rewarding role. This programme will take place over 4 residential weekends in Campbelltown. Due to the nature of the work only females need apply – exempt under Sex Discrimination Act 1975 S7(2)(D)(E). Current, clean driving licence is an advantage but not essential. For more details contact Fiona on 01369 700 800 or by email at fiona@ab-rc.org.uk or download an application pack from the website at www.ab-rc.org.uk. Successful applicants will be required to undertake an enhanced PVG disclosure check. Closing date for applications - Tuesday 14th February, 2012

ARGYLL AND BUTE RAPE CRISIS
 REG CHARITY No SC037022

Shinty Development Officer

The Camanachd Association, in partnership with Argyll & Bute Council and sportscotland, wish to appoint a Shinty Development Officer to lead the Association's plan for the promotion and development of shinty in Argyll & Bute. This is an important role with a particular emphasis on Youth Development, Club & Volunteer Development and Coach Education. The Job Description, Person Specification and further information on the application process are available on www.shinty.com. Closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 3rd February 2012. For further information, please contact the Camanachd Association on 01463 715931.

MACLEOD
 REQUIRE
SITE SUPERVISOR
 FOR DEVELOPMENTS AND CONTRACTS THROUGHOUT ARGYLL WRITTEN APPLICATIONS, WITH C.V. TO
 MacLeod Construction Ltd
 Kilmory Industrial Estate
 Lochgilphead PA31 8RR
 e-mail – ill@mkmacleod.co.uk

TRAINEES REQUIRED
For The Olive Garden, Oban
 and
The Lochnell Arms Hotel, Connel
Kitchen and Front of House

Full training will be given
 Immediate Start

For more details please
 contact 01631 710408

R A Clement Associates
 Chartered Accountants & Business Advisors

TEMPORARY, PART TIME RECEPTIONIST REQUIRED
 to work Tuesday to Thursday in our FORT WILLIAM office. In addition to reception duties some bookkeeping will be required so experience of this would be an advantage.

Please apply by email to Duncan Groat, Managing Partner, on dg@raclement.co.uk or in writing to R A Clement Associates, 5 Argyll Square, OBAN, PA34 4AZ.

The Scottish Salmon Company
Companaidh Bhradan na h-Alba

The Scottish Salmon Company is a leading independent producer of high quality Scottish Salmon. We are committed to high standards of animal welfare, sustainable operations and promoting a responsible environmental policy. We are currently recruiting for the following located at our Cairndow Site

HYGIENE TEAM LEADER (REF HTL/01/12)
(SALARY £17134.26 PER ANNUM)

This is a new Department within The Scottish Salmon Company, we are seeking a highly motivated individual who has the ability to work from their own initiative, you will have excellent written and numeric skills along with a can do approach to problem solving. The successful applicant will oversee the Hygiene Team with regard to the day to day activities. Responsibilities will involve assisting in the supervision of staff and carrying out the day to day cleaning operations, ensuring internal and external procedures are adhered to in relation to Hygiene. The ideal applicant will have previous Team Leader Experience and be able to motivate and encourage staff. Ideally qualified to Intermediate Food Hygiene Level and possess a sound knowledge of Hygiene Standards. COSHH and / or Safe Working Practice Qualifications are desirable but not essential as training will be provided. We are also recruiting for

HYGIENE TEAM OPERATIVES X 2 (REF HTO/01/12)
SALARY £15,991.97 PER ANNUM

We are also seeking Two Hygiene Team Operatives the successful candidates will be involved in the day to day cleaning operations. The role requires self motivated individuals who can work as part of a team or alone, applicants must have a can do approach and should be physically fit due to the nature of these roles and have a good understanding of working to Health & Safety guidelines. The applicants will have previous cleaning experience and knowledge of Hygiene Standards. Applicants will ideally be qualified in Basic Food Hygiene, respiratory equipment compliance, and hold a current first aid certificate these qualifications are desirable but not essential as training could be provided. Both positions require a Valid full drivers license and own transport are essential as the successful candidates will need to be available to work evenings and occasional weekends. In return, the Company offers a comprehensive pay and benefits package including entry into the Company Pension Scheme after the qualifying period. Working on a annualised hours contract based on a 40 hour week consisting of 2080 hours per annum on 1832 hours after holiday entitlement per annum. For an application form and job description, please contact: HR Department, the Scottish Salmon Company, Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, Argyll, PA26 8BH. Tel. No. 01499 600 435 / 415 Email: cairndowhr@scottishsalmon.com Closing date for applications: 5.00pm Friday 10th February 2012 Visit our website at www.scottishsalmon.com

MACLEOD
 REQUIRE
ELECTRICIAN (17th edition qualified)
 also
BENCH HAND JOINER (LOCHGILPHEAD BASED)
 WRITTEN APPLICATIONS, WITH C.V. TO
 MacLeod Construction Ltd
 Kilmory Industrial Estate
 Lochgilphead PA31 8RR
 e-mail – ill@mkmacleod.co.uk

Scottish autism

Part Time Support Worker (SA/801) £14,526 - £15,240 (pro rata for part time) - Oban

We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed Support Worker to join our Saturday Club in Oban. The club provides social opportunities for children ages 5-18 years both within the resource centre and in the local community. You will support children who use the service to access a variety of activities and social opportunities and be a valued member of the team. For more information on this post, please contact www.scottishautism.org Closing Date: 2 weeks from date advertised Registered charity number is SC009068

Ben Nevis Distillery Office Administrator

To complement our team, we are seeking an enthusiastic individual to help run our busy office. To be considered for this post, the successful applicant will require excellent communication skills both written and verbal, be computer literate including Microsoft packages and have broad experience and understanding of office administration. You will be a team player but also able to work on your own initiative. An understanding of customs and excise legislation and web based applications would be of benefit but training will be given. Please apply with full C.V. and covering letter to: Stuart Robertson, Distillery Manager, Ben Nevis Distillery, Lochybridge, Fort William, PH33 6TJ

Ben Nevis Distillery & Visitor Centre Visitor Centre Manager

To complement our team, we are seeking a socially confident individual to take full responsibility for managing our visitor centre and catering facility. To be successful in this post, the individual will require excellent communication and presentation skills, understanding of stock control, computer literacy including Microsoft packages and general administration experience. They will also require a thorough understanding of food hygiene legislation. Above all they will have to demonstrate a passion for customer service, hospitality and brand support work gained in a similar role. A flexible approach is also required, as evening and weekend work may occasionally be encountered. Please apply with full C.V. and covering letter to: Stuart Robertson, Distillery Manager, Ben Nevis Distillery, Lochybridge, Fort William, PH33 6TJ

campbeltown courier
 incorporating Argyllshire Advertiser

Media Sales Executive

The Oban Times Group are seeking to recruit a Media sales Executive to join our experienced sales team in Campbeltown. Applicants should be lively, enthusiastic, good communicators and committed to customer satisfaction. The successful candidate will work across a variety of publications and products. Ongoing in house training will be given as required. A full driving licence is essential as you may not necessarily be office based but could have the opportunity to travel throughout Argyll and surrounding areas in one of our company vehicles. We offer an excellent basic salary along with commission, generous annual holiday entitlement, company pension scheme, life assurance and private medical insurance. If you are looking for a career with a well established company and have the above attributes – we want to hear from you. Please apply by e-mail with a full C.V including contact details to: ali@obantimes.co.uk Closing date: Wednesday, 22nd February, 2012

Caledonian MacBrayne
 Hebridean & Clyde Ferries

CalMac Ferries Limited has a requirement for:
Seasonal Port Assistant (fixed term contract)
 Oban Ferry Terminal
 40 hours per week
 Rate of Pay £17,222 per annum (pro-rata) Ref 411-5B

Applications are invited for the position of Seasonal Port Assistant based at the Oban Ferry Terminal. Reporting to the Port Manager, you will need a flexible approach to your day-to-day responsibilities. Your duties will include mooring operations, customer enquiries, sales of passenger/vehicle tickets, cash handling and control of passengers and vehicles embarking and disembarking from vessels. You must be computer literate, with excellent verbal and written communication skills. You are expected to have a flexible approach to working as shift and weekend work will be involved. You must be customer focused, have a clear understanding of the customer interface and have a proactive approach to customer care. The successful candidate must be able to commute to the Oban Ferry Terminal on a daily basis. If you are interested in this position, please respond by sending your CV quoting reference number 411-5B no later than 18 February 2012 to: David MacBrayne HR (UK) Limited Ferry Terminal, Gourrock, PA19 1QP t: 01475 650100 f: 01475 650268 or email: vacancies@davidmacbraynehr.co.uk CalMac Ferries Limited is an equal opportunities employer.

Civil works sales person
Oban £ Excellent

The John MacLachlan Group is seeking to recruit an ambitious, highly motivated B2B Civil Works sales person to develop and expand business with existing and new customers. You will have good experience in civil works and providing customer solutions. A knowledge of the Argyll area would be beneficial. Looking for a new challenge in a diverse and dynamic organisation? Please email your CV and current salary details to our retained consultant: craig@bespokersourcing.co.uk or call Craig on 07730 200484.

Technician
Machrihanish Hatchery

We currently have a vacancy for a Technician at our research Hatchery at Machrihanish, near Campbeltown. After a successful probationary period, the post would be offered on a permanent full-time basis working a 40 hour week. This role is focused upon the development of wrasse as cleaner fish for the control of sea lice on salmon and on developing a sustainable culture of wrasse that avoids having to take fish from the wild and to conduct research to optimise their use for best practice in terms of wrasse and salmon welfare. Applications would be particularly welcome from candidates who have some experience in fish farming operations but it is not essential as full training and support would be provided. A driving license and own transport is essential. Beyond the nature of the role, the post holder would be expected to undertake over-time and weekend work as required in order to accommodate the business needs of the Hatchery and, for the same reason, would be part of the site Alarm Rota. If you are interested in applying for this vacancy, please submit an application in writing with details of relevant experience, by the closing date of Friday 10th February to: Vicky Ferguson, Human Resources Manager, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William, PH33 7PT

“ Geographically, the Oban Times encompasses a 400sq mile radius. This provides the most extensive coverage of Argyll, the West Highlands, and Islands – an area usually very difficult to reach. ”

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CARERS DIRECT LIMITED
 AN INDEPENDENT PROVIDER SPECIALISING IN CARE AT HOME

are looking for carers to work in The Oban Area
 Rate of pay from £7.80/hour – Car driver. Alternate weekends essential. SVQ2 would be an advantage.

Application forms from **01631 569 550**
 Registered with Scottish Care Commission
 Applications subject to Disclosure Scotland vetting.

ASP SHIP MANAGEMENT GROUP
 WE MANAGE SHIPS SAFELY

Deck Hand - Islay/Jura Ferry
Position – Deck Hand
Location- Inter-Island Ferry – Port Askaig / Feolin

ASP Ship Management are imminently seeking suitably qualified candidates to join the current crew of the 'Eilean Dhiura' in the role of Deck Hand. Local applicants will be preferred and crew must be fit and active. The possibility of advancement to Boatmaster may be possible for the most suitable candidates. To submit your CV please send to Newcasttle@aspships.com, or for further details please contact: 0191 230 8260. Closing Date for applications: 24/02/2012

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Blackface hogs sell to £80 at Oban sale

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd had forward 36 store cattle and 10 young bulls, 17 breeding cattle and 15 Over 30 Month cattle, plus 613 sheep of all classes at Oban last week when heifers saw an average rise of 12p per kilo and sheep sold to extremely high rates.

Bullocks averaged 214p (+5p) and sold to 232p per kilo for a 250 kg Limousin from Lochdar, Isle of Mull and £620 for a 285 kg Limousin from Strongorm, Balvicar, Oban.

Heifers averaged 210p (+12p) and sold to 273p per kilo for a 205kg Luing from Arisaig Estate, Arisaig and £605 for a 370kg Limousin from House of Keil, Duror, Argyll.

Bulls averaged 178p per kilo and sold to 205p per kilo for a 200 kg Limousin from House of Keil, Duror, Argyll and £505 for a pen of five Galloways from Scallastle, Mull.

Breeding cattle sold to £1,000, £900, £780 and £750 for Pure Galloway in-calf cows from Scallastle, Isle of Mull while Over 30 Month cattle sold to £710 for a 615kg Ayrshire Cow from Inion, North Connel and to 127p per kilo for a 535kg Limousin, from Balvicar.

Blackface hogs from Ballymeanach, Dalmally sold to £80 with Mules from Homestead, Ardferrin; Blackfaces from Slaterich, Kerrera and Suffolks from Balmackilichan, Lismore all fetching £73.

Ewes sold to £107 for a Texel from Barcaldine Home Farm, with Cross ewes from Newfield sold to £106, Mules from Ederline to £95, Suffolks from Glengorm to £93 and Cheviots from Annat to £90. Cast tups sold to £111 for a Cheviot from Strontollier.

Prime sheep trade continues to rise at Dingwall on Tuesday

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 81 prime cattle and 1,447 prime sheep at Dingwall on Tuesday when cattle trade slipped back and sheep prices continued to rise.

Prime bullocks averaged 196.8p (-3.3p) and sold to 209p per kg twice for a 635kg Limousin cross from Findon Mains, Culbokie, and a 550kg Limousin cross from Redfield, North Kessoak, and £1,462.65 for a 735kg Limousin cross from Roadside, Tore.

Heifers averaged 197.9p (-0.9p) and sold to 218p per kg for a 560kg Limousin cross from Easter Strath of Auchterflow, Killen, to Frasers Brother Butchers, Dingwall, and £1,278.90 for a 630kg Limousin cross from Udale, Poyntzfield.

Lambs averaged 208.4p (+4.8p) and sold to 225.6p per kg for 39kg Texel crosses from Bruiach Mills, Kiltarity, and £98 twice for 48.5kg Texel crosses from Cloves Farm, Alves, and 44kg Beltex crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge.

Cheviots sold to £93.80 from Raitcastle Farm, Nairn and to 222.4p per kilo from Ardnamurchan Estates, Acharacle.

