

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Driver charged after Taynuilt car accident

A 17-YEAR-old woman, whose car allegedly crossed onto the opposite carriageway and collided with another car containing three children, has been reported for dangerous driving.

The teenage driver of a Renault Clio collided with a Renault Scenic on the A85 near Taynuilt.

Both cars were damaged in the collision and blocked the road for a short period of time.

Connel Bridge bump fright

FEARS that Connel Bridge would have to be closed last week after an articulated lorry hit a support beam proved unfounded, following an inspection by the roads authority.

A Scotland Transerv inspection of the bridge last Thursday following the collision at 2.40pm the same day concluded that the structural damage was not severe enough to merit a road closure.

The driver of the lorry will not face any criminal charges.

Canon Charles Copland dies

MANY people around Oban will be saddened to hear of the death of Canon Charles Copland in Whitehill Hospital, Forfar on December 12.

Canon Copland was Provost of St John's Cathedral, Oban and Dean of Argyll and the Isles for 20 years before retiring in 1979. He was a colourful and popular character in the town.

Obituary - page 18



Argyle Square, Oban is caught in a colourful Christmas spin by the camera skills of well known local photographer Dennis Hardley

Oban party tickets prove in demand after event cancellation

TICKETS for the Street Party are in high demand – now that the event has been cancelled and the venue changed.

Monday saw an unprecedented number of people go to the refunds and exchanges desk in VisitScotland, Oban to buy tickets. 'Typical,' said party organiser Neil Mackay, 'but people should have bought their tickets in advance and we would never have been in this situation at all.'

Mr Mackay was adamant that tickets for the two new venues for the cancelled Hogmanay Street Party would be given out on a first come first served basis for people who had bought their tickets in advance.

And only then, if there are any tickets left, would they be sold at an event hut in the Corran Halls on December 30 and 31.

Refunds

Mr Mackay continued: 'People can come to the exchange desk in the VisitScotland exhibition area on Albany Street to have tickets for either Donnie Munro at the Corran Halls or Skerryvore at Skipinnish. The desk will be open when the VisitScotland centre is open. I hope to be able to man it personally for most of the time.'

People from outwith Oban can fill in a form online to exchange tickets – they can then be picked up at the event hut at the Corran Halls.

Refunds will be made by cheque in the New Year.

'I am sad that children cannot attend the event – over 14s will be able to attend the Corran Halls but Skerryvore is for strictly over 18s only.'

Rumours are circulating in the town that an alternative impromptu street party is being organised. Mr Mackay warned anyone thinking of organising this party to think seriously about the health and safety of participants. He said: 'Revelers can be in high spirits and that is when things can get out of hand.'

'Organisers of Oban Hogmanay spent a lot of time thinking about the health and safety of party goers.'

Second Christmas in French jail for Killin man

A GRANDFATHER from Killin will be spending his second Christmas in jail in France – but claims he has not had his day in court.

Alistair Campbell, aged 48, an HGV driver, was sentenced to nine years imprisonment in his absence and was formally extradited to France in March 2008 but he claims he has never had a fair trial for the crime he is said to have committed.

Speaking exclusively to *The Oban Times* from a prison in northern France, Mr Campbell said: 'I am here because the person who was daft enough to carry drugs said that I was the ring leader. I have spent two years in a concrete jail on the word of a convicted drugs smuggler.'

Back in May 2000 Mr Campbell found out that a man from Ballachulish had named him as a drug 'gang leader'. The man, called Mr A for legal

reasons, had been found in possession of narcotics when he was coming through the border to England from France.

Mr Campbell said: 'I found out from the newspapers that he was accusing me of organising the whole job.'

Mr Campbell contacted his family lawyer – more used to dealing with house sales than European Criminal Law.

'He tried to clarify the situation with the French authorities but it was not until I received a letter requesting my presence in Boulogne for a police interview that I knew this was very serious.'

'My lawyer told me he was unable to continue. He gave me two pieces of advice – the first was not to go to France until I knew the charges I was facing and secondly to get a criminal lawyer to help me.'



Alistair Campbell faces a second Christmas behind bars in a French prison

for more on this story see Page 15

Islay ship name winners go to launch

TWO WOMEN have won a competition to see the new Islay ferry being launched in Poland next year.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) held a competition to name the new Islay ferry, which will be called *Finlaggan*.

Mrs M McRae from Port Wemyss, Islay, and Alison Bell, Inverness, have been invited to the launch after they both voted for the winning name.

The new Islay ferry will be the first new ship to serve the route in 37 years and marks a major investment in vessels from CMAL.

Oops! - left in the dark

SCOTLAND Transerv, the organisation responsible for Argyll's trunk roads, says it shut off street lights on Oban's Esplanade after disconnecting a cable by mistake.

But one resident says the lights from Coasters Bar to the roundabout below the Corran Halls have been off for more than three weeks and claims she complained four times before the problem was attended to on Tuesday.

Nancy MacDonald, who lives in Westbay Apartments, said: 'Fortunately the Great Western Hotel has its spotlights on but when the pavement is icy, I daren't risk walking on it because it is so dark.'

A set of 18 street lights in Balvicar Road, Oban, which are the responsibility of Argyll and Bute Council were off for two weeks before being fixed by the beginning of this week.

Film premiere comes 'home'

LONDON-based director David Stoddart, a native of Oban, has unveiled his first film, a National Film and Television School project called *Solstice*.

But the audience at the world premiere were not in London, Cannes or Hollywood – they were in the Highland Theatre, Oban, as David brought the film back to his home town last Tuesday.

A number of invited guests from the area were present – many of whom had a part to play in the making of the film, which was made in Argyll and Glencoe and used local actors.

David, 28, brother of racing driver Susie Stoddart, said: 'The reason I brought it to Oban was because of the help I received from everyone up here.'

'Unlike filming in London, nothing is too much trouble for people here; we could always borrow a van or get extras for certain scenes.'



David Stoddart with his family in Oban 07-david01

'No-one in the crew had ever experienced anything like it. We were filming in the middle of nowhere, with no mobile phone signal, and they all thought that was crazy.'

Members of Oban's Spotlight Musical Theatre Group were involved in the filming and teenage member Allison Elliot joined professional actors in the main cast.

Andy Powell, a former Oban High School drama teacher, also played a part in the film, which has gained rave reviews from critics in London.

'We got Andy in at the last minute but he was really good as the villain of the piece,' said David. 'In London I have been getting a lot of compliments about him and the funny thing is I'm getting credit for 'a great find'.'

Dunbeg man jailed after false 999 call

A DUNBEG man has been jailed for a total of 188 days after admitting making a false 999 call to police, breaching bail conditions, threatening a police officer and failing to pay two fines.

Thomas John Barr, aged 49, formerly of Lorn Road, Dunbeg, had telephoned police claiming that there was a disturbance taking place at a house on Hillside, Dunbeg, on August 26.

Two police officers went to the location but found the occupier asleep on the sofa.

The call was traced to Barr's mobile phone and he was found at another house in Dunbeg with the phone on him.

On November 21, Barr, who was on bail, was seen by officers entering a house he had been ordered to stay away from. Officers followed him into the house where he was arrested and became aggressive

towards officers, threatening one of them. Defence agent Duncan Durbin said, regarding the emergency call, that Barr and his friends sometimes spent time drinking in each other's houses and when they did there seemed to be 'mischief afoot' with police being called out to minor breaches of the peace.

On November 21 he had been asked by the occupant of the house at Hillside to collect some mail and hand over keys and had let himself into the house without any disturbance.

Barr had been of the opinion that the police had been aggressive in handling him but had no intention of carrying out any of his threats.

The jail sentence, which included 28 days for non-payment of fines, was backdated to November 23 when Barr was taken into custody.

In Style

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Care homes programme is halted

THE JOINT Independent, Liberal Democrat and Labour administration of Highland Council has been accused of reneging on a commitment to build five new council-operated nursing homes after it won a controversial vote to halt the project to review costs.

A highly charged debate in Inverness last Thursday ended with the ruling group defeating an SNP bid, by 41 votes to 22, to progress the five-home plan.

A 30-bed NHS-linked new Inverness House nursing home in Caol and four others in the Highlands are now subject to a three-month 'business case review' to examine the affordability of and need for each unit.

Operating costs, future demand for residential care relative to council and private provision in each area, comparative costs with the independent sector and social and economic impacts will all be examined.

Councillors opposing the move slammed it as a delaying tactic, claiming it was a cloak for scaling back the £30 million care homes project or abandoning it altogether. Their suspicions deepened when Councillor Kenneth MacLeod, Inverness Millburn, suggested private care homes could be the way forward. He said: 'There is existing planning consent for a private care home in the Fort William area. If there is a private home in a good central position, why are we insisting on getting a [council] care home for Fort

William when the private sector will provide it? What is wrong with the private homes? I have seen plenty of them and they are very well run. Those that are not well run, the Care Commission will come down on them like a ton of bricks.'

A furious Councillor Donald Cameron said Councillor MacLeod's 'ignorance was matched by his arrogance'. Councillor Cameron recollected June 2007 when the council pledged to build the five homes - and correctly feared a different outcome this time. He said: 'People came into this chamber elected on the care homes issue. People were walking on air when that was decided. I had trouble driving home because I had tears in my eyes. I suspect I will have the same today - but for very different reasons.'

Justifying the review, council leader Michael Foxley said 40 per cent savings had been made at Acharacle Resource Centre and 25 per cent at four other Lochaber centres while maintaining services. 'I want to see Highland Council build Inverness House,' he said. 'The government requires all parts of the public sector to reassess spending plans.'

But Lochaber Provost Allan Henderson warned: 'There's a horrific record in Fort William with private sector homes.'

Councillor Bill Clark agreed: 'A business case review will certainly put

these homes at risk.' But Sutherland councillor Robbie Rowntree accused opponents of the deferral of 'a dereliction of duty'.

Lochaber's Eddie Hunter hit back: 'The proposal before us today seeks to change that policy,' he said. 'I would like to think I'm not derelicting my duty.'

Councillor Bren Gormley, SNP, agreed: 'We must not simply look into the price of everything and the value of nothing. I do not know of anything on the [business case review] list that could not have been produced yesterday.'

Lochaber's four Independent councillors risked expulsion from the administration by joining the SNP in voting against. Labour councillor John Holden, Inverness South, defied his official party line of abstention to oppose the move. Lochaber Labour Councillor Brian Murphy told *The Oban Times* after the vote: 'The figures show that if Labour had voted with the SNP it would not have made any difference.'

SNP group leader John Finnie vowed to investigate the policy change. He said: 'I have written to the chief executive of Highland Council requesting copies of all correspondence, and details of all telephone calls to and from officials about the Care Home Programme in the last three months and hopefully that will shed some light on this sudden lurch towards total privatisation of care.'



Just for you sir! Lucy Doogan, Kirstie MacIntyre, Eilidh MacIntyre and Alice Doogan give Mr McGilp a preview. 10_fs2john01

Students help head teacher celebrate wedding

MOST folk know by now Kinlochleven head teacher John McGilp never misses a chance to give his students a chance to shine - in everything from cookery competitions to shinty tournaments.

So when Mr McGilp let it be known that he was tying the knot with fiancée young musicians would like a 'gig' at the evening reception - and came up trumps straight away.

Strings instructor Olivia Ross suggested the Kinlochleven High School string quartet, made up of the MacIntyre sisters Kirstie and Eilidh, and the Doogan sisters Lucy and Alice

He contacted the music department to inquire if any of their talented young musicians would like a 'gig' at the evening reception - and came up trumps straight away.

Strains instructor Olivia Ross suggested the Kinlochleven High School string quartet, made up of the MacIntyre sisters Kirstie and Eilidh, and the Doogan sisters Lucy and Alice

otherwise known as 'Macandoo' would make a fantastic group.

'I threatened them with detention unless they agreed to play!' Mr McGilp told *The Oban Times*.

The four girls will play at John and Stacey's wedding at the House for an Art Lover, Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, on St Valentine's Day next year - for an undisclosed fee, we are told!

Hostel bid for Sleat pupils fails

AN ISLE of Skye councillor has failed in a bid to reinstate hostel provision for pupils from Sleat at Portree High School.

Ian Renwick had wanted Highland Council to reverse its earlier decision to exclude pupils living in the northern part of the peninsula from staying in hostel accommodation during the week.

At a full council meeting in Inverness last Thursday, Councillor Renwick claimed the current policy of allowing only children living south and west of Ferrindonald, five miles north of Armadale, to choose school digs was divisive. Demanding the hostel be made available to all pupils attending Sleat Primary School, Councillor Renwick

argued classmates moving from P7 to the high school were split up from each other depending on which side of the line demarcating eligibility for the hostel they lived. Under the present policy secondary school children from Camuscross, Duisdale, Teague and Drumfearn must travel to and from Portree every day - a distance of around 35 miles.

Councillor Renwick told councillors: 'Parents should have the right to decide whether to send their children to the hostel or not,' he told the meeting. 'There are long driving times and a greater risk of accidents in wintertime. Are we getting it right for our children? I don't think we are.'

But Skye councillor Drew Millar

said: 'He [Councillor Renwick] has gone ahead with this motion without even informing his colleagues what he is trying to do. This is nothing more than political points scoring.'

That view carried the day and Councillor Renwick's bid was defeated by 51 votes to 17.

Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative director David Ashford attended the debate in the council chambers.

He told *The Oban Times* after the vote: 'I'm very disappointed. This has been discussed at Sleat Community Council a number of times and there will be very considerable dissatisfaction at the failure of the council to recognise that it has made the wrong decision. The line should be drawn at Drumfearn.'

Electrician dies in Lewis

A LEWIS man has died in hospital after being found unconscious in his garden on Saturday.

Electrician Donald Martin, aged 35, of Kennedy Terrace, Stormoway, was discovered by a member of the public in the back garden of his home at 1pm.

The ambulance service attended and took Mr Martin to the Western Isles Hospital, but despite the best efforts of the medical team, Mr Martin was pronounced dead some hours later.

A post mortem will be carried out to establish the cause of death and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

There do not appear to be any suspicious circumstances.

Mr Martin's next of kin have been informed.

Convenor wins place on European committee

HIGHLAND Council convenor Councillor Sandy Park has been appointed by the Prime Minister to serve on a prestigious European committee.

From the end of January next year, he will serve for five years as an alternate member of the EU Committee of the Regions, the political assembly that provides the regional and local levels of government with a voice in the development of EU legislation and policy initiatives.

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WEST COAST REVIEW
The West Coast Review would like to thank all its readers and wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Local authority assure drivers of 'ample grit and gritters'

ARGYLL and Bute Council has assured drivers it has 'ample grit and gritters' for the winter.

After a few slips and scrapes on the roads questions have been asked of the council's policy on using the gritting lorries - a council spokeswoman did not

hesitate in putting on the record the gritting policy of the council.

'The council are well prepared for the winter season with 9,300 tonnes of grit and 37 vehicles across Argyll and Bute to spread it,' she said.

'We make decisions about when to grit roads based on weather fore-

casts provided by the Meteo Group plus eight weather stations on strategic routes and four weather sensors in the towns of Oban, Lochgilphead, Helensburgh and Dunoon.'

The council believe that having weather forecasters in the towns has made all the difference

to the in-depth and localised knowledge of the roads department, in comparison with any website freely available to the general public.

The spokeswoman continued: 'The roads department works to a winter maintenance policy as approved by council officials.

'We cannot be on all routes at all times, but we do attempt to treat routes as quickly as possible. Weather conditions in Argyll and Bute can be variable, and sometimes isolated rain showers can occur which will freeze the road. Once we become aware of these matters

we then treat the road. 'We make decisions on the gritting of islands based on information from weather stations on Islay and Mull, but we also work to weather forecasts as well.'

The council are responsible for all council maintained roads which are given four levels of

priority; from the strategic high speed main routes, through A and B roads; other main roads and bus routes; down to more local roads.

The spokeswoman added: 'All drivers should drive to the condition of the road and be aware that the temperatures reported in the media are

air temperatures and the road surface temperatures are generally three degrees lower.

'That is why thermometers in cars flash at 30C, as the road is likely to be freezing. If conditions are poor, then drivers obviously need to slow down and take extra care.'

Squirrel claim is a red herring

ISLANDERS have been looking for red squirrels on the Isle of Mull after reading about them in the Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) 2010 Explore brochure.

A picture of a red squirrel appears with the caption 'A Red Squirrel finds sanctuary on Mull'.

However wildlife experts on the island agree that there are no squirrels on the island - and never have been.

A spokesman for CalMac said that the photograph of the red squirrel was included as an example of the variety of wildlife which can be found across the Inner Hebrides region as a whole including Ardnamurchan, Coll, Iona, Lismore, Morvern, Mull, Tiree (a squirrel on Tiree, an island with no trees, would be something of a novelty) and the surrounding mainland areas including Oban.

'We can only apologise if this information is found to be misleading or confusing and hope that visitors will still be able to fully enjoy and appreciate their experience on Mull,' he said.

Ross Lilley, Scottish Natural Heritage south area officer, said: 'There are no records of squirrels on Mull, and there are no plans to introduce them.'

Barcaldine bike award

APRIMARY school in North Argyll has joined the ranks of the Cycle Friendly School Awards.

Barcaldine Primary School, through its efforts to purchase a bike for every child in the school and its on-road cycle proficiency training, has won the award through Cycling Scotland.

Through its participation in the Generation Green project, Barcaldine has 40 per cent of its pupils cycling to school and works hard to promote cycling, including a visit to the Fort William Mountain Bike World Cup.

There are also plans for a ride to the Scottish Sea Life Centre, which will see pupils use the new cycle path through the village.

Hey ho! You will need to search for planning notices

Government moves to put planning notices online only

PLANS for government and local councils to advertise public notices like planning applications or road closures online instead of in local newspapers have been met with strong criticism.

The Scottish government is consulting on changing the law to allow councils to use a new public information website which it says will save councils and government millions of pounds.

Public information notices are announcements that local authorities are legally required to publish.

There are two types of notice; statutory notices give required notice of an intended action, such as road closures, construction, licensing and planning developments and public notices inform people of changes to services, such as refuse collection.

However the move has attracted criticism from the Scottish media which says the best way to reach the public in local areas is still through local newspapers and that limited internet access in the Highlands means many people would be unaware of the notices.

It is estimated that only 30 per cent of people have internet in their homes and that 60 per cent of elderly people have no access to the internet.

Oban Times IT manager Stephen Day said: 'How is anyone going to know that there are planning applications on a website? Even if people have access to the internet, are they capable of using it? Or, can they afford to pay £20

a month for broadband coverage?'

'In the Highlands there are black-spots for broadband coverage where people have to use a dial-up connection, but they could rack up a hefty monthly bill doing that.'

'Many sites are also geared towards a broadband connection and not suitable for dial-up connections.'

The government says that the new website will publish notices from across Scotland and that notices will still be accessible in all local authority buildings, including local libraries and council offices, as is current practise.

Finance Secretary John Swinney said: 'Public bodies must provide the best value for money. Councils have collectively identified a need to cut spending on public notices which they are legally required to advertise and pay for, costing around six million pounds a year.'

'The changes we are consulting on will mean councils can use a new public information notice portal instead of advertising in local papers. The new portal will provide more cost effective public information and a means to improve communication and dialogue with the public.'

'While it will be up to councils to decide the best mix of advertising to use in their area, I would expect to see immediate savings.'

The consultation on the draft Local Authority Public Information Notices (Electronic Publication) (Scotland) Order is open until February 12, 2010.



The Fingal was moored off Kerrera last week after the ship's master was charged.

Grounded cargo ship skipper appears in court

THE MASTER of a cargo ship that ran aground in the Gulf of Corryvreckan area has appeared on petition at Oban Sheriff Court.

Polish national Stanislaw Sowinski, aged 59, has been charged with operating a

ship, the MV Fingal, whilst under the influence of alcohol. He has also been charged with deviating from his course, failing to keep a proper look out and failing to take action to avoid a collision.

Mr Sowinski appeared from custody last Thursday, made no plea or declaration and was remanded.

The Fingal, an 80-metre timber cargo ship, ran aground late on Tuesday evening in the

Gulf of Corryvreckan. Clyde Coastguard received a call to say the vessel had run aground with six people aboard and was taking on water.

Coastguard Rescue teams from Jura and Crinan,

RNLI lifeboats from Oban and Islay and the Royal Navy Rescue helicopter 177 from HMS Gannet were all launched to assist. The Fingal was stabilised and escorted into Oban where the master was charged.

Council call to suspend 'right to buy' in Argyll and Bute

AN APPLICATION to suspend the 'right to buy' scheme for some social housing tenants in Argyll and Bute is being put together for the Scottish government.

HOMEArgyll, a partnership of Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll housing associations, is considering asking the government to apply Pressured Area Designation (PAD) to Argyll and Bute to help overcome the area's 'acute' housing shortage.

Councillor George Freeman, the

housing and communities spokesman, said: 'Some areas are suffering from serious shortages of affordable rented accommodation, which is having an impact on housing waiting lists.'

Since the right to buy scheme was introduced in 1980, more than 5,600 homes in Argyll have been sold to tenants.

Now the registered social landlord sector in Argyll and Bute provides less than 7,900 rented properties, and on average there are only

800 lets available annually but 3,000 households on the HOMEArgyll waiting list.

Areas included in the PAD application, which is out to consultation with tenants and others until January 15, are Lochgilphead, Ardrishaig, Cairnbaan, Craignish/Ardfern, Crae, Crinan, Eredine, Inveraray, Kilmartin, and Tayvallich in Mid Argyll; Gigha, Macrihanish and Penninver in Kintyre; allygrant, Bowmore, Bridgend, Bruichladdich, Keills/Port Askaig, Port Charlotte, Port

Ellen, Portnahaven, Jura, Colonsay in Islay, Jura and Colonsay; Oban, Appin, Balvicar, Barcaldine, Benderloch, Bonawe, Clachan Seil, Connel, North Connel, Dalmaily, Dunbeg, Kilchrennan, Kilmore, Kilmelford, Kilniver, Lochawe, Taynuilt, Lismore, Luing, Port Appin in Lorn and Bunnassan, Craignure, Dervaig, Fionnphort, Salen, Tobermory, and Iona in the Mull and Iona area.

The suspension, which would be for up to five years, applies only to those

who have taken up tenancies since September 2002 and would not affect tenants' future right to buy.

When the consultation is complete a report will be made to the council's executive and to members of Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Forum, as well as the boards of individual housing associations.

Only when this has been done will any decision as to whether or not to submit an application to the Scottish government for ministerial approval be taken.



Snow White, seven dwarfs (and Elvis) came to Luing

SNOW White and the Seven Dwarfs, with a twist, came to the Island of Luing last week when the main character, right on cue, collapsed after taking a bite of a poisoned apple.

Thankfully, Elvis came to the rescue and she awoke her from her sleep.

The annual Christmas performance by pupils of Luing Primary School was well attended by islanders - and the audience enjoyed a mince pie and festive tippie at the end of the evening.

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Oban woman guilty of getting shirty

A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD former Oban woman, who took a shirt off a taxi driver and ran off with it, pled guilty at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday to breaching the peace in Oban in July.

Pamela McAllister, now of Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, also pled guilty to resisting arrest and assault a police custody and support officer by throwing water over her head.

Sentence was deferred until January 19 for background reports.

Lochnell Arms Hotel

NORTH CONNELL BY OBAN

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Search man swallowed tablets

SENTENCE was deferred on an Oban man who admitted swallowing a quantity of tablets in order to prevent them being discovered by police who were about to search him.

