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## Plans for Lonan Drive homes resubmitted



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# Mental health support needs in Oban 'a worry'

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Phenomenal numbers of people seeking a safe space to talk has revealed a much greater suicide prevention and mental health need in Oban than 'ever imagined'.

Such is the demand for Martyn's Monday Club and its new women's group that it is 'a real worry', says Des MacMillan, who started up a peer-to-peer support group seven months ago for men to open up over a cuppa without fear of being judged.

More than 130 people have passed through the club's doors at Hope Kitchen since it started.

'The numbers are high. They are phenomenal. In a perfect world no-one would need to come to us. It's great we are helping so many people but at the same time the scale of how much we are needed is a real worry. There's a much greater need in Oban than we ever imagined,' said Mr MacMillan.

A generous £5,000 donation

from Scottish Sea Farms will now be used to help 'tool up' the volunteers who help run the weekly sessions, sending them on courses for safe talk and suicide prevention training, as well as mental health first aid for themselves and for group members' benefit.

The groups that meet at Hope Kitchen are also being used by 'a scary' number of families bereaved by suicide, said Mr MacMillan.

'We need to be able to say the right thing, we have to know how to deal with difficult conversations we might have. We are not counsellors but these courses will give us the tools to look after our own mental health and help group members' well-being.

'We never give advice. While we can talk about and share our own life experiences, it is the GPs and psychiatric nurses who are the experts. We can signpost people to get the help they need,' he added.

In January the men's group became Martyn's Monday Club, taking the name of 37-year-old Oban man

Continued on page three



## Traditional storyteller is all heart

Traditional storyteller Jess Smith will be at Oban's Made In Argyll shop this Valentine's day signing copies of her books, telling tales and singing songs. Valentine's day tied in nicely with Jess's successful mission to get the Tinkers' Heart at the old junction of Hell's Glen and the A815 road to Strachur recognised as a national monument worth of protecting. For the full story, turn to page six.

## Welcome to the world baby Robyn

Celebrations have spanned more than 11,000 miles to welcome new baby Robyn Vivien Johnson to the world.

Weighing in at 8lbs 1oz, the tiny tot was born in Christchurch in the early hours of February 4 New Zealand-time to former Oban couple Jaki Aitken and Alex Johnson who lost their first daughter Rebecca to a rare genetic disease in December 2017.

Events in Oban organised by family and friends have raised more than £6,000 to support a charity dedicated to finding a cure for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) that claimed Rebecca's life when she was just five months old.

Robyn's delighted grandma Edwina Aitken told The Oban Times: 'She's absolutely gorgeous.'



Baby Robyn Johnson.

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# Plans for 44 new Oban homes resubmitted

by David McPhee  
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



An amended planning application to build 44 homes in Lonan Drive, Oban, has been submitted by TSL Contractors Limited.

The controversial project, which previously received 42 public objections, was withdrawn in May last year after Argyll and Bute Council's roads department recommended the application be refused.

This was because the entrance appeared to be too narrow 'to construct a road to adoptable standards'.

Last year's plans showed a mix of 44 flats and semi-detached houses in 12 blocks, with 'casual' and 'equipped' play spaces. However, the new application states the housing mix is yet to be decided.

Locals argued it was the

'Sometimes it takes half an hour to get into the town from here. It will be another 40 cars. The town is a mess.'

'only green area' within a section of high density housing, with an 'already overloaded' road network and a 'too narrow' entrance.

Residents also collected more than 340 signatures on a petition.

Community councillor, resident and chairwoman of Oban Community Council, Marri Malloy, labelled the new application a 'disgrace'.

Speaking to The Oban Times, she said: 'We have written asking the council for an extension. We don't have a meeting until the end of February, which means we



Residents of Lonan Drive and the surrounding area at their 'Rally in the Valley', held when the first application for housing in 'their only green space' was made.

don't have any say. We won't be able to help people that want to object.

'There is no recreational space for us here. [Lonan Drive] is for the children to play, which they did with rope swings, and people walk their dogs there.

'This will leave this bit of Soroba with no facilities.'

Mrs Malloy said she was not objecting to social housing,

but to the impact it would have on traffic. 'We are going to be stuck in the house all the time,' she added.

'As it is, I have to time when I go for my shopping because I can't get on to Soroba Road when the schools are out. Sometimes it takes half an hour to get into the town from here. It will be another 40 cars. The town is a mess.'

Duncan Martin, on behalf

of Oban Community Council, said on the application: 'Oban Community Council discussed this briefly at our meeting this week, but did not have time to consult those who objected previously. We were advised by Councillor McCuish to ask you to pause consideration until after our next meeting.'

The community council next meets on Monday February 25, while the application's consultation expires on Thursday February 21.

A TSL spokesperson said: 'TSL can confirm the application for 44 houses has been resubmitted and if granted will make a significant contribution to social housing in the Oban area.'

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson said: 'This matter will be decided at a future meeting of the Planning Protective Services and Licensing Committee.'

## Anti-pylon campaigners rally in Dalmally

The No More Pylons in Dalmally campaign has a community meeting planned for this Saturday, February 9, in the village hall at 1pm.

The agenda will focus solely on the pylon issue and how to move the campaign forward making it more community-led.

Scottish and Southern Energy Networks (SSEN) has long-standing plans for 52 new pylons which locals say would blight the landscape and generate health concerns. The village already has 29 pylons.

SSEN says underground cabling could still be an option but campaigners believe pylons will still be opted for because of cost.

Pylon and underground cable feasibility tests are due to be carried out in Dalmally this month. The survey work will include site walk-overs, peat probing, bore holes and trial pits.

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## Sheep worrying

About 11.30am on Tuesday January 29, at Inverinan near Dalavich, a dog was allegedly at large and not under control in a field of breeding sheep. The owner of the dog, a woman, 48, was later charged with the offence and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

## Drugs

About 12.45am on Wednesday January 30, on Corran Esplanade, Oban, a 24-year-old man was stopped and searched by police and found to be in possession of cannabis. The man was charged and issued with a recorded police warning.

## Attempted theft

Between 8pm on Tuesday January 29 and 8.30am on Wednesday January 30, at Kames Farm, Kilmelford, an attempt was made to steal a caravan. The stabiliser, hitchlock and door lock were damaged. Police are investigating the incident and are appealing for any witnesses or anyone with any information to contact them on 101 or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

## Phone stolen

Between 10am and 11am on Wednesday January 30,

## POLICE FILES

on a ferry between Oban and Mull, a silver coloured iPhone was stolen. Police are investigating the incident and are appealing for any witnesses or anyone with any information to contact them on 101 or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

## Assault

At 1.05am on Friday February 1, in Victoria Crescent, Oban, a man, 25, was arrested for assaulting a woman. The man was later charged and issued with a recorded police warning.

## Car seized

Routine police checks on a car stopped by officers in Lochavullin Road, Oban, at 11.45pm on Saturday February 2 revealed the driver, a 17-year-old man, was allegedly driving on a provisional licence, uninsured.

He was charged with the offences and the vehicle was seized. The owner of the car, a woman, 17, was also charged with allegedly allowing the man to drive her vehicle and commit the offences. A report will be

submitted to the procurator fiscal.

## Witness appeal

Between 5pm on Saturday February 2 and noon on Sunday February 3, on the A828 at Rhugarbh Farm, Benderloch, a vehicle left the road and collided with and damaged a fence. The vehicle failed to stop and report the incident. Police are investigating.

**Anyone with information in relation to the above, or to any incident, should contact their local police station on telephone number 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.**

## A relatively happy new year

New Year celebrations went well in Oban with various events on in the town and no increase of reported incidents.

A report from Oban Police, read out at last week's meeting of Oban Community Council, stated: 'As is usual at that time of year, the police dealt with a number of incidents of anti-social and disorderly behaviour, many of which were alcohol related.'

'There were no particular areas of concern highlighted during the period.'

## Disability access in the spotlight at free Oban event

A free one-day event has been arranged to improve disability access in Oban, however, there are only 40 places available.

The session aims to help raise awareness of the importance for businesses to provide adequate access.

It is being organised by Oban Access Panel and will take place on February 19 at the Corran Halls.

The event will cover what is meant by 'disability', legal requirements contained in the Equality Act and making adjustments to ensure premises and services are more accessible.

Panel chairman Jim Tolmie explained the panel was keen to engage with anyone offering goods and/or services to the public in Oban and the surrounding areas.

Mr Tolmie said: 'One person in seven in Scotland lives with a disability – either mobility, vision, hearing or a learning disability. Disabled people often have considerable spending power and if we can make provision to enhance their independence and accessibility, we can achieve a more equal world, a happier community, we can attract more visitors and achieve a more prosperous Oban.'

'The experience of disabled shoppers and tourists varies greatly and can often be improved by small, simple changes. Business owners can then benefit from customer loyalty and repeat trade – so everyone wins.'

The event will run from 11am until 3pm and is being funded by Disability Equality Scotland. To book a place, email [obandisabilityforum@aol.co.uk](mailto:obandisabilityforum@aol.co.uk).

This follows last year's Euan's Guide project run by The Oban Times and Michael Russell MSP. Euan's Guide is a website that publishes reviews and information about accessibility, helping to alleviate the fear of the unknown for disabled travellers. Visit [www.euansguide.com](http://www.euansguide.com)

# Mental health support needs a worry in Oban

Continued from page one.

Martyn Cruickshanks who took his own life in May.

Although the dad-of-one had mental health issues and loving family and friends, there were no clues as to what was going to happen.

Martyn's parents were on holiday in America when he went missing from the Glencruitten home he shared with them. His body was later found in a forest near Kilniver.

'There were no clues, there were no inklings. It was a shock. No one knew, if we had then it would have been prevented. He seemed to be the most positive he had been in years and was planning his future. It wasn't Martyn who took his life, it was his mental health problems. We will never understand fully,' said his mum, Fiona.

Martyn's dad Robert helps run the men's Monday meetings and Fiona is a facilitator at the women's group on a Tuesday.

Community backing for both clubs through donations, word of mouth and Hope Kitchen as a venue has been mind-blowing, says Martyn's family, who are being helped by helping others.

Martyn's 14-year-old son Zak is also helping his family smash the sometimes stifling taboo that can surround suicide. He will be climbing Ben Nevis with friends and family on April 6 and has

'What makes these meetings so special is the trust and confidence that exists.'



Above left: Martyn Cruickshanks. Above right: Martyn's Monday Clubs offer suicide and mental health peer-to-peer support.

set up an online appeal at [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eilidh-cruickshanks](http://justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eilidh-cruickshanks) to keep raising awareness about suicide prevention and help the clubs carry on their good work in Oban and Lorn.

A bingo night at The View in George Street raised £350 to boost the clubs' funds and this week Oban, Lorn and the Isles Health and Well-being Network awarded £2,000 to help pay for activities and outings.

Martyn's story is told at the start of every club meeting. He loved cars and 4x4s, he worked hard and played hard, always stood up for the underdog and always helped anyone being bullied. He was too busy helping other people to speak about his own troubles that eventually cost him his life, making him become another suicide statistic.

'Martyn was too busy helping other people to talk about his own difficulties. If we can get one person to take that big step to come in through the door and start talking about their problems to prevent this happening again, then it will be worth it. It is good to talk,

please do,' said Robert. 'What makes these meetings so special is the trust and confidence that exists. Friendships are made. The groups look after themselves, together we are helping making lives tol-

erable; it's obviously needed,' he added.

Martyn's Monday Club and the Tuesday women's club meet from 7pm to 9pm at Hope, helping over 18s through life when they

are struggling with mental health, feeling down, sad or lonely. There is also a closed group on Facebook for extra peer support.

Go to [martynsmondayclub.co.uk](http://martynsmondayclub.co.uk) to find out more.

## Drink driver banned for four years

An Oban woman had nearly seven times the legal amount of alcohol in her system when police stopped her car, Oban Sheriff Court has heard.