Condition scoring ewes can save time and money

CONDITION scoring in sheep is a simple and very effective tool to assess the body condition of ewes as they approach a stressful time.

Growth of their lamb(s) is rapid in the last eight weeks of pregnancy and it is important their body condition is good and the appropriate amount of supplementary feeding offered.

Body condition is assessed by running a hand over the back bone and loin of the animal and determining the amount of body fat and muscle depth. The condition is scored from 1, very lean to 5, overweight.

A Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) Technical Note TN640 - available free on the SAC website - gives clear guidance on how body condition scoring and user skills increase with regular use of the technique.

It is particularly useful in hill flocks, where the poor weather and restricted feed availability can impose significantly greater welfare stresses on ewes than lower down. In the period prior to lambing lean hill ewes will struggle to provide for rapid lamb growth and should be drawn out and offered extra feeding.

The present cost of the high energy and protein diets offered to ewes in late pregnancy, makes the appropriate targeting of supplementary feeding important for both economical and welfare reasons. While the mild weather so far this winter has allowed many flock owners to minimise supplementary feeding, it means there is a greater need than usual to establish the nutritional status of the flock now.

Adjusting feeding according to individual body condition scores in the 8-12 weeks prior to lambing, can have a significant impact on the number of lambs reared successfully.

Proper nutritional management of



Condition scoring can be done easily and quickly with a little practice

ewes maximises productivity and reduces health and welfare problems associated with animals being lean or overweight.

Lean ewes can be weak and have difficult births. Their lambs can be small and vulnerable due to poor quality colostrum or low milk supply and reduced mothering ability.

Fat ewes can have difficult births due to the size of the lamb. Both thin

and fat ewes are prone to develop twin lamb disease.

Other key periods to assess condition are at weaning and the eight weeks prior to tupping.

If poor body condition is identified at weaning time improvements can be made by using better grazing which can be more cost effective than having to supplement with expensive concentrates later in the year.

Market reports

OBAN Caledonian Marts

Bullocks
0-250kgs - £580 lochdar, 232p per kg lochdar;
251-300kgs - £620 Fiart, 217p per kg Fiart;

Heifers
0-250kgs - £560 Arisaig, 273ppk Arisaig;
251-300kgs - £550 lochdar, 215ppk lochdar;

351-400kgs - £605 House of Keil, 163ppk House of Keil;

Bulls
0-250kgs - £410 House of Keil, 205ppk House of Keil;

251-300kgs - £390 Scallastle, 162ppk Scallastle;

301-350kgs - £505 Scallastle, 168ppk Scallastle;

Breeding cattle
Cows In-Calf
Galloway - £900, £780 & £750 Scallastle;
British Blue £680 Tirtuir;

OTM cattle
Ayrshire £710 Inion;
Simmental - £690 Dallachullish,
Limousin - £680 Strongorm;
Blonde - £650 Kimalieu.

Sheep
Tups:
Cheviot - 111 Strontollier, £93 Strongorm;

Texel - £87 Barcaldine Home Farm Suffolk - £98 Acha-Bheim
Bluefaced Leicester - £90 Dalvores;

Ewes:
Texel - £107 - Barcaldine Home Farm Cross - £106 Newfield
Mule - £95 Ederline
Suffolk - £93 Glengorm
Cheviot - £90 Annat;

Hoggs:
Blackface - £80 Ballymeanach; £73 Slaterich,
Suffolk - £73 Balmackilichan,
Mule - £73 Homestead
Cross - £68 Mingary.

STIRLING United Auctions

Bullocks:
Up to 250kgs Drumelzier £590,

Roughside 236.9p;
251-300kgs Viewfield £710, 251.8p;
301-350kgs Littleport £770, Half Mark 236.6p;

351-400kgs Cleugh £905, 226.3p;
401-450kgs Auchenflower £1010, Dyke 231.3p;

451-500kgs Westerton £1110, Formal 237.4p;

501-550kgs East Shawtonhill £1180, Logan Mains 221p;

551-600kgs Stoopshill £1250, 211.1p;
601-650kgs Stoopshill £1250, 201p;
651-700kgs Holehouse £1300, 195.8p.

Heifers:
Up to 250kgs Drygate £565, 226p;
251-300kgs Sorn Mains £660, 242.6p;
301-350kgs Nether Dalkeith £780, 222.9p;

351-400kgs Craigend £865, 226.48p;
401-450kgs East Shawtonhill £955, Nether Craig 223.3p;

451-500kgs West Thomaston £1000, 211.9p;

501-550kgs East Shawtonhill £1105, Formal 208.5p;

551-600kgs West House £1200, 208.3p

OTM Cows:
Quixwood (Lim) £1555, 177.5p; Quixwood (AA) £1235, 162.9p; Hangingshaw (Cha) £1235, 156.7p; Quixwood (Sim) £1175, 157.9p; Dickmontlaw (HF) £965, Stoopshill 148.4p; Auchenloigh (SD) £885, 146.5p.

OTM Bulls:
Hillview (Lim) £1595, 166.8p; Auchintiber (AA) £1375, 165.8p; Knowhead of Duntrune (Cha) £1185, 166.4p.

Native Breeds
Heifers
Westerton (AA) £1110; Laigh Carnduff (HE) £1000; Laigh Carnduff (Sho) £730; Claddochside (BF) £490; Luss Est (Lui) £340.

Auchenflower (AA) 206p; Claddochside (BG) 187p; Laigh Carnduff (HE) 174.8p; Luss Est (lui) 173.5p; Laigh Carnduff (Sho) 173p.

Bullocks
Auchencarroch (AA) £1230; Logan Mains (SD) £1160; Holehouse (Ay) £970; Mid Auchencarroch (Lui) £930; Lochdochart (shO) £800; Plean (Ga) £780.

Hillview (AA) 234.4p; Logan Mains (SD) 227.4p; Luss Est (Lui) 225.2p; Dyke (Ga) 218.2p; Lochdochart (Sho) 204.9p; Lorn (Ay) 176.3p; Anit (Hi) 81.6p;

Sheep

Hoggs
Drumnessie (BtexX) £79; Drumnessie (SufX) £75; Dalmahoy (SufX) £74.50; Ardmaleish (ChaX) and Knocknaib, Ardmaleish (TexX), Edengrove (TexX) £71; Edengrove (TexX) £70; Drumnessie (Mul) £69; Drumnessie (BF) £67; Outerwards (BF) £56.

Ewes; Lettre (BF) £40.

DINGWALL Dingwall and Highland Marts

Bullocks
up to 200kg - 1 Kilbride, Broadford, £400, 205.1p;
201-250kg - 160 Upper Morness, Rogart, £585, 243.8p;

251-300kg - 5 Achiniver, Lairg, £650, 251.9p;

301-350kg - Gaskbeg, Laggan, £820, 248.5p;

351-400kg - Uiginish Farm, £990, 250.0p;

401-450kg - Dunain Mains, Inverness, £1,100, 250.0p;

451-500kg - Dunain Mains, £1,170, 239.3p;

501-550kg - Hilton Farm, £1,160, 215.9p;

551-600kg - Ballieforth, £1,230, 207.4p;

Over 601kg - Hilton Farm, £1,180, Hilton Farm, 200.9p.

Heifers
201-250kg - 22 Achfrish, Shinness, £570, 247.8p;

251-300kg - Eilburn, £800, Easter Muckernich, Tore, 250.0p;

301-350kg - Lyne of Urchany, Nairn, £960, 282.4 p;

351-400kg - Morvich, Rogart, £1,000, 256.4p;

401-450kg - Morvich, £980, 237.3p;

451-500kg - Lochdhu, Nairn, £1,020, Boggiewill, Fortrose, 212.9p;

501-550kg - Kinchyle Farm, Scaniport, £1,065, Ballieforth, 201.2p;

551-600kg - Ballieforth, £1,200, 201.7p.

Young Bulls
201-250kg - Belladrum Mill, £540, 190.0p;

251-300kg - 160 Upper Morness, £570, 190.0p;

301-350kg - Muirends Croft, 202.9p.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the AREA PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS OFFICE, FULTON HOUSE, GORDON SQUARE, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6XY; online at www.highland.gov.uk and, where given, the alternative location(s).

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description	Alternative locations where application may be inspected
12/00077/LBC	30M South of Strable Bothy Lagnaha Farm Duror	Conversion of agricultural barn to cafe/shop	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office Regulation 5 - affecting the character of a listed building (21 days)
12/00170/FUL	Land to North East of Allshelloch House North Ballachulish Onich	Erection of house (amended design to 10/00052/FULLD)	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00189/PIP	Land 80M South East of Craighulish Achaphubuil Fort William PH33 7AL	Erection of house and garage	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00198/PIP	Site at Unachon Cottages 40M N E of 3 Crossroads Spean Bridge PH34 4EX	Erection of house	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00217/FUL	Land to West of Achabeg East Lochaline Morvem	Erection of house (amended design to 11/00806/FUL)	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
12/00240/PIP	Land 120M North of Ardloch House Gairloch Spean Bridge	Erection of house - Plot 3 (Renewal of 08/00315/OUTLO)	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

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PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02281/PP	Erection of 12 flats with associated parking and road improvements	Land At McKeivie Heights Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office
11/02323/PP	Erection of waste handling shed building and formation of temporary storage area for skips	Soroba Quarry Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4SD	Oban Area Office
11/02353/PP	Erection of 46.9 metre high (to blade tip) wind turbine and formation of temporary access road.	Land North East of Barranrioch Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4QB	Oban Area Office
11/02456/PP	Erection of 46.9 metre high (to blade tip) wind turbine and formation of temporary access road.	Land at Ardconnel Farm Connel Oban Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Connel
11/02496/PP	Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse	Ard Daraich Lochdon Isle Of Mull Argyll and Bute PA64 6AP	Sub Post Office Craignure
11/02524/PP	Erection of a 10KW 18.99 metre high (to blade tip) wind turbine.	Ardalanish Farmhouse Buncness Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA67 6DR	Sub Post Office Buncness Isle of Mull
11/02579/PP	Formation of new fencing, new lighting and replacement of existing trolley shelters within car park area.	Texco Stores Ltd Lochavullin Drive Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4BW	Oban Area Office
12/00064/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and detached garage.	Plot 1 Ganavan Sands Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 4RF	Oban Area Office
12/00099/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, detached garage and installation of septic tank.	Land North Of Tirran North Connel Oban PA37 10X	Oban Area Office
12/00179/PP	Formation of vehicular access.	Cuilvona Ganavan Road Oban Argyll and Bute PA34 5TU	Oban Area Office

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02515/PP	Erection of single story extension to existing garage.	Duart Castle Lochdon Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA64 6AP	Sub Post Office Craignure
11/02574/PP	Conversion of barn to dwellinghouse	Barn At Shuna Farmhouse Isle of Shuna Appin Argyll and Bute PA38 4DH	Sub Post Office Ledaig
12/00192/PP	Alterations to existing bothy to form ancillary accommodation to dwellinghouse	3 Argyll Terrace Tobermory Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA75 6FB	Tobermory Area Office

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00 - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday at 67 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02591/PP	Erection of replacement single storey rear extension to dwelling, detached garage and change of use and alteration of detached outbuilding to holiday let including addition of conservatory.	The Grange Mansfield Road Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Port Ellen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
11/02412/PP	Installation of photovoltaic roof panels	53 Frederick Crescent Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7BD	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
11/02592/LIB	Erection of replacement single storey rear extension to dwelling and alteration of detached outbuilding to holiday let including addition of conservatory.	The Grange Mansfield Road Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Port Ellen
12/00055/PP	Partial demolition of existing derelict dwellinghouse, erection of extensions and integral garage and formation of vehicular access	30 Charlotte Street Port Ellen Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute PA42 7DF	Sub Post Office Port Ellen

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <http://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered.

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

THE ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL (SOROBA LANE, OBAN) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2012

On Monday 30th January 2012, Argyll and Bute Council made the above named Order under Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended, which will make it unlawful for any person to drive or cause or permit to be driven any vehicle (with the exception of vehicles in relation to the works), on that length of Soroba Lane, Oban, which extends from its junction with Lochside Street in an easterly direction for a distance of 40 metres or thereby. These restrictions are required to allow for ground investigation work to be carried out on either side of the bridge. This Order will be in operation every night between 1800 hours and 0600 hours from Monday 6th February 2012 until Friday 2nd March 2012 or until such time as the works are complete, whichever is the earlier. Alternative routes will be via Lynn Road, Lochside Street and Market Street.

Sandy Mactaggart, Executive Director, 1A Manse Brac, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD

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Lambing Spotlight

Lossit lambing goes indoors Colour coding assists unique simple system

A DECISION by Kintyre farmer Adam Armour to dramatically alter the lambing system at his 740 acre Lossit Home Farm, at Machrihanish, near Campbeltown has hugely benefited his enterprise over recent years.

After encountering serious problems with scavenging crows and ravens six years ago Adam opted to lamb all his ewes inside, a decision he feels was forced into making. 'I had 16 lambs due one morning,' explained Adam, 'and when I went into the field only one was alive. The rest had been killed by the crows and ravens.'

In that moment Adam decided the best, and perhaps only, way forward was to complete his entire lambing in a shed, regardless of the increased workload. Adam and his family are tenants at Lossit, and they also own the 400 acre South Glencreggan Farm, north of Campbeltown, at Glenbar. In contrast to Lossit's combination of ploughable land with a hill outcrop, South Glencreggan is made up of mainly hilly ground, with the combined venture carrying a stock of just over 1,000 ewes, made up of 600 Cross ewes, 400 Blackfaces and 80 Cheviots.

'My system of lambing is unique - nobody else lams the way I do,' said Adam.

Adam uses the raddle system at tupping time which allows him to predict when lambs will

be born.

'I put harnesses on the tup, and attach a coloured crayon to it. This means a crayon mark is left on the ewe after it has been mated,' said Adam.

Adam changes the colour of the raddle crayon five times during the tupping period which identifies the rotation of the housed ewes come lambing time.

'I can bring the sheep in for lambing in stages - there are five different colours as a guide. 'The sheep are only in the shed for a week; it's like a conveyor belt, they get moved along the pens as required. The sheep are brought in just before the lambs are due, and once they've lambed they are back outside a few days later.