Duncan McWhirter, aged 24, of 3a Castle Road, Oban admitted committing the offence on June 5 this year at a flat in High Street, Oban.

Procurator fiscal Craig Harris told Oban Sheriff Court that McWhirter had appeared in the flat as police officers were engaged in searching it.

'He was detained under the Misuse of Drugs Act and in order to search him the procedure was explained to him. He then took a pack out of his jacket pocket and swallowed the tablets from that.'

Defence agent Duncan Durbin said: 'He has been out of trouble for the past six months and is on a benefits agency task force.'

Sheriff Douglas Small deferred sentence for six months to allow McWhirter to be of good behaviour ordering him to appear again on June 15, 2010.

Assault teenager 'has settled down'

SENTENCE was deferred on an unemployed Oban man who admitted charges of assault, vandalism and breach of the peace at a homeless unit in which he was living.

Steven Colin Pattison, aged 19, whose address was given at Oban Sheriff Court as 29 Lochnell Road, Dunbeg head earlier admitted committing charges of breach of the peace, assault and vandalism at Kerrera Lodge, Shore Street, Oban between October 21, 2008 and July 19, 2009.

Defence agent Duncan Durbin said that his client had curbed his excessive drinking, and 'settled down completely', staying out of trouble for the last three months.

'He has a keen ambition to become a chef and starts a course in Fort William in the New Year,' said Mr Durbin.

Sheriff Douglas Small deferred sentence on Pattison until January 18.

Oban teenager is locked up for almost 11 months after admitting assault

AN OBAN teenager has been sent to detention for almost 11 months after admitting charges of assault, theft, breach of the peace and resisting arrest.

Fraser John McKerracher, aged 17, of Kerrera Lodge, Shore Street, admitted breaking into a shed at Taynuilt Golf Club and stealing £6 and a bag of crisps on August 15, 2008, breach of the peace on a public footpath in Soroba, Oban on October 3, 2008, resisting arrest

at Kerrera Lodge, Oban on May 9 this year and assaulting a man on Albany Street, Oban on June 20, 2009.

Remanded

Procurator fiscal Craig Harris told Oban Sheriff Court last week that McKerracher had been remanded in custody for the preparation of background reports last month after admitting the assault and resisting arrest charges.

Mr Harris told the court that

McKerracher had used a metal pole to remove a padlock on the shed at Taynuilt Golf Club.

'On October 3 last year he was aggressive towards four children, three aged 14 and one aged 10, on a footpath in Soroba. The children were frightened by this.'

'On June 20 this year the victim was in the town centre celebrating a friend's birthday. McKerracher was with a group of three or four individuals. They engaged in

conversation which quickly turned to abuse.

'The two friends decided to walk away but the accused came up level with them and headbutted the victim, repeatedly punched him, dragged him to the ground and tried to kick him.'

Alcohol

Defence agent Edward Thornton said: 'The theme running through these offences is the excessive consumption of alcohol by

someone who shouldn't even be drinking.'

'At Taynuilt he acted on impulse and could give no sensible reason for what he did.'

'In the incident with the four children he was approached by one of them to buy alcohol and took umbrage at that and was verbally abusive and aggressive. Again, alcohol had been consumed by him.'

'On June 20 all parties had been

drinking and my client, who had over-consumed alcohol, rose to the bait and became involved. He has no recollection of the incident.'

Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'You have accumulated a large number of previous convictions for a 17 year old.'

'There is only one disposal I can give and that is detention.'

McKerracher was sentenced to a total of 320 days in detention backdated to November 17.



Rockfield pre-five youngsters put on nativity play

Budding young actors at Rockfield Primary School's pre-five unit held a Christmas nativity last week attended by parents. Pictured are some of the young pupils who took part.

Mull anger over accidents on roads without grit

'It is not rocket science' claims island councillor after two dozen phone calls

MULL was missed off the list when it came to ordering grit - or so the islanders claim.

And now after two weeks of accidents and near misses demands are being made of Argyll and Bute Council to tell residents the real policy behind grit on Mull.

Driver Robert Denovan, of Dervaig, said: 'I was driving the road between my home and Salen in my 4x4 Honda CRV at 20mph when my car slipped and plunged into the deep ditch at the side of the road with the sunroof ending up in the burn. My wife was trapped inside the car and could not be freed.'

'As more cars drove towards the scene they were all slipping and sliding on the road. Another car went into the other side of the road. It was incredibly dangerous.'

'When the fire and rescue vehicle arrived it also slipped on the road.'

'The road had not been gritted and we were so vulnerable. My car has now been written off and all because the council did not do their statutory duty and grit the road.'

A council insider told The Oban Times that a member of staff in Kilmory makes a decision about the state of the roads throughout the

whole area, and whether they should be gritted. In some cases a decision is made on Friday about gritting roads the following Monday morning on Mull.

Accident

A Dervaig man, who did not want to be named, said: 'I have been told that the accident happened on the newly surfaced area of road, and it has not been treated with anti-slip.'

Wendy Brown from Tobermory was concerned to find that roads had not been gritted three hours after the council had been informed of dangerous conditions.

She said: 'I drove with

caution on the road to Craignure but I still spun at Aros Bridge and again at Fishnish.'

'People who stopped at the scene were unable to walk on the roads. They were slippery and we even had to dive out of the way as cars were losing control.'

'I wonder if someone from the council would like to state what action is going to be taken to prevent any of this happening again.'

Mull councillor Mary-Jean Devon said that she had received more than two dozen phone calls about the roads on Mull and in particular the road between

Dervaig and Salen. She said: 'I have asked the roads department to let me know if this road was gritted or not - and if not, why not?'

'It is not rocket science - if a road is icy it needs gritting.'

An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman said that it could not put resources on all routes at all times, but attempts to treat them as quickly as possible.

'Weather conditions in Argyll and Bute can be variable, and sometimes isolated rain showers can occur which will freeze on the road,' said the spokeswoman. 'Once we become aware of

these matters we then treat the road. We make decisions on the gritting of islands based on information from weather stations on Islay and Mull, but we also work to weather forecasts as well.'

'There are four levels of priority; from the strategic high speed main routes, through A and B roads; other main roads and bus routes; down to more local roads.'

'As far as Mull is concerned, there were around 800 tonnes of salt on Mull at the weekend.'

'In hard-freeze conditions we go through a maximum of 300 tonnes of salt a day across Argyll and Bute.'

Free internet access may create jobs

A FOREST trust is hoping a free internet connection will help to create jobs in a remote rural community.

Internet provider Freerunner has awarded Abriachan Forest Trust three years of free wireless broadband access.

The charity is one of 46 organisations across the UK selected as winners of a community competition to connect under-served or remote communities without any internet access.

The trust works with local groups to help people build their skills and move into jobs or training.

Through its regional development fund Freerunner provides free internet access to schools, community centres and small businesses outside of urban areas.

Concern over bins

BINS were a dirty issue at a recent meeting of Soroba Residents Association.

The offending bins sit by a fence on the outside perimeter of the flats next to the community centre - as they do not fit in the close.

But the meeting heard: 'The bins which are often full to bursting are not a good advert for Soroba.'

The bins, it seems, often roll away down the street with the slightest bit of wind or are used as overspill bins for anyone else in the area.

Councillor Donald 'Skye' McIntosh said: 'I hope to find a resolution to this matter as soon as possible with Argyll and Bute Council staff.'

Skye-based musician gains prestigious Saltire award

The Saltire Society has presented its highest award for outstanding contribution to musician Blair Douglas for his composition the Gaelic Mass, An Aifreann Ghàidhlig.

The Gaelic Mass was premiered as part of the Blas Festival in St Andrew's Cathedral, Inverness. This was followed by performances on the following two days in Fort William and Portree.

St Columba's Cathedral, Oban hosted another performance, as a closing event to the Year of Homecoming celebrations, on October 30. The work features the six traditional elements of the Mass, preceded and followed by four hymns and three instrumental pieces.

The performance of the Mass featured Paul MacCallum and Maggie MacDonald, with the Inverness Gaelic Choir

and traditional and classical musicians.

The Mass has been described as firmly rooted in the Celtic tradition, fusing indigenous and classical musical genres, more akin to folk masses than to the classical European forms. Born and raised on Skye, Blair Douglas has an outstanding international reputation among traditional musicians.

As an accordionist and keyboard player, he was a founder member of the bands Runrig, Mactalla and Cluar as well as being a recording artist in his own right.

Previous recipients of the award have been Mary Ann Kennedy, Bridget Mackenzie, Eric Allan, Katherine Stewart, and Professor Norman N. Gillies OBE.



ACHA Housing Officer Jackie Hardie with tenant Lesley Richardson drawing a lucky winner of the 2009 draw.

Lucky winners receive housing hampers

RESIDENTS of an Argyll housing association received a hamper of Scottish food in time for Christmas thanks to an annual members prize draw.

One member of each of Argyll Community Housing Association's (ACHA) four operating areas was picked out of the hat to receive hampers.

Life membership of ACHA is available to anyone in Argyll and Bute for just one pound.

As well as receiving a copy of ACHA's annual reports and accounts and being entitled to attend area and full AGMs, members elect area committees and the board of management, the voluntary panels that direct ACHA.

The winners of this year's hampers as picked by ACHA tenants Jim and Lesley Richardson of Garelochhead are Ms Aitken of Helensburgh for Helensburgh and Lomond; Mrs Graham of Dunoon for Bute and Cowal; Mr Birnie of Oban for Oban, Lorn and the Isles and Mr McCrae of Ardrishaig for Mid Argyll and Kintyre.

Colette Benham, ACHA's director of corporate services said: 'Members are important to ACHA and they deserve to be acknowledged. By awarding four hampers ACHA has a chance to say thank you.'

NEWS DESK Direct Tel: 01631 568060

THIS MONTH IN SCOTTISH FIELD... READ... HEALTH, WEALTH & HAPPINESS: Fifty tips to change your life. ABOVE SCOTLAND: Spectacular aerial photos of the nation. DUNBLANE: Exploring the charms of a town with a religious heritage. THE REAL FACE OF BURNS: Can we be sure what Robert Burns really looked like? WIN... WIN: A stay at Inchmarlo Resort and Golf Club; WIN: Two nights for four plus golf at the doubletree by hilton dunblane hydro hotel. DISCUSS... GO TO OUR FORUMS: Share views, rate whiskies or restaurants, or submit book reviews at www.scottishfield.co.uk

The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES FESTIVE DEADLINES MONDAY 28th DECEMBER 12noon FOR THE ISSUE OF THURSDAY DECEMBER 31st PLEASE NOTE - Our offices will be closed on Thursday 24th & Friday 25th December and Thursday 31st December & Friday 1st January



Lorn Lines

MEMBERS of Oban Speakers Club enjoyed interesting speeches by Donald MacAskill, Frank Walton and Jim Young at its last meeting.

Critics were Roy Wood, Donnie Graham and Eamonn Arthur who were introduced by Cameron Fletcher.

In the second half of the programme Bill Leech's topics brought answers from Willie Melville, Cameron Fletcher, Guido Faccenda, Alex Clark, Stuart Philp and Norman Martin. Timekeeper for the evening was Jim Fraser.

The meeting closed with an amusing and interesting evaluation given by Iain Fullarton.

SOROBIA Community House will be asking every household in the estate to pay a £1 membership fee in the New Year. And the small donation may help to secure the future of the community centre.

The group have a few bills that need to be paid and have decided to go to the community to secure the cash.

A spokesman for the Oban group said: 'We want to ensure that the many activities provided for the area will be secured and if every house in Soroba gave us £1 we can begin to do that.'

'Obviously if people want to give us more than they can but at the moment all we are asking for is £1 per family.'

WELL-known professional photographer, Richard Childs gave members of Oban Photographic Club an evening to remember last Monday when he stood in, at very short notice, for the scheduled speaker who was unable to attend.

In the first part of the evening Richard explained how he started in photography and then showed how to get a book self published on-line.

During the second part members were shown some of Richard's distinctive recent work together with an explanation of how the photos were taken.

As well as being an excellent photographer Richard also leads groups of photographers on field trips and teaches how to take better images.

Prospective new members are always welcome at any of the club's Monday evening meetings in the Regent Hotel, Oban at 8pm.

A LARGE turnout of members at the Argyll Members' Group of the NTS met in the Lochnell Arms Hotel, Connel, on Saturday December 5 to discuss the history of Lieutenantcy.

Jim Kirkpatrick, group secretary, said: 'After an excellent lunch the group chairman Mary Sandilands introduced the Lord Lieutenant for Argyll and Bute, Kenneth McKinnon.'

'Mr McKinnon who is a member of the group gave an interesting talk on the history of the lieutenantcy, explaining how he became Lord Lieutenant and what his duties were.'

Lake Falconer thanked Mr McKinnon, on behalf of the group, for his most informative talk.

SKIPPINNISH is celebrating 10 years in the traditional music business by raising a glass of its own whisky.

The popular ceilidh band, led by Angus MacPhail and Andrew Stevenson, launched a new whisky which will carry the Skipinnish name and has been blended to mark the decade the musical duo have been together.

Angus said: 'After much sampling we are thrilled with the results.'

Skipinnish, the band, also launched a new CD, featuring musicians who performed in Skipinnish Ceilidh House, Oban throughout the summer.

The CD line-up has a host of local musicians including piper Angus MacColl, Mod Gold Medallist Mary Catherine MacNeil, Rachel Walker, Archie McAllister, Scot Wilson and Seonaidh MacIntyre, as well as Skipinnish.

ARGYLL charity First Aid for Gambia has a new website.

The work of the group begins in earnest this month as the trainers start their African programme.

Details of the group's work can be found at <http://www.firstaid4gambia.org/>

Palliative care plans for Oban's hospital may include 'quiet room' CHP tell meeting

Nelson ward will not be used for front line clinical care

PLANS to improve palliative care in Oban's hospital could include a quiet room for patients and relatives and improvements to single rooms.

Number of options

Following news that a palliative care unit could not currently be accommodated in the redundant Nelson Ward in Lorn and Islands Hospital, Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership's (CHP) locality manager for Oban, Lorn and the Isles has said the hospital is looking at a number of other options.

At a recent meeting of the locality public partnership

forum, locality manager David Whiteoak said that the Oban Hospice board was aware of the situation regarding the Nelson Ward in October.

He said that to pursue the redevelopment of the Nelson Ward as a mixed medical ward, with palliative care at one end, would require funding into seven figures and because of commitments in Argyll and Bute CHP, which would have to fund the medical side of the ward, capital would not be available for at least six years.

He said the hospice board was told in October that

despite looking at other parts of the hospital, the management had not been able to find anywhere big enough to accommodate a palliative care unit.

Modest investment

'What was agreed at the hospice board meeting in October was that the Nelson Ward would remain live from our point of view and would be pursued at the appropriate time.'

'At the moment patients are cared for in all four wards of the hospital and the agreement [with the hospice board] was that together we would identify areas of the hospital

where some relatively modest investment by the hospice would improve the situation,' said Mr Whiteoak.

'We are looking to develop a quiet room for patients and relatives either as a sitting area or as somewhere where they can have confidential discussions with clinicians or nurses; improvements to arrangements whereby relatives can stay the night and improving the environment in a number of the existing single rooms either in terms of lighting or furnishings,' he said.

When asked if there was any chance of increasing the

space available to palliative care patients, Mr Whiteoak stated that this was not possible.

'As soon as you start moving walls around, you get into the need for planning permission and fall foul of the new planning regulations for capital investment and add a couple of 00s on the end of the price,' he said.

He added that the Nelson ward would continue to be used for various short-term needs - like a swine flu vaccination centre for health and council staff - but would not be used for front line clinical care.



Argyll College - under fire for not offering Gaelic courses

Barcaldine woman goes to 'war' with UHI over lack of local Gaelic courses

'Mrs Ray Michie will be turning in her grave that people still cannot study Gaelic in the Oban area'

A BARCALDINE woman is 'going to war' with the UHI Millennium Institute, for not providing Gaelic courses at its centre at Dunstaffnage, near Oban.

Despite UHI promises to deliver a Gaelic curriculum throughout the Highlands and Islands, Argyll College misses out. However, thanks to the issue being raised, a change might be on the cards.

Margaret MacKay, a former parliamentary secretary for MP the late Ray Michie, said: 'You cannot begin to imagine my dismay when I found that I was unable to study Gaelic in Oban.'

'Oban is the hub of the Highlands and Islands and the heart of Gaeldom - it seems ridiculous to me that Gaelic is not available at Argyll College.'

'When I worked for Mrs Michie she worked tirelessly for the establishment of a University of the Highlands and Islands and for Gaelic education. She will no doubt be turning in her grave that

people still cannot study Gaelic in the Oban area.

Blood, sweat and tears

'Her blood, sweat and quite literally tears have come to naught.'

Mrs MacKay is aware that Gaelic courses are available at Sabhal Mór Ostaig on the Isle of Skye but she is unable to adapt her lifestyle or leave her family in the Oban to attend a course at the island centre.

She said: 'The whole point of the UHI is that people should be able to study in the place that they live and love and not have to move away to study.'

'We are at war...bring on the troops.'

A spokeswoman for UHI Millennium Institute said: 'A great many of our courses are available throughout our network of colleges and learning centres.'

'However, if Mrs MacKay wishes to study either Gaelic and music or Gaelic and media to degree level, these two

programmes require intensive personal and group tuition and access to specialised facilities and are available at two UHI centres for the time being. Our other Gaelic courses, covering language and culture and development, can be studied at more centres and by distance learning - and our coverage is increasing.'

'We are happy to discuss Mrs MacKay's options for study with her and will be in touch to see how we can best take this forward, if at all possible.'

'We aim to be a centre of excellence for the development and enhancement of the Gaelic language, culture and heritage. Our Gaelic language plan sets out our intentions to increase the visibility and audibility of Gaelic to students, staff and the general public.'

'At UHI, our objective is to deliver higher education to the people of the Highlands and Islands so they can study when and where it best suits them.'

Noel the octopus pulls a cracker for Christmas

AN OCTOPUS at the Sea Life Sanctuary, near Oban is in training to pull a cracker to keep him fully occupied in the run up to Christmas.

The newly arrived Common Octopus, named 'Noel' by staff in honour of the festive timing of his entrance, will have daily training sessions so he can pull apart a cracker stuffed with fish food treats in front of visitors in the week before Christmas.

Mark Hind, curator for the Barcaldine sealife centre and Noel's trainer, explained: 'At Sea Life centres we are always looking for the next innovative way we can engage the Octopuses in behavioural enrichment activities.'

'They are extremely intelligent creatures needing constant stimulation.'

'In the same way as young children, Octopuses are tactile and take great delight in exploring their surroundings and solving puzzles.'

'Noel is very inquisitive, even by the usual standards for an Octopus, and we are confident he will have 'cracked' how to pull apart his fish-meat treat within the next few days.'

In addition to his cracking Christmas activity, Noel's tank will also host an underwater Christmas tree complete with baubles stuffed with hidden food treats for him to puzzle over.



Noel the Octopus will be pulling a cracker for Christmas

Former Rockfield school sale decision 'shortly'

A DECISION is expected 'shortly' on the only offer received to buy Oban's former Rockfield Primary School in the heart of the town.

The old school, which closed two years ago when Oban Joint Primary Campus was opened, was put on the open market in spring this year, with a closing date of July 31.

At the closing date only one bid had been lodged.

Feasibility study

A spokeswoman for owners Argyll and Bute Council said this week: 'The council will shortly be making a decision with regard to the offer previously received, and the offerer will be advised of that outcome.'

A feasibility study completed earlier this year indicated that the school would be the ideal location for community facilities following the closure of Oban Youth and Community Centre in Soroba Lane.

Winter water warning

AS SCHOOLS across Argyll and Bute go on their festive break, youngsters and parents are being reminded to play safe around rivers, reservoirs, lochs and streams, which could be frozen at this time of year.

Scottish Water in Argyll and Bute, is concerned people may be risking their lives around freezing watercourses at this time of year.

She said: 'While it's important that youngsters enjoy their school holidays and that people across Scotland take pleasure in the country's beautiful lochs, rivers and reservoirs, it's also vital that they stay safe.'

Peter Cornell from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, said: 'Sadly, we see drownings every year during the winter, particularly when the water freezes over.'

'Often people lose their footing when attempting to rescue a pet and all too frequently, the pet clammers out unharmed while the owner doesn't.'

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CALOR

Lismore

Your correspondent is Pauline Dowling: 01631 760293

Christmas craft fair

LISMORE'S first craft fair in early December, organised by the art group and overseen by Katy Crossan, was a great success with a variety of high quality goods on offer. It became the one stop shop for essential Christmas shopping. The range and quality of goods took all the consumers by surprise with a wealth of talent on show from professionals such as Sarah Campbell's Mogwaii textiles - cushions, scarves, hats, all at knock down prices - to the school children's stall full of imaginative creations.

Also on sale was Highland beef and a handmade Christmas cake. Customers could carry them home in a beautiful basket and serve them on locally turned wooden dishes.

Gill Bridle's Bear Back designer scarves, hats, and hot water bottles were very fast sellers and there was another chance to buy a great range of goods from the museum stall, despite the shop now being closed for the season.

A mixed stall was raising money for Oban Hospice and there were plenty of handmade cards and jewellery as well delicious chocolates, sweets and preserves but if all that didn't satisfy customers, there was a large selection of paintings and photography as well as the 2010 Lismore calendar. There was music too from Murray Willis busking on his accordion in the foyer.

Without exception prices were reasonable but visitors had to be early to snap up the best gifts. Refreshments



The pupils of Barcaldine Primary School perform the 'Nearly no Nativity Play'.

Brave Barcaldine pupils stage Nativity

GALLANT pupils at Barcaldine Primary School rose from their sick beds to perform this year's Nativity play.

Teachers named it the 'Nearly no Nativity Play' such was the poor health of the cast.

With every child in the small school of home-made soup, sandwiches, tea and home-baking were served by Anna Stewart and the excellent raffle prizes were donated by the stallholders.

Profits, other than those made by stallholders, were donated to hall funds. Congratulations to Katy for mastering such an enjoyable and worthwhile event.

Isle of Lismore Café

THE ISLE of Lismore Café, previously known as Lismore Café, is to re-open in the New Year under the management of Beth

having a speaking part, the high number of absences meant the play was under threat.

Head teacher Jeanette Morrison said: 'We nearly had no Nativity because of sick children. They literally rose from their sick beds and came in to perform. Parents and friends joined us for

our performance and there were a few tearful faces at the end - not from the children - as the pupils gave their all and yet again gave a memorable performance.'

The pupils also sang Christmas carols in Polish during the performance in St Modan's Church, Benderloch.

Campbell who has spent the last few years running the Corrour Station Restaurant. On January 1 and 2 it will open from 11am to 4pm and from Tuesday January 5 it will be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11am to 4pm and on Friday and Saturdays from 11am to 10pm. Evening meals will be available from 5.30pm until 9pm on these evenings. Beth is also to hold a Burns Supper in the hall on Saturday January 23 and 50 tickets are now available at £15 each. Early booking is advisable. When the café closed in November, Margaret MacDonald, representing

Islay

Your correspondent is Susan Campbell: 01496 850215

'Mind Your Own Business'

COMAS Training is planning to deliver the 'Mind Your Own Business' course for community organisations on Islay in the new year,

between January and March 2010.

The one-day course will be free of charge and is open to all organisations and communities within Argyll who are responsible for developing and managing community-led initiatives. Full travel expenses will be paid.

Islay and Jura Community Enterprises are acting as agents for Comas Training, and have been asked to gather information on local organisations' training needs to help them organise and to plan the course.