Ann Marie Birnie, 48, of 10 West Bay Flats, admitted the offence, which took place on October 29 last year.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty told the court last week that police were acting on an anonymous tip-off.

Her breath test measured 149 micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath; the legal limit is 22. Her defence agent Kevin McGinness told the court of 'the very difficult personal circumstances' Birnie had to deal with following the break-up of her marriage.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes placed Birnie on a community payback order with supervision to work on her

rehabilitation and 200 hours of unpaid work in the community. She was disqualified from driving for four years but that may reduce by 12 months if she completes a drink-driver rehabilitation course.

'If you come before the court for drink-driving again there will be no alternative but a custodial sentence,' the sheriff warned her.

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OT

## Raise a glass for pipe band

Oban Pipe Band is preparing for the 2019 competition season and is busy fundraising for travel and equipment costs.

On Friday February 15 the band is having a wine tasting event at the Masonic Lodge in Albany Street starting at 7.30pm.

One of the organisers, Alistair Dewar, said: 'The idea of the evening is to appeal to everyone who enjoys their wine, be it novice or as a connoisseur. Everyone will get something out of this.'

'Our wine expert will bring along a selection of eight wines for people to taste. Have a taste and look at the differences in each one and then have a general chat on how to analyse and taste wine. The wines will challenge your taste buds and hopefully you will discover something new and exciting. It is a fun, educational evening.'

It would help organisers if people buy tickets in advance. They are £20 each and are available at Oban Music, Argyll Square, Oban, or by contacting Glynis Dewar at glynisdewar5@gmail.com

# Health concerns raised over pigeon droppings

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Pigeon droppings on the steps of one of Oban's most iconic buildings in George Street have been branded a disgrace.

Councillors and business leaders are demanding the mess is cleaned up as soon as possible over fears the dried droppings could be a health risk as well as an eyesore.

Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'Ultimately it's the landlord's responsibility. It's a disgrace that such an iconic building in Oban has been allowed to get into that state.'

'Environmental health has been asked to look at it, the council is aware. It's relevant at the moment what with the investigation ongoing into the deaths at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Waterstones next to it is a very busy shop and



Pigeon mess on the steps in George Street is raising health concerns.

I can't see it being too happy about the mess. Heaven forbid anyone should come to harm because of it.'

And Councillor Jim Lynch added: 'I'm on to it. I didn't want the road sweepers touching the stuff because of the potential of disease so it's

with environmental health now. I've also asked the council to find out who owns the building so we can ask them to find a solution. I think the pigeons are roosting there. If nothing is done, it'll just keep getting worse.'

Birds and their droppings

'It's prudent it gets cleaned up properly and without risk to anyone.'

can carry more than 60 diseases, according to experts. One of them is Histoplasmosis, a respiratory disease that can be fatal.

Bid4Oban chief executive Andrew Spence said: 'Regardless of where responsibility lies, it needs to be cleaned up as soon as possible.' A spokesperson from Waterstones next door said: 'It's not trawled through here by our customers so we don't have a problem with it in that regard. We used to have problems with pigeons under our lights but we put

up pigeon spikes and they seem to be working.'

The offices above the steps used to be occupied by a firm of solicitors and Home Start but have been empty for about a year. There are also flats but the entry point to them is from Stevenson Street.

The Oban Times has been trying to confirm who the landlord is and get a comment.

An Argyll and Bute spokesperson said the mess was unsightly but there was no significant health risk.

'It is the building owner's responsibility to keep it clean and we will contact them to remind them of that. If the problem is made worse by birds nesting, we will also advise on preventative measures. Sadly, we do not have the resources to maintain privately owned properties,' she said.

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From left sitting: Douglas Swinbanks, Professor George Fleming and Eleanor Morrison, Enviro Centre. Standing: Paul Hendy, Scottish Flood Forum.

## Session attracts steady flow of flood queries

More than 30 people attended a drop-in session in Oban to voice their concerns about flooding.

Glasgow-based Enviro Centre and Argyll and Bute Council are carrying out a study into the three major flood influences in the town – tides, rivers and drainage – with a view to solving the problem.

The final report, due to be completed in June this year, will be sent to the Scottish

Government in the hope of securing funding. Held at the town's Rockfield Centre, the drop-in event was the second of its type to be held in the town and the first since severe floods in October last year.

Also present at the event was Paul Hendy, flood recovery officer for the charity Scottish Flood Forum. Anyone with concerns relating to flooding can phone the helpline on 01698 839021.

## Roofer fined and tagged for random attack in Oban

A man lost consciousness after being punched in a 'totally random attack' in the centre of Oban, the town's sheriff court heard last week.

In the early hours of October 7 last year, Stuart Paton of 68 Centre Street, Kelty, swung a single punch at a man standing talking in a group outside a take-away on George Street.

'Paton walked past this group and without any warning or any reason swung a punch which knocked the man out instantly; he hit his head on the corner of the building before hitting the ground,' said Eoin McGinty, procurator fiscal.

The two men were unknown to each other.

The incident was seen by police who arrested Paton immediately. When searched at Oban Police station he was found to have a small bag containing a fraction of a gram of cocaine.

His victim regained consciousness at the scene and was taken to hospital in Oban where a head wound needed to be stapled.

'This was out of the blue, a totally random attack,' said the fiscal.

Paton admitted assaulting the man to his severe injury and possessing cocaine.

Kevin McGinness, defence agent for the 23-year-old roofer, told the court: 'My client is deeply ashamed by his behaviour.'

'He was so intoxicated he had no recollection whatsoever.'

'He is deeply sorry for what happened and is anxious to make amends as best he can.'

Sheriff Patrick Hughes placed him on a community payback order for one year and ordered him to pay compensation of £1,000 to his victim and fined him £100 for possession of the class A drug.

Paton was also placed on a tag-monitored restriction of liberty order to stay at his home from 8pm to 5am every night for six months.

The sheriff told him it was only luck that this had not become culpable homicide: 'Any breach and you can only expect a custodial sentence.'

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www.obantimes.co.uk

# Community hub hope for Ardchattan Kirk

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Ardchattan Kirk has shut after 182 years of worship but there is a 'hope and a prayer' it will come back as a community hub.

The parish church on the shores of Loch Etive was packed for its final communion and special service marking its closure on January 27 and now that it has been locked up for the first time in its long history, plans could be getting under way for a possible community buy-out.

The church at Achnaba had to shut because of its straitened financial circumstances after a review by The Church of Scotland.

Church elder John Campbell said: 'The hope and prayer is we might get enough funds together to keep the building in the community but we couldn't start on an action plan for a community buy-out until it shut. We need to look at how we would bring revenue in if we did manage to buy it. There is already a group looking at buying out the old Bonawe school for the community. Perhaps the two can work together.'

'The other possibility is that another church buys it. That would be a major boost



Ardchattan Kirk is now locked for the first time in 182 years.

and perhaps we could still use it for our family services such as christenings, funerals and weddings,' added Mr Campbell, who was christened there.

Elders from the church are also looking for a site nearby for a new commemorative memorial remembering First and Second World Wars. The current brass plaque and framed paper memorials are now locked inside the church.

'Neither of them can go outside so we need to get a new war memorial,' said Mr Campbell.

Another church elder, May Macdonald, who was at the last service and whose father-in-law was a previous minister there, said: 'Sadly

the closure was on the cards for a long time. The numbers at our services were dwindling but it was almost full for its final swan song. I hope John's plans come to fruition but it would need a lot of work. If we can now fill our other church at St Modan's

in Benderloch every Sunday then that will be to the good of the community.'

Donnie Campbell, also an elder, is worried St Modan's will not be big enough to cope with some services, especially funerals and said parking was 'inadequate'.

He also said because of its remote location, Ardchattan Kirk, surrounded by a graveyard, would sell for much less than St Modan's.

'It's a great shame. It's a unique building that can take greater numbers than St Modan's. However, the decision has been made,' he added.

At full capacity Ardchattan Kirk could seat 420 people.

Ardchattan community councillor Breege Smyth, who is instrumental in the Ardchattan School take-over project at Bonawe, hopes a group will be formed to take

forward the idea of a community buy-out and said maybe a development trust could then be set up for the school and church to work together.

'What the church has, the school does not. It has a big space that could be used for multi-denominational worship or a museum to house the Ardchattan archives. We could complement each other.'

A Church of Scotland spokesperson said: 'The Ardchattan congregation owns two buildings and has decided to keep St Modan's church in Benderloch and to sell the Ardchattan building. The Presbytery of Argyll has agreed to this plan and the building will be listed for sale. In addition, the congregation has agreed to seek a link with the congregation of Connel. The Presbytery will consider their request in March.'

## Tobermory RNLI mourns former coxswain Phil

Tobermory RNLI's longest serving coxswain has died suddenly aged 52.

Phil Higson, who joined the crew in March 1992 serving more than 20 years, died on January 11.

He became second coxswain in 1996 and full time station coxswain in 2001.

In tribute, a RNLI spokesperson said: 'During Phil's service, he helped to save many lives and assist many people as well as mentoring and training volunteer crew at Tobermory. He will be remembered for his professionalism and sense of fun as well as trying to entice Princess Anne into the pub for a pint.'

Mr Higson's funeral will



Former Tobermory coxswain Phil Higson who died suddenly last month. Photograph: Sam Jones/RNLI.

take place at the West Suffolk Crematorium near Bury St Edmunds tomorrow, Friday February 8.

'Our thoughts are with Sarah, Steven and Scott at this very sad time,' added the spokesperson.

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## New hotel opening depends on weather

Oban's Premier Inn is on track to open at the end of this month but it is weather dependent.

Richard Aldread, head of new construction (UK and Ireland regions) at Premier Inn, said: 'We're progressing well with construction of the new four-storey, 80-bedroom Premier Inn and Thyme restaurant on Shore Street in Oban. Whitbread, Premier Inn's parent company, is making a multi-million pound investment in the new hotel and restaurant, which is important to us as we are currently under-represented in the Highlands and islands.'

Mr Aldread said staff recruitment was well under way and the majority of roles had now been filled.

However, it is still recruiting for a head chef and anyone interested should go to Whitbread careers website.

'All being well and weather dependent, we're looking forward to opening our doors to guests at the end of February and becoming part of the local and business community in Oban,' added Mr Aldread.



Left to right: artist Elma Nee, storyteller Jess Smith, Bookends Festival founder Joy Cameron and basket maker Kathy Potter.

## Crafters' shop becomes heart of Argyll

Traditional storyteller Jess Smith will be at Oban's Made In Argyll shop this Valentine's day signing copies of her books, telling tales and singing songs.

Ada Daley, one of the crafters at the shop near Station Square, was so inspired after listening to Jess at a Bookends pop-up event in Benderloch last month that she designed a window display all about it.

Valentine's day tied in nicely with Jess's successful mission to get the 'Tinkers' Heart at the old junction of Hell's Glen and the A815 road to Strachur recognised as a national monument worth protecting.

For centuries it had served as the wedding place for Scottish Travellers, also to bless the dead and the new born but by 2008 it was at risk from cattle hooves and dung, triggering a parliamentary petition with more than 1,000 signatures to save it.

Heart of The Travellers group was formed and, after public consultation, Historic Scotland scheduled it because of its cultural importance. The heart shape, outlined by pieces of quartz in the ground, has been fenced off but Jess hopes to get better access up to it. Jess will be at Made In Argyll on Thursday February 14 from 11am.

# High flying parking plan

by Fiona Scott  
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



week's Oban Community Council meeting at which, once again, parking was on the agenda.

'I am going out to look at the ground the department owns at Oban airport,' he told members of the council and the public. 'If we can get some hardcore down there and security fencing up then I believe it would make an ideal location for long stay parking for people who are visiting for a week or a fortnight.'

The councillor believes having long stay parking outside the town would reduce traffic within it during the busy tourist season and off-set the business rates the council has to pay the Scottish Government for its current short-stay parking areas.

