

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Merry Christmas to all our readers

Taynuilt child looks forward to a Christmas without pain

Joshua's only wish

A YOUNG Taynuilt boy is looking forward to his first pain-free Christmas after coming through eight life saving operations to correct a congenital heart defect.

Joshua Reffin, who turns two early next year, is eagerly anticipating opening his presents from Santa with mum Charlotte and dad Brian after spending last Christmas hooked up to a gastric tube.

It wasn't an easy time for the family, with young Joshua set to go through a traumatic series of treatments that were as risky as the heart defect itself.

Thankfully, he's on the mend and the family will be able to relax and make the most of the festive period.

Charlotte said: 'Joshua has been doing really well since his last operation in June. He's as lively as ever.'

'This will be his first proper Christmas.'

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by STEVEN FLANAGAN
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he's asked Santa for some drawing things and some jigsaws - he's actually just finished drawing on the sofa with a silver pen, so I've been scrubbing that off!'

"This will be his first proper Christmas."

Mum Charlotte Reffin

Joshua has been seeing a speech therapist to help him eat, as the gastric tube he had to wear in his early months put him off swallowing food.

Thankfully, it seems to have worked - so will he be having turkey?

'He won't be having turkey'

because he doesn't like it. His favourite food is sausages - which I couldn't have imagined a few months ago. So for Christmas he'll be having lots of veg, which he likes, with some chipolatas.'

Unfortunately Joshua hasn't seen the back of the operating theatre after consultants confirmed further surgery is required.

Charlotte said: 'He will be going back for cardiac surgery, but not for another 18 months to two years.'

'There was always going to be that possibility, as when they did the last operation back in June, there was a fine line between taking too much muscle away from the heart or too little.'

'At the time, the doctors said to us that they perhaps could have removed more than they had, but didn't want to risk it.'

'It's been confirmed now that they need to do a bit more.'

'It's just a little bit though and they're happy with his progress.'



Joshua gets ready for Christmas with mum Charlotte. t52reffin

Oban's development road plan axed

PLANS for a development road in Oban have been shelved by Oban CHORD project board.

The much-heralded development road was seen as the jewel in the crown for opening up the town of Oban and giving better access to the southern area of the town.

The project was to be based on co-operation with builders who would develop

state-of-the-art housing along the as yet undeveloped area of the town.

No enthusiasm

But the cost of completing the job was becoming prohibitive for the council and there was no real enthusiasm amongst the construction community to undertake the task.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman confirmed: 'The Oban Project Board

and the CHORD Programme Management Board has agreed that the Oban Development Road should be re-phased, with town centre traffic management being pursued as the first phase.

Wider plans

'This decision was taken after discussion with partners and in light of the current economic environment.'

'This phase of the

development road will be considered in the context of wider plans for the Oban bay and harbour area that will be developed following consideration by the council executive in January.

'If approval is given, the council will then consult with local partners and the Oban community in the development of these plans to best use the CHORD monies.'

Fault blamed for Lochgilphead blaze

A FIRE has caused 'considerable' damage to one of Argyll College's buildings in Lochgilphead.

Two rooms at the college's hairdressing campus in the town's Lorne Street were damaged by the fire.

Davie Stewart, watch commander at Strathclyde Fire and Rescue's Lochgilphead station, said 'considerable damage' had been done. He added: 'The fire appears to have been caused by an electrical fault within the building.'

Councillors demand schools meeting

AN ALLIANCE of SNP, Independent and Argyll First councillors have signed a motion demanding a special meeting of Argyll and Bute Council in a bid to throw out school closure documents. SNP's Ron Simon said: 'The meeting will force a discussion that may lead to all the proposals being thrown out.'

Oban man found not guilty of fraud

AN OBAN man has been found not guilty of using his employer's business account to buy items without permission.

Mark Petrie, aged 27, of 32B Glencruitten Drive, Oban, denied committing fraud by buying power tools, running up a bill of £713. Defence agent Sandy Mitchell argued Petrie was never told not to use the account.

Man's body found in Oban house

POLICE in Oban have confirmed there were no suspicious circumstances after the body of a 50-year-old man was found at a house in the town's Glenfoot Terrace. Police have named the dead man as Donald MacKay, who had lived at the address where the discovery was made.

Council holds emergency talks into future of troubled Oban Airport

THE FUTURE of Oban Airport is hanging in the balance.

Owner Argyll and Bute Council has been holding emergency meetings to discuss the future of the airport, which operates scheduled flights between Oban and the islands.

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

Cuts to essential airport services such as fire cover, management and ancillary staff are being discussed and if council advisors get

their way, the airfield may be put up for sale.

Despite council officers wanting to keep control, it is understood they have been unequivocally told they should consider a different approach. One source, told *The Oban Times*, this includes looking at a 'new

management team with a different mind set'.

White elephant

Insiders claim any cuts or privatisation will bring an end to the airport.

One source described the airport as a 'white elephant', as a result of a falling number of flights, fewer passengers

and sky-high costs. Council budgets show that more than £600,000 is paid annually in management and staffing costs alone.

It is also understood moves are being made to cut the number of firefighters based at the airport.

A source close to the

airport said: 'Can you imagine what would happen if firefighters were not able to deal with an accident in time? This spells disaster for the council - they are putting people's lives at risk.'

'But,' argued another insider, 'nothing has changed.'

'The same flights are coming in with the same amount of passengers. This is cost cutting at its crudest. Money before people - it is a disgrace.'

Argyll and Bute Council did not respond before *The Oban Times* went to press.

Island drivers worst hit by increasing fuel prices

DRIVERS on the west coast are being hit hard in the pocket by rising petrol and diesel prices at the pumps, the AA has said.

The UK average for diesel has gone up 3.06p a litre between mid-November and mid-December and now costs an average 126.19p, according to the AA.

In Scotland, the average is 126.7p a litre.

However, prices on the islands are significantly more with diesel prices on the islands ranging from £1.53 per litre on

Coll to £1.34 per litre on Mull, while motorists are complaining that prices on the mainland seem to be going up overnight.

The average cost of filling a 50-litre petrol tank has increased from £54.26 to £61.07. A 50-litre tank of diesel has gone up in price from £54.93 to £63.10.

It is expected that fuel prices will rise further in January once increased fuel duties and the higher VAT rate come into play.

AA president Edmund King said it was a 'bleak mid-winter' for drivers.

BARRA residents endured a taste of what life could be like without an air service after both its planes were grounded following a freak accident.

Glasgow runway accident

While one of the two Twin Otter aircraft that service routes to Glasgow and Barra was undergoing its routine annual overhaul, the other was hit by a de-icing vehicle whilst parked at Glasgow Airport on Friday.

The damage to the plane was minor, however, and Loganair was hopeful of restoring the service as *The Oban Times* went to press.

A spokesperson said: 'Work to repair the affected Twin Otter aircraft has been completed by

Loganair's engineering team at Glasgow and it left the hangar on Monday.

'Before it can return to commercial service, the aircraft must undergo a test flight and the rules relating to such flights require that they are undertaken in daylight and clear visibility.'

'Freezing fog at Glasgow, which has led to disruption to a large number of flights, has meant that we have been

unable to achieve the daylight clear visibility the test requires.'

'We now expect that the test flight will take place on Tuesday morning.'

Road and ferry route

Meanwhile, passengers from Barra had to complete journeys by travelling to Benbecula by road and ferry, with no other plane able to use Barra's unique beach runway.

That might be a vision of things to come for the islanders, with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar currently considering whether or not to remove the Barra-Benbecula flight subsidy in an effort to save more than £200,000.

Plans to axe flight subsidy to be re-assessed - see page 2.

Barra left without air service after freak accident



Barra's unique beach runway.

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'We now expect that the test flight will take place on Tuesday morning.'

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GLEN CAMPAGNA RESTAURANT HOGMANAY AND NEW YEAR'S DAY DINNER

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Smoked Haddock Crème Brûlée Lightly Smoked Haddock bound with Cream Egg Yolk and Seasoning
Rose of Galia Melon served with a Mulled Wine Coulis and a Wild Berry Compote

Champagne Sorbet with a Kiwi Coulis

Roast Turkey Breast topped with Grilled Fancetta served with a Haggis and Red Onion Marmalade Stuffing and a Pan Roast Jus with a hint of Sherry

Pan-seared Argyll Venison encrusted between Herb Rösti Potatoes garnished with Pickled Red Cabbage and a Black Cherry Sauce

Baked Halibut set atop a Dill and Watercress Mash served with Roasted Fennel

finished with a Smoked Aran and Wholegrain Mustard Sauce

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Pupils learn all about life down on the farm

PUPILS from a Mull school have been discovering all about life on the farm.

Youngsters and staff from Ulva Primary walked half a mile to enjoy a tour round Laganulva Farm, run by the Mackay family.

Helen Mackay met the visitors, taking them to see the pigs and explaining how they prove a useful asset to the farm, turning over the ground and eating all the weeds.

Then it was into a trailer, towed by Iain Mackay's farm buggy, to feed the cows and sheep.

He explained how some of the cows were Highland and some of them had

been crossed with a Luing bull.

He also outlined how the dairy cattle used to be milked in dairies all over Mull. Next it was onto the sheep flock. The youngsters counted 48 in total and were told how young trees were fenced off to stop them being eaten by the sheep, as some of the woodland on the farm is being regenerated.

Other animals included chickens and ponies.

Finally, the pupils got a chance to sit on the farm's 57-year-old tractor.

This was the first of many visits planned so the youngsters can see life on the farm at different times of year.



Pupils from Ulva Primary School count the sheep on Iain and Helen Mackay's farm.

Isle split on plans for museum and car park

REPORT

by LOUISE LEE
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planners recommended that a discretionary meeting be held on the island to decide the fate of the proposal.

The scheme would entail demolishing and rebuilding a former machinery building.

He said: 'Without prejudice I see that one of the comments refers to the community buildings on the island. I understand there are two and both are already underused.'

Complaints included the

building being too large, poor design and a strain on the roads and ferry service.

Councillor Neil Mackay addressed one of the objections - that other facilities on the island were underused - and proposed increased use of the school by the community.

He said: 'Without prejudice I see that one of the comments refers to the community buildings on the island. I understand there are two and both are already underused.'

There were 134 objections to the plans from people on the island and from as far away as the Isle of Man, Florida and the Bahamas.

Complaints included the

Planners told Mr Mackay this was not a material condition and it was for the applicant to decide whether they believed they had a viable building or not.

There were 89 letters of support for the building. People felt the community needed a place to define its past and that the island needed an attraction for visitors.

Supporters also felt a museum could even secure the future of the island. They argued that the use

of the ferry might have a positive impact on the vital transport link.

Planner Richard Kerr said a hearing on the island was needed due to the difference in opinion over the structural state of the building and the huge public response'.

Councillor Mackay interjected: 'It seems we received more objections than the number of people who live on the island.'

'We will meet in one of the two halls they have already.'

Plans to axe Barra-Benbecula flight subsidy to be re-assessed

PLANS to cut the subsidy for Barra's air link to Benbecula to save £200,000 are to be re-assessed.

Last week's decision by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar means that all possible cost saving options will be evaluated in February next year instead, with the implications of each proposal detailed in full.

There will also be a full public consultation.

Chairman of the

transportation committee and Barra resident Donald Manford is far from confident the subsidy will be saved, but said he's pleased the council took 'the correct course of action'.

He said: 'The council has done its job. As a result of yesterday's decision, I am satisfied that there will now be an evaluation of what services can be looked at and what the implications of that would be.'

'There are still a lot more questions to be answered though.'

He re-emphasised the importance of the air link between the islands, describing it as 'absolutely vital'. He said: 'One of the most important aspects is the blood transfusion service at St Brendan's Hospital on Barra, which allows the elderly and terminally ill patients to be treated on the island.'

'I've also had a lot of letters from people who work offshore and travel from Barra to Benbecula to Inverness. This is a big worry for them.'

Mr Manford said he was still investigating how the original proposal came to light in the first place.

He said: 'I would have expected it to have been discussed, but it wasn't. It changed from a decision to identify where savings could be made to a proposal on how to save £200,000. That in itself is a fail accomplish.'

Energy award success

TIREE Renewable Energy Ltd (TREL) has received the Best Community Initiative Award at the Scottish Renewable Energy Awards. The award is given to the outstanding initiative that has been led and developed

by a community which supports renewables in Scotland.

TREL triumphed over some stiff competition, including projects overseen by Npower and Balfour Beatty.

David and Lex perform regular concerts on behalf of the charity at care units across Scotland and have a large repertoire of well-known songs, traditional music and old favourites.

The two performances

were the final concerts in a series which has been supported throughout the year by Creran Hotels. It was the first time Mull Resource Centre residents had enjoyed a concert arranged by Music in Hospitals.

David and Lex

perform regular concerts on behalf of the charity at care units across Scotland and have a large repertoire of well-known songs, traditional music and old favourites.

The two performances

Distillery stalwart steps down

A WELL-known Islay woman, described as a 'stalwart' of the independent Bruichladdich Distillery, has retired after almost 10 years with company.

Ella Edgar has been with Bruichladdich since the re-opening of the Islay distillery in 2001.

The Highland dancing teacher has spent her working life in clerical administration in distilleries, either Ardbeg or Bruichladdich, and at Port

Ellen Primary School. Bruichladdich's managing director Mark Reynier said: 'It was tough at the beginning, getting the company off the ground.'

'There was a lot of activity - both emotional and physical - expectations were high and money was short.'

'Through these very difficult early times Ella was the stalwart that kept the show on the road, liaising with staff, contractors, visitors and suppliers.'

Argyll and Bute facing huge housing shortage

LESS than 10 per cent of the county's housing need will be met in the next five years, Argyll and Bute Council has said.

Setting out its Strategic Housing Development Plan for 2011-2016, the council has said that 311 new homes will be built in the area. But 3,420 houses are currently needed across Argyll and Bute.

And with the Scottish Government slashing its affordable housing budget in half there is little hope of further investment.

The council's plans will see £3.5 million spent per annum on housing - half the amount spent this year.

The money will not only fund new build housing for social rent but also housing for intermediate tenures such as subsidised home ownership, shared equity and rural homes for rent.

'She has been the distillery matriarch, always ready to talk with staff and visitors, sorting out problems and issues.'

'Though we shall miss her and her baking we will continue to see Ella and her award-winning Highland dancers at the open day at the very least.'

Ella, a Gaelic speaker, was born on the island at Lotts but now lives in Port Ellen.

Her career started with Ardbeg at the age of 19.

EDUCATION Minister Michael Russell was invited to take part in an in-depth interview during a recent visit to Mull - but it had nothing to do with politics.

Mr Russell was visiting Ulva Primary School where the pupils are doing a project called The World of Work.

They had chosen to interview professionals in the field of work they themselves would like to enter.

The range of professions the pupils are covering include

policeman, artist/craftsperson, photographer, fisherman, explorer and author.

During their crofting project, the older pupils had used Mr Russell's Eriskay books for reference, so it was as an author that the minister was questioned.

He answered a wide range of questions put to him by the impressive interview panel. They were interested to hear of his connections to the Outer Hebrides and of his own interest in crofting began.

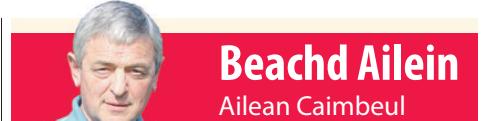
consequently crashing into Gualann Dhubh Bridge on the A848. Justice of the Peace Ian Smythe confirmed that the damage to the bridge would be paid through Kirkham's insurance. Kirkham was fined £160 and four penalty points were placed on his licence.

Andrew Kirkham, aged 40, of Shieling Holidays, Craignure, admitted driving without due care and attention,

Driver damaged bridge

A MULL driver who caused £12,000 damage to an island bridge was sentenced at Oban Justice of the Peace Court last Thursday.

Andrew Kirkham, aged 40, of Shieling Holidays, Craignure, admitted driving without due care and attention,



Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

'LUGHDAICHIDH na planaichean seo air dùblachadh, agus leasachaidh iad eifeachdas'.

Sin a bha àrd-oifgearan a' gealltairn à co-brachadh ùr eadar Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd agus Seirbhise Nàiseanta na Slàinte air Gàidhealtachd, agus meal-a-nàidheachd orra ma theid aca air sin a choilidhionadh.

