The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Business update

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Phoenix to rise from the ashes of Highland Theatre

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
LOUISE LEE
llee@obantimes.co.uk

OBAN'S vacant cinema is set to rise from the ashes with a new name, community ownership and a refurbishment.

The Highland Theatre building, on George Street, will be transformed by a community trust to meet the needs of modern cinemagoers with new seating, warm surroundings and the latest films.

The name of the new venture will be Oban Phoenix Cinema. The plans, in the final stages of negotiation, would mean the cinema being rented on a long lease thanks to a philanthropic purchaser willing to buy the building and work with a newly constituted cinema board. It is then envisaged residents of Oban and Lorn will volunteer as projectionists, ushers and box office staff.

The Highland Theatre closed in July after months of uncertainty over its future.

Last ditch attempts for a deal to be brokered between a local businessman and its owners fell apart and the cinema went into receivership.

Leading the bid to re-open the cinema are BID4OBAN directors, the organisation charged with reviving the town centre.

Last Thursday, BID4OBAN directors received five days' notice of an auction to sell the cinema building. They wrote to the receivers and asked them to stall the procedure.

Campbell Cameron, the group's town centre manager, said: 'On Friday it seemed there would be no chance of saving the cinema, but a breakfast meeting on Sunday started to put together a plan for keeping the cinema open in the town.'

The final details of the deal are still under wraps, but it is clear the venture will be managed by a BID4OBAN sub group on behalf of the community in the first instance.

'We need public support to keep the cinema open and viable,' Campbell continued.

'We want to listen to people's suggestions about how the cinema can be run. We have organised a brief public meeting that we hope people will come along to and sign up to help, donate money or give suggestions.

'A group will then be formed to take forward the project. This is great news for Oban.'

Plans already under discussion are new seating, a VIP area, a larger second screen, community office accommodation and screening the latest films in the week they are released in London and Edinburgh.

Councillor Neil Mackay, newly elected Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson for leisure, said: 'There are a number of very successful businesses in Argyll already run as community trusts or social enterprises and I have no doubt the cinema can be the same.'

A meeting of those interested in the cinema will be held on Monday evening at 8pm in Cuan Mor.

Mamie Cattenach and Margaret MacColl look forward to the cinema's re-opening. 15_t50cinema2

'We'll be first in line' say Margaret and Mamie

ON THE day the cinema closed in July, Margaret MacColl and Mamie Cattenach sat and cried on the steps of the building.

The movie-mad pair would go to the pictures once a week - sometimes two or three times - so they were devastated when the cinema closed.

With this week's exciting news about the cinema, the women were first in line to volunteer. Margaret said: 'I have been lost without the cinema.

'I have seen so many films here that I wouldn't like to think how many.

'There is nothing like going to a film to switch off – and we had quite a little community going along every week.

'We were devastated when it closed.'

Mamie added: 'I am very excited about the possibility of it re-opening. I am first in line to volunteer to help out.

'If there is anything I can do to get the cinema back open I will.'

Police Chief Inspector Glen Bland added his support. He said: 'I fully support the cinema opening back up. It would be a great resource for the whole community.'

Week of celebrations planned for Oban anniversary

OBANITES are being called upon to take part in a record breaking Orcadian Strip The Willow as part of the town's bicentennial celebrations in 2011.

The event will be one of many highlights during a week of celebrations to mark the town's recognition as a burgh 200 year ago.

While no actual Strip The Willow attempt has been made before, a similar event in Edinburgh during the Millennium got almost 2,000 people dancing. Billy Connelly, who is a patron of the Scottish Hebridean Dance Association, has backed the plans saying: 'I wish Oban a' the best. I can't imagine anything better than a wee hurl in the town.'

It is hoped that at least 3,000 people will take part in the dance that will stretch along George Street and the Esplanade on July 17 at 8pm.

The record-breaking attempt will follow on from a hoped-for royal visit earlier in the week.

Kenneth MacIntyre, chairman of the Oban Bicentennial group, a sub group of the town's community council, said: 'It is an exciting moment in Oban's history and something we want to celebrate.'

Other events in the pipeline for the week are a rededication ceremony including bestowing the Freedom of Oban on a number of cultural ambassadors, a Bicentenary Parade through the town, a Sons and Daughters of Oban Concert, an Oban High School mega-reunion and a family fun day.

There will also be a number of events throughout the year that will celebrate the anniversary.

Sheriff's warning to drug dealers

A SHERIFF this week lamented an increase in drugs offences in Oban.

Sheriff Douglas Small warned those dealing in drugs what awaited them when he jailed Craig Duffy for 296 days.

Duffy admitted three drugs related charges at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday.

The 36-year-old, of 19 Glenfoot Terrace, Miller Road, Oban, pled guilty to possessing diamorphine on June 6 this year at 2 MacDougall Court, Oban, while on bail for another offence.

He also admitted possessing heroin and possession of diazepam with the intent to supply, both on November 2 2008 at Donmore Lodge, Albany Street, Oban.

A sheriff and jury trial had been arranged for the case but Duffy's plea, which came before the jury was sworn in, negated the need for jurors, who had braved hazardous road conditions to attend.

Procurator Fiscal David Glancy said uniformed police officers had received an anonymous tip-off on November 2 2008 and had gone to Donmore Lodge where they found Duffy and three others.

Mr Glancy said: 'It was apparent to officers that those in the room were intoxicated and demonstrably agitated and nervous.'

After searching the property police found a bag of 389 diazepam tablets, a quantity of heroin and a number of polythene bags in a bedside cabinet.

Also in the cabinet was £215 in cash and a polythene wrap was recovered from the toilet bowl.

Mr Glancy submitted that the quantity of diazepam inferred there was an intent to supply.

Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'I have repeatedly made known the attitude the court will adopt to people convicted of drugs offences.

'These appear to be on the increase in Oban.

'You and your solicitor have recognised the inevitability of a prison sentence in this case,' added the sheriff.

School closure protest planned

SUPPORTERS of schools in Mull will take to the streets in Oban the weekend before Christmas in protest at the threatened closure of Lochdonhead and Ulva Ferry primary schools.

The rally, to be held in Station Square, will be open to all parents and pupils to come along and make a stand against closing rural schools.

Sarah James, a parent at Lochdonhead School, is calling on people from all over Argyll to make a special effort on December 18 to support parents and children who believe the council has got it wrong by putting them on a closure list in the first place.

She said: 'Any school under the threat of closure can join us. Anyone who feels that rural schools are part of the uniqueness of Scotland can join us.

'We want to show the council that there is a huge public outcry about these closures.'

The rally will begin at 11.30am.

❒ **The schools closure debate begins - see page five.**

No-one hurt as explosion rips through Connel house

FIREFIGHTERS were called to an explosion at a house in Connel in the early hours of Friday morning.

The bang was heard from up to half a mile away, although some other neighbours said they slept through the whole incident.

Windows in the upstairs of the house, in Grosvenor Crescent, were blown out while the downstairs of the home also looked as though it was damaged in the blast.

Tommy Keay, station commander of Oban Community Fire Station, said: 'We were called to an incident at a detached house at 4.30am in the village of Connel. Upon arrival we secured the building which was extensively damaged by an exploding water tank. The cause of the explosion is understood to be a build up of pressure, but we are not at this time able to give any further details as to the cause.

'Firefighters secured the scene.

'Accident investigators attended later in the day.'

It is understood that a 35-year-old male was in the house at the time of the explosion, but no-one was injured in the blast.

Holidaymaker Mary Martin, who was staying with friends nearby, said: 'I was woken up during the night. I couldn't believe my ears when I heard the explosion because you don't expect to hear a big bang like that when you are staying in the country.'

The damaged property in Connel. 15_t50fire1

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Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB
Tel: 01631 568000
www.obantimes.co.uk

Editorial

Editorial Director
Stewart MacKenzie
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Deputy Editor
Stuart Laundy
slaundy@obantimes.co.uk

Northern Editor
Stephen Norris
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Chief Reporter
Euan Paterson
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

Senior Reporter
Louise Lee
llee@obantimes.co.uk

Senior Reporter
Steven Flanagan
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
Christine McCartney
cmccartney@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
Edel Kenealy
ekenealy@obantimes.co.uk

Reporter
Richard Haddock
rhaddock@obantimes.co.uk

Web Co-ordinator
Marian Miller
mmiller@obantimes.co.uk

Newsdesk
01631 568060
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising

Advertising Sales Manager
Fiona MacInnes
fmacinnes@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Rhona McKillop
adverts@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Fiona Bennett
fbennett@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Vanda MacDonald
vmacdonald@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Margaret Freytag
adverts@obantimes.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Claire Firth
cfirth@wyvexmedia.co.uk

Advertising Sales Person
Kevin Summers
ksummers@wyvexmedia.co.uk

Branch Offices

Fort William
Tel 01397 703003
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Tel 01546 602345
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Sad day as popular isle railway ceases services

THE LAST whistle has blown on Scotland's only island railway.

The Isle of Mull Railway went out with a bang, including a full day of train trips between Craignure and Torosay Gardens.

The railway is closing, to the regret of its directors, not because of financial hardship or a lack of numbers but because Torosay Castle is up for sale.

As the train's final destination, the uncertainty over whether an agreement could be reached with any new potential owners led to the decision to close the hugely successful route.

In 1975, the then-owner of Torosay Castle, David James, decided to open the house and gardens to the public but he had a problem transporting tourists between the ferry terminal and the castle.

Until local businessmen Graham Ellis and Martin Eastwood found a suitable 10¼ gauge railway, visitors had to walk the two miles to the castle or use the then infrequent service bus. The men suggested that a narrow-gauge railway might be the ideal way to transport visitors. The first experimental service on the line started in August 1983 with the official opening taking place in June the following year.

Martin was joined by Graham and the other directors on the final day of the railway. Martin said: 'We were railway enthusiasts so we were willing to go on fact-finding missions to find out how to get a railway on the island.

'We had considered alternative narrow gauge railways but we didn't feel it was as safe as the 10¼ gauge.

'It has been a great tourist attraction for visitors to the island.'

Mike Betteridge, who has been involved as a director with the railway for many years, added: 'This was a great railway bringing many visitors to the island and offering a great day out for the family.

'I am sure it will be missed. It is a very sad day. We wanted to go out with a bang not a whimper.

'Holding one last day was about giving the staff the opportunity to say goodbye.'

What lies ahead for the rolling stock is not yet known, but it is understood there has been interest from potential buyers in Oban.

Train driver David Baxter waves to Morne Bootsma and Cameron Madden on Mull Railway's final day. 15_t50train1

Europe 'key' to fair deal says islands federation

REPORT
by STUART LAUNDY
slaundy@obantimes.co.uk

SCOTLAND's island communities have become part of a Europe-wide campaign to ensure they get a fair deal from the EU.

The Scottish Islands Federation (SIF) annual meeting in Oban last week heard how, as a member of the European Small Islands Network, isolated communities had supported the formation of Group 174, an EU cross-party, cross-country coalition representing islands, mountain regions and sparsely populated areas.

The group's objectives include promoting and defending the interests of islanders and ensuring that the EU is made fully aware of the challenges facing island communities.

SIF chairman Sandy Brunton explained that part of Group 174's role was to ensure EU legislation was fair to all within Europe, given the large number of people living in isolated places.

'This group is looking for equality in access to areas such as transport, health and education,' he said.

The issue of island depopulation within a European context was another issue raised at the annual meeting.

'One of the biggest issues is trying to ensure the issue is looked at in the broadest sense,' said Mr Brunton.

'The EU group has recognised this and has been organising different exchange visits within Europe. We are trying to look into that so that the youth on the islands has the opportunities and the confidence to take those opportunities if they choose to either stay on the island or come back.

'Because we are part of this European network, we can contribute and make sure the Scottish context is heard.

'A lot of our legislation is directed from the EU. If we don't influence that legislation, then we are basically left with what they decide for us.'

Mr Brunton said legislation needed 'island proofing' before it became law.

The final issue under discussion at the SIF annual meeting was marine policy and the effect on island communities of proposed offshore renewable schemes.

'The impact of offshore schemes on island communities can be far greater than that of onshore renewables and we need to make sure people are aware.'

The Scottish Islands Federation was formerly constituted last year, having previously existed as the Scottish Islands Network.

Mr Brunton said the federation – which has members from many west coast islands, plus the likes of Orkney and Shetland – was keen to build up its membership.

More information is available at www.scottish-islands-federation.co.uk.

Tobermory lights up in time for Christmas

ORGANISERS of Tobermory's annual lights switch-on had given up on holding an official ceremony this year.

But after an overwhelming outcry from islanders it was decided to hold a party with everyone invited.

More than 70 people turned up, and with hearty carol singing and the Christmas message of Morag MacGilp it was an evening to remember.

Morag, a former nurse, said: 'It is good to see so many people here tonight.

'Thank you to the hard-working organising committee including Andrea McKenna and Mary-Jean Devon, who enlisted the support of island people to get these wonderful lights up. All your efforts make a difference to this community.'

And following a countdown, the lights of Tobermory were switched on.

The community donated more than £200 for new lights in the village.

Morag MacGilp is joined by islanders to switch on the Christmas lights. 15_t50toblights4

Tiree builder attacked victim while drunk

A TIREE builder admitted punching a woman in the head when he appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff Court last week.

John Munn, 46, from 1 Kenovay, Tiree, was involved in a heated discussion with the woman in the early hours of Wednesday December 1 when he lashed out and hit her on the left side of the head.

The event was witnessed by a local doctor.

The court heard that Munn was drunk at the time of the incident and that spending time in the cells was a sobering influence.

Defence agent Gordon McNab said that his client accepted that alcohol was a contributing factor and indicated a willingness to seek help.

Sentence was deferred for three months for Munn to be of good behaviour and to seek advice and treatment if deemed necessary by health professionals.

Lifeboat called to evacuate Mull patient

OBAN'S Lifeboat was called out on Sunday night to evacuate a male patient from Craignure on Mull.

The *Mora Edith Macdonald* was called at 8.21pm, launching nine minutes later and arriving at 9.05pm. However, because the ambulance was delayed, the lifeboat did not depart Craignure until 10.20pm.

The lifeboat arrived back in Oban at 11pm and the man was transferred by ambulance to Lorn and Isles Hospital, Oban.

The lifeboat then refuelled and was ready for service at 11.15pm.

Beachd Ailein
Ailean Caimbeul

THOIR TLACHD DON MHATH, is math an t-olc!

Tha amannan ann far am bheil e glè dhoirbh seasamh ris an seòrsa feallsanachd seo agus gu dearbh ri bunaitean saorsa deamocrasaidh! Tha sinn ceart a bhith moiteil às an t-saorsa a th' againn ar beachdan a nochdadh gu follaiseach. Ach tha rud eadar ciall is cuthach agus tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd ceart tighinn cruaidh air na Comhairlichean Seòras Rosie agus Donaidh MacAoidh a thaobh an dìmeas a rinn iad air Gàidhlig agus air poileasaidh na Comhairle a thaobh a' chànain. Ach chan e a-mhàin gun d' rinn iad dìmeas air poileasaidh na Comhairle, rinn iad dìmeas cuideachd air poileasaidh Gàidhlig ris an do dh' aontaich na partaidhean poilitigeach uile nuair a chuir iad Achd na Gàidhlig air adhart ann an 2005. Agus thar a h-uile rud, tha iad a' cur cànan is dualchas luchd-cleachdaidh na Gàidhlig ann an suarachas! Dheasaich Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd Plana Gàidhlig agus chaidh sin a dheasbad agus aontachadh. Cha robh a h-uile Ball ag aontachadh 's dòcha, ach sin deamocrasaidh agus tha còir aca gabhail ris.

Beagan sheachdainean an dèidh Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail soirbheachail ann an Gallaibh, is molaidhean gan cluinntinn thall 's a-bhos, tha an dithis Chomhairlichean seo a' nochdadh an naimhdeis mhaireannaich dhan Ghàidhlig. Shamhlaich Mgr Rosie iarrtas air taice dhan Ghàidhlig ann an dealbhan-obrach cheannardan-sgoile ri riaghladh Nàsach àm an Dàrna Cogaidh. Chanadh cuid gum bheil a bheachdan fhèin an aghaidh Gàidhlig nas coltaiche ri geur-leanmhainn gràin-cinnidh.

Gu mì-fhortanach, tha na beachdan suarach seo a' faotainn foillseachaidh nàiseanta agus a rèir na chunnacas is na chualas ann an Gallaibh aig àm a' Mhòid, bidh mòran an sin air an tàmailteachadh leis an ìomhaigh a tha seo a' cruthachadh dhan sgìre. Bidh na daoine sin agus Gàidheil uile an dòchas gun tèid a' cheart uimhir de phrìomhachas a thoirt dha na Comhairlichean seo nuair a thig orra leisgeul iarraidh airson na thuirt iad! Tha e doirbh a chreidsinn gum bheil mòr-shluagh Ghallaibh a' faireachadh cho làidir an aghaidh Gàidhlig, agus bhithte an dòchas gun dearbh iad as na taghaidhean nach eil iad riaraichte leis na beachdan a tha na Buill seo a' cur air adhart às an leth!

SOMETIMES the right to freedom of speech is hard to live with! Just weeks after an acclaimed Royal National Mòd in Caithness, Highland councillors George Rosie and Donnie MacKay attract national headlines with inflammatory statements presented as reflecting the community views. From attitudes I heard while attending the Mòd, many Caithness residents will be seriously embarrassed by this image of their community.

Councillor Rosie likened Highland Council's requirement for head teachers to be supportive of Gaelic to Nazi Germany policy, but many regard his own persistent attacks on the language and its culture as more akin to racism.

Gaelic speakers and supporters everywhere support Highland Council's demand for a public apology from Mr Rosie, and local residents will wish to remember their opportunity to effect change at the ballot box!

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

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Here for you

Argyll suffers as temperatures plummet to -14C

ROAD routes in Argyll turned into skating rinks for much of this week as the Arctic conditions took their toll on the network.

While Argyll's businesses managed to honour their local deliveries, despite icy road surfaces, the traffic chaos around the Central Belt meant many delivery links were severed.

Lorraine Parrott, a partner with Oban Express, said on Tuesday: 'It has been a logistical nightmare. Never in 28 years of trading have we failed to get a trunking vehicle up the road from the Central Belt but yesterday we only got one back and three are still stuck in the Glasgow area.

'The heavy snowfall on Monday has compacted and frozen and the temperature in Glasgow on Monday night fell to -14°C.

'One of our drivers has been stuck in Bellshill since 9.45am on Monday and it doesn't look like he is going to get his vehicle moving today.

'Two drivers slept in their lorries overnight. This is an unprecedented situation.'

Gary MacEwan, a driver for MacQueen Bros Removals, took furniture from Taynuilt to Melrose on a 10-hour journey on Monday.

However, by Tuesday afternoon, he had still not returned, such were the problems on the roads.

Business owner Graham MacQueen said: 'The weather is giving us huge logistical problems but we can't use that as an excuse when people are between homes. We just need to get on with it.'

West Coast Motors was singled out for praise by passengers after managing to keep the majority of its buses on the roads.

Managing director Colin Craig said: 'For the first time I can remember we had to cancel most of our Glasgow services but we managed to run the last Glasgow to Oban and Glasgow to Campbeltown services of the day, in both directions.

'The minor roads have proven to be the worst and we have had to suspend some services but we are operating at just about full service.'

Despite being one of the mildest areas of the country, Argyll had its own fair share of road accidents over the past week.

The road at the Rest and Be Thankful was badly affected by the weather and approximately seven to eight inches of snow fell on Dalmally and Taynuilt on Monday, with conditions deteriorating further east.

Dangerous road conditions were also reported at Kilninver and along the A816, with several cars stuck there on Monday morning.

An Oban Times car was stuck on the Hill Road between Torloisk and Dervaig on Mull on Saturday. The reporter was trying out the original route proposed by Argyll and Bute Council to transfer pupils in the school closure plan.

But the untreated road became too slippery to drive on and Dervaig islanders Hugh and Catherine Duffy, with brother-in-law Tommy MacLean, came to the rescue.

At Cladich hill, Lochaweside, Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council chairman David Fellowes, in his Subaru Legacy 4x4, came to the rescue of a woman who had twisted her ankle while trying to push her car, which had become stuck in the snow. David said the hill was so slippery the ambulance was unable to get to the casualty.

A 28-year-old driver managed to make his own way out of his van uninjured after it left the B845 near Taynuilt last Thursday.

Christmas shoppers targeted by cash point skimmers

REPORT
by STEVEN FLANAGAN
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

CHRISTMAS shoppers in Oban have once again been targeted by fraudsters skimming card details from local ATMs.

The latest scam took place at the Royal Bank of Scotland branch on George Street at the end of last week. The device was detected and removed by staff, but it is unknown how many people have had their details stolen as a result.

Speaking on Monday, a spokesperson for the Royal Bank of Scotland said: 'There was a device at the Oban ATM a few days ago that was removed very quickly once detected.

'If someone does feel they may have been a victim of fraud they should contact their bank immediately.'

Rumours that the two RBS cash machines at Tesco were also targeted are unconfirmed, he said.

The attempted fraud comes just weeks after a Halifax Bank of Scotland ATM at Station Square was hit, with fraudsters obtaining hundreds of card details during the town's Christmas lights parade.

Victims of that scam reported attempted withdrawals from their accounts from countries such as Costa Rica, Cuba and Colombia.

The frauds have made what is normally a very busy Christmas period even more hectic for bank staff.

One teller told the Oban Times: 'We have been inundated with complaints. You wouldn't think this would happen in Oban.'

It is understood that no other ATMs have been targeted by the fraudsters, as The Oban Times went to press.

Despite the recent attacks, Mark Bowermann of Financial Fraud Action UK, said ATMs are secure.

He said: 'Cash machines are very safe to use; the chances in terms of the national picture of being attacked is slim, but if you are unfortunate enough to be the innocent victim of this type of fraud then you will get your money back from your card company.

'People should take precautions though.

'One of the things the fraudsters rely on is that the devices they use look like part of the actual machine. It can be quite difficult to spot.'

He said that there are a series of precautions anyone can take when using a cash machine to prevent any fraud.

❒ Look at the machine. Is there anyone loitering nearby? If so, they may have installed a skimmer, so take care.

❒ Physically examine the machine. Touch, or gently push the card reader to check its integrity before inserting your card.

❒ Shield the keypad. Skimming devices are accompanied with miniature cameras that record the customer entering their PIN – details of which are not contained on the card's magnetic stripe.

A spokesperson for Strathclyde Police said: 'People should always check the condition of the ATM before using it. If there are obvious signs it has been tampered with, contact both the police and the bank in question.'

Comprehensive advice on how to negate the chances of being 'skimmed' and a video of how the fraudsters do it can be found on the LINK cash machine network website at www.link.co.uk.

Public consulation into council cuts proposals

COUNCILLORS waved through proposals for the public to have their say into a major jobs cull and cuts in services at Argyll and Bute on Monday.

Argyll residents will now have three weeks to make their views known on plans to cut one in 20 jobs at the council, along with a series of measures the council hopes to introduce in a bid to cut its budget by £7.5 million.

As reported in last week's Oban Times, the budget proposal includes the closure of libraries, reduced rural bus services, reduced maintenance of roads, a 15 per cent cut in grants to swimming pools, removal of free fruit to infant schools, a 15 pence increase to the price of a school meal and moving cleaning, catering and domestic staff to term-time contracts.

Speaking after Monday's meeting council leader Dick Walsh said: 'We've shared our budget process with residents this year because we think it's the right thing to do.

'We don't have to consult on the budget and we haven't done it before but this year we knew there were difficult decisions ahead. By consulting on the budget since August I hope our residents are more aware of the challenges we face. We've held a number of consultation events and these have helped us develop the options that are now for discussion.

'I appreciate there's a condensed period remaining for people to feed in their thoughts.

'But we've been consulting since August and there's only a short window between when we get an idea of our settlement from the Scottish Government and when we start considering the final budget. It's important that the council gets as many views as possible and I would be delighted to hear any creative ideas people have which could reduce the impact of any of the budget proposals.'

Full details of the consultation will be available on the council's website, www.argyll-bute.gov.uk, by tomorrow (Friday).

Fatal crash driver fined for careless manoeuvre

AN OBAN businessman has kept his licence after carelessly pulling out in front of a woman whose brother was killed 13 years ago by his dangerous driving.

Justin Campbell-Black, 31, of Glendale, 2 Victoria Place, Dunollie, was fined £750 and given nine penalty points at Oban Sheriff Court last week after previously being found guilty of a charge of careless driving, reduced from dangerous driving.

Campbell-Black, who owns a barber's shop and a guest house, had cut the corner of Nant Drive and Lonan Drive just after 6pm on November 14, pulling his red Toyota Celica in front of a car driven by Maree Neilson.

Mrs Neilson, whose daughter was in the car with her, was forced to swerve into the nearside kerb to avoid a collision, and later identified Campbell-Black as he left the car at his former address in Nant Drive.

In 1997 the 17-year-old Justin Black was sentenced to three-and-a-half years' detention after admitting causing the death of an 18-year-old passenger, Robert Wylie from Oban - Mrs Neilson's brother - while on bail for another dangerous driving charge.

Defending, agent Ron McKenna asked Sheriff Paul Crozier to consider Campbell-Black's situation and the 'extraordinary' circumstances of the case when considering sentencing.

He said: 'Mr Black, since the outcome of the last case, has come back to Oban and he's put his life in order. He doesn't drink and he doesn't socialise in the town.

'Many people who have served a custodial sentence might have turned the other way. It's to his credit that he didn't.' Mr McKenna added one of Campbell-Black's children had spina bifida and required regular trips to Glasgow for treatment.

The solicitor continued: 'Although his wife does drive, they are a considerable distance from Glasgow, so for the benefit of the family it is better if they both have a licence.'

Sheriff Crozier said: 'I did indicate that this was a bad piece of driving that didn't quite fall into the category of dangerous driving.

'I've only just been persuaded not to disqualify you. What I am going to do is reflect the seriousness of the offence in the size of the fine.

'Your licence is also to be endorsed with nine penalty points; the maximum available for a careless driving charge. That means that, for the next three years, you are teetering on the brink of disqualification. If you speed, go through a red light, or even park on zig zags, you will be disqualified.'

Search on for top Gaelic writer

THE GAELIC Books Council is inviting submissions from Gaelic writers for the Donald Meek Award 2011.

The award was launched last year and was won by Dr Finlay MacLeod for his novel Gormshuil an Righ.

The Donald Meek Award, named after the former chairman of the book council, offers £5,000 to the winner, to encourage and support Gaelic writing.

Deadline for submissions is March 31, 2011. More information can be found at www.gaelicbooks.org

Nicole's picture perfect for ACHA contest

CHRISTMAS came early for an Oban girl after her reindeer picture was turned into a Christmas card that will be sent to people all over Argyll.

Four-year-old Nicole Clark was chosen as the winner of the Argyll Community Housing Association's (ACHA) greetings card competition.

ACHA ran the competition with Soroba Young Families Nursery in a bid to find a special way of passing Christmas Greetings this year.

Brian Murphy, ACHA's local manager of housing services, presented Nicole with the winner's trophy and a Christmas card of her own design as the association's Christmas tree lights were switched on at the Bealach-an-Righ.

'Mr Murphy said: 'We are very pleased that through joint working we are able to give all residents and visitors to the town a very festive welcome from us all.'

Brian Murphy, ACHA's local manager of housing services presented Nicole Clark with the winner's trophy and a Christmas card of her own design at the Christmas tree lights switch on. 06_t50tree01

Views sought on Barra habitats

RESIDENTS of Barra are being invited to have their say on the proposed Special Area of Conservation at East Mingulay.

Two open surgeries will be run by Scottish Natural Heritage at Barra Learning Centre on Wednesday, December 15, between 2pm-5pm then 7pm-9pm. The Special Area of Conservation (SAC) has been proposed to help the Scottish Government meet its European obligation to recognise and protect specified rare and vulnerable species and habitats.

David Maclennan, SNH area manager in the Western Isles, said: 'The consultation into the proposal has been running for a few weeks now and we are keen to see as many folk from Barra as possible during these two sessions.'

Details of the proposed SAC at Mingulay are available on SNH's website, and in paper form from SNH's office in Stilligarry, South Uist. Local staff will be available to discuss the proposals during the consultation period.

Distillery marks 200th birthday

THE ISLE of Jura has celebrated the 200th anniversary of its distillery - with a giant cake.

Islanders crammed into the cooperage on November 23 to celebrate the landmark anniversary of the distillery, which was first opened in 1810 and rebuilt in 1963.

The bicentenary will be marked with a limited edition 21-year-old malt, finished in an original Oloroso sherry cask from 1963.

OT

Lorn Lines

MEMBERS at the regular Monday meeting of Oban Photographic Club were entertained to a presentation from the Scottish Photographic Federation print portfolio.

Award winning black and white and colour prints from camera clubs around Scotland compete for a place in this prestigious collection.

Some stunning images were screened and comment was made that Buchaille Etive Mor and Rannoch Moor were featured by many photographers.

Members agreed the overall presentation provided inspiration to improve their photography.

At the next meeting the club will welcome Oban's Cameron Harris with the results from the Commercially Viable Competition on the subject of transport.

New members will be made welcome - 7.45pm for 8pm in the Regent Hotel.

❒ ❒ ❒

OBAN Pipe Band wants to raise £10,500 to buy new kilts, jackets and drums.

The band, which is returning to competitive piping next season, is holding a soup lunch in the pipe band hall this Saturday to kick-start its campaign.

Alistair Dewar of Netherlorn Piping Society said: 'The amount of money involved may seem a daunting task but the band committee is game to give it a try.'

❒ ❒ ❒

THE OBAN branch of the Scottish Women's Rural Institute held its annual open night on Tuesday November 30, with a theme of Christmas canapés, cocktails and cupcakes.

Despite the inclement weather, more than 60 members and friends from Oban and surrounding institutes attended and were welcomed by warming glasses of mulled wine.

They were then entertained by sparkling demonstrations of how to make the themed items and invited to sample the end results.