'A long-stay car park at the airport could provide 88 to 100 spaces,' added Mr McCuish.

'Because there is already a regular bus service to and from the airport, this would be an ideal place for visitors who were going over to the islands for a week or two.'

'It may also be of benefit to the many hotels and guest houses outwith Oban by pushing clientele their way.'

'All of this combined would help keep traffic congestion in the town at busy periods down and free up spaces for people who live and work here.'

Mr McCuish also reassured everyone the council was working hard to improve on the current system for paying



Congestion in Lochavullin Road caused by parked cars.

for parking which was introduced early in 2018.

'Papers have been prepared outlining plans to introduce weekly and monthly tickets along with making parking payments available by direct debit,' he added.

'These will be presented to the policy and resources committee next week with a view to having the additional measures introduced by Easter.'

Parking services will also

be meeting with the web and communications teams to agree a communication strategy for Oban and to improve the parking pages on the council's website.

There are currently 686 free parking spaces in Oban plus 717 pay and display spaces. A full list of off-street spaces for Oban, including car parks not owned by the council, can be found at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/car-parks-oban-lorn-and-isles](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/car-parks-oban-lorn-and-isles).





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## Support can make all the difference

Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

editor@obantimes.co.uk

### WHERE IS THIS?



who have the same or similar difficulties to you can often help with stress and learning how to cope with your condition, and a group like this can give you tips to cope with day-to-day life.

Those of us who enjoy good health take it for granted and it can be difficult to make others understand the challenges an illness of any sort can have on your life. But being with people who have been there and have

the T-shirt can lift a weight from your shoulders and let you open up about things you would normally find difficult to share.

I really hope that anyone who feels they could do with some support and advice goes along to one of the Breathe Easy meetings. They are informal and always include a cup of tea and cake or biscuits.

If you would like any further information then give me (Kay) a wee call on 07748 233215 and I can help or pass you on to the right person.

The photograph last week was of the back of the Church of Scotland on Glencruitten Road. This week's is part of a lovely walk.



Maurice Wilkins wants action on litter.



Rubbish strewn bankings.



Shopping trolleys blight the Black Lynn.

# Talking rubbish leads to call for emergency litter summit

by Fiona Scott  
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



A summit of community councillors, education chiefs and town groups to discuss the escalating problem of litter in and around Oban should be held at the earliest opportunity.

That was the unanimous view of everyone in attendance at Oban Community Council's monthly meeting last week when the shocking state of the town's paths and beauty spots was highlighted.

Keep Oban Beautiful campaigner and community council member Maurice Wilkins is urging members of the public to set an example.

'One thing I noticed when reading some of the Facebook comments was that people were intent on blaming the council for not cleaning up the town,' he said.

'I would suggest that perhaps we are looking at it the wrong way.

'We are doing nothing to encourage people not to throw litter in the first place and unless we do something

about that it will never change. One of the places we need to start is schools.

'I'm not blaming the children for this, but the children of today are the adults of tomorrow and if we could inject something into the curriculum on social responsibility then it would be a good start.'

Fast-food packaging, sweet wrappers, drinks cans and bottles were among the most common litter spotted around the town and surrounding areas.

Mr Wilkins is one of many volunteers who spend a great

deal of their own time picking it up and disposing of it, something that was endorsed by a member of the public at last week's meeting.

'Years ago we used to all take responsibility for the areas outside our own homes,' said Anne. 'If we could install that ethos again, the knock-on effect would be tremendous.'

Lack of signs, bins and council resources were also cited as part of the problem and Oban South councillor Roddy McCuish admitted Argyll and Bute Council also had a part to play in the clean-

up. 'As a council we have a large part to play in keeping Oban tidy and I will continue to push for this problem to be addressed,' he said. 'The area committee would be more than happy to facilitate a summit, led by the community council, and work alongside various groups.'

'I like the idea of a 'get ready for summer' campaign with a combined effort and events involving various groups and businesses around the town and, of course, the council.'

Details of the summit will be released in due course.

## Man assaulted police officer

Joseph MacIntyre, 38, of 15 Aray Gardens, Oban, was fined £200 and ordered to pay £200 compensation to a police constable when he appeared before Oban Sheriff Court last week.

MacIntyre was found guilty of assaulting a constable in the execution of his duty by lunging at him, seizing hold of him by his clothing and struggling violently with the officer, to his injury. The officer sustained soft tissue injuries to his hand in the incident at Oban Police station on November 17 last year.

## Gritter driver taken to hospital

A gritter driver was taken to hospital in the early hours of Wednesday January 30 after the vehicle overturned at Appin about 3.30am near the Old Inn on the A828.

Police had to wait until daylight before the gritter could be removed and the road re-opened. A police spokesperson said he had not been made aware of the driver's injuries.

## Extra £1.6 million for Argyll and Bute Council budget

Argyll and Bute Council is to receive at least £1.6 million more than initially thought in this year's budget.

In return for support from Scottish Greens, the government amended its spending plans to benefit local authorities.

In total, local councils will have access to more than £200 million to spend.

Argyll and Bute Council will be voting on its spending plans on Thursday February 14.

Cleland Sneddon, Argyll and Bute Council chief executive, said: 'The council welcomes the further £1.626

million in the block grant offered to Argyll and Bute Council for 2019/20 as a result of the Scottish Government's budget. The council will consider the additional financial powers indicated in the budget when it meets to set its own budget later this month.

'There will, however, still be many tough decisions on savings to make in order to deliver a balanced budget and provide sustainable services to our communities.'

In December last year, The Oban Times revealed that the council aimed to cut up to 60 jobs in a bid to save £4 million.

If the cuts still go ahead at the budget vote, youth and adult learning carers stand to lose 17.1 full time equivalent posts, saving £330,000.

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities president Councillor Alison Evison said: 'Whilst challenges still remain, and today's movement from the Scottish Government clearly doesn't mitigate all of our funding issues, we are now in a better place than we were with the original budget proposal.'

'I appreciate the movement from Scottish Government, with support from the Greens.'

## Oban Pride team set for launch party

An LGBTQ+ Pride event will be held in Oban for the first time in May this year.

Organisers are set to launch Oban Pride, which will celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, at The Lorne Bar on Friday February 22, when the team will be unveiling its logo and announcing the date for this year's inaugural Oban Pride day.

Oban Pride spokesperson Gary Hamilton told The Oban Times: 'The idea was born from an anti-stigma campaign that was running in Oban in conjunction with Waverley Care Scotland and Oban Phoenix Cinema.

'The purpose of Oban Pride is to promote equality and diversity throughout Oban as well as providing safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community and its allies to come together to celebrate and promote equal rights throughout Scotland while reflecting on our history,' added Mr Hamilton.

As well as unveiling its logo and announcing the date of Oban Pride 2019 at the event later this month, the Lorne's resident DJ Neil Ferguson will be playing everyone's favourite tunes with drag queen Crystal hosting 'Dragoake'.

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## Showcase website launched

A new website to promote living and working in Argyll and Bute has been launched.

The initiative builds on the successful #abplace2b which is being used by the council, its partners and members of the public on social media to direct positive national and international attention to the area.

Aimed at people moving to or visiting the region www.abplace2b.scot brings together information on services, schools, jobs and things to do.

It also offers local businesses and people the chance for promotion, by explaining why they have chosen to put down roots in the area.

Councillor Rory Colville, policy lead for corporate services, said: 'This is an opportunity for everyone to get behind a campaign to help us encourage more people and jobs to Argyll and Bute.'

If anyone would like more information about www.abplace2b.scot or would like to be featured on the site, contact [workingtogether@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:workingtogether@argyll-bute.gov.uk).

# Early Mod entry appeal

by David McPhee  
[dmcph@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:dmcph@obantimes.co.uk)



This year's Oban Provincial Mod is on the horizon and competitors are being reminded to hand in their entry sheets.

The closing date for entries along with fees and own choice music is Friday April 26 and no late entries will be accepted.

The event will take place on Friday May 31 and Saturday June 1.

Children's events will be held on the Friday, with the adults competing on Saturday.

All cups and shields should be cleaned and returned to Furan Gaelic Centre no later than Monday May 20.

An Oban Provincial Mod committee member said: 'An incredible amount of work goes into running a two-day event like this.

'A lot of time goes into chasing people up for them to get their entries in. We are having no late entries this year. We have been very relaxed

previously.' The volunteer explained that late entries had a domino effect and interfered with printing the programme, as well as hiring venues and adjudicators, so the decision was taken to extend the registration period for one month, but refuse late entries.

Last year was a bumper year in regards to the number of children's entries.

For example, one conversation competition for under eights featured more than 40 youngsters.

'I get so much pleasure from

hearing and having a fluent conversation with children who are going through Gaelic medium education,' the committee member added.

'It's astonishing how fluent some of the children are even at the age of eight.'

Competitors will be keen to repeat their success at the Royal National Mod, which is held in October.

Three winning pupils from Rockfield Primary School put their victory down to a stuffed animal.

They received gold badges after performing with either

'Oscar the Mod dog' or the 'Mod penguin'.

And Oban Gaelic Choir's rendition of an electronic Celtic band's song made headlines. Oban finished second for the second year running in the coveted Lovat and Tullibardine Shield, but people loved their take on Niteworks' Maraiche – it has been viewed tens of thousands of times online.

For more information about this year's Oban Provincial Mod, contact [duncan.macneil@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:duncan.macneil@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or call 01631 567886.



## Volunteers help tidy castle grounds

Conditions might have been freezing, but that didn't stop hardy volunteers from clearing away dead wood and rubbish from Dunollie Museum, Castle and grounds.

Maurice Wilkins, Eilidh McManus and Davie Walker, pictured left, were busy on Saturday, with more volunteers joining them on Sunday.

Eilidh, who took up the position of gardener last year, explained there was quite a lot of tidying up and restoration work to be done in the grounds.

To help with this, 'Dunollie' partnered up with Keep Oban Beautiful (KOB).

Maurice Wilkins from KOB said the grounds had a prob-

lem with a phytophthora - a plant destroying mould that feeds off rotting wood.

Eilidh added: 'It is a historic garden, but it is a community garden, and it is bringing the two together.'

To get involved with future clear-ups, email [info@dunollie.org](mailto:info@dunollie.org) or call 01631 570550 and ask for Eilidh.



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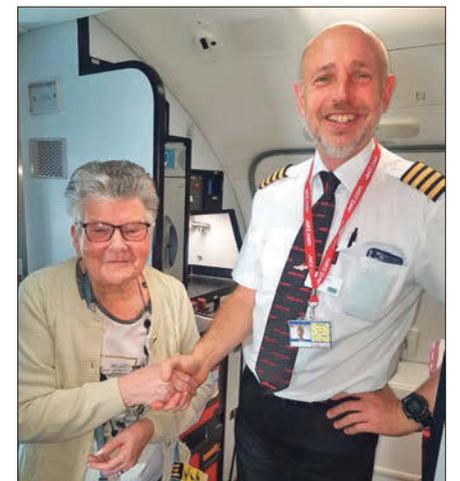
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## Up, up and away for first-time flyers

Oban couple Kay and Jim Harrison, 76 and 78, have boarded a plane for the first time.

Mr and Mrs Harrison of Mossfield Drive flew with Jet2 from Edinburgh

to Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands to visit their son and daughter-in-law, Willie and Helen Harrison, who moved there in August last year.

The pair got to sit in the

cockpit and shake hands with their pilot Captain Donald Grieg.

Daughter Louise Steel said: 'They loved the experience and wished they had done it years ago.'

## Young people asked for letters of aspiration

Young people in Argyll and Bute are being asked to send a letter to the Scottish Parliament setting out their aspirations for the institution over the next 20 years.

A selection of the letters will be included in a new book published by Luath Press in June to commemorate the parliament's 20th anniversary.

The book will also include essays from well-known authors, academics and others which explore how well the parliament is placed to

tackle the big issues facing Scotland in the future.