Tha an iomairt eachdraidheil seo eadar an dà bhuidheann phoblach a' ciallachadh gum bi uallach airson càirn cloinne fo stiùir na Comhairle, agus priomh chìram airson seann daoinne aig a' Bhòrd Slàinte. 'S e ceum inntinneach a thá se agus chan iongadh ged a bhiodh oifgearan bhon Riaghaltas a' gabhail ealla ach an gabh a leithid déanamh feadhna na dùthcha. Mar a tha cùisean air a bhith bho chionn blàthadhnaichean, cha mhòr nach eil Comhairlean is Seirbhisean Slàinte a' carachd gus uallach a chur air càch a chéile.

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New houses on road to success

A SCHEME to build much needed new homes on Mull can progress after a legal wrangle about an access road was resolved.

Last week *The Oban Times* revealed Argyll and Bute Council was holding up a social housing scheme at Shilinghill, Tobermory, by not adopting a road in a timely fashion.

But contractor Torosay Sandpit Limited (TSL) received good news last Thursday when the authority confirmed the legal discussion had ended and the ownership of the road was now with the council.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman said: 'We have now considered the representations received during the past two weeks and decided that the recently constructed road at Baliscate is a road to which the adoption provisions of the relevant legislation applies.'

'Hopefully this will allow matters to progress.'

School closed due to bad weather

THREE schools on Mull were closed because of adverse weather conditions.

Pupils from Ulva School, Bunessan and Dervaig were given extra holidays as the island experienced plummeting temperatures and heavy snowfall.

On the Isle of Iona, residents Carol and Davy Kirkpatrick made an extra special trip to get people to church – on a quad bike with trailer.

Free parking

DRIVERS in Argyll and Bute received an early Christmas present this week as charges in council car parks were suspended in the five days leading up to Christmas.



Protesters from Lochdon, Ulva and Barcaldine make their voices heard on Oban's Esplanade in freezing temperatures. 16-152schclose1

School campaigners brave snow storm

PARENTS and children from Mull and Barcaldine braved the Arctic weather conditions on Saturday to protest in Oban against proposed school closures.

Unfortunately, some campaigners from Ulva Ferry, who were due to attend, couldn't make it across because their road

was closed. For those who did manage to attend, they were shown support from passers-by and others, something that protesters said was a boost to their confidence.

Councillors Mary-Jean Devon, Roddy McCuish and Donald McDonald were on hand to stand alongside

parents and children. A representative from Lochdon Primary School said: 'We are here today to show people we will not lie down to school closures. Our schools are vitally important to our rural way of life.'

Grandma Jeannie MacColl, who came over to stand in

protest for Ulva School, added: 'The roads on Mull are terrible and the route Argyll and Bute Council is asking children to travel is unacceptable.'

The families at Ulva Ferry were unable to travel as the route chosen by the council to be used as the main school route was impassable.

£50,000 to work for common good

OBAN Common Good Fund has set a budget of £50,000 to give to town projects next year.

Minutes from the meeting held in late August show the committee has approved three awards to Argyll and Bute Council, Oban War and Peace Museum and Kilmore and Oban Church of Scotland.

The committee also granted £182.56 for flowers and vases for the annual meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in the Corran Halls.

Argyll and Bute Council applied for a contribution of £750 to provide wifi cover to three rooms on the first floor of the Corran Halls.

Oban War and Peace Museum was granted £5,000 as an extension to a funding package to reduce an outstanding loan.

Kilmore and Oban Church of Scotland were told the committee was 'supportive in principle' of the purchase and installation of a digital organ but they would not consider a grant for a further two years.

The date of the next fund committee meeting is still to be arranged.

Posties expect to deliver 75,000 items of mail

CHRISTMAS is always a busy time of year for Oban's posties – but this year's weather has made things even tougher.

The first two weeks of December saw 25,000 items a day pass through the Albany Street Post Office, with Royal Mail staff working 3am-3pm shifts, seven days a week, to help clear the backlog created by snow and ice in the Central Belt.

So bad was the weather that Parcel Force suspended deliveries to much of Argyll for four days.

But the excess work is simply the calm before the

storm – with 75,000 items of mail expected to have passed through Oban this week alone.

Speaking on Friday, Oban postie Graham Beuschier said: 'We are processing 25,000 items a day at the moment but that's pretty quiet for this time of year – it will triple that during Christmas week.'

'We don't have any relief staff, it's just the 38 posties working from here, covering the Oban area, Mull and the islands.'

'We'll be working all the way up to Christmas Eve and will be back on December 29.'

Jobs woe as Islay hotel ceases trading

REPORT

by EUAN PATERSON
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from tightening consumer spending and troubled economic conditions.

'Taking Islay's prominence as a tourist hot spot into account with its high number of whisky distilleries and other attractions, we are optimistic a buyer will be found for this quite excellent facility.'

The hotel has 16 bedrooms, 15 separate lodges and on-site restaurant.

The 71-par championship golf course, designed by Willie Campbell in 1891, is rated as one of the world's top 100 courses.

The hotel has closed for the winter season and the three remaining staff will assist the administrators in looking after the facilities and maintaining the golf course.

Parties wishing to express an interest in the company's business and/or assets should contact Tony Friar on 0141 300 5736.

THE MACHRIE Hotel on Islay has made 15 of its 18 staff redundant after it went into administration.

Blair Nimmo and Tony Friar of KPMG were appointed joint administrators of Machrie Hotel and Golf Links Ltd and its associated property company, Mendougal 21, on December 9.

The administrators say they are 'optimistic' of finding a buyer for the property, which includes an 18-hole championship golf course.

The course remains open while a buyer is sought, however, bookings for several upcoming Christmas nights out have had to be cancelled.

Islay-based Councillor Robin Currie said: 'This is a major blow because it is probably the biggest hotel on the island and employed a lot of people.'

'This is terrible news for these people, particularly at

'Opportunist' thief jailed for 394 days

AN 'opportunist thief' has been sentenced to a total of 394 days in prison after pleading guilty to four separate complaints.

Stuart Scott, aged 29, of 19D Shuna Terrace, appeared at Oban Sheriff Court having pled guilty to stealing a van from the CalMac pier of the van, which had come over from Barra and left for a delivery driver to pick up the following day.

The house break-in was at the residence of a man who, Scott claimed, owed

documents; and breaking into a house and stealing a digital television box.

Scott appeared alongside co-accused Ian Smith, aged 44, of Flat 8, St Valery Place, Oban, for the theft from the CalMac pier of the van, which had come over from Barra and left for a delivery driver to pick up the following day.

The house break-in was at the residence of a man who, Scott claimed, owed

him money. Defence agent Sandy Mitchell said the incidents were all of an opportunist nature and not pre-planned, adding: 'This is a man who has not had his problems to seek.'

Sheriff Douglas Small backdated Scott's sentence to November 16, when he went into custody and disqualified him from driving for one year.

Smith's sentence has been deferred until January 18.

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Lorn Lines



Toddler Abby Doherty with her prize-winning poster for the Scottish Parliament. The Little Learners Pre-school and Nursery pupil was one of the group's runners-up in an Engage for Education website. The pre-school children worked hard for this by visiting various places in Oban to learn about seafood within their local area.

□ □ □

A SMALLER audience than usual turned out to Oban Photographic Club's last weekly meeting of the season in the Regent Hotel, mainly because of the cold weather.

The speaker was well known semi-professional photographer Duncan MacEwan, from Bridge of Weir.

Duncan's talk was titled 'I never thought I would' and, in this instance, it was that he never thought he would leave his beloved Scotland and travel abroad. But here he was, seven years after retiring from teaching, showing excellent slides from his visits to South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and the Seychelles.

It was a pleasant change to see pictures which had not been manipulated in any way and their excellence was due entirely to the skill of the photographer.

His main message was 'keep your eyes open' because there are pictures waiting to be taken everywhere. Duncan also showed how different light changes pictures completely.

Since his visits 'Down Under', he has travelled to India as one of the official photographers to the Scottish team at the Commonwealth Games and has also been in the Arctic. Needless to say, he now shoots his photographs digitally – which could be another 'I never thought I would' talk!

□ □ □



Oban Hospice and Oban Camanachd Club equally shared £1,000 when four intrepid players set off to complete the West Highland Way earlier this year. Diarmid and David MacMillan were joined on their 100 mile trek by Chris Eccleston and Gussy Campbell and are pictured at the end of their fundraising effort when they arrived safely at Fort William.

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Oban sheriff fines and bans A85 'suicidal' driver

A SHERIFF has described the driving of a former Oban project worker as 'suicidal' after she overtook five cars over two blind bends.

Elizabeth Mullen, aged 47, whose new address was not disclosed in court, was banned from driving for one year as a result of her dangerous driving on the A85 between Dalmally and Taynuilt on August 16 2009.

Sheriff Simon Fraser also fined Mullen £750 and

told her that he had 'great difficulty understanding your evidence'.

Denied offence

Mullen had denied that she drove her car dangerously and at excessive speeds, followed vehicles with insufficient distance and overtook on blind bends.

The court heard that Mullen was returning to Oban from Newcastle. She was driving a hire car as her own car was off the road following a collision.

She overtook an unmarked police vehicle at Dalmally and, while they had no concern at that manoeuvre, her driving subsequent to that caused them to start video recording.

Constable Kenneth McKechnie, who has 10 years' experience in traffic policing, said: 'I felt that the vehicle in front, for lack of a better word, was being pushy, in a hurry.'

The court was shown the police video. Mullen's car was seen cutting across a double solid white line in the road, then passing three vehicles, round a blind right hand bend before pulling in. She then overtook two more cars despite having no view of the road ahead.

'Nonsense'

Mullen said that, due to a previous abusive relationship, she was afraid that the occupants of the unmarked police car were 'road rage drivers' and was afraid that, if she

stopped, there would be a confrontation.

She admitted that she drove at speeds up to and possibly exceeding 88mph.

Procurator Fiscal Craig Harris said Mullen's fear that the car behind was following her was untrue, adding that if she really was afraid she could have pulled in to the Taynuilt Hotel, the village police office or used her mobile phone to call police.

He said: 'This nonsense

about being afraid of the car behind was just that, nonsense.'

Mullen already had six points on her licence for a previous speeding offence.

Sheriff Fraser said: 'I have great difficulty in accepting the accused's evidence in this matter. At times, I had great difficulty understanding it.'

Addressing Mullen, he said: 'I'm satisfied that whatever your fear was, it was irrationally held.'

Replacement helicopter for Oban lighthouse station

A NEW helicopter will be seen in and around Oban in the coming months after the Northern Lighthouse Board renewed its helicopter contract. The EC135T2i will replace the Bolkow 105 that has been used in Oban for the last 38 years.

Director of marine operations with the Northern Lighthouse Board Phil Day said: 'We are delighted to welcome the new contract helicopter into service.'

'The aircraft is equipped for instrument flying which will reduce disruption to operations, where formally the aircraft could be grounded in a location due to poor visibility or by low light.'

Appin restaurant suddenly closes

THE OWNERS of an Argyll restaurant, which was renovated three years ago, have denied the business has closed for good.

The Creagan Inn, near Appin, unexpectedly closed last week. *The Oban Times* understands the restaurant, which had undergone a £500,000 renovation in January 2008, has closed as a result of poor trade in November and a lack of Christmas bookings and that staff face uncertain futures.

Owners Dave and Liz Hamblin said: 'The restaurant is closed for the winter but the business isn't. We hope to re-open in March.'

Swim a mile for Gambia charity

INVERARAY charity First Aid 4 Gambia is hoping people will get in the swim as part of a major fundraiser next May.

The group, which provides first aid skills and equipment to people in developing countries, want 3,000 swimmers to swim one mile and raise £10 in sponsorship.

For more details contact Bill Nelson on 01499 302139.

Pupils feel chill on rail journey

REPORT

by STEVEN FLANAGAN
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk

Glasgow - but they had to wear them on the train.'

The pupils, from Ardchattan and Achaleven primary schools, were heading to the King's Theatre to see *Snow White* - but were forced to don their winter woolies early on as the carriage was not heated.

Head of Ardchattan school Jacqui McLarty said: 'The schools were originally going to go separately but later decided to go together. As such, we had bought our tickets separately and, while I wasn't told about the toilets, my colleague at Achaleven was, so we advised the parents in advance.'

'Apparently, they are frozen in the mornings, but on that day my car wasn't even frozen. What we didn't realise though is that the train would be so cold. It got even colder as the journey went on - all the way to Glasgow. There was no heating.'

'Luckily the children had their gloves, hats and coats for the cold weather in



Dr Mac Armstrong, chairman of the Oban Hospice board, and Margaret McGregor, chairwoman of Friends of Oban Hospice, at the Light Up a Life service. 15_t51lightlife01

Hospice lights are lit at ceremony

LOVED ones lost were remembered at a poignant ceremony organised by the Friends of Oban Hospice.

The fifth Light up a Life service was held at the Corran Halls, Oban.

Ceremony

The short, atmospheric ceremony was hosted by Dr Mac Armstrong, chairman of the Oban Hospice Board.

Dozens of people turned out to light up a candle and remember a loved one.

The event featured a

reading, Christmas carols and a short performance from members of Oban High School Pipe Band and concluded with thanks from Margaret McGregor, chairwoman of the Friends of Oban Hospice.

'This was our fifth year and we get a different range of people each year, generally those who have lost someone in the last 12 months, although we also welcome people who have lost someone a number

of years ago,' explained Margaret.

Fundraising event

'The newly bereaved of all ages come along. If it is their first time here, they are a little bit wary, not knowing what's going to happen and we leave them to cope in their own fashion.'

The Light up a Life ceremony also acts as a fundraising event for the hospice, with donations dedicated to the loved one they have lost.

Anonymous donor comes to aid of vandalised Soroba bridge

A KIND hearted local has given Soroba a timely Christmas present in the form of gallons of paint to restore the recently defaced footbridge.

The hunt is now on for members of the community - led by someone with experience of such work - to return the £800,000

crossing to an acceptable condition. The old 'blue bridge,' which is now green, was only opened in May but was covered with offensive graffiti and gang tags within weeks.

At the time, local councillor Roddy McCuish said that while sickened by the vandalism, he didn't

think the council should pay for its repainting as cash was at a premium.

The gift of paint from the anonymous donor, therefore, is very welcome.

Mr McCuish said: 'We've been given as much green paint as needed to repaint the bridge. Now we're hoping to find members of

the community who can help us paint it.

The offer came as a direct result of the article in *The Oban Times* and I'm delighted someone has been kind enough to make this offer.

'We'd like to hear from people with relevant experience to supervise the

work so the bridge can be repainted to a high standard, and any other volunteers who can help.'

Mr McCuish also welcomed the recent installation of lights at the bridge and hopes they will act as a deterrent to further vandalism after the bridge is repainted.



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Low grit levels 'no cause for concern'

GRIT levels in Argyll and Bute are only at 30 per cent of what they were a year ago, but officers are confident there is no cause for concern.

The council had 8,236 tonnes of salt this time last year but at the time of going to press it only had 3,150 tonnes in stock.

However, the authority is waiting for a delivery, which it hopes will arrive before Christmas Eve.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokeswoman said: 'This quantity is equivalent to seven days' standard use. We are using salt preservation measures. This means using a salt and grit mix to treat roads and gritting roadside bins with grit and sand, not salt.'

'We are expecting approximately 3,200 tonnes of salt to arrive before December 24 and have orders in place for a further 4,600 tonnes to be delivered in early January.'

The spokeswoman continued: 'All operatives who would have driven gritting vehicles continue to use standard vehicles to hand cast narrow roads and assist in footway treatment works, when conditions dictate.'

Successful bid for survey funding

BID4OBAN has been successful in securing cash to canvas opinion on a way forward to improve the town.

The money, from the Argyll and Islands leader fund, will secure a project to ballot all the businesses in the town on whether they wish to contribute to a fund for improvements in the business district.

The group applied for cash to canvas opinion in Oban, create a draft business plan and market the project through local media.

The scheme was awarded £8,700, 50 per cent of the total eligible costs of the project.

Library friends' new website

THE FRIENDS of Oban Library have set up a website. Photos, information and minutes of the group's meetings can be found at www.bookfool.org.uk.