'It saves having the whole lot in the shed at the one time.'

Adam also believes that scanning his pregnant ewes represents money well spent.

'Scanning is important for me, so you know what they're having. I tend to get a lot of triplets. If I've got a ewe with triplets and another carrying a single lamb then I will adopt one of the triplets onto the ewe with a single lamb.'

The lambing cycle takes 17 days at Lossit with all the ewes coming through the shed in four different lots.

Adam starts lambing in March 1 and aims to be finished by the end of May.

Lambs receive a single

tube of Colostrum when they are born as Adam believes that when lambing 40 to 50 sheep it is difficult to make sure every single lamb has suckled the ewe. 'We give the lamb a tube of Colostrum just to be sure they have been fed sufficiently,' he said.

Replacement stock are bred on the farm rather than buying in as it results in a hardier ewe and proves more cost effective. He buys a replacement Texel tup every two years to get new blood into the flock but now aims to extend the home-bred policy to include the sires.

'Instead of buying in a ram, I have bought in six pedigree ewes to lamb that will give me different types for the next few years,' he said. 'I bought them from Achnamara-born shepherd Robert Cockburn.'

Adam grew up in Kintyre at High Tirfergus Farm, Drumlembie and when he left school he went to work on Laggan Farm in nearby Peninver. He

then moved into the forestry sector before working at Lossit for three years - then returning to forestry for a while.

In 1994, Adam and his wife Lesley bought South Glencreggan - but Adam continued to work full time in forestry. In 1998 the opportunity arose to take the tenancy at Lossit Home Farm - and the family moved in.

Although Adam readily admit that running the two places is very hard, it is also very rewarding. This Kintyre farmer is positive about the outlook for the Scottish sheep sector, aiming for as good, if not even better than the last 12 months.

'Last year was a record year for the whole of the sheep industry,' Adam explained.

'Over the last three years prices have nearly doubled, rising by 30 to 40 per cent due to environmental and economic factors across the world.'



Lesley and Adam Armour in their lambing sheds at Lossit Farm. 21_c05lossit03

Lambing Diary

TO HELP monitor lambing time, a free waterproof diary is available. The Quality Meat Scotland Scottish Sheep Strategy is offering the lambing diaries to aid farmers during their lambing season.

Kathy Peebles, QMS Livestock Development Manager said: 'Lambing time is a very busy period and it is amazing how easy it is to think you will remember the finer details, but after a few days of early starts and late finishes, it can sometimes be difficult to recall events accurately. 'Being able to track the ewes and tups that are underperforming is the best way of improving flock profitability and the Lambing Diary is an excellent way of record-

ing how your flock has performed.'

The diaries are waterproof and pocket size and enable accurate records to be kept. The Benefits of Better Breeding in the Sheep Sector project has shown Commercial sheep farmers that there are financial benefits to be had by monitoring the performance of the breeding flock.

The Lambing Diary makes the task simple and it is equally easy to get a hold of your own copy. Simply contact either: Rod McKenzie on 01463 811 804 or email rod.mckenzie@sheepstrategy.org.uk or Kathy Peebles at QMS on 0131 472 4040 or email info@qmscotland.co.uk

Early start at Gartvaigh

LAMBING time at the 500 acre Gartvaigh Farm, Southend on the Kintyre peninsula starts in January with the Cameron family's pure-bred Suffolk flock.

Thomas Cameron lams 380 ewes made up of Suffolks, Mules and Blackfaces, and expects to achieve a lambing average of around 140 per cent. 'Every year is differ-

ent', said Thomas, 'it just depends on what nature throws at us.'

The pure-bred sheep are lambed inside and a fed a diet of compound, barley and silage, while the Mule ewes receive compound, barley and molasses outdoors.

Thomas buys 50 Blackface replacements privately each year to combat interbreeding by introducing new blood into the flock and these

ewes receive molasses and mineral buckets pre-lambing.

The farm's 40 Mule ewes start lambing at the beginning of March with the balance of the flock later in the month.

Gartvaigh markets its lambs through United Auctions with around 40 Mule ewe lambs going through the Stirling sale ring, while a further 20 are sold privately.



One of the lambs from Gartvaigh, Southend. 21_c05farm02



Adam Armour has invested in pedigree Texel ewes to breed his own replacement tups. 21_c05lossit04



Gartvaigh Farm in Southend, Kintyre. 21_c05farm01

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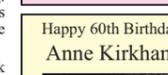
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Happy 60th Birthday

Anne Kirkham



02/02/12

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BIRTH

GRIFFIN

Liam and Siubhan are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Aoife Malin O'Rourke Griffin, born on January 3, 2012. First grandchild for Rosena and Joseph O'Rourke, Isle of Seil and third grandchild for Myra and Liam Griffin, Lerags. Thanks to staff at RAH Paisley and Lorn and Isles Hospital, Oban.

LAMBIE - GIFFMAN

Katrina and Hoffman are delighted to announce the birth of Isobel Jane on January 13, 2012 at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh.

ENGAGEMENTS

COLEMAN - Murdoch and Jane MacLeod, Achnaba House, Lochgilphead are delighted to announce the engagement of their eldest daughter Mairi Christina to James Coleman, son of Jim Coleman and Mrs Irene Paisley, Glasgow.

FLANAGAN - GEMMELL - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement on January 24, 2012 of David, son of Raymond and Anne Flanagan, Glasgow and Laura Anne, daughter of William and Anne Gemmell, Oban.

DEATHS

CAMPBELL - Peacefully at home on Thursday, January 26, 2012. Elsie, loving wife of the late Angus Campbell. A much loved mum to Fiona, Derek and Innis and a very sadly missed nana, sister and friend. Funeral Service will be held at Oban's Parish Church on Friday, February 3 at 1pm. Family flowers only please, retiring collection/donations to Cancer Research.

COWIE - Peacefully at the Mid Argyll Hospital on January 30, 2012. Andrew Walker Cowie, aged 86 years, of 1 Salen, Tayvallich, By Lochgilphead. Beloved husband of the late Jean Cowie. Much loved dad of Frazer and loving Grandpa of Alice and Tom. A dear uncle and cousin to all the family. A good friend and neighbour to many. Funeral service will be held in Cardross Crematorium on Tuesday 7th February 2012, at 12.15pm. Family Flowers only please, donations if desired to Cancer Research and Glasgow Disabled Scouts.

KENNEDY - Peacefully at Ach-an-Eas Residential Home, Inverness on Saturday, January 28, 2012. Margaret Kennedy aged 83 years, (formerly of 65 Lundavra Road, Fort William). Much loved wife of the late Jackie Kennedy, loving mother of Morabelle, Duncan and Annemarie, loving grandmother and great grandmother. Funeral on Friday, February 3, 2012 at 12 noon at St Mary's RC Church, Fort William, followed by interment at Kilmallie Cemetery.

MACCALL - At the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on January 29, 2012, in his 93rd year, Duncan Downie MacCall, dear husband of the late Jamesina (Ena), beloved father of Duncan and Maureen and father-in-law to Morine and Robert and a much loved grandfather and great grandfather. Sorely missed by all the family. The funeral will take place at Muckkairn Parish Church, Taynuilt on Thursday, February 2 at 1pm. Family flowers only please. Retiring collection / donations if desired for the War and Peace Museum, Oban.

MACKENZIE - Peacefully on Friday, January 27, 2012 at Raigmore Hospital, with his much loved family by his side, John Alexander MacKenzie (John Alex), 7 Grigor Drive, Inverness, aged 74 years. A Shinty stalwart. Dearly loved husband of Sheila, beloved father of Jean, Elizabeth and the late John Jr, adored grandpa to Murdoch, dear and respected father-in-law to George and Hugo, much loved brother to David and Louise, brother-in-law and great friend to many. Funeral service on Friday, February 3 at 1.15pm in the Funeral Home of William T Fraser and Son, Funeral Directors, Culdueth Road, Inverness, thereafter to Kilmacdonnell Cemetery. All welcome to attend. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired for the Renal Unit, Raigmore Hospital at the service or please forward to the Funeral Directors.

McNEILL - Mary. Peacefully at Greenhills Care Home, Biggar, on Thursday, January 26, 2012. Mary Helen McMaster, beloved wife of the late Gordon McNeill, (late of Killin and formerly of Cambuslang) much loved mum of Donald, Alistair, Margery and Barbara, devoted gran and great gran to all the family. Funeral Service on Friday, February 3 at 11.15am at Holytown Crematorium, Memorial Way, Holytown, ML1 5RU. To which all friends are invited, please wear an item of colour.

ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

BRODIE - Cathie's sister Amy (Newton) would like to thank all extended family, friends and neighbours for their help, comfort and support at this sad time. Very special thanks to all staff of Ward B, Lorn and Isles Hospital for their unstinting care. To Donald MacKinnon for his comforting service, Piper Angus J MacColl, everyone at the Royal Hotel for catering and efficient service and to Ian MacInnes and all at D & A Munn for their compassion and professionalism throughout. Finally thanks to those who paid their respects at Church and Graveside. The sum of £178.50 was raised for Cancer Research.

FYFE - The family of the late Jean Fyfe would like to offer thanks to all who gave their support and kind expressions of sympathy following our recent bereavement and to all who attended the funeral service. Sincere thanks to Rev Cliff Acklam for his comforting service, to Rev Dr Roddy MacLeod for his Gaelic reading, to D. MacDonald and staff for their helpful support and professional service and also to the Tayvallich Inn for providing warm and welcoming purvey. Special thanks to all the staff at Ardenaig, who looked after Jean so well in her later years and made her feel comfortable and at home with them. A retiring collection of £375 was donated to Macmillan nurses.

HOEY - Catherine, Hamish and their families would like to thank all relatives and friends for their kindness and support following the sad loss of Johnny, father, grandfather, great grandfather and great great grandfather of the family. The many letters, cards, mass offerings and thoughtful expressions of comfort and support were gratefully received and very much appreciated.

The family would like, especially to express their thanks to the management and staff of the North Argyll House for the exceptional love, care and attention Johnny received while he was in their care. Thanks to all who attended the mass and at the graveside and a special word of thanks to Bishop Joseph Toal, Fr James MacNeil, Fr Billy Fraser, Fr Sandy Culley and Fr David Connor for the lovely mass and funeral service.

MACLEAN - The MacLean and the MacDonald families, Ardfern and Dervaig, Isle of Mull. Would like to

thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their many kind expressions of sympathy following the sudden loss of Eilidh. Special thanks to Dr Ward for all his care and attention, the Rev Kenneth Ross for his comforting service and to piper Niall Shaw and Emma Dixon for her beautiful gaelic song, also to Donald MacDonald and Fiona for their kindness and efficiency and to all who provided the lovely food and came to pay their last respects to Eilidh at the church and graveside and generously donated £560 to the Dochus Centre, Lochgilphead.

PAYNE - Patricia (Pat), of Cinnait, Corpach. The family wish to express their heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in her care over many years and particularly during her recent illness. The kindness and consideration shown by Margaret and Murdoch, Homecarers, Isobel, Glen Mor Surgery, Belford Hospital, friends and neighbours has given great comfort. Thanks also to everyone who attended the funeral at St Andrew's Church. Thanks to Rector Alexander Guinness and Miss May MacIntyre, organist, for their sincere service. To John McLellan and Company for their caring and dignified handling of the funeral arrangements. The Moorings Hotel for their services. The generous sum of £719 from the retiring collection has been donated to the Belford Hospital Step Down Ward Fund.

MEMORIAMS

BIRCH - Betty Strang (nee Henry), at rest on January 30, 1998. The wonderful wife of Peter and remembered everyday.

GAHAN - (nee MacLeod) - Cherished memories of Marion, a beloved wife, mum, mother in law and granny, who died February 6, 2003. Another year has slipped away. Without you with us every day.

Always in our hearts and thoughts. We love you still and miss you lots. - Bill, Vivienne, Neil, Sam and Daniel, Michael, Sabine, Finn and Lilly XXX. **MACDONALD** - Treasured memories of Jessie (nee Campbell) Bailemartine - Tiree. 20 years have passed, Mum, but each of us in our own way have special thoughts of you today. - Lena, Clydebank. Nana, always in our thoughts and hearts. - Janette, William, Niall, Old Kilpatrick and London. **MACDONALD** - In loving memory of my dear husband, Lachlan MacDonald, who

died February 7, 2003. My thoughts are always with you. Your place no one can fill. I know you walk beside me. And when my life is through. I pray that God will take my hand. And lead me straight to you. Loved and remembered always. - By your loving wife, Ellen xxx.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of our dear dad, Lachlan MacDonald, who died February 7, 2003. Another year has passed. Since that sad day. The dad we loved was called away. His life was full of kindly deeds. A helping hand to those in need. A pleasant smile. A heart of gold. No better person, this world could hold. Loved and remembered always. - Donald, Ellen, John and Eleanor.

MACKAY - In memory of our mum, gran and great gran Agnes MacKay, who died January 29, 2011. Always in our thoughts. - Allan, Tricia and family. **MACLEOD** - In loving memory of a loving wife and mum Janet, passed away February 8, 2003. A silent thought. A secret tear. Keeps her memory ever dear. - Bobby.

NEWTON - In loving memory of my dear husband who died June 31, 1976. Remembered always. - Amy. **WHITE** - Precious memories of Russell a loving husband, dad and proud papa, who passed away on February 5, 2008. Close in my heart. Your memory is kept. To love, to cherish and never forget. - Always Hazel x. Loves you special papa. - Sophie and Erin xx

WHITE - In loving memory of our dear son-in-law, Russell, died February 5, 2008. We keep our loved ones in our hearts. And that is where they stay. You may be gone, but you'll always be a precious memory. Love always Mum and Dad, Fort William xx

MACLEAN - Precious memories of Ian (Cleasny) a much loved son, brother and uncle who died February 5, 2004. Those we love don't go away. They walk beside us everyday. Unseen, unheard but always near. Still loved, still missed and sorely missed. - Mum, Dad, Ann, Sandra and families.