The competition is being held in partnership with Young Scot which wants to engage young people in this important milestone of Scotland's democracy.

Allan Lindsay, participation and co-design director at Young Scot, said: 'By contributing, young people can create a lasting legacy that will show their thoughts, hopes and wishes for our country today and into the future.'

## Oban legion branch closed

The Oban branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland (RBL) has officially closed.

The Oban Times reported last November that the future of the organisation was in jeopardy after the chairman had to step down because of ill health.

With no replacement for the 70-year-old, the decision was taken to close the group.

On its social media page, a spokesperson for the RBL Oban branch said: 'Unfortunately the branch has now closed.'

Former chairman Ian Simmonds and his wife Lesley have been at the helm of the operation for the last seven years.

Mrs Simmonds was chairman of the Oban branch for five years, before handing over the reins to her husband two years ago.

The former army man said: 'It was decided to close the Oban branch. The Remembrance Day service was discussed and there is a small committee being formed to take care of that in the future.'

Speaking in November about his time with Royal British Legion Scotland, Mr Simmonds said: 'I will miss it. It's a brilliant organisation. There were not enough members.'

'We need people to do things as we are not fit enough to do it any more.'

A spokesperson for Legion Scotland said: 'Ian Simmonds has been a committed member of the Oban branch and his contribution to the remembrance parade year on year is greatly appreciated.'

An Oban Armistice Day committee is being formed to organise next year's event.

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## Man apologises for 'inexcusable' behaviour

A 27-year-old man from Inveraray apologised when he appeared before Oban Sheriff Court last week.

Christopher Mullen, who represented himself, told the court: 'My behaviour was inexcusable I would like to say I am sorry.'

Mullen, of 1A Fisher Row, admitted banging on the windows of a public house in Oban on December 4 last year, failing to provide

# Call for common sense over island's icy roads

by Kathie Griffiths  
[kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk)



Islay pupils are arriving at school scared because of hazardous bus and car journeys on ungritted roads like ice-rinks.

Island councillor Alastair Redmond says he has been inundated with complaints from worried islanders who say they have been struggling to stay on the icy roads.

He says despite the front-line roads men being hard-working, at the moment they can only do what they are told by the central management team at Argyll and Bute Council's Kilmory headquarters.

He says because orders are being made from the mainland, the council has failed to grit the roads around Loch Gorm, Gruinart, the Oa, Ardbeg and Artalla early



The route between Glen road and Port Ellen high road on Islay.

enough in the day. And he says that one of his constituents has been told council policy for Islay is that no back roads are to be gritted.

'Our island's diligent and professional school bus and car drivers start driving at 7.15am every morning so if the gritters don't start until 7am our road's department just can't cover the roads before traffic is on them.'

'On many occasions over

the last couple of weeks I have received complaints that the roads have not been gritted despite locals being told otherwise by call handlers on the mainland,' he said.

Now he is backing constituents' 'justifiable demands that in the future decisions about when and where gritting happens should be made locally and not from Kilmory.'

He said: 'It is essential we allow our front-line roads

'It is essential we allow our front-line roads men to use their own initiative and common sense.'

men on the island to use their own initiative and common sense. Unsafe icy roads are as unacceptable in my council ward as they are in the more populated parts of Argyll. Our council must do all that it can to see that the more rural and isolated parts of Argyll are not provided with a substandard service.'

And he added: 'I have taken this to the roads department via members' services. It has to be rectified.'

As well as emails from fearful parents, complaints include gritters being spotted out on Islay when it has been 10 degrees in the rain.

Farmers have also complained culverts at Ballinby need sorting.

But an Argyll and Bute spokesperson said: 'Argyll and Bute Council is responsible for 2,310kms of carriageway and our pre-treatments cover about 50 per cent of the road network. We simply don't have the resources to treat all areas so we provide salt bins and grit heaps so that people can help themselves.'

'We track the weather through a sophisticated forecasting system. We consult with trained meteorologists who monitor actual conditions from satellite and locally-based weather stations. Pre-treatments are based on area-specific forecasts and there is one for Islay and Jura. Our priorities have to be main traffic routes, including roads to hospitals, fire stations and ambulance depots.'



Drew Walker, Alan MacDougall, Fiona Cruickshanks and Nicola Wilson.

## View bingo night raises £350

There was a full house for the first monthly charity bingo night at The View in Oban last Friday.

More than 90 people helped to raise £350 for Martyn's Monday Club - a peer-to-peer mental health support group for men and women over 18 years. The View's next bingo night is on Friday March 8. Doors open at 7pm with eyes down at 7.30pm. The charity to benefit is yet to be announced.

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It seems to be a commonly quoted statistic that moving house creates the same stress level as divorce, death or starting a new job!

This has been relayed to me from many directions in the last few days with mixed tones of warning, concern and humour. If this is indeed the case then expect next week's article to be more incoherent than usual.

Maybe it's a reflection of the slightly nomadic life of a musician that I lead, but I'm not yet too concerned about the prospect of this weekend's flitting. Possibly next Monday, when among a mountain range of boxes, I can't find my accordion, my clothes, my laptop or wellies, I might have a different view.

Having moved a number of times over the years, I'm aware that the practicalities of the exercise are certainly not without issue, but because I've never stayed too long in one place it will hopefully be easier than it might otherwise be. I am also in a fairly lucky position that my worldly possessions – few as they are – are already

spread between Glasgow, Fort William and Tiree, and I've no need to shift all these things at the same time, so it will be a less comprehensive migration for me than it would be for most.

More interesting than the practicalities of moving, is the question of how where we live shapes our identity and the extent to which that varies widely between different people. For me, unlike many, where I live doesn't feel too important a factor in identity and never has.

Over the last 22 years since leaving school, as well as periods of living back home, I've lived in Tobermory, Glasgow, Fort William and Oban, but would never consider myself to be from anywhere else but Tiree. I have enjoyed greatly being in every one of these other places, and in different ways feel a strong and positive connection with them all, but to me living in a place is temporary when compared to the constant pull of the place where you were brought up, where family ties are and where cultural background is.

I would not assert that this strong link to place and cultural identity is either a good or a bad thing. Most people have no such specific links to people and place and it makes them no better or worse in character. However, it certainly exists, it feels powerful, and having existed with it, I would not like to live without it.

These connections, coupled with the ever present background feeling that I'll eventually move back to Tiree at some point, makes the effect of living anywhere else merely transitional. The practicalities of life and chosen vocations may override these hankerings for home, but it is a very enjoyably dream to have.

In the meantime, I am very excited about our imminent move to a new harbour and the beginning of another of life's chapters. I may live there till I'm a 102, but that time will feel transient when set against the permanence of upbringing and the anchor-lines to generations past in a geographic area that is specific to the ethnic group and culture into which I was born.



Professor Derek Bell said the issue of hospital cleaning is a complex issue that cannot be measured in a useful way by only referring to spending per square metre.

# Cleaning costs at hospital one of lowest in region

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



NHS figures have revealed that Lorn and Islands Hospital had the second lowest amount spent on cleaning per square metre in the Highlands and Islands.

The statistics, from the information service division of the NHS, show that between April 2017 and March 2018, the cost of cleaning per square metre in the Oban hospital was £39, which is £10 less than the national average.

It was also less than a third of the figure for the Balfour Hospital in Kirkwall, Orkney, which has the highest amount spent per square metre at £91.

## Cleaning

The hospital with the least amount spent cleaning per square metre in the Highlands and Islands was Raigmore Hospital in Inverness with a figure of just £34.

The findings from research conducted by the Scottish Conservatives follows the news that two patients at the flagship Queen Elizabeth hospital died after contracting an infection spread by pigeon droppings.

Professor Derek Bell, President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, said: 'This is a complex issue which cannot be measured in a useful way by only referring to spending per square metre.

The nature of national and local cleaning contracts should be taken into account, as well as other indicators, such as the number of complaints received about cleanliness at hospitals. Spending alone does not measure the effectiveness of the cleaning carried out.'

Scottish Conservative MSP Donald Cameron said it was very concerning that there

**'Patient safety is key for us and our staff maintain high standards of cleanliness'**

is such a huge difference between the amount of money spent on cleaning across hospitals in the Highlands and Islands and wants an urgent explanation from the Scottish Government.

'While it is true that it would be unrealistic to expect an identical spend given the different sizes and responsibilities of each hospital, the fact remains that some hospitals are spending considerably less than others, and it does call into question hygiene and infection control procedures in our local hospitals,' he said.

Oban councillor and Argyll and Bute Integration Joint Board vice-chairman Kieron Green said: 'Patient safety

is key for us and our staff maintain high standards of cleanliness in hospitals across Argyll and Bute. We also regularly review infection control procedures and data to ensure that any identified lessons can be put into practice.'

A spokesperson for NHS Highland added: 'Our domestic services staff in Lorn and Islands Hospital do an excellent job and carry out effective and efficient cleaning procedures. The work carried out by our staff also fully comply with the Scottish national cleaning specifications within all areas of the hospital.'

'As part of the national standard of cleanliness procedures and compliance the hospital operates at a very high level. In addition, the hospital has quarterly cleaning audits, which are carried out by an external auditor and a patient representative, and both have experience of the high cleaning standards that are required. The last audit carried out in December 2018 showed that the hospital achieved 99.1 per cent compliance which highlights that consistently high standards are being met and sustained.'

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# Votes decide community share of well-being cash

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Seven community groups have been vying for a share of £5,000 health and well-being funds.

The winners were voted for during a special presentation night at Oban's Rockfield Centre on Monday.

Each group had to tout for votes from the community audience, explaining what they would do with the Oban, Lorn and Inner Isles Health and Well-being Network money to get more people active and improve lives.

Votes were cast using special electronic keypads and the overall winner being awarded the full £2,000 they requested was Martyn's Monday Club, a peer-to-peer suicide and mental health

support group that meets at Hope Kitchen.

The runner up was Oban Toy Cupboard, based at Glencruitten Church Hall, which applied for £1,130 to buy more toys, especially sensory toys and equipment. It works like a lending library, is registered as a Scottish charity and started in 1990 with a mission to help more families play.

The remaining money meant the other five groups got £374 each to put toward their projects. The Youth Cafe had applied for £1,900 to help feed and educate the young people who come through its doors about healthy eating and cooking.

Soroba Young Family Group asked for funds to help families access more activities in the community. The scheme has welcomed



**Cast your votes now, an audience decided where health and wellbeing funds should be spent locally.**

112 under three-year-olds through its doors since August. As well as its birth to three unit, it runs a respite service and stay and play sessions.

Lorn Ladies Shinty Club wanted £2,000 to buy new helmets and shin guards and to hire facilities. The club, which is for all ages, had to stop training from October to January this year because

of the weather. Previously they were able to train at the old high school but the use of shinty sticks are not allowed inside the new building.

Lochnell Football Club is also up against the weather and wanted help to buy waterproof jackets for its players so they can keep dry, warm and are easily identifiable on a floodlit pitch in winter. More floodlights for

the practice ground in North Connel are also needed. When the club started up four years ago it had 25 members. It now has 120 who come from as far away as Appin and Dalmally.

Oban Rowing Club had also hoped to get £2,000 to buy a combined launch trolley and boat trailer. Currently the 22ft community-asset boat has to be carried down the long and very slippery slipway that the club uses near Oban Sailing Club. Without a trailer, it also means the club whose oldest member is 85, cannot join in events away from home.

Network chairperson Eleanor Mackinnon said the voting event, which doubled up as a networking occasion, was part of a pilot project to let the community decide where funding went.

## Nominate your local hero

A national charity is looking for nominations for a local group or individual who has gone the extra mile to improve their local community.

Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking is looking for inspiring stories of community cohesion for their annual Charles Maher Award – Walking Champion 2019.

The award recognises an individual, local group, organisation or local authority that has made a real difference to their local streets and improved them for people.

The award was set up in honour of Charles Maher, a campaigner and long-standing supporter of Living Streets.