Starting in January, the group is organising monthly coffee mornings between 10.30am and 12.30pm on the last Saturday of each month.

Find us on facebook 



Morven MacFadyen Donald, 11, and James MacIntyre, also 11, choose gifts as part of Oxfam's Unwrapped scheme to help communities in developing countries. [08 152unwrapped2](#)

Presents to help those less fortunate

PUPILS at an Oban primary school chose to help those less fortunate than themselves rather than send each other Christmas cards this year.

Each class at Rockfield Primary School voted to make a donation, with the money raised being spent on

Oxfam's Unwrapped gifts. In all, £151.75 was raised and youngsters from each class visited Oban's Oxfam store to choose their gifts.

Oxfam's Unwrapped

scheme offers shoppers the chance to buy gifts that will make a real difference to the lives of people in developing

countries. For example, £7 of Rockfield's money would buy school supplies such as pens and paper, while for £25, they could buy a goat which would make a bigger difference than the pupils might have imagined as goats produce milk to drink and sell, fertiliser for crops

and kids to take to market. Veronica O'Reilly, P6 class teacher at Rockfield, said: 'Each class discussed the idea of whether to give a charity gift. The majority voted to give the gifts so we collected donations and raised the money.'

Half-built sewage plant causes stink

REPORT

by STEVEN FLANAGAN
sflanagan@obantimes.co.uk



Ardchattan Community Council convener Iain MacDonald examines the open sewage tanks at Scottish Water's malfunctioning £1.5million treatment plant in Bonawe. [t52bonawe1](#)

Convenor of Ardchattan Community Council Iain MacDonald said: 'Work started about a year-and-a-half ago and there have already been one or two problems that caused a bit of grief locally.'

Worse, a rusty reinforcement rod has been pushed into the ground at a 45 degree angle to prop up a now collapsed plastic barrier.

With children having already been chased out of the plant, some are saying it is miraculous that someone hasn't already been seriously injured.

'It is not a safe site. The tanks are not secured.'

'There's a reinforcement rod waiting to cause an injury. It's just a complete disaster.'

'I don't think Scottish

Water can get it to work. There are a number of other issues. It's impinging on some building plots as they can't build until this is finished; not to mention that currently, houses are discharging into the loch.'

One neighbour of the plant, Mick Peters, said he hadn't seen Scottish Water engineers at the site for months, saying he's also worried about what will

happen if the status quo remains until the summer. He said: 'I think it might smell a bit then.'

Another resident said he understood that sewage was being taken away in tankers rather than treated.

Far from being near completion, a spokesman for Scottish Water confirmed that the plant won't be finished for months yet.

He said: 'Issues with the process at Bonawe have meant that the project has not yet been completed. We hope to have completed the work there by about March 2011.'

'These issues are not an inhibitor to development going ahead, provided the developer has applied for a connection and met all the required criteria.'

'We have taken some measures to improve ventilation on the site. These will be taken away when the project is completed.'

'We will investigate to establish if there are any issues related to access to the site and safety and take any action we believe is necessary.'

ACHALEVEN Primary School, in Connel, is situated on the main A85 Glasgow to Oban road, by the Connel Bridge. The school serves the village of Connel and its surrounding area from Achناclach in the east to Dunstaffnage House in the west. The school building is about 100 years old. The school is 3.5 miles from Lochness, a journey time of approximately 15 minutes.

Occupancy level: 21 per cent.

School roll: 2010/2011: 13.

Cost per child: £16,213.

School use: Achaleven Primary School

has experienced regular community use over the past five years. The community covered by the catchment areas of the school included in the proposal would continue to have access to other facilities in the area should the proposed amalgamation take place.

There are currently village halls available for community use in Benderloch, Connel and North Connel.

Class size in receiving school: Seven classes with a total roll of 128, made up of 16 P1s, 22 P2/3s; 15 P3/4s; 24 P5s; 17 P6s and 16 P7s.*

Saving to council from staff and property: £163,213*

the school will inevitably have an effect on young families moving into the area and the local community will be lost.

The Parent Council

strongly feels that the geography of Islay has not been adequately taken into consideration during the preparation of this proposal.

Communities on Islay are diverse and widespread and each part of the island is unique.

Young children who are currently able to walk to school will be faced with long daily bus journeys – completely going against the government's promotion of healthy diet and exercise for children.

The strength of Keills Primary can be evidenced by its 2008 HMI report and the actions taken and approved upon their recommendations.

The Follow Through Report on the inspection of Keills Primary School produced by Argyll and Bute Community Services was very positive.

Most recent external inspection was from the Care Commission, which has graded our pre-5 unit with, amongst others, two gradings of excellent.

Transport costs to take pupils to new school: £47,500.

On numerous occasions Keills has been held up as a shining example of what can be achieved in a small rural school with regard to the Curriculum for Excellence.

The head teacher visited Canada in 2009 as part of a small group of six head teachers representing Argyll and Bute Education.

As the season's festivities go on, the wish from Keills Primary School and the local community is 'all we want for Christmas is to save our school'.

Sums don't add up for Achaleven Parent Council

Transport Costs to take pupils to new school: £22,390*

Parent Council response: Chairman of the parent council John Little said: 'Our biggest concern is for the education of the children if this were to happen.'

'In addition, the number of people living in the catchment is growing and a lot of parents will want to be able to walk their children to school.'

'Further to this, we don't believe the sums add up – after all, the savings in terms of running the building will be eaten up in transporting the children.'

'We think our case is very strong and we believe the council's proposals are so flawed their proposals can't go through.'

'What it is doing is helping to galvanise the community into supporting the school; it has certainly raised the profile of the school.'

'There is also concern about Connel Village Hall, which is regularly used by the school for sports and events, so money will be lost to the hall if this happens.'

* Argyll and Bute Council's proposals for Barcaldine, Ardchattan and Achaleven primary schools have been grouped together and no further breakdown in figures is available.

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ISLAY

Your correspondent is Susan Campbell:
01496 850215

School pantos and concerts

ISLAY'S primary schools and the high school have yet again pulled out all the stops and presented splendid pantomime performances and musical evenings to their admiring public.

Keills school pupils gave an excellent performance with even the smallest children performing with confidence, and it was clear that much community support went into providing all the costumes, props etc.

Port Charlotte school was similarly on top form, as were pupils singing at Port Ellen's Candlelight Carol Service, Bowmore's concert and other events at island schools. Islay High School's wind band goes from strength to strength, and the developing musical abilities of the pupils were clear for all to enjoy.

Islay's icy weather continues

ISLAY'S weather has continued to be very wintry, with even the bright days staying frosty. Any melting of ice just added to the existing slippery conditions prevailing on village pavements and country roads.

This week, Bowmore has been very busy with pre-Christmas shoppers, with many people taking the chance to buy gifts before the arrival of forecasted snow.

The Co-operative staff in Bowmore were extremely helpful to their customers, offering to help shoppers who bought several full bags of 'messages' by carrying their shopping out to customers' vehicles.

Christmas wishes

WARMEST wishes for a Happy Christmas to *Oban Times* readers from your Islay correspondent, Susan Campbell.

NETHERLORN

Your correspondent is Fiona Cruickshanks:
01852 314375

ICY ROADS and snow couldn't keep the islanders of Luing away from their primary school on Wednesday, December 1.

The Annual 'Holly Tea' is a big event on Luing, drawing parents and friends of the Island of Luing Primary School to buy craft items using natural and recycled items, baking, Christmas cards/notelets, calendars and jewellery.

Teas and coffee were served with Christmas fare and there was a Christmas Hamper raffle, a treasure hunt, guess the weight of the Christmas cake and the name of a penguin.

A silent auction was held seeking bids for a lorry load of wood. All the children in Isle of Luing Primary School have been very busy over the past few weeks, preparing for this event, building on

**Strath of Appin pupils celebrate Christmas around the world**

Christmas Around The World was the theme for Strath of Appin Primary School's concert this week. The younger children confidently played the part of animals with great gusto, with older pupils singing songs reflecting Christmas in Spain, Hawaii, USA, China, India and Africa. MG

enterprise and craft skills. With the help of the Parent Council they ran the stalls and served the teas.

The evening brought in more than £1,000 for school funds, which include music lessons for the school's famous band - Ukulele Luing.

Netherlorn Churches Gathering

FIVE Church of Scotland churches of Netherlorn came together in Seil Island Hall in Ellenabeich for their 'Gathering' to hopefully, find direction, discover gifts and open doors.

The churches of Craignish, Kilbrandon, Kilchattan, Kininver and Kilmelford have been joined together as a family since 2007, and are now known as the Netherlorn Churches, under the guidance of their minister Ken Ross.

The purpose of the gathering was for people to get to know one another better, to consider what contribution to the life and witness of the churches they might be able to make, and to explore the meaning of their faith and how it relates to life in our rural communities.

Workshops on prayer, World Church, worship, pastoral care, youth work and outreach were facilitated and brought a lot of discussion and new ideas.

The younger folk spent the day in a puppet and music workshop. Led by the Inverness Company 'Out of the Box'.

It was the youngsters and their puppets who led the worship at the close of the day, with everyone joining in with the action songs.

The JAM group members assisted the minister in serving a simple communion to the 'Gathering' of friends from Netherlorn.

Church ceiliadh

SEIL Island Village Hall was the venue for the first Kilbrandon and Kilchattan Church Ceiliadh.

The idea of the Kirk Session, the event was held to welcome the 'new minister', Rev Dr Ken Ross, and offer a fun evening for members, friends, neighbours and families in the communities of Seil, Luing and Easdale.

Drew Connolly and Alasdair Gillespie played the accordion and keyboard, with a fine selection of tunes for dancing.

Mhairi Ritchie was MC for the evening, with songs from Graham Campbell, Agnes Connelly, Marilyn Fullarton and Cheryl MacColl, accordion by Rachel Cruickshanks and poetry from Innes MacQueen and Martin Waddell.

Mhairi Ritchie thanked Julie MacQueen for her many years as a youth leader in Kilchattan Church, far too young to retire!

Julie is taking some time off teaching and she received a card and voucher as a thank you.

During the fun filled evening people were invited to help themselves to tea/coffee, home baking and a chat in the small hall.

Young and old danced and chatted, many old pals rekindled friendships and met new people.

Iain MacColl, as a senior Elder in the Kirk Session, was called upon during the evening to present Douglas Gibson the retiring session clerk with a collection and plaque to mark this occasion.

Rev Ken Ross spoke with great admiration for the 30 years that Douglas has served the Kilbrandon and Kilchattan Church, thanking God for giving him the strength and skills to do such a valuable and first-rate job.

In his reply, Mr Gibson thanked the congregations for their help and assistance but most of all to his wife, Jean, for her support.

Mrs Gibson is the organist in Kilchattan Church on Luing.

The new session clark is Martin Waddell, who is also a reader and Elder in the Church of Scotland and lives on Seil.

KYLE OF LOCHALSH

Your correspondent is Charlie MacRae:
01599 544359

Weather at Plockton

DURING November there was four inches of rain at Plockton.

The warmest temperature was 12°C and the coldest -4°C.

Historical society

PLOCKTON Historical Society attracted an attendance of around 100 on Thursday, December 9, when guest speaker was Roddie MacLennan from Lochcarron whose subject was 'The Life of a Travelling Butcher'.

The audience enjoyed his many stories and Robert Kennedy thanked him.

Village hall AGM

PLOCKTON village hall AGM was held in Plockton hall on December 7 with the usual attendance.

The treasurer submitted a satisfactory report despite expenditure of £9,403.01.

All the office-bearers were re-elected with John French added to the committee.

Secretary/treasurer Charlie M MacRae, having first been elected on October 3, 1961, is now in his 50th year and has never missed a meeting.

Caterers from Nairn who had damaged the kitchen floor last year have still not paid despite admitting liability. Owing to recent damage at a dance a deposit of £150 maybe asked for in future.

**Mid Argyll 'Movember' men raise £1,000**

Six Mid Argyll men have raised more than £1,000 for prostate cancer research. Dochy MacLean, Za Walls, Alastair Stankey, Alec McLarty, John Doc and Jamie 'Hulk Hogan' Miller grew moustaches, goatees and beards throughout November to raise £1,000 for the charity. The men gathered at The Community in Lochgilphead to shave off a month's worth of facial hair, with local hairdressers Hazel Hunter and Jodie Brown doing the honours. The men thank everyone who donated so generously. 06_a51movember1

Panto audience transported to magical world

TOBERMORY pantomime, Tom Thumb really packed a punch.

From the moment the curtain went up the audience was transported to a kingdom whose tranquil realm was about to be threatened. Sets by Brian and Helen Swinbanks, together with evocative lighting from Rob MacDonald combined to create a magical world.

With a hungry giant devouring all the food in the land and a dithering and distracted king, played with panache by Davie Graham, a hero was needed. And Isobel Downing as Tom Thumb gave us a splendid principal boy.

Commanding the stage with an ease that belied her status as a pantomime debutant Tom Thumb bravely defended his princess, the suitably glamorous Kate Stevens, from a particularly nasty fate at

the hands of Slither Slugsline, a role in which Duncan Swinbanks simply oozed menace.

Unusually, this year's Dame was played by a woman, a role which Andi Stevens seemed to relish and her verbal jousts with Slugsline provided many laughs. Susie Carmichael, as Tim Thumb, Tom's errant brother, gave a performance which, of course, went down a storm. Claire Bidwell turned in a terrific performance as Lucy Lastic, while the part of the sparkling Spellena marked the return of Emma Barlow.

The number of youngsters taking part bodes well for the future and director Barbara Weir got the best from her young cast.

Michael Timms, in whose memory this pantomime was dedicated, would have been proud of them all.

Around the Rurals**Dervaig**

'FLOWERS of the Hedgerow' as a topic in the midst of sub-zero temperatures?

Dervaig Scottish Women's Rural Institute's December meeting might sound a bit misplaced, but these were flowers with a difference.

The guest speaker was Ted Dowling from Salen who is a 'bogger and green wood worker'.

In his case the green wood referred to is mainly hazel and he showed members how he uses a knife or a fixed blade on a bench to make, amongst other things, artistically curling flower shapes, tiny carved chickens and cockerels.

His talents extend far beyond these things - he also turns wood using a pole-lathe (bodging), and told members about various useful things the old countrymen were able to make from different types of wood.

He explained the need for proper coppicing of hazel - without that the hazel 'stools' (bushes to the uninitiated) - will become mis-shapen and eventually die off, and told members how his enthusiasm for these country crafts was started when he learnt of the skills his grandfather had used in his working life.

It was a result of heavy snow affecting roads, only 62 out of the 100 guests expected attended.

After an excellent meal supplied by the Plockton Inn, there was a ceilidh with many of the guests taking part. Music was by Catherine and Andy Will.

The band for dancing was unable to attend because of bad road conditions.

Many of the guests received a gift from Santa Claus.

Charlie M MacRae proposed the vote of thanks and particularly thanked Donald Ross who was retiring as main organiser.

Catherers from Nairn who had damaged the kitchen floor last year have still not paid despite admitting liability. Owing to recent damage at a dance a deposit of £150 maybe asked for in future.

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It's Christmas time...

Scouts serenade shoppers



On song: Members of the 1st Argyll Lorn Scouts at Oban's Co-op store, where they sang Christmas carols. 15_t52scouts01

CHRISTMAS shoppers were put in the festive mood thanks to the vocal talents of the 1st Argyll Lorn Scouts.

The youngsters firstly sang Christmas carols at Oban's Co-op and then Tesco.

There are currently vacancies for members of Scout and Beaver groups.

The Scout group meets on Monday evenings at the Cub Scout Hall, on the Esplanade, between 6.30pm and 8.30pm and is open to youngsters aged 10 to 14 years.

Anyone interested should contact Erica Smith on 01631 570731.

The Beavers group is open to those aged six to eight and meets on a Wednesday evening at the hall 6pm-7pm. Anyone interested should contact Alison Murray on 01631 566266.