If you are interested in attending the course or have queries about the course

content, please contact Ruth Campbell on 07980 844350.

Islay Pipe Band

ISLAY Pipe Band will play at Port Charlotte Hotel on Hogmanay.

On New Year's Day the band is hosting a ceilidh/disco in Portnahaven Hall to raise funds for the band.

Everyone is welcome to go along to enjoy and support Islay's pipers and drummers.

Scalpay

Your correspondent is Donald Morrison: 01859 540217

Christmas together

AT THIS time of year the Christmas plans are alluded to and it seems, generally, that friends and family will come together for Christmas dinner.

A merry Christmas from Scalpay to Oban Times readers.

Where are all the sand eels?

SAND eels were plentiful in the 1960s when they were trawled for.

They were also a source of food for sea birds that would dive for them.

What has become of the sand eels these days?

Good luck to the fishermen over Christmas and New Year.

Church news

THE CHURCH Presbytery Winter Communion Services were held in the local Free Church on December 13.

The Rev Calum MacLeod of Barvas, Lewis, took the opening services.

Pupils focus on climate change

ACHALEVEN Primary School pupils were paying particular attention to the climate change conference in Copenhagen, as they completed a project on the Polar Lands.

With the support of scientists from the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) at Dunstaffnage, the pupils have been learning about the impact the human race is having on these parts of the world.

Head teacher Sharon Burt said: 'We really have to thank the scientists for giving their time and coming to talk to us.'

'It has been particularly relevant for our primary five to seven pupils as they are following the events at COP 15 with great interest. Primary one to four pupils have been learning how the animals and people have adapted to be able to live in such a cold climate. At the end of our topic we invited family and friends into school to find out how we can all work together to protect our world. The children prepared displays, talks and presentations.'

'Thanks to the generous donations we received at the event, we have managed to raise enough money to adopt a polar bear and help the World Wildlife Fund in its research.'



Alba owner Graham Fraser with artist John Lowrie Morrison, who signed calendars for customers and hundreds of worldwide fans. 07_t51alba01

JoLoMo promotes calendar in Oban

IT HAS been a successful year for Argyll artist John Lowrie Morrison (JoLoMo) and he signed off 2009 on Saturday by promoting his 2010 calendar at Alba art shop in Oban.

In what has become an annual event, Mr Morrison signed hundreds of calendars for his fans around the world, as well as those who came into the shop.

Graham Fraser of Alba said: 'Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without JoLoMo at Alba.'

'It has been an exceptional year for JoLoMo and Alba and we continue to work closely together.'

Mr Morrison said: 'It is a special thing I like to do each year and I enjoy coming to Alba, where Graham has probably the best print and card shop in the UK.'

Graduations



Amy Matheson
GRADUATED from Stirling University with a BA Honours in Business Studies. Amy is the daughter of Neil and Shiona Matheson and grand-daughter of Katie Ann and the late Murdo Ian Matheson. Amy is a former pupil of Rockfield primary and Oban high schools.



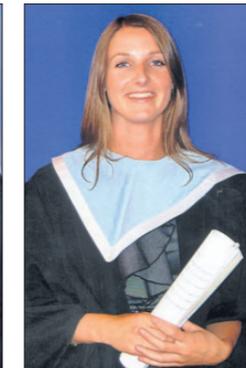
Mark McTighe
GRADUATED from Dundee University with an LLB Honours in Scots Law. Mark is the son of John and Sheena McTighe, Taynuilt, and is a former pupil of Taynuilt primary and Oban high schools.



Elizabeth MacDougall
GRADUATED from the University of the West of Scotland with a 2:1 Honours in Information Management and Management. Elizabeth is the daughter of Helen MacDougall and partner Gus Campbell and is a former pupil of Park primary and Oban high schools.



Jamie Campbell
GRADUATED from the University of Strathclyde with a Bachelor of Engineering. Jamie is the son of Mary Dunn, Oban, and Iain Campbell, Dunfermline, and the grandson of Margaret and the late Alistair MacKay, Oban, and Effie and the late John Campbell, Inverness.



Fiona Campbell
GRADUATED from Glasgow Caledonian University with a BSc Honours in Forensic Investigation. Fiona is the daughter of Dugie and Judy Campbell, Oban, and grand-daughter of Bob and Margaret Paget, Islay, and Maimie Campbell, Oban.



Natalie Brown
GRADUATED from the University of the West of Scotland with an honours degree in Social Sciences with Psychology. Natalie is the daughter of Captain Frank Brown and the late Catherine Anne Brown of Greenock and grand-daughter of Ethel and the late Archie MacCallum of Inveraray and Tiree.



Kerry Fairbairns
GRADUATED from Edinburgh University with an MSc Grade A in Counselling. Kerry, of Mull, is now Department Manager in Psychology at Stirling University where her partner is a professor. She is also a qualified drugs and alcohol abuse counsellor and has a two-year-old daughter.

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Pupils put their heart into life-saving training

Kinlochleven High School pupils are learning resuscitation techniques as part of their personal and social education classes in the run up to Christmas. The whole school is being instructed in life-saving skills under the 'Heartstart' programme. 'It's to ensure our pupils will know what to do if someone has a heart attack and that they have the skills to keep the patient alive until the emergency services arrive,' said head teacher John McGilp. Above, S1 pupils Calum Young and Danielle Campbell, front, and Jessica Whittaker and Sarah MacIntyre get to work on a 'patient'. 10_f52heart01

Kinlochleven Trust appeals for volunteers

KINLOCHLEVEN Community Trust is looking for volunteers to help clear the pier area, boat shed and island park in the village. Anyone who can spare a morning and day is asked to get in touch with Moira Hartley on 01855 831779.

New tanning salon to open in Fort William

A NEW tanning salon is to open in Fort William early in the New Year three months after a publicly run service in the town was closed down.

Dorota Palicka, of Kennedy Road, has applied to Highland Council to convert empty office space at Mamore House on The Parade into the sunbed centre and expects to open for business on January 8. The move comes two months after Highland Council decommissioned its sunbeds at Lochaber

Leisure Centre following advice from health experts that the tanning booths could pose an increased risk of skin cancer. That decision provoked a furious reaction from regular sunbed users at the leisure centre, many of whom relied on the ultraviolet light in the booths to alleviate skin problems such as eczema and psoriasis.

Now Ms Palicka reckons the leisure centre's loss will be her gain as opening day approaches.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'We are having our final inspection on January 7 and we will open the salon on January 8. Lots of people will be able to treat their skin problems or get a tan.'

'We need to think about the local people as well - everything here is for the tourists right now.'

As *The Oban Times* exclusively revealed in October, the cash strapped council will lose up to £50,000 revenue a year following

its decision to take the sun beds out. Recent medical studies found that strictly controlled exposure to ultraviolet light from sunbeds in combination with acitretin, a drug used to treat severe resistant psoriasis, are highly effective in alleviating or clearing up the distressing condition.

A council spokesperson said at the time that sunbed use, particularly by the young, is damaging and leads to an increased risk of cancer.



The bell ringers strike a festive note at Roy Bridge on Sunday.

Music School braves snow and ice to entertain at concert

DESPITE severe wintry weather conditions, members of Lochaber Music School bravely tackled the thick snow and icy roads to present an outstanding Christmas Concert at St Margaret's Church, Roy Bridge on Sunday afternoon.

Soloists included Rachel Keenan, voice; Sandy Cameron and Oskar Wineberg, classical guitar; Pieter Baak, clarsach; and Rufus Huggan cello.

Ensembles included the Music School's two String Orchestras, its 'Braes Quartet', traditional players and handbell ringers.

Before the final congregational carol, Peter Rose thanked popular violin tutor Monica Das

for her strong support of the Music School. Sadly for her pupils and colleagues, she is shortly to leave Lochaber to take up a teaching post in the south of England in January.

Ms Das was presented with a leaving gift by the Music School's chairperson, Lorna Ungood-Thomas.

Pupils from the Music School hail from the length and breadth of Lochaber. Music School director Peter Rose praised all those who, despite the weather, made it to the church.

'The musicians gave such an uplifting performance of festive music to a large and very appreciative audience,' he said.

Morvern postcode victory

By STEPHEN NORRIS

MORVERN residents have been handed a welcome Christmas present after Royal Mail announced it is proposing to change the local area postcode.

Campaigners have been battling for years to end mixups in their postal deliveries and last month won the support of the Scottish Parliament public petitions committee for their fight.

The area shares its current PA34 postcode with Oban and has witnessed years of bizarre incidents involving misdirected mail and goods.

Letters, flowers and even washing machines intended for Morvern have been delivered to addresses in Oban by mistake.

But after 10 years of inaction, Royal Mail has relented and agreed to allocate the area a new PA80 postcode.

The change will also mean a speedier mail service from Oban because mail destined for Morvern will be sorted in Glasgow into labelled bags and go direct to the Mull ferry, cutting delivery times.

Douglas Watt of Morvern Community Council told *The Oban Times*: 'This is what we have been seeking for 10 years and it's taken them all this time to get around to

seeing the light. I am sure the people of Morvern will be content with this.

'The change means it's an improvement in their service and it's saving them money as well.'

'It's a great triumph for perseverance and all the people who have supported us.'

Mr Watt said Royal Mail would be writing to every household in Morvern to outline the proposal and if less than 20 per cent objected the move would go straight ahead.

Tandem

The new postcode could go live as early as the end of February 2010 and would run in tandem with the old code for 12 months to ensure a smooth changeover.

Highlands and Islands MSP Peter Peacock, who has supported the campaign throughout, welcomed the news.

He said: 'The change will mean Morvern residents will have a postcode which indicates where they actually are, not lead people to believe they are in Oban many miles and a couple of ferry journeys away.'

'The new postcode

means that there will be improvements in the certainty of mail being delivered on time to Morvern, but will also show Morvern as a distinct community.

'I have no doubt the petition to the Parliament which I supported and spoke in favour of was instrumental in helping focus minds and I am very grateful for the support the Petitions Committee gave.'

He added: 'This campaign has been going on for many years, and getting this breakthrough is a very significant development for the better. I pay tribute to Douglas Watt and the Morvern Community Council and many other residents of Morvern who, over the years, have written to Royal Mail expressing their frustration.'

'It looks like their persistence has paid off.'

Royal Mail's head of external relations in Scotland Julie Miller said: 'In the case of Morvern, we examined very carefully all of the options and we are proposing this change in order to improve the efficiency of our mail services in the area.'

'We look forward to receiving feedback from the local residents on the proposal.'

Cheerleading first for Lochaber

LOCHABER-BASED high schools and youth clubs attended the first Lochaber Cheerleading Festival at Kinlochleven High School Theatre last Friday.

The festival was co-ordinated by the Lochaber active schools network and organised by Roslynn Newman, the Kinlochleven based co-ordinator.

The project, funded by the Girls On The Move Participation Grant Programme, enabled each school or club to employ the services of Ballachullish qualified dance instructor Vicki Horne for this term. Inverness-based Active Cheer also attended the event.



The local pupils who took part in the cheerleading festival on Friday. 10_f52dance01

Work goes on round the clock to keep Highland roads and pavements clear

HIGHLAND Council workers have been working round the clock to keep roads and pavements clear of ice and snow during the recent severe weather.

In Lochaber, the A86 east of Spean Bridge was particularly badly affected, as were sections of the A82 as up to five inches of snow over Saturday night and into Sunday left many minor roads passable only with

extreme care. The council has longest road network - 4,200 miles - of any local authority in Scotland and because of the distances involved has established a priority system, which targets roads based on their local importance.

On average the council uses 62,000 tonnes of salt per year on the roads and currently has 56,000 tonnes of road salt stocked up at

depots across the Highlands. A council spokesperson said: 'Winter weather can be very variable and it is easy to be caught out by sudden changes. In the Highlands, black ice can be a particular danger. It is not readily visible and can persist or recur even after the road surface has been treated with salt. In snow, if you get stuck stay with your vehicle until help comes to you.'

Motorists urged to check with the right people

POLICE are urging motorists to get information on road conditions and closures from the appropriate sources after a flood of emergency calls to the Northern Constabulary Force Operations Centre over the weekend as heavy snow and ice hit the Highlands.

Northern Constabulary advise Traffic Scotland has a website www.trafficscotland.org with up-to-date information on major trunk roads across Scotland and a traffic customer careline on 0800 028 1414.

A spokesperson said: 'Members of the public should only travel if their journey is necessary.'

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Beach logo winner on a high

A HIGH school pupil from Islay has won a flight in a small aeroplane after winning a competition to design a logo for a new beach cleaning project.

Ciara MacMillan, a student at Islay High School, won the flight in a competition run by the Argyll and Bute Forum which aims to raise awareness of the impacts of beach and marine litter and to support communities to clean their beaches.

The forum, run by the Group for Recycling in Argyll and Bute (GRAB) Trust, ran the competition to find a distinctive, recognisable logo for documentation and for use on its new website.

Over 230 pupils got involved in the competition and the forum said it was very pleased at the high standard of entries.

Second prize, and tickets for two on the Loch Lomond sea-plane, went to Megan Dunlop-Nelson of Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

Third prize, and a £50 voucher for a boat



Jura and Islay beach ranger Polly Mather presents a certificate to first prize winner Ciara MacMillan.

trip courtesy of Sealife fourth prize, a trip on the paddle steamer Waverley, went to Sophie Evans-Steele of Lochgilphead.

West coast fishermen slam Brussels quotas

FISHING leaders on the west coast have slammed the European Union's annual discussions to agree fishing quotas which they say are having a negative effect on lives and communities in the west Highlands.

'Political gerrymandering'
John Hermse, chairman of the Mallaig and North-West Fishermen's Association, said the annual fixing of quotas by the European Fisheries Council is driven by 'disproportionate environmentalism' and 'political gerrymandering'.

This year the council, which met in Brussels last week, slashed the west coast quota for prawns by 15 per cent, one of the mainstays of the west coast fleet.

Catches of haddock have also been cut significantly with a 25 per cent fall in the quota for 2010, less than the original proposal of 54 per cent, but with the prospect of another reduction again in 2011 depending on stock numbers.

There was some good news in that quotas for west of Scotland cod had a small increase of six per cent.

The European Commission has also agreed to consider a new set of west coast whitefish conservation measures as an alternative to the draconian set of regulations applied in January 2009, and which are currently being rolled over for the next 18 months.

Ireland has been asked to take the lead in this initiative and the Scottish Fishermen's Federation will be taking urgent action at the turn of the year to help shape the new regime.



John Hermse, chairman of the Mallaig and North-West Fishermen's Association

John Hermse said: 'The prawn quota won't have any effect on us as we have never caught the full prawn quota in the last four or five years, so from that point of view it won't have any great effect on the fleet.'

'I am glad that we have 67 vessels exempt from the restrictions as they caught less than one and a half per cent cod in the last year.'

'That equates to around 40 per cent

of the fleet which is a fairly major achievement. We had given up hope of being given that but it was ratified by the December council and gives us a bit of leeway.'

'Now we don't need to worry about those 67 vessels and can focus our efforts on other problems.'

Political boxing
'But the way that this whole thing is rolled out year after year is a farce. It doesn't make any sense, there is no rationale in it at all.'

'It's just people in Brussels partaking in political boxing and gerrymandering and that's what decides our quotas.'

'We in the Scottish fishing industry are fed up with it, lives and communities are at the butt end of all this nonsense and a lot of it is now driven by disproportionate environmentalism which seems to run everything in the world nowadays.'

Conservative MEP, Struan Stevenson, who is also senior vice-president of the European Parliament's fisheries committee, said the Fisheries Council had provided Scottish fishermen with their traditional Christmas gift from Brussels of a 'slap on the face with a wet fish'.

Mr Stevenson said: 'In recent years the Scottish fishing industry has seen 60 per cent of the UK whitefish fleet scrapped and thousands of jobs destroyed, despite the fact that the core objectives written into the EU treaty were aimed at preserving and protecting fish stocks and maintaining and enhancing jobs in the fishing industry.'

Argyll and Bute connect with Pathfinder North

ARGYLL and Bute Council has become the first local authority to be fully connected under an innovative high speed broadband initiative.

Skipness Primary School was the last site to be connected under the £70 million Pathfinder North Scheme to put in a 'future-proof' broadband network across five Highlands and islands local authorities.

Now 146 locations across the authority - including all schools, libraries and office sites - are benefiting from high speed broadband.

Argyll and Bute is the first out of Highland, Moray, Orkney and Shetland to be fully connected.

Council leader, councillor Dick Walsh said: 'Pathfinder North not only provides our key sites with high bandwidth internet access, but will also connect us with 654 other locations across the Highlands and Islands.'

'In addition, it allows all schools in Argyll and Bute to connect to GLOW, the national schools' intranet which promises to transform the way education is delivered in Scotland.'

Post Office beat the Christmas deadline on PA deliveries

A FLEET of 210 vehicles, 11 bicycles and 608 Royal Mail staff were geared up to deliver a bumper Christmas mail in the PA postcode area.

Royal Mail anticipated 12 million items to be delivered in the area in the run up to Christmas.

'This is our busiest time of the year for Royal Mail in Renfrewshire and Argyll and

all our postmen and women, as well as the extra seasonal staff we have taken on, will be working flat out to deliver a first class Christmas to everyone in the area,' said Tom McGhee, Royal Mail delivery sector manager for the PA postcode area.

He thanked everyone for posting early to beat the last posting date of December 21 for first class mail and for using postcodes.

Pupils treat pensioners to tea

OBAN pensioners went back to school after being invited into Oban High School for an afternoon of festive fun.

This year was the sixth time the annual pensioners' treat has been held and this year's event saw performances by the school's pipe band, choir, string group and, for the first time, a short sketch from the drama department.

While they watched the many performances, the pensioners were able to enjoy a cup of tea along with shortbread and mince pies provided by pupils in the home economics department.

Event organiser Morven Mckerrell would like to thank all the local businesses that contributed to making the day such a success.



Niall Jordan and Scott Sinclair entertain the pensioners with a few tunes. 07_51te01

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The Danny F 2 capsized in heavy seas off Tripoli

'He was an exemplary ship's captain, very professional and liked and respected by all who sailed with him and will be sorely missed.'

Campbeltown captain lost in Mediterranean cargo ship disaster

THE CAPTAIN of a livestock carrying cargo ship which foundered in storms in the Mediterranean on Thursday night was from Campbeltown.

John Milloy was captain of the Panamanian-registered Danny F 2, which left Montevideo on November 29 with a cargo tens of thousands of sheep and cattle on board, bound for Tartous, north of Tripoli, Lebanon.

The ship capsized in heavy seas about 11 nautical miles off Tripoli after sending a distress signal at 3:55 pm (13.55 GMT) on Thursday.

The ship's operator, Agencia Schandy, have said that she had a crew of 76

and six passengers - four Uruguayans, one Brazilian and an Australian.

Tribute

Former captain of the Danny F2, Richard Avenin, who was in command of the vessel until he retired, paid tribute to Mr Milloy saying: 'I knew the master of the Danny F 2 and many of the crew on board at the time.'

'The Master leaves a widow and two young sons. He was an exemplary ship's captain, very professional and liked and respected by all who sailed with him and will be sorely missed.'

'He probably perished ensuring all his crew disembarked the sinking

vessel.'

Three UN peacekeeping vessels, Lebanese army boats and British military helicopters based in Cyprus were involved in the search and rescue operation. Reports of the number of people who were rescued have been confused but at least 38 have been saved.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office said two Britons were on board the ship.

The 202-metre long vessel was built in 1975, and launched as Don Carlos as a car transporter; she was renamed Danny F 2 and rebuilt as a livestock transporter in 1994.

Oban High School news



AS WE wind down (or up!) towards the Christmas break we find the school busier and busier with bringing our version of Christmas to the local community.

Adding to the excitement was the recent snow fall which saw the sixth year students as excited as the first years and snowball fights all around!

On Monday we had our Carol Band and Choir performing at the Church Service.

Our Junior Jingles Dance went off without a hitch, and a fabulous time had by all.

One of the bigger events of the year, taking in the Senior School (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th year) and especially for the 6th year students, is the Senior Jingles.

This took place on Monday 21st and the school was abuzz with students looking forward to dressing up in his or her finery for the event. We're sure all the students had a wonderful night that exceeded all their expectations.

Our Enterprising students have done particularly well with the selling of personalised Santa hats, Candy Canes and cake bakes. By all accounts the pupils have done exceedingly well and raised many hundreds of pounds for charity.

The H20 Team visited the school on Wednesday 16th for a quick Rock Solid 'Happy Christmas' filming session. This will be for the Christmas Service video.

On Monday 14th December a Gymnastic Festival was held at the school.

Congratulations to all competitors, who performed excellent routines. The following pupils were the top scorers.

Level 1 team winners were Laura Campbell, Lauren Angus, Laura MacCallum and Eilidh MacLean all S1 pupils.

Level 2 team winners were Isla Donald, Caitlin Taylor in S1 and Christie MacKechnie S2.

The top individual gymnast was Caitlin Taylor.

And finally, all staff and students of Oban High would like to wish our local community a very Happy and Safe Christmas and New Year.

Christmas message

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our pupils and staff for their hard work and dedication in both the academic studies and in taking forward the hundreds of individual and team successes across the school.

The wealth of talent we witness each term on both the sporting fields and performing arts stage is incredible. So too is the depth of empathy and charity demonstrated by a whole array of citizenship activities.

Of course, few of these successes would be possible without the support and encouragement of our parents and our partners in the primary schools and local businesses.

So, on behalf of Oban High School, please accept our thanks and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Peter Bain, Head Teacher

Oban man fined £300 for breach of the peace

AN OBAN man has been fined £300 after breaching the peace at his former girlfriend's house.

Paul Shelvin, aged 22, Turnstone, Polvinister Road, admitted shouting and swearing at a flat in High Street, Oban, brandishing a knife, cutting himself on the chest with it and throwing a kitchen table over on September 20 2009.

Oban Sheriff Court heard on Monday that Shelvin had thought his then girlfriend was being unfaithful and he had gone round to her flat while drunk.

Man admits possessing cocaine

OBAN man David Ogilvie, aged 24, admitted possessing cocaine for the second time this year when he appeared on Monday at Oban Sheriff Court.

Sentence was deferred on Ogilvie, 12 Camus Road, Dunbeg, for background reports until January 19 2010.

Oban police have ding-dong build-up to Christmas

THE CHRISTMAS party season came to a climax over last weekend, which meant a busy few nights for Oban Police.

Over the weekend, police attended 30 calls relating to a mixture of anti-social behaviour and disorder.

This resulted in the issuing of 13 fixed penalty notices, plus 11 people being apprehended.

Inspector Julie Edward said additional police patrols were out in the town from Thursday through to Saturday as part of Strathclyde Police's current Festive Safety Campaign.

The adverse weather conditions over the weekend also presented problems for local police, with a number of complaints about icy roads and difficult driving conditions, however, only four road traffic collisions were recorded.

Council's budget warning

Argyll and Bute Council need to find £30million of savings over three years to balance the books

BUDGET cuts of up to £30million will be needed over the next three years if Argyll and Bute Council is to balance its books. That warning was given by council leader Dick Walsh and top officials last week.

At a briefing on the forthcoming budget round, Councillor Walsh said the financial pressures facing the council were 'unprecedented'. He added: 'We will be committed to providing quality services as we do at the minute.'

Freeze on council tax

Cuts, increased charges and using alternative service providers will be considered to find the necessary savings, but no specific proposals have yet been agreed. Councillor Walsh confirmed the decision to freeze council tax for a third year in 2010-2011 would not be revisited, as it would result in the loss of major government subsidies.