A festive tea was served by local members and a extensive raffle was drawn.

❒ ❒ ❒

MGM Timber manager Andy Buchanan, left, receives a certificate of appreciation from John Lloyd of Oban and Lorn Lions Club. The company was praised for its services to the club throughout the past year.

Oban Cub Scouts with bus driver and honorary Scout Iain Craig. 07_t50scouts01

Scouts welcome bus driver Iain to their pack

A BUS driver has been made an honorary Scout after helping the troop from Oban get back from the central belt through traffic chaos on the A82.

West Coast Motors driver Iain Craig, from Oban, travelled through to Auchengillan Outdoor Centre, near Glasgow, on Friday November 26, with 24 cubs and Scouts and their leaders.

With the bus unable to negotiate the final mile-and-a-half down a track to the outdoor centre because of the weather that weekend, the party waded through the snow to get there.

However, having been directed through Glasgow on the way home the bus became stuck behind lines of abandoned cars on Loch Lomondside. This meant the journey home took nine hours.

During this time the youngsters, aged between eight and 14, kept their spirits up by singing songs, making woggles and playing card games while they kept warm inside their sleeping bags.

Iain was invited along to the Scout Hall last week as the Scouts said 'thank you' for his patience and professionalism and was presented with a neckerchief and woggle and a bottle of whisky.

Scout leader Erica Smith said: 'The children were great and didn't complain once. The Cub Scout motto is 'Be Prepared' and we were.

'However, without Iain we might still be stuck there! Next time we go away anywhere, we'll be asking for Iain.'

Iain, who has been a bus driver for six years, said it was just another job. 'Everyone played their part. The roads were not unsafe and the reason we were stuck was because of cars being abandoned, not because of the snow. The traffic police were first class; they kept us informed and handed out chocolate to the kids.'

Lib Dems to the fore in new council alliance

A NEW ruling alliance has taken power at Argyll and Bute Council.

After voting with Independent councillors during the school consultation debate, the Liberals have become the second biggest party in the newly formed alliance.

The deputy council leader is now Lib Dem leader Ellen Morton, from Helensburgh, replacing SNP's Robert Macintyre, while the post of depute Provost and European spokesman went to Len Scoullar, an Independent from Bute.

Neil Mackay, an Independent from Oban, takes a £9,000 a year job as spokesman for enterprise, energy, culture and tourism.

Other changes will see Lib Dem Andrew Nisbet as spokesman for social affairs, Independent Bruce Marshall as environment spokesman, Islay-based Lib Dem councillor Robin Currie with the rural and island affairs, housing and Gaelic portfolio, and Rory Colville as spokesman for Third Sector and Communities.

Chairwoman of Helensburgh and Lomond area committee and education spokesperson is independent councillor Vivien Dance with her depute named as Lib Dem Al Reay. Posts that remain the same are Provost William Petrie, Leader of the Council and spokesman for leadership and economy Dick Walsh and spokesperson for transport and infrastructure Duncan MacIntyre, from Oban, who also took on the role as depute spokesperson for rural and island affairs, housing and Gaelic.

Council leader Dick Walsh said: 'I am pleased that the Lib Dems and Conservatives have joined us to work in partnership for our communities. We have a significant task ahead in ensuring the sustainability of long-term service delivery to our residents and we will ensure we focus on doing what is right.'

Councillor Morton added: 'We have clearly joined the administration at a difficult time, given the national economic situation. We will do our very best to work positively and in partnership with our fellow councillors and communities to ensure the best results for our residents.'

Roddie McCuish, Oban SNP councillor, said: 'This is a black day for Argyll and Bute Council. People have been rewarded for the way they voted last week. People will not forget how their elected members have let them down.'

Oban man jailed for resisting arrest

AN OBAN man who resisted arrest was sentenced to three months behind bars when he appeared at Dumbarton Sheriff Court last week.

Thomas John Barr, aged 50, who gave his address as Room 3, Glenview Guest House, Soroba Road, Oban, had denied that, on November 24, in Soroba Road and Albany Street, Oban, he resisted, obstructed, molested and hindered constables John MacBrayne and Mark O'Donnell in the execution of their duties, striking out with his arms and legs.

Keep an eye on elderly neighbours

ARGYLL Community Housing Association (ACHA) has called on residents to check on elderly and vulnerable neighbours this winter. ACHA staff are phoning round residents who live on their own and may be vulnerable to the severe weather conditions.

An ACHA spokesman said: 'The severe weather conditions have been with us all week. The association would ask residents to check on their neighbours, particularly if they haven't seen them, and not to hesitate to contact their local ACHA office if they have any doubts about anyone's well-being.'

Appeared in private

A MAN appeared in private from custody at Oban Sheriff Court last week on a petition alleging assault and robbery. William McConnell, aged 30, of 5 Lorn Court, Oban, made no plea or declaration and was remanded in custody.

Assault allegation

WILLIAM Beaton, 48, of Oban, appeared in private at Oban Sheriff Court last week on a petition alleging assault. There was no plea or declaration and Beaton was released on bail.

Not guilty plea

A MAN has denied assaulting his mother and presenting a knife at her when he appeared from custody at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday.

Lewis MacLachlan, aged 29, pled not guilty to two charges of assault and a breach of the peaceat Battery Terrace, Oban. Bail was granted with conditions.

Students fined following drunken argument

TWO TEENAGE business students from Oban have been fined for their part in a drunken argument at Lorn Terrace earlier this year.

Layla Williams, aged 19, of 13D Corran Brae, Oban, and Alison McPhee, also 19, of 5 Cowan Place, Oban, denied allegations that, on June 22, they had acted in a racially aggravated manner against an Englishman, that they damaged the windscreen of a van and that they destroyed the paintwork of a car with small stones.

McPhee also pled not guilty to charges of assaulting both a male resident of Lorn Terrace and his female partner.

At Oban Sheriff Court, both accused were cleared of making racist comments but were found guilty of the other offences, fined £200 each and ordered to pay £261 compensation each for repairs to the car.

McPhee was also found guilty of assaulting the male resident of Lorn Terrace and was fined an additional £150.

However, charges that she assaulted a female resident were found not proven.

The court had previously heard the charges arose out of a heated discussion Williams and McPhee were having with a young male resident of Lorn Terrace at the communal entrance on the evening of June 21.

Sentencing, Sheriff Douglas Small said he accepted that they were both first offenders and students so had restrictive incomes. He told McPhee: 'As far as the assault is concerned, I take into account it was a fairly minor assault and fine you £150.

I see no reason to differentiate between you and the co-accused [on damaging the car]. So you will also pay a fine of £200 and half the cost of the repair - £261.'

HMS Argyll sails back to Navy fleet

HMS *ARGYLL*, now the most advanced warship of her class in the Royal Navy, was welcomed back into the operational fleet on Friday.

The vessel, which has undergone a £20 million upgrade, was welcomed back to frontline operational duty with a special rededication ceremony at Devonport Naval Base in Plymouth.

The ship's links to Argyll were to be recognised at the event with a performance by a ceremonial Scots piper but bad weather meant he was unable to attend.

The upgrade of the 1989 ship, carried out by Babcock Marine, involved a new superstructure that will protect the ship against the sea and wear for years to come, new weapons and sensors and updating the command system, making it the best in the fleet. Captain, Commander Paul Stroude, said the upgrade has turned the ship into the most potent and relevant fighting ship of its kind. He said: 'We are very proud of our ship and what we have achieved so far and are now looking forward to the challenges of operational sea training and our subsequent operational deployment.'

HMS Argyll rededication ship dressed with pennants at the rededication ceremony in Devonport Naval Base in Plymouth.

Offensive image drawn in frost

MEMBERS of Oban Bowling Club have expressed their disappointment after an offensive image was drawn onto the green the night before its Christmas Fayre.

The image, which was 'drawn' into the frost covering the green, measured approximately 100 feet in length – stretching across the whole of the green – and was first noticed on Saturday morning, just prior to the fayre.

It was easily visible from the door of the club house.

Past president Anne Campbell said: 'It must have happened on the Friday night, as it wasn't there in the afternoon.

'It is disappointing, but it happens every year.

'It must have been done by someone dragging their foot across the grass.'

The club's greenkeeper and new president Donald MacLean said no damage was done to the green.

He said: 'These things happen every year.

'It appears different people have different artistic tastes.

'It's just kids I suppose. We'd prefer they didn't go near the green at all though,' he added.

The club has not reported the incident to the police.

Curfew imposed after assault claim

A MAN has been granted bail with conditions of a curfew after allegedly assaulting a taxi driver.

Dene Cassells, aged 23, of 11 Lunga Road, is accused of punching the 59-year-old driver on Sunday and failing to pay the fare.

He has also been charged with assaulting a policeman on his way to Oban Police Station.

The alleged offences were committed while he was on bail for a separate offence.

Sheriff Douglas Small granted bail with conditions that Mr Cassells is at his home address between 7pm and 7am.

Not guilty plea

A 23-YEAR-old man who allegedly assaulted a woman by seizing her by the throat has pled not guilty at Oban Sheriff Court.

Lee Campbell, of Flat 7, 35 High Street, Oban, who appeared from custody on Monday, is accused of assaulting the woman last Friday at an address in Miller Road, Oban.

Bail was granted and an intermediate diet set for February 15.

Alleged assault

A MAN, aged 52, has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal after an alleged assault on Miller Road, Oban, on the evening of Saturday December 4.

Argyll makes case for rural post offices

REPORT
by STEVEN FLANAGAN
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

THE IMPORTANCE of a strong Royal Mail in rural Argyll and the islands was highlighted to the Scottish Affairs Committee during a fact finding visit on Monday.

The committee was invited by member Alan Reid, MP for Argyll and Bute, as it considers its recommendations for the new Universal Service Obligation (USO), to be introduced as part of the Royal Mail privatisation bill.

But the difficulty of travelling in Scotland during the cold snap meant only two members of the committee made the trip, chairman and Glasgow South West MP Ian Davidson and Mr Reid.

The two politicians visited Oban's sorting office before making their way to sub-post offices at Dalmally and Furnace.

Mr Reid said it was important for the government, when considering the bill and the USO, to take into account the unique challenges faced in his ward. He said: 'I think what we're hearing on this visit is that people do value the service that Royal Mail provides, so these visits are very important.

'I think Mull is clearly an area where there's a problem with the existing service obligations.

'The problem is that all the mail doesn't arrive in Oban until after the first ferry of the day.

'That means much of the mail goes across at 10am and we have been hearing about one postman who is out delivering mail at 9pm.'

Relaxing those service obligations would lead to an improved service in such areas, he said.

Mr Davidson added: 'I think it's very important to have a USO – the question is what should the USO be?

'The daily delivery and collection of mail and keeping post offices open are very important issues in remote communities, so I am very pleased that the committee visited Argyll and Bute to talk to postal managers and workers and their customers and hear their opinions on how the service can be improved.'

Joining the Scottish Affairs Committee during its visit was the Royal Mail's director of Scottish affairs Ian McKay.

He believes the privatisation bill is an opportunity for the organisation to improve, but hopes the visit helped shape the committee's view with regard to the importance of a strong rural service before it submits its recommendations to the government.

Far from being reassured by the visit, Dalmally sub-postmaster Gilli Chrystal admits to some concern for the future.

She said: 'I am concerned about the future. As I stated to the politicians, Royal Mail currently do the final mile. There's lots of final miles in this area.

'I think in rural areas the post office and Royal Mail is a core part of the community. The post office is the heart of most rural areas. I don't know what will happen.'

Dalmally sub-postmistress Gilli Chrystal speaks to MPs Alan Reid and Ian Davidson about the importance of the Post Office and Royal Mail in rural Argyll. t50post1

'Stupid' Celtic fan fined £400 after shouting in street

A CELTIC fan has been branded 'stupid' after being found guilty of making anti-Celtic and anti-Catholic comments in Oban.

Kieran Cassie, 23, a joiner from 21D Combie Street, Oban, was accused of shouting 'Celtic, ******* Celtic' and '******* Celtic Fenian Band,' on Breadalbane Street following a Frankie Boyle gig at the Argyllshire Gathering Halls on March 28 this year.

Appearing at Oban Sheriff Court, Cassie denied making the comments, saying he would not use such words given his own background.

But the court ruled that the evidence of the two arresting police officers was sufficient to show that he had made the comments and he was fined £400. However, the charge was amended to delete any reference to the offence being aggravated by religious prejudice.

PC Iain Young, who arrested Cassie with his colleague, Special Constable Kenneth Gray, said: 'There were lots of different groups out that night. A group on the left side of the car were collectively shouting. A male from the group on the left stepped into the road, in front of our stationary vehicle, and pointed to the other group and shouted "******* Celtic Fenian Band".'

Determining the comments to be sectarian in nature, the officers arrested Cassie.

Defence agent Edward Thornton put it to the officer that he may have been mistaken in identifying Cassie, given the number of people on the street and the number of people chanting at the time.

He said that wasn't the case.

Sheriff Douglas Small told Cassie: 'This was a stupid thing for you to become involved in.

'This could have resulted in other members of the public becoming aggressive.'

Lights add sparkle to Lochgilphead

CHRISTMAS festivities got under way in Lochgilphead at the weekend during the fifth annual Christmas Lights Festival.

Scores of people from Lochgilphead and further afield turned up to join the celebrations.

Christmas carols were provided courtesy of the Lochgilphead Joint Campus Choir, while local band True Love spiced things up with a mix of their own songs and covers of contemporary hits.

Mid Argyll Pipe Band led a march into Colchester Square with the lights committee and Santa was doing the rounds to spread the Christmas cheer.

Unfortunately, wintry weather put paid to some of the plans, with the amusements and Christmas tree not arriving in time.

This year's lights were switched on by Lochgilphead's citizen of the year Jenny Campbell, who was presented with flowers from Sophie McIver, grand-daughter of festival secretary Betty Rhodick, Sophie Balkeen, daughter of Sam, who is on the committee, and Martin, local police sergeant.

Betty said: 'Everyone seemed to enjoy it. Unfortunately, the amusements were stuck in East Kilbride but people didn't mind too much.

'Planning has already started for next year.'

Lochgilphead's Christmas lights were switched on by citizen of the year, Jenny Campbell. 15_t50lochl19

ARGYLL AND BUTE RURAL SCHOOLS DEBATE

Firing gun started in school consultations

The public consultation into Argyll and Bute Council's controversial plans to close up to 25 of the area's rural schools begins on Monday. Anyone who wishes to have their say must make their thoughts known by February 24.
During the consultation period, The Oban Times will feature all schools affected by the proposals, highlighting some of the reasons put forward by the council for closure and the response of parent groups and supporters.
We begin at Lochdonhead, on Mull.

LOCHDONHEAD is based in Lochdon, five miles from the ferry terminal at Craignure. There is a growing community in the area with a hospital and community trust building planned for the neighbouring village. Built in the mid 1970s, the school replaced a previous building that had been in the village since the 1850s.

According to the council's proposal document, journey times to the receiving school, Salen, is 42 minutes.

Parent Council comment: Under the proposal, four of the youngest children will have to travel from Lochbuie to Salen, a total distance each way of 56 miles, and a total travelling time each way of one hour and ten minutes.

Occupancy level of school: 27 per cent.
School Roll: 2010/2011: 14 pupils.
Parent Council comment: The school roll fluctuates regularly. We are a small, rural school.

Cost per child: £9,446.
Parent Council comment: By moving our children to Salen the school will be over the threshold for qualification for grant aid, therefore an issue for all schools. There will be less money in the pot.

School Use: In 2008/2009 there was no community use of the building.
Parent Council comment: There are after-school clubs, fundraisers, community events and toddler groups all held in the school on a weekly basis.

Class size in receiving school: There will be three classes with a total roll of 46 pupils made up of P1-2 with 13 pupils, P3/4/5 with 17 pupils and P6-7 16 pupils.
Parent Council comment: Children would miss out on any after-school clubs or care at Salen as there will only be one bus. At the moment they attend two after school clubs in Lochdonhead. We have the best of both worlds in Lochdonhead as children are educated in the heart of their community while using the latest technology to meet up with their peers throughout the island.

Saving to council from staff and property: £113,151
Transport costs to take pupils to new school: £19,344
Parent Council response:

There is strong feeling right across the island community that this proposal is unacceptable.

The prospect of closure has come as a body blow to the school community. Perhaps the most significant impact is for the remote community at Lochbuie, where pupils Henry and Charlotte Lines live, aged seven and nine. Next year they will be joined at school by Harry and Grace Corbett, aged five, who would have to leave home as early as 7.30am.

The proposal states the council is not aware of any major residential developments, however, in 2007 West Highland Housing Association bought and land-banked a site half-a-mile from the school for 17 units of social housing.

This land is waiting to be developed. A Progressive Care Centre and a Business Resource Centre are being built at Craignure with jobs and a demand for housing - all of this is likely to have a positive effect on the school's roll, which fluctuates by tradition.

We consider the proposal is about educational provision on Mull, not just the two schools at risk of closure. There are implications for everyone involved in education on Mull.

We are exploring ways of making sustainable savings to the running costs of Lochdonhead, looking at ways of linking the school with renewable energy resources and increasing the use of parts of the school outwith school hours.

We are determined to prove we are worth saving as a school and want to be here for future generations of local children.

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A happy ending?

THE prospect of a night out at the cinema is an enticing one and the directors of BID4OBAN are to be congratulated for stepping in at the eleventh hour with their proposals to breath new life into the former Highland Theatre.

The idea of a community run cinema, with volunteer staff - from projectionists to the box office - is an intriguing one.

But whether this story has a happy ending depends very much on whether the good folk of Oban and its environs are willing to support a cinema - regardless of how it is run.

It has to be borne in mind that the venue closed simply because it could not make ends meet.

GLASGOW LETTER

Glasgow Skye success

GLASGOW Skye Asssociation secretary Karen Campbell and other committee members did a sterling job when the effects of the extreme winter weather hit arrangements for the annual concert in Partick Burgh Hall.

Two concert artistes, Donald Murray and Sineag MacIntyre, were unable to travel to Glasgow and with little warning two substitutes had to be arranged. One of these was Karen's husband Seumas, a former winner of the Mòd Gold Medal, and the other was this year's Mòd Gold Medallist Iain MacLean.

The other singers were Margaret MacLeod and James Graham.

There was a variety of songs and all artistes sang superbly. A particular, and pleasing, feature of the Glasgow Skye is the presence of the Phoenix Honda Glasgow Skye Pipe Band and with accordionist Robert Nairn setting the feet tapping the audience, not as many as normal but still creditable given the weather, were treated to a concert worthy of any Gathering.

Accompanists for the singers were Alan Kitchen and Kirsteen Grant.

Early in the proceedings young Cameron West presented the chairman with a memento of the occasion and later vice president Scott Smart delivered a comprehensive vote of thanks.

From the concert venue in Partick Burgh Hall, it was off to the Glasgow University Union for the annual dance with Robert Nairn's Band.

The annual dinner is held on the evening prior to the concert and dance and once again it was held in the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel. Despite the weather, very few patrons called off and they were rewarded with an excellent meal and stimulating speeches.

Guest of honour Gathering Chairman Tommy MacAskill illustrated why, now that he has retired from his civil service employment, he has made a success of his new life of writing, broadcasting and research. In his talk he reminisced about life in Skye and his role in the life of Gaelic affairs in London interspersing with humour, in both Gaelic and English. Tilly MacMillan, president of the Glasgow Lewis and Harris Association, proposed a toast to the kindred associations and Dr Donalda McComb, head teacher of Sgoil Ghaidhlig Ghlaschu, proposed a toast to the Skye Association. The post dinner musical entertainment was provided by Kenna and Seumas Campbell.

Echoes of Oban

THE MAIN auditorium of the College of Piping was only 20 short of capacity, despite the inclement weather, for the Echoes of Oban concert which showcases the skills of Argyllshire Gathering winners.

It was an evening of excellent piping entertainment and included a slideshow of past Argyllshire Gatherings, photographs mainly taken by Jeannie Campbell. It was disappointing Jeannie missed the concert and I am sure readers will join with me in wishing her a speedy recovery from illness.

Concert

DESPITE atrocious weather, there was a good attendance at St Andrew's in the Square at Donald Black's recent concert.

Those who attended were not disappointed and Donald was joined on stage by piper Chris Ross and singers Alison Lamonby and Catriona Laird.

Paisley carols

MOD GOLD Medallist Sineag MacIntyre and special guest Kathleen MacInnes will sing favourite carols in the Holy Trinity and St Barnabas Church, Paisley, at 2.30pm on Saturday December 18.

Diary dates

Thursday December 9: Live at the Star, St Andrew's in the Square, 8pm, Jez Lowe's 'Geordies Winter Almanac Road Show'.

Friday December 10: Clydebank and District Highlander's Association ceilidh - cancelled.

Saturday December 11: Glasgow Skye Association Children's Party, Renfield Centre, Bath Street, 2.30pm. Paisley and District Highlander's Association ceilidh dance, Howwood Village Hall, 7.30pm.

Wednesday December 15: Gaelic Quiz, Park Bar, 7.30pm.

Thursday December 16: Prostate Cancer Charity Concert, City Chambers, 7pm, featuring Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir.

Friday December 17: Uist and Barra Association ceilidh dance, Crawford Hall, Beith Street, Partick, 9pm-1am.

Saturday December 18: Highlander's Club ceilidh dance, Partick Burgh Hall, 8pm, Mhairi Coutts Trio. Capercaille, Paisley Abbey, doors open 7.30pm.

Pub scene

ON FRIDAY evening in the Park Bar music will be played by the Monach Isles/Donald MacRae with the Pneumatic Drills on Saturday and Stewart Cameron/Simon Moran on Sunday.

The Islay Inn will have the Jolly Beggars on Friday and the Clachies on Saturday with an extra special addition both this Sunday and the next when they will host a piping competition in conjunction with the National Piping Centre. The piping will start at 8pm each evening and the final will be held on a date still to be decided in January.

Also in the Islay Inn on Saturday December 18, prior to the usual ceilidh music, the legendary jazz trumpeter Bruce Adams will perform. **Neil Murray. Tel: 0141 954 8105. Email: neilfmurray@yahoo.co.uk.**

Kyles Athletic shinty team

This week's flashback photograph features a Kyles Athletic shinty team from days gone by. It was submitted by George MacLellan, of South Uist, who found it among his mother's photographs. She worked in the Kyles of Bute area in the mid 1920s till the early 1930s. We invite readers to send in flashback photographs. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

PO Box 1 , Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB
email: editor@obantimes.co.uk
www.obantimes.co.uk
Telephone: 01631 568000
Fax: 01631 568001

No trust in councillors

Sir,

Like a lot of people I thought the election of new Independent councillors was just what Lochaber needed.

To say I am disappointed is putting it mildly.

How many times did we hear the Independent councillors complain that the Waterfront development was holding back the Morbaine planning application?

Now they are doing the same thing themsleves with the Blar Mhor in place of the Waterfront.

We have an Independent councillor, Donald Cameron, declaring an interest in the Blar Mhor development. A bit late in the day I would suggest.

And it wasn't long ago that Eddie Hunter told me he was definitely going to support whichever supermarket was submitted first and he expected the first appication to be Morbaine.

He was adamant that he wouldn't turn away development and that he would support both the North Road and Blar Mhor applications.

Along with a friend, I attended the planning meeting which considered the Morbaine application and was shocked that no local councillor supported Bill Clark's proposal to approve the Morbaine bid.

Considering that Eddie had been so vocal about supporting both applications, it put another nail in the coffin of my trust in what councillors tell you.

I exclude Bill Clark from these views and would warn him about the political knives that will be looking for his back. Bill, you are not supposed to let the public know what is going on.

James Kennedy, Achintore Road, Fort William.

Oban Legion thanks

Sir,

Now that all the money from our recent Poppy Appeal have been forwarded to Poppyscotland in Edinburgh it is with gratitude to the people of Oban and district that I can advise you the amount collected this year was £8,460.12.

In these days of austerity and uncertain job security for many people this amount reinforces what we in the Legion have known for years, that the people in this area are 100 per cent behind our armed forces. We must not forget the many shopkeepers and others who accept our collecting cans and poppies nor the volunteers who collected on the streets or at static locations on our behalf. Our grateful thanks to everyone.

Despite the sad fact this branch will cease to exist officially following our January meeting, one thing is not in doubt. Those of us who remain from the branch will ensure that the annual Poppy Appeal goes ahead as usual and I have no fear that the amount collected will be on a par with this and other years.

Bert MacBrayne, chairman, Oban branch, The Royal British Legion.

School closures

Sir,

It was with a certain degree of pride that I learned the SNP members of Argyll and Bute Council had come out of their joint administration.

This was rather than be part and parcel of a decision to close 25 schools thus killing off vital communities in the council's area.

I would take it to be the duty of the councillors, especially the SNP ones to try and grow communities in Argyll and Bute.

With no local school available, families will be reluctant to put down roots and these families are the future of growth here.

Colin Stevenson, Strachur.

Four stars

Sir,

I congratulate the Queens Hotel on being awarded four stars but your assertion that it is the only four-star hotel north of Glasgow and south of Inverness on the west coast should be challenged.

What about the Inverlochy Castle Hotel, although may be not quite on the coast; the Isle of Eriska Hotel and the Knipoch Hotel just outside Oban?

Ian Cannell CBE, Isle of Man.

Hopsital praise

Sir,

May I say how pleased I am about the treatment I have just received at Lorn and Isles Hospital, Oban.

The NHS should be proud of all the staff there who are helpful, kind, patient and professional. Mr Scobie and his team offered an excellent service and it was a pleasure to be treated with such care. Many thanks to everyone.

Name and address supplied.

ISLAY LETTER

Plaque unveiled

A PLAQUE in memory of John Ross, founder member of the Bowmore Harbour Association, has been unveiled by his widow Kate at the entrance to the new pontoons at the village pier.

As well as being instrumental in setting up the association, he also served as its chairperson until forced to retire through ill health.

John bore his final illness with great fortitude and died in August 2008.

A fitting tribute was paid to John at the unveiling by association treasurer George Rhind who referred to the late chairman's tireless efforts in fundraising for the harbour dredging project. His 'hands on' approach was also praised as he had been responsible for the building of the original pontoons.

A grateful Kate thanked the association members for their tribute, adding that John had worked hard to improve the harbour facilities as he had wanted to put something back into the community that had made him so welcome when he took up residence on the island.

Following the unveiling, a drop of John's favourite dram warmed the cockles.

Christingle

CHURCH of Scotland Reader Angela Stather, now ministering at Jura Parish Church, was at the helm at the annual Christingle service in Bowmore's Round Church on Monday.

This was an evening of youthful exuberance provided by the large number of youngsters from throughout the island in attendance. All monies raised will go to children's charities.

Today, close on 6,000 Christingle services are held throughout the country and, to date, have raised more than £1.5m for children's causes.

Christmas celebrations continue when the linked parishes of Kilarrow and Kildalton and Oa hold a joint carol service in Port Ellen's St John's Church on Sunday, December 12, at 7pm. Among the participants will be Còisir Ghàidhlig Ìle with Iseabail Mactaggart wielding the baton.

Butchers' president

A BOWMORE butcher has been elected president of the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders at the group's annual general meeting in Perth.

Billy MacFarlane, who operates from premises in the village's Shore Street, takes over from Stuart Christie who as completed his term in office.

The new president spent his boyhood in Clynder and served his apprenticeship in Kilchreggan where he met his wife Margaret. After a short term in Stornoway, he moved to Islay 36 years ago and opened his Bowmore business in 1998. He currently employs a staff of two and also has a meat preparation and cooking facility at Bridgend. In his address to the federation, Billy said that although there was plenty to be proved there was much to be confident and optimistic about. Well done Billy. 'Sausages is the boys!'

Poppy Appeal

THE GENEROUS residents of Bowmore raised £573.75 for the recent Poppy Appeal.

The collection was organised by David Barr, of Ceòl na Fairge, who took over responsibility two years ago from Rose Gibson whose sterling efforts for the appeal over many years led her to being honoured by PoppyScotland.

A further £44 was added to the cause by a special collection in the Round Church on Remembrance Sunday.

Writer entertains

JAZZ musician, writer and Majorcan orange grower Peter Kerr was the special guest at a Spanish evening hosted by the Islay Book Festival committee in Bridgend Hotel.

The speaker, who has an Orkney crofting background and once played with the Clyde Valley Stompers, has had a varied and interesting career ranging from farming, orange growing, travel and writing.

He has also penned a number of travel books, detective stories and has given readers many insights into his experiences in the Balearics.

Greetings

I WISH those of you who read these meagre jottings a joyous Christmas and the hope that Santa will fill your stockings to overflowing. Nollaig chridheil.

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

A view from the tower

by McCaig

Not much cheer for Christmas

YES, the snow is Christmas-like but almost everything is affected.

The roads are blocked, railways and airports are closed, ferries disrupted and almost everyone is skint. Never have there been more generous discounts offered in big stores. But the shops themselves seem to have acquired decorations that are almost dowdy, and of hard-faced, hard-nosed local government officials - at the top, you will understand - rejoicing in keeping their wily plans for redundancies and school closures to themselves so there is too little time to fight their fiendish ploys before they come into effect.

However, they'll have to keep the lid on tightly and ensure there are no 'leaks'. Let's face it, anyone and everyone with an interest in how we are governed at local level has been waiting for lists of who and what are to be 'chopped'.

They know that somewhere in the inner sanctum at Kilmory there has to be 'lists' of those who will be unemployed – from director to refuse operative – but: 'No' says he who has apparently been employed by a number of local authorities to state who and what is dispensable.

But he has met his match in local MP Alan Reid who has been around long enough to know the intricacies of the Freedom of Information Act and ask boldly for detail of the list of schools that are proposed for closure.

'There's no list,' says the chief executive's rotweiler to the enforcer of the Freedom of Information Act. 'Oh, really', says the civil servant, 'but there is, as reference has been made to it by both local councillors inside and outside the governing coalition.

'You are nicked, you will be reported to the Freedom of Information Commissioner' who has quite serious powers to deal with those who break the terms of the Act.