Nursery play delights proud parents



Taynuilt Nursery children performed their Christmas Nativity on Friday in front of a delighted audience of parents, who enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies during the show. 10_f52fw01

Pupils count down to the big day



Fort William Primary School enjoyed the 'Countdown to Christmas' with their nativity play on Tuesday. The pupils put on their version of the Christmas story to a crowded audience in the school games hall. 10_f52fw01

Festive cheer for Torosay Court



Oban High School pupils who stay at Glencruitten Hostel visited Torosay Court in Oban with some Christmas cheer for residents, who sang along with some Christmas carols. 16_t52carol01

Competition winners hope Santa fills their sacks!



This group of youngsters turned super-sleuths to win themselves a special prize. The eagle-eyed six were the winners of the Alba Christmas Quest, which challenged entrants to find characters related to the Nativity story hidden in 25 shop windows around Oban. From left to right are: Kerry MacLeod, 11, Jennie MacLean, 9, Evie Turner, 7, Claire Reid, 8, Adam Hamill, 8, and Adam Kinvig, 6. They all received a special sack to hang up on Christmas Eve ready for Santa's arrival. 16_t52albawinners1

Procession in Dalmally

THIRTY folk accompanied a nativity scene around Dalmally last Wednesday evening singing carols and delivering Christmas blessing cards from local churches.

It was damp but not as cold as it has been, and there was a definite warm and festive atmosphere as friends and strangers came together in the procession.

Glenorchy Lodge had room at the inn and provided mulled wine and mince pies. The Rev Liz Gibson thanked everyone who made the evening go so well.

The event was organised by Craig Lodge Community and the local Church of Scotland.



Mary, Joseph and the angel Gabriel made their way around Dalmally proclaiming the Christmas message. 10_f52fw01



Mull Lines

A WOMAN from Linlithgow saw Mull's famous sea eagles up close after winning a competition aimed at bringing more visitors to the island.

Sheila Cornock and husband Eddy enjoyed three nights dinner, bed and breakfast on the island together with personal guided tours arranged by Holiday Mull and Iona as part of its 2010 public relations campaign.

The couple were given the red carpet treatment by a host of Holiday Mull and Iona members and associates.

'It was a splendid prize,' said Sheila. 'We had a fantastic time.'

'The boat trip was super and Fingal's Cave on Staffa was pretty spectacular. The weather was brilliant too.'



TOBERMORY'S Highland Cottage is toasting the New Year after being included in Britain's Good Hotel Guide for the first time.

It is also the only restaurant in Mull with two AA Rosettes for its food.

The Guide adds that Highland Cottage 'incorporates everything a small hotel needs' and that Dave Currie, who opened the hotel with his wife Jo in 1999, is particularly helpful in booking trips for guests.

'We're thrilled to have been included in such a prestigious publication just over 10 years after building the hotel from scratch,' said Dave.

'It's especially welcome since the guide provides impartial advice on finding good places to stay and eat.'



SMASH hit CBeebies kids' television show Balamory had a dramatic effect on the island of Tobermory, population under 1,000.

A year after it started filming in 2002, Tobermory visitor numbers rose by 40 per cent, bringing 160,000 extra visitors to the island.

Figures recently released by VisitScotland estimate the series contributed £5million annually to the tourist economy of Mull and the Western Islands.

Oban's Tourist Information Centre topped 700,000 enquiries making it the busiest in Scotland.



THE MISHDISH restaurant in Tobermory has served its 10,000th customer - and it only opened in May.

Lucky milestone customers were Malcolm Smith and Helena Buckley from Stirling who were presented with a bottle of champagne by manager Wil Craig and head chef Sarah Fairley.

Owner Nicola MacLeod said: 'The day before, we came across this couple on the road back from Glenormiston Castle.'

'Their car had one wheel off the road in a ditch and we helped them back onto the road.'

'My husband Robert then bumped into the lady the next day who said that she was so grateful and that she was looking for a nice place to go for lunch and he, as the owner, obviously recommended Mishdish.'

'We then received a call from our manager to say that the 10,000th customer had just walked through the door. 'They couldn't believe their luck.'



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OT

Drink and drug drivers will be locked up

POLICE in the Highlands are warning drink or drug drivers they could end up spending Christmas Day in a cell after offender figures again showed an upward trend.

Week two of their festive safety campaign saw eight motorists caught drinking and driving - three more than last year.

Last week, 11 people tested over the limit compared to seven in 2009.

Northern Constabulary road policing inspector John Smith said: 'People who continue to ignore our warnings about drink or drug driving are this week facing the real possibility of spending a night in the cells and if they are caught on Friday their families could end up having a very miserable Christmas.'

Service on BBC Alba

A GAELIC Service filmed earlier this month in Portree Parish Church will be broadcast on BBC Alba on Christmas Eve at 11pm.



Little angels: Lochyside's nativity play Christmas Stars was a big hit. 10_52lochyside

Christmas stars shine at Lochyside Primary School

LOCHYSIDE RC Primary's Christmas concert went down a storm last Wednesday as the whole school put on an entertaining and varied programme for families, friends and staff.

Highlights included the guitar group opening the concert with 'He's Got the Whole World in his Hands', which was a fitting choice given that Lochyside's school roll includes children from several nationalities. Highland dancing, Christmas carols and a routine from the Dance Platform group followed, before the audience enjoyed the pupils' own musical nativity play, Christmas Stars.

Festive message from Lochaber Provost Allan Henderson

IT IS hard to believe another eventful year in the service of Highland Council has passed.

My wife and I are visiting our daughter, Ashley, in Australia, for the Christmas holiday. However, it will all soon be over and we will be back to our beloved Lochaber.

Over the year the private or public sector argument continued to dominate our care of the elderly. To me, it is crystal clear, that we need a good mix of both homes, and, if the council is not willing to build a new one, in Caol, as agreed, then it is duty bound to refurbish Invernevis House. This along with the MacIntosh centre,

in Mallaig, and Strontian, gives the necessary balance in Lochaber.

Schools rationalisation

has also dominated a lot of council time. The programme to amalgamate all three Fort William schools certainly has a lot of merit in it, with a 21st century school being proposed to replace three ageing buildings and three prime sites being realised for housing development as well as allowing for the possibility of a Gaelic school.

The major disappointment has been the lack of progress to secure phase three redevelopment funding for Lochaber High. This project should have been completed before starting

new major schools. The cost of demolishing the team at Lochaber High is going to be high and even higher to set it up again, when funding is deemed available.

Local transport continues to

be a growth industry, with the planned inter modal freight transport depot at Corpach, the expansion of sea freight and hopefully rail getting involved. Disappointingly there is little progress in improvements to the A82.

However the continuing success story is the oldest method of all, steam. The seasonal Jacobite steam train continues to run at almost 100 per cent capacity on the Mallaig line.

Congratulations once

again to all our sporting bodies. Shinty continues to dominate the major

industries still planning to expand, albeit with delays due to the credit crisis, this says a lot for the resilience of Lochaber. Shoppers look like having more choice in the area in the near future. However the High Street, while certainly the council's concern, continues to be dominated by high rents and premises which are the wrong size for modern shopping. Interestingly, like many more towns, the centre has more people starting to live in it, while the shopping opportunities, as we knew them, become less.

Congratulations once again to all our sporting bodies. Shinty continues to dominate the major

achievements in Lochaber, but there have been notable successes in many other sports and representation at the Commonwealth Games. We as councillors continue to strive for the best facilities and take particular pride in the new 21st century complex at Lochaber High school, which is open to the public. This combined with upgrading at Lochaber Leisure Centre, the planned all weather pitch on the Blar and the continued hosting of major sports events at the Nevis Centre shows our commitment.

Christmas Greetings and a Happy and prosperous New Year to all. Allan Henderson, Lochaber Provost.

Lochaber Provost Allan Henderson: season's greetings from Australia.



10_52provost01

Councillor Foxley said the overhaul would mean better care and support for vulnerable children and their families.

He said: 'For a child who is surviving in a dysfunctional home there will be much better local team working and awareness of the issues.

'Currently if you had a child with slight brain damage and there were difficulties at home, health visitors and GPs know about it - but educational staff do not become involved until the child is three. Now there will be an integrated team involving education, social work and NHS staff and the lead agency for the social care of the child will be the council. Obviously, significant medical issues such as trauma injuries and illnesses will continue to be dealt with by the NHS, as they are now.'

Asked about potential job losses, he said: 'If there are jobs cuts they will be to do with management. In Fort William, for example, you will only have a single agency leading on services for the elderly, and one for children's services.'

"Now there will be an integrated team involving education, social work and NHS staff."

This will be a far better service. NHS Highland will become the single lead agency looking after the elderly, so the current problem of people being admitted to hospital and remaining there too long, or who are discharged home without a proper care package for them being in place, will be addressed.

'This is an issue that both the NHS and social work has been struggling with for many years, and often a blame culture has existed between the two.

'Bringing both under a single management will put a stop to that and will ensure that elderly and vulnerable people don't fall through the gap.'

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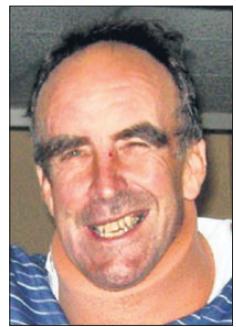
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Christmas cheer from Oz

Injured Skye cyclist sends message of hope from Brisbane hospital

ISLE of Skye round the world cyclist John Gilbertson has sent a Christmas message back home as he continues his recuperation in an Australian hospital.

John, a director at Isle of Skye Smokehouse in Broadford, left Skye on July 2 and arrived in Australia via France, Italy, Dubai, Sri Lanka and Thailand, receiving donations from Skye exiles along the way.



John Gilbertson, injured but determined.

But at Byron Bay in northern New South Wales last month he hit a pothole and was thrown from his bike, sustaining broken ribs, spine and neck damage and a severe head injury.

By then he had already raised thousands of pounds for Crossroads Skye and Macmillan Cancer Support through his Cycle4Skye initiative.

Speaking to *The Oban Times* on Tuesday, 7pm Eastern Australia time, from his bedside phone in the Birn Ward at the Princess

EXCLUSIVE
REPORT by
STEPHEN NORRIS
snorris@obantimes.co.uk

Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, John said he was overwhelmed by messages of love and support.

He said: 'I would just like to say a huge, huge thank you to everybody for all their thoughts and prayers. It really means so much to me.'

'I have local people from the Skye and the Uists visiting me who have been out here for 70 years.'

'At the moment, sleep simply becomes such a large part of my life and I just have to be patient and get through this stage of my recovery.'

'I'm feeling okay, but I'm very wobbly.'

'I have brain damage, but they say it will eventually work its way out. I'm sometimes forgetful of what's happened recently, but not before the accident.'

'I am just so fortunate to be here. I am so impressed with everyone and the care I have received. Just don't go back on a bike again, they say!'

Asked if he planned to continue his round the world charity drive by whatever means, he said: 'I'm so keen to keep the project going – just tell everybody to have confidence in me. Ask them to keep in touch – this is just a wee delay, but there will be progress.'

'Please wish everyone back home a very happy Christmas and New Year from me.'



The heavy snowfall closed most schools in Lochaber on Friday but Ballachulish Primary managed to stay open. Forty-one of the school's 66 pupils made it in, and they made snowmen in the playground at lunchtime.

Anger growing over district nurse out-of-hours cuts

ANGER is growing in a remote Lochaber community towards NHS plans to scrap district nurse out-of-hours care – with the community council vowing to win its battle to keep the service.

NHS Highland recently told West Ardnamurchan Community Council the existing service was 'neither safe nor sustainable' and from early next year GPs, NHS 24 and the Scottish Ambulance Service would provide cover.

Furious Kilchoan residents met in a packed out village hall on Monday night to discuss their next move to protect the service. At the meeting, community council chairwoman Rosie Curtis said the community was 'fighting for its life' and they were 'worried sick'

"West Ardnamurchan community is fighting for its life."
Chairman community council.

A sub-committee dedicated to the issue was set up and met yesterday (Wednesday) to agree a campaign action plan.

Lack of information

Community councillor Jon Haylett told *The Oban Times* they had contacted NHS Highland asking for information, but had so far not received a reply.

He said: 'Nobody has told us the basis on which this decision was founded.'

'Under freedom of information we've asked them to provide us with the details, and to be honest, I don't think they've got any facts.'

He added: 'People here are very, very angry and the village is absolutely determined to win this.'

Inspectors give institute university thumbs up

THE HIGHLANDS and Islands could soon have its own university after the UHI Millennium Institute got the thumbs up from national education inspectors.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) scrutiny panel will now formally advise the Scottish Government that it has assessed UHI as 'fully meeting' quality standards

The positive 'rigorous review' by the panel, which is drawn from the higher education sector, means a final decision could be reached within weeks.

Cabinet Secretary of Education and Lifelong Learning Michael Russell said: 'This is a tremendous achievement for UHI and is a key step in achieving its long

held ambition of university title. UHI is already playing an important role in enabling people across the region to access higher education without having to leave the area.'

UHI principal James Fraser said: 'It would be an understatement to say we are delighted, but we must contain our celebrations until a final decision is made by the Privy Council.'

We very much hope that the people of the Highlands and Islands will have something wonderful to celebrate in the new year when they finally have a university of their own.'

UHI has more than 8,000 students and more than 100 courses at 12 institutions, including Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, West Highland College and Argyll College.

Heron Bay crash victims escape serious injury

TWO PEOPLE escaped serious injuries after their car spun off the A82 into a ditch on Monday morning.

The single-car incident happened four miles south of Fort William at Heron Bay, just after 10am. Both occupants of the car were taken to the Belford Hospital. The male driver was uninjured but his female passenger was kept in overnight for supervision after receiving a knock on the head.

Concern over Drimnin ferry

LOCHABER councillors have expressed 'strong concern' at the absence of discussion at ward level about Highland Council's decision to withdraw £35,453 annual grant funding from the privately-run Drimnin ferry between Drimnin in Morvern, Laga Bay on Loch Sunart and Tobermory.

According to council figures, passenger numbers fell from 1,400 in 2008-9 to 755 last year, equating to £46 subsidy per passenger.

Local sources say traffic is considerably heavier than that and councillors agreed to hold a meeting with the community. The issue will be placed on the ward forum agenda for February 7.

Invergarry school gains grant

INVERGARRY Primary School has been granted £500 towards its outdoor activities programme from Lochaber councillors' discretionary budget.

Ballachulish Community Council was awarded £2,000 to help pay for a slate obelisk at the entrance to the village.

NEWSDESK

01631 568000

Trial delayed

A FISHING boat skipper charged with risking lives by leaving his wheelhouse unattended has had his trial delayed until next year.

William Paterson, aged 49, of Carradale, Argyll, denies three charges under the Merchant Shipping Act and will now face trial at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court in May.

Alan Oman, 68, also of Carradale, denied failing to ensure a proper look-out as owner of the vessel and also faces trial.

No plea taken

A MULL man appeared on petition at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday on a charge of embezzlement.

Peter Dugdale, aged 54, from Tobermory, made no plea or declaration.

Fort shops weather winter storm

RECENT adverse weather doesn't seem to have slowed Christmas shopping in Fort William, with some shops in the town saying they are doing better than last year.

Black's Outdoor Leisure manager Ian MacPherson said sales were running ahead of last Christmas.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'The snow seems to bring people in. Nobody wants to travel in this weather so people are using local shops more.'

The feeling was echoed at DE Shoes, with manager Mike Brown equally upbeat. He said: 'It's been better than last year. We have products

West coast fishing industry 'at risk' after quota cuts

reduction in monkfish quotas was cut to two per cent.

There was, however, a 10 per cent increase in the quotas for high value mrim, a type of flat-fish.

Last week's discussions resulted in a 25 per cent reduction in catch sizes for cod and whiting – reduced from the 50 per cent proposed. Haddock quotas were also reduced by a quarter, while prawn fisherman were hit by a 15 per cent cut.

Man pushed police officer

AN OBAN man who pushed a police officer was fined £450 at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday.

Torquil Telfer, aged 24, of Firthard, Connel Road, admitted that on April 25 at

over the past two years. We now don't have the quotas for many fisherman to make a living.

We feel we have been ignored by Brussels, ignored by the UK Government. Even worse, we feel ignored by the Scottish Government when it comes to helping alleviate the problems we're having on the west coast.

'There's plenty of fish in the sea, but we don't have the quota to catch them.'

He claimed environmental campaigners demanding cuts are in turn causing a significant increase in the number of wasteful discards.