Entries can be made by an individual, local group, organisation or council via the nomination form at [www.livingstreets.org.uk/charles-maher-award](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/charles-maher-award)

Nominations will close on Wednesday February 13 and the winner will be announced in Birmingham on Friday March 29.

## Highland students completing courses beat national average

A new report has revealed that 70.3 per cent of full-time students successfully completed their studies at Highlands and Islands colleges in the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

This is higher than the national average figure, which shows that 66.1 per cent of students passed further education courses at Scottish colleges in the period. The region's results are also higher than the previous year, increasing by 2.8 percentage points.

### Successfully

The statistics were published in the Scottish Funding Council's college performance indicators report this week. The number of part-time students who successfully completed their courses at Highlands and Islands colleges was also found to be higher than average.

Dr Michael Foxley, chairman of the Highland and Islands further education regional board, welcomed the report's findings saying: 'The results show a significant improvement on last year, with students at University of the Highlands and Islands



colleges performing well above the Scottish average.

'They are a testament to the dedication of our staff as well as the hard work of our students. The findings are particularly great for our students, who will be able to progress onto further courses or to access employment opportunities.'

Scottish Conservative Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron said: 'I am delighted that our students are performing so well across

the many colleges in the Highlands and Islands. It not only highlights the high quality teaching staff that we have in the region, but also the hard work that students have put in to succeed in their chosen academic paths.

'Hopefully this can further boost the attractiveness of all our UHI colleges to prospective students from outside the region, so that more people will remain in the Highlands and Islands to work and live in our communities.'



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OT

## Cosy up for Benderloch's cultural offerings

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Entry is by donation.

Bookends Festival has a pop-up session at the Reading Room on Tuesday February 12 from 11am until 6.30pm with hot drinks, home baking and hundreds of books to read and take away. From 2pm that day, there will be a Finish What You Started opportunity for people to bring along any kind of project that needs completing.

Mull Theatre brings The Electrifying Mr Johnston to the Benderloch hall on Wednesday February 13. The play is about Tom Johnston who brought light to the Scottish glens. To book phone call 01631 720498.

Glasgow sextet James Edwyn and The Borrowed Band are gigging at the hall on Friday February 15. Their music is a mix of alt-country, indie/folk rock and roots orientated Americana. Doors and bar open at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 in advance, £12 on the door. Call 01631 720247.

# 59 jobs go as TalkTalk closes Stornoway site

TalkTalk is to close its site in Stornoway, making all 59 staff redundant.

Western Isles politicians and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have called on the Scottish Government to intervene. The telecoms company says it is transferring its Stornoway operation to Manchester with the loss or transfer of 59 jobs.

Alasdair Allan MSP commented: 'For an economy the size of the Isle of Lewis, the impact of the loss of 59 jobs cannot be overstated. It is proportionate to job losses in the thousands for a city the size of Glasgow. This is a real body blow to the Isle of Lewis.'

And at First Minister's

Question Time in Holyrood last week, the MSP asked Nicola Sturgeon what the Scottish Government could do to assist the workforce that will lose their jobs in the summer. The first minister responded by saying she 'was very concerned to learn of the developments at Talk Talk in Stornoway and the

impact this will have on the employees affected, as well as on the local community and the local economy'.

Mrs Sturgeon added the government was 'committed to doing everything possible to address this situation urgently in the hope of obtaining a positive outcome'.

Councillor Donald

Crichton, chairman of the sustainable development committee, said: 'This is a significant blow to the economy of the Western Isles.'

Councillor Crichton added that, with the council's partners, they would be implementing Partnership Action for Continuing Employment procedures.

## Getting a grip of health and care funding crisis

Frustration was evident at the latest meeting of the board overseeing the Argyll's health and social care services.

At Argyll and Bute Council headquarters in Lochgilphead on January 30, the Integration Joint Board (IJB) heard that savings measures have been slow to achieve, though members praised a new financial reporting process.

A £4.398m overspend is currently being forecast by Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) for 2018/19, which may rise as high as £5.5m depending on a service level agreement with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Argyll and Bute Council's head of strategic finance



Interim chief financial officer Kirsty Flanagan.

Kirsty Flanagan is interim chief financial officer for the HSCP.

Mrs Flanagan told IJB

members, which oversees the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP): 'It is really disap-

pointing to note that this is a deterioration in the position reported to the board in November, when it was £4.006 million.

'The main reason for the overspend relates to a short-fall in delivering the 2018/19 savings.'

She stressed, however, the risk connected to the HSCP's service level agreement with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Mrs Flanagan continued: 'At the IJB meeting on September 26 the board instructed officers to put in place measures to minimise discretionary spend. While this was communicated to staff, the figures you have before you, I would suggest

that they have been largely ineffective. For this reason, along with the financial situation NHS Highland finds itself in, we are implementing a range of further measures known as Grip and Control.'

'This will take a great deal of time and effort and the measures will be in place until we see an improvement.'

IJB member and Argyll and Bute councillor Gary Mulvaney complimented Mrs Flanagan on the quality of financial information now available to the board.

He commented: 'It doesn't change the overall picture, which is not good, but at least the clarity of information makes it easier for the IJB to monitor the situation.'

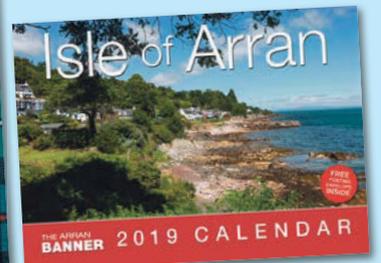
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## CalMac fund aimed at helping west coast youngsters

Ferry operator CalMac is launching a new community fund to help boost opportunities for young people in west coast communities.

The fund is open to non-profit-making organisations and applications must be for a project or activities that benefit children and young people aged 26 and under living in a mainland port or island the company serves. Organisations can apply for £500 to £2,000.

CalMac's director of community and stakeholder engagement Brian Fulton said: 'I'm really looking forward to seeing some creative applications on how it can be used to help positively impact young people's lives within our communities.'

'We are targeting 30 awards in year one and will monitor interest levels in the fund over the course of the year, with each application being judged on its own merits.'

Community awards will be made across six areas and will be made in three rounds a year. Each application will be judged by a panel of young people recruited in partnership with Young Scot.

Organisations can access an online application form and see full terms and conditions.

The first round of applications is being accepted from non-profit-making organisations based in the Western Isles and Ullapool from Friday March 1.

Applications for Skye, Raasay, the Small Isles, Inner Hebrides, Oban and ports serving these communities will open on Wednesday May 1.

## Students have their say on Brexit

Students took their thoughts on Brexit to the Scottish Government and parliamentary representatives last week.

More than 80 students and student officers of the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) met in the Mercure Hotel, Inverness, for their annual conference.

Richard Lochhead, minister for further education, higher education and science, took questions from delegates before a panel discussion with representatives of the Highlands and Islands in Holyrood and Westminster.

Students made an emotional plea to politicians to address concerns they have over the uncertainty of EU students to continue to study in the Highlands and Islands.



Richard Lochhead and Alan Simpson.

Florence Jansen, HISA deputy president of Lews Castle College, said: 'Politicians should communicate openly about the effect Brexit

will have on EU students. EU students deserve to have our voices heard.'

Alan Simpson, president of the Highlands and Islands Students' Association, said: 'It's important the Scottish Government listens to the concerns students have.'

The minister acknowledged he was glad to hear from the students about their concerns around Brexit.

'The Scottish Government will do all that it can to support EU nationals who are studying here. Scotland is, and always will be, open and welcoming to anyone who wants to study or work here,' he said.

'We will not stand by while the benefits of international collaboration and knowledge exchange are threatened.'

## Reduction in 'last resort' seal culls

Scottish Sea Farms has seen a reduction in the number of seals culled to protect farmed salmon stocks, according to latest figures.

The fall in numbers is the result of ongoing investment in rigid new pen netting.

The figures show the company, which has 45 salmon farms around Scotland's west coast and islands, culled 11 seals under licence at nine farms to protect its salmon stocks during the reporting period February 1 2018 to January 31 2019.

This is down 31 per cent and 35 per cent on 2017 (16 seal culls) and 2016 (17 seal culls) respectively.

Seal culling is the last resort option taken by farmers to protect the salmon in their care and is carried out under licence only when seals persist beyond all other

preventative measures. Scottish Sea Farms' head of fish health Ralph Bickerdike said: 'Our priority has been to install Seal Pro nets at those farms with a historic seal challenge.'

'The speed with which we can do this, however, is dictated in large part by nature as there are limited opportunities in the growing cycle where we can install the new nets without risking stress to our salmon. The ideal time is ahead of each new crop.'

To date, Seal Pro netting has been installed at 21 farms at a cost in excess of £4.2million, with plans for a further nine farms – specifically those facing a seal challenge – to be equipped in 2019 and 2020 at the start of each new crop cycle.

However, with counts indicating the seal population in the west

of Scotland has been increasing substantially over the last 10 years, and each seal eating between three-seven kilogrammes of food per day depending on species, the pressure on available food sources has never been greater. With traditional nylon nets, a hungry seal will push its snout against the soft twine in the hope salmon will swim close enough for it to grab. In contrast, Seal Pro netting has a tougher, more rigid surface which helps deter seals and, in turn, improve fish welfare.

Now being widely adopted across the sector, protective netting such as Seal Pro nets along with the use of acoustic deterrent devices has contributed to an 81 per cent drop in the number of seals culled by salmon farmers since 2011 – with the ambition being zero culls.

## Cash boost for Scottish Women's Aid helpline

Equalities minister Christina McKelvie has confirmed the government's support of the Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline.

At a meeting with Scottish Women's Aid staff, Ms McKelvie praised the helpline for the support it gives to abuse victims and said: 'We want anyone experiencing domestic abuse or feeling trapped in an unwanted marriage to have somewhere to turn to for help.'

To assist the helpline, Ms McKelvie announced a grant of £1.7 million over the next two years that 'will ensure more people are supported and protected and can access the emotional and practical support they need.'

Helpline manager Lydia Okroj said: 'We are delighted to have secured this grant and we are looking forward to working with partners to continue to provide a high quality, specialist service to survivors of domestic abuse and forced marriage in Scotland.'

Ms Okroj said these issues could be 'isolating and frightening experiences and no-one should go through them alone.'

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## STATUE OF ST VALENTINE IN THE ITALIAN CITY OF TERNI

St Valentine is celebrated by lovers the world over and long may this continue; in the hectic pace of life today we need to take time to stop and reaffirm our love for our partners and all that we do for each other.

Pope Gelasius originally made Valentine a saint back in 496AD and he became a by-word for romance but his feast was removed from the general church calendar in the late 1960s.

With little confirmed about his life and the chance that there might be two or more Valentines whose stories merged over the centuries, this all led to his demotion and removal of his liturgical feast. There is no doubting there was a Valentine; archaeologists found a catacomb in Rome dedicated to him and his feast still appears on the calendar of some local churches, particularly the Diocese of Terni, Narni and Amelia in

the Umbria region where St Valentine is claimed as a former bishop

The diocese says it has hard evidence that the martyred Bishop Valentine was known and venerated in the city about 65 miles north of Rome, as far back as the seventh century.

The Basilica di San Valentino in Terni has become a place of pilgrimage and hundreds of betrothed couples gather there before getting married, to promise to love each other at the Festa della Promessa, Celebration of the Promise.

But did you know that at the Blessed John Duns Scotus Church on Ballater Street in the Gorbals there is a reliquary containing a bone said to be from one of St Valentine's arms? A French family donated the Glasgow relic to the Franciscans in Victorian times; it came to its present home via the Church of St Francis, Glasgow.

## LOVE HEART SWEETIES



Everyone's first Valentine, from the playground, Love Hearts were first made back in 1954. The production of a Love Heart with the embossed message and edible ink remains a secret and is unique to

Swizzels. Today they are exported internationally and are translated into different languages and they can be bought as personalised wedding favours.