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Nursery gets into the spirit of Burns

Youngster Ramsay Stubbs piped in the haggis, carried by his nursery classmate Linnea Livingstone, to St Bride's recent Burns Supper celebrations. The kids dressed in tartan sashes they made themselves out of paper and toasted the haggis with glasses of Irn Bru. Nursery teacher Kate MacIntyre said: "We held a wee ceilidh dance afterwards and they all really enjoyed it." The primary pupils at the Ballachulish school held their Burns Supper yesterday (Wednesday).

Lochaber High School head for the slopes of the French Alps



An excited group of 47 pupils and six staff from Lochaber High School travelled to the French Alps to enjoy a week of wonderful snow, excellent skiing, blue skies and bright sunshine. The group is pictured outside Lyons airport en route to Alpe d'Huez.

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Think again on Bonawe bus route cuts

Sir,
I am writing to protest about the proposal to cut the 408 bus service between Oban and Bonawe.
It is fundamental to the survival and sustainable future growth of our rural community to have a bus service which enables people to get to work at least 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday both in Oban and for those to come to work at locations within our local area.
My two teenage children use the later weekday bus service about twice a week each after attending after school clubs and activities and my daughter regular uses the Saturday services to get to town for part-time work.
Cutting this service would seriously disadvantage my children, as it would all the other youngsters who live along this bus route.
There is a need to encourage and support people of working age within this area, as well as providing the necessary services for the young and retired.
This is a lifeline service and I ask that any proposed cuts should be reconsidered.
Cath Thomson
North Connel

Find another use for old Rockfield School

Sir,
First of all an old iconic building of great architectural merit - named Rockfield School - is vacated.
It is then put on the market. Potential buyers are turned away for a variety of reasons. The building gradually succumbs to the pressure of the Argyll climate - wind, rain and extremes of heat and cold. The building becomes increasingly unsafe and ever-more expensive to put right.
This is why the old Argyll Hotel is now flattened.
The council then decide that 'something must be done' and a final solution is sought. They decide that the building should be de-listed. This was described as 'a lengthy procedure in last week's Oban Times. Meanwhile the building falls into further decay making it all the easier to de-list. If the council are successful in getting the building de-listed, it is not too hard to imagine that there is another demolition in the making.
Let's hope that this threat can be turned around and that there is a constructive use for Rockfield School.
Sarah G Swain-Nisbet, Oban

Bring back the sands at Ganavan

Open Letter for Argyll and Bute Council and community leaders.
Sir,
I was extremely sorry to read in *The Oban Times* the loss of the beach sand at Ganavan.
It was a beautiful beach and I have fond memories of visiting there in my childhood days. A group of community-minded folk, including myself, found a way to transfer over six hundred ton of sand to renew a beach area in Fort William.
We also lost some of this

in the December storm but plan to replace it. I do not believe that mother nature will replace the sand at Ganavan, without a little help. This can be done for a reasonable cost.
Our project was quite successful and I would be happy to show you the method we used on the beach at the Old Fort, Fort William.
If you would like help or information, please contact me.
I can be reached at berkeleyhouse67@hotmail.com.
Norrie MacLean, Fort William

Ten Little Kingdoms

written by Miss J.E. Clark of Eynsham, in 1889
Plans for separation grew worse than those before, Then they asked for two Parliaments, now 'tis three or four. Only just imagine if Home Rulers had their way, This is something like the tale the world might hear one day.
One United Kingdom they fancied wouldn't do, So to please some grumbling Irish they split it into two. Two little Kingdoms, but then the Scots, you see, Claimed their ancient throne and rights, and so there were three.
Three little Kingdoms, and after that one more; For Welshmen claimed a Parliament, and then there were four. Four little Kingdoms wouldn't do at all - One of them was far too big; the others far too small. All throughout Great Britain ancient hates revived, Cornwall wants to rule herself, and then there were five. Five little Kingdoms, but London in a fix, Raised the "Southern English" flag, and then there were six!
Six little Kingdoms, alas! the "Home Rule" leaven Caused a rising in the West, and then there were seven! Seven little Kingdoms; Northmen wouldn't wait, But started the Northumbrian state, and then there were eight. And all the towns one may visit by the Eastern Counties line, Held their own East Anglian Parliament, and then there were nine. Nine little Kingdoms; the Midlands people then Called a Parliament themselves, and then there were ten!
Ten little Kingdoms never could agree How to work together, and so they went free. Ten little Kingdoms with constitutions new, Ten little Kingdoms always in a stew. Ten little Kingdoms too weak to stand alone, A foreign nation conquered them - and then there were none!

Poem for EU regionalisation

Sir,
The following poem is synonymous with EU Regionalisation with the exception of two regions in Britain, as Brussels decrees Britain is to be broken up into twelve regions.
Pro EU SNP independence in the EU is a total farce unless SNP withdraws from the EU with a free trading agreement with Brussels.
Only UKIP's policy of true independence by withdrawing from the EU with a free trading agreement with Brussels will restore control to a British Government of the Union.
Pro EU SNP is setting a Euro Trap out of the frying pan into the fire for more Brussels Dictatorship by unelected Bureaucrats, due to the fact Scotland will be compelled to adopt the Euro currency as a new member state of the EU if it becomes independent of Westminster.
Thank you Miss Clark for your foresight. Some people never learn the lessons of history of divide and rule.
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Harry to fly the flag for Argyll

Youngster is triple medal winner

DESPITE only taking the game up two years ago, Taynuilt lad Harry Mobey is showing he has a future in the game after clinching three county medals.

The 11 year old Taynuilt Primary School pupil was the sole representative from Oban and Lorn to travel to Campbeltown for the Argyll and Bute Schools Badminton Championships, which attracted more than 40 players.

Competition was fierce, but young Harry, who turns 12 next month, stood head and shoulders above his peers as the only one to earn two winner's medals, for the boys singles and for the mixed doubles, with Courtney Schnell of Castlehill Primary.

Harry was runner-up in the boys doubles competition too, with partner Jordan Leitch of Rothesay Primary.

His achievements are even more remarkable given it's the first time he's been able to enter the tournament, with wild weather preventing participation in 2011.

Harry will now represent the whole county when he travels to



Harry Mobey, of Taynuilt, shows off the medals he won at the Argyll and Bute Schools Badminton Championships.

Perth for the Scottish Championships in April.

To prepare, Harry will continue to work on his game with elder brother, Stewart. Such is his talent that he is already taking on and regularly beating adult players.

He said: 'It's quite a good feeling to win, but there aren't really

many people playing badminton in Argyll and Bute.

'I'm looking forward to Perth and hopefully I'll do well.'

Results

The full results from the championships are:

Girls singles: winner Ellie Macdonald Rothesay Primary, runner up Louise McKellar Castlehill Primary.

Boys singles: winner Harry Mobey Taynuilt Primary, runner up Neil Littleton Glenbarr Primary.

Girls doubles: winners Ellie Macdonald Rothesay Primary and Nicola Wareham Glenbarr Primary, runners up Louise McKellar and Fern Currie both Castlehill Primary.

Boys doubles: winners Neil Littleton and Cameron Campbell both Glenbarr Primary, runners up Harry Mobey Taynuilt Primary and Jordan Leitch Rothesay Primary.

Mixed doubles: winners Harry Mobey Taynuilt Primary and Courtney Schnell Castlehill Primary, runners up Neil Littleton and Nicola Wareham both Glenbarr Primary.



The Argyll and Bute under-15 girls celebrate securing their semi-final place.

Girls in green march on in national cup

Brewin Dolphin Cup Boroughmuir 26 Argyll and Bute 57

ARGYLL and Bute's under-15 girls rugby team progressed to the semi-finals of the Brewin Dolphin Cup on Sunday after beating Boroughmuir in Edinburgh.

Although conceding the first try of the match, the Argyll girls went on to win comfortably but will have to wait on other results

to find out their semi-final opponents. As the first half progressed the Argyll team gained confidence and finished the half four tries to two in the lead.

They then started the second half in brilliant form and scored two quick tries to put the tie in their favour.

Captain Rhona McGlone showed excellent leadership at number 10 and organised the team well. Try scorers for

Argyll were: Rhona McGlone, Ellie MacNiven, Brooke Nisbet (4) and Olivia Nisbet (2). Olivia also converted all of the tries to give maximum points to the Argyll team.

Travelling with the team, SRU Modern Apprentice Emma Roxburgh said: 'I am very proud of the way the girls have played today.'

'Given that many of them are from Mull and they haven't had

much opportunity to train as a team they showed great passion and determination.

'We will be arranging as many training sessions and team runs as possible for the Argyll teams before their next fixture.'

The Argyll U18 team should also have been in action against Gala however the Borders team had to withdraw from the competition, meaning the senior girls also progress in the cup.

Primary league returns

THE SENIORS of the Oban Express Primary Football roared back into action on Sunday morning at Oban Community Pitch after last week's cancellation, playing 18 games on three pitches in only two hours.

Lochnell opened their day with four goals against the Scorpions with Finlay Bennett getting his name on the score sheet as usual.

The boys from North Lorn went on to defeat Thistle with a goal in each half but eventually ran out of steam in their last game when the 02 Saints' Cameron Clark scored twice without reply.

It had already been a good day for the 02 Saints having earlier won at Galaxy with Jude Bain claiming a hat trick and in their opening match they had buzzed the Wasps away with another hat trick this time from Gavin Forgrieve.

The all-conquering Saints Boys continued with their undefeated march this season and won all three matches against Red Star, Scorpions and the Jags without conceding a goal.

The All Stars started their day with a goal fest at Lochnell and had a hat trick hero in birthday boy Cammy Kerr. They were then involved in the game of the day against Red Star, with the

PRIMARY FOOTBALL



The new Oban Saints 03 team sponsored by builder and Oban Saints winger, Ross Maitland.

Lochgilphead lads edging this one 2-1.

The Jags enjoyed a comfortable win over Galaxy in their opening match with Jamie Anderson, Mark MacKnight and Finbar Dunn all on target without reply then in their next match against Wasps they went one better with Ben Smith claiming a brace and Ryan Woodrow finding the net with a long range effort.

Their stable mates, Thistle, had a mixed day but did enjoy a win over the youngsters of Saints 03, formerly known as Pumas.

In Saints 03's match with

Lochnell both teams were unable to find the net in the first half but half time substitute Connor Moore opened the scoring and the flood gates with Gary McIvor claiming a hat trick, one of which was a header from a Ross Campbell corner, in their first win as Saints.

They went on to record another win against Galaxy in a great match.

All of the leagues now take a fortnight break to accommodate the Argyll and Bute coaching weekend and the school holidays, giving coaches, players and spectators some time off.

Saints through to last 32 of Scottish Cup in granite city

AN IMPROVED Oban Saints are into the last 32 of the Scottish Amateur Cup after disposing of Echt in Aberdeen.

Having drawn 2-2 in Oban the previous Saturday Saints were expecting a difficult away replay but were buoyed by the return of skipper Keith Millar, Chris Graham and Myles McAuley in a 16-man squad.

Saints should have opened the scoring in the 20th minute when Craig MacEwan set up Donald Campbell, but Donnie's weak effort was easily saved by keeper Paul Bennett.

However, two minutes later the visitors took the lead with a well worked goal. Donald Campbell, Myles McAuley and Ryan Campbell played some neat interpassing football before the ball was swept out wide to Willie Gemmell who sent over a perfect cross to the far post for the unmarked Keith Miller to head the ball home.

And three minutes later the Oban side were 2-0 in front when Willie Gemmell crossed for Myles McAuley who beat his marker before drilling a low right foot drive past a helpless Paul Bennett.

The home side started brightly at the start of the second half, but

FOOTBALL

again they weren't troubling the Saints defence who looked pretty solid, and the hard working midfield were supplying plenty of ammunition for the forwards.

The Saints strikeforce was tormenting the Echt defence with their clever running and Craig MacEwan combined with strike partner Donald Campbell, who steered a great right foot curler past the outstretched arms of Paul Bennett to kill the game off.

As a reward for the win the players and committee stopped off in Perth on the way home for refreshments and it was a tired and very emotional squad that arrived back in Oban in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Manager Iain Jackson said: 'The boys were excellent. We played some excellent football and restricted a good Echt team to very few chances and we fully deserve to be in the last 32 of the tournament, which started off with nearly 700 teams.'

'We now face a tough away tie against Caledonian League side Cambusbarron Rovers which will be played this Saturday at Cambusbarron with a 2pm kick-off.'



Winners and runners up from the Argyll Area Scottish Badminton Finals Qualifier at Oban's Corran Halls on Monday.

Big entry for badminton qualifier

BADMINTON

MORE than 140 young badminton players gathered at Oban's Corran Halls on Monday for the Argyll Area Scottish Badminton Finals Qualifier.

Participants in the U14, U16 and U19 age categories travelled from all over the county, with entries from Tiree, Islay, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead and Dunoon.

Winners from each category will go forwards to the Scottish Schools Badminton Finals.

West Highland Week entries

THE NOTICE of Race and Entry forms for West Highland Yachting Week (WHYW), from July 28 to August 3, are now available on the website www.whyw.co.uk and from the secretary of the Joint Regatta Committee (JRC) Jim Lowe at office@whyw.co.uk.

There's a new look to the publications for the 65th anniversary event that points up the ethos of fun and family involvement alongside the top class racing.

Jim Lowe, secretary of the joint regatta committee that runs WHYW said: 'The mix of quality on the water competition and

Saints' youth team fixtures and results

YOUTH FOOTBALL

LAST weekend's results:

Ardencaple 9, Under 13s 4 - Zander Kilmurray (2), Jay Cooper (2); Under 14s 1 - Daniel MacVicar, Westerton Rovers 5; EDFC United v Under 15s postponed; Baljaffray Thistle 2, Under 16s 3 - Coll MacKenzie (2), Liam MacEachran.

Next weekend's fixtures: Goldenhill v Under 13s; Castle Rock v Under 14s; Under 15s v Allander Colts.

Friendlies start

SHINTY

OBAN Camanachd will get their 2012 season underway this Saturday with a home friendly against Glengarry.

Throw-up will be at 1pm at Mossfield.