'There may not be public flogging or six months in the stocks but he can have you removed from your ill-advised promoted post.

But will it ever happen? One can but hope or will it just be another Argyll and Bute Council mess, hidden under the carpet and the 'good guys' losing out as usual? It is up to you, dear reader, to insist your views are heard and it would be a very foolish councillor or chief executive who dismisses you with a curt nod.

Farewell Mull Railway

I HAD hoped to make the last journey from Craignure to Torosay last weekend on that wonderful little railway that has been taking those who wish to be transported in a unique way from the CalMac ferry at Craignure to the delightful Torosay Castle but, unfortunately I'm somewhat incapacitated currently with two badly scalded feet which make journeys of any distance difficult.

To digress, if you are diabetic you should never be allowed to buy a hot water bottle. In fact, you should be told it is not suitable as we lose sensation in our limbs and don't feel the heat scalding our ankles until we get up in the morning and try to put our socks on.

It did, however, give me the chance to discover what an excellent, professional service the accident and emergency staff give at Oban's Lorn and Isles Hospital.

But, back to the Mull Railway. I joined David Webster on one of the very early runs and was smitten and still am.

I know there are plans to keep it in the area, if not on Mull, but I can't reveal them yet. Both locations I heard mentioned are feasible and I look forward to one of them being opened next year.

Against all the odds

IF I WERE to recommend a thought-provoking, well researched and important political biography to give to a friend this Christmas it would be 'Against All the Odds' by David Torrance.

Like him or hate him, Alex Salmond has been a very important figure in the last two decades of the 20th century and the first of this one, and for as long as he stays at the forefront of Scottish and British politics.

If anyone is to achieve independence for Scotland it will be him and his dogged determination to see Scotland a separate state and the union with England a 'busted flush'.

I will make no comment on that proposition and neither does the excellent author and journalist in his book, but he does a fine job of telling the Salmond story from sources other than Mr Salmond.

It is not a commissioned biography, it would be worth a great deal less if was, but it's one that should be read to give greater understanding of an astute, determined and single-minded 'lad o' pairts' who just might be the father of the 21st century Scottish State.

'*Salmond Against The Odds'*, by David Torrance, is published by Birlinn at £20.

McCaig

PRESS POLICY

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

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YOUR LETTERS

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. The editor also reserves the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

Serving in Afghanistan - but thoughts turn to home front

FOR MOST people, December is all about getting ready for Christmas, however, for a handful of local lads, this year it's all about Afghanistan.

Five Oban soldiers serving with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 5th Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland (5SCOTS), will spend the festive period on active duty in Lashkar Gah.

REPORT
by STEVEN FLANAGAN
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

Their remit on Operation Herrick 13 is to train the local police force as well as making regular patrols.

While a few of the troops will be coming home for Christmas, most will remain on active duty until the end of their tour in March or April next year.

The Oban Times has got in touch with the troops to find out a bit more about each of them and to see how they're getting on.

The troops have also taken the opportunity to send an early Christmas message back home.

This week, we hear from PTE Alexander Keith Haggart, an Oban boy now living in Canterbury, Kent; Private Vincent Kennedy from and still living in Oban; and Private Jonathan MacCulloch now of Howe Barracks, Canterbury, originally from Oban, and who celebrated his 25th birthday this week.

Next week we'll hear from Corporal Nawal Rai, a native of Kathmandu, whose village is twinned with Oban, and Private Jonathon Farragher, the 22-year-old former Oban High School pupil who still lives in his home town.

'Haggs' notices the difference in his second Afghan tour of duty

A FORMER pupil of Oban High School, Private Alexander Keith 'Haggs' Haggart is enjoying his second tour of Afghanistan, and like his comrades, has already noticed a difference.

The 25-year-old sport and driving enthusiast joined the army in 2007, and currently works as a gunner and marksman as part of the Police Advisory Team in Nad e Ali south.

That in itself is quite a change from his previous tour in Herrick 8, ground holding at Lashkar Gar, but it's still given him an interesting perspective.

He said: 'It's something different from ground holding. I get to interact more with the Afghan National Special Forces and help develop their abilities.

'I've noticed more professionalism within the Afghan National Police and Army this time around.'

His recent activities have seen him engage with locals on a different level though.

He said: 'Recent patrols saw me coming under contact from Taliban while providing support to the lads clearing a road with a potential Improvised Explosive Device.'

Private Haggart, whose cousin George Johnstone is currently in army training in Harrogate, is normally based in Canterbury but had this message for his friends and mother Elizabeth Haggart.

He said: 'Hello to my family back home and a big hello to Murray at Dunbeg Stores. See you all soon.'

Private 'Haggs' Haggart says he has noticed a real difference during his second tour of Afghanistan.

Vinny rises to 'enjoyable challenge'

AT 29, Vinny Kennedy is serving his first tour of Afghanistan with the regulars – and he's loving it.

Normally a contact worker for Argyll and Bute's social work department in Oban, he travelled to Afghanistan as a member of the 7 SCOTS Territorial Army battalion based in Dumbarton.

A well-known face in Oban, Vinny was recently a poster-boy for the TA, with his image used on recruitment posters. His latest task couldn't be further from that.

Private Kennedy said: 'I am a light machine gunner in a multiple, working from Control Point Salaam.

'My job is to patrol with the other members of my call sign, providing security for the local people by preventing the Taliban from causing intimidation.

'We are still getting to know the area, however, my multiple has done a lot of patrolling with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and we have been extremely impressed with the way it operates and its work ethic.

'I enjoy meeting the locals and living with them in their environment.

'It is an enjoyable challenge working with the ANA. The new friendships and camaraderie I have developed with my colleagues has been brilliant.'

Vinny, who attended Portree High School, describes himself as a member of the Marki Dan's Appreciation Society and lists his hobbies as: 'Paragliding, canoeing and I would like to try shark wrestling.'

Vinny is one of those soldiers who is hoping to get back home for Christmas. Waiting for him is girlfriend Veronica MacKenzie, step-son James and son Vincent MacKenzie. He's also hoping to see his father William Ryan, mother Irene Toher, sister Nina and brothers Laird and Lyle.

To them, he says: 'I miss everyone and I will see you all at Christmas.'

Private Vinny Kennedy hopes to be home for Christmas.

Jonathan keeps troops on move with new role at Camp Bastion

PRIVATE Jonathan MacCulloch joined the army in 2005 and has already seen his fair share of action across the world.

Starting as a B Company rifleman, he moved on to MSp Company heavy machine guns from 2006 and has been in HQ Company, MT Platoon since 2009.

His service has twice taken him to Kenya, in 2006 and 2010, twice before to Afghanistan in 2008 and this year, and the Falklands last year.

An expert in machine guns, his latest role is a little different from what he's used to.

He said: 'At the start of the tour I was at the Helmand Police Training Centre (HPTC) and have just recently been moved to Camp Bastion to work with Corporal Ross on the vehicles.

'My main responsibility is to maintain all the vehicles, fix them when needed and to update all the paperwork.

'When vehicles are damaged by Improvised Explosive Devices, we get them processed and fixed correctly,' added Jonathan.

'I enjoy working on all the vehicles and getting them back on the road.

'Working in HPTC was interesting though; it was really good to see the difference in the Afghan National Police from when they arrived to when they passed out.

'I was also the top gunner in lots of vehicle moves from HPTC to Forward Operating Base Lashkar Gah.'

Jonathan also had to get used to celebrating his birthday in a different way, as he turned 25 on Monday.

Since his last tour in Afghanistan, Private MacCulloch has noticed a marked increase in the size of Camp Bastion, the main British military base in Afghanistan. He's also noticed a significant improvement in relations between the military and the locals.

Jonathan is due to return home in March and is looking forward to seeing wife Jessica, two-year-old daughter Aimee and a special arrival.

He said: 'I'm looking forward to the end of the tour when I will be greeted by all my family and my newborn little boy, who is due in March.'

Private Jonathan MacCulloch is currently on his third tour of Afghanistan.

Is your loved one serving overseas this Christmas?
Call Steven Flanagan on 01631 568021 or email sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

Mull Lines

A BINGO night held at MacGochans Bar, Tobermory, with guest caller John Weir, raised £200 for the Tobermory Memorial Fund.

The fund to refurbish the town's war memorial is gathering steam with other donations, including £90 from the Chip Van, a personal donation of £600 and many fund-raising events in the town, helping the group meet its target.

The fund-raising group hopes to employ a stonemason who already does work on the island to carry out the repairs to the hillside memorial in the spring.

Donations can be made via Brown's Shop or in the Clydesdale Bank.

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MULL Eagle Diary: With winter tightening her icy grip even further, the struggle for survival for our largest and smallest birds gets harder by the day.

Whilst garden birds can get a helping hand with bird food and kitchen scraps, the eagles must go it alone. Some may go for several days without feeding well though, in general, they are built to withstand that. The small birds aren't so robust and need our help.

But even the mighty eagle has its limits. Recently, one of the east coast released white-tailed eagles was found hungry and exhausted on Ardnamurchan. She had been in Fife until just a few days before but her long journey west had taken its toll. She was found by a dog walker and reported to local eagle experts who in turn concluded that she was too weak to survive on her own.

With the help of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the young inexperienced eagle was easily caught and transferred to its wildlife hospital near Edinburgh. After some care and a lot of food she was back to full strength and released again on the east coast which is where she's remained ever since. Maybe she's learnt her lesson and on this occasion east, rather than west, is best.

To arrange a trip to see the eagles at the Loch Frisa Eagle Hide call 07920 817362.

❒ ❒ ❒

MULL musician Colin MacIntyre is offering to play a gig in your sitting room if you buy his new album - before it is even recorded.

The former Mull Historical Society front man has signed up to Pledge Music, a new concept of getting music into the public domain for artists who are not signed to one of the major record labels.

Colin said: 'I'm about to record my sixth album. Through the good people at Pledge Music, I'm doing things a bit differently this time. This means you can order your own pre-release advance copy of the finished album now.

'We have other goodies on offer - a gig in a front room, signed album artwork, Skype access into the studio or a night of music and chat at my mum's hotel.'

To order the album and to find out more about these other goodies log on to www.pledgemusic.com/projects/colinmacintyre.

'Anyone who pledges automatically gets a download of the album and will have contributed a donation to the Mary's Meals charity.'

LISMORE

Your correspondent is Pauline Dowling: 01631 760293

St Andrew's Night Ceilidh

A PACKED hall enjoyed a St Andrew's Night ceilidh run by Sarah Campbell and the hall committee and compered by Katy Crossant.

The house band was Shindiggery, a Scots music group from Edinburgh, some of whom had visited before as part of Mairi Campbell's Lismore Fiddle retreats.

They played a varied selection of Scottish traditional music in several sets and were joined by a host of local talent starting with Lismore Primary School pupils, directed by Anne Livingstone, performing some of their Scottish country dances.

They also sang under the direction of head teacher Catherine Davies with duets from Shona Wright and Sophie King singing 'Westering Ho' and Katie Cook and Rachel MacCormick performing 'Mairi's Wedding.

Adults Freda Drysdale, Mary MacDougal, Katy Crossant and Sarah Campbell all sang in the first half, Mary and Katy performing Gaelic songs.

The talented 16-year-old Colin Black's guitar playing was greatly appreciated as was Chris Small's reading of a poem.

The second half was opened by 12-year-old Tom Campbell Paine showing how well he is now playing the pipes after only two years, and he was followed by Murry Willis and Eoghan MacDonald on accordion and keyboard, two young talents going places musically.

As well as the singers and instrumentalists from the first half the audience heard a musical Gaelic song from Stephen Green and perhaps the highlight was a Polish lullaby sung with her babe in her arms by a member of Shindiggery.

Special mention must be made of Sarah Campbell's hilarious rendition of 'My Funny Valentine' accompanying herself on the keyboard.

Thanks go to the hall committee for a great ceilidh and for the welcome refreshments in the interval.

Fiddlers delight Christmas Fayre shoppers

Taynuilt fiddlers played Christmas tunes to the delight of shoppers at the annual Christmas Fayre held in the village hall. Raising money for local charities, there were lots of bargains in store, such as knitted goods, woodcarvings and photography. The hall was packed with people enjoying hot drinks and cakes.

Broadband speeds

BRITISH Telecom has been advising that it has upgraded the Lismore exchange enabling much faster speeds for the island.

However securing the upgrades is proving difficult and anyone attempting it has been getting the run around on the phone. At the time of going to print, only one person has the promised 8MB and one is promised an improvement though a great deal less. Persistence is recommended if you have the time and patience because, although there are many factors involved, some improvement is likely from the meagre half a megabyte the island gets at the moment.

Storm damage

A HOUSE at Killean in the middle of Lismore was struck by lightning recently causing damage to wiring and water pipes, knocking out many phones throughout the island and destroying a number of computers.

It was a single bolt of lightning but the extent of the damage was considerable and many people had to wait in excess of a week to get phones back and a lot longer to replace computers and get back on line.

Poppy appeal

THE ISLAND collected £540.14 for the Poppy Scotland appeal, which is double what was collected last year.

This was helped largely by the £200 Beth Campbell collected at the café Poppy Lunch.

KYLE OF LOCHALSH

Your correspondent is Charlie MacRae: 01599 544359

Postponed

THE WARD forum for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh, scheduled to take place in Plockton Hall on Monday November 29, was postponed as a result of the adverse weather conditions.

Also postponed because of the weather was the annual sale in Plockton High School on Saturday November 27 in aid of school funds.

Historical society

THERE was a good attendance in Plockton Hall on November 18 when Plockton Historical Society presented a talk by Mary Carmichael entitled 'The Land Where I Belong'.

This was a talk on the life and works of photographer Duncan MacPherson. Robert Kennedy introduced Mary and proposed the vote of thanks.

Arts and crafts society

PLOCKTON and District Horticultural and Arts and Crafts Society presented 'Festive Footage and Flower Displays' by Donald MacKintosh of Loch Duich Plants in Plockton Village Hall on November 24.

Plants were available and a finger buffet and wine was served.

Sale raises £873

PLOCKTON and Kyle Free Church ladies held a sale in the Lighhouse Centre on November 19 and raised £873 for foreign missions.

Dinner success

THIRTY people attended a St Andrew's night dinner in the Plockton Hotel organised by Plockton Small Boat Sailing Club.

Dancing to Andy Will and his band followed the meal.

It was also a farewell evening to Lyndsay Averne, the club's membership secretary who is off to Australia where her husband has been posted for two years.

Poppy collection

THE POPPY collection for the Earl Haig Fund in Lochalsh, Glenshiel and Glenelg raised £3,660.74.

Legion AGM

THE LOCHALSH branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland held its AGM in Kyle on November 22.

All the office-bearers were re-elected, but Terry Harvey and Alasdair Davidson stood down from the committee and Lieutenant Commander Andy Will and Nina Shanks were added to it. Alasdair Davidson, Glenelg, and Jock Healy, Drumbuie, were made life members.

The branch will send out 27 parcels at Christmas. There are 80 paid up members but funds are low. The next meeting is on January 24 to discuss changes to the annual Armistice Parade.

KILLIN

Your correspondent is Judy Forster: 01567 820298

Killin Youth Group

KILLIN Youth Group has been up and running since Easter this year and is open to all pupils of secondary school age.

Regular Tuesday sessions form the backbone of the group's activities, complemented by various trips and fundraising.

Over the coming months it is hoped to fill the programme with a variety of activities covering all interests, including sports nights, art and music workshops, cinema nights, games nights and outdoor activity days.

As part of this it is hoped to make use of the skills and interests of local people.

Perhaps among the local people there is someone with an unusual job who would be willing to give a couple of hours to get involved in the youth group. Volunteers to help out with the group on an occasional basis are also needed. Telephone 07786 558861 for more details.

Floral awards

Domestic Section - Hanging Baskets: 1 M Campbell, 7 Bakllechrois Court; 2 Mr and Mrs Hunter, 6 Dochart Road; 3 Mr and Mrs Robertson, Grey Street. Commended: Mr and Mrs Smith, Muillean Sabh.

Tubs/Containers: 1 Mr and Mrs Smith, Muillean Sabh; 2 Mr and Mrs MacGregor, 3 Dochart Road; 3 Mrs F Fraser, 9 Ballechroisk. Commended: Mr and Mrs Graham, 3 Stewart Road.

Window boxes: 1 Mr and Mrs Twigg, Craigdarroch; 2 Falls of Dochart Cottage; 3 L Brown and D Petrie, Lyon Road. Commended: Mr and Mrs Chisholm, Kilvaxter Cottage.

Overall display in containers - 1 Mr and Mrs Hunter, Dochart Road; 2 Mr and Mrs Smith, Muillean Sabh; 3 Mr and Mrs MacGregor, Tigh Breagna. Jointly Commended: Mrs Guild and John, 5 Monemore. Mr Buglass, 6 Monemore.

Garden with Most Year Round Interest - 1 Mr and Mrs Huntley, Rowanbank; 2 Mrs M MacNee, Burnbank; 3 Mrs A Weaver, Croftcroy. Commended: M Lincoln and L Stevens, Tigh-na-Croft.

Commercial Section, Accommodation Provider - 1 Invertay Guest House; 2 Killin Hotel; 3 Dall Lodge. Commended: Coach House Hotel.

Restaurant and Retail - 1 Shutters Restaurant; 2 The Gallery; 3 Falls of Dochart Retirement Home. Commended: The Smiddy.

Fundraising

SARAH Heward presented a cheque for £2,487 to the Falls of Dochart Retirment Home and Killin Mountain Rescue Team following her fundraising Ironman event in Lanzarote.

Children's Sunflower Competion: Tallest Sunflower - 1 Tegan Dowling, 275cms; 2 Beth Allan, 227.5cms; 3 Ellie Ridgewell, 223cms. Largest Open Bloom - 1 Tegan Dowling, 28cms; 2 Emily Crow, 24cms; 3 Beth Allan, 21.5cms.

Killin Primary School

MS NICOLA Campbell has joined the school from Thornhill Primary School.

Judy Holden

JUDY Holden is fundraising for the purchase of an ultra sound scanner.

Donations can be made at the school office. All good wishes are sent to Judy from the school.

Eco Schools

AS PART of the Eco Schools programme, there will be a recycling container in the playground to enable old clothes and shoes to be collected to earn money for funds.

The community is welcome to use it as the more clothes that are collected the more money is raised for the school funds.

Looking back

PRIMARY 1/2/3 pupils are enjoying the topic 'How we Used to Live'.

The class brought baby photographs and drew pictures of the playground in the past.

The pupils went outside and looked for materials to stick on the banner. They found flowers, grass, leaves sticks plastic wrappers and crab apples.

Tree planting

A BIG thank you to Transerv which has removed Tarmac from parts of the playground.

This will allow the eco-group to plant fruit trees. They also fixed the play mat under the climbing frame

Fire safety visit

A REPRESENTATIVE from Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service came to the school to talk about fire safety.

She showed a film of a bedroom that was set on fire because someone had dropped a match. She spoke about fire hazards such as overloaded sockets and leaving a candle next to curtains. Fire alarms should be tested once a week.

RME and Home Team Challenge

P6/7 are taking part in Home Team Challenges.

Nearly every week a new challenge is given. Points are awarded for helping people, being kind and considerate, following school rules and working hard.

Ardnamurchan pupils back out on tour

Ardnamurchan High School pupils have gone out on tour again for their annual musical village hall tour, this year visiting Ardgour, Strontian and Acharacle. Each night, various groups of pupils and soloists delivered their unique variety of traditional and contemporary music and song to delighted audiences of local residents. Head teacher Chris Millar-Craig said: 'We are delighted with the success of this year's tour and we have had some very warm and appreciative comments from the community. Well done to the pupils and a big thank you to all involved.'

Tasty treats at Dalmally fund-raiser

Fundraisers at Dalmally braved the weather conditions to taste a few tasty treats in the church hall. With plenty of cakes and treats in store, MSP Jamie McGrigor was among many who enjoyed the day.

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Around the Rurals

Glenorchy

ON NOVEMBER 24, Brik Halcrow and Jenny travelled from Mull for a much requested return visit to give another demonstration of eucaustic wax working.

As with last February, the weather was dreadful, but there was a good turnout of members.

Brik laid out a selection of books and leaflets on the subject and explained how the various tools and fitments worked. She also laid out samples of her work.

She quickly demonstrated the landscape for members who had been absent the last time, then went on to make a Christmas card using the smaller tools. Everyone was given the chance to do this and fun was had by everyone.

Competitons: Christmas Tree decoration – 1 Helen Gibson; 2 Pat Villani; 3 Kathleen McKenan. Peppermint creams – 1 Helen Gibson; 2 Pat Melville; 3 equal Jane Goodwill and Pat Villani.

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Society given fascinating insight into Scotland's seabirds

LOCHABER Natural History Society welcomed Dr Andy Douse, senior ornithologist with SNH, to its November meeting for a fascinating insight into Scotland's seabirds.

Dr Douse has many years of experience both in the country and abroad, and began by saying that Scotland has huge numbers of breeding seabirds – over five million, more than the human population.

These numbers give us an international responsibility for many species, from puffins and guillemots to gannets and shags.

But how are they counted? The last full census, Seabird 2000, was a huge survey involving many people. Andy described the varied techniques used, which even included an endoscope for species in burrows.

The next census is being considered for 2013-17, although the financial situation puts some doubt over this. Yet the state of our seabirds is an excellent 'barometer' for the health of our seas and oceans.

Major censuses combined with annual monitoring at key colonies around Scotland show that seabirds have had mixed fortunes in recent years.

For example, kittiwakes and Arctic skuas have been declining rapidly, whereas gannets are flourishing with new colonies being established. Seabirds are vulnerable to many pressures from man's activities. The introduction of predators such as cats, rats, mink and even hedgehogs to islands around the world has caused the decline and extinction of many species.

Worry

Commercial fishing has depleted food stocks, whilst climate change is causing many complex impacts. The huge quantities of floating plastic in the world's oceans is a great worry – it lasts for so long.

For example, fulmars have been found with their stomachs full of accumulated plastic particles, which restrict their ability to feed.

The speaker ended by outlining the latest applications of technology in seabird research, such as the use of tiny 'geolocators', which give us fresh insight into the amazing lives of seabirds.

Next speaker to address the society will be Dr James Merryweather of Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum, who will give a talk on the wildlife and ecology of native woodlands entitled 'You call that a woodland?'.

The meeting will take place on at the Alexandra Hotel tomorrow (Friday) night at 7.30pm. Everyone welcome.

OT

Ardnamurchan fury at nurse plan

WEST ARDNAMURCHAN Community Council has expressed fury at NHS Highland plans to axe local district nurse out-of-hours services in early 2011.

Chairman Rosie Curtis said the 'dangerous, callous and short-sighted' move came despite NHS promises it would not withdraw emergency cover. She said: 'This cut strikes at the heart of our community. Our district nurses have always dealt with emergencies round the clock, whatever the weather. Now we've been told this is to stop. Instead, we will have to rely on our nearest ambulance, an hour and a quarter away, or our local GPs, who are an hour away – if they are available and the roads are open.'

In a letter to WACC, NHS Lochaber locality general manager Tracy Ligema said using community nurses for emergency or primary care response out of hours was 'neither safe nor sustainable'. WACC has vowed to fight the decision.

Glencoe Hospital goes up for sale

NHS HIGHLAND board will put the former Glencoe hospital on the open market after December 23 – despite an eleventh hour plea from South Lochaber Community Company (SLCC) for another time extension.

As *The Oban Times* exclusively revealed last week, SLCC failed to raise any funds towards the £450,000 asking price. NHS Highland said it had received an extension request 'in the early hours' of Tuesday, the same day as the board meeting. Chief executive Roger Gibbins said holding onto the building any longer could not be justified on cost grounds.

NEWSDESK 01631 568000

John and Jan Bryden lead the 200 marchers through the snow to the accident site. People arrived by bus and car from Mallaig, Glenfinnan, Acharacle, Arisaig and Mallaig to take part. 10_f50john01

Don't delay on barrier pledge plead families

REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

ABOUT 200 local people marched along a snowy A830 on Sunday to support two bereaved Lochaber families campaigning for crash barriers at the spot their children died.

Dressed in bright day-glow safety jackets and shepherded by Mallaig coastguards and local police, the column walked five abreast to Rannachan corner near Lochailort, where Kirsty Bryden, 19, and her passenger Roddy MacInnes, 17, died when their car plunged off the road into Loch Eilt on September 29.

Kirsty's mum and dad, John and Jan, and Roddy's mum Heather laid a wreath beside a small stone cairn and simple wooden cross, erected after the tragedy.

Minutes earlier, Mr Bryden addressed supporters outside his Craiglea home before the 2.5-mile walk to the crash site.

Imploring Transport Scotland to immediately fulfill their promise to install a barrier, he said: 'We are asking as a community, pleading to them to make this corner safe - not in 18 months, but now. 'People have been dying on this road since 1944 and nothing was done. When the coalman went in [the loch] in 1968, when John from Nevis Bakery went in, nothing was done.

'When the children were lying dead in the car after skidding off that road, nothing was done.

'If a workman was on scaffolding and fell and died, would the authorities let other people use that scaffolding until they had finished their inquiries? No they would not. 'We are gathering here to say to the authorities - for God's sake listen to us. People are dying here and you are doing nothing. Plug this hole before somebody else dies. Plug it today or tomorrow, before it's too late.'

Highlands SNP MSP Dave Thompson led moves to convince Transport Scotland to bow to local opinion and put up barriers.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* at Craiglea, he said: 'I am just happy to have been able to help over the past two or three weeks.

'It is a good result that they are going to put barriers on that corner.

'Any driver who loses control there, for whatever reason, is led right into the loch by the camber. It is just a shame it has taken a tragedy for action to be taken.

'I can't imagine what John and Jan and the MacInnes family have been going through over the past nine weeks.

'Now we have to make sure that those barriers are put in as quickly as possible. We will keep the pressure on to make sure it is done asap.'

New Fort community school a step closer

REPORT by STEPHEN NORRIS snorris@obantimes.co.uk

A NEW community school to replace the ageing Fort William and Upper Achintore primaries appears a step closer after school representatives were briefed on potential sites and timetables for the project.

Parent councils and head teachers met Highland Council officials and members in Lochaber House to hear that two locations, land at Lundavra Road and the Angus Centre off Lochaber Road, were the only two sites under active consideration.

A report will go before the education, culture and sport committee in January recommending their approval as two areas capable of hosting the new school.

Both will be scored and weighted on their suitability, before a community consultation is carried out to allow local people to express their preferences and what community facilities they would like to see.

Fort William councillor Donald Cameron said: 'It is likely a positive decision regarding a site will be made in March and then it all comes down to when the new community school will be built – not if.

'The time scale is difficult because of capital funding constraints, but the best guess is that the new school will be built within three to five years. It's the community facilities that are going to be the big bonus for the Upper Achintore community.

'Local councillors would prefer it to be completed as quickly as possible – three years from now.'

Roads and pavements 'treacherous'

REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK fort@obantimes.co.uk

EXTREME weather left minor roads and pavements in parts of Lochaber in a treacherous state this week with many residents stuck in their homes.

Highland Council has come in for criticism for not doing more to clear frozen snow and ice as the mercury plummeted to –13°C near Fort William on Tuesday morning.

In the town's Plantation, youth worker Donna Calder described her street as 'absolutely ridiculous' and a 'no-go area'.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'It is like it's a forgotten place, probably because it's up the hill. I spent three hours clearing the pavements of ice with two young boys. We emptied three grit bins.

'I can understand if the council can't get up here to clear it, but surely they could do something? They knew it was coming, so they can't say it caught them out.'

Alasdair MacDonald, of Lochaber Place, said Upper Achintore had been badly affected by snow and ice but no gritters had been round.

He said: 'I'm disabled and I can't get out of my house because the pavements and roads around here haven't been touched. At the same time I can see them putting up Christmas lights on Lochaber Road. I think they've got their priorities wrong this time.'

Across Loch Linnhe in Ardgour, Ardgour Inn owner Luke Alexander said despite the bad weather, the council had managed to salt local roads. He said: 'The main road has been gritted and cleared and all the snow on the road has melted.'

However, Shiel Buses cancelled all Ardgour to Fort William services on Tuesday due to hard ice on the A861 round Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil. Director David MacGillivray said: 'The hard freeze has compacted the snow and we didn't want to take any risks.'

A council spokesperson said they were doing as much as they can, but gritters would not be able to get to every road.

She said: 'The council has a gritting priority system, which means unfortunately there will be some streets that don't get cleared.'

Archie bids farewell as editor of *Scottish Field*

TO MARK the retiral of Archie Mackenzie as editor of *Scottish Field* magazine, staff and colleagues gathered recently at the Bonham Hotel, in Edinburgh, at a drinks reception hosted by Howard and Joan Bennett, the magazine's owners.

During the evening, Mr Bennett, chairman of Wyvex Media, paid tribute to Archie's 15 years as editor and at a staff gathering held earlier in the offices at Craigcrook Castle, Edinburgh, he was presented with a cheque and gifts from the company and staff.

Born in Oban, Archie was educated at St Columba's School and Oban High School and began his career at *The Oban Times* as a junior reporter under the then editor, Alan E Cameron. During his time on the newspaper he travelled the length and breadth of the west coast covering all kinds of events from agricultural shows to local and national Mods.

Archie at the Bonham Hotel, Edinburgh, with Roddy Martine, left, a former editor of *Scottish Field*, and his successor, Richard Bath.

He also served as a senior reporter on *The Oban Times*, went on to edit both the *Argyllshire Advertiser* and the *Campbeltown Courier* before finally becoming consultant editor.

Archie then moved to the magazine world as editor of *Scottish World* magazine and travelled to the USA and Australia to promote the magazine. In 1995 he was appointed editor of *Scottish Field* which he ran until June of this year. He was also promoted to editorial director in September of 2004.

Having seen the magazine's circulation almost double during his tenure as editor, he always gave credit to the staff as he saw it very much as 'a team effort'.

Although retired from *Scottish Field*, he will continue to work on a part time basis editing *Scots Heritage* magazine, a quarterly publication for the overseas market.