Argyll and Bute is set to receive an extra £6.7million from the Scottish govern-

ment next year. But Bruce West, head of strategic finance, said inflation and rising costs outside the council's control, such as landfill tax and teachers salaries, will swallow up much of that increase. He said: 'It's going to generate quite a difficult situation for the council. A number of difficult choices will have to be made over the next few years.'

Council chief executive Sally Loudon said: 'The public sector is in uncharted territory. Argyll and Bute Council is not alone in the issues we are facing. We are going to take every opportunity we can to look at where we can cut costs to retain services that are valued in the community.'

She added that the impact of the budget squeeze on the council's 4,500 employees would be the subject of ongoing discussions with council trade unions.

Draft budget proposals are due to be published around January 21 with the final budget agreed in February.



Globespan's scheduled flights stopped as the airline and package holiday company went into administration

Argyll holidaymakers stranded as airline collapses

HOLIDAYMAKERS from Argyll were among around 4,500 passengers left stranded abroad last week as Scotland's biggest airline, Globespan, went into administration.

All flights were cancelled as the airline went into administration last Wednesday with the loss of 800 jobs.

Around 4,500 passengers were stranded mostly in Spain, Portugal, Cyprus and Egypt with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) planning to repatriate about 1,100.

Last year the airline carried more than 1.5 million passengers on 12,000 flights, operating mainly from Edinburgh, Prestwick and Aberdeen and Manchester airports.

Administrators PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) said the Edinburgh-based airline was in the process of contacting all passengers booked with or travelling with the airline.

Neil Cochrane from Oban said that he had driven to Glasgow Airport to catch a flight on Tuesday, December 16 but there was no-one from the company available to give him advice at the check-in desk.

He said: 'We drove down here last night to see if we could get any help but there was nobody about to help or give any advice and we got to the airport at 6.30pm.'

'There should be more



Neil Cochrane and David Blakey at Glasgow Airport

information for people like me. It feels like you are a bit high and dry.'

It is estimated that there are around 27,000 people who have future flights booked through the Atol insurance scheme, a protection scheme managed by the CAA, and around 90,000 people who have forward bookings but

have no Atol protection.

Some passengers may be protected under their own personal travel insurance or through their credit card transaction, but there are thought to be many passengers who are not insured.

Bruce Cartwright of PricewaterhouseCoopers said: 'I am obliged to confirm that

IT HAS emerged that nearly £34 million was being withheld from Globespan by E-Clear, the company handling its online transactions.

Globespan was owed around £20m for flight tickets that had already been used and a further £14m for flights yet to take off.

After airlines XL and Zoom went bust last year, the insurance industry made it more expensive for credit card companies to cover that insurance cost.

One solution is for the companies to hold on to the cash until the flights have taken place. Once they have occurred obviously there will not be a claim on them.

But E-Clear are understood to have been withholding as much as £20m for tickets that had been used.

the group will no longer be able to operate flights.

'Our focus right now is on assisting those passengers who need to complete return journeys and communicating with those who have future reservations.'

'We would strongly advise those passengers who had expected to travel tomorrow to remain at home or make alternative arrangements as there is no prospect of their planned flight taking place.'

Following Globespan's collapse Rochelle Turner from Which Holiday magazine said that it was important that people take steps to ensure they are protected.

'If you pay for your flight with a credit card, visa debit card or book it as part of a package holiday then you shouldn't have any problems getting your money back.'

'The same applies for people who book through an Atol bonded travel agent or operator. You may even be covered by your travel insurance as some policies cover scheduled flights.'

'Sadly, if these don't apply to you there's little hope of you seeing your money again so bear this in mind when you book your next flight or renew your travel policy.'

A helpline has been set up for Globespan passengers on 0871 271 9000.

25 Years Ago

Those Were The Days

The Oban Times

Thursday December 27, 1984



Spring decision on viability of Oban waterfront scheme

IT SHOULD be clear by spring next year whether or not Oban's waterfront could be developed, according to Argyll and Bute's planning department.

The district council director, Mr Michael Oliver, stressed however, that as yet there were no specific proposals for how the town's waterfront might be developed.

The Scottish Development Agency and other parties are looking at the possibility of a land assembly exercise, primarily involving Caledonian Mac-Brayne and British rail ground.

The agency is also looking at land reclamation between the North and Railway piers and between the South Pier and the Lismore ship, although it has been made clear that the SDA would need a clear indication of how the land would be used before it supported any reclamation scheme.

Land ownership holds up Mallaig path

UNCERTAINTY over who owns some plots of land in Mallaig is holding up a scheme to build a footpath near the primary school. Locals feel that the footpath is necessary for the safety of children walking on the truck road.

Mr Russell Johnstone, MP for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber, has taken up the issue. In a reply he received from the minister for home affairs and the environment, Mr Johnstone was told that although design work for the project had been completed, the roads authority could still not buy the land because of uncertainty over who owned some plots.

Mr Johnstone said: 'Parents are naturally worried about the danger to children from heavy lorries along this stretch of road. I am glad to hear that the department is hoping to clear up outstanding uncertainty about ownership of individual plots of land 'fairly soon' and I hope there will be no delay once this has been done in getting ahead with the project.'

Cal-Mac to introduce new fares system

A NEW system of fares in 1985 will mean no increase at all for some of Cal-Mac's ferry routes.

But some other charges will increase by as much as 7.5 per cent.

The announcement that fare increases would average five per cent was made last week following the government's decision to give Cal-Mac £7.5m in grant for 1985. The grant was announced by George Younger, secretary of state for Scotland.

Cal-Mac was investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1982 and it found some anomalies in the ferry fare structure. A new system of calculating fares was recommended and this will be put into practice next year.

As a result some routes will have increases of 7.5 per cent and others will have no increase at all. One of the routes with a higher increase is Islay, with both car and passenger fares going up by seven per cent.

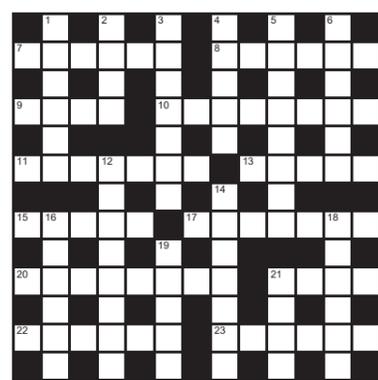
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

Across

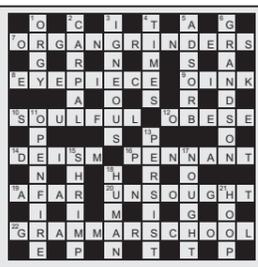
- Santa's wagon (6)
- They're atop of trees (6)
- After-dinner drink (4)
- Seasonal pastry treat (5,3)
- Canadian city or a cervid (3,4)
- Female fox pulling santa? (5)
- Liquid over lunch (5)
- Unhappy event (7)
- 13 across is one (8)
- Hanker for the tree? (4)
- Christmas season (6)
- Three strikes to get Christmas bird (6)

Down

- Bay (6)
- Present knack? (4)
- Santa's way in (7)
- Scrawny (5)
- On the same wave length (8)
- Floodgate (6)
- Theology (8)
- Apportion (7)
- Go over work again (2-4)
- Mary's ride (6)
- A little tipsy (5)
- Chipper (4)



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The Oban Times & West Highland Times

Rural communities will pay for savings

THE Scottish government's latest money-saving wheeze to stop advertising public notices in the local press and only display them online is yet another example of urban-based legislators not understanding rural issues. Unlike the central belt, there are many areas of the Highlands where broadband internet, which is required to view most internet sites today, is just not available - and the cost of telephone line connections can be unaffordable for most people. But it is rural communities who will pay for this money-saving exercise as they are the ones who will miss important planning applications or road closure notices because the information was only available on a computer.

Glasgow Letter

Celtic Connections 2010

WITH Christmas shopping now completed, it is time to look forward and that, of course, means Celtic Connections and its 17th festival which starts on Thursday January 14 and ends on Sunday January 31. Europe's premiere winter music festival, it was the Scottish Event of the Year 2009 and 2010 looks to be even better. The artists will come from more than 30 countries and there will be 300 events spread over 14 venues so there will be something to suit all tastes. The opening concert will, for example, be a dialogue between the traditional and classical communities with a 50-strong line-up of musicians and this will be interspersed with appearances from those who will be performing later in the festival. Those advertised to appear on the opening night include Lau, Carlos Nunez, Kathleen MacInnes and the National Youth Pipe Band but being Celtic Connections there could be pleasant surprises. Celtic Connections is about much more than programme concerts. Each weekend there will be workshops for all ages and for all levels of ability and each evening from 5pm to 7pm, starting on Friday January 15, Danny Kyles Open Stage gives an opportunity for new talent to be recognised. The best six acts from the open stage will perform in the final in the Strathclyde Suite on January 31 at 5pm. If you happen to be in town for the afternoon what could be better than going along to those free concerts and hearing performers you have never heard before. The Festival Club this year will only be Friday and Saturday and will take place in the Art School and there will also be late night sessions in the Exhibition Hall of the Concert Hall featuring artists in the city from programme concerts. On January 22 and 29 these sessions will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and, as has been the pattern in the last few years, the final of the BBC Radio Scotland Young Musician of the Year on Sunday January 31 will also be broadcast live.

Remember that if you still have to buy tickets for the festival, a discount card qualifies for a 15 per cent discount until December 27 and after that for 10 per cent discount. For tickets telephone 0141 353 8000 or visit www.celticconnections.com.

Gaelic course

TAIC/CNSA are delighted to announce that they hope to start Gaelic courses in Glasgow in February 2010. With the main aim of encouraging fluency in Gaelic for very young children, they hope to attract adults who are likely to be involved with this age group. The ideal situation would be a mix of learners and fluent speakers and the course will be highly relevant for parent and child language bonding. Meetings will be twice weekly and for everyone who signs up the first two days will be free of charge. Further information is available from Finlay MacLeod, telephone 01542 836222 or finlay@cnsa.org.uk.

Thanks

MANY thanks to all readers who have provided me with information for this column during the past year. Nollaig chridheil.

Diary dates

Thursday December 24: Comunn Taobh-an-Iar Highland Ball, last day to book tickets. Telephone 0141 942 4495.

Thursday December 31: Helensburgh and District Highlander's Association Hogmanay Party, Geilston Hall, Cardross.

Friday January 8: Comunn Taobh-an-Iar Highland Ball, Milngavie Town Hall, 7.30pm. Clydebank and District Highlander's Association Ceilidh, Lesser Town Hall, 7.30pm.

Saturday January 9: Glasgow Skye Association Family Ceilidh, Partick Burgh Halls, 7.30pm.

Pub scene

MUSIC in the Park Bar this weekend will be provided by Eriskay Lilt on Saturday and Sunday while in the Islay Inn it will be an Open Night on Sunday with the premises closed on Friday and Saturday. **Neil Murray. Tel: 0141 954 8105. Email: neilmurray@yahoo.co.uk.**

Oban Saints a leading example

Sir, Many congratulations to Oban Saints on its success in the Scottish Sports Awards, *The Oban Times*, December 10. Not only are the young people of the area benefiting from the unselfish and dedicated service of Iain Jackson, David Buchanan and their talented colleagues, but us members of the older brigade are treated to entertaining and skilled football every Saturday. With this kind of leadership Oban sets an example to the rest of the country. Well done. **W Raymond Shaw, Last of the Summer Wine Group - Junior Member, Drimvargie Road, Oban.**

PRESS POLICY

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

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

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

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



Can readers help identify house?

Reader Jeremy Lawrence submitted the above photograph and wonders if anyone can identify the house. Jeremy thinks the photo was taken in or near Oban in the late 1850s. His great-grandfather Walter Searle, the tall young man standing, is seen with his wife Margaret, born McIntyre, and members of her family. Jeremy is assuming that the house is the McIntyre home. His great-grandparents emigrated to Cape Town, South Africa, in 1860. We would like readers to send in flashback photographs and photographs of *The Oban Times* being read in far flung places. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

Letters to the editor

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Biggest not the best

Sir, I note that Chief Constable Steve House of Strathclyde Police and Sir Paddy Tomkins former Chief Constable of Lothian & Borders Police and HMIC are in favour of one unitary force for Scotland. I had the privilege of serving in Strathclyde Police for 31 years in Glasgow city and rural areas, and working with all eight Scottish Police Forces when I was the Coordinator of the Scottish Police Service Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Graduates. In my view a single force for Scotland would not necessarily lead to an improvement in service. The best run forces in my experience were those that were large enough to be resilient but small enough

to deliver a personable and holistic service for both urban and rural communities. It is my opinion as the former Chief Inspector in Charge of Oban, Lorn and the Isles in the Strathclyde Police area that any resource allocation model adopted by a potential single Scottish Police Force could arguably lead to the centralisation of resources. This could hypothetically lead to a policing policy and resource allocation model more geared to the needs of the central belt and in particular the economic and political centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh, than our rural and Island communities. Chief Constable Steve House and Sir Paddy Tomkins are however to be commended for bringing the debate on the potential for a single police force for Scotland that has taken place

for years in police circles into the public arena. This debate however has to take into account the geographic and logistical challenges of policing our rural and Island communities and not be restricted solely to potential economies of scale. **Frederick Hall** Convenor **Oban Community Council** **Accident at school** Sir, Several months ago I wrote to *The Oban Times* to suggest ways in which this school access point must be improved. I probably went into too much detail to justify the letter being published. I would simply repeat a traffic roundabout must be constructed; a flyover

pedestrian bridge must be included; land on the north side can and must be acquired and there are ways and means of offsetting the costs. **Malcolm Black.** **Find pool cash** Sir, At the full council meeting of Argyll and Bute Council on October 1 2009 councillors voted to transfer £70,000 from unallocated reserves for the conduct of community council elections. Surely these councillors can transfer a further £10,000 to Mid Argyll Swimming Pool to save it from closure in March 2010. It is essential everyone learns to swim because one day it may save a life whereas, in my opinion community councils are another level of bureaucracy we can do without. **Douglas W Tott, Isle of Islay.**

Islay Letter

New minister

DR ROBERT D Barlow preached at St John's Church at Port Ellen and at the Round Church at Bowmore on December 13 as the sole nominee for the presently vacant and now linked charges of Kilarrow and Kildalton and Oa parishes. An overwhelming congregational vote found in favour of Dr Barlow and, following ratification by the Presbytery of Argyll, it is hoped he will be ordained and inducted into his first full-time charge by the end of January 2010. Dr Barlow comes from a distinguished medical and biochemistry background. He is married to Gwen and has a grown-up family of four. He currently lives in Avoch on the Black Isle and completed his probationer minister training in the parishes of Kilmorack and Erchless in Beaulieu. After a long period of vacancy, everyone is looking forward to welcoming the new minister to the island churches and community.

Catriona at the 'Islay'

A FORMER editor of the community newspaper the *Ileach* will be the guest chairperson at next year's Islay Gathering. Catriona Bell from Bridgend will preside at the Glasgow Ilich's 148th annual get together in Glasgow University Union on Friday March 5. A native of Sutherland, she came to these shores more than 50 years ago when she took up a teaching post at the then junior secondary school at Bowmore. She met and married local businessman and farmer Donald Bell from Ballygrant and went on to make her own considerable mark on many aspects of the island's community life. As well as her continuing active involvement in the local newspaper, she was one of the many moving forces behind the tireless efforts which led to the establishment of the island swimming pool. Local voluntary

services and farming circles have also greatly benefited from her input and she and Donald are now enjoying a well-earned but still busy retirement at their home at Traigh Cill an Ruabha at the head of Lochindaal. The gathering programme will also feature the Association Pipers, Pipe Major Nigel Morris and pipers Lindsay MacArthur and Sandy MacLellan. Other bill toppers will be Gaelic songstress Mairi MacInnes, Mull Mod gold medallist Alastair Whyte and silver pendant winner Iain G MacLean from Staffin and Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir. Making her 'Islay' debut will be Port Ellen's Marion Ramsay, a daughter of Danka and Donald Ramsay, who is now involved in the world of opera. Charlie Kirkpatrick and his broadcasting band will fill the instrumental spot and also musically cater for those attending the ensuing dance. Keeping everyone in control will be association president Peter Campbell, now entering the final months of his presidential tenure.

It's panto' time

IT WAS panto time at the island's primary schools and the pupils presented new slants on seasonal stories before packed houses. Keills Primary School performed 'Scrooge - a Ghost of a Chance'. This was an ambitious undertaking considering the space limitations but it proved to be outstandingly telling and effective. The performers fully entered into the Dickensian spirit and scenery, costumes and make-up were up to professional standards. Outstanding costumes also enhanced Bowmore primary's 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Adding to the hilarity were a nervous Daisy the cow, a host of funky animals and birds, creatures of the night and a take on 'Strictly Come Dancing'. The Durden family kept up the pace and the witch, good fairy, chamberlain, king, princess, giant and unhappy wife, along with supporting characters, added to the merriment.

'Cinderella Rockerfella' greatly amused the audience at Port Ellen Primary School and the jokes came thick and fast. Cinders, Ugly Sisters and Prince Charming, along with the usual suspects, were in top form as were witches, fairies, mice, leather-clad bikers and an ingenious scooter-riding frog. America's wild west is not a usual panto locale but proved an ideal setting for the Port Charlotte pupils' 'Ye Har! Way Out West'. Giant cacti, homespun homesteaders and pesky injuns peopled the stage and milked the comedy situations for all they were worth. This was an impressive festive offering greatly enjoyed by the supporters. All involved in these presentations deserve our highest praise.

Carol service

THE CONGREGATIONS of St John's Church at Port Ellen and the Round Church at Bowmore joined forces for the annual carol service on December 13. Kilarrow Session Clerk Marian Senior conducted the proceedings and the service included readings from members of both churches and Bowmore Sunday School. There was also musical input from the children and from Coisir Ghaidhlig Ile, conducted by Iseabail Mactaggart. The Rev David Carruthers, interim moderator, led the prayers and manned the organ, and everyone enjoyed the ensuing fellowship, coffee and mince pies. More Christmas music and mince pies will be on the menu at 10am on Sunday December 27 when Reader Angela Stather introduces a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in the Bowmore church. Greetings to those who read these meagre jottings of mine. I wish everyone a joyous Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year. Mar sin leibh. **Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel: 01496 810 658.**

A VIEW FROM THE TOWER

By McCAIG

Looking back

AS WE contemplate the traditional turkey and plum pudding, let's pause for a moment to reflect that while we are in comfortable surroundings with food on the table and wine in the glass there are millions of our fellowmen who have next to nothing. They have no home - only the most inadequate of shelters - very basic, if any, food and little prospect of any future. We in the affluent parts of the world should remember that amongst the commercialism that is to many what this holiday period is all about, for others it came about through three Wise Men bearing gifts to a baby born in a stable in Bethlehem and the message this brings to us. The latest survey of those who still tolerate being stopped in the street or rung up has revealed that the number of those who claim to be practising Christians in Britain has fallen for the first time below 50 per cent yet, when asked if they still believed in God there was a very positive response as many more than ever go to church. Strange isn't it? Mind you, I blame those of the evangelical tendency who claim that their fundamentalism is the one true religion and only they are entitled to call themselves Christians. It puts a lot of those who prefer their faith to be deeper and more personal but not of the 'happy clappy' variety off making a commitment. That said, let's look at 2009 and see what happened militarily speaking. Naturally, this can't be totally inclusive, but picks out significant events that ought to make us pause to think. When I was a youngster we were at war with Germany and subsequently Japan and Clydebank had been bombed so severely that one could see the sky bright red even in Oban. That, the loss of the *Breda* in the Firth of Lorn and the sinking of Sunderland sea planes in Oban Bay are my strongest local recollections. Since that time there have been, as the old lady from Ballachulish said in the last century, 'wars and rumours of wars and will be until the end of time'. There have been, and will be; some get mentioned, others we rarely hear of. But we certainly have heard of war in Iraq and in Afghanistan - both of legal dubiety. As far as Iraq is concerned this column has always opposed Tony Blair's decision to become involved on the shirt tails of the former President Bush. As we hear evidence from the formal inquiry into the Iraq conflict, currently being held in London, even the staunchest supporter of Britain becoming involved must wince at some of the evidence led. We were going to war against the regime in Iraq whether Parliament sanctioned it or not. Indeed, if it had not, we were still going to war against Iraq because the 'B' twins - Blair and Bush - had taken that decision at least a year

before British forces entered Iraq and immaterial of whether 'weapons of mass destruction' had been found there or not.

Why are we in Afghanistan?

AGAIN, ex-President Bush is involved. He ordered the supply of arms to the Taliban who were insurgents at that time and who seemed to be those who could bring stability to that far-off land. Naturally, when they got a foot in the door they wanted control and their loyalty was on their terms. As with Vietnam and Cambodia there was no democracy; it was toe the US line. The Afghan government of those days was corrupt and is today. Yet, we are sending young men and women to their deaths un-necessarily. The weekly returning of our forces in coffins angers and most certainly forces us to question why Britain is still there. As we are about to have a General Election - will it be May or March? - Gordon Brown starts to talk about 'exit' strategies. How those families who have lost loved ones must wince at his mentioning such when we should never have been there in the first place. Yet army recruiting staff tell us that more and more young men and women come to their offices to volunteer - not out of patriotism, but seeking adventure. One I know who will be joining up next month is the most mild-mannered of young men yet he too ignores the fact that his contemporary from Mull, who was killed in Helmand Province just months ago, was a fellow pupil at Oban High School and liked by him.

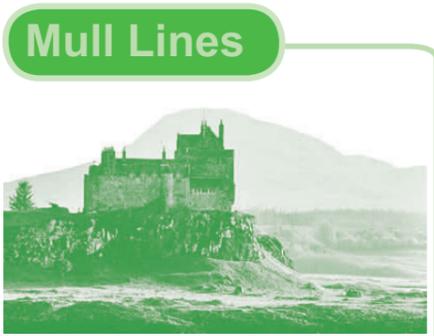
The rest of the world?

NEXT week, we'll look at what has happened in civilian life. Naturally, there's been an enormous drain on our financial resources caused by Iraq, Afghanistan and the other 'conflicts' in which Britain seems inevitably to become involved. Hasn't anyone told our leaders that the world map is not largely coloured red as it was in days of Empire and that we no longer need to be the world's policeman? Undoubtedly, we have been, and rightly too, concerned about recession and the fragile nature of the banking system. Add to this global warming and the posturing of Scotland's First Minister is merely an irritating footnote. Our medical advisors tell us we should have a swine flu jag. Now it seems our 'under-fives' should have two it seems. But waiting times are coming down and could come down even further if the consultants' letters could be typed within a day or two and not four weeks later. Meantime: A Happy Christmas to all readers.

McCaig

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.



Mull Lines
A CHILDREN in need fundraiser at Lochdonhead Primary School on Mull raised £258 for the national charity. The school raised money by having a sale and coffee afternoon selling chutney, jelly jam, candles, calendars and lots of buns. The school had lots of visitors making the day busy and successful.

MULL Museum have a range of surplus books for sale from its Tobermory base. The books include some rarer editions including *Duncan Forbes of Culloden* by C de B Murray, London, 1936; *Achachlachar* by Emma L. Menzies, Edinburgh 1950, letters of a minister's wife. For a full list or for further information contact Librarian Andrew Reid at ajohnstonereid@hotmail.co.uk.

A SPECIAL ring will go on display next year at Mull Museum. The finger ring of late medieval date was found by John Wilson of Lochdon using his metal detector. The ring was advertised in the list of treasure trove finds and Mull Museum has purchased it.