He said: 'There's a direct correlation there and I'd be happy to stand up anywhere in the world and say that.'

Former Mallaig prawn boat skipper Pimmy

MacLean said the move was a 'disaster' for the industry.

He said: 'Cuts are not what they need right now. If anything, fishermen should be able to land what they catch.'

Meanwhile, trade sanctions could be imposed on Iceland after the country decided to set its own unilateral mackerel quotas outside the bounds of the international coastal states management agreement.

Ian Gatt, chief executive of the Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association, said: 'Considering that Iceland never even fished for the species prior to 2005, their decision to significantly increase even further an already grossly over-inflated quota is the height of irresponsibility.'

Adam Morris Meikle, aged 25, of 41 Buchany Dounie, Dunblane, was also fined £600 at Oban Sheriff Court after being found guilty of performing the manoeuvre

Ex-soldier shouted racist remarks

A FORMER soldier, who was awarded a commendation for bravery, has admitted shouting racist remarks at a staff member outside an Indian restaurant.

Ross MacLellan, aged 20, of 19A Glencruitten Drive, Oban, pled guilty at Oban Sheriff Court to acting in a racially aggravated manner

at 11.10pm outside Oban's Coriander restaurant on October 9 this year.

MacLellan had consumed 'five or six' cans of lager before the incident, after which police traced and arrested him.

Defence agent Sandy Mitchell said his client believed the man had

bumped into him, which prompted the verbal abuse. He added that MacLellan had received a commendation of bravery during his time as a rifleman in Afghanistan, before he was discharged in 2009.

MacLellan was fined £540 and ordered to pay £450 to the victim.

Mrs Jones was contacted by Meikle some time after the incident. She claimed he asked her to change her statement, something Meikle denied.

Sentencing, Sheriff Douglas Small said: 'I don't believe the accused when he said he did not do a handbrake turn. That really is the end of it.'

on May 1 this year. The court had previously heard that Meikle, who pled not guilty, had been refused entry to the Oban Camping and Caravan Park by owner, Judith Jones.

Meikle then sped off in his orange Subaru Impreza and performed a handbrake turn before leaving the park.

The court also heard that

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The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Give drivers a break

ANYONE travelling any distance during Christmas and New Year in the car will be quick to notice just how much it is costing to fill up with fuel.

But with trains and planes at a virtual standstill in many parts of the UK during the ongoing cold snap, anyone considering alternatives to taking the car isn't exactly spoilt for choice.

There is no good news on the horizon - the new year increase in VAT is bound to add further to the cost of motoring at a time when surely, it would be better to give drivers a break - especially those in rural areas and on islands.

GLASGOW LETTER

Na Caimbeulaich

'WE ARE just an ordinary west Highland family.'

'Like so many others we were brought up on acroft where the family relied on the land and fishing and in the local community there was plenty of singing and piping.'

These are the words of Kenna Campbell - well my attempt at translating what she said in Gaelic - when she was asked to describe her family background at the recent meeting of Comann Gaidhlig Ghlaschu in Sgoil Ghaidhlig Ghlaschu.

The word 'ordinary' is not, of course, relevant to Na Caimbeulaich, surely the most well-known and most successful musical family in the Gaeltacht.

Having made their singing debut with the members in the current line-up, Kenna with daughters Mary Anne and Wilma, Seumas and Maggie MacDonald, about 13 years ago and then going into abeyance for many of those years they have now performed at several events.

At this meeting the purpose was to link their music to their local Skye community, the area around their home in Greepie close to Dunvegan.

The music used as illustration came from the three generations, two of which were represented in the group, with the music of the oldest group being provided courtesy of the archives at the Scottish School of Studies.

Mary Anne provided most of the narration and highlighted the contrasting ways in which the songs were sung over the years emphasising especially the different approaches introduced when formal appearances on stage were being made.

The importance of the piping tradition was very evident and the group treated the audience to several examples of peult a beul which only they can sing with such musicality and precision.

You will have gathered that this was a most enjoyable and informative evening's entertainment but with Glasgow still experiencing very cold weather the size of the audience was probably less than expected.

There is still an opportunity, however, for those who missed out to catch up with Na Caimbeulaich at Celtic Connections when they will be performing in St Andrew's in the Square on January 20.

The even better news is that early next year they hope to publish a book which will be accompanied by a CD.

PRESS POLICY

WEATHEObanTimesdoourutmostmakesurethatallour reports are fair, accurate and balanced, but we accept that, on occasion, mistakes can occur in the hectic process of producing the biggest local newspaper in the West Highlands.

It is the policy of The Oban Times Group to correct any errors in print. If you find an error of fact on our pages please write to The Editor, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB giving your daytime telephone number where possible. This statement of policy will appear on this page every week along with any corrections or clarifications. The Oban Times adheres to the Press Complaints' Commission's Code of Conduct. The views expressed in The Oban Times are not necessarily those of this newspaper.



Santa visits County Chest Hospital, Oban, 1993

This week we turn the clock back to 1993 when Santa called in to visit patients and staff at the former County Chest Hospital in Oban. The photograph was submitted by John Hay of Airds Cottage, Taynuilt. We invite readers to send in flashback photographs. Please send prints to *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB, or email editor@obantimes.co.uk. Prints or emails must be accompanied by a caption, name, address and telephone number. Anyone wishing their prints returned must supply a stamped addressed envelope.

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Positive Lochaber development vital

Sir,

I refer to points raised by Councillor Donald Cameron regarding his claim in response to James Kennedy that it would have been a shock if any of the 13 councillors present had supported my motion to approve the Morbaine application and that approval of that application would have killed off strategic planning at Blar Mhor.

Considering those planning councillors from other parts of the Highlands had supported the Waterfront Development, it shouldn't have been a shock.

Gates will open at 7pm and the event will start at 8pm. Tickets are available from the SECC ticket office or by telephone 0141 564 4220.

Hogmanay in Glasgow

THIS year's New Year celebrations in Glasgow's George Square will be very much a ceilidh with performances from Salsa Celta, Capercaillie and Skerryvore.

The planner accepts they over egged their application. All developers want to have a free run. The planner who submitted both reports advised me that he had considered approving both developments.

I am delighted to have a development on the Blar. I believe Lochaber is not in a position to refuse positive development. As for the Waterfront not coming to fruition - they simply could not deliver what they said they would.

Councillor Bill Clark, Caol and Mallaig ward.

Education service must change

Sir,

I'd like to reassure readers that the Argyll Rural Schools Network (ARSN) is entirely wrong when it accuses council officers of attempting to deceive both the council and residents via proposals to amalgamate primary schools.

The council is committed to providing a quality education service within the constraints of a reducing budget and we have been open about our consultation and the reasons for it.

In this continued spirit of openness we have published a full outline of why we deemed the reports quoted by ARSN are valid and relevant to our proposals. It can be read in full on the council's website.

The council faces its

biggest budget reduction for a generation. Savings of £11.4 million need to be found across all council services. It can no longer afford to continue operating schools which are at less than half capacity and which in the education of some children costing £30,000 per year, compared to only £3,000 per year for others in larger schools.

While some people do not agree with the proposals we cannot avoid the fact that the education service must change. The consultation gives everyone genuine opportunity to share their ideas so together we can agree what these changes are.

Cleland Sneddon, Director of Community Services, Argyll and Bute Council.

Biomass plant plan unfair

Sir,

Comments from Peel Energy's development manager Jonathan Burley in your recent report on the proposed Corpach biomass plant can only be described as complete flim flam.

His claim that an important element of the plan is to make full use of the harbour is not what I heard at the consultation in the Moorings Hotel, when I was told of the difficulty of getting timber materials to piers and loading ships to bring said materials to Corpach. He also said he understands the concerns from local people that the road network is incapable of carrying an extra 40 to 60 lorries a day - just paying lip service there then. Transport Scotland's report that this

would present no problem

is in itself laughable. The consultants were totally blind sided by local reaction at the consultation to Transport Scotland's claim.

A journey that normally takes eight minutes from Corpach to town centre takes 45 minutes if you are lucky in summer - and that is without more and more lorries. If it is 60 lorries in, then it is also 60 lorries out - in reality 120 lorry journeys.

For deliveries from 7am till 11pm that works out at between 5 and 7.5 journeys per hour for 16 hours per day. Where is the quality of life in that for the local community? How can it be 'green' to make the people of Corpach and surrounding area's air quality, noise levels and congestion worse?

The plan is not only unfair and ill thought out but probably immoral. The promise of free heating for new houses is just not realistic. Where would this housing be? Nowhere near this site that's for sure.

Norman Clark, Corpach.

Thank you

Sir,

With all the gloom surrounding the recent winter weather, I'd like to put in a word of appreciation for the people and organisations who have responded so magnificently to the difficulties of the past few days.

So thank you to the Scottish Hydro Electric boys, the bus drivers of West Coast Motors and last but not least to Royal Mail and Joe, our favourite 'postie' of all time. May you all have a very happy and well-deserved Christmas break.

John Gosling, Barcaldine.

ISLAY LETTER

Sparkling Round Church

BOWMORE'S famous Round Church is pristine white in the low winter sunshine.

In fact, it is outshining the snow which arrived a week ago and is now coating the surrounding countryside.

The church is looking at its best following the complete exterior redecoration of the historic A-listed building thanks to the generosity of the Morrison Bowmore Distillery Company which carried out the project as a gift to the Kilarrow parish church.

The work was carried out on the distillers' behalf by a local contractor whose staff's efforts are praiseworthy indeed.

Bowmore Distillery has provided the redecoration of the outside of the church since the middle of the 19th century.

It began when twin brothers William and James Mutter were the innovative distillery owners and has continued on a regular basis long after the Mutters sold the business to the Sheriff's Distilling Company in 1925.

The minister, Kirk Session and congregation are all greatly indebted to the distillery company for its continuing generosity. They are also grateful to the MacEachern Brothers for their high standard of workmanship.

Christmas celebrations

A SELECTION of popular carols, interspersed with advent scripture readings, pleased the large congregation attending the joint carol service of the linked Kildalton and Oa and Kilarrow parishes in Port Ellen's St John's Church on December 12.

Sharing the presentation and readings were Church of Scotland Reader Angela Stather and parish minister the Rev Dr Rob Barlow. Jean Campbell was in her accustomed place at the organ.

Còisí Ghàidhlig Ìle, led by Iseabail Mactaggart, performed Gaelic versions of 'Child in a Manger' and 'Silent Night' and the richly blended voices greatly pleased.

Under the baton of Maureen MacDonald, the Port Ellen Primary School choir, complete with antlers, were cheered to the echo.

Its Gaelic input certainly charmed and its performance of 'I Believe in Angels' put Abba well and truly in the shade.

The Christmas Eve service at St John's, led by the parish minister, begins at 11.30pm.

Carol singing at the Round Church at 11.15pm on December 24 will precede the Watchnight Service at 11.30pm.

Angela Stather will preside.

Panto at Bowmore

'IT WAS curiousser and curiousser' and

'we got what we saw and saw what we got'.

Yes, this was the Bowmore Primary School's panto take on 'Alice in Wonderland' played to packed houses in the high school assembly hall on December 16.

Disco and ceilidh dancers peopled the stage along with exotic flowers, busy bees, woodland animals and the participants in an impressive Royal procession.

All the usual suspects were much to the fore including the elusive White Rabbit, Hare, The Mad Hatter and the slothful Caterpillar.

The Queen of Hearts threatened everyone with beheading, and the audience participation added to the merriment nowhere more so than in the robust singing of 'The Lights of Lochindaal'.

Sadly, Tweedledum and Tweedledee could not be present but the cloned and quiffed Jedward upped the comedy stakes.

Costumes and sets were a spectacle of colour and ingenuity, local references achieved the correct response and the comic timing worked a treat. Lewis Carroll would have approved. And did we all enjoy it? Oh yes we did!

Agus Nollaig chridheil dhuiibh uile.

Hugh Smith, 4 Flora Street, Bowmore, Islay PA43 7JX. Tel:

01496 810658.

A view from the tower

by McCaig

Bearing gifts

BY THE time you read this the last minute preparations for what was, and is for Christians round the world, one of the two great religious festivals of their calendar should be made.

Although Christmas has been usurped first by commercial considerations and now by those who deny all religions but still take the 'fringe' benefits, such as public holidays to themselves, as of right.

However, the commercial brouhaha that makes such a positive contribution to this time of year has so far been a little muted.

As this is written almost a week in advance I cannot be precise as to whether the 'shop, shop till you drop' syndrome will kick in at the last moment and the power of the credit card will cause a spending madness, but I doubt it.

The days of paying for Christmas excesses while adding the summer holiday to the outstanding balance have diminished by command of Messrs Cameron, Osborne and Clegg.

Has the era of political and financial reality hit home at last?

These and many other musings have filled my mind as I write this from my hospital bed where I am confined by a burnt foot - too close contact with my hot-water bottle - and other complications which may mean I will be spending a fair portion of the festive season being ministered to by the wonderful staff at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban - and I mean every word of that!

Anyone who enters any of the professions involved does, indeed, bear a gift - that of being real and genuine and going that extra mile without question.

The inestimable value of rubber gloves

OBSERVATION of the NHS at close quarters has given me insight into why it does genuinely cost an awful lot of money.

While, of course, there may be excesses - and where are there not? - we never appreciate just how many millions of pounds - even the supply of rubber gloves must cost.

But this is the price we must pay for the protection from infection.

We all know of cases in recent years - and as far back as dear old Florence and the era of carbolic soap - no sneet intended - where slovenly practices have led to problems of epidemic proportion.

Such is the price we must willingly pay for our protection.

The various shades of blue gloves and their significance is still a mystery to me but I know that the 'ban infection' campaign driven home by current Health Minister Nicola Sturgeon has made a difference.

Such may seem trivial to those who have never thought about why a nurse can change her gloves up to six times while carrying

out a single procedure.

Being in hospital has allowed close observation of what is involved in a very basic principle.

As far as seasonal 'gifts' are concerned, I will end this part of the homily with a plea to all political parties: enter a period of reconciliation within your ranks. Ban excesses of the left and right - none have all the solutions - and consider a degree of co-operation that avoids the daft ideas of the 'Big Society' - a bunch of well-heeled public schoolboys dreaming in 'do-gooder' mode and of Ed Miliband's realignment of the Left for its own sake.

Seeing and seizing opportunities

WE HAVE rightly had a campaign to have more 'bobbies on the beat'.

Trouble is how to pay for them and, if we can't, where does the expertise gathered go?

One man, and colleagues from the police and the armed forces, has channelled that expertise, whether it be in the reality of why divers died on a wreck to the larger-than-life reality of media services, film and television.

One local man who certainly has the expert knowledge of the police work involved is Fred Hall, ex-chief inspector of Strathclyde Police for Oban, Lorn and the Isles and a former head of that force's diving team.

Along with John Paterson and Stephen Toft, both of whom are uniquely qualified to bring their skills to the serious problems of what really caused a death underwater and to what's new in the fantastic world of 21st century James Bonds'

Comedians' adventure takes in the west coast

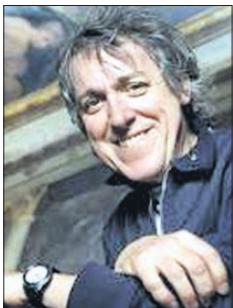
THE WEST coast is among the television highlights during the holiday season when it forms the backdrop for the latest adventure of 'Three men in a Boat' comedians Dara O'Briain, Griff Rhys Jones and Rory McGrath.

The programme was filmed in and around Argyll and the islands and includes footage from Kilmore Games, where Dara takes on the might of the women's heavyweight champion in a hammer throwing competition. The women win...or do they?

The three presenters also took a keen interest in the beer tent during the shooting of the programme.

The men visited various other places of interest including Inverawe Smokehouse and Easdale Island.

On an overnight stay in Tobermory, they visited the distillery where they enjoyed a wee dram in the island's



Griff Rhys Jones. only distillery before seeking out local attractions.

All in all, the three men had a great time. Griff Rhys Jones told *The Oban Times* that he liked his time on the west coast as it seemed to be more relaxed than other places he had visited.

The two-part programme will be shown on Monday December 27 at 8pm on BBC2 and Thursday December 30 at 8pm on the same channel.