Council under fire over gagging order

STAFF and politicians have hit out at the timing of a council policy instructing local authority workers not to speak to the press.

A letter issued to all employees tells staff they should not speak to the press. Despite most local authorities having such a document it was delivered to staff in a week where many were told they may be in line to lose their jobs.

The letter entitled 'Dealing With the Press' states: 'If you are asked a question by a reporter that is not a simple fact, you should ALWAYS direct the journalist to the communications team.

'You should not answer the question yourself because councillors should always be quoted in the media.

'We must make sure the message we give to the public is a consistent one.'

The person who handed the letter into *The Oban Times* said: 'We are under strict instructions at the moment not to talk to the media. It was no coincidence that this was delivered with my wage packet. Although we have not been told we will lose our job if we speak to the media, the threat is there nonetheless.'

Roddie McCuish, SNP councillor who stood down as deputy area committee chairman this week, said: 'The timing of this instruction could not have come at a worse time for the work force of Argyll and Bute.

'Already they are facing uncertainty and morale is at an all time low.

'I am all for there being a consistent message to ensure we get the correct information out. Yet the letter doesn't have this as one of the reasons for producing a policy.

'Surely, in every employee's contract, there is a section regarding contact with the media.

'Issuing this letter at this time creates suspicion and mistrust. Our work force is our most valuable asset and we will need them with us every step of the way in the coming years ahead.

'I am afraid this will do more harm than good. This is an instruction I would expect from one of the large city authorities, not from Argyll and Bute.'

Paul Holleran, National Organiser of the National Union of Journalists in Scotland, said people had a right to speak to the press at any time.

'With the level of cuts in the country, people have a democratic right to have a voice in the press.'

Jo Smith, communications manager at Argyll and Bute Council, said: 'The council's communications team is the first point of contact for media enquiries. Employees are advised they should direct all media queries to the communications team, leaving them free to carry on with their normal work.'

Ice bound: not Baffin Bay, but Canna Bay, with the mountains of Rum behind.

Winter ice gets a grip in Canna Bay

CANNA Bay froze over this week – for only the third time in living memory.

The island is normally protected from extreme cold by its sheltered maritime location, but near-record early winter frosts have left their mark.

National Trust for Scotland property manager Stewart Connor said: 'It's unusual for Canna to experience such low temperatures. While the bay did start to freeze over last year, it wasn't as bad as this.

'Over the last week or so, we've also had some snow, but this melted quickly and didn't cause any of the disruption that the mainland has experienced. It did last long enough though for the children to get a few snowmen built, which in itself is a rare experience on Canna.'

OT

Car skids into river

A MAN escaped without injury after his car skidded off the A82, plunged down an embankment and overturned in a river on Monday afternoon.

The driver, the sole occupant, was heading north about 1pm when he lost control on the icy road on a right hand bend at the entrance to Bunree Caravan Park, eight miles south of Fort William.

The black Vauxhall Corsa smashed through a wooden fence and finished upside down on the half-frozen River Righ, Lochaber police said.

Officers from Glencoe attended the scene and the vehicle was later recovered.

Kyleakin Primary School panto

KYLEAKIN Primary School is staging its Christmas pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk next Tuesday, December 14 at 7pm.

Glenelg Primary School puts on its nativity play the following evening at 7pm, while Kyle Primary School children perform their nativity on Thursday, December 16, also at 7pm. All three events will be held in the local village halls.

Cash boost for clubs

LOCHABER councillors have agreed cash support for three local organisations from their discretionary budgets.

Plantation Kidz Club received £150 for travel costs to a pantomime, Plantation Community Association £150 towards a pensioners' Christmas lunch and Lady Lovat Primary School £500 to help with ski trip costs.

Veterinary practice on the move

A FORT Willaim veterinary practice will move to new premises in the New Year after being bought over.

CC Evans Ltd on Victoria Road has been acquired by Inverness-based Crown Vets and will move to its new home in Glen Nevis Place by spring 2011.

Previous owner Chris Evans, whose surgery has treated all types of animals for the last 33 years, plans to work with Crown Vets for three months before retiring in March 2011. All existing vets and support staff will be kept on and Crown Vets hope the business will expand and need further staff in the future.

Mr Evans said: 'We are very pleased to have found a successor who is experienced, forward thinking and with the energy that running this huge practice demands. I know that they have plenty of ideas for its development and that our clients and their animals will be safe in their hands.'

Chamber of Commerce meeting

FORT William Chamber of Commerce holds its next networking meeting in Ben Nevis Distillery tomorrow (Friday) from 12.30pm to 2pm.

Local businesspeople are invited to attend.

Improper use of lifting equipment caused man's death, sheriff rules

REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK fort@obantimes.co.uk

A LOCHABER workman's death came as the result of improper use of heavy lifting equipment, a sheriff has ruled.

Alexander Stewart, aged 70, of 10 Glen Nevis Road, Caol, died on August 1 2008 from injuries sustained when he was crushed by a mechanical shovel at his workplace at Lorne Developments Limited (Lochaber Aggregates), Ben Nevis Industrial Estate, Fort William. The company was fined £4,000 after admitting breaching health and safety regulations and using inappropriate equipment for the job.

Sheriff Paul Crozier's findings follow a fatal accident inquiry held at Fort William Sheriff Court in October, which heard from four witnesses including company director William MacKenzie and his son Colin, who were involved in the accident.

William MacKenzie told the inquiry he had decided to remove a piece of screening plant by attaching four chains to it and lifting it using a JCB JS 130 machine. After an initial unsuccessful attempt, Mr MacKenzie and Mr Stewart were lifted to the top of the screening plant in the bucket of another vehicle driven by Colin MacKenzie, to check the chains.

William MacKenzie shouted to his son to go to the JCB to lessen the tension on the chains.

Colin MacKenzie could not make out what he was saying and leaned out of the cab to hear the instructions, catching his jacket on the joystick.

As he had not applied the hydraulic lock, the arm of the vehicle moved, titling the bucket forward.

Mr Stewart was stepping back into the bucket from the top of the screening plant and was knocked back and caught between the bucket and the plant.

As soon as Colin MacKenzie realised what had happened, he reversed his vehicle and Mr Stewart slid to the ground.

The injured man was taken to Belford Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

In his report, published last week, Sheriff Crozier determined a number of 'defects in systems of working' had contributed to the accident.

He said: 'The JS 130 should not have been used to lift the screening plant. It was not intended for lifting operations.' He ruled that an assessment of the weight of the screening plant should have been carried out and the men should not have been lifted to the top of the plant in the bucket, saying: 'A ladder or mobile elevated work platform should have been used to gain access to the top of the screening plant.'

Sheriff Crozier also said Mr Stewart's death may have been avoided had a number of precautions been taken. He said Colin MacKenzie should not have leaned out of the cab and having decided to do so should have used the hydraulic lock.

Major Cameron.

Caol soldier wins tough Army race

A CAOL soldier has won one of the most arduous and difficult races in the British Army calendar.

Major Robert Cameron took the veterans' title in Exercise Rhino Soldier in Northern Germany in a time of 1 hour, 23 minutes, 34 seconds. Nearly 600 competitors took part in the 26 Regiment Royal Artillery event.

Competitors ran in Army issue boots and clothing and had to tackle ice-cold water crossings, ropes, crawling under low nets, muddy ditches and steep climbs.

Robert, a former Lochaber High School pupil and a married father of one, said: 'I actually felt fine at the end of the race - I had a supply of jelly beans to keep up my strength.'

Major Cameron is currently commanding officer of the Army Crew Training School in Germany. His parents Alan and Elma live in Upper Achintore, Fort William.

Cream of the crop: Alasdair MacLean of Strontian Stores pick up his award.

Strontian village shop is cream of the crop at rural store awards

A VILLAGE shop in Sunart is one of the top small shops in the UK – and that's official.

Strontian Stores (Keystore) beat thousands of rivals to scoop Rural Store of Year at the Robert Wiseman Dairies Neighbourhood Shop of the Year awards at Cameron House, Loch Lomondside last Thursday.

Owner Alasdair MacLean travelled down for the glittering awards ceremony – and had no idea he was in the frame until the verdict.

'It's absolutely brilliant,' Alastair told *The Oban Times*.

'It's not just down to the store, but to the staff as well, who put in a tremendous effort. We looked at the needs of everybody in the community and expanded, and it has got to the stage where we are going to have to expand again.

'We run vans to the ferry every single day of the week and take the papers for the peninsula and bread and milk to Lochaline, the two shops in Strontian, and to Ardgour and Kilchoan.

'What we are doing seems to have worked – we get a lot of people coming through from the rest of the peninsula to shop and have a cup of tea.'

Strontian Stores employs three full time and two part time staff.

Sports groups vote for historic merger

THREE Lochaber sports bodies are to merge into a single charitable organisation, the Lochaber Sports Association.

The union of Lochaber Sports Council, Sportlochaber and the Sportlochaber Youth Support Fund means local clubs will now pay a single affiliation fee.

Some 44 sports clubs voted overwhelmingly in favour of merger in written responses.

Chairperson of the new body, Jane Blanchard, said Lochaber's sporting community would benefit from having a 'single, strong voice, both locally and nationally'. She told *The Oban Times*: 'We are very excited indeed about the solid platform this will give our affiliated clubs.

'I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of both the Sportlochaber Board and Lochaber Sports Council for all the hard work they have put into reaching this historic agreement, and also to thank the clubs who have shown their continuing support and trust.

'We are confident that they, and indeed the wider community, will reap the benefits over the coming years and we are very much looking forward to working together.'

Ms Blanchard said immediate aims of the LSA include increasing awareness of the funding available, and holding a clubs' forum in spring with national bodies to help with funding, volunteers and coaching.

An indoor training facility for pitch users will also be on LSA's priority list.

Rotary celebrates 60 years

Rotary Club office bearers and their guests enjoyed the 60th anniversary Charter Night dinner dance of the Rotary Club of Lochaber in the Alexandra Hotel on Saturday night. Seated left to right are John Hyde, President of the Rotary Club of Oban, and Angus Nicolson, President of the Rotary Club of Lochaber. Standing are, left to right, Rosie and Colin Ross, Ben Nevis Distillery, Helen and Paul Brian (Paul is President-Elect of the Lochaber Club), and Margaret Hyde.

Severe weather closes schools

SCHOOLS in Lochaber, Lochalsh and Skye were hard hit by severe weather on Tuesday.

Ardnamurchan High, Kinlochleven High and Lochaber High were among dozens of schools closed in Lochaber.

In Lochalsh only Glenelg Primary remained open. All south Skye schools and Portree High closed.

Kyleakin Primary School and Kyle Primary School head teacher Alison MacLennan called off lessons at 7am on Tuesday morning. She said: 'It was just too dangerous for staff to drive. We have staff travelling a distance from Portree, from Sleat, from Dornie and Lochcarron and we could not take the risk.'

Mallaig pool takes plunge with boiler

MALLAIG and District Swimming Pool is to install a biomass boiler at its Fank Brae site to cut costs and carbon emissions.

The wood chip-fuelled boiler, supplied by Torlundy-based Highland Wood Energy, will generate CO2 savings of more than 126 tonnes a year.

Heating costs constitute a large part of the pool's budget and increasing oil prices led pool managers to look for a viable and sustainable alternative.

HWE, aided by a Forestry Commission Scotland grant, will meet all capital costs then sell the energy to the pool on a per unit basis. That price will be significantly cut through the Renewable Heat Incentive, a government-backed scheme only recently confirmed in the October budget. Per unit costs to the pool are reviewable after the initial three years of the contract but will remain tied below the price of oil, ensuring that the pool always makes a saving. A clause in the deal also allows the pool to explore the possibility of buying the boiler outright in the future, potentially further reducing energy costs.

HWE managing director, Bruno Berardelli said: 'This is a great project for us to be involved with.'

MDSP chairman Roger Lanyon hoped work on installing the boiler would begin in January.

The boiler and fuel will be housed in a purpose built annex next the pool building.

Gaelic church service boosts lifeboat funds

A GAELIC church service held on Skye at the weekend raised more than £150 for RNLI lifeboats.

The money came from donations from the congregation who attended the service at Portree Parish Church on Saturday, which was filmed for BBC Alba. It will be shown on Christmas Eve at 11pm.

Portree RNLI lifeboat coxswain Davie Urquhart said: 'It is heartening to know that those who attended the service appreciate the important work carried out by Portree lifeboat.'

Lochaber Showstoppers' much-awaited Christmas pantomime begins its three-day evening run at the Nevis Centre tomorrow night. With a live band backing the all-star local cast, 'Robyn Hood and her Merry Women' take on the Sheriff of Nottingham – with laughs all the way. Showstoppers will also give a Saturday afternoon matinee performance. Above, Robyn Hood, Gemma Wright; Sheriff of Nottingham, Dominic Dobson; and Murdo Marion, Stephen Carruthers, warm up at final dress rehearsal on Monday night.

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Argyll & Bute Council

Firms urged to cash in on growth programme

SMALL businesses wishing to expand are being urged to make the most of available grants before March 2011.

Argyll and Bute Council's Business Gateway team is recommending small businesses apply for a grant of up to £3,000 under its pilot Competitive Businesses Growth Programme.

The programme, which provides discretionary grant support to both growing and start up businesses, offers an experienced business advisor to help in the application process.

Under the programme, eligible businesses already trading over the VAT threshold can apply for a grant of 50 per cent of actual project costs up to a maximum of £3,000, whilst new businesses can apply for a grant of up to £500 for start-up costs.

Councillor Robert Macintyre, Argyll and Bute Council's spokesman for economy, environment and rural affairs, said the council is keen that businesses that could benefit are aware of the assistance available. He said: 'Securing funding to grow your business isn't easy in the current climate but there is help available. Business Gateway can signpost the available funding sources and help you develop your business plan.'

Following its launch, several local businesses have already successfully applied to the scheme.

'We hope to help more local businesses thrive and grow by providing some financial support as well as advice,' added Councillor MacIntyre.

The Competitive Business Growth Programme is funded by Argyll and Bute Council and the Argyll and the Islands LEADER 2007-2013 Programme.

Business Gateway also provides support, advice and assistance in identifying other potential sources of funding for Argyll businesses.

For more information contact Business Gateway on 01546 605 459

Bright future predicted for Harris Tweed industry

THE HARRIS Tweed industry looks set for brighter times with output forecast to increase by 30 per cent on 2009 figures.

Led by the Harris Tweed Industry Forum, the industry and agencies have worked together to pull in support from the Harris Tweed Investment Fund (HTIF), the European Social Fund's (ESF) skills and training project, and backing for individual projects with the mills and the Harris Tweed Authority.

Current training packages for new and existing weavers have been complemented by a wide-ranging package of support in the mills, developing skills in production, management and design.

Three local trainees recently gained certification from the prestigious Textiles Centre of Excellence, in Yorkshire, and other mill employees have had bespoke design and trend advice - crucial for developing desirable products in global markets.

International models starred at Harris Tweed Hebrides' third anniversary celebrations in Glasgow.

Ian Angus Mackenzie, Managing Director of Harris Tweed Hebrides, sees signs of this co-ordination paying off.

He said: 'We are extremely busy into next year, so are confident about the future. In particular, the breadth of training support has allowed us not only to deal with immediate requirements but identify and invest in the skills we will need to take the company forward, including in design, marketing and management.'

The Harris Tweed Skills and Training Project, funded by the ESF, Western Isles Council and Highland and Islands Enterprise, comes to an end in March 2011.

According to project managers Upper Quartile (UQ), the focus of training for mills and weavers has been 'extremely practical' and allowed mills to develop new skills and attract new people to the sector.

'This puts the industry in a strong position for future growth,' says UQ.

Chairman of the HTIF Councillor Angus Campbell said: 'Last week three mill trainees received awards from the Textiles Centre of Excellence in Huddersfield, and the ESF project targets have either been met or will be exceeded. It is fitting that in this centenary year of the Harris Tweed Orb, the industry is working together to invest in future growth.'

Shawbost-based Harris Tweed Hebrides recently celebrated its third birthday with a gala catwalk show in the Blythswood Square Hotel in Glasgow.

The successful promotional event featured international models wearing Harris Tweed outfits by Scottish designers such as Deryck Walker and Fort William's Judy Clark.

Tanglewood B&B joins an exclusive club

A TAYNUILT bed and breakfast has become only the ninth business to be awarded a VisitScotland Gold Star.

Tanglewood Lodge is the latest to receive the award for exceptional hospitality and service.

Owners Geoff and Carol Blunsum said they had been working for nearly four years to achieve the gold status.

Geoff said: 'It is very rewarding to know that all our hard work and effort has been recognised in such a positive manner.

Beautiful

'Our success is also due to being located in a beautiful part of the West Highlands, having good suppliers and places to eat locally.

'We are delighted with our gold star, which has been awarded for excellence in hospitality and customer care.

'We hope to continue providing our guests with the best service we can, encouraging them to return in the future.'

Geoff and Carol Blunsum at Tanglewood Lodge. 07_t49tangle1

Gold stars are accessible to properties of any star grade but are limited to a select few establishments and are reviewed each year. David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland's Regional Director for Argyll, said: 'Establishments such as Tanglewood Lodge are exceptional when it comes to quality and service in accommodation provision. B&Bs and guesthouses play a huge part in bringing millions of visitors and billions of pounds to our economy.'

Success comes at a pace for Fearnach Bay House

THE FEARNACH Bay House, at Kilmelford, has been voted the UK Cottage, UK Coastal and Scottish property of the year by a national website.

Beating off competition from more than 5,000 other holiday properties to win the MyCottageHoliday Excellence Awards, the owners say the award is a remarkable achievement given that, just two years ago, Fearnach Bay House only existed on paper.

The owner of the four bedroom lochside holiday cottage, Rory Campbell-Gibson, said: 'This prestigious award is particularly special to us. We wanted to offer the perfect self-catering holiday experience, so we found the ideal location and built the house ourselves.'

Andy Brown, editor of MyCottageHoliday, said: 'The finalists for each region and category were selected by the editorial judging panel based purely on the reviews left by guests on the website. The very best cottage holidays all offer something extra. Sometimes it's just little touches that make the difference for a holidaymaker. Consistency, commitment and attention to detail is what makes the winners stand out.'

While the Fearnach Bay House was judged to be the best property out there, west of Scotland properties featured heavily in the final stages of the competition. Among the list of 12 commended properties were Argyll's Laich Cottage and The Tree House, both Kinlochlaich, Oban, Craobh Haven Cottages, near Oban, while Fort William properties Loch Leven Chalets and But 'n' Ben Breaks were also included. Shortlisted for awards were: Ach na Skia Croft, Arisaig; Stable Cottage, Lochgilphead; Airdeny Chalets, Taynuilt and Creag-an-Fhithich, near Oban.

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Maggie Wilson, left, with Morag Young at the Craft Fair held at the Corran Halls last month for Argyll Animal Aid. 07_t50hats01

Hats off to duo's new joint venture

REPORT by STEVEN FLANAGAN sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

TWO Ballachulish crafters are demonstrating that a lack of jobs doesn't mean a lack of work by starting their own fashion firms.

Maggie Wilson's venture, Wilson Smith, and Morag Young's MoMo Chapeaux have already started establishing a reputation for quality and individuality at craft fairs and shows across the country.

Both make their own unique hats, bags and accessories, but instead of working against one another the pair have teamed up to reduce costs.

The result is two firms heading towards success instead of just one.

Maggie decided to purchase buy a sowing machine after her husband was made redundant. A window dresser to trade, she had no track record in fashion but decided such a minor obstacle wouldn't stop her.

She said: 'I trained in Jenners, so that was my background. But where would I get a job doing that in the Highlands?

'We both source our fabrics from Scotland and I think we've got some fantastic products here.

'The reception from people has been brilliant so far. I think people are pleased to see something unique that's not available elsewhere.'

Home-based

She believes the tide is turning towards small, home-based producers as people are seeing too many similar products on the High Street.

'For me, part of the motivation was that I got fed up seeing products made in China going into shop windows,' she said.

'At least you know with our stuff that you're not going to see anyone else wearing your hat.'

Unlike Maggie, Morag, 46, already had experience of running a business, a family hotel, before embarking on her first solo venture with MoMo Chapeaux.

One year in and it's a case of so far, so good.

She said: 'I think we're both still finding our feet, trying different things and different events, but it's all been very positive so far,

'I think I started the business just to be creative. Or mad maybe?

'I think it's just because I enjoy creating beautiful things people want.'

Morag's dedication to her new business is such that she's studying towards a textile qualification in Edinburgh.

Maggie, a first time entrepreneur at 59 years of age, said she's proof that it's never too late to start your own business.

Her advice? 'Don't give up your job if you can and start your business slowly; see where your market is. If you think you can make it work, do it.'

Showroom service at its best

A FORMER Oban butcher and builders' merchant has been named Scotland's best showroom advisor within the Homebase chain.

Donald Hay picked up his award at the company's National Showroom Conference in the Grange Hotel, Falkirk, last Tuesday for his high number of sales.

Donald, who turns 51 next Wednesday, said: 'I nearly fell off my seat when they said my name as the winner. I knew I had been doing well but it was a big surprise.'

Store manager Andy Spence was at the award ceremony with Donald and paid tribute to his showroom advisor.

'We are all made up for Donald. He deserves this award because of his successful sales technique and his personality.

'I have never seen a man so shocked in my life when Donald's name was announced on the night.

'It is good for the store as well, because it's usually one of the city stores that win these awards.'

Since opening five years ago, the Oban branch of Homebase has been the best performing store in Scotland in four of those years.

Winning showroom advisor Donald Hay, left, with Homebase store manager Andy Spence. 07_t49hay01

Quality counts as Dunstaffnage Marina achieves a UK first in ISO accreditation

A WEST coast marina has become the first in the UK to gain a quality management accreditation.

Dunstaffnage Marina has recently received accreditation for ISO:9001, a quality management system, under the category 'marina services'.

Dunstaffnage Marina Chief Executive Officer Neil McLauchlan said: 'It has been a worthwhile process for the company and has greatly improved many aspects of the work done by its boat services division. This is a certificate that the customers at Dunstaffnage can identify with quality and give them the comfort of knowing that all work is traceable and that quality measures and standards are in place and can be monitored through all aspects of the company.

'People with expensive boats want to know they are cared for and at Dunstaffnage Marina we can actually measure that now for those customers.'

Lachie Beaton, senior development manager at Highlands and Islands Enterprise, added: 'We are delighted Dunstaffnage Marina has been awarded this accreditation.

'This is testament to the ambitions and hard work of the management and all the staff at Dunstaffnage.'

The marina is currently the only one in the UK that has ISO certification and offers 150 fully serviced berths.

Start-up scheme for ex-service personnel

A NEW business scheme has been launched to help young ex-service men and women to start up their own business.

The new scheme, called 'Be the Boss', has been designed to support recent UK service leavers to plan, fund and grow their own small businesses.

Under the scheme, ex-service personnel could qualify for business start-up funds up to £7,500 and up to £30,000 for business expansion plans.

Be the Boss has been set up by the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT) in conjunction with The Royal British Legion and Poppyscotland.

Business Gateway will deliver the scheme for all other ex-service personnel in Scotland.

Ian McGregor, chief executive of Poppyscotland, added: 'Our role in Be the Boss is to ensure that the Scottish clients' journey through the application process is as easy as possible and we look forward to helping young veterans achieve their goals.'

Panto group endures its own drama!

REPORT
by EUAN PATERSON
epaterson@obantimes.co.uk

AN ARGYLL drama club has been counting the cost of the freezing weather after burst pipes flooded the club hut and damaged costumes, props and scenery.

The flood happened last Saturday, just five days before the curtain goes up on Benderloch and North Connel Drama Club's panto *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

However, George Hamilton, who is playing the panto dame, insisted the show must go on, explaining the group had salvaged most of the costumes and equipment.

He said: 'Last Friday I was putting the finishing touches to my dame's outfit and the next day I'm helping to dry out the club hut.

'The recent cold snap, along with a wintering field mouse's appetite for pipe lagging, resulted in burst pipes and soaked costumes, props and scenery. Fortunately most items are retrievable and, in the best theatrical tradition, the show will go on!'

Benderloch and North Connel Drama Club will take to the stage for the first of four performances today (Thursday) at the Corran Halls, Oban.

George's wife Val, who is also a member of the group, said: 'The club was established in 1955 and has been regularly entertaining young and old with a seasonal production since 'Scatterbrained Scarecrow of Oz' in 1989.

'All the money we raise through our varied performances enables us to finance the next production. Now those funds will also be needed to repair club premises so that rehearsals can continue in the new year.'

Panto dame George Hamilton, dressed in more usual attire, helps with the clean up at the club hut. Below, George in costume for this year's show.

Trio set to go Dutch after impressing visitors

THREE young musicians have been invited to take part in a concert in Holland after meeting up with the Dutch group Ogham at a concert in Killin.

Fiddle player Charlotte Gunn, aged 14, Gaelic singer Morvyn Menzies, 16, and Jack McRobbie, 17, were three of the many young musicians from Killin and the surrounding area who impressed the Dutch group with their musical prowess.

Ogham, which play traditional Scottish and Irish music, began their love affair with Killin and Scotland in 1984.

Each year the group plays a Scottish tour with concerts in towns and villages all over Scotland, with Oban and Mull being among their favourite parts of the country.

Ogham have been planning to introduce some young Scottish talent to their home town of Tilburg for some time and have contributed financially to help the trio make the trip to Holland.

Search

David Ostler, from Killin, who organises Ogham's concerts in the village said: 'I hope this will be the first of many trips in the future for young musicians from the area and I hope to broaden the search further west to Dalmally next year.'

The concert in Tilburg is on February 19.

Musicians, from left, Charlotte Gunn, Morvyn Menzies and Jack McRobbie are off to Holland.

Enthusiasts rewarded for braving winter weather

WINTRY weather on the first Thursday of December resulted in a lower attendance than usual at the Isle of Skye Accordion and Fiddle Club's monthly meeting in the Royal Hotel, Portree.

But those enthusiasts who did brave the conditions were rewarded with a fine evening of traditional music from the musicians, one of whom had travelled all the way from Muir of Ord to entertain – and then travelled home at the end of the night.

Club chairman and MC Jim Campbell gave his usual warm welcome to the assembled company before inviting his vice chairman, Aly 'K' MacPherson, of Portree, on stage to open the evening with great toe-tapping marches and reels on his piano accordion, accompanied by local drummer Donald John Campbell on drums and, on second box, Ian Joseph MacDonald, of Roy Bridge on keyboards.

After their great warm-up session they handed over to the youngest player of the night, Hannah McDiarmid of Torvaig on solo accordion, who played sets of jigs and Gaelic waltzes. No stranger to the club and always a welcome visitor, Hamish MacDougal, from Muir of Ord, on button box, accompanied by John Cameron, Portree, on keyboards and Donald John Campbell on drums kept the music swinging along in good style after which Donald John stayed on drums, John Cameron switched to accordion and was joined by regular local player, John MacGilvary on accordion, to make up another entertaining trio.

Guest band of the evening was the ever popular Iain Angus Macleod Ceilidh Band with Iain Angus himself, from Harris, leading on piano accordion, Ian Joseph MacDonald of Roy Bridge on second accordion and Portree's Aly 'K' MacPherson on drums.

Their selections were delivered with great verve and professionalism to the delight of an appreciative audience - a fine trio of musicians always sure to please a Skye audience.

The next club night will be held in the Royal Hotel, Portree, on Thursday January 6, when they look forward to the music of the Ross MacPherson Scottish Dance Band – another night of great west coast music.

John Grundy

Guest band, the Iain Angus Macleod Ceilidh Band in action, with Aly 'K' MacPherson on drums, Ian Joseph MacDonald on second accordion and Iain Angus Macleod on lead accordion.

Poppy appeal raises £8,500

PEOPLE who bought a poppy in Oban have raised almost £8,500.

The Oban branch of the Royal British Legion, which disbanded after this year's Remembrance Day parade, raised £8460.12 for the Poppy Appeal.

Former chairman of the Oban branch Robert MacBrayne said: 'In these days of austerity and uncertain job security for many people, this amount of money only reinforces what we in the legion have known for years, that the people in this area are 100 per cent behind our armed forces and are prepared to support them year in, year out.'

The money was raised by volunteers who collected on Oban streets and shopkeepers who sold poppies and displayed collecting cans on their premises.

Although the Oban legion branch no longer officially exists, former members of the committee have confirmed that they will continue to do the annual Poppy Appeal in the town.

Change of venue for Dalmally show

VILLAGERS in Dalmally were hoping to be shouting 'it's behind you' at their new £1 million hall - but a delay in its opening has meant a switch of venue.

A legal hitch is preventing Dalmally Community Company (DCC) from opening the community centre, as a result of which this year's Christmas panto – due to take place from today (Thursday) until Saturday - has been moved to the old village hall, which is nearly 100 years old and was officially closed in September this year.

All other events that were scheduled to take place in the new hall have also been relocated to the old hall until the wrangle is resolved.

The building itself was mostly finished two months ago – nearly a month ahead of schedule - but it is understood that the complication revolves around water and sewage connections to the hall, which are still to be made.

There is now growing frustration at the delay, and the community council says it is disappointed that the DCC hasn't been more forthcoming with the reasons for the hold up.

Chairman of the community council David Fellowes said: 'The Christmas panto is being moved, as is the grand opening ceilidh. Now it's just a ceilidh!

'Two board members of the DCC, Tim Boardman and Donald McLaren, were present at our November meeting and we were unable to get any information from them. Quite considerable pressure was put on them to find out what was happening. It isn't ideal at all and people are very disappointed.

'People are also annoyed that, with all that money spent, the beautiful hall sits there and can't be used.

'It's a mess. I would say it is extraordinary to complete a building – or even start it – without the water or sewage being organised.

'You wouldn't build a house without knowing you can put the water and sewerage works in.'

Mr Fellowes said it was his belief that the hold-up was a land ownership issue.

However, the chairman of DCC Kenny Black remained tight lipped as to the reason for the delay, saying making it public could prolong the situation further.

As it stands, he said, the matter could be resolved any day now.