The ring will be on display from next season along with a small pilgrim's cross also found by John Wilson.



To sponsor Mull Lines please contact Isla at 01631-568000



Beachd Ailein

Gun teagamh bha e math beachd a chluinntinn bho chomhairliche eaconomach air Ghàidhealachd gum bheil dòchas aige gun tig fàs air eaconamaidh na Gàidhealtachd air a' bhliadhna seo tighinn. Tha seo na mhìneachadh ged a tha làn fhios againn nach eil sinn air crìoch fhàicinn air toradh staing ionmhais an t-saoghail, agus gum bheil iomadach buille romhainn fhathast.

Mar a thuir mi roimhe, feumaidh tomhas de thruas a bhith againn dhan fheadhainn a tha a' feuchainn ri slighe a lorg a dh' ionnsaigh leasachaidh ann an suidheachadh den t-seorsa, oir chan eil clàr-ùil ann. Tha luchd poilittigs ceart a bhith ag radh gum feumar caomhnaidhean a dhèanamh air cosgaisean poblach gus cumtasan a chothromachadh, ach aig an aon àm tha a' mhòr-shluagh cuideachd ceart a bhith a' sùileachadh barrachd smachd bhon Riaghaltas air na buidhnean a tha an eisimeil airgid poblach airson am bith! Tha e reusanta gum biodh an aon fhulangas air a h-uile duine anns an t-suidheachadh seo, agus chan eil a' mhòr chuid a' creidsinn gum bheil sgilean rianachd ionmhais cho tearc is nach lorgamaid daoine eile nam falbhaidh cuid a bhancairean le stiurt bho nach d' fhuair iad leasachadh duaise!

Chuala mi aon amas caomhnaidh a chuir dragh mòr orm. Ciamar a tha Seirbheis Nàiseanta na Slàinte an Glaschu is Inbhir Chluaidh an dùil a thèid aca air dà mhillean dheug no a shàbhaladh air cosgais bhanastramas thar còig bliadhna, gun aig a' char as lugha euslaintich a bhith fulang, agus aig a' char as miosa beatha ga chall? Tha Seirbheis Nàiseanta Slàinte Ghlaschu is Inbhir Chluaidh mar tha trì fichead millean ann am fiachan agus tha impidh orra cosgaisean a lughdachadh, agus tha an aon seorsa staing aig seirbhis na slàinte ann an sgìrean eile. Dè ghabhas deanamh ma tha far am bheil seirbheisean a dh' fheumas a bhith tèarainte? Tha aon rud a tha fìor ann an seirbheisean poblach as an fharsaingeachd, agus 's e sin gum bheil dùbhlachadh agus ath-dhùbhlachadh air cosgaisean rianachd is stiùiridh leis na bheil ann de roinnean fa-leth. Saoil am bheil an t-àm ann sealltainn a-rithist air na roinnean sin a phòsadh gus seirbheisean a dhion?

Tha mi 'n dòchas gum faigh sibh na dh' iarr sibh bho Bhodach na Nollaige am bliadhna, agus tha mi 'n dòchas cuideachd gum bidh sibh, sonas, agus fìor dheagh latha agaibh uile a-màireach, agus feuch nach ith 's nach òl sibh cus!

While it is enormously encouraging to read that some economists expect Scotland's economy to begin growing again in 2010, most of us are aware that the impact of the financial crisis will continue to affect us for some time to come.

Against this background can Glasgow and Inverclyde NHS seriously expect to reduce nursing costs by £12m over five years without affecting patient care? Their challenge is not unique, so it's maybe time to look at merging more public authorities to save on much duplicated administration, and protect public services. Have a happy Christmas!

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



Children at Ulva School enjoying the Healthy Heart School. (52heart01)

Ulva pupils put their hearts into healthy living

CHILDREN held a Healthy Heart Day at Ulva Primary School, Isle of Mull to show parents and friends how to keep fit and well.

Throughout a fun-packed day the children and their parents

and friends learned skipping tricks, such as the scissors and the crossover, to raise £52 for the British Heart Foundation and the organisation's national Jump Rope for Heart campaign.

Head teacher Heather Waller said: 'To prepare for this event the children invited Steve, the ambulance man, to teach resuscitation techniques.'

'The schoolchildren used

the vegetables, grown by themselves in the school garden, to prepare delicious, healthy lunches for their parents.

'The whole day was great fun and an overwhelming success.'

Coll in favour of centre
Majority of islanders support £2.4m project

THE MAJORITY of Coll islanders have come out in support of building a new community centre in Arinagour - despite reservations over the cost of the £2.4 million project.

A survey commissioned by one of the main funders BIG Lottery Fund in November has found that three-quarters of 109 of a possible 137 people interviewed were either very supportive or supportive of Development Coll's An Cridhe project.

The survey was commissioned after the Lottery, which had awarded £852,329 from its Growing Community Asset programme, learned that the islanders had voted not to sell the old community-owned hall.

The sale of the old hall was integral to Development Coll's business plan for An Cridhe, both for raising funds and moving to one 'fit-for-purpose' centre.

Concerns
The 'no sale' vote was a catalyst for some on the island to voice their concerns about the cost of the project relative to the size of the population and a meeting, independently chaired, was held to answer

many of the growing questions, followed by the Lottery survey.

Reflect on findings
The Lottery confirmed last week that it had 'no plans to withdraw our offer of grant to Development Coll' but said it had asked the community company to 'take time to reflect on the findings of the consultation' and would visit the island in January for a public meeting.

The BIG Lottery has asked Development Coll to submit a proposal to demonstrate how the project will achieve its proposed funding and on-going viability, including assurances that the old hall will not compete with the new centre.

Ironically, the Lottery survey found that 54 per cent of islanders were now in favour of selling the old hall while those who were not in favour of its sale wanted to see its use changed or remain as a community asset.

Of those surveyed, 80.7 per cent said they would use An Cridhe, 16.6 per cent said they would not and 2.8 per cent were unsure. Emma Grant, project

officer with Development Coll, said it was a great outcome, reaffirming support on the island for the multi-purpose centre, including a library, performance/exhibition space, education facilities, office and kitchen space and a bunkhouse with 12 beds.

'We are still waiting for the final say so from a couple of funders and assuming that these two come in, we have still to raise £44,000,' said Emma, adding that the timescale for the project had been put back by a couple of months following the vote on the old hall.

Emma said that the working group and directors would now analyse the survey against the business plan for An Cridhe.

A meeting is to be set up between Development Coll and Coll Community Council to discuss the future use of the old hall but it is understood that the hall committee is looking at pursuing some kind of change of use.

The islanders on Coll have themselves raised around £66,000 towards An Cridhe.



Siubhlachan - filming in the Uists last summer

North Uist filmmaker has high hopes for latest drama

UIST filmmaker Uisdean Murray returned home last week to promote his latest film *Siubhlachan*, incredibly made on a £25,000 budget on the islands last summer.

Uisdean, originally from Paiblesgarraidh on North Uist made the Gaelic drama for BBC Alba after his five-minute short film of the same name won a best film award last year.

The 30-minute drama is aimed at the younger Gaelic audience and tells the story of Seonag, played by 12-year-old Cassandra MacLean of Berneray, in company with other local actors.

Adventures
Seonag has been left her grandfather's pocket watch and discovers it has the ability to transport her through time into all manner of adventures, some distinctly sinister. The ending of the film has deliberately been left open-ended in the hope that it will be commissioned into a series of six dramas.

Uisdean filmed *Siubhlachan* in North Uist and Berneray over two weeks last summer. From start to finish, the drama took six months to complete, and was made on a budget of £25,000. *Siubhlachan* was previewed in Stornoway.

Uisdean said: 'I'm pleased with the way the film has turned out with strong performances from the cast and good special effects. Reaction has been really positive so far.'

The original short film of *Siubhlachan* has been selected for screening in film festivals all over the world. The 30-minute version will be screened on BBC Alba on Christmas Eve at 6.10pm and on Christmas Day at 5.25pm.

Feis Tir A Mhurain fundraiser

FEIS Tir A Mhurain is holding a fund-raising ceilidh on Monday December 28 in Stoneybridge Hall from 7.30pm.

The licensed ceilidh is

offering teas, coffees, homebaking and a raffle. South Uist's feis, which turned 20 last year, is raising funds for the purchase of new instruments to carry on the feis tradition.

An island on wheels....

Left: A car in the Australia has two links with the west coast of Scotland. The first is, of course, the 'I Read the Oban Times' car sticker and the second is a much coveted TIREE car registration plate. Car owner Calum MacKinnon said: 'I was born in the village of Kilmoluaig on the Isle of Tiree where I lived for some years. Following service in the merchant navy I decided to make Western Australia my home. We received the red sticker in our newspaper and decided to put it in the most appropriate location, close to Tiree.'



TIREE and the red car sticker show just how far the Oban Times can travel.

Barra man remanded in custody

A BARRA man who allegedly threatened to shoot police officers with an air rifle on the island was remanded in custody following an appearance in private at Stornoway Sheriff Court last Thursday.

John Christie, 24, of Castlebay, Barra, faced 10 gun-related charges. He made no plea or declaration and was remanded in custody.

Mr Christie is accused of stealing an air rifle from a house at Horve, brandishing it at police constables and repeatedly threatening to shoot them.

The allegations also include two charges of assaulting individual police constables and threatening to fire the weapon at them.

He faces a further charge of having the rifle with intent to commit a robbery.

It is alleged the incidents all occurred while he was on bail.

Local charities face cash crisis

A CASH crisis in local charities may lead to some organisations closing their doors for good.

National funders such as the Lloyds TSB Foundation, The National Lottery and various trusts are struggling for cash due to the financial downturn.

One group highlighting the cash shortage, The Toy Cupboard, were banking on receiving cash from Lloyds TSB to keep them afloat over the next few years. But the group were given a blow when they received a letter from the charity stating that they will be suspending grant-making activities.

The letter from chief executive Mary Craig continues: 'Scottish charities will miss out on £6million worth of funding a year. This means services you offer will now be under threat.'

Lindsay Elliot, chairwoman of the Toy Cupboard, said: 'We have managed to secure funding for our group that will see us through to our 20th anniversary in April. 'However, and it's a big however, we have been told by the Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland, one of our major funders that it can not promise the group financial backing in the future.'

SNH Gaelic plan goes to consultation

SCOTTISH Natural Heritage's (SNH) Gaelic Plan has gone out to public consultation.

The plan will guide how the organisation promotes and develops the use of the language in its work.

SNH Chairman Andrew Thin said: 'In the present day, Gaelic is in daily use in many communities across the country and it is only right that public bodies such as SNH reflect those communities in the language we use.'

The public have until January 29 to submit their views on the plan, copies of which are available online at www.snh.org.uk/gaelic/languagePlan.asp. Hard copies will be in all SNH offices and available on request to anyone interested.

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The Oban Times Wedding Album



Robertson - Vallis

Morven Robertson and John Vallis were married at Kilmichael Church, Kilmichael Glassary. The couple held a reception at the Cairnbaan Hotel. Photograph by Perfect Images, Dunbeg, Oban.



Smith - Scott

Lorna Smith of Altour Road, Spean Bridge, and Chris Scott of Falkirk were married at Kilmonivaig Church, Spean Bridge, by the Rev D MacQuarrie. The couple held a reception at The Moorings Hotel, Banavie. Photograph by Anthony MacMillan Photography, Fort William.



Blyth - Neilson

Lyn Blyth and David Neilson, both of Inverness, were married in Inverness Cathedral. Photograph by Phimister Photography.



Tokozi - Windham-Wright

Rita Tokozi of Gyor, Hungary, daughter of Marti and Zoltan Tokozi, and Thor Windham-Wright, of Shore Cottage, Barcadline, son of Mike and Sue Windham-Wright, were married at Hedervar Castle, Hungary.



O'Brien - Berry

Caroline O'Brien and George Berry, both of Oban, were married at Oban Congregational Church.



Blakey - Smith

Nina Blakey and Chris Smith were married at Oban Registry Office. The couple held a reception at the Oban Bay Hotel. Photograph by Perfect Images, Dunbeg, Oban.



McBurney - Hawley

Elaine McBurney and James Hawley were married at the Ardanaiseig Hotel where they also held their reception. Photograph by Perfect Images, Dunbeg, Oban.



Leckie - Bisp

Gillian Leckie and Geoff Bisp were married at the Bridge over the Atlantic, Isle of Seil.



Vetter - Asmussen

Silkie Vetter and Ike Asmussen, both of Germany, were married at the Ardanaiseig Hotel where they also held their reception. Photograph by Cameron Harris of Highland Photos, Oban.



Johnson - Barrett

Kimbra Johnson and Roger Barrett of Kilniver were married at Craignish, Ardfern. The couple held a reception at the Loch Melfort Hotel, Arduaine. Photograph by Perfect Images, Dunbeg, Oban.



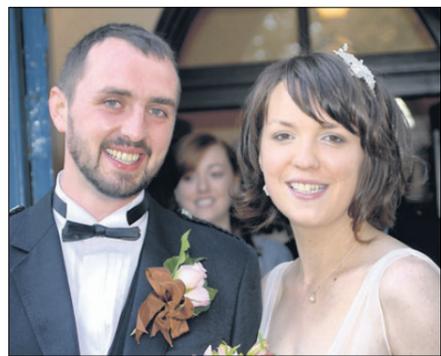
Bradley - Stewart

Rachel Bradley and Jamie Stewart were married at St Margaret's Church, Roy Bridge. The couple held a reception in The Moorings Hotel, Fort William. Photograph by Perfect Images, Dunbeg, Oban.



MacLeod - Faragher

Karen MacLeod and Jonathan Faragher were married at Darlington Registry Office. Karen is the daughter of Mary and Donald, Colonsay. Jonathan is the eldest son of Fiona and Jamie Smith of Owen Sound, Canada. The couple held a reception at Walworth Castle Hotel. The couple have set up home in Canterbury where Jonathan is pursuing his army career.



Munro - De Plano

Anna Munro and Christopher De Plano were married at Kilmore Parish Church, Isle of Skye. Christopher is from Braes, Isle of Skye, and Anna is the fourth daughter of the Reverend and Mrs James Munro, former minister of Tiree and Coll and South Uist.



MacAskill - Yates

Connie MacAskill of Seil and Jamie Yates of Liverpool were married at Eilean a Chomhraidh, Balvicar Farm. The couple held a reception in Isle of Seil Community Hall.



Heenan - Nicholson

Lucy Heenan, Cardross, and Craig Nicholson, Dumfriesshire, were married at St Oran's Church, Connel. They held a reception at the Isles of Glencoe Hotel. Photograph by Anthony MacMillan, Fort William.



McAlister - MacPherson

Lynsey McAlister and Mark MacPherson, both of Torlundy Road, Fort William, were married at Duncansburgh Macintosh Church, Fort William by the Rev Donald MacQuarrie. The couple held a reception in Caol Community Centre. Photograph by Anthony MacMillan, Fort William.



Russell - Duffy

Sandie Russell and Richard Duffy were married at St Conan's Kirk, Loch Awe. The couple held a reception at Dalavich Social Club. Photograph by Perfect Images, Dunbeg, Oban.

www.thehighlandtheatre.co.uk for full listings and future presentations

Cinema

The Highland Theatre
George Street, Oban, PA34 5NX - Box Office: 01631 562444

From Sunday 27th - Thursday 31st December

AVATAR	Cert 12A 166 min DAILY 5.00, 8.30 THURS 31st 3.00 ONLY
SHERLOCK HOLMES	Cert 12A 128min DAILY 12.00, 2.45, 5.45, 8.45 THURS 31st 12.00, 2.45 ONLY
ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 2	Cert U 88 min DAILY 12.45, 3.00 THURS 31st 12.45 ONLY

From Sunday 2nd January - PARANORMAL ACTIVITY 15



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Thursday 24 December >	Ballochmyle The Woody
Friday 25 December >	Sandra Macbeth Markie Dans Open til 2am
Saturday 26 December >	Chunks Markie Dans Open til 2am
Saturday 26 December >	Danny Carroll The Woody
Saturday 26 December >	Boxing Day Party Skipinnish 10PM - £5 with house DJs
Saturday 26 December >	Boxing Day Party Skipinnish 10PM - £5 with house DJs
Hogmanay - 31 December >	Crooked Reel Markie Dans Open til 2am
Hogmanay - 31 December >	Skerryvore and Support Skipinnish 10PM - £5
Doors open at 9pm, Tickets available from Tourist Info or obanhogmanay.co.uk - £12.50	
1st January 2010 >	New Years Day Skipinnish 9PM - £10 Extravaganza!
1st January 2010 >	Live Music Markie Dans - 5pm with Tim O'Connor
1st January 2010 >	Crooked Reel Markie Dans - 10pm Open til 2am
2nd January 2010 >	Live Music Markie Dans - 5pm with Tim O'Connor
2nd January 2010 >	Sandra Macbeth Markie Dans - 10pm Open til 2am
Sunday 3rd January >	Trail West The Woody 3-6pm & 9.30pm-1.30am

what's on

Various >	Ballet, Jazz Ballet West Classes Body conditioning Tel: 01866 822641
Various >	Kundalini Yoga Energie Fitness Tel: 01852 300174 for details
Mondays >	Pilates Rockfield Primary Campus 6.30pm
Mondays & Wednesdays >	Pilates Energie Health & Fitness Club Monday 11am / Wednesday 7pm
Thursdays >	Beginners Tai Chi Church of Scotland Centre 7.45pm
Saturdays >	Gymnastics with Nikki Oban Primary Campus - Suitable for all ages 12-4pm tel: 01631 770656 or 01355 904714 Magic Show
December >	The Vatersay Boys Various venues - www.thevatersayboys.com

It's Mr Donkey to you!

With festive legal claims at an all-time high The Oban Times presents the essential politically-correct guide to Christmas.

*Dashing through the snow,
In a one horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go,
Laughing all the way.*

A risk assessment must be submitted before an open sleigh is considered safe for members of the public to travel on.

The risk assessment must also consider whether it is appropriate to use only one horse for such a venture, particularly if passengers are of larger proportions.

Please note: permission must be gained from landowners before entering their fields. To avoid offending those not participating in celebrations, we would request that laughter is moderate only and not loud enough to be considered noise pollution.

*While shepherds watched
Their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.*

The Union of Shepherds has complained that it breaches health and safety regulations to insist that shepherds watch their flocks without appropriate seating arrangements being provided, therefore benches, stools and orthopaedic chairs must be made available.

Shepherds have also requested that, due to the inclement weather conditions at

this time of year, they should watch their flocks via CCTV cameras from centrally heated observation huts.

Please note: the angel of the lord is reminded that before shining his/her glory all around she/he must ascertain that all shepherds have been issued with glasses capable of filtering out the harmful effects of UVA, UVB and Glory.

*Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer,
Had a very shiny nose.
And if you ever saw him,
You would even say it glows.*

You are advised that under the Equal Opportunities for All policy, it is inappropriate for persons to make comment with regard to the ruddiness of any part of Mr. R. Reindeer.

Further to this, exclusion of Mr R Reindeer from the Reindeer Games will be considered discriminatory and disciplinary action will be taken against those found guilty of this offence. A full investigation will be implemented and sanctions, including suspension on full pay, will be considered.

*Little donkey, little donkey on the dusty road,
Got to keep on plodding onwards with your precious load.*

The RSPCA have strict

guidelines with regard to how heavy a load that a donkey of small stature is permitted to carry.

Also included in the guidelines is guidance regarding how often to feed the donkey and how many rest breaks are required over an extended four hour plodding period.

Please note that due to the increased risk of pollution from the dusty road Mary and Joseph are required to wear face masks to prevent inhalation of any airborne particles.

The donkey has expressed his discomfort at being labelled 'little' and would prefer just to be simply referred to as Mr. Donkey.

*We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain,
Moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.*

Whilst the gift of gold is still considered acceptable - as it may be redeemed at a later date through such organisations as 'cash for gold' etc, gifts of frankincense and myrrh are not appropriate due to the potential risk of oils and fragrances causing allergic reactions.

A suggested gift alternative would be to make a donation to a worthy cause in the recipient's name or perhaps give a gift voucher.



Lochnell's nativity stars

Pictured above are pupils from the primary one and primary two class at Lochnell Primary School who were the star performers at this year's Nativity production in the Benderloch school.

While the older pupils provided the narration, the little ones performed the nativity scene, and the rest of the classes led some enthusiastic singing of classics like Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer, Jingle Bells, Silent Night and Away in a Manger.

15_152lochnell01

Local Origins Rural Network

All the local food and creative Producers would like to thank all our customers at the LORN markets this year, and wish you all a Wonderful Festive Season.

We look forward to seeing you all again in March.

To learn more about our local produce and join LORN as a Producer or a Friend please contact
01631 720223
or visit www.lorn.org.uk

YOUR STARS WITH PATRICK ARUNDEL

ARIES Mar 21st - Apr 20th 090 6612 4520
As you finalise your 2010 resolutions, world domination can be very much on your mind. But seriously, you will be determined that people take you a lot more seriously this week and whether it's the kids, people close by or your colleagues. The stars are also priming your ambitions, but take the view that your hopes need to go one step at a time. Call me now for your in-depth forecast...

TAURUS Apr 21st - May 21st 090 6612 4521
To surf celestial influences to their full potential, you will find yourself away from your normal environs this week. But that isn't necessarily possible for every Bull, and if you find yourself ensconced in your normal surroundings, try to have a bit of a shake up. Being more active may also help. Solo? Someone you like may live far away or be a co-worker. Call me for your love scope...

GEMINI May 22nd - Jun 21st 090 6612 4522
Most of us resolve to change some part of our lives at this time of year and as you ponder and speculate, you can be especially attuned to the things which you share closely with others. Achieving a proper balance will always be important for a lively and curious Gemini, and where this is lacking, changes beckon. Single? Things can seriously hot up. Call for your love scope in full...

CANCER Jun 22nd - Jul 23rd 090 6612 4523
Chatterbox Mercury reverses on Boxing Day and words and attitudes need to be picked with great care - especially when it comes to those closest to you. Even someone as wise as you - when it comes to familial politics, can be misunderstood or misquoted. Then again, you could be a model of diplomacy Cancer and someone could still take umbrage. Call for more news and astral advice...

LEO Jul 24th - Aug 23rd 090 6612 4524
If you are someone that likes arrangements to be adhered to and especially if you are the one who has made them in the first place, your pride could take a tumble in this last week of 2009. Other people have other agendas, so try to be sanguine if your hospitality or plans are rejected in order that someone else's gains the ascendancy. Try to be philosophical. Call for more news and advice...

VIRGO Aug 24th - Sep 23rd 090 6612 4525
Old wounds can get raked up on the back of both Mars and Mercury's reversed motion. All sorts of plans can be affected by this, perhaps because you realise that someone is actually worthy of your attentions - even if there has been a separation. Equally if there are any outstanding issues that remain unresolved, there can be rumblings of discontent. Call me for your love scope in full...

LIBRA Sep 24th - Oct 23rd 090 6612 4526
If you're fortunate enough to have a complete break between now and early next year, despite the obvious attractions of partying and family time, some deeper strands are being stirred which may see you quite happily spending time quietly reading, watching TV or ruminating on what has gone on in the last year. Use this to rest and recuperate Libra. Call your special prediction line for more news...

SCORPIO Oct 24th - Nov 22nd 090 6612 4527
There can be some lively debates, and you can also find yourself wanting to take on the opposition when it comes to any challenge which has a mental dimension to it. But there is also the risk that you can find yourself talking about more contentious subjects, and wanting to dominate the conversation. Someone may feel you are on a high horse. Call your special Scorpio prediction line for more...