The collaboration will be one

ARGYLL musician Aidan O'Rourke and An Tobar, the Tobermory Arts Centre have been commissioned to write a piece of music for the Cultural Olympics.

The commission, through the PRS for Music Foundation, will see a collaboration between two of Argyll's most prolific musicians to write a piece of music which will feature at the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad as the city hosts the Olympic and Paralympics Games.

Composer

Aidan, from Oban, is a fiddle player and composer renowned both as a founder member of Blazin' Fiddles and Lau. He is the three times winner of the Best Live Act at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. He has also featured on more than 80 albums, most recently guesting on the latest solo album by Idelwild's Roddy Woomble.

An Tobar, managed by Mull man Gordon MacLean has endeavoured to work on new music reflecting on the people of the island and beyond.

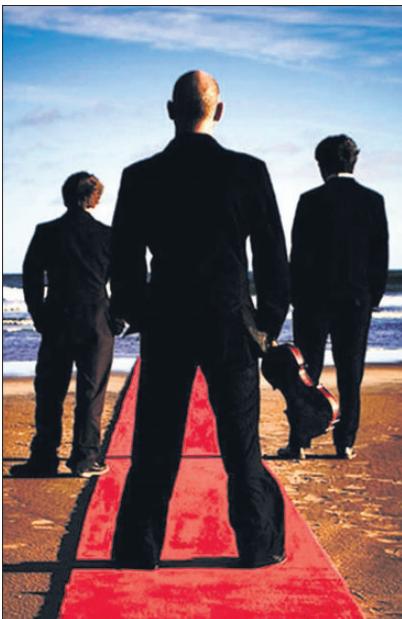
The collaboration will be one

of only 20 commissions in total, each piece lasting 12 minutes and offering a snapshot of the quality and diversity of new music in the UK.

Aidan's commission is called TAT-1 and is inspired by the fact that Aidan's home town, Oban, was the point of departure for the first transatlantic telephone cable.

The 12 minute TAT-1 will be the centre piece of the project which will also include four other shorter pieces giving a fuller picture of the TAT-1 story. These will be titled Monarch, the massive cable-laying ship which spent 2 years in the North Atlantic, Clarenville, the town in Newfoundland connected to Oban by the cable, Gallanach, the picturesque bay where the cable leaves the UK, and The Hotline, for years the cable carried the famous hotline between Moscow and Washington.

Aidan is currently on tour in Japan with his band Lau. They will embark on a Scottish tour early next summer, playing Skipinnish Ceilidh House Oban on May 19.



Lau are currently on tour in Japan

Leisure correspondent

Louise Lee

llee@obantimes.co.uk 01631 568023

gig guide

Every Thursday >	Skipinnish Ceilidh House	Ceilidh Night free entry
Thursday 23 December >	Tim O'Connor	
Markie Dans		
Friday 24 December >	DJ Stevo	
Markie Dans		
Saturday 25 December >	Sandra MacBeth	
Markie Dans	9.30pm Licensed until 2am	
Saturday 25 December >	White Night	
Skipinnish Ceilidh House	(with DJs £10 - 10pm)	
Sunday 26 December >	Ash Bash's Bday Bash	
Markie Dans	with Chunks	
Monday 27 December >	Open Mic Night Night	
Markie Dans	with Stretch	
Friday 31 December >	Hogmanay Party	
Skipinnish Ceilidh House	with bands and DJs - £15	
Saturday 1 January >	Rox Revival Ceilidh Band	
Skipinnish Ceilidh House	& Special Guests - £12	

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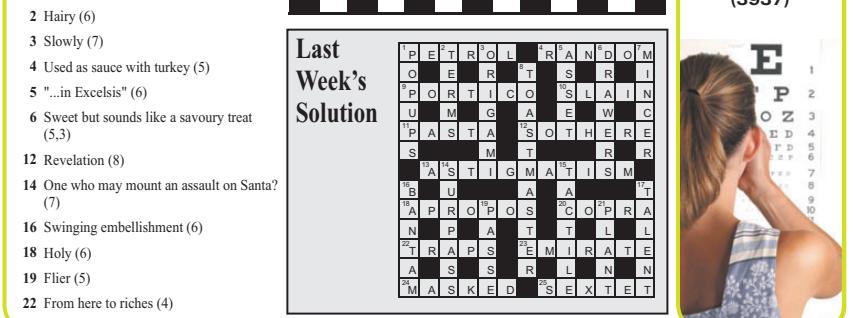
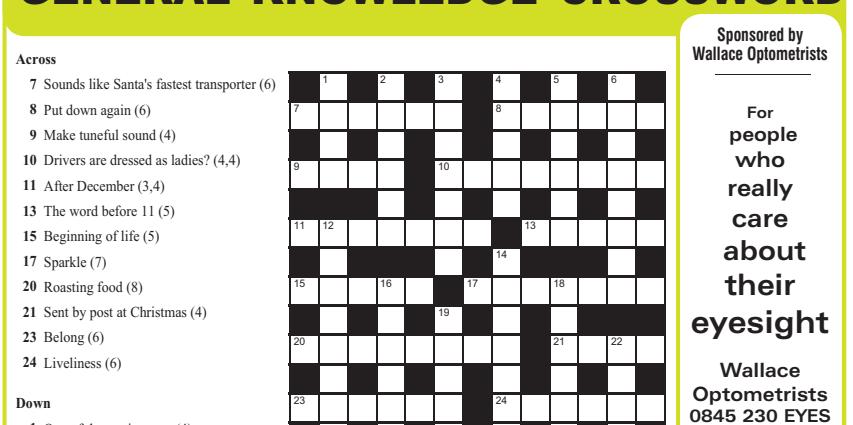


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Strictly ceilidh dancing at Rockfield

Fleet-footed children at Rockfield Primary School, Oban, took part in their own country-dancing version of the popular television series, Strictly Come Dancing. Senior pupils at the school had been learning country dancing steps for their end of term ceilidh, which was held on Tuesday, but as an extra practice the primary seven pupils took part in the competition in front of a judging panel made up of deputy head teacher Sylvia Clark and retired teachers Ann Kunz, Rosie Coleman and Lynda Oxland. Michael and Joanie Garvin provided the music during the dance, which was held in the school campus main hall. 15_152dance02

Personal Christmas Greetings



Those Were The Days The Oban Times

Thursday December 21, 1995

Christmas post safe in Scout's hands

LORN Scout Group delivered thousands of letters over the weekend and raised £1,700.

A few bemused parents were also seen wandering around the streets with bunches of letters, looking at street names on Saturday and Sunday.

It took the Scout Troop, Cub Pack and Beaver Colony the best part of three days to sort out more than 11,000 Christmas cards to be distributed to Oban and Lorn, including Bonawe, Barcaldine and Kilmore.

There was even a letter to South Africa – on which the sender had kindly put a stamp – and the odd letter to Glasgow and Edinburgh, which were posted normally.

The First Argyll Lorn Group did a reciprocal deal with Scouts in Connel and

Taynuilt, delivering their Oban letters for them.

Assistant Scout Leader Jeff Anderson said the money raised would be used for the upkeep of the hall, into which a new water supply had to be put this year at a cost of more than £800.

The Scout post was organised by the parents' committee and Scout Leader Richard Bourne, with the help of shop keepers around the town who agreed to have boxes for the post on their premises.

Oban man wins top squash title

OBAN born squash player Martin Heath, aged 22, dominated the final of the Scottish Championships at Heriot Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh, on Sunday to lift the prestigious title for the first time.

The world ranked number 30 and

Scottish event top seed, who plays in events all over the world from his London base, had survived a semi final fight on the Saturday when he took five games to overcome the challenge of his older brother David.

In the final against number two seed Barry Sutherland of Newlands, Heath raced to a first game 9-2 victory and although Sutherland, the Scottish Grand Prix champion, showed more endeavour in the second game he couldn't match the speed and variation in Heath's play and lost 9-1.

The three-game final and the Scottish title was won in little under 30 minutes with Heath blasting his way to a 9-5 third game win.

David Heath secured third place beating P O'Hara of the Cumbernauld Club.

'Winning the Scottish title is something you dream about,' said Martin.

'It is good to play well as I feel I haven't always done my self justice in Scotland.'

Blackface lambs sell to £67.50 at Islay sale

UNITED Auctions held their last sale of the year at Islay Auction Mart when 2,786 head of lambs and sheep were sold.

All classes met a spirited trade with Texel cross lambs from No 6 Bayview selling to 187 pence.

Cast ewes maintained recent high rates with Charolais from Craigens selling to £82.50.

Blackface lambs were an exceptional trade with

the top price coming from the Kepolls consignment realising £67.50.

The Coull consignment of lambs led the prices per kilo when their Suffolk crosses sold to 187 pence.

Cast ewes maintained recent high rates with Charolais from Craigens selling to £82.50.

Beltex is champion at Stirling prime show and sale

UNITED Auctions sold 6,812 prime sheep including 4812 lambs averaging 168.3p/kg (-0.9p/wk) and 2,000 ewes and rams at Stirling last Thursday. The sale including a Christmas show judged by H Moir, Perth.

The champion was a 47kg Beltex from Taylor, Easter Ochtermuthil which sold to £100. The reserve was a 42.7kg from Mr Stevenson, Coilavoulin which sold to £88. Texel lambs from Cupar Road sold to £119 and to 200p per kilo from Glenalmond while Beltex from Guardswell sold to 214p per kilo.

Texel ewes from Nevay sold to £107 with Suffolks from Quixwood to £91.

Gartvaig sold Bluefaced Leicester ewes to £72.50 and Suffolk rams to £85.50.

Charolais bullocks sell to 216p per kilo at Dingwall

DINGWALL and Highland Marts Ltd sold 82 weaned calves and store cattle, seven breeding cattle, and 104 OTM cattle at Dingwall last Wednesday when quality kinds proved short of buyers requirements.

Bullocks averaged 161.2p and sold to 216.3p per kg for a 245kg Charolais cross from Balloano, Farr, and £805

for an Aberdeen Angus cross from 211 Upper Birichen, Dornoch.

Heifers averaged 147.3p and sold to 215.4p per kg for a 260kg Charolais cross from Balloano, and £785 for a 545kg Simmental cross from Ruthven Farm, Kirkmichael.

Breeding cattle sold to £800 for a Limousin cross cow in calf from Woodburn, Lairg.



Over three acres of trees are being felled in Craignish in an attempt to contain the Scottish outbreak of Ramorum.

Argyll forests under attack

COMMERCIAL forestry, worth millions of pounds to the Scottish economy, could be at risk after an extremely damaging plant disease was found in Argyll.

Ramorum disease has been confirmed in Japanese larch trees in a forestry plantation on the Craignish peninsula, resulting in over three acres of the trees being felled.

It is the first time the fatal disease – which only last year was discovered to infect Japanese larch – has been found in Scotland.

It is hoped that the drastic step will prevent any further infection, but the Forestry Commission Scotland are warning that, if it is not stopped, it could present a huge risk to one of the country's biggest industries.

The head of plant health at the commission, Roddy Burgess, said: 'It comes as quite a bitter blow that we've found Ramorum in Scotland. While we are dealing with around 100 infected sites in

the south western peninsula of England and south Wales, we had hoped it had been contained.'

'If we don't manage to contain this particular area and it does spread then what is certain to happen is that there will be a considerable impact on commercial forestry of the Japanese larch.'

'While that only makes up about five per cent of Scotland's forestry at the moment, it is still unknown why the disease has now started to infect the Japanese larch.'

'Whether it jumps into another species we don't know, so potentially there is a significant threat to Scottish forestry.'

While the timber from the felled trees can be used if treated properly, the land cannot be reused for Japanese larch as there is evidence that the disease can remain active within the soil.

Ramorum was first discovered in California in

1995 when a large number of tanakas died mysteriously.

It appears to be spread by spores, which are carried in mist, wind and rain. As such, the Forestry Commission believe the chances of it spreading throughout the UK and they were felled before the trees died.'

Dr Bob McIntosh, the director of Forestry Commission Scotland, said: 'I urge all owners of larch trees to inspect them regularly for signs of decline or poor health, particularly next spring when they produce new needles, and to contact us if they suspect they might have Ramorum disease.'

Symptoms on Japanese larch trees include wilting shoot tips, needles turning black and falling prematurely, and cankers that bleed resin can appear on the branches and upper trunk. However, the disease on larch is more difficult to identify in winter because larch shed needles in the autumn, although tell-tale resin bleeds can still be visible on the trunks.

He

said: 'It was called that as some oaks, which aren't true oaks, were found to have it in America. Only five oaks were found to have it throughout the whole of the UK and they were felled before the trees died.'

Dr Bob McIntosh, the director of Forestry Commission Scotland, said: 'I urge all owners of larch trees to inspect them regularly for signs of decline or poor health, particularly next spring when they produce new needles, and to contact us if they suspect they might have Ramorum disease.'

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Stirling hosts 'Strictly ladies' show and sale

UNITED Auctions held their inaugural 'Strictly Ladies' show and sale of Texel and Charolais in-lamb ewes and gimmers at Stirling last Monday when an excellent show of sheep and a good ring-side of buyers resulted in Texel gimmers selling to a top of 4,000gns for one of the first prize pens of three from RE and RF Scott, Ashvale (Drumpark) to A and J Alston, Chapelton of Menmuir, Brechin. This gimmer was by Kelso Oxygen which was Sire of the Year in 2009.

Gimmers

Second top price of 3,000gns went to Jimmy Douglas of Cairness for his second prize gimmer

**COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
APPLICATION FOR TWO
MOORINGS: UPPER LOCH TEACUIS**

Notice is hereby given that Matthew J.L. Wilson has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Executive, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by the section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, to carry out laying of two moorings at the above location in the positions(s):

	Latitude	Longitude
Mooring 1.	56° 37.522N	05° 50.193W
Mooring 2.	56° 37.660N	05° 50.358W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspection at Lochaline Post Office.

Objections relating to safety of navigation, in respect of the application should be made in writing to:

Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference: 2SPC2|51385

Matthew J.L. Wilson, Claggan Schoolhouse, By Lochaline, Morvern, Oban, Argyll. PA34 5XB

**COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
APPLICATION FOR 2 NEW
MOORINGS: EASDALE SOUND**

Notice is hereby given that Graeme Bruce has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Executive, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by the section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, in respect of 2 new moorings at the above location in the positions(s):

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Mooring 1	56° 17.690N	05° 39.164W
Mooring 2	56° 17.685N	05° 39.231W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspection at Oban Public Library, 77 Albany Street, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4AW

Objections relating to safety of navigation, in respect of the application should be made in writing to:

Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference: 2SPC2|51433

Graeme Bruce, The Old Coach House, Ellensabeach, Isle of Seil, Oban, Argyll

**COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949
APPLICATION FOR**
Single Mooring: Ardmucknish Bay

Notice is hereby given that Ken Cameron has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Executive, under section 34 of the Coast Protection Act 1949, as amended by the section 36 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, in respect of a single mooring at the above location in the positions(s):

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Mooring	56° 29.552N	05° 25.499W

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspection at Ledaig Post Office

Objections relating to safety of navigation, in respect of the application should be made in writing to:

Gordon Hastie, The Scottish Government, Ports and Harbours Branch, Area 2G North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ within 28 days of the date of this notice quoting reference: 2SPC2|51435

Ken Cameron, 18 Keils Crofts, Benderloch, Oban, Argyll

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The Scottish Government

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND
THE A830 TRUNK ROAD (BANAVIE SWING BRIDGE) (TEMPORARY WIDTH RESTRICTION) ORDER 2010

The Scottish Ministers give notice that they have made the above Order temporarily restricting vehicles over 9 feet 10 inches (3 metres) width on that length of the A830 Fort William - Mallaig Trunk Road in Banavie in the vicinity of the western end of the C1160 Corpach Moss Road (Northern Loop - Camaghael Road) westwards for a distance of 150 metres or thereby.

The Order, which is required because works are being or are proposed to be executed on the said length of road to allow re-decking, re-waterproofing and resurfacing to take place, will be in operation from 8th January 2011 until 00.01 hours on 1st May 2011, but will only have effect in relation to the length of road as indicated by the appropriate traffic signs. The Order does not provide for any exemptions.