He said: 'There has been some progress and we're now quite rapidly moving in the right direction.

'But divulging what it is isn't going to make things happen any faster and it won't be helpful to anyone.

'There is no scandal here. It is incredibly frustrating though – the hall is basically ready to go.'

Mr Black added that, should the matter be resolved in time, the panto and all other events will take place in the new hall.

Ballet good show from young Atlantis dancers

Ballet pupils of Alison Shepherd's school at Atlantis Leisure Dance received certificates on Saturday marking a year of achievement. Aged between six and 15 years, the dancers were examined in June by Anne Beckett, all passing with flying colours. The pupils are pictured with the certificates they received at the Atlantis Dance Studio on Saturday. 15_t50balletawards50

Five friends embark on an adventure with gallery

FIVE friends who have been exhibiting their art work locally for the past 25 years have opened a new gallery in the town.

Marianne MacEachen, Jessie Robertson, Babs Levy, Isobel MacDonald and Jan Robertson have recently opened The Wee Gallery, in Stafford Street, to let people see their work and to fill one of the vacant shops in the town centre.

At 90, Babs is the oldest member of the group but is described by Marianne as 'a neighbour and an inspiration to us all'.

Marianne said: 'It has been our dream to have our own gallery and with so many empty shops in the town we thought it would be a good opportunity to fill one.

'There has been a lot of interest and nice comments from people; we want people to come in and have a look at the pieces of art, which are all our own.'

The ladies are all members of Oban Art Society and have painted together for a long time. It has taken the best part of a year to find suitable premises, with the help of Councillor Roddie McCuish, Marianne added: 'We hope in a very small way to enhance the image of the town by at least filling one of the empty shops with something interesting to look at.'

The Wee Gallery will initially be open until the end of the festive period and also sells cards, jewellery and calendars.

Three of the team of five who are running The Wee Gallery in Oban, from left: Isobel MacDonald, Marianne MacEachen and Jessie Robertson.

Success to toast at Scots Trad Awards

REPORT
by LOUISE LEE
llee@obantimes.co.uk

THE Scots Trad Awards have placed Oban, well and truly, as the heart of Scottish music.

Skipinnish Ceilidh House was named venue of the year and Oban High School Pipe Band took the award in its category.

Former Tiree High School teacher and accordionist Gordon Connel picked up the prize as tutor of the year.

And if it wasn't for Gordon's efforts, a further three acts who made it to the final would not have been there, as Angus MacPhail, of Skipinnish, explained.

'Gordon has been teaching people on the island for 40 years, without taking a penny for doing it.

'Trail West, Skipinnish, Skerryvore and Gunna Sound have all been influenced by his gentle and calm way of teaching. He is an incredible guy. Without Gordon these bands would simply not exist.'

Turning to his own award, Angus said: 'It is fantastic to be officially recognised as the top music venue, especially as it is only two years since we opened.

'Seven days a week in the summer we offer the best quality music to the people of Oban and far beyond, and we try to give new talent a place to perform alongside new performers, such as Oban High School Pipe Band.

'The award is a credit to everyone involved with the ceilidh house, the bar staff, the door stewards, the musicians, the people who come along, everyone. It feels fantastic to have won.'

Oban High School Pipe Band continued its highly successful year by picking up the Pipe Band of the Year title.

Donnie MacDougall, a tutor and Pipe Major of the novice juvenile, said: 'We didn't know before our name was called that we would win the award. In fact I was quite taken aback because we were up against some incredibly talented Grade One pipe bands.

'The pipe band is hard going on kids and their families and we recognise that.

'Having two bands and Oban Pipe Band in the town next year will mean there is plenty of pipe music but it will be less onerous on the young people.

'It was great to be recognised for all that hard work. It was a great night – thank you to everyone who voted for us. The kids are really chuffed as is everyone involved with the pipe band.'

Julie Fowlis, from North Uist, took the award for Album of the Year.

The award winners in full: Community Project, Orkney Traditional Music Project; Event, Shetland Folk Festival; Club, Highland Accordion and Fiddle Club; Instrumentalist, Martin O'Neill; Scots Singer, Joe Aitken; Trad Music in the Media, Travelling Folk; Services to Gaelic Music, Bliadhna nan Oran; Up and Coming Artist, Matheu Watson; Scottish Dance Band, Ian Muir SDB; Folk Band, Malinky; Gaelic Singer, Eilidh MacKenzie; Composer, Iain Morrison; Pipe Band, Oban High School Pipe Band; Music Tutor, Gordon Connell; Live Act, Red Hot Chilli Pipers; Venue, Skipinnish Ceilidh House; Album of the Year, Julie Fowlis Uam; Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame, Robin Hall and Jimmie MacGregor MBE, Alison Kinnaird MBE, Gordon Duncan, Dr Tom Anderson, Pam Wilkie, Ray Fisher and Donald MacRae; Hamish Henderson Services to Traditional Music, Bill Wilkie MBE.

Angus MacPhail and Andrew Stevenson collect the award for best venue.

Islay's stars of the Mòd stage winners' concert

ISLAY'S own Gaelic stars gathered to give a concert of National Mòd prize winners.

Mòd 2010 in Caithness proved to be a successful one for junior and adult competitors and, as among the furthest travelled competitors, many islanders chartered a plane to attend.

The Post-Mòd Concert in Bowmore Hall was well attended by friends and family and many of the community who have an interest in developing Islay Gaelic.

Opened with a warm welcome by fear an taigh Hugh Smith, the concert kicked off with rousing selections from Islay Pipe Band, then the traditional 'Suas Leis a Ghaidhlig' sung by the massed Islay choirs.

The singers followed, featuring Coisir Ghaidhlig Ile with their winning Puirt a beul Iseabail Mactaggart conducting, followed by Coisir Og Ghaidhlig Ile, led by Arlene MacKerrell.

Many young singers and reciters presented their pieces, pleasing the attentive audience. Both Bowmore Primary School Choir, conducted by Helen Gillies, and Port Ellen School Choir, conducted by head teacher Maureen MacDonald, acquitted themselves with style and ability, and all the individuals gave of their best in their own 'spots'.

Coisir Ghaidhlig Ile Ladies sang with their usual polish and flair, finishing just in time to put the kettles on for the traditional break for supper and raffle. At the top of the second half, Coisir Ghaidlig Ile's male voice choir performed 'Sguaban Arbhair', which was warmly received.

The evening was closed with 'Oidhche Mhath Leibh' sung together by all the concert participants and audience, ending a delightful occasion which bodes well for the future of Islay Gaelic.

SC

Participants in this year's Post-Mòd Concert on Islay.

Coffee morning in aid of local churches raises £2,400

MORE than 100 people enjoyed a coffee morning in Ballachulish Village Hall on Saturday in aid of local churches, St Mun's Ballachulish and The Good Shepherd in Kinlochleven.

A range of stalls, including tombola, home baking and bric-a-brac, combined with a festive atmosphere to make the event a huge success. More than £2,400 was raised.

The first raffle prize, a hamper of drink, was won by Diane Robertson, Ballachulish, and second prize, a luxury food hamper, was won by Jackie Donald, Kinlochleven.

Father Francis, who drew the prizes, is pictured, right, along with organisers and helpers with the two main hamper prizes.

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Friday 10 December > Markie Dans	IASG (Stuart & Angus)
Saturday 11 December > Skipinnish Ceilidh House	Dodgy Ground (with DJs) Licensed until 3am
Saturday 11 December > Markie Dans	Declan
Friday 17 December > Skipinnish Ceilidh House	Skerryvore Opening Show (check website)
Friday 17 December > Skipinnish Ceilidh House	Skerryvore Late Show (check website)
Friday 17 December > Markie Dans	Chris Suckle
Thursday 23 December > Markie Dans	Tim O'Connor
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My Village Dornie

FARQUHAR MacKenzie, like countless West Highlanders before him, sailed the world's oceans in the Merchant Navy. The South Sea Islands were among his favourite places, but he always knew he would return to his native Dornie once his working days were over.

Now a sprightly 72, Farquhar resides for most of the year at Lag Cottage, a short distance from Carn Dubh, the house he was born and brought up in and his grandfather's home. In summer, Farquhar and his Irish partnerm Brid Joly, sail the Shannon in their cruiser.

Farquhar left Dornie at 16 to train with electrical engineering firm William McWhirter in Glasgow. Five years later he joined the Merchant Navy and went to sea with the Bank Line, owned by Andrew Weir of Kirkcaldy, maintaining engines and generators on cargo ships sailing the world. For 28 years he sailed the seas, with Tonga, Fiji and Samoa his favourite destinations. An 18-month spell in the Falklands with MoD contractors Turner Diesel followed, a job which included call-outs to fix generators at the army base on South Georgia - a trip of 800 miles across the wild southern ocean. In 1989 he returned to Scotland and spent 18 months doing electrical commissioning work on oil rigs before they started drilling, one six month posting taking him to Bari in southern Italy. He retired at 60 and returned to his home village with a lifetime of tales.

Here, he tells *Oban Times* reporter STEPHEN NORRIS something of Dornie, its life and its people.

What makes Dornie a special place for you, Farquhar?

I always knew I would come back to Dornie. I never considered anywhere else, really. Because I had a kind of nomadic life, this place was a harbour for me. It was the people - in a small community like this you never lose touch, whereas if you were in the city and away from home as much as I was, you would have lost touch with people.

Dornie's like a lot of West Highland villages, and it is certainly changing today. When I was a boy I could go into any house in the village, go up the other end and stop in every house on the way back.

But now a lot of people, mostly retired people, have moved here. That's a good thing in a way because a lot of them take an active part in community life. Some, though, you never see.

I think sometimes outsiders appreciate Dornie more and perhaps the locals take it for granted.

We only have one wee shop now. There was another one, but it closed years ago. Supermarkets, cars, transport – they all make it easier to shop elsewhere. But the people that use them are the same ones that complain if their local shop closes.

How has Dornie changed over the years?

Well, the bridge – the original bridge that is - went right through the village, right from the end of the hotel here and straight across Loch Long.

There is more passing traffic now, but the present bridge kind of bypasses Dornie to a certain extent and you don't get people coming in so much. It's progress but I think that affected the village.

The existing bridge was built in the 1970s, but the original was built in 1940. Before that, it was the Dornie Ferry which, coincidentally, has a pipe tune, quite a famous one, named after it. We had a discussion here in the hotel the other day about who wrote it. I think it was a fellow MacKay, who was from here.

How important is shinty to Dornie?

It's very important, it holds the community together in many ways. It's not just Dornie folk, they're from Shiel, from Glenelg, from Lochalsh, the whole area. You get to know people through it that you wouldn't otherwise. It's like a social glue, in a kind of way.

When I went down to Glasgow I played shinty for all the five years I was there, for Glasgow and Inverness-shire.

The first game I played was against Mid Argyll and I knew a lot of the players.

I was lucky there was a shinty social circle that helped me settle. There was a chap from Balmacara, Hector MacRae, who knew I was coming down and set things up. He made sure I was in with the bricks right from the start.

I went down to Glasgow on the Monday - and there was a postcard for me on the Tuesday to say I was to go to the Glasgow and Inverness-shire AGM!

What sets Dornie apart from other places?

Well, there's Eilean Donan Castle, of course. There are photographs of it all over the world. I remember once I was in the Hibernian Hotel in Durban and they had an Irish theme bar. This is going way back, maybe 40 years ago, mind you.

On the stage they had an advert for Guinness, this mural of a huge castle. There were two guys in bow ties standing there. I think one was the hotel manager. I said to them 'I'm interested in this castle, can you tell me where it is?'

And they said: 'We don't really know, but it's on the west coast of Ireland.' I just laughed and said, well I know we get high tides, but as far as I know it was on the west coast of Scotland six months ago! It was Eilean Donan, of course. The castle is a big draw for Dornie.

Is Dornie's location an asset or a drawback for local employment?

Before the Skye Bridge and before the road round Strome Ferry, in summertime this place was a bottleneck because they could not get any further when the ferry tied up for the night. The B&Bs used to be really full with people from Skye and Lochalsh, but now it's all through traffic.

Also, the forestry's cut down from what it used to be, the local contractors are shutting down and we've lost the old folks' home in the village.

That's a big loss because it employed a lot of local people. It only closed this year, they reckoned it was not fit for purpose. They are building a day centre just behind here but the one before was residential.

And your favourite time of year?

Spring is my favourite in Dornie, when everything is coming back to life again with the greenery. More so this year after last winter, which was pretty horrific.

Do you think Gaelic can make a comeback in Dornie and Lochalsh?

I hope it can. I think Plockton High School does very well, the music school of excellence there producing tremendously talented musicians and that can only be good for the language.

Up to the age of four I basically had no English, I only had Gaelic. Only Gaelic was spoken in the house when neighbours came in, but my parents made sure I had English before I went to school.

But I'm afraid after I went to school, the Gaelic fell away. At that time there were only two schools that taught Gaelic in Scotland, and they were both in Glasgow.

English was seen as the language of advancement but it is one of my regrets today that I did not keep up my Gaelic.

Not so long ago a man from Stornoway stopped me and asked me questions. He spoke to me in Gaelic, and I spoke to him likewise, but after a while I had to put my hands up and told him 'I'm going to change to English' - and he got quite annoyed.

I remember me and my brother, who died a few months ago, were at this tourist thing and they were asking if anyone spoke Gaelic.

I said, 'Well, I'm afraid I've kind of lost it now. I still understand every word, but I can't really speak it.' And my brother turned round and said 'Aye, and I've got a dog the same!'

They are putting a lot of money into Gaelic, though. Perhaps it's a bit late in the day but at least they are making the effort. That's got to be a good thing.

What are the challenges ahead for Dornie?

Well, if they could get jobs for young people here, but I can't see it, especially in the present depressing climate. A lot of the young people who go away don't want to go away, but it comes down to pure economics. But there's talk about Kishorn [fabrication yard] starting up and if that goes ahead it might give people a start.

Picturesque: Eilean Donan Castle at Dornie is famous worldwide. 10_f49dornie 01

Scenic Dornie, above, lies at the confluence of lochs Long, Duich and Alsh. 10_f49dornie07

Top of page: The A87 bridge over Loch Long takes traffic to Skye and Wester Ross. 10_f49dornie03 **and St Duthac's Catholic Church in Dornie recently celebrated its 150th anniversary.** 10_f49dornie02

5 Years Ago

Those Were The Days

The Oban Times

Thursday December 8, 2005

Argyll's first civil partnership planned in Islay

ISLAY looks set to be the first place in Argyll and Bute to celebrate a civil partnership under new laws giving same-sex couples legal recognition of their relationships.

From December 20, gay couples across Scotland will be permitted to 'marry' under the Civil Partnership Act.

Under the new law, which came into force on Monday, couples who want to form a partnership must register their intentions with local councils a minimum of 15 days prior to their planned ceremony.

A spokesman for Argyll and Bute Council said: 'As of the end of November, there was one booking for a civil partnership ceremony in Argyll and Bute. I believe it's in Islay, but I can't be specific.'

Gay rights campaign group Stonewall welcomed the change in the law. Chief executive Ben Summerskill said: 'This is the moment we fought so hard for. We're delighted.'

Anna and Chloe switch on Lochaber Christmas

THE YOUNG Lochyside school pupils, who helped raise funds for Highland Hospice, lit up Fort William's Christmas tree in Cameron Square last week.

Anna Brayshaw, aged five, and Chloe MacLean, aged seven, both pupils of Lochyside Primary School, were chosen to light up the tree and the High Street.

Participants

The girls were asked to switch on the lights as they were the youngest participants in the Highland Hospice Mayday sponsored walk in the summer.

Anna said she would like 'lots of CDs from Santa when she wakes up on Christmas Day while Chloe, who will celebrate her eighth birthday on December 27, would like an electric scooter. Lochyside Primary School also sang carols for the crowds while Highland Hospice chaplain Mike Rattenbury led a prayer.

Citizen of the Year Millie lights up Tarbert

TARBERT Citizen of the Year Millie Malia switched on a Christmas lights display with a difference in the village on Saturday night.

A tugboat docked in Tarbert Harbour has been decked out in lights and decorations for the month of December. HMRT Golden Cross is the official escort to HM Yacht Britannia and one of Scotland's most famous historic rescue vessels.

A special safety at sea display will take place on the boat in the New Year when it will also be open to schools and the public.

Suzie Wong, the Hollywood actress who owns the ship, said: 'It is wonderful to see such support being extended to my ship and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making this event possible.'

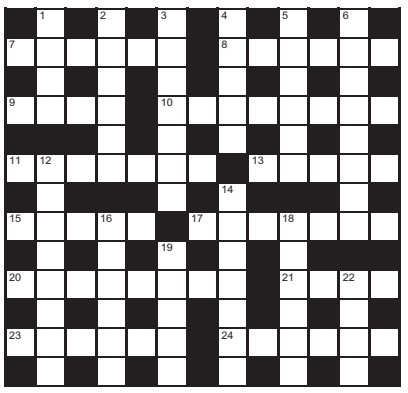
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

Across

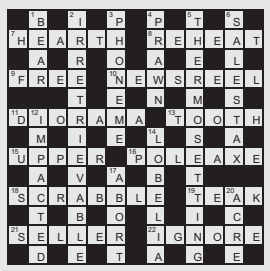
7 Fruit, colour and county (6)
8 Calmer (6)
9 The cost of living? (4)
10 Theoretical person? (8)
11 Paint (7)
13 Windy (5)
15 Creeper (5)
17 It is what it is (acronym) (7)
20 Devilish (8)
21 Expression of displeasure (4)
23 Cold top (3,3)
24 Post (6)

Down

1 Correct (4)
2 Perplexing (6)
3 City of Israel (3,4)
4 Not shy (5)
5 In the direct line (6)
6 Mode of ascension (8)
12 Persuade (8)
14 Lose characters to contract word (7)
16 Term of office of a superior (6)
18 Bring in (6)
19 Run off (5)
22 Found in body fluid (4)



Last Week's Solution



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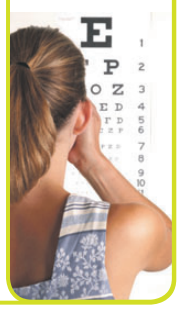

Skye Lines

Andrew Dixon: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is at the heart of Gaelic culture.

THE GAELIC college on Skye, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, (SMO) is to play a major role in a new artists' residency programme proponents say will be the best in Europe.

New national arts body Creative Scotland plans to place almost 200 artists in centres around the country each year under its Creative Futures initiative and says SMO will be a key player.

The programme, which aims to promote individual talent, younger artists and the arts in the wider community, will focus on talent development, skills enhancement and innovation.

SMO will manage a three-year programme of residencies in the visual arts, music and literature, with additional investment for a new Gaelic drama residency in partnership with the RSAMD.

Delivering the annual Sabhal Mòr Ostaig lecture, Creative Scotland chief executive Andrew Dixon said: 'With almost 200 residencies each year, Creative Futures as a programme will be unrivalled in Europe. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is at the heart of promoting Gaelic culture and will be one of our primary residency hosts, strengthening its role as a key partner for Creative Scotland and reinforcing the role that places across the country contribute to a creative Scotland.'

SMO principal, Professor Boyd Robertson, said the arts had been 'at the heart' of the college since its foundation in 1973 - and was delighted with Mr Dixon's recognition of its role in developing Gaelic arts.

'We look forward to working with Creative Scotland to promote Gaelic Scotland's rich culture and artistic talents to a local, national and international audience,' he said.

❒❒❒

THE MAIN ship on the Raasay-Sconser route, the Loch Striven, will be back in service next week after undergoing her annual service and refit at the Ardmaleish boatyard, Port Bannantyne, on the Isle of Bute.

The 208-tonne 30-metre vessel underwent sea trials off Bute on Tuesday, under the watchful eye of her motorman Paul Camilli, from South Arnish, Raasay.

Paul, who travelled down to Bute last Thursday, told *The Oban Times* the yard had done 'a fine job'.

Work included fitting the ship with new generators.

'We took her out on Saturday and everything is well ahead of schedule,' he said.

The relief boat, the Loch Linnhe, is currently in service on the Raasay crossing until the Loch Striven returns.

Skye project sheds light on Gaelic place-names

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

GAELS in ages past ascribed names to places and landscape features for reasons often shrouded in myth and legend.

Now a Skye-based national research project is beginning to shed light on the issue to provide an invaluable data base to organisations and the wider public.

Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba (Gaelic Place-names of Scotland) has already catalogued more than 1,000 locations and geographical features in its online gazetteer.

The database offers the correct Gaelic spelling of a place and its meaning for use by local authorities, the media, researchers, local communities, tourists, walkers or anyone with an interest in how a settlement, mountain or burn came to be named a certain way.

Included with each entry is research upon which the names have been determined, and a six figure grid reference linking to a map location. Some entries include sound files to aid with pronunciation.

Set up in response to a growing demand from councils and other public organisations for Gaelic names on signs and leaflets, AÀA uses local knowledge, historical sources and established principles to agree gramatically and historically accurate forms of place-names.

Dr Michelle Cotter on Neist Point – Gob na h-Èist, 'the point of the horse', at Waternish on Skye.

Project manager Dr Michelle Cotter, who is based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Sleat, told *The Oban Times* historic links between land and people were at the centre of her work.

Complex

'I came to AÀA with a background in environmental anthropology, looking at how communities relate to their physical surroundings,' she said. 'An understanding of place names is an invaluable key to unlocking this complex and fascinating relationship.

'Generally, it is mostly settlement names at the moment, but there's name for everything in Gaelic.

'For example, I climb Beinn na Caillich (the hill of the old woman) above Broadford - but no-one really knows how the mountain got its name.

'There was a local rumour that a Viking princess has been buried at the cairn at the top, but it has not been excavated as yet.'

AÀA ran the Ainm is Àite project for Highland Council in Skye and Lochalsh, working with school pupils to record their local Gaelic place-name heritage and is in partnership with SNH to deliver research training to people on Islay and Jura under a Gaelic heritage initiative.

The scheme, funded by SOILLSE, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comunn na Gàidhlig, gets underway in January.

Meanwhile, AÀA continues to research Gaelic names for Highland Council's core paths network, Forestry Commission core paths and Scotrail stations.

Other AÀA partners include Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Ordnance Survey, HIE, the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Place-Names Society and UHI Millennium Institute. For more information, visit www.ainmean-aite.org.

Police force gets 'tweeting'

NORTHERN Constabulary has embraced social networking sites to get its message across to young people.

The force officially launched its Facebook, Twitter and YouTube services last week and already has more than 500 followers on Twitter and nearly 500 on Facebook.

Police say benefits include getting 'real-time' information direct to the public during a major incident.

Salmon farm won't harm scenic area

SCOTTISH Natural Heritage (SNH) has written to Western Isles Council to say it has no objections to a planned Atlantic salmon farm in the Sound of Harris.

SNH says the operation in waters close to the islands of Lingay and Groay would have 'localised scenic effects' but no 'significant adverse impacts' on the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area (NSA).

SNH Western Isles area manager David Maclennan said: 'We are aware of the presence of locally important seals, cormorants and otters, but we believe the fish farm is unlikely to affect them. If there are impacts, they will be of local - not national - importance.'

Applicant Andrew Rodger, of North Lamerick, Berneray, North Uist, said the scheme would create seven full-time jobs.

Got a story for **The Oban Times**? Call our reporters on 01397 703003.

Lochaber visitors give local businesses the 'thumbs up'

REPORT by
STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

MORE than three in four visitors to Lochaber have given the thumbs up to local businesses they used while on holiday, according to a major survey.

The 'Who Cares Wins' poll of 880 people visiting the area found 78 per cent would recommend 'without a doubt' the business they gave feedback on, compared to 51 per cent in other Highland areas.

Lochaber tourism operators also rated higher than eslewhere in the region for 'outstanding' helpfulness, knowledge and warmth of welcome' - 62 per cent to 51 per cent.

The area's scenery and natural environment figured strongly in the findings, with 36 per cent of respondents saying it was the defining feature of their holiday. One in seven described the friendliness and helpfulness of local people in general as 'outstanding'.

Asked what one thing could have improved their visit, some 28 per cent cited Lochaber's notoriously fickle weather.

Organisers, promotional group Outdoor Capital of the UK (OCUK), said the visitor feedback scheme would be a valuable tool in shaping marketing strategy in the future.

OCUK project director, Frazer Coupland said: 'This is a really useful body of work and will help us ensure we emphasize and develop what we know visitors like and we do well. Our stunning natural environment and a warm Highland welcome are vital to our tourism offer.'

OCUK director Steve Ham, who also manages The Underwater Centre in Fort William, said: 'This research is an important piece of work because it is bang up to date and has involved a large number of visitors. It clearly shows that as an area we have a huge opportunity that we can grasp.

'Visitors love Lochaber, and rate us highly. If we can provide even better information about how to enjoy rainy days then we can only improve our tourism industry's bottom line. We need to have these results to the front of our mind when planning new facilities for Lochaber.'

Project co-ordinator Anna Trafford said OCUK has produced a 'rainy weather adventure sheet' listing 35 things to do and places to go when the sun doesn't shine.

She said: 'Whilst we can't change our weather, we can make sure visitors make the most of good weather by making available forecasts, letting visitors know where to buy or to bring the right kit, and making sure we know what there is to do when it rains.'

Banavie Primary 7 kids joined Robert Robertson and teacher Dierdre MacDonald at the St Andrew's Day ceilidh. 10_f50ban01

Banavie teacher hits all the right notes

BANAVIE Primary School P2/3 teacher Dierdre MacDonald stepped out of the classroom and picked up her fiddle to perform at the school's St Andrew's Day Ceilidh last Tuesday.

Dierdre together with accordionist Robert Robertson, a Lochaber Ceilidh Trail member and former pupil, accompanied all classes as they danced and sang a selection of Gaelic and Scottish songs.

Primary 7 organised the ceilidh as part of their enterprise project.

Audience enjoys DVD of Lochaber in the past

ABOUT 150 local people defied snowy weather on Saturday afternoon for the premiere of short films of events in and around Fort William from 60 years ago.

The hour-long DVD, 'Capturing 1950s Lochaber - The George Scott Films', is the result of the transfer by the town's West Highland Museum of Super 8 black and white movies into DVD format. The footage, shot by the late George Scott, engineer at the British Aluminium Company's Lochaber Works from 1945-1956, was donated to the museum by his widow Doreen, now of Parksville on Vancouver Island.

OT

Christmas concert and art exhibition

PLOCKTON High School will host a festive event with a difference next Tuesday when pupils stage a combined Christmas concert and art exhibition.

Doors open at 7pm for the exhibition, at which some outstanding artwork produced by pupils from S1-S6 will be on view.

The concert, featuring solo stars and talented groups from the music department, is scheduled to start at 7.30pm.

Plockton High School Choir, and special performances from the Lochalsh Junior Pipe Band and the Skye and Lochalsh Junior Orchestra are all on the programme. Other highlights include mince pies from Home Economics and a raffle with a fabulous star prize - a hamper full of goodies donated from all around the area.

All raffle proceeds go towards materials to make future concerts even bigger and better than this one is sure to be, say organisers. Admission is £4 for adults, £2 for children.

New water tank on Portree

SCOTTISH Water has installed a new 1.5m litre drinking water storage tank at Portree.

The utility says the plant will improve capacity and cater for future development. Work began on the project in August last year to build the tank into a hillside above Torvaig.

Drinking water for the Portree area is drawn from three springs in Storr Forest and will be fed into the new tank.

Should any problem cause production to cease, the facility will ensure supplies can be kept flowing for several hours while the issue is resolved.

Prizewinners of Kinlochleven Community Trust's 2010 calendar competition line up with judge Andrew Baxter, centre, and KCT development officer Moira Hartley, second right. 10_f50kinloch01

Prizewinners see winning shots featured in 2011 trust calendar

IT HAS been another successful year for keen amateur photographers in South Lochaber after they saw their efforts printed in the latest community calendar.

At a social evening and prizegiving hosted by Kinlochleven Community Trust (KCT) last Tuesday, competition organiser and judge Andrew Baxter congratulated this year's winners and entrants for submitting some stunning photographs.

Mr Baxter, a KCT director and the local sub-postmaster, told *The Oban Times* he had 'a tough time' choosing the 12 top entries from a wide selection of shots depicting south Lochaber landscapes and wildlife.

Eventually, though, he picked out Allan Ferguson dramatic shot of a red deer stag stuck in a snowdrift.

Mr Baxter said: 'The photographs are of such a high standard with some very different themes and styles from previous years.

The magnificent stag in the snow was a clear overall winner - it has such an unusual composition and really stood out from the others.'

Now in its third year, the calendar produced by the trust raises funds for projects around the village - and has proved a big hit across the world. The print run of 500 is almost sold out.

'We have villagers who buy 20 at a time to send to friends and family across the globe,' Mr Baxter said.

'For many people it's a reminder of this special this part of Lochaber.'

The trust is already planning the competition for the 2012 calendar and urges local people to keep their cameras at the ready to take advantage of fine weather and light conditions.

2010 Prizewinners: 1st Prize Adult - Allan Ferguson (Stag in the Snow); Under 18 Runners Up - Thomas Rowe (Bishop's Bay), Alex Whittaker (Waterfall), Shannon Hartley (The Pipeline); Runners-Up - Ian Morrison (Blackrock Cottage), Andy Welch (Robin), Elaine Smith (Highland Cow), Allan Ferguson (Loch Leven), Jim Milligan (Grey Mares' Waterfall), Jan Hamilton (Loch Leven), Lesley Woollacott (The Three Sisters), Michael Hartley (View From Loch Eilde Path).

Better treatment for rheumatism patients

Services at Fort William's Belford Hospital to be developed

REPORT by RICHARD HADDOCK fort@obantimes.co.uk

PEOPLE in Lochaber suffering with rheumatism will soon be able to receive their treatment much closer to home.

At a meeting on Tuesday NHS Highland board members gave their backing to a plan to improve the rheumatology service in the area and develop it at the Belford Hospital, in Fort William.

The introduction of the biologic infusion service at the Belford will mean that patients can receive this treatment locally, instead of having to travel to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. It is also hoped this will give nurses time to do more follow-up work, allowing the consultants more time to undertake necessary early identification and intervention work.