The club's second team, Lochside Rovers, will also be in action from 1.30pm at Ganavan when they take on rivals Fort William.

Club president Nigel Evans said the games would kick off a series of friendlies for the club.

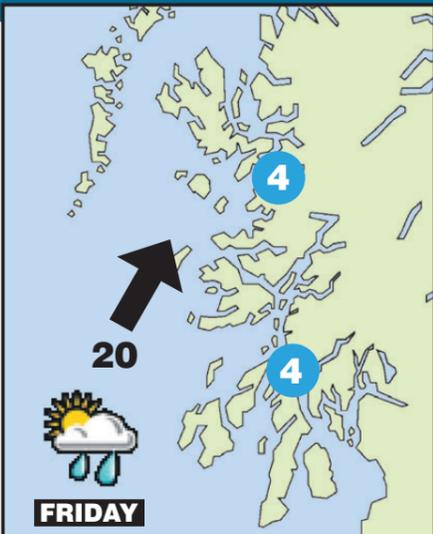
Weather

Thursday Dull and cloudy with risk of light rain
Winds light to fresh, south easterly
Temperatures 0°C to 2°C

Friday Cloudy with increasing risk of showers
Winds fresh, southerly or south-westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 4°C.

Weekend Outlook Cloudy with showers, some heavy
Winds strengthening, south-westerly
Temperatures 4°C to 8°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, February 2, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur 06.45	2.1 14.02	2.9 19.33 2.0 ** ** *
Fri 02.06	2.9 08.19	2.1 15.18 3.1 20.44 1.8
Sat 03.20	3.1 10.08	1.8 16.03 3.3 21.45 1.6
Sun 04.07	3.3 10.47	1.6 16.41 3.5 22.31 1.3
Mon 04.47	3.6 11.22	1.3 17.18 3.7 23.10 1.0
Tues 05.25	3.8 11.56	1.0 17.53 3.8 23.47 0.7
Wed 06.00	4.0 12.29	0.8 18.24 3.9 ** ** *

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardershaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

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The following pages are from the Fort William (Northern) Edition of The Oban Times.

The Oban Times prints two editions of the paper. There is the main edition as well as the Fort William (Northern) Edition.

Sometimes pages that appear in the Fort William edition do not appear in the main edition (and vice versa).

As an electronic subscriber you get the main edition plus the pages that appear in the Northern edition.

The Oban Times

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Thursday 2 February, 2012

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Talking Shop with Claire

SEE PAGE 7

Go Green

SEE PAGE 13

Lambing Page 17



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Man injured in fall from quad bike

MALLAIG lifeboat team was called to Knoydart after a 20-year-old Morar man injured himself falling from a quad bike on Sunday afternoon.

The lifeboat picked up Oliver Weir from Inverie and transferred him to a waiting ambulance in Mallaig. Mr Weir was taken to Belford Hospital in Fort William for treatment to his injuries.

Staff bid farewell to West Highland Museum curator

THE WEST Highland Museum in Fort William said goodbye to its curator Mairi Mooney, who left last week after five years in the position.

Museum trustees, staff and volunteers gathered for a farewell lunch for Ms Mooney and presented her with a framed print of Fort William in 1753. Ms Mooney has decided to use her spare time to go travelling and see the world.

Colleen Foggo will take up the reins as museum curator/manager. Chairman of the museum's management committee Chris Robinson said: 'This year, with Colleen, we hope to encourage even more visitors and volunteers to support the museum and follow on from all Mairi's good work.'

Shinty players gather for 15th annual tournament

FEMALE shinty players from across the west Highlands gathered at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, for the 15th annual five-a-side Johnstone Trophy on Saturday.

Eight teams, including Lochaber, Skye, Ardnarmurchan and Glengarry, entered the competition. Glengarry 'A' ran out winners for the 13th time after defeating Badenoch and Strathspey 3-1 in the final, with two goals from Laura Gallacher and one from Lauren Doherty. Gallacher was also named player of the tournament.

Sponsor Ailsa Johnstone handed out the medals and trophies after the final.



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Former Woolworths employees, from left, Catherine Sinclair, Anne Lloyd, Carol Hodgson, Kay MacDonald, Scott Pedan and Evelyn Livingston outside the old shop premises on Fort William High Street. 20_05wool01

Campaign group's pledge to fight ferry fare changes

THE GROUP campaigning against the Scottish Government's proposed changes to ferry fares in the Western Isles held a packed meeting in Benbecula on Monday night.

The Outer Hebrides Transport Group (OHTG) claims government plans to scrap Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) for commercial vehicles will hurt the haulage industry as well as local consumers. The government wants to revert to the bulk discount system used before

RET was introduced in 2008, which gives bigger discounts for firms transporting more goods. The RET scheme sets ferry fares to what it would cost to travel the same distance by road.

OHTG co-ordinator Gail Robertson said: 'Our campaign is focussed on the devastating economic fallout the withdrawal of RET will have on families in the islands. We have to stop this haulage and household tax. The prospect of paying hundreds of pounds extra for commercial

vehicles is a nonsense and any talk of rebates and discounts from the SNP government is a red herring. We have a price structure and it is in the interests of these islands that we retain it.'

David Wood of Stornoway-based hauliers Woody's Express said the cost of a return journey between Lochmaddy, North Uist and Uig, Skye, would rise by £400 - 172 per cent. He said: 'This is a fight for the jobs and living standards of every

household in the islands.' OHTG representatives are due to meet with Transport Minister Keith Brown in Edinburgh on Tuesday afternoon.

A Transport Scotland spokesman said: 'The RET pilot has had a positive impact since it was introduced in October 2008 and we want to see that continue. That is why we are continuing with RET as a permanent feature for passengers and cars on the current routes while extending it to include new routes.'

Lunch club lands £6,000

LOCHABER Action on Disability (LAD) has secured a £6,000 grant to help with the cost of running Caol Community Centre's lunch club.

Loyds TSB Foundation for Scotland awarded the grant to the Caol-based charity, which provides transport to and from the community centre as well as up to 40 meals a day. The

centre will be given over from Highland Council to public ownership on April 1. LAD manager Laura Cheetham said: 'We are very excited about running Caol Community Lunch Club. We are really pleased to be able to use skills and experience we already have to increase the support we provide for local people.'

World War II shells destroyed in controlled beach explosion

BOMB disposal experts carried out a controlled explosion on a popular Lochaber beach by after five live World War II mortar rounds were found.

As reported in last week's *Oban Times*, 16 unexploded shells were found on the Singing Sands, Kenra Bay, Acharacle by Salen coastguard member Tom Jackson. Eleven of the shells discovered were found to be spent.

Navy experts from Faslane naval base arrived at the beach last Wednesday morning to inspect the explosives. A Faslane spokesman said the ordnance were a mixture of 'high explosives and smoke rounds'.

Coastguard Lochaber sector manager Phil Wren told *The Oban Times*: 'Five of them were still live and dangerous. They carried out a controlled explosion of all

of them in the sand dunes on Wednesday lunchtime.'

The beach was cordoned off for a number of days while detailed searches took place.

Sand

It is believed recent storms stripped the sand off the beach, exposing the shells. Mr Wren also said it was likely there was still more WWII relics buried in

the beach. He said: 'There are two signs erected by the landowner warning people of the danger.'

The bomb squad said they had been called out here three times in the past few years, and there is probably more where they came from.'

The scenic beach was used as a training ground for the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, in June 1944.

Redundancy ruling leaves Fort workers with nothing

Former Woolworths employees to miss out on share of £68m payout

FORMER Woolworths employees in Fort William who lost their jobs when the company folded are set to miss out on their part of a £68million redundancy payout because of a court ruling from England.

The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) won the compensation package at an employment tribunal last week. But hundreds of Scottish workers, including those in Fort William, will miss out because of a ruling which says any store with 20 or less members of staff does not constitute a mass redundancy.

The Fort William shop had 17 workers when it closed its doors three years ago. Carol Hodgson, who worked in the store for 24 years, told *The Oban Times* she thinks everyone who worked for the company deserves compensation.

She said: 'It's a sad situation, to think that they are discriminating between some of us. We all worked for the same company

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

- I don't know how they can say some of us don't deserve the money but others do.

'We had a lot more than 20 people working at the shop a few years ago, but they dwindled down over the years and they [Woolworths] let it happen. If people left, they just didn't replace them.'

She added: 'We'll just have to wait and see what happens. We're not holding out much hope, but if we don't fight, we won't get anything at all. Even if we just get the legislation changed so this doesn't happen to anyone else, that would be something. It's not about the money; it's the principal.'

Caol woman Audrey Blackmore worked at the store for 28 years and estimates she could be missing out on as much as £2,500. She told *The Oban Times* she was 'absolutely disgusted' with the decision.

She said: 'There was two or three younger ones who left a couple of months before when they heard it was closing down. If they had been part of the head count we would have been entitled to get the money.'

Local MSP Dave Thompson said: 'It's extremely disappointing to hear those who worked in these branches are not entitled to compensation purely on the fact they worked in stores with 20 or less people.'

'Politicians must unite to help put a stop to this unfair law and work together to get the best outcome for the 1,000 Scots affected.'

USDAW national officer John Gorle said that the union would challenge the decision at an employment tribunal appeal hearing and, if unsuccessful, to Europe.

Central Scotland MSP Richard Lyle raised the issue at Holyrood last week and is setting up an online petition to gather support for the workers.



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Lochaber estate's jubilee honour

A LOCHABER estate has been chosen as one of 60 sites across the UK to be home to a 60-acre 'diamond wood' to celebrate the Queen's diamond jubilee.

Corrour estate, near Fort William, will form part of the Woodland Trust's plan to plant six million new trees across the country during 2012.

Carol Evans of Woodland Trust Scotland, said: 'We are extremely pleased that Corrour has offered to develop a Diamond Wood. The project will allow us to engage with local children, provide them with the opportunity to plant trees, engage with nature and celebrate their role in marking this historic event.'

The 23,000 hectare Corrour estate was formerly owned by Sir John Stirling Maxwell, who helped establish the Forestry Commission in 1919.



100 years young: Margaret with her telegram from the Queen at her birthday celebrations.

Party marks Mallaig woman's 100 years

A MALLAIG woman celebrated her 100th birthday at a party in the village with friends and family last weekend.

Margaret Wallace was born in Ardersier near Fort George, and her first job was as a nurse at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. After working as a midwife and a private nurse, Margaret moved to Mallaig to cover the local district nurse in the 1930s. She quickly settled in the north Lochaber village and met her future husband Isaac.

The pair ran the local shop and made the well-known Wallace Macintosh lemonade during and after World War II. After retir-

ing in the late 1960s, Margaret occasionally did nursing work in the local area.

The centenarian, who has four children, nine grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren, was surrounded by family and friends at a birthday party in Mallaig Community Centre on Saturday afternoon, where she received a telegram from the Queen.

Margaret's daughter Iris told *The Oban Times* the party went 'very well'. She said 'There was lots of music and cake. My brother-in-law is a chef in Switzerland and he made some lovely food. She got lots of flowers and a new digital TV.'

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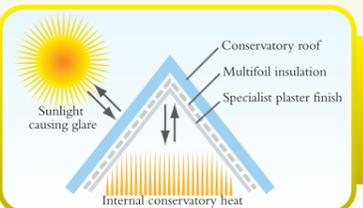
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Police files

MACPHERSONS Welding on North Road, Fort William, was entered sometime between 12.30pm on Saturday January 21 and 8am on Monday January 23.

Some equipment was damaged and some was stolen.

WIND deflectors were stolen from the windows of a Ford Puma parked in Viewforth car park, Fort William, sometime between 9pm on Saturday January 21 and 1.30am on Sunday January 22.

A FLAT door was damaged in Moray Place, Fort William, by an unknown male at 2.20am on Saturday January 21.

ANYONE with any knowledge of these incidents is asked to contact Fort William Police Station on 01397 702361 or the confidential line on 01397 702000.

Members of the public may also report any crime, offence or anything suspicious by telephoning Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Race on to find sponsor

THE ORGANISERS of the annual Ben Nevis Race are looking for a local sponsor to help with their plans to expand the event this year.

Six hundred runners from across the country were picked to take part in last year's event from more than 900 applicants, and similar numbers are expected for this year's race on September 1.

The race committee plan to give a free, specially designed t-shirt to each competitor, and want a local company to help subsidise the cost.

Committee member Damian Forster said: 'This is a fantastic opportunity to become involved with the premier race on the UK hill running calendar.'

Lotto jackpot winner

A LUCKY winner picked up £400 at the Fort William Football Club lotto draw on Saturday.

The numbers were 02-08-17. Next week the jackpot will be £100.



Lochaber Burns Club gathers to honour Bard

Members of Lochaber Burns Club gathered at the Alexandra Hotel in Fort William on Friday night to celebrate their annual Burns Supper. Club president Jim Sutherland chaired the evening and after pipe major Sandy MacKenzie piped in the haggis, Mr Sutherland addressed it. Angus Grant and John Lawrie were among those who provided music and songs during the evening. John Hynd toasted the ladies, with the reply coming from Allan Reid. Hugh Dan MacLennan delivered the Immortal Memory, Hector MacLean said the Selkirk Grace and John Hutchison toasted the club.

John plans marathon bike ride to Moscow

Lochaber man gears up for gruelling 7,000 mile motorbike trek to raise cash for Kirsty's Kids

A LOCHABER man who circumnavigated Great Britain for charity last year has laid out plans for his next fundraising trip – a marathon motorbike ride from his Lochailort home to Moscow and back.

John Bryden plans to tackle the 7,000-mile route to raise money for Kirsty's Kids, the charity he and his wife Jan set up in memory of their daughter Kirsty who died in a car crash on the A830 Road to the Isles in 2010, aged 20. Mr Bryden will set off from his Craiglea home on his

By RICHARD HADDOCK rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

lengthy journey on July 4, 2013, the anniversary of the charity's official opening.

The planned route will see him round the northern coasts of Norway and Sweden before heading to the Russian capital. Mr Bryden told *The Oban Times* he was expecting a 'gruelling' journey.