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23rd - Dec 21st 090 6612 4528
Mars can see you in a rebellious space Archer, and with a cluster of energy emphasising money and possessions, one area that you won't take kindly to being told what to do is around money. Whilst you may decide to hit the winter sales and spend gifted cash on massively reduced in price merchandise, be sure you're not tempted to splash on trash. Call me for your financial forecast...

CAPRICORN Dec 22nd - Jan 20th 090 6612 4529
There is nothing like having choices, after all this can be more empowering than not, but rather like buying a hot dog in New York and deciding on what sauces you are going to have, there can sometimes be a sense of choice overload. The same can be true of a big decision that you are set to grapple with this week. Where possible try to simplify things. Call me for your in-depth forecast...

AQUARIUS Jan 21st - Feb 19th 090 6612 4530
Someone may be proving rather evasive and if you are an Aquarian who would prefer to know where you stand, any such games will just serve to drain you emotionally, if you are keen to move your love life onto a more sizzling level, this can be very frustrating. Then again, you may be thinking of making a decision to start all over again. Big stuff! Call for your love scope in full...

PISCES Feb 20th - Mar 20th 090 6612 4531
As Mercury rewinds in the part of your situation linked to your future plans, but angling to unpredictable Uranus in your own sign, you may find yourself changing your mind about a long held aspiration. The problem is that you could get a lot of conflicting advice, and this could leave you feeling more, not less confused. Socially plans can also be altered. Call now for more astral advice...

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Oban hotel creates its own Toy Story

AN OBAN hotel is creating its very own Toy Story this Christmas with the launch of a festive toy amnesty in aid of the Salvation Army.

Big hearted employees at the popular Oban Bay Hotel are urging the public to support their campaign to spread a spot of Christmas cheer by donating new and unwanted toys which will be presented to the charity in the New Year.

Members of staff at the hotel were asked to select a charity that was close to their hearts with the Salvation Army being chosen due to the great work it carries out in social services in the area and further afield.

The hotel's general manager, Darrell Williams, said: 'It's inevitable that each year the children will get duplicate gifts and we hope that this year, rather than having them lying around unused and unwanted, that parents will drop them off to our Toy Amnesty.'

'The Oban Cash for Kids is a great cause and as a local

business we are proud to do our part in bringing the community together to help spread good will this Christmas.'

Gift
Generous members of staff at the hotel are getting the ball rolling by adding an extra gift to their Christmas shopping lists and are hoping that guests and members of the public will join them by donating new, unwanted toys or by picking up an extra present to donate to the Toy Amnesty.

Members of the public will be able to drop their gifts into the Oban Bay Hotel until January 5, 2010 and they will then be presented to the Salvation Army later that month.

Territorial Envoy Craig McKinstry, leader of the Salvation Army in Oban, said: 'Receiving their gifts will allow us to distribute extra gifts to needy children throughout the year, so we hope that the community will come together once again to donate generously.'

Soroba group perform

SOROBA Young Family Group took their Nativity play to the Christ Church on Oban's Corran Esplanade for their performance.

Minister the Rev Dugald Cameron welcomed the children and their families before the children performed 'Happy Birthday Jesus' before proud families and friends.

Children from both the morning and afternoon sessions and reception group took part.

Oban High School recorded the event and teas were served.



Santa visits Connel club

CONNEL toddlers were delighted when Santa Claus popped in on their Christmas party. With a sack full of gifts he gave each boy and girl an early Christmas present. The youngsters also enjoyed special party games and snacks. The group will now take a break over the festive holidays and return in the New Year. 07_152lod01



An Iona treat

CHILDREN from Iona were treated to a visit from Santa after performing their version of the Twelve Days of Christmas to a packed audience in the MacLeod Centre. Head teacher Liz Kennedy said: 'A great time was had by everyone. We hope that all the Oban Times readers have a good Christmas and send you all best wishes for the New Year.'

Recipe of the Month

Home cured ham.
You will need...
A piece of boned and rolled pork leg (about 3kg)
About 2kg of salt
Some or all of the following:
Thyme, sage, rosemary, bay, mace, nutmeg, cinnamon sticks, cloves, black pepper
An onion
A carrot
A couple of sticks of celery

A really handy thing to have in your fridge year round, for quick meals, salads and sandwiches is a joint of ham. It is very easy to make and tastes much better than any sliced ham from the supermarket. You just need a little patience. Chef Tom Addy

First you need to cure your piece of pork leg by completely covering it in salt and leaving with a weight on it for 3 weeks. You can adapt your dry cure salt recipe to suit your tastes, it is fun to try out different herbs and spices each time you make a ham to compare and contrast.

At the restaurant I often use a handful each of thyme, sage and a couple of bay leaves along with a pinch of the aromatic spices, clove, nutmeg, mace, cinnamon stick and black pepper.

After leaving covered in your herby, spicy salt for three weeks in a cool place or fridge, you should take the meat out and give it a rinse under the tap. Next you should place in a pan, cover with cold water and bring to the boil. When the water is boiling you should change it for fresh cold water and bring to the boil again. This will make your ham less salty and with a large joint may be worth repeating. Once the water has been changed the ham can simmer for about 3 hours. The addition of an onion, carrot and celery to the stock will add flavour and give you the base for a great soup too.

Now your ham is ready and can be enjoyed straight away or allowed to cool before slicing. It will keep covered in the fridge for at least 2 weeks.




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Islay finishes lamb sale season on a high

UNITED Auctions held their last sheep sale of the season at Islay Auction Mart when 2,987 head of all classes were sold. This was undoubtedly the dearest trade for the year at Islay Auction Mart.

The majority of lambs on offer were second and third draws held over from the earlier part of the season which sold to £74.50 for Suffolk crosses from M/s Wood, Octofad consignment of almost 500 head. M/s Johnstone, Balacava sold inside fed Texel cross lambs to £71.00.

Feeding ewes from Mr Hope, 7 Claddach sold

to £86.50. Topping the prices per kilo was M/s Warren, Coull when their outstanding offering of Suffolk cross lambs destined for further finishing sold to 187 pence and this was closely followed by Mr Findlay, Kilbride when his consignment of Cheviot crosses sold to 183 pence.

Blackface Lambs sold to £64.50 per head from M/s MacLellan, Kilchiaran consignment of almost 400 head whilst Dunlossit Farms led the top call per kilo for Blackfaces at 174 pence.

ISLAY

United Auctions Lambs

SuffolkX: £74.50, £69.50, £68.50 & £68 Octofad £67.50 Kilchiaran £67 Balmartin £66.50 Ballinaby (Mrs Warren) £66 Octofad £65.50 Coull & Octofad £65 Octofad & Paire A Chlissan £64 Caille £63.50 Ardbeg & Duich £62.50 Octofad, Kilchiaran & Duich £62 Garbreck. TexelX: £71 Balacava £69.50 Ardbeg £68.50 Gartness £67.50 Tallant & Balacava £67 Carrabus £66 Keppells & Kilmeny £65.50 Balacava £65 Coull £64.50 Balacava £63.50 Ardbeg £63 Duich £62.50 Lossit & Dunlossit Estate £62 Mulindry £61.50 Duich £60 Coull. Cheviot: £55 Kilbride Cross: £65 Coull £61.50 Coull £61 Coillabus £58.50 Cruach (Brown) £56 Carrabus £55 Coillabus & Dunlossit Estate. Blackface: £64.50 Kilchiaran £61.50 Duich £60 Kilchiaran £59 Cam £57.50 Ballinaby (Mrs Warren) £56.50 Kilchiaran. Ewes TexelX: £86.50 7 Claddach

United Auctions

UNITED Auctions sold 126 store cattle, 102 cast cows and 2,473 store sheep at Stirling last Wednesday.

Bullocks averaged 165.1p (-5.73p) and sold to 216.1p per kg for a 347kg Limousin cross from West Park and £920 for a 800kg British Blue cross from Woodend.

Heifers averaged 174.4p (+9.39) and sold to 190.8p per kg for a 360kg Charolais cross from West Park and £730 for a 440kg Charolais cross from Parkhead.

Cast cows averaged at 85.6p per kg.

Suffolk cross lambs averaged £63.65 and sold to £68 from Balafark; Texel cross lambs averaged £63.10 and sold to £67 from Forter; Mule lambs averaged £62.06 and sold to £63.50 Oveton and to £62 Kildalloig; Blackface lambs averaged £50.31 and sold to £60.80 Rodders, £57.50 Middleton, £56.50 Kildalloig and £56 Outerwards.

Blackface ewes sold to £35.50 Old Manse.

Dingwall and Highland prime sale

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 78 prime cattle and 831 prime sheep at Dingwall last Tuesday.

Prime bullocks averaged 168.2p (+0.5p) and sold to 177p per kg for a 630kg Limousin cross from Leanach Farm, Culloden, to John M. Munro Ltd., Dingwall, and £1,279.55 for a 785kg Simmental cross from 28 Arabella, Nigg Station.

Prime heifers averaged 168.4p (-1.7p) and sold to 178p per kg for a 605kg Limousin cross from Bridgend Farm, Dingwall, and £1,091.20 for a 620kg Limousin cross from Drummond Farm, Evanton.

New season lambs averaged 170.1p (+12.3p) and sold to 184.2p per kg for 38kg Cheviots from 25 Fairmuir Road, Muir of Ord, and £83.50 for 50.5kg Suffolk crosses from Muirton Mains, Urray to John M. Munro Ltd., Dingwall.

Blackface lambs from Bunchrew Farm sold to £74, and to 184p per kilo from Nuide Farm, Kingussie.



Shelagh Reade, Isle of Mull Cheese, MT Selby and Hew Service of Highland Geese, Ardfern, with their wares. 07_152fayre01

Local producers network hosts Christmas fayre at Benderloch

LOCAL produce was to the fore during a Christmas extravaganza in Benderloch's Victory Hall.

LORN

Organised by local producers of Local Origins Rural Network, the Christmas fayre on two days over a fortnight saw produce as diverse as chocolate walnuts to felt crafts and mincemeat to fresh fish.

Music and entertainment were also on hand from the likes of Skipinnish ceilidh band, Lochnell Primary School, Argyll Youth Theatre and Appin Drummers.

Hew Service from Highland Geese at Ardfern was delighted to be at the Christmas fayre and had received a few late orders for geese for Christmas dinners.

"Throughout the year we have been coming to the producers market in Benderloch and certainly intend to continue doing so because it is a great market," he said.

As well as his Commander's Dressing, named after his father who used to make a similar dressing during the Second World War, Mr Service had his popular chocolate walnuts and dried mushrooms from the same part of France

that his Christmas geese come from.

Shelagh Reade from Isle of Mull Cheese had travelled over from the island for the fayre while closer to home others had come from Appin, Taynuilt, Oban and Shona Magill from Connel brought in her handmade chocolates.

Starting two years ago, her hobby has developed into a part-time business for the marine biologist who had made 3,000 of her delicious and unusual-flavoured truffles - hot cherry and lemongrass and ginger to name but two - in the space of 10 days leading up to the fayre.

Market organiser Jill Bowis explained that Local Origins Rural Network was a way of creating contacts between different parts of the community. "We organise markets and are working together to get other ways of marketing the produce we have in the area," she said.

As well as offering soups, teas and coffees at the Christmas fayre, she had her own homemade produce on sale, including Jacob's lamb.

The first market of the new year will be on March 1 at Kintaline Farm.



Organiser and driving force behind the local producers market in Benderloch, Jill Bowis 07_152fayre02

Bullocks to 170p per kilo at Dingwall

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 15 weaned calves and store cattle, two breeding cattle and 26 OTM cattle at Dingwall last Wednesday.

Bullocks sold to 170.3p per kg and £860 for a pair of 505kg Charolais crosses from 25 Fairmuir Road, Muir of Ord.

Heifers sold to 164.9p per kg and £795 for a pair of 482kg Simmental crosses from 25 Fairmuir Road.

Young bulls sold to 194.7p per kilo for a 190kg Shorthorn from Cuilaneilan, Kinlochewe, and £850 for a 640kg Aberdeen Angus from 25 Fairmuir Road.

Over 30 Month cattle averaged 96.8p and sold to 138.1p per kg and £815 for a 590kg Charolais cross heifer from Hilton Farm, Tain.

Beltex lambs take title at Caledonian Marts' Christmas Show and Sale

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd held their Annual Christmas Show and Sale of prime lambs on Tuesday December 15.

This year's show was kindly sponsored by Messrs Jim and Stuart Watson, haulage contractors, Ochiltree and Mr Jim Johnstone, haulage contractor, Mauchline.

The judge was Mr Richard Johnstone from Messrs Thomas Johnstone and Sons, Quality Butchers, Falkirk,

Airdrie and Dunfermline who awarded the championship to Messrs A Morton, Lochend Farm, Denny for a pen of 49kg Beltex lambs which realised £230 and 469.3p per kilo, to the judge.

The reserve champion pen was awarded to Mr J McDonald, Newbigging Farm, Crieff for 42kg Beltex lambs which realised £140 per head and 333.3p per kilo to T and F Skinner, Quality Butchers, Kippen, Stirling.

The 33 pens of show lambs forward for the sale averaged 196.1p per kilo compared to the overall sale average of 172.2p per kilo.

Prize list Mule Lambs 1, 2 and 3 W Adam, Shankhead, 41kgs, £70.80, 173.1p per kilo; 40kgs, £68.50, 171.0p per kilo and 44kgs, £72.20, 164.2p per kilo Suffolk Lambs land 2 D D & R C Taylor,

Easter Ochtermuthill, 43kgs, £91, 212.2p per kilo and 45kgs, £88.50, 197.1p per kilo 3 A & J Marshall, Mains of Struie, 43kgs, £74, 172.3p per kilo Texel Lambs 1 (Reserve Champion) J McDonald, Newbigging, 42kgs, £140, 333.2p per kilo 2 A Morton, Lochend, 50kgs, £95, 190.1p per kilo 3 J B Guthrie, Cuiltburn, 44kgs, £93, 211.2p per kilo

Continental Lambs 1 (Champion) A Morton, Lochend, 49kgs, £230, 469.3p per kilo 2 J B Guthrie, Cuiltburn, 49kgs, £97, 198.1p per kilo 3 J G & K Graham, Easterton, 43kgs, £91, 212.2p per kilo Blackface Lambs 1D McBeath & SJ Jessop, 44kgs, £73.50, 167.2p per kg 2 and 3 J Maxwell, Jaw, 45kgs, £70, 156.3p per kilo and 40kgs, £64.50, 161.8p per kilo

Texel champions sells to 1,200gns at Dingwall

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 93 MV accredited pedigree females at its annual show and sale at Dingwall on Wednesday.

Beltex judge, Mr D. Douglas, Braes of Coulmore, North Kessock, awarded the Beltex champion to a Coningswick Jumbo gimmer carrying a single, from Messrs J. Scott and Partners, Fearn Farm, Tain, realising 450gns to Messrs I. & H. Anderson, Newton of Carnousie, Forglenn.

The reserve award went to a Brookies Lex gimmer carrying twins from Messrs M. and I. Bissett, Mariain, Evanton, realising 250gns to Mr J. Macaulay, Brabster Farm Cottage.

Suffolk champion was awarded judge Mr J. Ross, Ankerville, Nigg, to a ewe by Stockton Real Lucky carrying a single from Messrs H. P. Sleight and Sons, St John's Wells, Fyvie, realising 400gns to Mr L. Dunn, 25 Fairmuir Road, Muir of Ord, - with the reserve award going to a Glenho Royal Edition gimmer carrying a single, also from St John's Wells, Fyvie, which realised 500gns also to Mr L. Dunn.

The Texel judge, Mr K. Ingram, Balloch View, Grange, awarded his Texel champion to a gimmer by Glenside Nugget, from Messrs C. and I. Angus, Oldfield, Thurso, realising 1,200gns to the judge.

The reserve champion was a Millar's Outstanding ewe lamb from Wester Moy Texels, Wester Moy, which realised 400gns also to the judge.

Ewe lambs sold to 400gns for a Texel from Wester Moy Texels.

In lamb gimmers sold to 1500gns for a Texel from Woodhead of Cairness, Fraserburgh; 600gns for a Suffolk from St John's Wells, while Beltex sold to 450gns from Fearn Farm.

In lamb ewes sold to 450gns for a Suffolk from St John's Wells, Beltex sold to 260gns from Mariain while Texels sold to 320gns from Tri-deug, Watten.

Caledonian Marts

CALEDONIAN Marts (Stirling) Ltd had forward 3,429 sheep comprising 2,541 prime lambs, 888 cast ewes and tups at Stirling on Tuesday.

Prime lambs averaged 172.2p per kilo, back 2.5p on the week, and selling to 198.3p per kilo and £97 for a pen of 44kg Beltex lambs from J B Guthrie, Cuiltburn, Muthill.

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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 and, where given, the alternative location(s).

Written comments should be made to the Area Planning and Building Standards Manager at this office 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
09/00444/FULLO	Warden's House 25 Walter Cameron Way Corrach Fort William	Installation of remote biomass heating station / fuel store	Corrach Post Office
09/00453/FULLO 09/00454/BLCLD	Dunbeg House North Ballachulish Onich Fort William	Alterations to house and reinstatement of bridge	Ballachulish Post Office (14 days) Regulation 5 - affecting the character of a listed building (21 days)
09/00455/FULLO	Restaurant 28 Leven Road Kinlochleven	Change of use from store to accommodation and alterations and extension to restaurant	Kinlochleven Post Office (14 days)
09/00461/FULLO	Site 180m North East of The Angus Centre Angus Crescent Upper Achintore Fort William	Temporary siting of hard/soft landscaping material	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)
09/00472/FULLO	Unit 1 Blar Mhor Industrial Estate Fort William	Alterations and extension	Lochaber Area Planning & Building Standards Office (14 days)

Area Planning and Building Standards Manager, Ross, Skye & Lochaber:
Dalydd Jones, Highland Council, Fulton House, Gordon Square, Fort William, PH33 6XY
Tel: (01397) 707015 Fax: (01397) 707022 e-mail: planning.lochaber@highland.gov.uk

Duais Dhòmhnail Meek

Chuireadh an duais seo air chois le Comhairle nan Ealain an Alba agus le Bòrd na Gàidhlig mar urram dhan Ollamh Dhòmhnail E. Meek, le sùil gum misnich is gun cuidich i sgrìobhadair. Faodar tagradh a chur a-steach air a son leothasan a chuireas crìoch air sgrìobhadh dhe na gnèithean a leanas, no a bhios faisg air crìoch a chur air, air 31 Dùbhlachd 2009.

Sgrìobhadh cruthachail sa Ghàidhlig - bàrdachd, sgeulachdan, nobhail no dràma - a bhios aig meudachd leabhair, no faisg oirre

Rosg eile sa Ghàidhlig, aig meudachd leabhair, no faisg oirre

Obair rannsachaidh dhen aon mheudachd nach fheum a bhith sa Ghàidhlig ach a bhios air cuspair a bhineas dhan Ghàidhlig

Bu chòir an sgrìobhadh a chur a-steach air pàipear gu Comhairle nan Leabhraichean aig 22 Sràid Achadh a' Mhansa, Glaschu G11 5QP, airson a bhith ann air 30 Faoilleach 2010. Bu chòir na litrichean DDM a chur air a' phasgan. Bheirear breith air le triùir bhrìtheamhan: aon a' riochdachadh a' Bhùird, aon a' riochdachadh Chomhairle nan Ealain is Chomhairle nan Leabhraichean, is aon eile on taobh a-muigh.

Bidh luach £5,000 de dhuais(ean) ga(n) tairgse, is bheirear taic airgid seachad cuideachd airson an sgrìobhadh fhoillseachadh ma bhios sin iomchaidh.

Faodar ceistean a chur gu Comhairle nan Leabhraichean aig an t-seòladh shuas, air 0141 337 6211 no aig brath@gaelicbooks.net

Second Christmas in French jail for Killin man

Continued
"My new lawyers informed me that I was being investigated by British Drugs Enforcement Officers."

"I fully complied with them and on our third meeting they told me they were closing the case as they could find no evidence to link me to Mr A's fabricated accusations."

Again, Mr Campbell was called to France for trial and again advice from his new counsel was not to attend. A letter from the Home Office stated: "You are not obligated to honour the French requests."

Legal advice
Legal advice given to Mr Campbell led him to believe that the French would not seek extradition due to lack of evidence against him, other than the hearsay evidence of a man who was caught with a lorry load of illegal drugs.

"When Mr A was tried and given a seven-year sentence I received a threatening visit from a French policeman who was accompanied by a translator who was also a British Custom's officer."

"Shortly after this visit from the French authorities I heard that I had been given a nine-year prison sentence in France."

"By the time I received the letters I had one day to make an appeal to the French courts but I had no money to pay the lawyer's fees, so foolishly I tried to ignore them."

For about three years Mr Campbell did not hear anything until he was stopped by the police for using his mobile phone while driving.

When Mr Campbell's records were called up police saw that he had an outstanding European Arrest Warrant (EAW) on his record.

He was arrested and given his liberation the following day as police could not find the correct paperwork.

Mr Campbell said: "The same week I had to appear at a district court in Glasgow on a speeding charge."

"I was travelling at 70mph on a part of the M77 which I did not realise was restricted to 50 mph."

"I made a point of arriving early so as to enable myself to enlist the services of one of the duty lawyers as I had no intentions of contesting the accusations as it was just carelessness or ignorance on my behalf. I also sought her advice on the EAW."

Rejected
"After some research she told me the French had presented an EAW in Scotland which had been rejected by the authorities."

"This lawyer was of the opinion that any country seeking extradition only had one chance to present the warrant correctly."

But one year later a local police officer served papers on Mr Campbell for another EAW had been issued.

After a number of hearings at Edinburgh High Court, legal arguments and changes of lawyers Mr Campbell lost his fight to stay in the UK.

EXCLUSIVE REPORT by Louise Lee

He was extradited to France on March 6, 2008 and imprisoned near Paris before being moved to jail in north east France.

Home Office records show that there was a trial held in France on May 22 2002 but Mr Campbell and his family contest that this was not a fair trial.

"My father was condemned on the word of a convicted drug smuggler," Mr Campbell's daughter Sandra said.

"The French claimed my father was known to the UK authorities - but as he only has two minor driving offences this is highly unlikely."

"We have spoken to several Scottish solicitors who have said that in Scotland, this case would never have reached a court."

Today, Mr Campbell is scared and lonely in prison.

His family have not been able to visit him since March 5 2008 and the social workers in charge of his case don't seem able to tell him when his release date is.

He said: "One social worker tells me I will be out in November 2010 while another tells me I am due to be released in November 2014."

"It would maybe be easier if I could speak the language - at the moment there are only two people I can speak to in the prison. More than wonder the suicide rate in this place is one in 10."

"I am in prison yet I have never had my day in court. They have cancelled out my human rights and there is no one here to help me."

A spokesman for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said that they were continuing to monitor Mr Campbell and he had received two consular visits - they were, however, unable to comment on his legal position.

Mr Campbell's sister Margaret and her husband Duncan Hendry said: "We have spent the past 22 months trying in vain to get help from the government and Mr Campbell's MP Anne McGuire."

"This government and its MPs are running scared from Europe - they are terrified to do or say anything to offend our so called European partners, even if this means leaving an innocent British citizen to rot in a French prison."

"Alistair's prison sentence is a miscarriage of justice and yet another example of Gutless Gordon [Brown] and his band of spineless 'yes' men and women showing they are unfit to protect UK citizens."