Head of rheumatology, Dr John Harvie, said: 'This is an exciting time when new therapies have led to increased therapeutic options but also emphasised the need for maintaining the quality of non-pharmacological management and the importance of the multidisciplinary team for both new and established patients.

'Opportunities for education of patients, carers and the wider multidisciplinary teams will enhance the services already available for patients.'

The plan also includes the continuation of the seven-day inpatient facility at Highland Rheumatology Unit in Dingwall and access to medical beds at Raigmore Hospital for complex cases.

The action plan is the result of a review that began in 2008, which involved rheumatology patients and everyone associated with their care.

Mid Highland general manager Gill McVicar said: 'I am pleased to see the fruits of all the hard work and commitment of everyone involved in the review, including patients and staff, and I am very grateful to them. Some of the things we want to do will take some time to develop, others will happen quite quickly, but it is good to have a vision for services for the future.'

Tenant turns to community council

BALLACHULISH community council has been asked to assist a Highland Council tenant who has been presented with an excessive bill for work to a council house that has been vacated.

Office bearers are to deal with the matter and any others needing attention after members agreed to break for the months of January and February. The community council will next meet in February 2011.

Jodie and classmates celebrate her Christmas card success.

Jodie's card voted top of the class

A CHRISTMAS card designed by a Mallaig Primary School P3 pupil has been voted top of the class by Lochaber Housing Association (LHA).

Jodie Gray's colourful card will be sent to all LHA's corporate partner agencies across Scotland, including the Scottish Government and Highland Council. Jodie and her classmates from Mallaig Primary visited Printsmith to watch the card in production as part of the prize. During a tour of LHA offices the children enjoyed a 'juice and cake break' and entertained staff with a selection of songs that they have been learning for their carol concert. Jodie was presented with a framed copy of her design and a gift by staff members Maureen Cameron and Maggie Mackenzie.

All other schools taking part were given a donation to funds for their Christmas party.

LHA's Jenny MacKay thanked everyone who participated. She said: 'Every year the standard seems to be getting higher, which makes the job of the judges very difficult.

Bob goes the distance with degree

Bob celebrates his graduation with wife Christine and son Mark

A KINLOCHLEVEN man has graduated from the University of Aberdeen – only months before he draws his state pension.

Bob Herbert, 64, completed his studies for his MA degree in Scottish Archaeology at his home via the university's Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Bob juggled academic assignments with his job at Alcan's Kinlochleven smelter and then the Lochaber Smelter in Fort William. Now retired, he helps run a B&B.

A general interest in archaeology prompted Bob to embark on his distance learning degree in 2001.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'I'm never going to be an Indiana Jones - but it's a great way of keeping myself active and getting out and about.

'At the moment I'm nibbling away at the relationship between charcoal production in Lochaber, and gunpowder production and iron smelting in Argyll.'

It is a second degree for Bob, who has just begun a third round of higher education study – this time a mathematics module with the Open University.

Michael Kennedy, Lindsay Sedgewick, Ruth Earnshaw, Rebecca Fraser and Emma Fraser helped man the World Aids Day sales stall. 10_f50aids01

Lochaber High School marks World Aids Day

LOCHABER High School dress code was placed on hold last Friday as pupils were invited to wear something red for World Aids Day.

Each pupil donning anything red paid £1 for the privilege, with all proceeds going to the charity.

S6 pupils also held a cake and cherryade sale in the foyer, selling home made buns – with red and white icing – and the pink fizzy drink for 30p a throw.

Ceilidh

Red ribbons, the symbol of AIDS awareness, were also for sale, while school musicians staged a lunchtime ceilidh outside the main hall.

Stall volunteer Rebecca Fraser said donations were going well.

'We are hoping to top £400, which is what we took last year,' she told *The Oban Times*.

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Festive road safety campaign targets drink and drug drivers

STRATHCLYDE Police will be targeting drink-drivers and those not wearing seatbelts during a festive road safety campaign launched this week.

During the four-week campaign officers across Argyll, Bute and West Dunbartonshire Division will be using the automatic number plate recognition system, high-visibility patrols and high-profile road checks to target offenders.

Unmarked patrol cars will also be deployed to high-risk locations, such as pubs where people may be tempted to drink and drive.

'Morning after driving'

The campaign will continue until January 3.

Inspector Hugh O'Neill of Road Policing, Argyll said: 'Don't risk driving after taking drink or drugs and be wary of morning after driving.

'The consequences can be fatal and any conviction will result in an automatic ban and drivers should consider the effect that losing their licence would have,' he said.

'Our message is simple – if you are not fit to drive, then don't.'

More than 220 motorists were detected drugs or drink driving in the Strathclyde Police area during last year's festive campaign.

If you don't follow the latest advice on the mountainside it might be one of the Mountain Rescue Team that have to come and rescue you. t50rescue1no

Hillwalkers and mountaineers encouraged to gear-up for winter

POLICE in Oban are gearing up for winter and are advising hill walkers and mountaineers to do the same.

Every year Oban Mountain Rescue Team and members of Strathclyde Police's Mountain Rescue team are called onto the hills and high peaks around the north west of Scotland to deal with accidents, both avoidable and unavoidable.

Reducing the risk of avoidable accidents saves lives and resources – by following some simple advice, walking or climbing in the hills and mountains can be a safer, more enjoyable experience.

The latest advice is to be well equipped with a map, compass, layers, waterproofs, gloves, hat, suitable boots, whistle, crampons, ice axe, be knowledgeable in first aid and have a charged mobile phone possibly with a solar charger.

It is also advisable to tell someone where you are going and what your proposed route is.

For more advice on hill walking you should contact the police who have developed a new leaflet.

Area Commander, Chief Inspector Glen Bland said: 'Every winter there are tragic accidents on the mountains – a lot of them avoidable.

'I'd encourage anyone considering walking or climbing around Oban and the Isles this winter to follow our advice, take the proper equipment and to walk or climb within the limitations of their experience and the prevailing conditions. Our mountains and hillsides are there to be enjoyed – but please take the proper precautions, don't take risks, stay safe and come home fit and well and not as a tragic statistic.'

Double-check your pipes during big freeze

SCOTTISH Water is appealing for Argyll residents to double-check their property and land for leaks and burst pipes as winter's icy grip over the country continues.

While the water operator has been working hard to fix public water mains, there are fears that buildings that are only occasionally used could be hardest hit.

Ross Barclay, Scottish Water's water operations leader in Argyll, said: 'We are having some operational problems because of the weather.

'While visible leaks on public water mains are being fixed, others will be hidden by the snowy ground conditions and there will be some bursts on pipes on private property.

'Unoccupied holiday homes, village halls and other outbuildings could also have internal bursts in their plumbing.

'Scottish Water would appeal to people to help us by checking for burst pipes on their property and we would ask people with outdoors taps and troughs to turn off any running taps.'

Additional vehicles and equipment have been brought in to help Scottish Water staff maintain services for customers.

A spokesperson said that, while workers will try to reach reported issues as quickly as possible, their health and safety is a priority.

Leaks can be reported by calling the Scottish Water Helpline on 0845 6018855.

Information on protecting pipes and short films giving practical advice such as how to locate your stop cock to stem the flow of a burst can be found on a special Scottish Water website at www.scottishwaterresponse.co.uk.

CAIRNBAAN, By Lochgilphead

An exclusive new development of 3 mid-terraced and 1 end-terraced 2 bedroom houses, finished to a very high specification, situated in the picturesque village of Cairnbaan, adjacent to the famous Crinan Canal.

Fixed Price from £146,000

We also have detached and semi-detached houses for sale at

- Fernoch
- Balliebeg, by Lochgilphead
- Achnabreck, by Lochgilphead
- Achnashellach, by Lochgilphead
- Poltalloch Street, Lochgilphead
- Kilmartin
- Kilmelford
- Glenshellach, Oban
- Connel
- Isle of Tiree
- Minard
- North Craleckan, Furnace
- Campbeltown

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One or two bedroomed house to let in Campbeltown area.
Would possibly accept ground floor flat.
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LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME?
The Oban Times & West Highland Times
Be seen by over 40,000 readers
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Dancers at the Lorn School of Dance take to the floor t50look1no

Lorn School of Dance host magical night

LORN School of Dance presented its first winter show of the season, Look Who's Dancing, last Friday in St Columba's Church Hall, Oban.

The dancers, girls aged 11-16, attend after-school classes in ballet, jazz dance, street dance, choreography and costume design with teacher Sophie Hamilton, who opened the school in January. The event showcased dancing and artistic talent and included live music and puppet theatre, also performed by the girls themselves.

Improvement

Sophie said: 'The audience was spellbound and parents commented on how much improvement children had made this year and what a delightful and theatrical show it was.' At the end of the show Sophie thanked everyone who had supported it and gave a special mention to Marie MacDougal who warmed up the audience with hot drinks and baking when they arrived having made it through the snow, and to Colin Gruber who enabled the show to go on by fixing the lights after their timely blackout just before the interval. The candles on the tables the audience were sitting at shone with such spirit in the hall that when the lights went the blackout actually added to the magical atmosphere of the night.

Dalmally pharmacist retires

DALMALLY'S pharmacist, Malcolm Bruce, retired this week after spending 16 years there.

Mr Bruce thanked all the customers at the Lochview Pharmacy for their kindness over the years and wished all the best to new pharmacist Isna Yaqoob and Ruskhsana Akbar.

Quality cattle short of Dingwall sale requirements

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 94 weaned calves and store cattle, 15 adult head of breeding cattle, and 61 Over 30 Month cattle at Dingwall last Wednesday when quality cattle were short of requirements.

Bullocks averaged 146.2p and sold to 178.2p per kg for a pen of 303kg Charolais crosses from Abersky, Torness, and £760 for a pen of 533kg Aberdeen Angus crosses from Viewhill, Rearquhar.

Heifers averaged 138.9p and sold to 173.4p per kg for a 320kg Charolais cross from Abersky and £690 for a 500kg Limousin cross from Seafield Park, Nairn.

Breeding cattle sold to £1,250 for a Limousin cross heifer with a heifer calf at foot from Littleburn, Munlochy.

OTM cows averaged 85.6p and sold to 126.7p per kg for a 675kg Limousin cross from Little Kildrummie, Nairn, and £915 for a 910kg Limousin cross from Pitmain, Kingussie.

West Coast Property Guide
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TO LET
TERRACED HOUSE TO RENT
Banff Crescent, Fort William,
2 Storey, Fully Furnished, 2 Bedrooms, Accessible to town centre, Immediate entry.
Further details Telephone 07990 752599 or 07598 712565

HOUSE - UNFURNISHED
Ballachulish
2 BEDROOMS & SPARE ROOM
£400 pcm, plus bills & Council tax
No Smoking/Pets/DSS
Deposit & References required
Immediate Entry or in New Year
Enquiries after 6pm - Jeff/Carol 01855 811492

TO LET NEAR TARBERT
2 bedroom cottage
Spacious and comfortable
Solid fuel central heating (stove)
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Garden with large shed
Available January
Short assured tenancy
Contact 01880 820583

FLAT FOR RENT
Fully furnished one bedroom flat in the centre of Lochgilphead
Available for long let
Own car parking space
No DSS
References required
£420p.c.m + Council Tax
Apply in writing to Box Number 150 Argyllshire Advertiser, Argyll Street, Lochgilphead, PA31 8NB

Two bedroom flat
14B Corran Brae, Oban
Solid fuel central heating, double glazed throughout, wooden flooring, bath / Jacuzzi.
Walk in condition.
Offers in the region of £95,000.
Home report available.
Telephone 07796485041
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Plot B, Lochnell Arms, North Connel, by Oban, PA37 1RP
Most deceiving spacious modern bungalow on two floors with views across Connel Airport to the Morvern Hills and Ardmucknish Bay in the distance.
- Four bedrooms (2 on ground floor)
- Sitting room with Fitted Kitchen and Utility Room off
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WEST LOCHAWESIDE
House to rent
Four bedrooms, main bathroom,
En-suite in main bedroom.
Large sitting room with dining area overlooking loch.
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No pets, smokers or D.S.S.
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From £75 per week incl. of bills
References and deposit required
Tel: 07789991759

Bowling fayre raises £500 for green fund

OBAN Bowling Club raised around £500 for green funds at its Christmas Fayre on Saturday.

A healthy turnout meant busy stalls and teas and cakes went like a charm.

A spokesperson for the club said: 'Thanks to all who supported the event.'

Right - Locals peruse the selection of goods available on the stalls at Oban Bowling Club's Christmas Fayre. 15_t50bowlingclub1

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SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG
Ionad Nàiseanta Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig

Manaidsear nan Cùrsaichean Goirid (Làn-ùine)

c £30,000

Tha Sabhal Mòr Ostaig a' sireadh Mhanaidsear airson pròram nan Cùrsaichean Goirid a stiùireadh.

Bidh na cùrsaichean goirid a' ruith tron t-Samhradh, aig àm na Càisge agus aig amannan eile den bhliadhna mar a bhios iomchaidh. Bithear a' tabhann chùrsaichean Gàidhlig, ciùil agus cultair aig iomadach ìre gu còrr is 900 oileanach gach bliadhna.

Bidh sibh fileanta sa Ghàidhlig le sàr sgilean eadar-phearsanta agus rianachd. Bidh sibh comasach air a bhith ag obair ann an àrainneachd air leth trang agus luchd-obrach a stiùireadh.

Ceann-là: 17 Dùbhlachd

(Agallamhan tràth sa Bhliadhn' Ùr)

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Bidh agaibh ri dhol tro sgrùdadh Disclosure Scotland, Tha co-ionannachd aig cridhe Shabhal Mòr Ostaig, Tha Sabhal Mòr Ostaig na charthannais clàraichte an Alba SCO02578

ACHA
argyll community housing association

Customer Services Assistant **Oban**

Temporary contract to 30th June 2011
35 hours per week
Salary Grade 7 (£15,399 to £17,111) per annum

To apply visit our website at www.acha.co.uk ; Tel 01546 604095 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk

Closing Date: 12 noon on Wednesday 15th December 2010

Interviews for these posts will be held on Wednesday 22nd December 2010

Appin Community Cooperative Ltd

Port Appin Stores is looking for a part time Shop Assistant to start in the New Year. Later next year we anticipate a full time vacancy so extra hours could be available to a suitable candidate.

A clean driving licence, familiarity with technology, flexibility, and a friendly disposition would be advantageous. Training provided.

Please apply in writing to:
Dr Iain McNicol, Dunvegan, Port Appin PA38 4DE or phone on 01631 730433 for further information.

Procurement and Claims Officer

SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION for MARINE SCIENCE

Fixed Term appointment for 2 years
Clerical Grade 5,
£22,126 - £26,394 per annum

We are looking for an experienced procurement and claims officer to support our Interreg IVA, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Crown Estates funded BioMara project. Applicants should have excellent numerical skills, enjoy a busy working environment and be flexible to the needs of the project.

The post reports to the Management Accountant and will be responsible for procurement, claims processing, audit and liaising with project funders and partners. In addition, they will be expected to provide general admin support to the project.

For a full job description and to apply for this job online, go to www.sams.ac.uk, alternatively you can apply by sending your CV and covering letter to The Human Resources Department, Procurement and Claims Officer, D09/10.MS, The Scottish Association for Marine Science, Scottish Marine Institute, Dunbeg, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1QA or by e-mail to recruitment@sams.ac.uk.

Closing date for applications is 12 noon, 10th January 2011

SAMS has an equal opportunities policy and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

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The ARK hairdressing Co Ltd

15 Airds Crescent , Oban

Young Enthusiastic and Fashion Conscious Hairdressing Assistant required.

If you would like a career in hairdressing contact Andrea or Kate on 01631 566998 or pop in to the Salon.

North Argyll House
Care Home for the Elderly
Bealach An Righ, Oban

Vacancy for full time care assistant

6 months fixed contract which may lead to a permanent position.

For further information and application form please contact Manager Morag A. Telfer 01631 562168.

Enhanced Disclosure checks apply

Crossroads Caring Scotland
Practical support for Scotland's Carers

Care Attendants

We are seeking to appoint caring and committed individuals to provide care and support to people within their own homes in Mid Argyll, Campbeltown and surrounding areas.

Variable hours including evenings and weekends.

Experience of Social Care and an SVQ or equivalent qualification is preferred but not essential. Training will be given. Car owner would be an advantage.

For an application pack for please contact:-
Crossroads Caring Scotland, Community Health Department, Aros, Blarbuie Road, Lochgilphead PA31 8LE
Email: dalriada@crossroads-scotland.co.uk
For an informal discussion about the work please telephone: 01564 603082
Crossroads Caring Scotland is an equal opportunities employer.
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UNDERSTALKER

Challenging position on prestigious family owned Highland Estate. Minimum 5 years' Highland stalking experience with ATVs and ponies. Attractive package with house. Possible part-time work for partner.

Apply to: Rhoderick Noble, Ardverikie Estate Office, Kinlochlaggan, Newtonmore, PH20 1BX
Or email: ardverikie@ardverikie.com

West Coast Tool & Plant Hire, OBAN Requires

Depot Manager

Area/Depot: Oban, Argyll

Managerial and customer service experience essential, with a good knowledge of hire equipment/products and the local area. Full driving license required.

Apply in writing marked "vacancy" to:
Darran Mellish, West Coast Tool And Plant Hire, Glenburn Road, Ardrishaig, Argyll, PA30 8EU
Mob: 07887 610080 or email to Darran@westcoastplanthire.co.uk
Application Closing Date: Wednesday 15 December 2010

Oban Times RECRUITMENT Oban Times RECRUITMENT

PUBLIC NOTICES

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll Bute COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES: EDUCATION

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 1980 CHOICE OF SCHOOL

It is customary for children to attend their local school; however, parents may make a written request to place their child in any school under the management of the education authority. Such a request is referred to as a placing request.

Information concerning the authority's schools and the procedures to be followed in making placing requests is available at every school and at the Education Offices, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 708508). This information is also available for inspection or reference at public libraries. Information in relation to any particular school is available at that school.

Placing requests for session beginning August 2011 should be sent to the Director of Community Services, Education Offices, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 708508) by 15 March 2011 for primary and secondary schools.

Gaelic Medium Education

Gaelic Medium Education is available in the following schools:- Bowmore Primary School, Islay; Tiree Primary School, Tiree; Salen Primary School, Mull; Rockfield Primary School, Oban; Strath of Appin Primary School, By Oban and Sandbank Primary School, Dunoon.

Parents who are interested in such provision are advised to register at the Gaelic Medium School in their area in accordance with the advertisement on registration of children which will be published week commencing 3 January 2011.

Parents of children due to commence attendance at school in August 2011, whether or not they wish to make a placing request, should proceed in accordance with the advertisement on registration of children which will be published week commencing 3 January 2011.

CLELAND SNEDDON
Director of Community Services

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR AMALGAMATION OF SCHOOLS, SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

Argyll and Bute Council is consulting on proposals to amalgamate schools, under the terms of the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010. Public meetings to discuss the proposals have been arranged as follows:

Schools Affected	Time	Venue	Date
Kilmartin Primary/ Dalmally Primary/ Ardchonnel Primary.	7.00pm.	Dalmally Primary.	19 January 2011
Dervaig Primary School/ Ulva Primary.	7.00pm.	Ulva Primary.	1 February 2011
Taynuilt Primary/ Kilchrenan Primary.	7.00pm.	Kilchrenan Primary.	13 January 2011
Salen Primary/ Lochdonhead Primary.	7.00pm.	Lochdonhead Primary	31 January 2011
Lochnell Primary/ Barcaldine Primary/ Achaleven Primary/ Ardchattan Primary.	7.00pm.	Victory Hall, Benderloch.	26 January 2011

You are welcome to attend the public meeting to express your view on the proposals. A summary of the proposal and full copies are available from Argyll and Bute Council's website www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk/schoolconsultations

You can write to the council expressing your views on the proposals at:

Education Service
School Consultations
Argyll and Bute Council
Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon
PA23 8AJ

Or at the following e-mail address: schoolconsultations@argyll-bute.gov.uk

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Take notice that the applications in the following schedule may be inspected during normal office hours at Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR, at the location detailed below and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Anyone wishing to make representations should do so in writing to Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR within 21 days of the appearance of this notice. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

SCHEDULE – DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION PLANS

- **Ref No: 10/01795/PP**
Applicant: Mrs M A Ironside
Proposal: Erection of extension and repositioning of ancillary accommodation
Site Address: Ballymore Isle Of Iona Argyll And Bute PA76 6SJ
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Isle of Iona
Listed Building/Conservation Advert

- **Ref No: 10/02018/PP**
Applicant: Mr And Mrs B T Dickey
Proposal: Alterations and extensions to dwellinghouse.
Site Address: Sealladh Na Mara Ellenabeich Isle Of Seil Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4RQ
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Connel
Listed Building/Conservation Advert

- **Ref No: 10/02019/LIB**
Applicant: Mr And Mrs B T Dickey
Proposal: Alterations and extensions to dwellinghouse.
Site Address: Sealladh Na Mara Ellenabeich Isle Of Seil Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4RQ
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Balvicar
Listed Building/Conservation Advert

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Take notice that the applications in the following schedule may be inspected during normal office hours at 67/ 69 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX, at the location detailed below and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Anyone wishing to make representations should do so in writing to 67/ 69 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX within 21 days of the appearance of this notice. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

SCHEDULE – DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION PLANS

- **Ref No: 10/01709/PP**
Applicant: Mr And Mrs Iain MacLellan
Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse
Site Address: Lochindaal Hotel Main Street Port Charlotte Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA48 7TX
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Port Charlotte
Listed Building/Conservation Advert

- **Ref No: 10/01891/CONAC**
Applicant: Mr And Mrs Iain MacLellan
Proposal: Demolition of vacant storerooms.
Site Address: Lochindaal Hotel Main Street Port Charlotte Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA48 7TX
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Port Charlotte
Listed Building/Conservation Advert

- **Ref No: 10/01946/PP**
Applicant: Catherine MacTaggart
Proposal: Erection of rear extension and alterations to shopfront.
Site Address: Bowmore Post Office Main Street Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA43 7JH
Location of Plans: Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay
Listed Building/Conservation Advert

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR and the location detailed below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning and Regulatory Services Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR by the 30/12/2010

- **Ref No: 10/01406/PP**
Applicant: Mr A Read And Ms A Young
Proposal: Change of use of existing steading to 6 dwellings
Site Address: Kames Farm Steading Kilmelford Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4XA
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Kilmelford

- **Ref No: 10/01727/PP**
Applicant: The Camping And Caravaning Club
Proposal: Demolition of amenity blocks, erection of new amenity block, security entrance barrier, formation of play area and extension to opening season
Site Address: Barcaldine Caravan Park Barcaldine Oban Argyll And Bute PA37 1SG
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Ledaig

- **Ref No: 10/01825/PP**
Applicant: Mr Gilbert Mackechnie
Proposal: Change of use of dwellinghouse to guesthouse together with alterations and extension.
Site Address: Rudha Na Cloiche Corran Esplanade Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5AQ
Location of Plans: Oban Area Office

- **Ref No: 10/01943/PP**
Applicant: Mr R Young
Proposal: Temporary erection of 15 metre high Anemometer Mast for period of 2 years.
Site Address: Clachan-Seil South Of Beinn Mhor Oban Argyll And Bute
Location of Plans: Oban Area Office

- **Ref No: 10/02010/PPP**
Applicant: Mr And Mrs John Tricker
Proposal: Site for the erection of a dwellinghouse and associated works.
Site Address: Tigh Beag Connel Argyll And Bute
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office, Connel

- **Ref No: 10/02024/PP**
Applicant: Mr Colin N Kennedy
Proposal: Erection of 50 kilowatt wind turbine (18 metres to hub height)
Site Address: Land South West Of Caoles Isle Of Coll Argyll And Bute PA78 6TB
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Isle of Coll

- **Ref No: 10/02034/PP**
Applicant: Mr Peter Johnston And Nicola MacEwan
Proposal: Erection of side extension to dwellinghouse
Site Address: 18 Creag Bhan Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4BF
Location of Plans: Oban Area Office

Argyll and Bute Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST. An extant list of planning applications can be viewed on the Councils website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST and Argyll and Bute Council Libraries.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at 67/ 69 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX and the location detailed below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning and Regulatory Services 67/ 69 Chalmers Street Ardrishaig PA30 8DX by the 30/12/2010

- **Ref No: 10/01763/PP**
Applicant: Mr Hugh Carswell
Proposal: Erection of recording studio, installation of solar PV panels, air source heat pump and erection of wind turbine
Site Address: The Cottage Knockrome Craighouse Isle Of Jura Argyll And Bute PA60 7XZ
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Craighouse Isle of Jura

- **Ref No: 10/01856/PP**
Applicant: Dr Robin Stevenson
Proposal: Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey sun room
Site Address: Caberfeidh Bruichladdich Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA49 7UN
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office, Port Charlotte

- **Ref No: 10/01965/PPP**
Applicant: A MacConnell
Proposal: Site for the erection of a dwellinghouse
Site Address: Land North East Of Sunset View Upper Kilchattan Isle Of Colonsay Argyll And Bute
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Isle of Colonsay

Argyll and Bute Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST. An extant list of planning applications can be viewed on the Councils website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST and Argyll and Bute Council Library

Any letter of representation the council receives about a planning application is considered a public document.

Please therefore note that representations will be made available for public inspection and, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, will be copied on request. They will also be published on the council's web site.

The author of such a representation is solely responsible for its content and accuracy.

Anonymous representations will be "shredded" and those marked confidential will be returned to the sender. Neither will be taken into account when the application is being considered.

Details of representations we receive on planning applications can be viewed on the council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publicaccess

crofters commission
ughdarras nan croitearan

The following decrofting Directions have been granted:

Part Croft
Lyrabus Moor, Kilarrow & Kilmeny
Direction dated 3 December 2010 granted to Malcolm MacLugash. Area ext to 0.14 ha
Conditions: 1. The land is used for a house site. 2. Complete enclosure of the land with a stockproof fence within 4 months of completion of the proposed development. 3. Maintenance of the fence by each successive owner or occupier of the land.
Case Number: 4.86.27738

1 & 26 Inveroy, Kilmonivaig
Direction dated 6 December 2010 granted to Mrs Ann M A MacKintosh. Area ext to 0.12 ha.
Conditions: 1. The land being the site of an existing dwellinghouse. 2. Complete enclosure of the land with a stockproof fence within 4 months. 3. Maintenance of the fence by each successive owner or occupier of the land.
Case Number: 4.86.27996

The granting of these Directions may be appealed to the Scottish Land Court, within 42 days from the date of this advert. Information on how to appeal is available from the Crofters Commission.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined between the hours of 9 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 and time period for comments
10/04661/FUL	Land 45m South West of Riverview Invergarry PH35 4HG	Erection of new dwelling	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
10/04639/FUL	Roadside Cottage Stronchreggan By Fort William	Demolition of byre/store and extension to house	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
10/04731/FUL	Woodside Spean Bridge PH34 4EU	Installation of Domestic Air Source Heat Pump	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
10/04758/FUL	Mill House Roy Bridge PH31 4AG	Extension to existing dwelling house to form additional bedroom and sun lounge	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
10/04330/FUL	Torlundy Farm Torlundy Fort William PH33 6SW	Change of use from agricultural land to campsite for retrospective siting of 5 Mongolian tents/yurts and construction of associated facilities	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

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949 SINGLE MOORING: LOCH ETIVE

Notice is hereby given that Douglas Fotheringhame has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, in respect of a new single mooring at the following location in Loch Etive:

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Mooring	56 27.737N	05 18.277W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at Oban local Library

Objections relating to safety of navigation in respect of the application should be made in writing to:
Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference:
2SPC\2\5\419
Douglas Fotheringhame
7 Brixwold Bank
Bonnyrigg

Barcaldine Community Association
A.G.M
Wednesday 15th December 2010 at 7.30pm
Scottish Sealife Sanctuary, By Oban

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES
Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES
Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

crofters commission
ughdarras nan croitearan

The following decrofting Directions have been granted:

Croft House Site and Garden Ground
8 Treslaig, Ardgour
Direction dated 30 November 2010 granted to Charles MacLean and Mrs Dorothy M MacLean. Area ext to 0.154 ha.
Conditions: 1. Complete enclosure of the land with a stockproof fence within 4 months. 2. Maintenance of the fence by each successive owner or occupier of the land.
Case Number: 4.85.28071

2 Upper Scotstown, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
Direction dated 1 December 2010 granted to Miss Josephine A Newman. Area ext to 0.07 ha.
Conditions: 1. Complete enclosure of the land with a stockproof fence within 4 months. 2. Maintenance of the fence by each successive owner or occupier of the land.
Case Number: 4.85.28138

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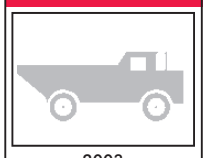

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4WD
Roll bar, becon etc
Good condition.

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£5000 + VAT

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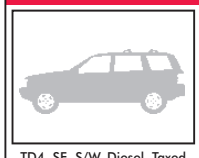

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new car index

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ISUZU	**ISUZU S & S Services** Old Bridge Road, Heathfield, Ayr Tel. 01292 880080 / 880440	**SUBARU S & S Services** Old Bridge Road, Heathfield, Ayr Tel. 01292 880080/880440 — SUBARU
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Offers

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FLIT

Muirburn meeting at Ardrishaig delayed

THE Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) muirburn meeting scheduled to take place at Ardrishaig on Tuesday of this week will now take place on Monday, January 31, 2011.

An SAC specialist on muirburn will be at Ardrishaig with advice for farmers, crofters and land managers in Argyll. Muirburn is the art and science of burning off vegetation like heather to both create a better habitat for wildlife and grazing livestock.

At a previous meeting on Skye, Dr Alistair Hamilton told his audience that a decline in the practice of muirburn in the North-west Highlands could increase the risk of severe wildfires resulting in the possible loss of nesting grounds to the release of harmful carbon into the atmosphere.