He said: 'We've estimated it will be around 6,000-7,000

miles, but we thought the UK trip would be 5,000 and it ended up being 8,000.

'People would be welcome to join me, but it's not a holiday, it's not for the faint-hearted. It's going to be quite gruelling. I've got experience of sleeping rough in the cold and wet.'

English company JC Exhausts have donated a new tracking system which will allow Mr Bryden to update his exact position to people back home via the charity's Facebook page.

Meanwhile, a three-foot cuddly

toy which accompanied John on his round the country trip has set off on a year-long journey of his own.

Eyore, which Kirsty gave to her mum as a present, will make his way around the world being passed hand-to-hand, and last week flew out to Alexandria in the USA to start his journey.

John said: 'People can sponsor him and have him for a week then pass him on.'

'We'll put pictures of his trip on Facebook and hopefully it will encourage people to donate.'



Fundraising trip: John Bryden.

Last ditch talks on nurse crisis

WEST Ardnamurchan residents fighting to retain their out-of-hours 999 cover will have a final meeting with health bosses in an attempt to resolve the issue as the deadline looms.

Representatives from West Ardnamurchan Community Council (WACC) will meet the chairs and chief executives of NHS Highland and the Scottish Ambulance Service on February 21. The following day they have a meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon.

One of the two district nurses who currently provide cover for the area, Jessie Colquhoun, will

retire on February 20, with her replacement due to join a west Lochaber team instead of being based in Kilchoan.

NHS Highland advertised the position a number of weeks ago, and the candidates for the job will visit the area today (Thursday). WACC has decided not to take part in the visit.

Around 70 local residents attended a meeting in Kilchoan Community Centre last week to be updated on the latest situation.

The meeting unanimously approved the decision to continue fighting to have the nurses based in west Ardnamurchan.

Isle of Skye campsite voted best in Scotland

AN ISLE of Skye campsite has been named the best in Scotland by an annual awards group.

The Skye Camping and Caravanning Club Site in Edinbane was given the honour by the AA Campsite of the Year Awards. Editor of the AA camping guide said the campsite had been given the award for 'exceptional quality and attention to detail'.

David Weller and his partner Nicky Cellier took over the site in late 2007 and Mr Weller told *The Oban Times* it was an 'honour' to receive the award.

He said: 'We are highly delighted. It is in recognition of the work both myself and my partner Nicky have put into the business and building it up.'

'We took over a fantastic site in a great location that was in need of a bit of modernising.'

Golf clubs agree half price deal

THREE Lochaber golf clubs have struck a deal with Crieff Golf Club to allow members reduced entry to the Perthshire course.

Fort William, Dragon's Tooth in Ballachulish and Spean Bridge Golf Club members can now use any of the other courses for half price.

Fort William announced the agreement with Crieff at its annual general meeting last week, when it was also stated membership fees would not be increased for 2012.

Meanwhile, the club will hold a fundraising dance at the Moorings Hotel, Banavie, on Saturday February 18. Local band *Wonderland* will provide the music.

Newsdesk 01397 703003

Councillors hold talks on stopping the spread of Japanese knotweed

STOPPING the spread of Japanese knotweed in Fort William will be the focus of discussions at Lochaber councillors' business meeting on February 13.

Stands of the alien invader have taken root along the Achintore shore, behind the primary school and in areas of Lundavra, leading Fort William Community Council (FWCC) to express concern to Highland Council and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The invasive nine-foot shrub is capable of breaking through concrete and tar and can re-grow from a tiny sliver of rootstock, which can reach

two metres down. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency classes any material containing pieces of knotweed as contaminated soil and strictly regulates its removal.

FWCC has also received an unconfirmed account that a mortgage can be refused if the weed is within 50 metres of a property.

Lochaber wards manager Dot Ferguson told *The Oban Times* one option open to councillors would be to write to all landowners along Achintore Road to make them aware of the problem. She said: 'We would hope after that to work with the landowners

to raise awareness of the difficulties of removal and the damage knotweed can cause,' SNH Lochaber area officer Martin Faulkner said knotweed had also been noted on Union Road and in Corpach. He told *The Oban Times*:

'If you want to get rid of it the most effective way is to use herbicide – but you may be at it for quite a few years.'

'Because we live in such a wet climate, you may have to pick your day as well. If it is causing a problem, it is the landowner's responsibility, not the council's – but once it gets into the natural environment, it is unclear whose responsibility it is.'



The new dental clinic in Portree saw its first patients this week.

New Portree dental clinic opens

A NEW £1.2million NHS dental clinic in Portree opened its doors for the first time on Monday morning.

The facility at Sraid An Eorna holds three dental surgeries and a room for oral health education. Two full-time dentists work at the clinic with another to join part-time in March, but health bosses say they will continue looking for another full-time team member.

Dentist Graham Smith said: 'We were delighted to put the new clinic to its proper use for the first time. It is a state of the art facility and provides an excellent environment for both patients and staff.'

The first patient treated at the new clinic, Duncan MacFadyen of Fiscavaig, said: 'The new dental clinic is great. It's really

spacious and it's good that the staff have got such a lovely place to work. Just what we needed in Portree.'

There are currently 2,244 people on the Skye and Lochalsh NHS dental service waiting list and NHS Highland dental service development manager Alex Fraser said the new clinic would help bring this number down.

He said: 'We are delighted that the opening of this clinic will significantly improve access to NHS dental care for people living in Skye and Lochalsh.'

'Once the new dentist is in post, NHS Highland will be able to offer some of these patients access to NHS dental care, starting with those who have waited the longest.'

Lochaber charity takes part in 'virtual' meeting pilot scheme

A LOCHABER charity has been invited to join a nationwide pilot project to hold 'virtual' support meetings using webcams.

M.E. Lochaber, which supports people with post viral fatigue syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome and myalgic encephalomyelitis, were invited by Action for M.E. The project will use the free computer programme Skype to allow people who are too ill to attend meetings to be a part of a support group. Skype allows users to communicate by voice and video over the internet.

The first group meeting is due to be held at the end of March. For more information email susan.webster@actionforme.org.uk.

Big bands in concert

LOCHABER High School Big Band will once again join forces with St. Augustine's Big Band from Blackburn to put on a concert in Fort William later this month.

The English band has travelled north for a number of years to rehearse and perform with some of the finest young musicians in Lochaber.

The concert, featuring jazz music from the past 50 years including Duke Ellington, Glen Miller and Ray Charles, will be held at the main hall in Lochaber High School at 7.30pm on Thursday, February 16. Admission is free and any donations will go to local charities.

Inspiring Burns Supper at Glendale

EIGHTY guests enjoyed an inspiring Glendale Burns Supper at Glendale Hall on Skye, when the traditional Burns theme was given a local twist.

As well as honouring Robert Burns, the Glendale Burns Supper paid tribute to Neil MacLeod, the Glendale bard who died in 1913.

Professor Norman Macdonald gave an expert introduction not just to Neil but his wider family, many of whom were also accomplished poets. Arthur Cormack sang the songs not only of Neil, but his father and brother. The evening was expertly chaired by Allan Campbell, while Norman Macdonald delivered the address

to the haggis in both Scots and Gaelic. Murdo Beaton had the audience rolling in the isles with his highly entertaining and humorous toast to the lassies, which was then matched by an inspiring reply from Mairi Sine Chaimbeul.

Ian Blackford of the Glendale Trust, who delivered the immortal memory, said: 'A theatrical delivery of Tam O' Shanter from the wonderfully gifted Angus Thorburn and a most well-crafted Holy Willie's prayer from Brian Smith left the audience highly appreciating an evening of great entertainment which was rounded off by a musical rendition of Burns songs by Andy and Catherine Will.'

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LORN LINES



Oban Inspector Julie McLeish, left, accepts the cheque from Graham MacQueen, Oban in Bloom's Anne Stewart and Andy MacDowall.

SPURRED to act after his greenhouse was vandalised, Oban's Andy MacDowall has raised more than £1,000 for police community engagement schemes.

At 80, Mr MacDowall is himself a tireless servant to the community, helping arrange the town's colourful floral displays for the busy tourist season.

Instead of reacting angrily to being a victim of crime though, he decided the best thing to do was organise a raffle to help, and his gesture has been warmly welcomed by local police inspector, Julie McLeish.

She said: 'We'll be speaking to our partners in education and the council etcetera to weigh up suggestions as to how this money could be best used.'

'We're really grateful to Andy and Oban in Bloom for raising this money.'

Andy said: 'Some kids broke my greenhouse and I thought if I could do something that gets them involved in activities and makes them less likely to get into trouble then that'd be brilliant.'

'Everyone at Oban in Bloom has worked very hard on this and Graham MacQueen has been a big help - he's done an awful lot to support us.'

'I'd like to thank everyone that has contributed to the raffle and supported us, without their support this wouldn't have been feasible.'

The final cheque of £1,120 was presented to the police last week.

Graham MacQueen, whose charitable trust supported the raffle, said: 'This is just another wonderful example of the terrific community spirit we have here and how we can achieve exceptional results by working together.'



STEPHEN Lipton of Campsie Camera Club was a popular guest speaker at the recent Monday night meeting of Oban Camera Club on January 23.

In a humorous digital photo presentation with a most comprehensive collection of images ranging from portraits, the Waverley, flowers, landscapes, buildings, birds and animals, Stephen kept his audience entertained and educated on what it takes to be a successful photographer.

Alex Clark gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the club. The club meets each Monday and new members most welcome.



Pupils from P1 and P2 of Lochnell Primary School in Benderloch enjoyed a day out entertaining at the Lynn of Lorne Nursing Home in the village. The school pupils regularly sing and entertain in the village and this was the first of three recent visits. The pupils entertained The Tuesday Group at Ford Spence Court and also the new 'friends' group, Club nan Caraisden, who meet monthly in the church hall.



THERE is always a wide variety of subjects covered by speakers at Oban Speakers Club and last week's meeting was no exception.

The main speakers were John Maclean who spoke on Rev John Witherspoon, Ian Crawford who spoke about Living with Polio and Frank Walton who spoke on Howard Carter.

They and their immediate critics Willie Melville, Roy Wood and Malcolm Black were introduced by Donnie Graham.

The topics session which formed the second half of the evening was introduced by Iain Fullarton. He gave a variety of topics to Willie Melville, Eamonn Arthur, Jim Fraser, Alec Clark, Roy Wood and Archie McPhail.

Timekeeper for the evening was Tom Clegg and a fair and sympathetic evaluation was given by Bill Leech.

The next meeting will be the Annual Ladies Night which will be held on Thursday 9 at 8pm in the Soroba House Hotel.



CONNEL Parish Church held a charity lunch in aid of the famine victims in East Africa via Mary's Meals last Saturday when around 150 people enjoyed lunch together.

As a result, the event raised £1261.36, which is enough to provide food for a further 43,000 meals in Africa.



Park Primary School pupils presented Glynis Dewar with a bouquet of flowers after a morning of tributes to wish her well in her retirement.

PARK Primary School bid farewell to one of its longest serving staff members last week when Glynis Dewar retired after 20 years.

Pupils arranged a whole morning of celebratory events to pay tribute to the popular figure, who struggled to hold back the tears as former pupils returned to play bagpipes for her special day. Pupils presented Glynis with jewellery, a gift voucher and flowers, while the staff presented their presents at a special tea on Friday.

Head teacher, Gillian Carney said: 'We will all miss her greatly and wish her a long and happy retirement.'



Would you like your news from the Lorn area in LORN LINES? You can send all the news from your family, organisation, club, society or group to editor@obantimes.co.uk

£8.2 million to come off A&B budget over next three years

ARGYLL and Bute Council will today (Thursday) debate proposals to save £8.2million over the next three years.

The executive committee will consider the measures set out in the 496-page draft budget before they are presented to the full council for a decision on February 16.

Save £1.8m this year
This year's draft budget has been prepared after one of the authority's most extensive community consultation exercises, which saw a number of meetings held locally and two live, online web-chats.

According to the council, among the areas likely to benefit from significant capital spend over the next three years are roads and amenity services, education, social work, affordable housing and culture and leisure.

This year's service review proposes savings of £1.8million for 2012/13, £2.75million for 2013/14 and £3.645million for 2014/15.

Most of these relate to management and operational cuts and efficiencies, although it is proposed to increase council fees and charges by three per cent for each of the next three years. In addition, the package of revenue savings agreed last year will continue to deliver savings over the next three years. These amount to £4.6million in 2012/13, £5.1million in 2013/14 and £5.1million in 2014/15.

Funding allocated to Argyll and Bute Council by the Scottish Government over the next three years amounts to £224.1million in 2012/13, £222million for 2013/14 and £220.3million for 2014/15.

This compares to £221.592million in the current financial year.

Council tax remains frozen, meaning the local authority will continue to collect just over £45million per annum over the next three years.

Meanwhile, the council say £83million of capital investment will be made over the next three years. Of that, grant funding from the Scottish Government will be £9.65million for 2012/13, £8.9million

for 2013/14 and £13.2 million for 2014.

Council leader, Dick Walsh, said: 'Our prudent approach to financial management and our decision last year to scrutinise our spending up until March 2015 has meant we are in the best possible position to meet the financial hurdles we will continue to encounter in the coming years.'

'Argyll and Bute's residents and communities should not underestimate the scale of the ongoing challenges which all local authorities face.'

'However, they can be assured we will not let up in our efforts to explore every avenue in our bid to improve the efficiency of our organisation so as to shield those services which people care about the most from the

effects of the financial squeeze.'

'As a council, we need to continue to ensure that we create the conditions and infrastructure to support economic development and regeneration, that housing stock is sufficient to support economic development, that we have the leisure, culture and sports facilities to attract residents and visitors to our area, that our towns are

attractive places to live in and visit and that our transport infrastructure allows access throughout Argyll and Bute in a safe and convenient way.'

'We now have the task of agreeing how best to take account of what people have said they would like us to safeguard and invest in, while at the same time identifying the necessary savings.'