The works at the bridge will require the bridge width for traffic to be reduced to 3 metres.

It is anticipated that the works will be carried out over a 14 week period during the above period.

There is no suitable alternative route for traffic affected by this restriction during the prohibition.

For information about roadworks on motorways and trunk roads visit www.trafficscotland.org.uk

A copy of the Order and this Notice will be available on the Transport Scotland website at www.transportscotland.gov.uk/road/road-and-traffic-orders/traffic-orders

D M C MACNEILL

A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers
Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road,
Glasgow G4 0HF.



Mrs Caroline H Sinclair has applied to **decroft** part of the croft at 1 & 2 Ardconnel, Kilmore & Kilbride extending to 0.250 ha for the purpose of providing a site for a dwellinghouse. Case number: 4.86.28426 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, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW or info@crofterscommission.org.uk by 10 January 2011 quoting the above case number. Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information inquiry.



The following decrofting Directions have been granted:
Part Croft
Ardtir, Lismore & Appin
Direction dated 15 December 2010 granted to Graeme W MacCorquodale. Area ext to 0.0396 ha.
Conditions: 1. Purchase within 5 years.
2. The land is used for amenity ground to an existing dwellinghouse.
3. Complete enclosure of the land with a stockproof fence within 4 months of purchase.
4. Maintenance of the fence by each successive owner or occupier of the land.
Case Number: 4.86.27756
The granting of this Direction may be appealed to the Scottish Land Court, within 42 days from the date of this advert. Information on how to appeal is available from the Crofters Commission.



NOTIFICATION OF COMMISSION DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS TO CREATE NEW CROFTS

1. Application by Shaun Bate, owner of Highfield Croft, Achavieach Road, Glencruitten, Oban. **Approved.**

2. Application by Ballimore Farm Estate, owner of Ballimore, Kilcrennish, Taynuilt. **Refused.**

Parties with an interest in any of the above applications may appeal our decision to the Scottish Land Court, within 42 days. Information on how to appeal is available from the Crofters Commission.

**APPLICATION FOR APPORTIONMENT
GALMORE COMMON GRAZINGS**

Mrs Jennifer MacLachlan, 5 Achluachrach, Kilmonivaig intends to lodge an application for apportionment of approximately 1.317 Ha hectares for the purpose of erection of a croft house for unattended croft, erection of livestock/implementation shed and formation of livestock holding areas.

Miss Linda Campbell, Grazings Clerk, Dykelands, Camaghael, Fort William, PH33 7NF, has a copy of the application which can be inspected by any person interested.

Any comments on the application should be lodged with the Crofters Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW before 7 January 2011.

Acopy of any representations made will be forwarded to the applicant.

To find out more about living and working in argyll & bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk


**REFUSE COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS
FOR CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR**
SPECIAL NOTICE FOR ISLE OF ISLAY RESIDENTS

Due to the Christmas holidays the following changes will be made to the scheduled collections. Commercial bin's due to be uplifted on Tuesday 28th December will now be uplifted on Wednesday 29th December. Glass bins scheduled for Wednesday 29th December will now be collected on Thursday 30th December. Paper bin's scheduled for Monday 27th December and Tuesday 28th December will be uplifted on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th December respectively. Garbreck Landfill Site will be open on Monday 27th December and Tuesday 28th December 2010 – all other services as normal.

Week commencing 3rd January 2010 will not be affected and collections will be undertaken as normal.

OBAN & LORN REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION

Refuse and Recycling collection services on Monday and Tuesday of the Christmas and New Year Holiday period will be carried out as normal. All other day services will be as normal.

CIVIC AMENITY/RECYCLING SITE – MOLEIGH

The site will close at 4:00pm on Friday 24th December and 31st December and reopen on Monday 27th, Tuesday 28th December and Monday 3rd, Tuesday 4th January from 11am – 3pm. All other day site will be open as normal.

MULL & IONA REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION

Refuse and Recycling collection services on Monday and Tuesday of the Christmas and New Year Holiday period will be carried out as normal.

CIVIC AMENITY/RECYCLING SITE – GLENORM

The site will close at 2:00pm on Friday 24th December and 31st December and reopen on Monday 27th December and 3rd January from 9am – 4pm.

TIRE REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION

Refuse and Recycling collection services on Monday and Tuesday of the Christmas and New Year Holiday period will be carried out as normal.

CIVIC AMENITY/RECYCLING SITE – GOTTY BAY

The site will be closed 25th, 26th December and 1st, 2nd January

Coll, Colonsay, Lismore

Schedules will run as normal, subject to adverse weather conditions and restricted ferry timetables.

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 67/ 69 Chalmers Street Ardriahsa PA30 8DX and the location detailed below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning and Regulatory Services 67/ 69 Chalmers Street Ardriahsa PA30 8DX by the 13/01/2011

Ref No: 10/02054/PP

Applicant: Mrs L Silcock

Proposal: Erection of one and a half storey dwellinghouse, detached garage and installation of sewage treatment plant with associated outfall.

Site Address: Land North West Of Carriga Fhada Farm The Oa Isle Of Islay Argyll And Buteshire

Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Port Ellen

Argyll and Bute Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST and Argyll and Bute Council Libraries.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at Planning and Regulatory Services, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8ST and Argyll and Bute Council Libraries.

Applications for planning permission listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be examined at Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR and the location detailed below between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday and by logging to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk and clicking on Online Planning Applications. Written comments for the following list of applications may be made to Planning and Regulatory Services Lorn House Albany Street Oban PA34 4AR by the 13/01/2011

Ref No: 10/01914/PP

Applicant: Mr Shane Cazdow

Proposal: Construction of two 225k wind turbines with a maximum height of 45 metres to blade tip and formation of associated access track and hardstanding areas.

Site Address: Land East Of Camas Nan Gall Toberonochy Isle Of Luing Argyll And Buteshire

Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Culipool

Ref No: 10/01975/PP

Applicant: Mr Ron McRae

Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse, detached garage and formation of access

Site Address: Land North West Of Ardnaos Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Buteshire

Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull

Ref No: 10/02049/PP

Applicant: Mr Colin Gladstone

Proposal: Erection of 2 dwellings and installation of 2 septic tanks

Site Address: Land North Of East Kames Kilmelford Oban Argyll And Buteshire

Location of Plans: Sub Post Office Kilmelford

Ref No: 10/02055/PP

Applicant: Mr And Mrs I Forbes

Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse.

Site Address: Site North Of 79 Nant Drive Oban Argyll And Buteshire

Location of Plans: Oban Area Office

Ref No: 10/02063/PP

Applicant: Mr And Mrs Duncan And Lynn Grant

Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse

Site Address: Land South Of 7 Aray Gardens McCaig Road Oban Argyll And Buteshire

Location of Plans:

S&S Services Subaru

Christmas Eve	8 – 12.30pm
Christmas Day	Closed
Boxing Day	Closed
Monday 27th	Closed
Tuesday 28th 9 – 4pm (Car sales only)	
Wednesday 29th	8 – 6pm
Thursday 30th	8 – 6pm
Friday 31st	8 – 1pm
Saturday 1st	Closed
Sunday 2nd	Closed
Monday 3rd	Closed
Tuesday 4th 10 – 3pm (Car Sales only)	

Tel: 01292 880080/880440

If you have an enquiry out with these opening times please contact John Spicer on 07831 808702.

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new car index

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Victims of domestic violence urged to seek help and support



WOMEN in Oban are being encouraged to seek help if they suffer from any type of violence in the home. Strathclyde Police set up an advice centre in Tesco car park to give out information and make people aware that there is help available for victims of domestic violence. PC Liz Taylor said: 'I want women to come forward and report any form of violence to officers. It is unacceptable and we are there to support women and men who live with violence!' Pictured are, from the back, PC Liz Taylor, Janine Calder from Oban Women's Aid, Sgt Mark Wilson and special constable Flo McBurnie. 16_t52women1

Groups urged to apply for cash which may be axed

VOLUNTARY groups are being told to submit applications for grants

week.

Previously, community organisations could apply for grants all year round with funds paid at the point of determination. But now applications will be assessed by area committees in April and September and funds made available thereafter.

The cost of the festival last year was in excess of £11,000 and it will be more this year as costs get higher including the cost of council venues.

We are very thankful for the use of Lochgilphead High School and the two halls in Ardrishaig but it's not cheap and the council grant goes a long way to meeting that.'

The aim of the third sector grants programme is to support those groups most in need of cash, plus events that will give added economic benefit to communities.

Addressing social inclusion, alleviating rural isolation, enhancing quality of life and improvements in health are some of the criteria used to assess grant applications.

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4 An order for an advertisement shall be deemed to be made on acceptance of the advertiser's order by the Publisher whether placed by telephone, mail, fax or person.
5 Cancellation of display advertising must be received by the Publisher before the publishing deadline, failing which, the publisher reserves the right to invoice the customer in full for the whole cost of the advertisement.
6 The parties submit to the jurisdiction of the Scottish Courts and Scots Law. In the event of any dispute or action by the Publisher to recover payment from an advertiser, it is agreed that matters will be settled in the Oban, Argyll Sheriff Court or such other Court as the Publisher may choose.
7 The Publisher shall not be liable for any loss or damage occasioned by any total or partial failure (however caused) of publication or distribution of any newspaper or edition in which any advertisement is scheduled to appear. In the event of any error, misprint or omission in the printing of an advertisement or part of an advertisement, the Publisher will either re-insert the advertisement or relevant part of the advertisement, as the case may be, or make reasonable refund or adjustment to the cost. No re-insertion, refund or adjustment will be made where the error, misprint or omission does not materially detract from the advertisement.
8 Errors must be notified to the Publisher in writing within fourteen days of publication. In no circumstances shall the total liability of the Publisher for any error, misprint or omission exceed the amount of a full refund of any price paid to the Publisher for the particular advertisement in connection with which liability arose or the cost of a further or corrective advertisement of a type and standard reasonably comparable to that in connection with which liability arose.
9 The Advertiser/Advertising Agency agrees to indemnify the Publisher in respect of all costs, damages or other charges falling upon the publication as the result of legal actions or threatened legal actions arising from the publication of the advertisement in any one or more of a series of advertisements published in accordance with copy instructions supplied to the publication in pursuance of the Advertiser/Advertising Agency order.
10 Adverts under the value of £75 must be paid on acceptance of order by the Publisher. All advertising on a credit basis must be agreed with the Publisher in advance.
11 Payment of any invoice raised by the Publisher will be due 15 days from the date of invoice or as otherwise directed on the invoice. In the event of non-payment the Publisher may charge late payment interest at a rate of 2% and this is chargeable on a daily basis from the due date until the bill is paid. In addition the Publisher may charge a late payment levy of £10 as an administration fee. In the event of late payment the Publisher reserves the right to disallow any discounts given and to raise an additional invoice for the discount which will be treated as though it has been raised with the original invoice.
12 A request to insert an advertisement assumes acceptance of our conditions.

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Everyone's Favourite competition is back and The Oban Times is looking to find the west coast's bonniest baby in 2011.

If you think your baby is the cutest in the West of Scotland then nominate them.

Our panel of judges will help us find our Bonnie Baby of 2011 and the top tot will be crowned Oban Times Bonnie Baby 2011 and his/her parent or guardian will receive a top prize with two runners up also receiving an award.

The deadline to enter your child is **Monday, January 24 at 5pm** and children must be under the age of two on **24/01/2011**.

Parent/Guardian must consent to publication of their child's photograph in our papers by signing the entry form.

Entries, including one photograph, MUST be accompanied by the official entry form which can only be obtained from The Oban Times. Photocopies will not be accepted.

If you wish your picture returned, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Normal Oban Times terms and conditions apply and the editor's decision is final.

Send your entry to:

The Oban Times Bonnie Baby Competition, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll

Name of parent/guardian:.....

Address:.....

Full name of child: Age at 24/01/2011:

Signature of parent/guardian:.....

Oban Times PERSONALS

XMAS PERSONALS



Merry Christmas

Marek and Willie Madej wish all their friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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BIRTH

HUGHES - Felix Arthur: rapid arrival at home early Saturday, 18th Dec (6lb 2). Big brother Rufus and parents delighted by our new addition - many thanks to Oban Maternity Unit, especially Kirsteen and Ronnie.

ENGAGEMENT

MILLER - JOHNSTON - Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Alice, younger daughter of Keith and Jenny, Oban to Tommy, elder son of Tom and Sheila, Strathaven

DEATHS

CORRIERI - Very suddenly on Thursday December 16, 2010 at Stirling Royal Infirmary, Steve Corrieri of Byand, Aros Lane, Callander, beloved husband to the late Margaret also a dear father to John, Keith, Roslyn and Victor and the late Frank and a much loved father-in-law, granddad and great granddad to the family. Funeral service on Thursday December 23, at St Andrew's Episcopal Church, Callander at 11am, thereafter to Callander cemetery to which all friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only please, donations in lieu of flowers to Healthy Heart Club S.R.I.

KENNEDY - Peacefully at Tigh a Rudha Eaventide Home, Isle of Tiree on December 19, 2010 Morag, aged 89 years, formerly of 12 Carnam Road, Arinanrig, Isle of Coll. Beloved wife of the late Donald Aleck Kennedy. Funeral arranged for Isle of Coll on Thursday, December 23, 2010.

MACKAY - Peacefully at home on Friday December 17, 2010, aged 54 years. Donald, beloved son of the late Alex and Sheila Mackay, dear brother of Sheila, Moyra, Sandra and Jack. Funeral will take place at St. Modan's Church, Benderloch on Thursday 23, December (Today) at 11am, thereafter to Glenshira Cemetery, Inveraray.

MACLENNAN - Peacefully, on Wednesday December 15, 2010 at Bonny Bridge Hospital, Christina (Chrissie MacLennan) of Marshall Crescent, Callander and late of Strathfillan Terrace, Crianlarich. Beloved wife to the late Lewis, a dear mother to Mary and Fay and the late Johan, Alda and Ian, a dear granny and great granny to the family. Funeral service on Wednesday December 22, at Crianlarich Church at 12 noon, Interment thereafter to Killin Cemetery to which all friends are respectfully invited.

MACLEAN - Peacefully at home, Knock Farm, Isle of Mull, on December 14, 2010, Lachlan, 87 years. Devoted husband of the late Chrissie, a loving father to Mairi, Donald and Lachlan, father-in-law to Allan and Nancy, and grandfather to Jamie, Katrina, Robert and Alexander. Funeral Service took place on Tuesday, December 21, from Salen Church.

SMITH - On Saturday December 18, 2010, Andy (P.M.985) died at home, 36 Lorn Road, Dunbeg; after a short illness borne with bravery and dignity, much loved husband of Morvern MacKenzie, a loving dad, grampa and great grampa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CRAWFORD - The family of the late Ian (Ductarie) Crawford at Balmeanach, Fishnish, Isle of Mull wish to thank relations, friends and neighbours for their heartfelt comfort and support at this sad time. We wish to thank most sincerely all the help that we got to help Dad to stay in his home to the end. He is now at peace with Mum.

HENDERSON - Dr Kathlyn Henderson, daughter of the late Katherine Henderson, 12B Longdale Terrace, Oban would like to thank all relatives and friends for

their support and kindness during her mother's illness and following her loss. Special thanks to all nursing staff at the Cruachan Unit of The Lorn and Islands District General Hospital, to her friends, also her neighbours Jean Johnston and Kenny Adcock and to Hamish Hoey and Son for their funeral arrangements.

HARRISON - Janet, Isobel and Colina would like to thank Mary, Josie and all the girls of Eadar Glinn for their kindness, care and support to Grace over the last few years also to Hamish Hoey & Son for their kind help and support.

MACINNES - I would very much like to thank the community of Inverlochy and Fort William who sent cards, made contact and turned out in such large numbers to the funeral of my mother Charlotte MacInnes. Mum was well known in the town, a very popular lady, full of fun and kind to everyone she came in contact with. She will be sadly missed by so many people. Your support had been of great comfort to both myself and the rest of the family and I thank you all sincerely for your many kind words. Steven MacInnes, Lundy Road, Inverlochy.