'Well managed muirburn, when done with due regard to environmental impacts and in line with the regulations, can be a very positive management tool. It promotes new growth and conserves the species we associate with our moorland habitats,' he said.

Management tool

Muirburn has been carried out in the hills for generations. Traditionally gamekeepers have used it to create the typical patchwork of heather growth. Young grouse then find cover in the old heather and eat the buds of young heather as it regenerates after burning. However muirburn also halts the build up of old vegetation that might, otherwise, pose a fire hazard in the spring. As this type of ground is often peaty there is the added risk of the peat smouldering, releasing greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

'If the peat below the vegetation burns, it can release huge amounts of carbon. It is estimated that carbon stored in organic soils in Scotland - especially peat - is equivalent to more than 180 years of greenhouse gas emissions at current emission rates. With the attention we are asked to pay to climate change targets this risk has added implications,' says Alistair Hamilton.

The event on Monday, January 31, in the Royal Hotel, Ardrishaig (formerly the Grey Gull Inn) begins at 11am and finishes at 2.30 pm with lunch provided. Those attending are recommended to bring maps of their farms The meeting will cover topics including moorland ecology, the benefit of muirburn to sheep, the principles of fire and muirburn planning, practice and regulation. The event is funded by the Scottish Government as part of its Animal Welfare and Advisory Activity.

For catering purposes could those wishing to attend should contact SAC's Oban office (01631 563093) or Campbeltown Office (01586 552502).

Islay sale beats winter weather

UNITED Auctions held their Annual Christmas Sale of all classes of cattle at Islay Auction Mart when they had a catalogued entry of 508 head.

Despite all the regular buying force being present, representing all the principal Scottish farming counties including Aberdeenshire, Lanarkshire, Stirling, Perthshire and Dumfriesshire, averages fell by £75 per head on last years considerably high values.

A good show of mainly spring born calves were on offer and sold to £855 per head for Limousin cross bullocks from Mr McArthur, Lossit.

Mr MacTaggart, Kintra lead the bullock prices per kilo at 183pence.

Heifers, also from Lossit, sold to £775 for Limousin crosses, whilst Neriby lead the prices per kilo at 184pence, also for Limousin crosses.

Mr Neil McDonald, Bayview sold his homebred Limousin bull, which earlier in the year was Mid Argyll Show Beef Champion, this animal sold for £4,600.00.

Breeding cattle sold to £1100 for Spring calving heifers from Tarbert Estate, Jura.

Weather reduces numbers forward for sale at Stirling

UNITED Auctions sold 307 store cattle and 50 cows and 3374 store lambs at their annual Martinmas sale of crossbred lambs at Stirling when numbers were short due to adverse weather conditions.

Bullocks averaged 158.58p (+6.08p) and sold to 194.6p per kg for a 334kg Limousin cross from Camreggan and £890 for a 534kg Limousin cross from Bargany.

Heifers averaged 157.56p (+6.36p) and sold to 174p per kg for a 480kg British Blue cross from Bargany and £865 for a 508kg British Blue cross also from Bargany.

Texel cross lambs from Moor sold to £78.50 with Suffolk crosses from Muirton to £78.

Blackface lambs averaged £52,86 and sold to £64.50 from Gibbalston while Mules from Ormsary sold to £62.

ISLAY
United Auctions

Bullocks
Aberdeen AngusX: £440 Kelsay
CharolaisX: £750 Uiskentuie £570(4) and £535(3) Ballinaby.
GallowayX: £515(4) Dunlossit Estate
Limousin X: £855 Lossit £795 Ballychattrigan £750 Uiskentuie £720 Lossit £710 Kilbride £700(4) Lossit £685(2) Ballychattrigan £655 Woodend £635(5) and £630(10) Uiskentuie £630 Kilbride £600(2) Uiskentuie £595 Mulindry(4) and Neriby(5) £585(3) Neriby £580 Pairc A Chlassan £575 Uiskentuie £570 Mulindry(2), Ballychattrigan(3) and Dunlossit Estate(3) £550(9) Neriby.
SimmentalX: £705, £660 and £650 Uiskentuie £645 Corrary £640 Corrary(2) and Island(1) £635 and £615 Uiskentuie £565(3) Corrary.
Heifers
CharolaisX: £635 Uiskentuie £500(7) Ballinaby
GallowayX: £500(6) Dunlossit Estate.
LimousinX: £775 Lossit £665(4) Uiskentuie £620(4) Lossit £610(9) Uiskentuie £600 Dunlossit Estate £570(6) Neriby £565 Uiskentuie £545 Dunlossit Estate £535 Ballychatrigan(5) and Uiskentuie £510 Mulindry.
SimmentalX: £610(3) Uiskentuie £530(3) Corrary.
Breeding cattle
Limousin bull: £4600 Bayview
In-calf heifers: £1100 and £1050 Tarbert Estate, Jura.
In-calf cows: £1000, £780(2), £750, £720(3) Tarbert Estate.
Prices per kilo
Bullocks
CharolaisX: 174p(9) Dunlossit Estate 172p(4) 9 Mansefield Road.
LimousinX: 183p(4) Kintra : 179p(4) and 177p(5) Neriby 174p(4) and 171p(2) Kintra 171p(5) Neriby.
Heifers
CharolaisX: 165p(6) 14 Mansefield Terr : 163p(2) Ballinaby.
LimousinX: 184p(6) Neriby 169p(6) Kilbride 168p(10) Ronnachmore 163p(3) Mulindry .

DINGWALL
Dingwall and Highland Marts

Bullocks up to 200kg – Littleburn, £230, 153.3p;
251-300kg – Gorthleck Mains, Inverness, £480, 170.8p;
301-350kg – Abersky, £540, Craggan Sheaig, Balnain, 159.6p;
351-400kg – Craggan Sheaig, £630, 161.5p;
401-450kg – Viewhill, £600, 147.4p;
501-550kg – Viewhill, 142.6p.
Heifers up to 200kg – Littleburn, £270, Scallasaig, Glenelg, 150p;
201-250kg – Gorthleck Mains, £345, 150p;
251-300kg – Gorthleck Mains, £410, 162.1p;
301-350kg – Abersky, £555, 9 Portnalong, Carbost, 142.9p;
351-400kg – 287 Morness, Sutherland, £545, 143.4p;
401-450kg – Drumbuie, Drumnadrochit, £510;
451-500kg – 8 Torvaig, Portree, £550, Seafield Park, 138p;
501-550kg – Drumbuie, £665.
Breeding cattle
Cow with male calf – Penick Farms, Auldearn, (BBX), £1,200; Littleburn (LimX) £1100, (SimX), £1000. Cow with heifer calf – Littleburn, (Lim), £1100, (SimX), £780.
OTM cows: Little Kildrummie, (BBX), £905; Proncy Farm, Dornoch, (CharX), £885; Little Kildrummie, (LimX), £855.
OTM clean bullocks & heifers: Penick Farm (BBX heifer), £715; Cluny Estate, (Hgh bullock), £470.
Prices per kg
OTM cows: Little Kildrummie, (BBX), 114.6p; Pitmain Farm, (Lim), 110.9p; Proncy Farm, (CharX), 103.6p.
OTM clean bullocks & heifers: Penick Farm, (BBX heifer), 104.4p; Cluny Estate, (Hgh bullocks), 101.3p.

Tyree Limousin is Oban Christmas sale champion

Douglas MacDonald of Tyree, Benderloch lifted both the champion's ticket and reserve at the Caledonian Marts (Stirling) Ltd Christmas Show and Sale at Oban Livestock Centre on Tuesday. Judge John Owen chose as his champion a home-bred April-born Limousin cross by Tweedside Upstanding. The reserve was also a Limousin cross by the same sire. Report next week.

Prime lamb trade up 22p per kilo on week

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 99 prime cattle and 395 prime sheep at Dingwall last Tuesday when cattle showed a drop on the previous week while lambs rose by 22.8p per kilo. Prime bullocks averaged 168.2p (-8.7p) while heifers averaged 167.6p (-10p).

New season lambs averaged 179.1p (+22.8p) and sold to 193.2p per kg for 44kg Texel crosses from Torgorm, Conon Bridge, and £91.50 for 50kg Charollais crosses from Balintore Farms, Tain.

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BABY EQUIPMENT

BABY WALKER pink, £20 Telephone 07955 354248.

BEDCOT - COSATTO SUPER JUNIOR Beech bedcot in good condition only, £30 Telephone 01546 603405.

COT MOBILE Fisher Price mobile. Fish/Oceans theme. Remote control. Lights, music and projection. Benderloch, £10 Telephone 01631 720305.

HIGH CHAIR Chicco blue and yellow, £15 Telephone 07955 354248.

IKEA COT Pine 2 position Cot. Well used but looked after, solid. (Mattress for sale too for £10 always had protector on it) Benderloch, £35 Telephone 01631 720305.

INFANT BACK PACK CARRIER adjustable back length. Very good condition. Little rucksac for essentials, used. Lots of features. Rarely used! Benderloch, £40 Telephone 01631 720305.

KOO-DI HIP CARRIER Black. Folds into own pouch. Suitable for 9-15 kg. Benderloch, £5 Telephone 01631 720305.

MOBILE Fisher Price Lights and Music Travel Unit. Projects lights and plays melodies. Stand alone. Ideal for taking away, Benderloch, £5 Telephone 01631 720305.

PRAM Pink, Tesco, £10 Telephone 07955 354248.

TOMMEE TIPEE BABY MONITOR with sensor mat, parent unit and night light. incl instruction book. Benderloch, £20 Telephone 01631 720305.

WOODEN COT TOP CHANGER Universal, saves bending down to do nappies! Takes most changing mats. Benderloch, £10 Telephone 01631 720305.

WOODEN ROCKING CRIB beautifully made, complete with mattress, vgc, was £100 sell for £40. Telephone 01631 570577.

BICYCLES

GIRLS BIKE lilac/silver, 20" Shimano bike, suitable 6-9 year old, £15 Telephone 01586 550272 or 07787 091138.

LADIES' BICYCLE Raleigh, 3-speed gears, brand new tyres, very good condition (nr Tarbert), £49.99 Telephone 01880 820060.

BOOKS

THE MACBRAYNES BOOK Their Highlands & Islands by bus, Stuart Bell

VG condition, scarce. Can deliver Oban, Lochgilphead or post at cost, £20 Telephone 01852 500674.

CD'S, DVD'S AND VIDEOS

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COMPUTERS AND GAMES

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OFFICE KEYBOARDS & MOUSE I have one white one black microsoft, also a black logitech office keyboard. Selling for £2 each. Free mouse for 1st two sold, £2.00 Telephone 01546 606475.

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FURNITURE

2 SEATER SOFA Land of Leather, navy blue, £49.99 Telephone 01631 565224.

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BEDSIDE TABLES bedside tables x 5, solid wood from 4* hotel, £10 each Telephone 01631 562746.

BLUE LEATHER SETTEE 3 seater settee, £49 Telephone 01631 564848 Office Hours.

CONSERVATORY SUITE little used, four-piece, cane conservatory suite. 2 x 2 seaters, 1 x chair, 1 x round table. White cushions, £40 Telephone 07776 361422.

DISPLAY CABINET mahogany corner display cabinet, H 67" W 25 D 14", good condition, £49.99 Telephone 01546 603472.

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PINE CABNET Large solid waxed pine television cabinet with draws, £49.99 Telephone 01852314009.

PINE FURNITURE Pine IKEA wardrobe £20; solid pine chest of drawers £10; black bookshelf £5, Telephone 01631 710167.

PINE SINGLE BED pine framed single bed, spotless as new condition, including mattress, £25 Telephone 01631 564848 Office Hours.

PINE WARDROBE , £40 Telephone 01631 564848 Office Hours.

PINK VELOUR BED SETTEE metal action bed settee, £9 Telephone 01631 564848 Office Hours.

SETTEE wine coloured two seater settee, £9 Telephone 01631 564848 Office Hours.

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WARDROBE large dark wood wardrobe, with drawers underneath, £25 Telephone 01631 564848 Office Hours.

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RUSSELL HOBBS SAUCEPAN SET Marco Pierre White model. 3 saucepans, frying pan and milk pan all in hardly used condition, £20 Telephone 01631 720149.

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MISCELLANEOUS

WINKLES 25kgs bag of winkles for sale, basically just looking for a buyer, Oban, £47.50 Telephone 07747 492780.

MOTORCYCLE EQUIPMENT

CAM CHAIN GSX 550cc cam chain for sale brand new still in box, Oban, £20 Telephone 07747 492780.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

UPRIGHT PIANO Danemann London. Very usable instrument, £49.99 Telephone 01631 564848 Office Hours.

OUTDOOR SPORTS EQUIPMENT

BOYS SKI SUIT AGE 8-10 Brugi boys all in one ski suit. Mainly black with some yellow and grey on sleeves. very good quality, warm suit, good condition, £20 Telephone 01631 710737.

GIRL'S SKI SUIT lovely powder blue ski suit - for girl aged 11 - 12 years old. Very good condition. Please phone on Friday, £20 Telephone 01631 570222.

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ICE AXE Camp hill walking ice axe. 73cm length, only used a few times. Excellent condition, £30 Telephone 01631 566080.

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PERSONAL NOTICES

Mary Kate Campbell

Would like to thank everyone who attended her 80th birthday party and for all the cards, gifts, flowers and good wishes.

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Is Christ your Lord? Any time for Him? Eternal damnation for those who know not Christ is biblical truth, not mythical nonsense.

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The Big Fisherman is 80 years old

Happy Birthday

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See Trade Classified Page for Rates

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BIRTH

MACDONALD – Born on November 2, 2010, at the Royal Maternity, Glasgow, Harry Murdo MacDonald, a very special son for Fergus and Fiona MacDonald and grandson of Flora MacDonald, Uist and Helen and Harry Burton, Glasgow

TRAYNOR – HORN – Brendan and Kirsty are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Ellen's brother Fionnlagh Scott on November 17, 2010. Grandson for Iain and Kathleen and Ann and Les. Special thanks to midwives and staff at Belford Hospital.

SPREADBURY - KELSO
Charles and Hazel are delighted to announce the birth of their beautiful baby girl, Aimee. A little sister for Charlie and Alyssa. Special thanks to all at the Oban Maternity Unit, especially to Elayne and Karen for their excellent care in making sure Aimee arrived safe and sound.

DEATHS

KENNEDY - Anne, aged 51, passed away on December 2, 2010, after an illness courageously borne. A much loved sister, auntie and friend. Funeral Service was held on Tuesday, December 7, at St Mary's RC Church. - Michael, Ali, Kev, Katherine and families.

MACCOLL - Peacefully, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on Tuesday, November 30, 2010 John (Big Jock), Tigh na Struan, Kilmore, beloved husband of Kathie, much loved dad of Elspeth and Iain, loving father-in-law, grandad and friend to many. Will be deeply missed.

MACDONALD - Peacefully at the Belford Hospital with her family beside her on December 4, 2010 Meg Millar, beloved wife of the late Donald Alick and loving mum of Alasdair, John, Mairi and Sandra, dear mother-in-law to Mal and Elizabeth and great friend of Gary and Richard, and a very much loved Granny of Kevin, Craig, Andrew, Callum and Greg xxxxx. Sorely missed.

O'BRIEN - Peacefully at home with her family around her, after an illness borne with determination and dignity, Valerie, beloved wife of Billy, 24 Glenview, Dalmally, mum to Laurence and Louise, Olivia fiancee to Laurence and doting grandmother to Amelia. Will be sadly missed by family and friends. Funeral will take place at Dalmally Parish Church, on Friday, December 10, 2010 at 1.00 p.m. Family flowers only please, retiral collection/ donations will be taken for Marie Curie Cancer Care and Macmillan Cancer Support.

PAYNE – Mac (Edward) Payne of "Cinntail" Corpach, died Tuesday November 30, 2010 in the Belford Hospital after a short illness. Most beloved husband of Pat. Father to Brian, Ann, Cathy, Robert and Sue. Grandfather to Paul, Calum, Richard, Jill, Cairstie, Tracey, Karen, Chris Thomas, MacGregor, Jemma and Graeme. Great Grandfather to Bob, Amelia, Charlie, Luciana, Jack, Matthew, Holly, Joe and Anaia.Well Loved By All. Funeral will be held at St Andrew's Church, Fort William, on Saturday December 11, 2010 at 12 noon. Family flowers only. Donations at the church or to MacLellan Funeral Directors, for the Belford Hospital Fund.

ACKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

CAMPBELL – Iain, Iain, Fiona and families wish to thank all relatives and friends for their support and kindness during Nancy's illness, and after her loss. Special thanks to Dr. Helen MacDonald at Culloden and all medical and nursing staff at Wards 2a, 2c, 4a and 6a at Raigmore Hospital, also Dr. Kelly and the staff of the Macmillan Suite and Macmillan nurses Susan Morrison and Brian Hunter for all care shown to Nancy. Thank you to Rev. Donnie G. MacDonald for a very warm and comforting service, to Donnie MacLeod for his caring and sensitive handling of the funeral arrangements and to the Cuillin Hills Hotel. Special thanks also to the Urquhart family for their hospitality. Many people travelled great distances in unfavourable conditions to support us at the church and cemetery, which was greatly appreciated, and donated over £1,600, which will be shared by Macmillan Cancer Support in Skye and Inverness. Balloch, Inverness.

MACLEAN - The family of the late Vicky would like to thank sincerely all you wonderful people in Ardgour for your support in coming to Mums funeral and sending lovely letters and beautiful cards. Thanks also to Christine King and Roben in Appin for making the long journey also. God Bless You All. X

MACLEOD - The family of the late John MacLeod would like to thank family, friends and neighbours for their cards, phone calls and all who attended the funeral. We would also like to thank Rev Cringles for a lovely service, Catriona and staff of Hamish Hoey for efficient funeral arrangements, all staff at Ward B for their care and attention, special thanks to Ross for music and Lochnell Hotel for catering. Retiring collection of £344.44 was collected for Cerebral Palsy

MACNIVEN - Myra and family wish to thank sincerely all family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues for the lovely cards, flowers, visits and telephone calls received following our very sad loss of Duncan. Sincere thanks also to Dr Adrian Ward for his professional care and kindness shown and thanks to the Lochgilphead Ambulance crew for their professional care and excellent help. Thanks also to Fiona and Roddy of Donald MacDonald Funeral Directors for their caring and kind support and dignified professional services. Also a big thank you to all who came to Cardross Crematorium to support us and pay their last respects to Duncan, in spite of the very harsh weather.

WEIR – The family of the late Kenneth Weir, Caol, wish to thank sincerely all who attended his funeral and those who sent messages of sympathy and support, Rev Dr Corbett for his comforting service, organist May Macintyre for her lovely music, also piper Sandy, Ewen, Funeral Director of John MacLellan & Co for efficient funeral arrangements, also Faye and staff at Caol Community Centre. A retiring collection raised £183 to be divided between Belford Hospital and Heart Smart, Lochaber.

IN MEMORIAM

ANTONIOS - Cherished memories of Wagih, a devoted husband and friend, who died December 14, 2007.
Loved and remembered everyday.
- His loving wife Margaret.

BELL - In loving memory of our dad John who passed away on December 12, 2004. Also remembering our mum Betty who passed away on July 21, 2002.
Sorely missed.
- Inserted by John and Morvyn.

BUNTING - In loving memory of my mother, Jessie, who died December 11, 1980, my stepfather, Willie, who died February 10, 2003 and brother, Arthur, who died October 30, 2001.
Forever in our thoughts.
- Alasdair and family, Tiree.

FLEMING - In loving memory of our dear mother Peggy who died December 6, 2005 and also remembering our father Malkie who died November 3, 1992.
- Ann, Andrew and families. RIP

FILES - Endeared memories of Sarah neé Campbell, mother, grandmother and great grandmother, who died December 10, 2002.
Husband Tom and family.

GIBSON - In loving memory of my dear mother Jenny, who died December 12, 2003.
Loved and remembered always
Jimmy.

GIBSON - In loving memory of my dear mother Jenny, who died December 12, 2003.
Love you always
Kathleen and Sandy.

GIBSON - Loving memories of a dear mother, granny and great granny Jenny, died December 12, 2003. Also remembering loved ones gone before.
Forever in our thoughts
Tommy, Nellie and family

KEIR - Sadly on December 4, 2009 Jessie (Robertson) passed away. Always in our thoughts. Love from Jim and Mum Agnes Robertson.

KENNEDY - In loving memory of our mum, granny and great granny, Eva, who died December 6, 2003.
The sadness and heartache
The tears we cried
The stories we share and memories we hold
There is a place in our lives no one can fill
We love and miss you mum
And always will.
- Emily and Ken, Kathleen and Roddy, Iain and Louise, Bruce and Mairi, Jenna and Norman.

MACCALLUM - In fond remembrance of Jackie a loving husband, Father and Grandfather who passed away on December 9, 1993. Inserted by Jessie and Family.

MACEACHEN - In loving memory of Alister, dear husband, father and papa, died December 8, 1998. RIP.
When thoughts drift back as they often do
We will cherish the memories we have of you.
- Margaret, Michael, Pauline, Craig and Scott.

MACINTYRE - In loving memory of my dear father, Hugh MacIntyre, who passed away on December 9, 1970. RIP
I lost a father with a heart of gold
Few of his like this world could hold
For those left behind he did his best
God grant him now eternal rest.
- Inserted by his loving daughter, Flora, Glasgow.

MACQUARRIE - In loving memory of our dear mum and grandma, Agnes, who died December 14, 2008 and our dear father and grandad, Donald John, who died May 21, 1989.
Always in our thoughts
- Inserted by Simon, Ishbel, Kirsteen and Kevin, Dumbarton

RICHMOND - In loving memory of father and grandfather, John Richmond, 9 Lismore Crescent, Oban, who passed away on December 13, 1973.
There is a bridge of memories
From here to Heaven above
That keeps you very close to us
It's called the Bridge of Love
As time goes by without you Dad
And days turn into years
They hold a million memories
And a thousand silent tears.
- Inserted by his ever loving son Victor, daughter-in-law Anne, grandchildren Yvonne and John, Bermuda.

SANDISON - In loving memory of our precious son, Liam.
It's lonely here without you
We miss you more each day
For life is not the same to us
Since you were called away
To your resting place we visit
Place flowers there with care
But no one knows our heartache
When we turn and leave you there
Love and miss you.
- Mum, Dad, Aaron and Cameron.xxxx

SANDISON - In loving memory our dear grandson, Liam, who died December 10, 2006.
Forever in our thoughts
Always in our hearts
Love you now and forever Liam.
- Gran and Grandad xxx.

SANDISON – In loving memory of our darling grandson, Liam, sadly taken on December 10, 2006, age 4 years.
Each flower is placed upon your grave with very special love
The kisses we place upon your stone
Reach you up above
We miss you so much Liam
Love you forever.
- Granda and Granny, Claggan.xx

SANDISON – In loving memory of our darling nephew and cousin, Liam, died December 10, 2006, age 4.
Your name is precious
It will never grow old
It's engraved in our hearts
In letters of gold.
- Love Auntie Linda, Uncle Angie, Sean and Lisa.xxxx

SMITH - In loving memory of our darling mum Jessie who died December 5, 1992.
The light of our lives
Love you always.
- From your daughters Mary, Janet, Amina and their families xxxx

CHARITY DONATIONS

CANCER RESEARCH UK Scotland

Fighting Cancer on all fronts...
CRC Scotland spends more on research than any other organisation
Commitment of over £15 million each year
Cancer Research UK Scotland
Suite 1/1, Unit 4 Blair Court
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Clydebank, G81 2LA

Oban Hospice
CARING FOR THE FUTURE
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Please give your financial support by donation, deed of covenant or legacy
Please send to **Appeals Department, Highland Arts Effort, Royal Blind Asylum School, P.O. Box 500, Gillespie Crescent, Edinburgh, EH10 4HZ**

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Working towards a time when every person in Scotland has equal and ready access to the best information, treatment and care for cancer
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Tel 0808 100 6000
In memory of Dawn Joyce

Oban Times
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

Remember Someone Special
'Light up a Life' 2010

Friends of Oban Hospice once again invite you to remember someone special by sponsoring the lighting of the Hospice lights for the trees sited at the Corran Halls' Gardens, Oban. Each sponsor's dedication will be recorded in our 2010 Light up a Life Book which will be on display in the Corran Halls at the "Switch On" Ceremony to be held on Tuesday 14 December 2010 at 7.30pm. Thereafter the Book can be viewed in the public Library, Albany Street, Oban.

You are cordially invited to the "Switch On" Ceremony and we look forward to welcoming you there.

'Light up a Life' 2010

In memory of (name) .....
Dedication: .....
.....
.....
.....
.....
(maximum of twenty words)

Please return your form by Friday 10th December 2010 to:Friends of Oban Hospice, c/o ABCR, 120 George Street, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5NT

I wish to support Light up a Life and enclose a donation of:

£.....

Cheques should be made payable to "Friends of Oban Hospice"

Please tick the box if you require a receipt for your donation ☐

Full name ..... Dated .....

Address .....

.....

Tel .....

Gift Aid Declaration
I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and wish Friends of Oban Hospice to benefit from Gift Aid on my donation. ☐

The Oban Times Caravan will be in Tesco's car park from **Mon. 6th Dec. till Sat. 11th Dec. from 10am till 3.30pm** you may return your forms/donations to there if you wish.

www.argyllcommunities.org/obanhospice.

Christmas Services at St John's Episcopal Cathedral

George Street, Oban
We give you a warm welcome to St John's Cathedral this Christmas

Christmas Family Service
10.15am Sunday 19th December
The children will tell the Christmas story, and at the end Christingles will be given out.

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols
7.30pm Monday 20th December

Let's Go To Bethlehem
3.30pm Christmas Eve
Special service for children (and adults) as we build up the Christmas Crib and sing Christmas carols. Ends with juice and Christmas pies in the Narthex.

Christmas Eve
11.15pm Eucharist

Christmas Day
9.30am Said Eucharist
11am Family Eucharist and Carols
Children please bring a Christmas toy to this service.

KILMORE & OBAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Quiet, Reflective services:
1.Advent Breathing Space,
Wednesdays December 1, 8, 15 and 22nd, 7 p.m.
at Glencruitten Road Church

Family Services:
1. Christingle Service,
Friday December 17th, Corran Esplanade, 6:30 p.m.
2. Nativity Service,
Sunday, December 19th, Glencruitten Road, 11:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Services
The Watchnight Service
at 11:30pm in Glencruitten Road Church
Christmas Family Service
7.00 Corran Esplanade 9.00 Kilmore

Christmas Day service
10.30 Corran Esplanade

Sundays: 10 a.m. Corran Esplanade, 11:30 a.m. Glencruitten Road (GR is the Family Service)

Special Sunday Events:
On Dec. 5th, 9:15 Communion AND 4 p.m. Kilmore
Dec. 19th- Gaelic Service, 3 p.m., Glencruitten Road
Dec. 26th- ONLY service of the day, Glencruitten Road Family Service

For more information please contact the Church Office, Mon-Fri 9am-1pm

Tel:01631 562405 E Mail:obancofs@btinternet.com
Website:www.obanchurch.com

LORN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Family Service
Sunday 19th December
10:30am at Main Hall, Oban High School
Christmas Dinner 1pm. Oban.
On your own? no plans yet?
Enquiries to 07836342622

VISITATION AT TAYNUILT

Canon Fraser wishes you all a peaceful and Happy Christmas & New Year

Friday 24th December
11.30 p.m. Carol Service
12.00 a.m. Midnight Mass

Saturday 25th December
10.30 a.m. Children's Mass
ALL WELCOME

St. Columba's Cathedral Oban

Bishop Joseph Toal and Canon Donald MacKay
Wish you all a peaceful, holy and Happy Christmas Season

FRIDAY 24th DECEMBER
6:30 p.m. Blessing of the Crib & Christmas Vigil Mass
11.30 p.m. Carol Service
followed by Concelebrated Midnight Mass

Bishop Joseph Toal Principal Celebrant

SATURDAY 25th DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS DAY
10:30 a.m. Christmas Day Mass

All Welcome

ECCLESIASTICAL NOTICES

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, LOCHABER AND LORN MEETING.
Meeting for Worship on the Second Sunday of each month.
11am at Port Appin Public Hall.
All welcome.
Bring and share meal afterwards.

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Sunday 12 December 2010
Oban High School
Main Hall
10:30am
All Welcome
Telephone
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www.lorncf.org.uk

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN
Campbell Street Church
Sunday 12 December 2010
11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.
Phone-In *'Worship Link'* available
Rev. Archie McPhail MA, MTh
(01631) 567076
All welcome

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Sunday 12 December 2010
Advent 3
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion 08.00
Sung Eucharist..... 10.15
Sunday School and Crèche
Loop System
Large Print Hymn Books
All Welcome
Norman MacCallum, Provost.
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Holy Spirit, Ardchattan
No Service
St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Eucharist.....11.00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist.....10.00

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GRADUATIONS

Debbie McCorkindale graduated with an HND in Social Sciences at the Glasgow School of Nautical Science. Debbie is the youngest daughter of Neil and Hazel McCorkindale, Scammadale and granddaughter of Mary McCorkindale, Oban.

Patricia Ryan graduated with BSc in Occupational Safety and Health with Distinction from the University of West of Scotland. Patricia is married to Neil Sutherland, Ballachulish and is the daughter of Winifred and the late Michael Ryan, Achahoish, By Lochgilphead.

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Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

Oban Times BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

Top award presented to Oban Saints at Hampden

Saints are the only club in the West Region to have received this accolade

Oban Saints club secretary David Buchanan, Argyll and Bute Council football development officer Martin Rae and team manager Iain Jackson pictured with the Community Club Quality Mark Flag with the Scottish Cup in the foreground. Photos: Trevor Thomson, The Scottish Football Association

FOOTBALL

OBAN Saints Football Club was presented with the Scottish Football Association's top Quality Mark Award of Community Club at a recent awards ceremony held at Hampden Park.

Fourteen clubs and schools attended the awards evening at the home of Scottish Football.

Saints are the only club in the West Region to be given this top accolade by the SFA.