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**Butternut Squash and Almond Risotto**  
*With Shaved Parmesan and Chives*

**Oven Roasted Breast Of Chicken**  
*Served with a Creamy Mashed Potato, Roasted Shallots and a Red Wine jus*

**Dessert**

**Homemade Sticky Toffee Pudding**  
*With a Warm Toffee Sauce and Tablet Ice Cream*

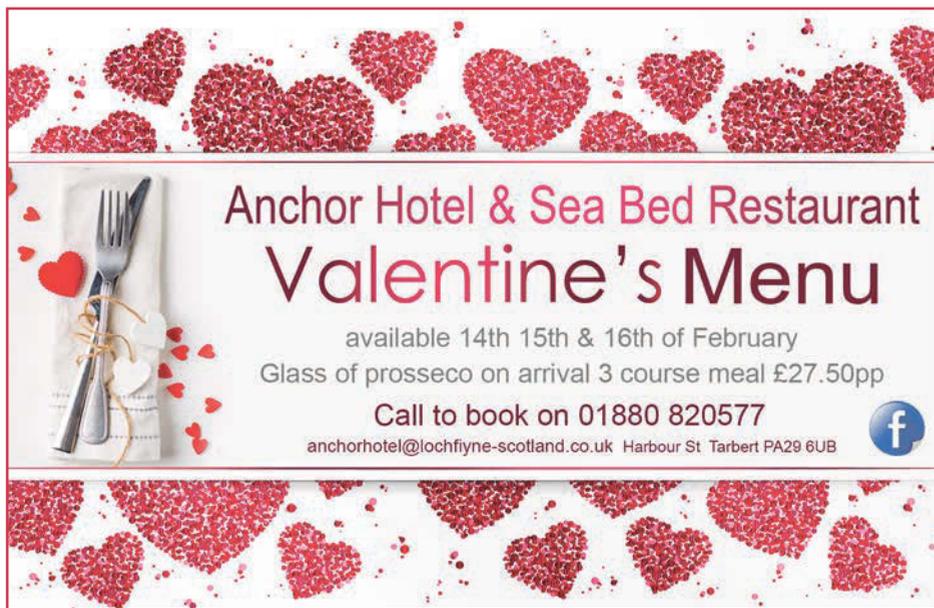
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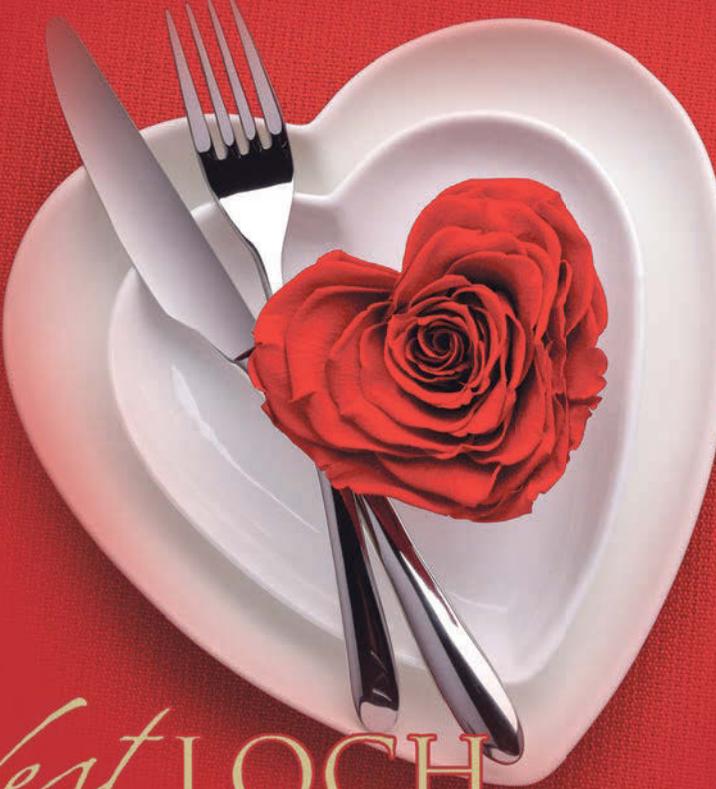
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# BUSINESS NEWS

## IN BRIEF

### Brand development

Outer Hebrides businesses will have the opportunity to develop their brand to help them stand out against the competition at a brand development workshop this March.

Organised by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), as part of its Entrepreneurial Academy, the brand development workshop will be delivered by experts in the field and will be free to attend.

The workshop will be delivered by Lesley Thomson, managing director of communications consultancy Spreng Thomson, and Janice Kirkpatrick, creative director of design agency Graven, pictured below.

The workshop takes place in Stornoway on March 14.



### Double delight

MacPhee & Partners has double reason to celebrate in its Oban office.

Billie Kirkham has been promoted to associate solicitor and Fiona Anderson has been announced as a finalist in the category of paralegal of the year, at the Scottish Law Awards.

Billie's promotion is in acknowledgement of her excellent work within the firm's family law and executry departments and also her contribution to the company. Fiona is one of only three paralegals to be shortlisted for the paralegal of the year award.

A spokesperson for the company said: 'To be recognised as one of the best paralegals in the country is a fantastic achievement and we look forward to the awards ceremony, in Glasgow on March 21.'

# Innovation and heritage celebrated at Port Ellen

The iconic Port Ellen distillery on Islay will be revived in an inspiring celebration of quality, heritage and innovation, under plans that were revealed to the local community.

The plans, which will be formally submitted to Argyll and Bute Council later this year, were unveiled at a pre-planning consultation event in Port Ellen, giving residents the opportunity to view the proposals.

The community was invited to view the plans at the consultation event and also to share memories and artefacts relating to the historic distillery.

The tight-knit community on Islay is intrinsically woven into the life of the island's famous distilleries, with almost everyone connected either directly or through friends and family with the Scotch whisky industry. Former employees of Port Ellen were amongst those invited along to share in the distillery revival plans.

### Anecdotes

Diageo's specialist archivist for single malt whisky, Joanne McKerchar, also attended to meet people to learn from their Port Ellen experiences, anecdotes and artefacts.

Under the plans, Port Ellen will be brought back into production with a combination of two pairs of experimental copper pot stills and two separate distillation regimes in an innovative combination of tradition and experimentation. The move will allow the Port Ellen whisky makers the freedom to experiment with new whisky styles.

The experimental stills pay homage to John Ramsay, who owned Port Ellen in its formative years and who made it one of the most innovative distilleries of the 19th century, pioneering many of the techniques and equipment that would become mainstays of the Scotch whisky industry.

This history of cutting-edge innovation included: the spirit safe – now a feature of all Scotch malt whisky distilleries – which was first tested at Port Ellen distillery in the winter of 1823/24; archive records show that John Ramsay was exporting significant quantities of Port Ellen single malt to the United States of



America as early as 1840, making it a pioneering single malt export, laying the foundation for Scotch whisky in its biggest global market.

From 1841 to 1843, John Ramsay experimented with distilling malt whisky in a patent still – the continuous distillation technique developed for grain whisky – typical of Ramsay's restless, inquisitive nature, always seeking new methods and innovations for his product.

Archive records show that John Ramsay imported sherry and Maderia casks to mature his spirit, making him an early adopter of the now-common practice of finishing single malt in specific casks.

The buildings at the Port Ellen distillery have gone through many changes since it first opened in 1824, with the distillery closing and largely being demolished in the 1930s, before being rebuilt in the 1960s.

Following its most recent closure in 1983, only the kiln building with its classic pagoda roofs and the traditional sea-front warehouses have survived. These buildings will be restored as integral parts of the revived distillery, with

a beautiful new stillhouse created to house distillation.

Georgie Crawford, the master distiller who is leading the Port Ellen project, said: 'These plans are any whisky maker's dream come true. To have the opportunity to recreate the original spirit character of Port Ellen distillery so we have new generations of that classic Islay peated malt is incredible, but then to combine that with the freedom to experiment with new variations is truly extraordinary.'

In regard to the building design for the recreated distillery, she said: 'Like the whisky, the plans for the building combine the best of heritage and innovation. The buildings at Port Ellen distillery have changed and evolved many times over its lifetime. We're lucky enough to have the old kiln buildings and seaside warehouses that will be restored and reimagined, alongside spacious and modern light-filled new buildings to house the distillery production.'

'We believe these plans are a fitting tribute to the exceptional legacy of Port Ellen and we are incredibly excited to be able to share them.'

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## Christopher Trotter to star in charity fundraiser

Lochaber charity Birchwood Highland is hosting its annual Dinner with the Stars fundraising event, with food ambassador and writer Christopher Trotter set to visit the Highland capital to cook and entertain foodies and supporters of the charity.

Christopher is a passionate advocate for seasonal fresh Scottish produce, having been inspired by Scotland's larder when running a hotel in Argyll for six years. Trained at the Savoy in London, Christopher has worked in two Michelin-starred establishments – head chef in one.

Now in its fourth year – and with an established foodie following – Dinner with the Stars 2019 will take place in Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness in April, and will feature local guest chefs, plus a main course prepared by Christopher.

Emily Stokes, chief executive of Birchwood Highland, said: 'We're really looking forward to welcoming Christopher to the Highlands. Dinner with the Stars is Birchwood Highland's major fundraising event of the year and helps to raise vital funds for quality of life activities for people we support, all while raising awareness of mental health more generally within the Highlands.'

The evening will also feature a Q+A session with Christopher, finishing up in true Highland style with a céilidh with award-winning Hò-rò.



Dinner with the Stars guests will sit down to a main course by Christopher Trotter.

## Dawnfresh to expand operations

The UK's largest producer of farmed trout has unveiled plans for investment.

Dawnfresh, which employs 27 people near Taynuilt, has submitted scoping reports for two additional fish farm sites in Argyll – at Ardentinny, Loch Long and at South Bute – as the first steps in the planning process.

If given the green light, the Taynuilt-based company would invest £4 million in each of the high energy sites, with around 7,000 tons of trout being produced per 22.5-month cycle across the two sites.

As well as creating six permanent full-time jobs at each site, the new fish farms would create an additional 12 permanent full-time jobs on service boats, servicing the two Argyll sites and two other sites.

Additional downstream jobs would be created and safeguarded through the supply, servicing and maintenance of the sites and would create jobs for suppliers elsewhere in Scotland through boat and feed barge construction, equipment provision with further positions created in processing.

Alison Hutchins, farming director for Dawnfresh, said: 'Our proposed fish farm sites represent a major investment in Argyll, with the potential to create and support up to 24 direct full-time jobs.'

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## Adored and accused; a duchess falls from grace

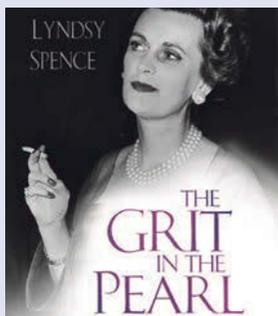
How did the star debutante of 1930, a woman whose name was a byword for class and glamour, become plagued by scandal, heartbreak and tragedy?

In her new book, *The Grit in the Pearl*, author Lyndsy Spence reveals how Ethel Margaret Whigham, later the Duchess of Argyll, was a woman ahead of her time – but also the product of an emotionally abusive mother and the victim of unscrupulous and vicious men.

Using previously unpublished sources – including an image from Scottish Field's archives – and personal transcripts, this is the full story of a fragile woman who took a bid to gain independence in a life that befell so many women of her generation – and lost.

Margaret, Duchess of Argyll's life was one of complexity and controversy. Born Ethel Margaret Whigham, the only child of a Scottish self-made millionaire and a beautiful high-society woman, her childhood was rich and splendid – but empty. She was a daddy's girl with an absent father, living with a jealous mother who sought to remind Margaret of her every shortcoming. As she grew up, her name was a byword for class and beauty; she was the debutante of her coming-out year, and her marriage to Charles Sweeney literally stopped traffic. But it was not to last.