ROBINSON - George Gibson of 2 Nursery Park, Spean Bridge died peacefully at Moss Park Care Home on Thursday December 16, 2010 in his 92nd year. Loving husband of Joan, father to Chris and David and grandfather to Neil, David, Stephanie, John and Kirsty. Well loved by all. Funeral held Wednesday 22nd December at Inverness Crematorium.

VAN GALEN - After a long illness Catherine, died peacefully in the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on December 19, 2010, much loved aunty to Alice and dear friend to Donella. Appin has lost its colourful eccentric who brought so much to the community. "May you rest in peace now Catherine in your beloved Appin" Funeral will take place in Appin Parish Church on Wednesday December 29 at 1pm, family flowers only, donations if desired to Appin Medical Fund.

MEMORIUMS

BLACK - Treasured memories of our beloved parents, Ethel died December 23, 1994 and Alex, died March 8, 2005.

For those we love
But no longer see
Let light perpetual
Shine upon them

From Henry, Lily, Jim and families.

CAMERON - In memory of my beloved husband and dear father Lachlan Cameron who died December 14, 1994, also loved ones who have departed before and since.

Memories are gifts to treasure
Ours of you will last forever.

- Mary and Margaret

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of my dear wife Liz who died so suddenly on December 26, 1998.

One of the best
Loved and remembered always.

- Cammie, Fort William

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of a sorely missed Son and Brother, Iain Matheson, who died on December 16, 2007, and a loving Husband and devoted Dad, Iain Matheson, who died on December 27, 1994.

Forever in our hearts, Mum, Annmarie, and Marion

Gen and Uncle Iain, you walk beside us and protect us as we grow, Calum, Clare, Erin, Alastair, Matthew and Eve xx

GRANT - In loving memory of my dear wife Morag who died on December 25, 1999. Sadly missed, quietly remembered every day Our Lady of the Isles pray for her.

- Angus, Dalmally

GRANT - In loving memory of my dear mother and our granny Morag who died on December 25, 1999.

Today, tomorrow, our whole life through
We will always love and remember you.

- Elizabeth, Julie and Steven, Dalmally

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HUNTER - In loving memory of my dear mother and grandmother Christina Stewart, who died December 19, 1985 also Mima MacAulay, our dear sister and auntie, precious mother of Donald Angus and Shirley Ann who died December 30, 1989. In our hearts you will always stay.

MACALLISTER - In loving memory of David MacAllister formerly of Tobermory, Isle of Mull, died December 21, 2004. Sadly missed by wife Rosemary, children Fiona, Alex, David and all grandchildren and family.

MACDONALD - In loving memory of Duncan, a dear husband, father, father-in-law, grampa and great grampa, who passed away December 23, 1993. Also remembering those gone before and since. Always in our thoughts Love May and family.

MACGILLIVRAY - In loving memory of Chrissie, a dear mother and gran, who passed away on October 7, 1994.

Loved and remembered everyday

ROBERTSON - In loving memory of our dear mum, gran and mum-in-law Betty who passed away on December 27, 2002.

Memories will last forever Of days when we were all together.

God Bless Ma

- Love Maureen, Kate, Alyson and all families xxxx

STEWART - In loving memory of our dear mother and grandmother Ann who passed away on December 12, 1982 and our dear father and grandfather Angus who passed away on October 7, 1994.

Loved and remembered everyday

- Angus, Nancy, Rena, Mavis and families.

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 Angeline, Dunfermline

WATSON - In loving memory of Kenny, a beloved son, dad, brother who fell asleep on December 2005, aged 39.

Every day we think of you And miss you more and more Just wishing we could see you

Come walking through the door

Loving you always.

- Ma, Bobby, Jordan and Alice

ECCLESIASTICAL NOTICES**SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

Friday 24 December 2010 Christmas Eve St John's Cathedral, Oban

Children's Service "Let's Go to Bethlehem".....15.30 Midnight Eucharist....23.15

Saturday 25 December 2010 Christmas Day

St John's Cathedral, Oban

Holy Communion.....09.30

Sung Eucharist and Carols.....11.00

St James, Ardrecknich, Cladich

Service of Readings and Carols.....11.00

St Columba, Grulinne, Mull

Holy Eucharist.....11.00

Sunday 26 December 2010 St Stephen

St John's Cathedral, Oban

Naming of Jesus

Holy Communion.....08.00

Choral Mattins.....10.15

Parish Eucharist.....11.30

Loop System Large Print Hymn Books All Welcome

Norman MacCullum, Provost,

(01631) 562323

St Columba, Grulinne, Mull

Holy Eucharist.....11.00

St Columba, Bishop's House, Iona

Holy Eucharist.....10.00

ASSOCIATED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OBAN

Campbell Street Church

Sunday 26 December 2010

11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Phone-In 'Worship Link' available

Rev. Archie McPhail MA, MTh

(01631) 567076

All welcome

GRADUATIONS

Iain Smith graduated from the University of Abertay Dundee in 2009 with a BA in Games Production Management (Distinction) and, pictured above, in 2010 with an Msc Masters of Professional Practice in Games Development (Distinction). Abertay also awarded Iain the Euan Lambert Memorial Prize for Entrepreneurship. Iain is the son of James and Susan, Lawrie stone, Achintore Road, Fort William and has now taken the position of Associate Producer with Codemasters, Leamington Spa.

Quaker Meetings established on Mull

Katherine Elwis - who married a stone-waller from Mull - took a leap of faith when she set up a Quaker Meeting in Tobermory. With a growing congregation and a fresh outlook on communion in the spirit, she explains how the group is going from strength to strength.

clerk Dave Taylor and Mary Barnes, a birthright Quaker, who both travel across the sea to Mull and along with experienced friend Dorothy bring added gravitas to the meeting.

Our first Meeting was held on February 21 2010. We put an announcement on the local notice board, spread the word among friends and nervously waited to see what response we would get. I kept hearing the line from Kevin Costner's film Field of Dreams repeating in my head, 'If you build it, they will come'. We waited. And sure enough, they came. Seven people attended our first meeting. Since then the number has risen to 16 at its height. We hold a meeting on the third Sunday and first Wednesday in the month. Meetings have varied with some totally silent while others have prompted profound verbal ministry.

Why has the ground here proved so fertile? Why such a response with the meetings so deep and gathered? People have come, some of whom had no idea what was involved and they have stayed. They came looking for something that was missing from their lives and the silence has spoken to them.

One experienced attendee, Louise McKeown-Dyer, said: 'In the past, I attended Quaker Meetings for ten years. Since moving to the Isle of Mull I have felt that I was missing a spiritual home. I was full of excitement when I heard that a Meeting was being held in Tobermory.' Jenny, a Friend who travels

from the Ardnamurchan Peninsula on the mainland, said: 'The journey to Tobermory takes me an hour-and-a-half. When the ferry reaches Tobermory I can see Taigh Solais like a beacon at the end of the town. I have a brisk ten-minute walk along the road, following the coastline, before climbing the lighthouse-like stairs up to Meeting.'

'I arrive refreshed by my wonderful journey, ready to settle quietly and concentrate my mind, happy that the new Meeting makes it possible to worship among Friends again, at least in the summer when the ferries run on Sundays.'

Newcomer Mandy Collins adds: 'Meeting friends who have such gentle thoughts is inspiring. I have found what I have been searching for.'

Barbara White, who knew virtually nothing about Friends before, feels the peace when she says: 'I look forward to quiet, contemplative time. It is a very cleansing experience.'

Lochaber boxers are a big hit in Rutherglen

New premises in the New Year

TWO NETHER Lochaber Amateur Boxing Club travelled down to Rutherglen to take part local club Durie's ABC first ever boxing show.

A large crowd from the Kinlochleven-based club accompanied Sam Crowe and John Viray to Glasgow – and were rewarded with highly combative performances from the youngsters.

Both boys had already attended a training weekend at Durie's boxers and the visit helped secure their place on the bill.

Sam, aged 15 and from Kinlochleven, opened the show with an 'exhibition of skills' bout with Durie's ABC boxer Shaun Rooney.

This was Crowe's first time back in the ring since having metal pins removed from his right leg which had been badly broken last summer.

He boxed extremely well and proved that his leg can now withstand the rigours of boxing. The club is now looking to get him

a competitive bout soon.

Nether Lochaber ABC's second boxer on the bill was John Viray, also aged 15 and from Kinlochleven. He was matched against Uskash Farooq from Glasgow West ABC, who turned out to be a whirlwind of a fighter.

Nether Lochaber ABC is now taking an extended Christmas break before moving into new premises in Kinlochleven early in the new year.

However, the club is already looking forward to a trip to London in the spring, having been invited to box as part of a Scotland select in a show organised by Billericay ABC at an exclusive 5-star hotel.

Head coach Martin Glenesk said: 'Although our boxers are not going to be in the gym over the next couple of weeks, we expect them to work even harder at improving their fitness so that when they come back to our new gym they are ready to go.'

Nether Lochaber boxers

John Viray and Sam

Crowe: in action at

Rutherglen f52box1n0

Although the first round was close with both boxers standing toe to toe and trading punches throughout, the later rounds established that Farooq was an incredibly fit boxer who could maintain

the same pace from start to finish.

Viray had trained hard for this fight but even he was caught out by the young man's stamina. Ultimately this cost Viray the fight.

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Amber Haze is top yacht

AMBER Haze, the Sigma 33 owned by Eric and Irene Chapman, finished the 2010 season at Oban Sailing Club as top yacht.

Winning both aggregate series and finishing in the top two places in the weekend cup races on most occasions it was a well deserved podium position for the couple this season.

They edged out Billy Forteith's steamon Shadowfax with Colin Crawford's Dehler 34 Nimrod third overall on points.

Dictated

It was a close finish to racing with the performance of each yacht also dictated by how many races are sailed by each boat. The system, introduced by former commodore Joey

Gough, has been successful in encouraging all those who take part to be recognised by their performance.

Tim Bleazard took the top prize in the fast handicap dinghy section with his full rig Laser and Jamie Chapman, sailing his Laser 4.7, lifted the trophy for slow handicap dinghies.

It was a close call in the

SAILING

Scotwest Windows Trophy for the best Laser sailor with Steven Forteith and Jamie Chapman tying on points, Steven in the fast section and Jamie in the slow. Both were awarded firsts.

Tierney Carter, who has sailed consistently well all season, won the Forteith Refrigeration Trophy for the best performance in the Topper dinghy section whilst Jamie Sinclair was judged the most improved dinghy sailor in the club overall.

Awarded

Colin Currie was awarded the prestigious Endeavour Trophy for his sterling efforts racing his Mirror dinghy and the keelboat Hot Toddy and his dedicated work with the Ocean Youth Trust (OYT).

Over the last two seasons with OYT Colin was promoted from bosun to second mate. He also took his Yachtmasters exam this year and was on the crew of Alba Endeavour for 'The Big Commute' race to Shetland in August.

This involved racing



This season's keelboat winners at Oban Sailing Club.



This year's winners in Oban Sailing Club's dinghy classes.

Oban Saints youth fixtures and results

FOOTBALL

THE league and cup games involving Oban Saints youth teams were called off last weekend due to the weather.

The Under 14s were due to be at home to Seafar Villa and the Under 15s away to East Kilbride.

The boys will now take a festive break, but will be hoping the weather improves to allow their games to go ahead in the New Year.

Oban Pool League

POOL

	P	W	L	pts
Lancaster A	8	7	1	14
Kelvin	8	7	1	14
Lancaster B	9	7	2	14
Lochmell	8	5	3	10
Markie's A	8	5	3	10
Cellar	8	4	4	8
Claredon	9	4	5	8
Golf Club	8	3	5	6
Lochavullin	8	2	6	4
Harbour	8	1	7	2
Markie's B	8	0	8	0

Scores: Lancaster B 7, Harbour 2; Markie Dan's A 6, Cellar 3; Golf Club 9, Markie Dan's B 0; Lochmell 5, Lancaster A 4; Lochavullin 8, Claredon 1.

Fixtures: Lancaster A v Lochavullin; Markie Dan's B v Lochmell; Cellar v Golf Club; Harbour v Markie Dan's A; Kelvin v Lancaster B.

Karate kids gain certificates

YOUNG karate students from Oban and Lochgilphead sat a grading exam at the Mid Argyll Sports Centre, Lochgilphead.

The students, all part of the Kyokushin Schools of Karate (KSK) Scotland were going for a range of belts, from novice to blackbelt at the grading on December 12.

There are 10 coloured belt grades to pass before the black belt exam can be taken.

Instructor Iain Rodger said the day was a great success for both clubs, with three new 2nd kyu's (brown belts), four new 1st Kyu's



The young karate students who sat their grading exams.

Bowmore sports to be resurrected

BOWMORE Sports has been resurrected and will take place on Saturday July 16.

The sports have not taken place over the last few years but younger members of the community have shown an interest in running the event.

John MacIntyre, the previous chairman, has stepped down but will remain as an ordinary member of the committee. John's replacement will be Duncan MacGillivray who is hoping

KARATE

(brown belts with black stripes) and two new 1st dans (black belts).

New starters will be taken on at both clubs in January: Lochgilphead from Wednesday, January 12 and Oban from Thursday, January 13.

Anyone wishing to start should contact Iain through the KSK Scotland web site www.kskscotland.com

Whilst most of us are wrapping up in scarves, hats and gloves, one Mid Argyll teenager is packing his shorts and sunglasses to head off to sunnier climes.

Bellanoch sailor, Lorenzo Chiavarini, has been selected by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) as one of three sailors to take part in the Laser Radial National

Youth Squad. The three boys, who are the top three under-17 laser sailors in the UK, travel to Sydney for three weeks to take part in the Tailored Support programme over Christmas and New Year.

Accompanied by RYA head coach, James Gray, the teenagers will compete in two events: The Australian Laser

National Championships and the Australian Youth Sailing Championships.

But hopefully it won't be all work and no play for 16-year-old Lorenzo as the team hopes to fit in some sightseeing and maybe even an Ashes cricket match.

SAILING

FOR the fourth week in a row all games involving Scottish Amateur League teams were called off due to the weather.

The league now takes a Christmas and New Year break with matches resuming on January 8.

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the weather

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NANCY BLACK Ships' Chandler

Thursday

Sunny intervals.

Winds light east, north easterly.

Temperatures -3°C to -6°C

Friday

Sunny.

Winds light, east, south easterly

Temperatures -2°C to -5°C.

Weekend Outlook

Sunny intervals.

Winds light, east south easterly.

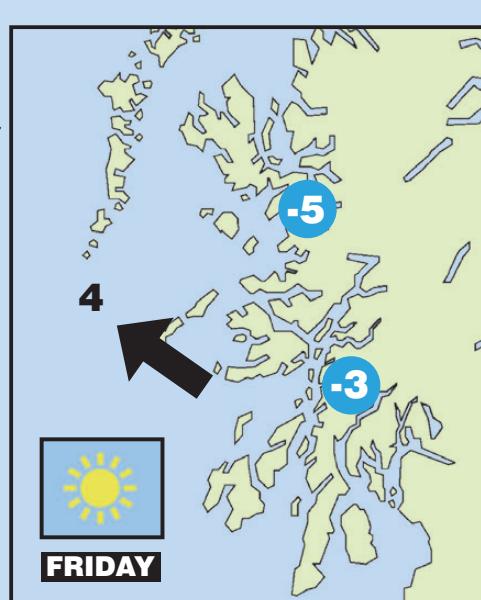
Temperatures -2°C to -5°C.

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist - Moderate

Oban to Coll/Tiree - As above

Kennacraig to Islay - As above



Tides

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Tide tables for Oban during the week from

Thursday, December 23, 2010

are listed below with differences

for major ports listed beneath.

All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

Date	am	pm
Thur	00.35 0.8 06.39 4.0 13.13 1.0 19.06 3.9	
Fri	01.18 0.7 07.19 4.0 13.57 1.0 19.45 3.8	
Sat	02.02 0.7 08.01 4.0 14.43 1.1 20.28 3.6	
Sun	02.49 0.8 08.47 3.8 15.32 1.2 21.15 3.4	
Mon	03.39 0.9 09.37 3.7 16.27 1.4 22.08 3.3	
Tues	04.35 1.1 10.35 3.5 17.29 1.6 23.15 3.1	
Wed	05.38 1.3 11.51 3.3 18.40 1.7 *** *** *.*	

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardriahig	-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