Attended

Senior club secretary David Buchanan and senior team manager Iain Jackson attended the presentation evening along with Argyll and Bute Council football development officer Martin Rae.

The Scottish FA Quality Mark scheme is a youth football initiative which supports grassroots football development.

With over 400 Scottish clubs and schools already participating, over 8,500 coaches have directly benefitted from coach development and first aid training to date.

With the support of partners McDonald's and the Big Lottery Fund, the Scottish FA works with grassroots clubs and schools to broaden and increase youth and community participation as well as enhancing player, coach and volunteer development.

The evening, attended by around 100 people, started off in the Hampden Museum with a welcome from Danny Bisland, the West Region club development manager.

After a look round the museum a buffet was served before the presentation got underway in the Bain Suite.

The first award of the evening went to Oban Saints who were presented with the Community Club Quality Mark Flag, the top award in the Quality Mark scheme.

Saints were presented with the Standard Award in 2006, the Development Award in 2008 and now the Community Award in 2010.

David Buchanan thanked all the club's coaches, volunteers and players for all the hard work they had put in since the club joined the scheme in 2006.

Thanked

David also thanked the SFA's West Region staff, development officer Martin Rae and his predecessor Dylan Kerr for all their help in achieving this top award.

Argyll clubs were well represented at the awards night. Along with Oban Saints, Helensburgh Football Club were presented with the Development Club Certificate and Lochgilphead Soccer Centre got the Standard Club Certificate.

The final presentation of the evening, the West Region's Merit Award went to Lochgilphead Soccer Centre and Oban Saints coach co-ordinator Willie Luke for all his hard work and endevour over the last 12 months.

It turned out to be a successful evening for the Argyll and Bute clubs as they all won prizes in a quiz held earlier in the evening.

Lochgilphead Soccer Centre won training equipment while Saints and Helensburgh won 30 tickets each for youngsters to go and watch the St Mirren v St Johnstone SPL game on Saturday.

The evening closed with the Scottish FA West Region manager Paul McNeill thanking all the clubs, coaches and volunteers for all their dedication and for taking part in the Quality Mark scheme.

Lochgilphead Soccer Centre received the Standard Club Certificate. Pictured are coaches Graham Whitefield, Alan Millar, Martin Rae, Argyll and Bute Council football development officer, Willie Luke and Gordon Munro.

Willie Luke, centre, was given the Scottish FA West Region's special Merit Award of a watch by Danny Bisland, left, club development manager and Paul McNeill, the SFA's West Regional manager

Archie gets top shinty post

SHINTY

GLASGOW'S Archie Robertson has been elected as President-elect of shinty's ruling body, the Camanachd Association, following a ballot of the membership in which he outvoted the only other candidate for the post, Donald Stewart of Ballachulish.

A native of the Isle of Skye, and a current board member of the Camanachd Association since 2007, Archie Robertson is also on the management committee of Glasgow Mid-Argyll Shinty Club and a director of the Glasgow Celtic Society. He played senior shinty at international level and for Lovat and Glasgow Mid-Argyll.

Current association president, Duncan Cameron, finishes his term of office at the AGM on Friday, April 29, 2011.

Facilitate

The post of president-elect is intended to facilitate a smooth transition from one president to another. Over the coming months Archie Robertson will shadow Duncan Cameron in the performance of his duties and benefit from the president's guidance and advice regarding the role.

The president-elect will then be presented at the 2011 AGM for confirmation as president for a term of three years.

Scottish Amateur Football League fixtures

PREMIER Division:Greenock HSFP v Oban Saints - referee Gordon Hay.

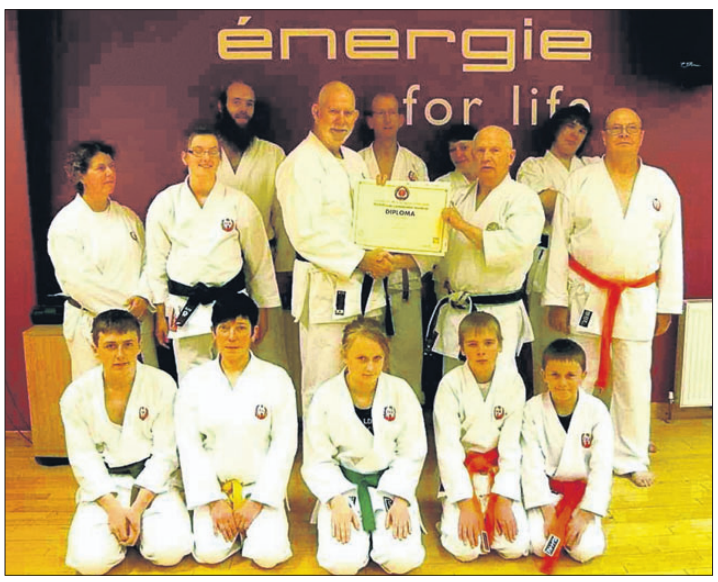
Premier Division One: Glencastle Sparta v Campbeltown Pupils 'A' - referee Gordon Kelso.

Premier Division Two: Port Glasgow OBU v Tarbert - referee Alan Lamb.

Division One - Lomond Rock 'B' v Lochgilphead Red Star - referee Andrew Seymour.

Division Three: Campbeltown Pupils 'B' v Jamestown - referee Peter McCallum.

All these matches are scheduled to kick-off at 2pm, weather permitting.



Ronnie Watt, right, presents the sixth Dan certificate to Christopher Bruce.

Karate man fights his way through the snow

KARATE

FIGHTING his way through the dreadful snow that plagued Aberdeen and most of Scotland, Ronnie Watt came to Energie Fitness Centre in Oban to hold a Karate course and Dan grading for the Scottish Kaishin Wadokai (SKW).

Ronnie, probably the highest qualified karate practitioner in Britain, was recently awarded The Order of the Rising Sun with gold and silver rays by the Emperor and Government of Japan. This prestigious award was presented to him by the Consul General of Japan, Mr Tarahara, in his beautiful residence in Edinburgh.

He has subsequently receive a letter from Queen Elizabeth II, giving him unrestricted rights to wear the award.

The karate course in Oban was voted a complete success and the Dan Grade applicants were successful with second Dan awards being presented to Gayle Munro, Fiona McInnes and Jaimie Twort. Alan Yau will also receive an award.

Much to the surprise and great pleasure of all present, Ronnie Watt presented Christopher Bruce, chief instructor of the SKW, with his sixth Dan Certificate.

Lochaber win challenge shield

SHINTY

THE SECOND Scottish Schools Homecoming Challenge Shield was competed for in Oban last week with four high school teams competing for the senior school title.

The tournament, which was introduced last year during the year of Homecoming by the South of Scotland Schools Camanachd Association and supported by Oban High School, is designed to allow senior pupils the final opportunity to compete for their school.

A focus of the tournament is also to recognise the final-year pupils in the team for their contribution to school shinty.

Teams from Oban, Lochaber, Ardnamurchan and Douglas Academy took part in the tournament, with teams from Dunoon and Lochgilphead having to pull out at the last minute due to travel problems.

In an afternoon which saw some excellent team and individual shinty on display it was Oban and Lochaber that made it through to the final.

In an evenly matched final, which undoubtedly saw some of the country's top youth players competing, it was Lochaber that managed to gain the slight edge and eventually took the final 2 – 0. Oban High School head teacher Peter Bain was kindly on hand to present the trophy to the victorious Lochaber team and a certificate of achievement for all the final-year pupils that took part in the competition.

This included Stuart Callison, Connor Sweeny and Brennan MacDonald from Lochaber, Brendon McLone, Guy Berg and Ryan Harrison from Douglas Academy; Craig MacPhail and Reece Mackay from Ardnamurchan and Peter Currie from Oban High School.

Fantastic

Argyll and Bute Shinty Development Officer Darren Reid said: 'It is fantastic that this competition firstly gives the senior school pupils the chance to compete for their school and it is great that through this tournament the senior players can be recognised for their contribution to school shinty.

'I am confident that the players involved in this tournament will be making an impact in the senior game in the immediate future and hopefully make up the nucleus of their local clubs for years to come.'

Oban Lorne hope weather improves

RUGBY

THE ARGYLL under-16 team will be hoping the weather warms up as they continue preparations for the final of the Brewin Dolphin Schools Bowl.

The Argyll boys face Biggar but a date for this fixture is to be confirmed.

Oban Lorne's senior team has not played a game since the beginning of November but continue training sessions as normal – last week's session was in temperatures of around –7°C.

Captain Struan Smith said: 'This week the first team are scheduled to play Clydebank at home in the league this Saturday but the weather doesn't seem to be on our side.

'The boys are all keen for this game to be played, however, because we want to make up for the narrow loss in the away fixture earlier this season.

'Clydebank are always tough opponents who are difficult to break down.'

Oban Pool League

POOL

	P	W	L	Pts
Lancaster A	7	7	0	14
The Kelvin	8	7	1	14
Lancaster B	8	6	2	12
Cellar Bar	7	4	3	8
The Lochnell	7	4	3	8
The Claredon	8	4	4	8
Markie Dan's A	7	4	3	8
Golf Club	7	2	5	4
The Lochavullin	7	1	6	2
The Harbour	7	1	6	2
Markie Dans B	7	0	7	0

OBAN Pool League's website has now gone live and can be viewed at www.obanpoolleague.co.uk

Results: Claredon 6, Lochnell 3; Lancaster A 6, Golf Club 3; Markie Dan's B 2, Markie Dan's A 7; Cellar 7, Lancaster B 2; Harbour 0, Kelvin 9.

Cup fixtures: Lochnell v Lancaster B; Lancaster A v Golf Club; Markie Dan's B v Cellar.

League fixtures: Lancaster B v Harbour; Markie Dan's A v Cellar; Golf Club v Markie Dan's B; Lochnell v Lancaster A; Lochavullin v Claredon.

Freya Aitchison jumping with horse, Shasta.

Fun in the sun for pony clubbers at Skipness

THE WEATHER played an important part in the first Winter League Competition for Argyll (South) Branch of the Pony Club recently.

Dramatic variations meant that the brilliant sun in Skipness and scenic mist at the Long Walk belied the treacherously icy conditions which prevented Inveraray competitors from transporting their horses.

Nevertheless, with some substitutions, the day went ahead with 13 competitors doing Dressage and Show Jumping at Riding S Cool, Killinochonoch.

The club would like to thank List Judge Wendy Campbell-Gray for coming down from Taynuilt to judge, Christine Dobson for writing and all the other helpers. The club is also very grateful to John Brailsford for the use of his excellent arena.

The next winter league competition for the pony club will be held on December 11 – all entries to Melissa James on 01880 760358. The competition is open to all.

The final day will be in March with a prize giving to follow. Further information can be found on the Pony club website.

Dressage results: Novice: 1 Hannah Prill on Perry; 2 Cara Drew on Perry; 3 Kirsty Aitchison on Shasta; (Non PC) 1 Marina Mac-Arthur on Soli.

Intermediate - Introductory 2007: 1. (equal) Gemma Rae on Zebedee; Freya Aitchison on Shasta and Maggie Richmond on Saffy; (Non PC): 1. Diane Forbes on Bobz; 2. Roanna Taylor on Hero.

Open - Novice Eventing 2006: 1. Alexis Stewart on Libby; (Non PC) 1. Toni Stewart on Yates; 2. Shelagh Oakes on Perry; 3. Catriona Wilson on Fergus.

Winter League Showjumping results: Pre Novice: Hannah Prill on Perry; 2. Kirsty Aitkinson on Pebble; 3. Cara Drew on Pebble.

Novice: 1. Sara McDougall on Trushki; 2. Freya Aitkinson on Shasta; 3. Gemma Rae on Zebedee; 4. Maggie Richmond on Saffy.

Intermediate: 1. Catriona Wilson on Fergus; 2. Sara McDougall on Trushki; 3. Diane Forbes on Bobz. Open: 1. Catriona Wilson on Fergus; 2. Shona McArthur on Red; 3. Alexis Stewart on Libby.

Lochaber pulls off another major sporting coup

'The event has been staged at Aberfeldy for years, so it is a bit of a scoop to take it off them'

EXCLUSIVE REPORT
by STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

LOCHABER has pulled off another major sporting coup after it emerged the Fort William-based Highland Warrior Triathlon has been chosen as a Scottish championship event.

Local sports promotions agency No Fuss Events tendered a strong bid several weeks ago to bring the national middle distance event to Fort William - and ticked all the boxes with the Triathlon Scotland selection panel.

To land a Scottish championship triathlon, the bidding organisation must show it has the ability to stage a highly successful event and raise the sport's profile.

Championship events comprise both an elite and an age group level race, and No Fuss' Warrior bid out top on all criteria, including a suitable personnel structure, event marketing, race entry structure and quality facilities.

Hundreds of top-class triathletes are expected to gather in Fort William on September 10-11, 2011 for three triathlons - the Big Ben Nevis triathlon and The Half Ben Nevis triathlon on the Saturday, and the Warrior on the Sunday.

The Warrior, by far the toughest of the three, will see competitors swim 1900m in Loch Linnhe, followed by a tough 56mile bike ride and finally a half marathon distance run in and around Glen Nevis.

No Fuss has already hosted two championship events in 2009 and 2010, the Triathlon Scotland Off Road Triathlon Championships.

Frazer Coupland Chloe Robertson from No Fuss told *The Oban Times* they were delighted the Warrior will have championship status in 2011 – and that Lochaber had been able to prise away the event from the previous venue, Aberfeldy.

He said: 'The event has been staged at Aberfeldy for years, so it is a bit of a scoop to take it off them.

'This is really great for us, it's the third year to have a championship event and the middle distance is a prestigious one. We knew from the participants' feedback in 2010 that the event was hugely popular and the potential was massive. Lochaber is going from strength to strength as an event destination.'

No Fuss Events have a full calendar of events on 2011 stretching from January to October, starting with the Winter Feast friendly duathlons in January and February.

Spectacular Lochaber: a snowboarder flies over a jump high on Nevis Range with lochs Linnhe and Eil far below in the distance.

Snowsport season gets off to a great start

NEVIS Range got their snowsports season off to a great start last weekend as over 750 people took to the slopes over Saturday and Sunday.

Skiers, snowboarders and sightseers took the gondola to the bottom station at 2,000 feet to enjoy Alpine weather conditions.

Ski school organiser Laura Knight said powder snow prevailed at all levels with the best skiing to be had on the upper slopes, where snow cover was deepest.

'Conditions are pretty good right now and we did get another good dump of snow last night,' Laura told *The Oban Times* on Monday.

'With just a little bit more on the beginners' slopes it will be perfect. The forecast is that it will thaw a bit after a teperature rise later in the week, but hopefully that will not happen.'

The resort is planning to open again this weekend if good weather and snow cover continues, with full operations resuming from December 18.

Equipment hire will still need to be provided by customers themselves until that date, when upgrading work is due to be completed.

Glencoe Mountain had insufficient snow last weekend and is currently evaluating snow conditions.

World Cup named Event of the Year

MOUNTAIN BIKING

THIS SUMMER'S UCI Mountain Bike World Cup at Nevis Range has been named Event of the Year at a national sports awards ceremony.

Sunday Mail Sports Awards were held in Glasgow last Thursday where Lesley Beck, of organisers Rare Management, picked up the prize.

The event has been held on the slopes of Aonach Mor since 2002, and attracted more than 18,000 spectators in June.

Chairman of Outdoor Capital of the UK Fraser Copeland said winning the award was 'absolutely tremendous'. He told *The Oban Times*: 'The event is going into its tenth year and it's fantastic that it is still picking up high accolades like this. I think here in Fort William and Lochaber we are punching way above our weight with the events we manage to attract.'

Fort game hangs in the balance

FOOTBALL

HOPES that Fort William and their Highland league counterparts might lace up their boots this weekend hang by a thread as warmer temperatures arrive.

Frigid weather has laid waste to the fixture list in recent weeks, but melting snow on top of frozen ground could mean another hazard - waterlogged pitches.

Conditions permitting, Fort travel to Formartine United on Saturday desperate to reverse a bleak run of form, which has left them anchored at the bottom of the table.

Weather forecast for Pitmedden is rain today (Thursday) and Friday with temperatures set to rise to a balmy 8ºC by Saturday.

Flooding could be the next problem

RUGBY

LOCHABER RFC hope to get back into action on Saturday against rivals Moray after their match against RAF Lossiemouth was frozen out last weekend.

The Banavie pitch has suffered badly under ice and snow and with the onset of a thaw flooding could be the main threat to the fixture going ahead.

Lochaber presently lie third in the Caledonia Division 2 Northwest league

Prizewinners at Spean Bridge Golf Club.

Annual prizes handed out at Spean Bridge Golf Club

GOLF

THE WINNERS of Spean Bridge Golf Club's annual awards were presented with their trophies at a ceremony at the clubhouse on Saturday.

Winners: Club champion - A Reid; Club champion, handicap – C Cameron; George Carson junior trophy - S Latto; Stableford pairs - K Dalziel and G Dalziel; Stableford singles - C Maccoll; Greensome Cup - H Campbell and I Graham; Mclaren trophy – W Atkinson; Bogey Cup - S Maclean; Drummond Cup - B Stewart; Edbroke trophy - K Dalziel; Hotel trophy - C Davidson; Hotel trophy, handicap - C Cameron; Captain's prize - C Cameron; Pairs trophy - B Stewart and S Steele; Bell Cup - B Stewart; Kenning Cup - K Dalziel; Texas scramble - D McCook, C Donaldson and M Cameron; Gordon Pearson trophy - C MacColl; Senior league - H Campbell and A McNeil tied.

Ronald Ross wins top award

SCOTLAND shinty star Ronald Ross has been honoured at a national awards ceremony for his incredible goalscoring feats.

Ronald won the Amateur Performance category at the Sunday Mail Sports Awards after notching over 1,000 goals for Kingussie. Ronald, Scotlands national development officer for the sport, has his exploits recognised in the Guiness Book of Records. He said: 'It is fantastic to finally get the award. It doesnt get better than being recognised by your country.'

Ronald Ross.

Phoenix boxers caught cold by the bad weather

BOXING

LOCHABER Phoenix Boxing Club has been caught cold by the extreme weather conditions hitting the country with several recent bouts cancelled.

They travelled to Elgin where Lochaber's Chris Bradley was due to take on the current Scottish champion and Mark Curtis was to participate in his second contest. Both their opponents were from Peterhead but failed to make it through the snow and so the Lochaber men came home without a fight.

A show the club was due to attend in Aberdeen last Thursday was also called off at the last minute because of the severe weather.

Club coach Vince Lopez said: 'The other drawback to this bad weather is the amount of illness it brings. Artom Jevstifejevs had to withdraw from his Scottish Novice final through illness and at last count the club has missed out on twelve bouts since the start of last month.

'Effectively the rest of this year is a write off but the boxers at the club are continuing to train hard as we have a show in Bolton at the start of January and are waiting confirmation of the boxers with contests.'

He added: 'Although the weather has us down we are certainly not out and will be back punching harder than ever in 2011.'

Chris Bradley: travelled to Elgin only to find he had no-one to fight.

10_f50boxing01

Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

WIN £1400

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE. . .

This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
E Muir, Burnbank Terrace, Ardrishaig and E Ross, Eglington Road, Ardrossan

All you have to do

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. Prizes will be shared between those submitting correct entries.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to reach "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB **by 12noon Tuesday.**

You may hand it into **The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban** by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition Rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time.

Employees of The Oban Times Limited, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.

I enclose £1 (note) for 20 crosses (tick box) ❑ The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules.
How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1.

Name_____

Address_____

_____ Tel No._____

Send to **'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB**

Badminton brothers make the feathers fly

'We sometimes let the adults win - it depends who it is'

BADMINTON

TWO BADMINTON brothers are already proving to be a smash in the Scottish junior rankings as they start their first full season.

Stewart and Harry Mobey from Taynuilt, only started playing the sport two years ago when coach Debbie Craig held a badminton taster session at Taynuilt Primary School and recognised the boys' potential.

Now Stewart, aged 12, is competing at national under-14 level, where he is ranked 38th and 10-year-old Harry is competing at under-12 level and is 19th in Scotland.

They also compete together at under-14 level in doubles.

The brothers attend Oban Badminton Club and play against adults in order to find a competitive match.

'We sometimes let the adults win,' joked Stewart. 'It depends who it is.

Learn

'Playing against them is good for us because we learn things from them. If you want to learn a new trick, you can usually pick something up.'

The sporty brothers also take part in football, tennis, swimming and running but say badminton is their favourite sport. Harry said: 'In competitions we have to be serious but normally we just play to have fun and keep fit.

'We play badminton three or four times a week, whenever there are courts available.'

Stewart added: 'Badminton is a great sport because it is fast and keeps you fit.'

Oban Badminton Club meets on Tuesdays (8-10pm) and Thursdays (6-8pm) in Atlantis Leisure.

Badminton brothers Stewart, left, and Harry Mobey pictured at Atlantis Lesiure. 07_t50mobey01

Oban Lorne have the Wright combination

RUGBY

SUPER-fit Robert Wright, who is competing in his 30th season with Oban Lorne Rugby Club, is now looking forward to taking to the field with both his sons.

The 47 year old, who has been a regular in the Oban Lorne back-line this season, is already playing alongside elder son, Allan, aged 19.

But in a landmark season for the British Telecom worker, he also recently welcomed his other son, 17-year-old Craig, to the first team set-up.

Robert started playing rugby at Oban High School under Charlie Robertson but his diminutive size as a teenager prevented him making his first-team debut for Oban Lorne until the age of 17. Robert said: 'I've been trying to retire for the last 10 years but we've never had enough players so I just stayed on. I suppose I'm just trying to keep fit for as long as possible.

'I try to train twice a week and I go to the gym as often as I can; you've got to, especially at my age.

'I still enjoy playing and I suppose my next target is to play a game with both the boys. Allan and I scored in the same match against Millbrae in only his second match and that was a memorable day for us.'

Robert, who is also a keen golfer and plays off a handicap of three, said he was pleased that his sons had followed in his footsteps in playing rugby but was quick to thank his understanding wife, Morven, for putting up with his extended rugby career.

Allan, a SVQ Rugby Community Coach, is in his third season with Oban Lorne. He said: 'It's great playing alongside him but he just starts the game as another teammate. I'd say he's pretty hard on Craig at training, though.'

Robert responded: 'I might be a bit hard on him but the reason I'm still playing is because I push myself at training. You don't get fit by just playing in games.'

Craig, who is yet to play for the first team, has just joined the senior squad but has been watching his dad at training for much longer.

'I can't remember the early years that well but my dad has taken me to training sessions since I was five years old, so I suppose I have been training with the squad long before now,' joked Craig.

Robert is enthused by the young players coming through to the first team and is very much the elder statesman in a young back-line. He said: 'You feel your age when you see kids going to mini rugby at five years of age and then you are lining up beside them in the first team.'

The father and son duo of Robert and Allan is not unique in Argyll; Angus and Scott MacColl regularly line up for Isle of Mull Rugby Club together.

From left, Craig, Robert and Allan hope to take to the field together in Robert's 30th season for Oban Lorne Rugby Club. 08_t50bert01

Macaulay Cup draw throws up some interesting ties

THE DRAW for the first round of shinty's Artemis Macaulay Cup has thrown up some top ties in both north and south sections.

In the north, Lochaber, second in North Division One last season, will tackle the team that denied the Spean Bridge club promotion by a single league point, Kilmallie, while, also in the north section, there are two all-Premier clashes when Lovat entertain Fort William at Kiltarlity while Kingussie travel to Drumnadrochit for their tie against Glenuquhart.

The remaining north first round fixture sees Newtonmore travel to Kirkton to play North Division One's Kinlochshiel.

Determined

Top draw in the south sees Inveraray take on a recently relegated Bute side who will be determined to show that they have what it takes to play at the top level, while newly promoted Glenorchy will make life very difficult for Kyles Athletic when the teams meet at Dalmally.

The two Oban clubs have managed to avoid each other in the opening round, with Oban Celtic heading for Glasgow and a fixture against Glasgow Mid Argyll, while Oban Camanachd also start their 2011 Macaulay Cup campaign with an away tie, this time at Lochgilphead and a game against Kilmory.

Head-on

Success for both Oban outfits would see them meet head-on in the second round. If results run to form shown throughout season 2010, the quarter-finals may also result in Kingussie facing Fort William; Kilmallie playing Newtonmore and Kyles meeting Inveraray at Tighnabruaich.

SHINTY

Artemis Macaulay Cup 2011

1st Round North		
Lochaber	v	Kilmallie
Kinlochshiel	v	Newtonmore
Glenurquhart	v	Kingussie
Lovat	v	Fort William
1st Round South		
Inveraray	v	Bute
Glasgow MA	v	Oban Celtic
Kilmory	v	Oban Camanachd
Glenorchy	v	Kyles Athletic
2nd Round		
Glenurquhart or Kingussie	v	Lovat or Fort William
Lochaber or Kilmallie	v	Kinlochshiel or Newtonmore
Glenorchy or Kyles Athletic	v	Inveraray or Bute
Kilmory or Oban Camanachd	v	Glasgow Mid Argyll or Oban Celtic
Semi Final 1		
Glenurquhart/Kingussie/ Lovat/Fort William	v	Lochaber/Kilmallie/ Kin'shiel/Newtonmore
Semi Final 2		
Glenorchy/Kyles Athletic/ Inveraray/Bute	v	Kilmory/Oban Cam/ Mid Argyll/Oban Celtic

Saints hope to get back in action

FOOTBAL

THE Scottish Amateur League premier division game between Cambria and Oban Saints due to be played at Stepps last Saturday was called off due to the horrendous weather conditions.

The Oban side will be hoping to get back into action this weekend when they travel away to take on old rivals Greenock HSFP.

The match is due to take place at Battery Park with a 2pm kick-off with referee Gordon Hay in charge.

Saints and Tarbert had agreed to play a friendly on the 3g pitch at Oban High School if both their games were off last weekend, but unfortunately this also fell victim to the weather.

The teams have agreed to do the same this Saturday on the 3g at Oban High School, kick-off 2pm if both their league games are off. Tarbert are scheduled to travel to play Port Glasgow OBU.

SCOTTISH AMATEUR LEAGUE - PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oban Saints	8	5	2	1	26	12	17
Kilpatrick	7	5	1	1	17	11	16
Greenock HSFP	7	4	2	1	12	9	14
St Josephs	7	4	0	3	13	17	12
Arkleston	4	2	1	1	11	9	7
Thorn Athletic	6	2	1	3	10	14	7
Aikenhead	4	1	2	1	8	5	5
Castlemilk	6	1	1	4	7	14	4
Inverclyde	6	0	2	4	10	17	2
Cambria	5	0	0	5	3	9	0

Oban Saints youth fixtures and results

FOOTBALL

ALL games involving Oban Saints youth teams were called off last weekend due to the weather.

This weekend's fixtures: Westerton United v Under 13s; Under 14s v Seafar Villa; East Kilbride v Under 15s; Milngavie v Under 16s.

Atlantis Indoor League

FOOTBALL

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Carpet Fitters	3	3	0	0	9
Atlantis Leisure	3	2	0	1	6
Oban Times	3	2	0	1	6
RM Builders	3	2	0	1	6
Hydro	3	1	1	1	4
Dunollie	3	1	1	1	4
Oban High School	3	0	0	3	0
Scottish Sea Farms	3	0	0	3	0

Results: Carpet Fitters 9, Oban Times 4; Dunollie 5, Atlantis 12; Hydro 6, Oban High School 4; RM Builders 11, Scottish Sea Farms 3.

Tobermory golf

GOLF

RESULTS of December Hole Medal on December 9 - 1 Donald (Do Do) Maclean 39-9=30; 2 Eoghann MacLean 38-6=32; 3 Iain Wilshire 42-9=33.

the weather

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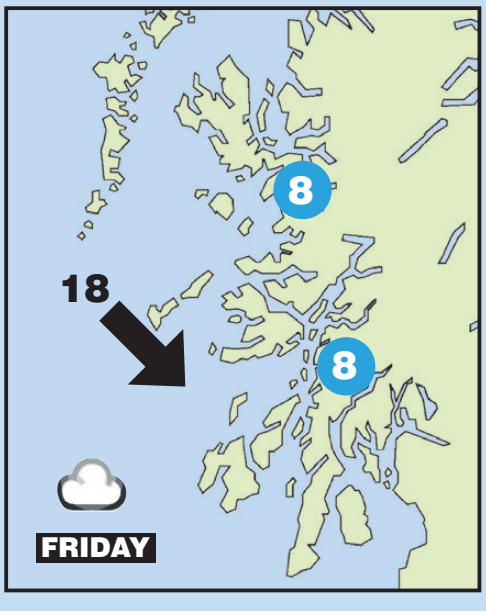
Thursday
Cloudy.
Winds light, south easterly.
Temperatures 8ºC to 9ºC

Friday
Cloudy.
Winds moderate west, north westerly.
Temperatures 8ºC to 9ºC.

Weekend Outlook
Cloudy.
Winds moderate, north weaterly.
Temperatures 1ºC to 9ºC.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States
Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree -As above
Kennacraig to Islay - As above



Tides

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Tide tables for Oban during the week from
Thursday, December 9, 2010
are listed below with differences
for major ports listed beneath.
All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am				pm			
Thur	01.40	1.1	07.35	4.0	14.10	1.4	19.43	3.6
Fri	02.21	1.2	08.14	3.8	14.51	1.6	20.20	3.5
Sat	03.02	1.4	08.55	3.7	15.34	1.7	20.58	3.3
Sun	03.46	1.6	09.39	3.5	16.20	1.9	21.41	3.1
Mon	04.33	1.7	10.30	3.3	17.12	2.0	22.33	3.0
Tues	05.24	1.9	11.36	3.2	18.11	2.0	23.44	3.0
Wed	06.22	2.0	13.03	3.2	19.12	2.0	**.**	*.*

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Lochboisdale	+0.30
Campbeltown	-5.30	Mallaig	+0.25
Crinan	-0.47	Portree	+0.55
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Tobermory	+0.16
		Dover	+5.30