In *The Grit in the Pearl*, Lyndsy Spence, using previously unpublished sources and personal transcripts, reveals the story of a fragile woman who was to come up against the very highest echelons of English high society – and lose.



# Lochaber's railway

## Morvern lines

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Building railways, especially in remote places, has always been a tricky and dangerous occupation resulting in numerous deaths and accidents.

The Burma Railway, known also as the Death Railway, was a 258-mile railway between Ban Pong, Thailand, and Thanbyzayat, Burma, built by the Empire of Japan in 1943 to support its forces in the Burma campaign of the Second World War. Between 180,000 and 250,000 Southeast Asian civilian labourers and about 61,000 Allied prisoners of war were subjected to forced labour during its construction. As many as 90,000 civilian labourers and more than 12,000 Allied prisoners died.

Many men were killed or maimed for life in the making of the West Highland Railway Line, sometimes called in Gaelic, Rathad Iarainn nan Eilean – Iron Road to the Isles, which links the ports of Mallaig and Oban with Glasgow. The Mallaig extension, completed in 1901, was notable for the extensive use of mass concrete in making viaducts and other structures for the line. It was this, the weather, and a lack of a health and safety regime, which proved fatal to so many of its construction workers which were mainly Irish navvies. The Oban Times and other Scottish newspapers in period style, reported numerous fatalities and accidents of which the following are a few.

'A shocking accident occurred on the Banavie branch of the West Highland Railway late on Saturday night (March 1897). As the night passenger train was returning to Fort-William, and when in the neighbourhood of Old Inverloch Castle, the driver felt a jerk, as if the train had passed over something.

'On reaching Fort-William the incident was reported and a search party returned to the spot and discovered the mutilated body of a man lying close to the side of the rails. On being removed to the Belford Hospital, Fort-William, it was found that the unfortunate man still lived, but that both legs had been amputated. He died about midnight and was identified as John Connelly, belonging to West Calder, a workman employed at the construction of the new Mallaig line.

'Deaths from exposure among the navvies

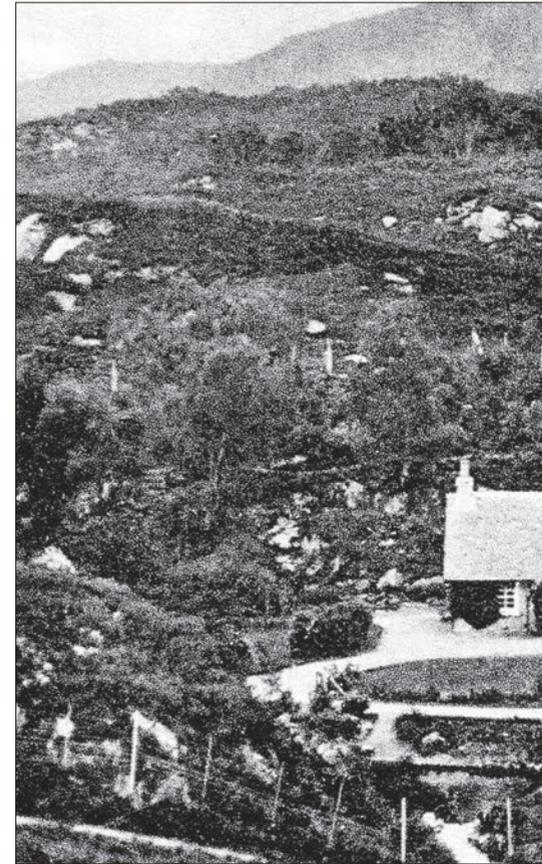
are becoming so frequent on the Mallaig and Invergarry railways as to give cause for much alarm (1898). On Sunday night three more workmen succumbed. One, named McLeod, was found by the public road near Kinlochailort, between Fort William and Mallaig. He had a cut on his head and is thought to have fallen where he was found, and died from exposure in the snow.

'February 1898: The local sanitary inspector reported that since the commencement of the Mallaig and Fort Augustus Railways as many as 15 navvies were found dead on the road-sides or drowned in the locks of the Caledonian Canal at Banavie and Gairloch. Being destitute and without friends, they had to be buried at the expense of the district. The rate per burial, including the cost of coffin, etc, came to an average of £2 per head.

'February 1898: A third explosion, attended by the loss of two lives, occurred on Saturday at the Mallaig Railway Works, near Glenfinnan.

'March 1898: Information has reached Fort-William of another blasting accident on the Mallaig railway works at Polnish, near Kinlochailort. It appears that, immediately prior to a blast going off, Thomas M'Alpine, one of the partners of the firm who are constructing the new line, was standing on the slope of a cutting 150 yards distant, and on the charge exploding he was struck on the groin with a stray boulder from the blast. He was knocked over and received a serious flesh wound. The resident medical officer, being of opinion that the injury was of a dangerous nature, telegraphed to Glasgow for a professor, who arrived by special train early yesterday morning accompanied by trained nurses and Mr Robert M'Alpine, the senior partner of the firm [known as 'Concrete Bob']. The injured man's wounds were carefully dressed, and he is now believed to be out of danger, although in a critical state.

'October 1898: A melancholy fatality occurred yesterday at Polnish, near Arisaig, on the new Mallaig railway works. From particulars which have just come to hand, it appears that a squad of workmen were engaged in deep rock cutting when a heavy portion of rock was dislodged from above and fell among the workmen, killing instantaneously one of their number, named Frank Docherty, a navy 20 years of age. The remains of the deceased were conveyed to a house nearby and the men who sustained injuries were taken to the contrac-



tors' hospital at Polnish. December 1898: A shocking accident occurred on the Mallaig Railway works on Saturday, whereby Walter Craw, navy, aged 20, belonging to Limerick, was seriously injured. It seems that while dressing the slope of the cutting with an iron crowbar he slipped and fell a distance of 25 feet. As he fell the crowbar entered the lower part of body and emerged at the shoulder blade. His recovery is despaired of.

'March 1899: A stream which had been dammed up at Leacavuie near Glenfinnan to provide water power for a drilling machine, burst early on Saturday morning. The rush of water carried off a store in the immediate neighbourhood, washing most of its contents into Loch Eilt.

'The storekeeper, Alexander MacTavish, a young man who slept on the premises, was drowned. His body was found in the evening in a reservoir, situated on a lower level, which



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# y of death



Polish House, used as a hospital by Robert McAlpine & Sons during the construction of the Fort William to Mallaig railway line. Photograph: Iain Thornber; with thanks to Martin Briscoe, Corpach, for sharing his archives.

had partly checked the torrent from the higher dam.

November 1899: On Monday, while a number of workmen on the Mallaig railway were engaged on the line near Kinlochailort, one of their number was struck by flash of lightning and rendered semi-unconscious. He was conveyed to the contractor's hospital at Polish, where restoratives were applied. Several of the other men suffered slightly from shock. The water-pipe to Kinlochailort Hotel and air compressor pipes used by Messrs R. MacAlpine and Sons, were also torn up by the lightning.

An extraordinary accident happened on Friday night to the train which works on the completed portion of the Mallaig Railway between Banavie and Glenfinnan. The train,

consisting of an engine, a carriage occupied by a number of men and two wagons, was proceeding at a rapid rate in the direction of Glenfinnan. It was pitch dark. When opposite Kinlocheil a violent shock was experienced, and the train came to a sudden standstill, though fortunately it stayed on the rails.

Examination showed that it had run into a huge bull, the animal being killed by the force of the concussion. Both the wagons were thrown off the rails. The workmen were all badly shaken, but no one was injured. The carcass of the bull, which took 20 men to lift into a truck, was taken to Corpach. The railway is properly fenced, but a cross-over gate had been left open and the bull wandered onto the line.

Iain Thornber

[iain.thornber@btinternet.com](mailto:iain.thornber@btinternet.com)

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

We delve into The Oban Times archives to bring you faces and places from yesteryears



This photograph was taken at Colonsay Fire Station in 1999, but what was the occasion? If you know, email us at [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk) or call us on 01631 568000.

We had a call from a reader about last week's photograph. The picture showed Alan Stewart with his wife and son, John, who are formerly of Ardrishaig, who owned the huskies, with builder Donald A MacDonald from Lochgilphead. Alan himself also got in touch to say Donald had sponsored Argyll's first and only sled dog race. The Stewart family went on to start the first sled dog centre in the UK, outside Aviemore. John went on to be a top racer in USA /Canada.



Photocall at Fort William (new) Golf Club. Photograph from the Roamer Archive.

## Selling your Whisky Cask?

If you own a cask of Scotch Whisky and are interested in selling it, we would love to hear from you.

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## LETTERS

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or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

## Oban clubs proving vital to our wellbeing

Oban is fortunate in the number of support groups it has. While some are run by professionals, there are many where volunteers offer a friendly face, a cup of tea and someone to talk to.

Two such groups are Martyn's Monday Club and a new, similar group for women, which meets on Tuesdays.

The peer-to-peer men's support group was initially set up seven months ago at Hope Kitchen by Des MacMillan.

What Mr MacMillan did not expect were the sheer numbers of men and women whose mental health was suffering and who needed this safe place to talk.

The groups are also helping to support 'a scary' number of families who have been bereaved by suicide.

Mental health and wellbeing issues can hit anyone at any time, and many struggle to deal with the feelings that may arise. So it is important these groups are there and that we as a town can help support them, as they rely on donations to fund them.

A bingo night at The View in George Street raised £350 to boost the clubs' funds and this week, Oban, Lorn and the Isles Health and Wellbeing Network awarded £2,000 to help pay for activities and outings.

Martyn Cruickshanks' family know the heartache of losing a loved one only too well. And Martyn's 14-year-old son Zak is also helping his family smash the sometimes stifling taboo that can surround suicide.

He is climbing Ben Nevis with friends and family on April 6 and has set up an online appeal at [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eilidh-cruickshanks](http://justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eilidh-cruickshanks) to keep raising awareness about suicide prevention and help the clubs carry on their good work in Oban and Lorn.

So let's get behind this young lad's fantastic effort and donate to these worthy causes. We never know when we, or someone we love, might need their help. Visit [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eilidh-cruickshanks](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eilidh-cruickshanks)

Visit [martynsmondayclub.co.uk](http://martynsmondayclub.co.uk) to find out more the clubs.

## Ardchattan Parish Church final services

Thank you to all who joined us for the final communion service and the service to mark the close of the church on January 27, 2019.

It was lovely to see a busy church.

Special thanks to the Reverend Bill Gray and Reverend Dr Rodrick Campbell for leading the services, and to Norman Nicholson for his uplifting music.

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow?

**Ardchattan Parish folk.**

## In search of ex-trooper

Every year former members of a Royal Artillery Troop, which was based in Catterick and Aldershot in the 1970s and 80s, have a reunion and for the last 10 years we have been trying to find a Jimmy (Nobby) Clarke who was born and believed to be living in Oban.

We would be grateful if any of your readers know him and could ask him to get in touch as we are keen to locate him.

**Ian Skien**

**The Beagles, Cashes Green, Stroud, GL5 4SD**

## Icy roads raise concerns

I have been hearing from many of my constituents on Islay in regards to the gritting of our roads. There is no doubt in my mind that our front line roads men are hard working and have the same concerns about ice on our roads as everyone else. That said they can only do as they are ordered by our council's central management.