Local volunteers for the RNLI gathered at the Oban branch of the Yorkshire Building Society on Monday after it was selected by members as the building society's chosen charity. Pictured are, from left, Andrew Mead, Sally Jackson, Peter MacKinnon, Carol Darling, John Hill, Jason Philp and Billy Forteth.

Oban building society aims to keep RNLI afloat

YORKSHIRE Building Society's Oban branch is on a mission to raise funds for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) after picking it as its chosen charity.

Staff at the branch are set to organise events throughout the year to help raise money for the voluntary life-saving service, while collection tins will be on hand at the branch for customers to contribute to.

Nautical-themed toys will also be sold at branches throughout the year to help raise funds.

The timing of the association with Britain's second largest building society couldn't be better, with the RNLI rolling out new lifejackets to improve the safety of rescuers.

The cost of kitting out volunteers across Scotland's 45 stations is £100,000. Yorkshire managed to raise £175,000 for its chosen charity last year, the Alzheimer's Society.

Oban branch manager for Yorkshire, Sally Jackson, said: 'I am delighted we have chosen the RNLI as our 2012 Charity of

the Year. The RNLI volunteer crews in this area play a vital role in keeping our seas and beaches safe, so I'm proud we will be doing our bit in supporting them and giving something back to thank them for all their hard work.'

'I am hoping our customers and members of the public in Oban are going to get behind us in 2012 and help us raise a fantastic amount of money for the RNLI.'

The Yorkshire Building Society Charitable Foundation,

which is the focal point for all Yorkshire, Barnsley and Chelsea Building Society's charitable giving, will also be making a significant contribution to the total raised.

The RNLI was chosen after a members' vote.

Oban RNLI's Willie Melville said: 'It's brilliant timing. We're introducing these lifejackets now and they're designed not just to be more comfortable, but to be more practical and useful for rescues. Yorkshire's support is much appreciated.'

Police spot checks feature in road safety campaign

MOTORISTS in Connel and Benderloch were being pulled over by police this week as spot checks were carried out throughout the Lorn area.

Vehicles were being checked for road worthiness while drivers were subject to random breathalysing.

Roadside speed checks were also carried out as part of a local road safety operation.

Oban roadworks

THERE will be disruption to traffic using Soroba Lane Bridge from next week.

Work may mean diversions for buses and taxis. Work starts on Tuesday and is expected to last two weeks.

Man 'accidentally' shot at fishermen

A MAN who accidentally fired an air rifle at two fishermen on Loch Earn has been fined £600 at Stirling Sheriff Court.

David Dickson, 29, from Wishaw in Lanarkshire, admitted recklessly discharging the .22 weapon.

The two anglers, Thomas Gilmour and Kyle Little, were in a boat 40 yards from the shore when they heard the pellet strike the hull.

Stirling Sheriff Court was told that the pair immediately recognised the sounds as those made by an air rifle being fired, and headed for land to phone the police.

Oban surgeon decision on hold

A DECISION on whether or not convicted insurance fraudster Dr Ramesh Gupta will be struck off the medical register may not be taken until next year.

The £100,000-a-year Oban cancer surgeon had already been suspended by the General Medical Council (GMC) on other matters prior to his conviction at Glasgow Sheriff Court in December for trying to steal £25,000 in an insurance scam.

A spokesperson for the GMC said they could not comment on any live investigation, but added: 'The service standard for investigations is approximately 15 months from start to finish.'

'Criminal matters take precedence on any investigation by ourselves.'

Kilchrenan has say at windfarm meeting

A LARGE turnout of Kilchrenan residents left a windfarm development company in no doubt that its actions are having a negative impact on the village.

Representatives from engineering firm Blackwell attended a busy meeting of Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council in Kilchrenan Village Hall on Tuesday, at which Greenpower's Carrig Gheal windfarm development was discussed.

While a stakeholders committee has been set up, involving the contractors, police, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forest Enterprise, Argyll and Bute Council, residents have complained about a lack of communication about the project.

During construction, vehicles have ripped up grass verges on the B845 and C29 and blocked these roads to local traffic, a resident's car has been damaged and on one occasion 18 homes were without water after a lorry caught a water pipe, causing it to burst.

Residents also complained about the number of smaller vehicles using the roads and the standard of driving by some of the workers.

Blackwell's contracts manager Jim Wilkinson told the meeting that 80 large loads have been brought to the site since construction began but Blackwell would now be reducing the number of plant vehicles at the windfarm site by 10 per cent.

He added the community would be warned of heavy vehicle movements through the company's website and stated Blackwell had commissioned a dilapidation survey, which recorded the state of the road and verges before construction began.

Mr Wilkinson added: 'We are here and we want to be tolerated, if that is the right word. We want to be courteous and if anyone sees examples of workmen not doing that then please report it.'

The windfarm is to be constructed by the end of this year, having begun in October 2011. It includes 20 wind turbines, between 65 metres and 80 metres in height.

Peacocks' staff await news

STAFF at Oban and Stornoway branches of clothing chain Peacocks were awaiting news of a potential buyer as *The Oban Times* went to press.

Rumours are circulating online that administrators, KPMG, are considering a number of offers for the international business, which owns 611 stores and 49 concessions across the UK alone.

The Cardiff-based retailer fell into trouble after reportedly failing to persuade its lenders - including Barclays and Royal Bank of Scotland - to enter a debt for equity deal.

While the company has struggled with debt, retail performance has been positive. The company reported its like-for-like sales rose for Christmas 2011 by 17 per cent on the same period last year.

Water pours down Oban roadway

SCOTLAND Transerv says it is working with Scottish Water to discover why water has been constantly running down Oban's Connel Road since October last year.

Oban resident Kathryn Spence launched an appeal on The Oban Times' Facebook page to encourage as many people as possible to complain about the problem on the Bealach an Righ having grown tired of an apparent lack of action.

A spokesperson for Transerv said: 'Our staff has checked the drainage there and while our gullies are running clear we are working with Scottish Water to trace the source of the problem.'

Only two complaints had been received about the problem.

Western Isles Conservatives host Burn Supper

THE Western Isles Conservative Association held their Burns' Supper in at Stornoway's County Hotel on Saturday.

Guests enjoyed a traditional Burns' night meal, with the haggis being piped in by Anna Fraser and addressed by association chairman, Murdo Macleod.

The evening was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Construction workers to get free advice

CONSTRUCTION workers across Argyll and the islands are being urged to pick up free lifesaving advice at Oban High Scholl on Valentines' Day.

Health and Safety Executive inspectors, alongside leading members of the construction industry, will give practical advice on how to prevent death and injury when carrying out key activities on site.

To reserve a place, contact Allan Mulholland at allan.mulholland@hse.gsi.gov.uk or call 0141 275 3062

Food from Argyll goes to Berlin

REPRESENTATIVES from Food from Argyll took their produce to Berlin last weekend, for International Green Week.

Virginia Sumison from Argyll Food Producers travelled with Fergus Younger from the Argyll Agricultural Forum/SAOS to the ICC Exhibition centre, taking with them local venison, whisky, salmon, haggis, shortbread, chutneys, sauces and cheeses.

The group had been invited by the European Commission and supported by the Scottish Government.

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Additional work done at A83 landslip site

TRANSPORT Scotland has installed a number of new mitigation measures at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful following recent slippage.

Floodlights and tilt meters have been installed at the slippage area, while patrols of the hillside in the event of a deterioration forecast have been readied.

Meanwhile, work continues to identify further measures to mitigate against impact of landslides wherever they occur.

Transport Scotland's Graham Edmond said: 'Around the Rest and Be Thankful in particular, we are looking at protective netting, shelters and the potential for planting on the hillside. The improvement and strengthening of the nearby forestry road, as an emergency alternative, is also being investigated as discussed at previous meetings.'

Man arrested in Oban retail outlet

A MAN was arrested on Monday after breaking into the Oban branch of clothes retailer New Look. Police found the man in the George Street premises after he had set off an alarm.

He was due to appear in court on Tuesday.

Taynuilt Hotel bid raises village hope

HOPES that Taynuilt Hotel could be taken over by a private owner were boosted this week with the news administrators had received a bid for the property.

The hotel is part of the Glenorchy Lodge Hotels group, which went into administration last year.

Administrators RM Tenon are currently marketing the Taynuilt Hotel and Tyndrum Lodge Hotel, which remain open for business but Glenorchy Lodge Hotel, in Dalmally, remains closed.

A group had been set up in Taynuilt to discuss a potential community buyout, if no commercial offers were received.

A spokesman for RM Tenon said: 'We are currently pursuing active offers for the property.'

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Aquapharm's senior scientist, Dr Dorothee Gotz, collects samples from the waters at Dunstaffnage.

Major boost for Dunbeg bio-tech firm

Marine microbes could be key to future skincare products

A DUNBEG firm leading pioneering research into using natural marine ingredients instead of petroleum in skincare products announced a lucrative major partnership agreement this week.

Marine biotechnology firm Aquapharm, has signed a deal with Norway's Aqua Bio Technology (ABT) to work towards developing sustainable, environmentally friendly products for the lucrative cosmetic and skincare market - one of the world's most valuable industries.

Scientists at Aquapharm believe marine microbes are the key to finding the bio-active ingredients of the future, and have developed specialist fermentation processes to source and produce such extracts.

Now they will undertake a development programme in conjunction with ABT, sharing their expertise in a bid to prove these extracts can be produced with minimal environmental impact - and successfully commercialised for the personal care market.

Aquapharm's Jon Williams, said: 'We have an ageing population and one that is more environmentally aware. Both factors

"Our approach could lead to significant economic and environmental benefits."

Jon Williams
Aquapharm

Arvid Lindberg, chief executive of Aqua Bio Technology ASA, said: 'The collaboration with Aquapharm will enable ABT to tap into the knowledge and lucrative pipeline that Aquapharm holds.'

'Together with ABT's technical know-how on product development and ability to commercialise marine ingredients through its vast distributor network around the world, this paves the way for a true win-win collaboration.'

have led to increasing demand for personal care products with proven scientific benefits.

'As such brand owners and retailers in this sector are seeking out new sources of innovative, naturally-derived, anti-ageing ingredients - and we believe we have an answer.

'Our approach could lead to significant economic and environmental benefits over existing petroleum-based ingredients, as well as being cost-competitive.'

'By working with ABT we plan to develop one or two possible ingredients from sustainable sources, show our ability to up-scale production, and will work together to commercialise them.'

Innovation Norway has provided grant funding of nearly £55,000 to help develop the project.

Aquapharm's cutting-edge techniques have paved the way for the culturing of microbes previously thought 'unculturable', allowing its scientists to create an impressive bank of unique marine bacteria and fungi which can be harnessed as a source of novel functional ingredients.

According to the firm, these could be used to create a diverse range of 'next-generation' products including: anti-ageing ingredients with anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties as well as natural preservatives.

Oban High School aims to build fence to combat rising problems with strangers and dog dirt

School draws community council's attention to increasing incidents of 'unauthorised adults'

STRANGERS walking through the premises, and pupils and staff clearing school grounds of dog mess before lessons can start, are becoming the norm at Oban High School.

That was the message delivered to a meeting of Oban Community Council by head teacher Peter Bain on Monday.

Mr Bain, who also addressed Oban councillors in attendance, said he had a substantial

problem with 'unauthorised adults' walking through the school grounds during school hours and with dog owners allowing their pets to defecate and urinate on the property.

Murray Hamilton, the new head of PE, and three of the school's senior pupils also spoke of the problems they encounter.

Mr Bain now wants to erect a new fence, extending the fencing of the Oban Community

Pitch, to prevent dogs accessing, and defecating on, the grassy slope opposite the pitch.

He said: 'There have been occasions where two dogs have been fighting in front of a PE class outside and PE teachers have had to form lines of pupils to check the pitches for dog mess before a lesson can start.'

'No unauthorised adults should be on the school grounds during the day, ever. We also

want dogs on a lead at all times and we definitely don't want owners to let them defecate.'

Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'I am 100 per cent in support of Mr Bain and as much as the dog mess concerns me, I am more worried about the incidents of unauthorised adults walking through the school.'

The school is this week launching a public consultation on the erection of the fence.

Villagers furious after rumours that Bonawe bus service faces axe

VILLAGERS in the small rural community of Bonawe have launched a campaign to save its 'lifeline' bus service after drivers were told it was to be cut.

While Argyll and Bute Council insists no decision has been taken on the future of the 408 service, villagers believe they have just three weeks to save it from the council's chopping block.

"People will lose their jobs if this lifeline service is cut."

chairman, Ardochattan Community Council

Council officials last year agreed to reduce discretionary funding for community and

rural transport by £451,000 from £726,000 to £275,000 - however these savings have not yet been achieved.

Ardochattan Community Council has now launched a petition and Facebook page to drive the campaign to save their bus, while names were collected on a petition presented during Saturday's Oban Phoenix Cinema bring and buy sale at the

Corran Halls.

Chairman of the community council, Iain MacDonald, believes the Bonawe route is being considered instead of the Easdale and Kilmore service. He said: 'There has been no community consultation on this, nothing at all. The council don't seem to realise people will lose their jobs if this lifeline service is cut. Kids won't be able to go

to after-school activities.

'I'm absolutely furious about it.'

Fellow community councillor, Jill Bowis, said: 'The council is looking at what they arrogantly call an 'appointment and shopping' service, three days a week, outside of school term times. That would simply not be good enough. What about hospital appointments, for example?'

Oban North and Lorn councillors, Elaine Roberston and Louise Glen-Lee are supporting the villagers.

Councillor Glen-Lee said: 'There has been no word of this, no papers, no consultation. People should never hear from bus drivers that their bus service could be cut.'

Councillor Robertson added: 'This would affect the well-being of the whole community.'

Meanwhile, it is understood the Sunday extension of bus services to Benderloch is to be discontinued.

Argyll and Bute Council say no decision has been taken on any bus service, but confirmed the matter will be on the agenda of the Oban, Lorn and Isles Area Committee meeting on February 15.

THE OBAN TIMES READER SURVEY 2011-2012

Survey highlights our loyal and passionate readership

"The Oban Times is like good whisky - it improves with age!"

The Oban Times is regarded as an institution for the people of the West Highlands, according to the findings from our 2011 reader survey.