MP Anne McGuire said: "Mr Campbell and his family first contacted me in March 2008 shortly after

the Scottish Court of Appeal had heard his case that he should not be extradited to France following a European Arrest Warrant request. At that time I spoke to Mr Campbell about his extradition which was imminent."

"I raised the case with the Foreign Office and Scottish Government and was advised that Mr Campbell had exhausted all legal processes to prevent his extradition."

"The core reason for the Scottish Appeal Court agreeing to the extradition was that Mr Campbell had failed to attend a court hearing in France in 2002 to answer charges relating to drug offences committed in that country."

"In his absence the trial proceeded and he was found guilty."

"I was subsequently advised that Mr Campbell did not attend the French trial because he was given his own legal advice that he need not attend although the Scottish Appeal Court rejected that."

"Since my constituent arrived in France I have been contacted on numerous occasions by his family and have Mr Campbell's authorisation to deal directly with his sister. Many of the concerns raised since have related to the prison conditions in France, a prison transfer request, health concerns and the availability of prison transfer facilities to the UK."

"At every stage I have either raised matters directly with the Foreign Office or sought to ensure that the family's own representations have been and continue to be dealt with appropriately by British Consular officials in Whitehall or France. I also obtained an Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons to raise both particular issues about consular support for Alistair and the current support arrangements for prisoners abroad."

"Given this situation has arisen through legal processes in France and Scotland I have advised the family that any remaining legal options they may have must be pursued through the French courts and that is what I have been advised."

"I fully appreciate the frustrations of both Mr Campbell and his family as they continue to seek to now challenge the conviction through an appeal in the French legal system that was ruled out given the long timescale between the trial in France and his later extradition."

"My investigations have clearly indicated that neither the UK nor Scottish Governments (nor the Prime Minister) have powers to overturn or directly intervene in legal matters such as these in France once the Scottish legal processes had been exhausted."

"I continue to give advice to Alistair's family and to follow up particular concerns that he is not able to resolve through the French prison authorities or the British Consul General in France."

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Argyll Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at: Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR and the location details 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 Services: Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR by the 14/01/2010

- **Ref No: 09/01207/PP**
Applicant: Trec Maritime Trust
Proposal: Erection of boat storage and maintenance shed
Site Address: Land South Of Warehouse, Pier Road, Scarinish, Isle Of Trec PA77 6TN
Location of Plans: Trec Area Office
- **Ref No: 09/01719/PPP**
Applicant: Mr and Mrs R Carmichael
Proposal: Site for the erection of a dwelling house
Site Address: Tirlaggan Cottage, Achnacross, Isle of Lismore, Oban, Argyll and Bute PA34 5UG,
Location of Plans: Oban Area Office
- **Ref No: 09/01727/PP**
Applicant: Ms Anna Taylor
Proposal: Erection of agricultural building
Site Address: Mossfield Croft, Isle of Coll, Argyll and Bute PA78 6TB,
Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Isle of Coll
- **Ref No: 09/01802/PP**
Applicant: MacCalman Homes Limited
Proposal: Erection of 2no. self catering cottages and 1no. unit for temporary residential use, alterations to existing dwellinghouse and repositioning of existing shed and stable
Site Address: Dha Urtar, Bowmore, Isle of Islay, Argyll and Bute PA43 7JQ
Location of Plans: Bowmore Area Office Isle of Islay

Argyll and Bute Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Planning Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST.

An extant list of planning applications which can be viewed on the Council's website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

A weekly list of applications which can be viewed at Planning Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST and Argyll and Bute Council Libraries.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

Take notice that the applications in the following schedule may be inspected during normal office hours at Dalriada House, Lochgilphead or Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR and by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Anyone wishing to make representations should do so in writing to the undersigned within 21 days of the appearance of this notice, whichever is applicable as indicated below. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

SCHEDULE - DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION PLANS

- **Ref No: 09/01656/PP**
Applicant: Mr M Asher
Proposal: Erection of a single storey dwellinghouse.
Site Address: Land South West of Uha Cottage, Western Road, Tobermory, Isle Of Mull, Argyll and Bute PA75 6PR,
Location of Plans: Tobermory Area Office
- 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

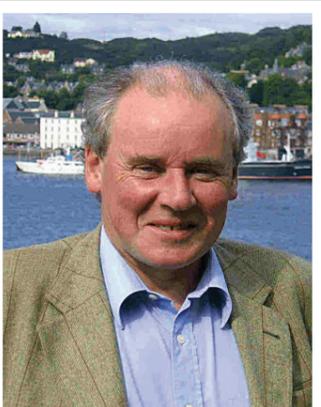
CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR WASTE AND BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- WASTE COLLECTIONS**
- Oban and Lorn**
If your collection falls on Christmas Day and New Year Day, therefore a Friday then your collection will be the subsequent Saturday. Normal Service applies to all other collection days over this period.
- Paper and Cardboard**
No collections on Christmas Day, 28th December 2009 plus New Years Day and 04th January 2010.
- Civic Amenities and Recycling Site (Moleigh)**
This facility will be closed on the following days. Christmas Day, 28th December 2009, New Years Day and 04th January 2010.
- Mull and Iona**
If your collection falls on Christmas Day and New Year Day, therefore a Friday then your collection will be the subsequent Saturday. Normal Service applies to all other collection days over this period.
- Civic Amenities and Recycling Site (Glengorm)**
This facility will be closed on the following days. Christmas Day, 28th December 2009, New Years Day and 04th January 2010.
- Tiree**
Waste collections as normal
- Civic Amenities and Recycling Site**
Closed from 2pm on Thursday 24th December 2009 until Tuesday 29 December 2009 also from 2pm on 31 December 2009 until Tuesday 5 January 2010
- Coll**
Waste collections as normal (Subject to ferry timetables)
- Colonsay**
Collections will be weekly during Christmas and New Year weeks. (Subject to ferry timetables)
- Lismore**
Collections as normal
- BEREAVEMENT SERVICE**
24, 28 31 December 2009 and 4th January 2010 - Restricted Services
25 to 27 December 2009 and from 1 to 3 January 2010 - No Service
29, 30 December 2009 - Normal Service.
- Argyll and Bute Council wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

JAMIE MCGRIGOR MSP

Local Constituency Office:
61 Chalmers Street,
Ardriashaig, Argyll
PA30 8DX

Tel: 01546 606586
or e-mail:
Jamie.mcgrigor.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



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from your West Highlands & Islands Lib Dem Team



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A: 5 MacGregor's Court, Dingwall, IV15 9HS
A: 95 Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AL

T: 01349 862152 T: 01369 704840

Published and promoted by the Highland Liberal Democrats at 5 MacGregor's Court, Dingwall, IV15 9HS.

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CROFTERS COMMISSION
SGHADRAS NAN CROFTARAN

Ms Amanda Coates has applied to **decroft** part of the croft at The Marches, Kilmore & Kilbride extending to 0.20ha for the purpose of providing a site for a new dwellinghouse. Ref: 4.86.21453

If you are a crofter, shareholder or owner of a croft in the township you may submit comments on the proposal in writing or some other permanent form to the Crofters Commission, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ or info@crofterscommission.org.uk, 18 January 2010 by quoting the above case number. A copy of any valid comments will be served on the applicant.

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Beyond the nature of the role, the post holder would be expected to undertake over-time as required in order to accommodate the business needs of the Unit and, for the same reason, be willing to include themselves in the staff rota for 24 hour alarm cover.

In return the successful candidate will benefit from an attractive salary and benefits package. Assistance with accommodation may also be available.

If you would like to be considered for this role, please apply in writing to: Vicky Ferguson, Human Resources Manager, Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd, Business Resource Centre, Blar Mhor Industrial Estate, Fort William, PH33 7PT.

The closing date for the receipt of applications is **Friday 8th January 2010.**

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Bring your existing Subaru to us before 31st December to qualify for this incredible offer



Terms and conditions apply. Loyalty offer of £2000 (including VAT) on top of your trade in value applied to all Legacy and Outback models (excluding 2010 Model Year vehicles) registered in your name between 14th December and 31st December 2009.

Christmas and New Year opening times

24th December 8am till 12.30pm sales and service	30th December 8am till 6.00 pm sales and service
25th December Closed	31st December 8am till 3.00 pm sales and service
26th December Closed	1st January Closed
27th December 11am till 4pm sales only	2nd January Closed
28th December 9am till 4.30pm sales only	3rd January 11am till 4pm sales only
29th December 8am till 6.00pm sales and service	4th January 9am till 4.30pm sales only
	5th January Normal opening

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Web: www.munrosoban.co.uk

Drive SAFE this Christmas

Christmas is the time when you hear the following statements during discussions on Christmas jollifications:-
"I can take it - it doesn't affect me!"
"I know when I've had enough!"
"I know when to stop!"
"Six pints? No problem, I can handle it!"
"I think drivers who drink should be banned for ever, but three or four pints isn't really drinking is it?"
"I'm fine, I had a pint of milk before I started drinking, and a vitamin C tablet! And I shall have some black coffee before I get back in the car!"
"It doesn't matter how much you drink, if you've had something to eat it won't affect you!"
The sad thing is, most of these statements are untrue but all too many well-meaning folk genuinely believe that alcohol has no effect on their ability to control a motor vehicle. That they are still regularly trotted out and quite genuinely believed only serves to demonstrate that, in spite of a great deal of publicity, people still don't fully comprehend the effect on their brains of even a small amount of booze.
Alcohol works on the brain in two ways. First and contrary to popular conception, alcohol is a powerful depressant. It slows down brain action rendering the drinker less alert. Its other effect is to produce a feeling of euphoric confidence, false confidence in fact. As you drink you slow down, imperceptibly at first but sufficiently after just one unit of alcohol to be recordable on special instrumentation. This affects your reflexes which don't react as fast as they should as a result. Unfortunately with the accompanying euphoric confidence you don't realise your short comings. As a result your judgement becomes clouded, you don't recognise danger signs, you are more likely to take chances but less able to react fast enough to deal with emergencies which, let's face it, can occur very fast when you are at the wheel of a car. It is a highly dangerous position to be in for driver, passengers and all other road users.
Now it is important to remember, this is not a matter of theory or supposition. It is all measurable fact and if you only have twice the legal limit of alcohol in your blood, you are at least thirty (30) times more likely to have an accident.
Another sad fact is, there is no absolute minimum amount that will allow you to drive safely. It all depends on your state of health, the time of year, any medication you may be on, how well and what you have eaten in the previous twenty-four hours, your weight, your mental state - stress can enhance the effect of alcohol, and for females, the stage of their menstrual cycle. Indeed because of the biological difference between males and females, females cannot deal with alcohol as well as males can, so already they will require less to incapacitate them. One day a half pint of ordinary bitter can render you a dangerous driver, the next it will not affect you at all. And there's no way of knowing what state you are in. Nor can you rely on milk, vitamin C or black coffee to help you out. They have no affect whatsoever on your blood alcohol level. Black coffee in fact, will make things worse. The recommended maximum units of alcohol to be consumed in one week is 14 for women and 21 for men. It has been suggested by some authorities that 21 for women and 28 for men is acceptable but there is no absolute proof. An average glass of wine, half a pint of ordinary bitter or a standard measure of spirits each equal one unit. Because of the above however, these do not equate to the legal driving limit. Remember too that it takes one hour for your liver to process one unit of alcohol, so if you have had a skinful the night before, don't drive the next morning unless you are very sure your blood is quite clear of alcohol. Many an unfortunate driver has been caught and tested positive by the police the morning after a boozing session the night before.
This Christmas, if you want to drink, don't drive. Make other arrangements for your transport needs. Make sure this Christmas is one you remember for its happy times; not for being the one on which you gained a criminal record and someone else lost life or limb because you were driving under the influence of drink.

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new car index

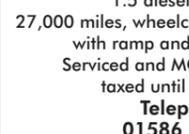
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PERSONALS

William Theo Peel



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Happy 60th Birthday Angus Cumming from all the family.



Happy 21st Birthday Drew 29/12/2009



Love all the family (KEEP ROCKIN!)

'In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God"'

YOU ARE KNOWN UNTO GOD!

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Angus MacNeill would like to thank the following people during his recent stay in hospital. Dr Douglas, Nurse Townend at Bunnisan Surgery. The Doctor's and Nurse's at the Golden Jubilee and Ward B in Oban Hospital. The Royal Navy Helicopter crew, coastguard, fire service and ambulance crews from Mull and Oban. And not forgetting the many telephone calls, cards and visitors.

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Christmas Greetings From our readers

SEASONS GREETINGS

Sorry no time to do cards this year to all our drivers and passengers have a Merry Christmas. From Margaret and Paul at North Argyll Volunteer Car Scheme.

SEASONS GREETINGS

For Mairi MacEachen the Greatest Gran in Argyll Have a Merry Christmas and a Good New Year Love from Shaun, Donna and Calum.

SEASONS GREETINGS

Bessie Hood would like to wish all her friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Merry Christmas

COWAN - Jean will not be sending cards this year but would like to wish friends, relatives and neighbours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 6 Edendonich, Dalmailly.

SEASONS GREETINGS

Archie Simpson 13 Dunmar Court wishes all relatives, friends and neighbours old and new a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Merry Christmas

Seasons Greetings to all friends and good health in 2010. Jean MacGillivray Lynn Court

Betty MacEachen, Gowrie Villa.

Oban wishing all family, friends and neighbours a Happy Christmas and a good New Year.

SEASONS GREETINGS

Mrs Mamie Campbell would like to wish all her friends and neighbours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 27 Glencruitten Drive Oban

Morag MacLellan, Angus Terrace.

I will not be sending Christmas Cards this year, but wish family, neighbours and friends a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2010.

Mary and Stewart MacKenzie, Benderloch

We will not be sending Christmas cards this year, opting to give a donation to Macmillan Cancer Care instead.

We wish family and friends a Merry Christmas and a health and happy New Year.

Thank you for all your kindness and support during 2009

Merry Christmas

Marek and Willie Madej wish all their friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Oban Times PERSONALS

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BUCHANAN - Jessie, John and family of the late Nan Buchanan wish to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for all cards, visits, telephone calls and flowers received following Nan's death. Sincere thanks to Rev. Walter Ritchie for his comforting words, Hamish Hoey for caring and efficient funeral arrangements and Tigh na Truish Hotel for catering. Special thanks to doctors and all staff of Ward C at the Oban Hospital and to the doctors, nurses and home helps at Easdale Surgery. Finally thanks to everyone who came to pay their respects at the church and graveside. £280.24 was collected for the Lorn and Islands Hospital, thanks to all who donated.

DUNCAN - Ian and Anne would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the kind expressions of sympathy extended to them following their recent sad bereavement. Sincere thanks to the Rev David Hamilton and Rev Fraser Stewart for their comforting services and to D Chisholm & Sons for their professional handling of the funeral arrangements. Finally, thanks to all those who paid their last respects at the service in Inverness Crematorium and at Kinlochleven Parish Church and who donated so generously towards the Highland Heart Nurse Appeal/Leukaemia Research Fund.

IN MEMORIAM
BLACK - Treasured memories of our dear parents Ethel and Alex. Mum died December 23, 1994 Dad on March 8, 2005. For those we have loved But see no longer Let light perpetual Shine upon them. - Henry, Lily, Jim and families.

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of my dear wife, Liz who died so suddenly on December 26, 1998. Quietly remembered always. - Cammie, Fort William.

CAMPBELL - Remembering Liz, who died so suddenly on December 26, 1998. Always in my thoughts Love Simmo x.

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of Margaret, who passed away December 23, 2008, beloved wife and mother. Loved and missed everyday. - Ian, Maree and Gary.

CAMPBELL - Loving memories of Margaret, died December 23, 2008. - Beloved sister, Cath and beloved sister-in-law Margaret and families.

ELDER - Special memories of a much loved dad, Donald, died December 29, 1996. Forever in our thoughts. - Bessie and Alda.

GRANT - In loving memory of my dear wife, Morag, who died on December 25, 1999. Sadly missed in every way. Quietly remembered everyday. Our Lady of the Isles pray for her.

KENNEDY - Suddenly but peacefully at home on Wednesday, December 16, 2009, after a long illness patiently borne, Chrissie Kennedy, beloved wife of Archie, loving mum of John and dear mother-in-law of Catriona. Much loved and missed by all family and friends. Interred at St. John's, Ballachulish on December 19, 2009.

MACARTHUR - Peacefully at Tigh-a-Rudha, Isle of Tiree on Friday, December 18, 2009. Alexandra (Alix) (née MacNeill) in her 87th year beloved wife of the late Archie and devoted mother, nana and great-nana. Sorely missed.

MORRISON - Peacefully at her home, 'Carnoch', Croft Road, Oban, on December 15, 2009 in her 89th year, Mary Ann, (née Morrison), beloved wife of the Captain Norman Morrison MBE and much loved mother of Margaret, Angus and Derek, adored grandmother and great-grandmother.

SUTHERLAND - Suddenly but peacefully surrounded by his family at Stirling Royal Infirmary on Thursday, December 17, 2009 David Sutherland of Fingal Road, Killin. Dear father to Yvonne also a dear brother to Helen and Joan also beloved uncle to the family. Funeral service on December 24, 2009 at Ardour Parish Church at 12noon, thereafter to Church Cemetery to which all friends are respectfully invited, family flowers only please donations if desired to Ardour Church and Killin Nursing Association.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
BAIN - The family of the late Jessie Bain would like to thank all medical staff, especially Dunaros, Billy McClymont for all funeral arrangements, Mishnish Hotel and Douglas MacNeillage for his support and kind words. Thanks to all who donated for Glen Iosal. (£296)

METAGGART - Precious and loving memory of my beloved husband, dad and grandpa John who died December 25, 2005. You always had a smile to share. Time to give time to care. A loving nature kind and true. These are the memories we have off you. - Forever in our thoughts, Mary, Jan, Philina, Christina and grandchildren x.

MILLER - In loving memory of Christine, a dear friend who died on December 24, 2007. - Jessie and Mary.

MUNN - In loving memory of Mary Anne, a loving mum, mother-in-law and granny, who passed away on December 28, 2008. We never knew that morning. Just what the day would bring. A heart of gold stopped beating. We couldn't do a thing. We never got to say goodbye. Perhaps it's just as well. For how could we have said farewell. To the one we loved so well - Neil and Mairi-Anne. Remembering you today granny. We miss you. - Kieran, Kyle and Ryan xxx.

STEWART - In loving memory of Jessie, wife and mother who passed away on December 23, 2007. A loving smile, a lovely face. A loving wife we can't replace. An empty space no one can fill. We miss you Jessie we always will. Life is not the same without you. Always in our hearts. - Husband and daughter, Charlie and Angelina, Dunfermline.

WATSON - In loving memory of a much loved mum and dad, David (Davie) Watson, who passed away on December 24, 2006 and Elizabeth (Betty) Watson, who passed away on December 25, 2008. Both loved and missed everyday. From Evelyn, Billy and family, home and away.

WATSON - In loving memory of Kenny, a dear son, father and brother who died so suddenly on December 26, 2005. Loving you and missing you always. Till we meet again. - Ma and Jordan.

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Christmas message from Cardinal

IN THE course of the past 12 months Scotland has celebrated a Year of Homecoming culminating in a wide variety of celebrations on St Andrew's Day. The homecoming year has seen ex-patriot Scots and many thousands of members of the Scottish Diaspora come home. Cardinal Keith O'Brien, leader of the Catholic Church in Scotland said: 'It is my hope that now and in the years to come, we here in Scotland will experience our own homecoming in which Scots come home to their faith and rediscover the Christian convictions upon which our nation was built and which the generations who came before us upheld. 'I hope 2010 will see a return home to Christian values and beliefs in our country. To those Christians who have left their church and lapsed from their faith I say - make 2010 the year to rediscover the eternal truths of the Christian message. 'To those of no faith I urge you to make this coming year the one in which you discover what the Christian message says and how it is relevant to your life. 'To our fellow Scots of other faiths, I hope you will take time in the course of 2010 to learn something of the Christian faith which has so shaped the society in which you now live. Ultimately, I wish everyone in our country a very peaceful and happy Christmas and a successful New Year.'

CHARITY DONATIONS
ECCLESIASTICAL NOTICES
SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION
Thursday 24 December 2009 Christmas Eve
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Crib Service "Let's go to Bethlehem".....15:30
Midnight Eucharist.....23:15
The Provost
Friday 25 December 2009 Christmas Day
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Said Eucharist.....09:30
Family Eucharist.....11:00
St James, Ardbrecknish, Cladich
Service of Lessons and Carols.....11:00
St Columba, Gruline, Mull
Holy Eucharist.....11:00
Sunday 27 December 2009 Christmas 1
St John's Cathedral, Oban
Holy Communion.....08:00
Choral Mattins.....10:15
Parish Eucharist.....11:30
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St Columba, Gruline, Mull
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Holy Eucharist.....11:00
St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona
Holy Eucharist.....10:00

LORN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Christmas Day 25th December
The Well
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10:30am
All Welcome
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www.lorncf.org.uk
ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN
Campbell Street Church
Sunday 27th December 2009
11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.
Phone-In 'Worship Link' available
Rev. Archie McPhail
MA, MTh
(01631) 567076
All welcome

Thought for the week
What's it all about?

AFTER all the busyness, preparations and waiting, Christmas is here again and we might find ourselves wondering 'what is it all about?' - 'What are we celebrating?'

Beyond all the trimmings, the commercialism and the stylised nativity scenes we might look through the window of history into the Roman occupation of Palestine two thousand years ago and ponder the old haunting story of a baby born in bleak poverty to a travelling couple who struggle to find accommodation in a busy town.

The baby is welcomed and rejoiced over, being recognised as a special person through signs of angels and star given to poor social outcasts and to foreign visionaries who bring

priceless gifts for the child. In order to escape the violent infant killings ordered by the enraged local ruler, the family become refugees in a neighbouring country before safely returning to their homeland.

Yet there is another dimension to this story. This is a heaven and earth event proclaimed by hosts of angels; an event of cosmic significance, and it is for all people.

In this Bethlehem moment, boundless God enters the confines of human life and history. This is God loving the world so much that he gives his son Jesus, his life, to dwell within humankind in a humble and vulnerable way, to be amongst people wherever they might be. He became one of us, to draw us into his family,

to enable us to belong to him and receive his real life. Jesus lived and talked the Kingdom of God, a new way of being, and demonstrated how to live in love for him, for one another and all people. He is God's gift for each of us.

The old carol puts it like this: 'How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given, So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.'

The risk and mystery of God's love in action takes us beyond the stable scene, beyond ourselves, to the 'realms of glory' from where it originates. We can celebrate because 'Love came down at Christmas', 'Love divine was born at Christmas.'

A name given to Jesus is

Immanuel - God with us - so confirming the reason for celebration; for joy and hope. God comes to be with us, beside us, right into the ups and downs, doubts, hurt and mess of our lives and our society to bring his perspective and lifestyle, his forgiveness, companionship and encouragement, to be with us for ever.

We can know that in the Bethlehem babe is God's everlasting light given to dispel our darkness. We can celebrate with wonder and hope through the words of that familiar carol, so apt for Christmas Eve - 'the hopes and fears of all the world do rest on thee tonight.'

May this be a Christmas gift of truth and peace for you.

Carol Leech

Message of heartfelt thanks from refugees



Pipers Andrew and Camy Scott provided the entertainment at a special ceilidh in Oban.

'THANKS for opening your hearts to us' - that was the festive message from a group of refugees from around the world who visited Oban earlier this year.