Almost 1,400 readers kindly completed The Oban Times survey in October last year - that's nine per cent of our current circulation and significantly higher than our 2.5 per cent target.

You were substantially positive about your community newspaper, highlighting our readers as loyal and passionate. Almost 90 per cent of you told us you read The Oban Times every week. We also learned that you buy the broadsheet weekly because you enjoy its content and like to know what is happening in your local area. Forty-seven per cent of you read your Oban Times twice or more. Over half saw an increase in the quality of photographs in the past few years while a large percentage also thought the newspaper's design, layout and look had improved. We also received a stream of positive comments thanking and congratulating us for our contribution to the West Highlands.

You also like our adverts - 82 per cent agree that adverts in The Oban Times are useful for sourcing

local products and services. As well as looking at the paper's classified section for bargains every week, 60 per cent of you visit events and restaurants after seeing them advertised within our pages.

While focussed local news content was well received, we learned that you would like to see more lifestyle and hobby features.

Readers in rural and island areas expressed a desire for more district news, a view echoed by respondents in Oban. All comments and suggestions are currently being reviewed by the Editor.

Stewart Mackenzie, Editorial Director: "As 2011 marked the 150th anniversary of The Oban Times, it seemed an appropriate time to look to the future and find out what you - our readers - want from your community newspaper. Taking all the feedback on board, readers can expect to see further improvements and we will continue to work hard at meeting the demands of our expansive readership."

He added: "A massive thank you is due to all those who completed our survey last year."



What you said about The Oban Times

- "Just to say many thanks for having a paper of such quality that has been so consistently good over the years."*
- "The whole family read the paper from Grandparents to Grandchildren."*
- "The Oban Times is a key aspect of my week to week life. It serves an important purpose on behalf of a marginal area of Scotland."*
- "To many of us it's an institution - The Highland Man's Bible."*
- "I find The Oban Times a useful source of local information and congratulate the editorial staff for their interest in local activities."*
- "Thursdays wouldn't be the same without it."*

Key Findings

- 1,369 respondents completed The Oban Times survey in October last year
- Almost 90 per cent stated they read The Oban Times every week.
- 82 per cent agreed that adverts in The Oban Times are useful for sourcing local products and services.
- 60 per cent of readers visit events and restaurants after seeing them advertised within our pages.
- 47 per cent read their Oban Times twice or more.
- 75 per cent share their Oban Times with others in their household.

"A massive thank you to all those who completed our survey last year."

- Stewart Mackenzie, Editorial Director for The Oban Times

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The runners set off at the start of the Leanachan Race on Sunday morning.

Nicola Meekin breaks woman's record for 10-mile Leanachan Race

Ruari Watt is winner in perfect conditions at Loy

CYCLING

WEST Highland Wheelers had perfect weather conditions at Glen Loy for round five of the winter league on Sunday.

The cyclists had to complete as many laps of the figure-of-eight course as they could within an hour. Three competitors completed six laps, with Ruari Watt finishing in the fastest time of 60 minutes and 28 seconds. Mairi Meldrum completed five laps in 75m 17s to come out as the leading lady ahead of Nix Forster.

Some racers chose to tackle the short course, which only lasted 30 minutes. Kim Cameron took the honours.

Wheeler's Andy Rogers said: 'Dry conditions underwheel were most welcome with the climbs and technical descents ensuring that each rider remained focussed. 'Great soup and a fine spread courtesy of Fiona Thompson after the race with the many incidents during the race being analysed over a warming plate of broth.'

Results -
1, Ruari Watt (6 laps) 60:28; 2, Ben Thompson (6) 66:55; 3, Ben Miller (6) 68:52 (1st Junior); 4, Lachlan Blair (5 laps) 60:57 (2nd Junior); 5, John Shirley (5) 63:08; 6, Jesse Wigham (5) 66:36; 7, Roddy Wells (5) 67:35; 8, Stephen Dent (5) 67:36 (3rd Junior); 9, Mairi Meldrum (5) 75:17 (1st lady); 10, Alastair MacLennan (4 laps) 49:45; 11, Foss (4) 61:14; 12, Brian Barbour (4) 62:52; 13, David Lund (4) 64:07; 14, Tom MacMahon (4) 64:41; 15, Nix Forster (4) 65:49 (2nd Lady); 16, Andy Rogers (4) 68:04; 17, Robbie Bellshaw (4) 68:37; 18, Scott Clark (4) 68:42; 19, Brychan Martin (4) 71:26; 20, Peter Martin (4) 71:27; 21, Gordon Watson (4) 75:37; 22, Gavin Linfield (3 laps) 53:36; 23, Frances Dent (3) 62:29 (3rd Lady); 24, Nigel Miller (3) 67:28; 25, Andrew Foggo (1) 13:11.

ATHLETICS

AROUND 40 runners took part in Lochaber Athletic Club's Leanachan race at Nevis Range on Sunday morning, which saw a new woman's record being set. Nicola Meekin broke the woman's record for the 10-mile forest trail course, finishing in a time of 66 minutes and 19 seconds. John Binnie took a close race win in a time of 61m 21s, just three seconds ahead of Alan Ross. Tim Brand came in third in 61m 54s.

Results (LAC unless stated):

1, John Binnie 61 minutes 21 seconds; 2, Alan Ross 61m 24s; 3, Tim Brand 61m 54s; 4, Ryan Stewart 63m 25s; 5, John Gay 66m 12s; 6, Nicola Meekin 66m 19s; 7, Ali Kennedy 66m 24s; 8, Owen Bass (Deeside) 67m 44s; 9, Peter Kennedy 68m 53s; 10, Nial MacBeath 70m 10s; 11, Amanda Blackhall 70m 13s; 12, Ronnie Turner 72m 56s; 13, Andrew Cameron 73m 31s; 14, Graham MacNab 74m 27s; 15, John Hynd 75m 16s; 16, Sarah Mackenzie 75m 38s; 17, Brian Campbell 75m 41s; 18, Colin Denny 76m 8s; 19, Laura Barbour 79m 16s; 20, Susan Jane Ross 79m 43s; 21, Jim Hamilton 81m 7s; 22, Lucy Prins 82:27:00; 23= Aileen Duncan 83m 19s; 23= Biff Gow 83m 19s; 25, Dave Tomlinson 83m 20s; 26, Dave Ford 84m 27s; 27, John Dougan 84m 49s; 28, Emma Pearce 85m 39s; 29, John Grant 86m 26s; 30, Bill Scott 91m 32s; 31, Ernie Orr 92m 40s; 32= Suzanne Duncan 93m 19s; 32= Mairi Macallum 93m 19s; 34, Laura Hynd 96m 58s; 35, Pamela Hamilton 97m 34s; 36, Sandra MacDonald 97m 35s; 37, Margaret Rose McPhee 102m 9s; 38, Jenny Ford 102m 12s; 39, Craig Whitehead 110m 52s; 40= Joanna Hynd 111m 52s; 40= AJ Whitehead 111m 52s.

Kinlochleven boxer wins top-of-the-bill bout in Paisley

KINLOCHLEVEN-based Nether Lochaber 'Claymores' Amateur Boxing Club's reputation continues to grow after one of its boxers won a top billed fight at a show in Paisley on Friday night.

Nathan McDade faced local fighter Tony Lindie in his sixth amateur fight, and had a clear points lead when the referee stopped the fight in the last round. McDade, who turns 20 next week, was awarded the win when the referee disqualified Lindie for headbutting 10 seconds before the end of the fight.

From the outset, both fighters threw combination after combination with McDade throwing the cleaner shots and landing more scoring punches than his opponent.

In round two McDade's superior fitness started to pay



Nathan McDade won his top-of-the-bill bout in Paisley

off as Lindie began to falter and McDade's punches got through more easily. By the third round McDade was well ahead on points but Lindie was still working hard.

Frustration now got the better of Lindie and he started swinging wildly and at one point even tried to kick McDade. After the referee had seemingly calmed him down to the amazement of everybody in the crowd, Lindie head-butted McDade full in the face when both boxers were in a clinch on the ropes, leaving the referee no alternative but to disqualify him.

Nether Lochaber head coach Martin Glensk said: 'Although the fight ended with his opponent disqualified, Nathan was already well ahead on points and would have won the fight. I was very pleased with his performance. This proves he has what it takes to box in any situation.'

The club is now getting ready to take three boxers to box in Peterhead ABC's show on Saturday night.

Fort to face high-flying Fraserburgh

Skye trio on trial as Conlon aims to strengthen squad as Ellis cousins play last game

FORT William will take on high-flying Fraserburgh at Claggan Park on Saturday looking to build on recent good home performances.

The game will see the long-serving Ellis cousins, Sean and Michael, play their last game for the club before they jet-off to Australia. The pair have agreed to join Melbourne side Cobrams, and will leave Lochaber on February 10.

Manager Danny Conlon told *The Oban Times* emotion would not dictate his team selection.

He said: 'It would be good to have them in there, but we have to think of the game the following weekend and we want to get a settled side.'

'I'll just try and put out the best side to get a result for us.'

FOOTBALL

Jonathan Hewitt, who missed last weekend's game, will be available for selection, but Darren Duncan may miss out with a knee injury.

Fort took on Wick Academy at Claggan last weekend missing a number of players, while Conlon served a one match dugout ban.

He said: 'We struggled to control their movement in the first half, but the first 30 minutes of the second half we played well and I felt we were a bit unlucky not to get an equaliser.'

'That was encouraging. 'If we can build on that we can give Fraserburgh a good game

on Saturday.' Fort were unable to create many chances of note in the first half and two top drawer finishes from Gary Weir gave the away side a 2-0 half time lead.

Fort improved after the break and five minutes in a Darren Duncan screamer from outside the box flew past the keeper to make the score 2-1.

Wick's Sam Mackay struck with 10 minutes left on the clock to end any hopes of a Fort comeback.

Meanwhile, Fort have a right back and two strikers from Skye on trial at the club.

Conlon said it was 'a bit too early' to say if any of the trio would be offered contracts but said if they impress they may be included in Saturday's squad.

Lochaber to tackle Aberdeenshire this Saturday

RUGBY

LOCHABER are due to take on Aberdeenshire 2nd IV at home this Saturday in a fixture re-arranged from earlier in the season.

Blair MacRaid's men faced yet another postponement last weekend after the club's pitch was deemed to be in too poor a condition for the tie with Garioch. The Banavie club has not played a home league game since the start of November, when they lost to Ross Sutherland.

Lochaber Leisure's form continues

INDOOR FOOTBALL

LOCHABER Leisure continued their excellent form in the Ali Young Premier League with a 2-0 victory over HWEnergy No-Stars at the Nevis Centre on Sunday evening.

TNF United remain nine points back in second after narrowly defeating Livercaol 5-4, while Goon Squad and Ballachulish kept up the pressure two points behind in joint third. Goon Squad beat Steaua Sookabreast 5-4 while Ballachulish defeated Granite House 3-1.

Elsewhere, bottom-club Bayern Bru put up a good fight against Stroke City before going down 6-4, and Achintore FC knocked in the night's biggest score, winning 9-2 against AA Young to move into fifth place.

Mini-rugby training back on track

RUGBY

LOCHABER Rugby Football Club is resuming its mini-rugby training for P3-P7 children at King George V Park, Fort William from 10-11.30am on Saturdays.

Boys and girls of all abilities are welcome to come along and give the game a try.

Top three keep up tempo at 10-pin

TEN PIN BOWLING

AFTER week 10 of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues in the Nevis Centre, the top of the scratch division remains unchanged with the top three teams all running out 5-0 winners.

Alleycats remain in top spot with 48 points followed by Council on 45 points and Ardtoe/Nevis Radio in third on 37 points.

Council are the new leaders in the handicap division with 34 points. Alleycats fall to second on 33 points after dropping two points to Underdogs. Ardtoe/Nevis Radio move into third, also on 33 points, after beating Phoenix.

The highest team games of the week came from Council with 549 scratch, 790 handicap. Council also had the highest two game scratch total with 1039.

Individually the best game this week came from Rotavators' Ron Grettton with 190 scratch, 246 handicap helping his team take maximum points from Likely Lads.

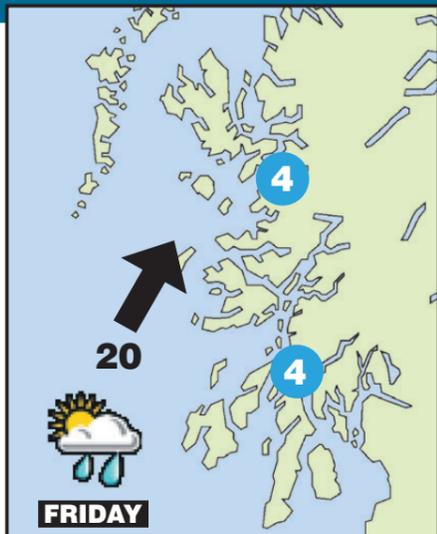
Weather

Thursday Dull and cloudy with risk of light rain
Winds light to fresh, south easterly
Temperatures 0°C to 2°C

Friday Cloudy with increasing risk of showers
Winds fresh, southerly or south-westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 4°C.

Weekend Outlook Cloudy with showers, some heavy
Winds strengthening, south-westerly
Temperatures 4°C to 8°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay Moderate



Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday, February 2, 2012** are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	06.45 2.1 14.02 2.9 19.33 2.0 ** ** *	
Fri	02.06 2.9 08.19 2.1 15.18 3.1 20.44 1.8	
Sat	03.20 3.1 10.08 1.8 16.03 3.3 21.45 1.6	
Sun	04.07 3.3 10.47 1.6 16.41 3.5 22.31 1.3	
Mon	04.47 3.6 11.22 1.3 17.18 3.7 23.10 1.0	
Tues	05.25 3.8 11.56 1.0 17.53 3.8 23.47 0.7	
Wed	06.00 4.0 12.29 0.8 18.24 3.9 ** ** *	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardishaig	-5.35	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Dover	+5.30
Islay Port Ellen	2.00		
Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Mallaig	+0.25		

Wherever you are...
Whatever the weather

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