The 25-strong party included people from some of the most war-torn and poverty-stricken countries in the world including Eritrea, Columbia, Palestine, Kosovo, Iran and Syria.

The group, which included five children under the age of five, visited Oban in the late autumn and, at this time of year, wanted to repeat their thanks to the people of the town for their warmth and generosity.

Arrangements for the visit were co-ordinated by Oban couple, Graeme and Heather Pagan, and the costs involved were met by generous donations from 26 benefactors in the area and the generosity of Oban businesses Piazza, Light of India, Caledonian MacBrayne, Tesco, Atlantis Leisure and the Sea Life Centre.

Graeme Pagan said that the group wanted to thank the 'good people of Oban for their kindness and hospitality and for opening their hearts to us'.

The group, from Glasgow, was organised by Rema Sherifi who was herself a Kosovan refugee evacuated from camps in Macedonia and Albania in 1999.

Since coming to Glasgow, Rema has worked passionately on behalf of a huge number of people from different countries and was this year nominated for the Scottish Woman of The Year award.

Graeme Pagan said: 'Our visitors very much enjoyed their visit during which they had trips to Mull and Lismore.

'One of the highlights of the weekend was the ceilidh in St John's Church Hall in Oban which brought together a number of different cultures in dance, song and poetry.

'After what some of our visitors have been through it was humbling to meet them here, where most of us have so much, and to share with them the beauties of this wonderful place which, shame to say, we sometimes take for granted.'

Obituary
Canon Charles McAlester Copland
Missionary, churchman and noted sportsman

CHARLES McAlester Copland died peacefully in Whitehills Hospital, Forfar, on the 12th December 2009, just months before his 100th birthday.

He had been in the ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church for 75 years, and at the time of his death was the oldest priest in the Church.

His father, Alexander Copland, spent 50 years in the Ministry, the last 22 of them as Rector of St. Johns Church in Forfar.

His mother, Violet Williamson, was the daughter of the Chieftain of the Name and Arms of McAlester.

Copland was educated at Denstone College where he was Captain of School and of Rugby. From there he went up to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, graduating with honours in History and Theology in 1933. At Cambridge, he continued his sporting prowess, gaining a half-blue for shooting, the captaincy of College Athletics and playing in both College Fifteen and the London Scottish B Team.

On leaving Cambridge, he trained for the ministry at Cuddesdon College, Oxford, before beginning a curacy at Peterborough Parish Church in 1934.

In 1938 he offered himself for service overseas and went out to serve in the Scottish Episcopal Church Mission at Chanda, south of Nagpur in India. He remained there for 15 years, latterly as Head of the Mission.

Home on furlough in 1945, he married Wendy Williamson, beginning a partnership in ministry that bore much fruit.

In 2003 a man who had been brought up in Chanda wrote: 'Chanda Mission is synonymous with Canon Charles Copland. It is almost 50 years since he left the Mission but he had so dedicated his life to the people that his service rings loud and clear to this day.'

Fortunately, Copland recorded the history of the Mission and, in a later book, an account of life in Chanda.

Returning from Chanda he became successively Rector of St Mary's, Arbroath and then, for twenty years, Provost of St John's Cathedral, Oban. He combined that post with that of Dean of Argyll and The Isles, retiring from full-time ministry in 1979.

He had the unusual distinction of having been appointed as a Canon in three Anglican dioceses - of All Saints' Cathedral, Nagpur; of St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee and of St John's Cathedral, Oban.

Charles Copland was an unashamed traditionalist - a committed member of the Church Gaelic Society, of Forward in Faith and of the Scottish Prayer Book Society. He made no secret of his disapproval of some developments in Church and in modern Society. He frequently made



Scotland, two of them gold. When he finally gave up competition shooting, he continued as a valued coach and gave much encouragement to his fellow enthusiasts. It was a skill that had stood him in good practical stead in India.

He remained remarkably fit almost to the end, taking part in the annual charity swim in Kirriemuir even in his nineties.

The Coplands retired from Oban in 1979, firstly to Comrie and then for the last fourteen years to Kirriemuir, where he was a familiar figure in his McAlester kilt and, occasionally, wearing the red stockings that he had worn when playing rugby 80 years before.

No-one will ever forget his annual wine-and-cheese parties, even if his occasional home-brewed vintage bordered on the lethal. He and Wendy (who predeceased him in 2001) were always welcoming and hospitable.

Charles Copland leaves two daughters, Frances and Jane, and two grandchildren, Robbie and Helen. He was sui generis.

NEWS DESK Direct
Tel: 01631 568060

Association call for more directors

THE CAMANACHD Association want to attract directors to the board of the sport who represent the wide geographical area that shinty is played.

Currently, Glasgow (2), Lochaber (2), Inverness, Oban and Mid Argyll are represented but the association is encouraging clubs which are not represented to give serious thought to nominating a suitable candidate for the two positions which are currently available.

Each director as a member of the board will have collective responsibility for the strategic direction of the association and the development of the game.

Individual directors will have a responsibility for policy formulation of an aspect of shinty, set in the association's strategic framework by chairing a committee of four or five people, supported by professional staff.

Shinty

Board meetings occur four or five times a year and committees meet three or four times over the same period. Meetings are held in locations and at times convenient for members.

The board are anxious to encourage people with energy, ideas and experience of the management of shinty at grassroots level to come forward and join the board at an exciting time in the development of the sport.

Members

Prospective board members do not need to currently be members of clubs. A spokesman for the Camanachd Association said that any individual can express an interest in becoming a director and approach a serving director to nominate them. Further details of the process of becoming a director are available from Bruce Crawford on 01463 715931.



Gathering gloom over the condition of An Aird, Fort William may result in the home club searching for a temporary venue.

Macaulay Cup gains new sponsor

Shinty

INVESTMENT management company Artemis has been announced as the new sponsor of the Oban based Macaulay Camanachd Association.

The association said the three-year deal meant they would be able to continue the high standards they have for the Macaulay Cup and the National Macaulay Sixes Tournament for primary schools.

Association secretary David Hamilton said: 'We are delighted to work with Artemis and will be meeting with them in the new year to promote the school sixes tournament as well as the Macaulay Cup competition.'

London and Edinburgh-based Artemis was established in 1997 by four partners specialising in investments for retail investors and manages assets of nearly £10 billion.

Artemis is also involved with Ocean Racing, The Great Kindochit Quadrathlon, the Highland 100 Bike Challenge and Kyles Athletic Shinty Club.

Cup draw

Meanwhile, the draw for the first two rounds of the Macaulay Cup has been made:

Round 1:

Lovat v Skye, Glenurquhart v Fort William Kilmallie v Kingussie Lochaber v Newtonmore Bute v Kilmory Kyles v Oban Camanachd Oban Celtic v Inveraray GMA v Glenorchy

Round 2:

Lochaber or Newtonmore v Kilmallie or Kingussie, Lovat or Skye v Glenurquhart or Fort William, Oban Celtic or Inveraray v Glasgow Mid Argyll or Glenorchy, Kyles Athletic v Oban Camanachd v Bute v Kilmory.

Oban and Islay honours even

Chess

OBAN and Portnahaven chess clubs met for a rematch following the Islay side's victory in the first encounter.

For this second match, Oban were able to summon a stronger team and managed to edge the match by four games to two, with one table reaching stalemate.

Honours are now even but both clubs are keen to play a deciding match.

Lochaber winners



Lochaber Bowling Club held its annual presentation of trophies in the BA Social Club recently.

Winners and runners-up: Ladies Championship – A Boyle, runner-up A Thain; Westland – G Hamilton, runner-up W Thain; Two Bowl A Robinson, runner-up W Gibbons; Pairs – W Hutchison and I Gregor, runner-up A and Judith Robinson; MacDonald Cup – A Haggart, runner-up A Robinson; Sutherland Cup – I Haggart, runner-up A Robinson; Gents Championship – I Gregor, runner-up I Haggart; Club Championship – I Haggart, runner-up F Sweeney; Best Improver – Tina Aberley.

Annual swimming gala success

OVER 100 swimmers took part in this year's Oban Otters annual gala ranging in ages from six to 14 year olds.

The main gala featured swimmers competing for championship trophies with ten gala records broken.

Trophy winners:

MacLean Cup: Evie Workman
MacKay Cup: Hugo Stahl
Spence Shield: Megan Keys
Hutchison Cup: Thomas Lines
Achnacreebeg Trophy: Rebekah MacPherson

Swimming

Larchfield Trophy: Calum McBurnie
Columba Hotel Trophy: Fiona McLean
Tyndrum Cup: Clare MacKinnon
Intermediate Shield: Isla Duncan
Iona Shop Cup: Connor MacNeil
Gateway Cup: Abigail Evans
Forteth Cup: Shannon Reynolds
Hunter Cup: Patrick MacKinnon & Alasdair Aitken
Beaver Timber Shield: Shannon Reynolds
Beaver Timber Shield: Alasdair Aitken
Winners of the small pool gala were Aiden McPhee, Jamie Turner and Angus Scott.

Fort William face uncertainty over new shinty season ahead

Kingussie aim to purchase the Dell before the summer

CAMANACHD Cup winners Fort William face deepening uncertainty over where they are to play shinty next season with pitch works planned for their deteriorating An Aird park.

For years the club has been meeting with owners Highland Council in a bid to restore the famous park below Ben Nevis to its previous best.

An Aird is widely regarded as one of the elite arenas in shinty and regularly hosts internationals and Camanachd Cup finals.

However, the poor condition of the playing surface has been the subject of widespread consternation for some time.

Matters were not helped last year when drunken youths broke into the ground and left considerable damage to seats in the grandstand.

£120,000 improvements Now, though, Highland Council is set to undertake essential drainage works at the ground, with the help of 50 per cent funding from SportsScotland.

The improvement scheme, costing an estimated £120,000 has been met with relief at Fort William Shinty

Club - but now throws up thorny issues for new boss Peter MacIntyre and his players.

It was initially thought the work would mean the club flitting to the nearby Black Parks for a year.

'Up in the air'

Now, though, this could be delayed as Lochaber Highland Games are scheduled for An Aird on the final Saturday in July, possibly stalling the work.

Club officials discussed the issue at their Annual General Meeting last Thursday.

They admitted there was little clarification at this stage of where they would be playing Premier League matches next term.

'Initially we thought we would be relocating to the Black Parks all season but that is perhaps not the case now,' confirmed club chairman, Richard Gall.

'It is possible that no work will be done until after the Highland Games. If this proves to be the case, we might be able to play as many home games at the beginning of the season,

then move after July. It is all basically up in the air at the moment.'

Whatever situation prevails, the long overdue drainage work at An Aird will hit Fort William Shinty Club financially.

The club has made revenue in the past from hosting cup finals and also receives significant funds from bar takings at their clubhouse - all of which will be affected.

There is also the issue of the Black Parks and its ability to absorb significant rainfall.

'The drainage is not great but it would not take too much to get it right,' said Gall.

'Despite the situation, we are just relieved something is being done at An Aird because basically we could not carry on in the condition it was in.'

Synthetic park

One further issue bubbling in the background is the possibility of a new third generation synthetic park being laid shortly in Lochaber.

Fort William hope to have

their interests included in any plan for such a development, although they are not yet fully convinced of the merits of artificial turf for shinty.

'We aim to have a game in the New Year at a new 3G park which has been laid at Kinlochleven,' said Gall.

'We are not entirely sure shinty is ready for this yet so we would want to find out ourselves.'

While the Camanachd Cup winners broach grounds for concern, The Oban Times has learned 2009 Premier Division champions Kingussie are in negotiations with Dochfour Estate to purchase their home ground of the Dell.

The Badenoch outfit attempted to buy the park for £10,000 several years ago but the deal was never concluded despite a loose 'agreement' with the former owner, Lord Burton.

It is understood the matter has now been revived, with Kingussie currently shouldering an annual rental fee for the park.

Kingussie previously enjoyed the privilege of

rent-free use of the field for a century before a toll was levied. Talks are currently ongoing between the parties with club officials hoping for a positive outcome by summer 2010.

The deal would include the park and existing car park land which borders the field on both sides.

It is understood a fee double the previous figure would allow talks to progress. Kingussie officials want to improve access to the ground and extend hard-standing areas around the park.

There are no plans, however, to construct a club house at the ground, largely due to the flooding threat from the nearby River Spey.

Should Kingussie succeed in their bid, they would join neighbours Newtonmore as one of the few clubs in Scotland to own their own facility.

The progressive Badenoch clubs have both campaigned resolutely for better grounds and playing surfaces within the sport.

The Dell and the Eilan are universally regarded as two of the best playing surfaces in the game.

Week 2 of 2

WIN £700

To allow for the Christmas Holidays, Spot the Ball will run for 2 weeks - entries must be in by 12noon on Monday 28th December

Spot the SHINTY BALL Competition

All you have to do

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1.

If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. Prizes will be shared between those submitting correct entries.

If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to reach "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by 12noon on Monday 28 December. 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 _____

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Fort facing Christmas freeze-out

Winning Momentum could be lost as icy weather takes a grip on Highlands

FORT WILLIAM FC are facing a fixture wipeout until 2010 as the big freeze strengthens its grip on the Highlands.

Fort's last two home fixtures against Lossiemouth on December 12 and Deveronvale last Saturday fell victim to the frost - and with snow and ice now affecting the entire region away games are also looking decidedly dodgy.

The Lochaber side are due to play Forres mechanics on Sunday in their last game before the New Year, but after a week of temperatures as low as -10C the Forres

Football
By STEPHEN NORRIS
pitch is as hard as iron and currently lying under a blanket of snow.

Frustration
FortWilliamFC committee man John Corbett expressed his frustration this week that the team has been unable to reap the benefits from their last game, a thrilling 2-1 home win over Strathspey Thistle.

The team are desperate to keep the momentum going after the win as they seek to move up the league and

take advantage of their good form.

Mr Corbett reckons summer football could be back on the Highland League agenda as the fixture backlog grows - but reckons Fort's annual battle to dodge the winter weather bullet will only be won when Claggan Park has a new playing surface.

Mr Corbett told the Oban Times this week: 'We need an all-weather pitch, that's the only thing that will alleviate our problems.'

'At the moment I don't see any problems with it and I can't see the Highland League giving us a problem over it either.'

'Under the new licensing regulations the 'G3' pitch is perfectly compatible with the rules.'

'It's the most up to date of these artificial pitches and is FIFA approved - but of course it all comes down to money.'

Away
'With the way the weather is just now, we won't get away games either.'

Asked how he viewed the prospect of Fort William not kicking a ball until New Year, he said: 'I would hate to think that, but it's not just us.'

'The league will have to make some kind of decision along the line.'



Santas John O'Neil and Jim Hamilton get ready for the Christmas handicap on Sunday.

Santa arrives at the double

LOCHABER Athletic Club's Christmas Handicap Run from Claggan Park took place in truly seasonal conditions on Sunday.

Two fit-looking Santas - looking suspiciously like Lochaber AC stalwarts John O'Neil and Jim Hamilton - were among the field.

Athletics

First male to cross the line was Richie Collins with an overall placing of seventh after time reconciliation followed by overall second lady Nix Forster.

Fastest runner of the day was John Hepburn in

Athletics

17.04, then came the team Blackhall assault with the only other runner to crack the 18 minute barrier being junior Innes Blackhall in a fantastic 17.57 and second place overall. Innes was closely followed

by the first lady, his mum Amanda, in 18.27.

LAC's Damian Forster said: 'Well done to all who took part and many thanks to all the helpers.'

The next race is Cruim Leachan on Boxing Day with the Aonach Mor uphill on New Year's Day.

Boxers are in the medals at championship

Boxing

BOXERS from Lochaber Phoenix travelled to Fife recently to compete in the Scottish Youth Novice championships and produced fine performances to return with two silvers and a bronze medal.

This was the first time the club had sent boxers to this event and all three youngsters showed great potential for the future.

Fifteen year old Denver Small reached the final of his 50kg category with a hard fought victory over the strong Gary Macquire from Bellahouston ABC.

Competitive

His final opponent was old adversary Daniel Wicksted of Craigmillar ABC and like every bout between these two it was very tight and highly enjoyable to watch. Alas a strong finish was not enough as Wicksted's good earlier work earned him the title.

Twelve year-old Chris Bradley continues to show great improvement and this showed to great effect in his 38kg semi-final win against Greg Nailen of Forgewood ABC.

Bradley's opponent for the final was another former opponent in Joe Murray of Craigmillar ABC.

James Aitchison, also 12, produced an excellent performance in his 40kg class semi against the eventual winner of the competition, Lee Dale.

Oban's Ruari makes Scotland national squad

Football

OBAN youngster Ruari Jaspersen, currently playing with Erskine YFC, has made the Scottish Amateur Youth Football Association national squad at under 15 level.

Ruari is in the 22-man squad who will take on a couple of pre-youth teams in the new year, one of which is Rangers.

The squad meets once a month at the National Football Centre in Torvglen and Ruari is one of four lads from the West Region.

Islay man is Scottish champ

Motorsport

ROSS Marshall from Gleneedale on Islay has been crowned Scottish Legend Cars champion for 2009.

Legend cars are designed primarily to promote exciting racing and to keep costs down.

The bodyshells are replicas of American cars from the 1930s and 1940s, powered by motorcycle engines.

The cars all run to the same specification, with the only variable being the body style.

Ross is now aiming for the British championships in 2010.

League standings

Pool

Oban Pool League	P	Pts
Loch B	7	12
Lochnell	8	12
Markie Dans	7	10
Loch	8	10
Claredon	8	10
Lancaster	8	10
Cellar Bar	8	8
Markie Dans B	8	8
Kelvindale	8	6
Gluepot	8	4
Claredon B	8	2

Tides

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday, December 24, 2009 are listed below with differences for major ports listed beneath.

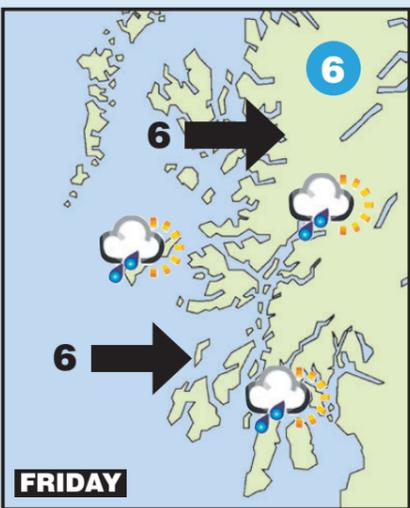
All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	04.15 1.8 10.21 3.4 17.03 2.0 22.24 3.1	
Fri	05.03 1.9 11.17 3.3 18.01 2.0 23.22 3.0	
Sat	06.03 2.0 12.39 3.2 19.04 1.9 *** **	
Sun	00.44 3.0 07.12 1.9 14.09 3.3 20.05 1.8	
Mon	02.19 3.1 08.23 1.8 15.13 3.5 21.03 1.6	
Tues	03.22 3.3 09.32 1.6 16.04 3.6 21.56 1.3	
Wed	04.13 3.6 10.33 1.3 16.49 3.8 22.45 1.0	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrihaig	-5.35	Lochboisdale	+0.30
Campbeltown	-5.30	Mallaig	+0.25
Crinan	-0.47	Portree	+0.55
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Tobermory	+0.16
		Dover	+5.30

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the weather

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Christmas Eve

Thursday will be mainly cloudy with sunny intervals. Winds light to moderate west to south-westerly. Temperatures -3°C to 5°C

Christmas Day

Again cloudy with sunny intervals throughout the day. Winds moderate westerly. Temperatures -1°C to 7°C.

Weekend Outlook

A mixture of cloudy and bright spells. Winds moderate west to south-westerly.

Temperatures -1°C to 7°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate

Oban to Coll/Tiree - As above

Kennacraig to Islay - As above

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Island sailing club hold first prizegiving

Sailing

COLL Sailing Club held its first ever prizegiving recently after the island's sailing club held its first ever regatta.

The winners were decided at the island club's first sailing regatta held in September.

The trophies were donated by local businesses the Coll Hotel, Henderson Shellfish, Island Stores, Island Café and Arinagour Primary with engraving donated by Barbara Payne.

Design

The medals were based on a design by Luisaidh Henderson with the

prizegiving event held in the Island Café on Coll.

Regatta winners 2009

Coll Hotel Trophy for single-handed secondary school pupils

1 Gregor Cook
2 Phoebe Smith
3 Josh Bastow

Island Café Trophy for single-handed primary school pupils

1 Ella Smalley
2 Ross Cook
3 Alex Wainwright

Island Stores Trophy

1 Gregor Cook/Lewis McAloon

2 Francis Bastow/Naimh Brady

3 Phoebe Smith/Ciara Brady

Arinagour Primary School Trophy for primary five, six

and seven pupils double-handed

1 Ella Smalley/Lexi Young

2 Poppy Young/Hazel Smith

3 Ross Cook/Cameron Wainwright

Henderson Shellfish Trophy

1 Kenneth MacIntyre

2 Olvin Smith 3 Aileen Cook



Pictured are some of the prizewinners from Coll Sailing Club's first regatta.

Saints sweep Broomhill away in cup replay

Football

Scottish Amateur Cup Fourth Round Replay
Broomhill 1 Oban Saints 2

IT WAS a happy Oban contingent that headed back up the A82 on Saturday with a narrow 2-1 win under their belts which now gives them a tough away tie against Falkirk in the last 64 of the competition.

However, the 2-1 scoreline doesn't tell the full story of the game. Apart from the opening ten minutes the visitors dominated for most of this hard fought encounter where no quarter was asked or given.

It was the home side who started the game in determined mood and deservedly took the lead in the sixth minute when some slack play in midfield allowed Gary Devlin to despatch a well placed shot to give the home team the lead. As it turned out this

was the only shot of any significance that Broomhill had on target all afternoon.

This was a typical Scottish Cup tie with plenty of meaty challenges going in but referee Jim Ferrick, who had a good game, never let it get out of control.

The visitors had a great chance to pull level in the 14th minute, but Hill keeper Terry Stinson made a great save with his legs to stop a Craig MacEwan effort hitting the back of the net.

The second half started with the Oban side in determined mood and they pushed forward at every opportunity.

Saints equalised in the 56th minute when Broomhill keeper Terry Stinson made a fine save, but the rebound fell kindly for Donald Campbell and the Saints midfielder wasted no time in drilling the ball into the back of the net to make the score 1-1.

Pressing

Broomhill seemed to be tiring as the game wore on and it was the Oban side who were doing most of the pressing.

Donald Campbell was unlucky not to make the score 2-1 when he broke through the middle, but his curling shot, which had beaten the keeper, hit the

post before being booted clear. With fifteen minutes remaining Saints deservedly took the lead when Asen Gaydardzhiev out on the left touchline cleverly beat the defender before sending over a great cross into the box for Allan MacKay who outjumped his marker to head the ball past Terry Stinson and into the net to make the score 2-1.

The home side had a claim for a penalty turned down by the referee when Gary Devlin broke into the box and took a rather theatrical tumble, after a tackle from Ross Graham, but thankfully for Saints the referee wasn't interested and

they managed to play out the final few minutes to gain a 2-1 win.

Manager Iain Jackson was delighted to get through to the fifth round of the competition. He said: 'Broomhill made us fight all the way, but the win was more comfortable than the scoreline suggests. Apart from the opening ten minutes I thought we dominated the match and fully deserved our victory. In fact I was disappointed that we had to come down here for a replay in the first place as we should have won the original game in Oban by three or four goals.'

The Saints squad will have a well earned festive break before preparing for their tough fifth round tie away to former finalists Falkirk on January 9.