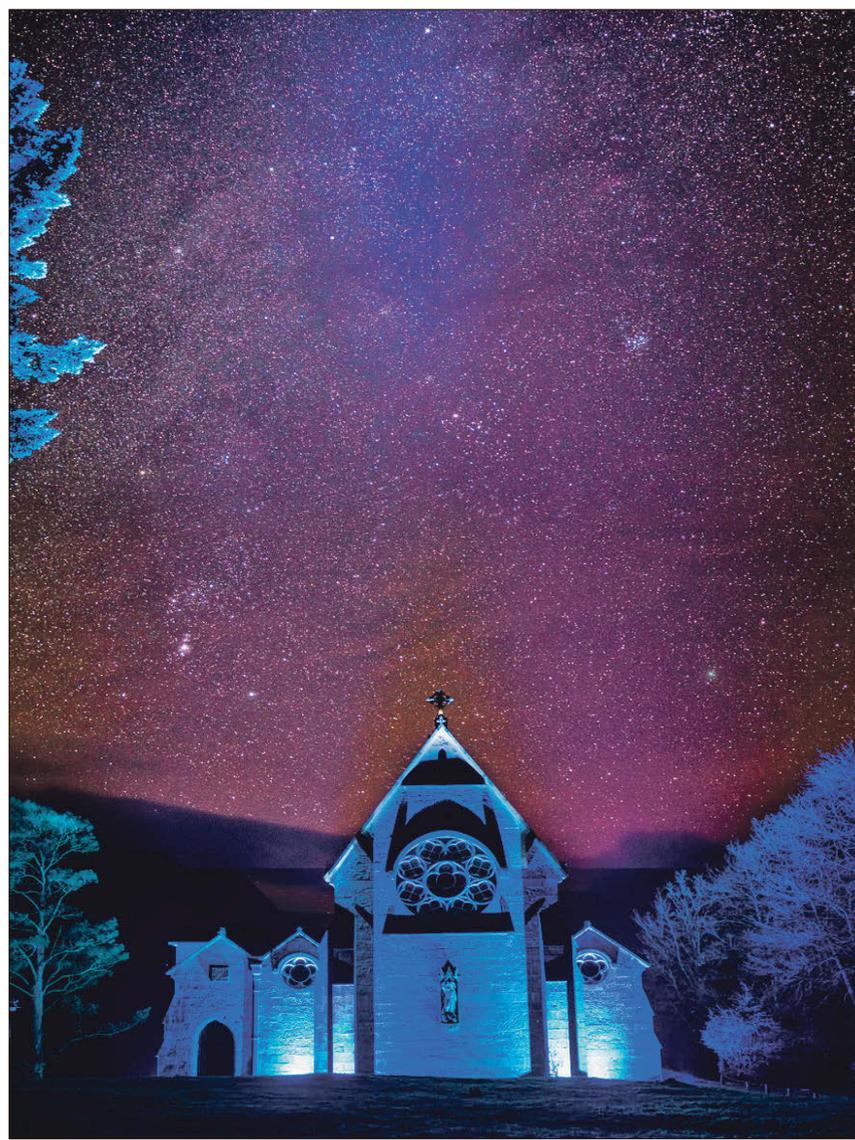
I have received very worrying reports from numerous fellow Ileachs that school buses and cars across many parts of Islay have struggled to stay on the roads leaving many pupils scared by the time they reached school.

Our council has recently failed to grit the roads around Loch Gorm, Gruinart, the Oa, Ardbeg and Artalla early enough, this is despite school buses and cars on these routes each day before 8am.

Our island's diligent and professional school bus and car drivers start driving at 7.15am every morning, so if the gritters don't start until 7am our roads department just can't cover the roads before traffic is on them.

On many occasions over the last couple of

## YOUR PICTURES



We know our readers love to take photographs so we are happy to create this space to showcase people's images each week. If you have a photograph you would like to see published here, send it to [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk), post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB or hand

it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or in High Street, Fort William. This fantastic photograph of the night sky was taken by reader Robert Alexander Hunter, who took this of Glenfinnan Church on December 9, 2018.

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weeks I have received complaints that the roads have not been gritted at all despite locals being told otherwise be call handlers on the mainland.

My constituents are justifiably demanding that in the future these decisions should be made locally. It is essential that we allow our front-line roads men on the island to use their own initiative and common sense.

Unsafe icy roads are as unacceptable in my council ward as they are in the more populated parts of Argyll. Our council must do all that it can to see that the more rural and isolated parts of Argyll are not provided with a substandard service.

**Councillor Alastair Redman, Kintyre and Islands ward.**

## ScotRail staff go above and beyond in freezing temps

I would like to publicly thank the crew of the 5.20am train leaving Oban on Saturday February 2.

The temp at 5am last Saturday was -6°C in Oban. When boarding the train it felt like -6°C in the train.

There was no heating. I was told by fellow travellers who commute daily on this train it had been the same all week. They were forewarned and brought with them blankets, hats and hot water bottles.

Passengers, like myself, were not prepared and had a very uncomfortable journey. One could see one's breath.

The poor crew had suffered these freezing temperatures all week. A passenger had sent a hot water bottle to a crew member as he had previously witnessed the effect the cold was having on said crew member.

I think it is shameful that these long-serving loyal crew members had to work in conditions like this.

The crew went way out of their way to do what they could to make the journey more bearable.

Had this been a hospital, a residential care home or an office it would have been closed.

ScotRail should be on their knees thanking their front line staff as it is the commitment of the staff that makes the company look good.

ScotRail know how to charge 21st century prices but their service falls way short of that. A return ticket from Oban to Glasgow is £52-plus.

I have written to the CEO of ScotRail and challenged him to do this early morning jour-

ney from Oban during the next cold spell. I also suggested he writes a personal letter of gratitude to the staff in ScotRail Oban.

Thank you to all the crew of the 5.20am train from Oban last Saturday you all deserve a medal.

**Mary-Jean Devon, Mull.**

## Are we killing Scotland's natural resources?

Environmental depredations come in many forms, all of which are linked directly or indirectly, to making money.

There is no doubt that sectors such as forestry, and to a lesser extent aquaculture, make a significant contribution to the Scottish economy (over £1 billion in forestry in 2015). But there is no gain without pain, I'm afraid.

Let us be brutally honest, we generally don't care about effects we can't see, do we? So it was with some dismay that I recently took in the view of the hillside of Barnluasgan (famous for our beavers) because it appeared that several thousand of these animals had been busy overnight. The hillside, previously brimming with lush green trees, was now utterly bare as far as one could see. Of course, even I realised that beavers had not done this. No, it was a much more destructive mammal. One that operates heavy machinery but is less inclined to operate common sense.

Land management is an amazingly civilised term and conjures up images of Tweed-suited rangers. The truth is far less picturesque, so on contacting Forestry Commission Scotland and being told that part of the reason was to ensure 'slope stability', I sagged with relief.

I once thought that cutting down forests in large swathes was bad. Don't we actually need them to stop erosion and leaching, absorb CO2 and provide some habitats? So cutting down trees in an area well known for heavy rain, delicate ecosystems and in a warming world does not seem particularly clever. I was further confidently informed that native trees will start to grow on the scorched hillsides through 'natural regeneration'.

Our world is in a precarious state. If you must expose our hillsides to the elements let us see some bigger investments in bringing in alternatives quickly.

**Nick MacIneskar, Tayvallich.**

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Rinn mi beagan gairdeachais nuair a leugh mi gun deach dràibhear a dhiteadh air sgàth 's nach robh e air sneachda a ghlanadh far uinneagan a chàir mun do shiubhail e leis! Bidh cuimhne aig cuid gum bheil mi air a' chuspair seo a thogail uair neo dhà roimhe is mi a' cur às mo chorp mu dhràibhear gan cur fhèin agus dhaoine eile an cunnart leis nach leig an leisg leotha uinneagan an cuid charbadan a sgriobadh mun tèid iad air an rathad.

Tha e do-chreidsinneach gur e aineolas is coireach dha leithid seo oir shaoileadh tu gum bheil cuideigin a bha comasach air cead-dràibhidh a chosnadh mothachail gum bheil lèirsinn air na tha mun cuairt ort bunaiteach a tha-obh comas carbad sam bith obrachadh chun na h-ìre as àirde sàbhailteachd.

A dh'aindeoin sin chithear càraichean a' siubhal 's gun ach beagan òirleach den uinneig aghaidh air a glanadh, neo fiù 's nuair a tha na h-uinneagan air an glanadh gun ghuth air na th'air mullach a' charbaid agus a tha dol a dhòrtadh thairis air an uinneig aghaidh nuair a dh'fheumar casg astair a

dhèanamh. Nuair a thachras sin tha an dràibhear gu tur air a dhalladh!

'S e fear de na gearainean a bh' agamsa nach robh mi riamh air iomradh a chluinntinn air poileas a' cur casaid dràibhidh cunnartach, neo fiù 's dràibheadh gun chùram, air duine airson leithid seo.

Aig an aon àm tha neach sam bith a bheir trèilear air chùl càr chun an rathaid glè mhòthachail air cho biorach 's a tha poileas air fàs dhan taobh sin, is dràibhear gan stad agus gam peanasachadh airson adhbharan gu math beag aig amannan.

Mar sin tha mi toilichte fhaicinn gum bheil am poileas a' gabhail ealla ri droch chleachdadh cunnartach, agus le aithne a' mhòr-shluaigh gum bheilear a' peanasachadh leithid seo bidh dòchas gum bi dràibhear nas toiniseile agus nas cùramaiche. 'S fheàrr faicall na gàbhadh!

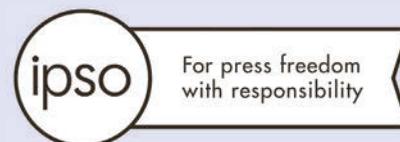
B' e brosnachadh agus misneachd a chualas bho Cheit Fhoirbeis nuair a liubhair ise a' chiad tè de dh' Òraidean Cuimhneachaidh Iain MhicLeòid aig Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann

deireadh an Fhaoillich. fon tiotal "Dileab bhuainn" thug BPA an Eilean Sgitheanaich, Loch Abair, agus Bhàideanaich, teachdaireachd làidir dhan òigrìdh luach a chur air an dualchas agus a ghiùlan is fhoillseachadh le moit. Chuir i cuideachd an cuimhne na bha ga h-èisteachd nach buin a' Ghàidhlig dha Pàrtaidh poilitigeach sam bith, ach dha na h-uile a thogras a cleachdadh!

Good visibility is critical to safe driving and I welcome police action against drivers who fail to properly clear their vehicle windows before travelling. An important message to all drivers.

MSP Kate Forbes had several messages for Gaelic users when she delivered the first John MacLeod Memorial Lecture at Edinburgh University, but one of the most important was that Gaelic does not belong to any one political party. It is a right for all who care to learn it and use it.

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



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

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# DISTRICT NEWS

## DUNBEG

Controlled explosions are being carried out in Dunbeg as part of work to build 600 homes between the village and Ganavan.

The first blast was scheduled to take place on Monday February 4 with the next today (Thursday February 7).

The remaining explosions will be on Thursday February 14, Thursday February 21 and Thursday February 28 between 10am and noon and 2pm to 4pm. A spokesperson said: 'These operations are required in areas of hard rock on the higher ground between MacVicar Court and Lochnell Road to break up material which cannot be removed by mechanical equipment.'

'It is anticipated the closest properties may experience a degree of ground vibration waves which will radiate away from the blast location with some noise pollution.'

## APPIN

The Appin branch of the Scottish Women's Institute held its annual quiz night on Friday February 1 in Appin Village Hall.

The winning team at the well-attended event was Sheila Lawrie, Marianne Steemen, Sandy Lawrie and Richard Bourne. Runners-up were Rhona Taylor, Sarah Keating, Vivienne Dunlop and Brenda MacLeod. There was also a raffle and tea.

## OBAN

Oban Communities Trust is hosting the Community Benefit Society annual general meeting and celebration at the Communities Hut, Rockfield Centre, today (Thursday, February 7).

Tea, coffee and cakes will be served. Everyone is welcome.

## TAYNUILT

Musicians will be jamming in Taynuilt Sports Pavilion on Monday February 11 from 6.30pm with everyone welcome to attend.

The event poster reads: 'If you'd like to join us to play and/or learn drums and percussion, you are most welcome.'

'Or bring along another instrument to weave in and around the beat: harmonica, voice, xylophone, whatever gives you pleasure.'

## TOBERMORY

Tobermory RNLI, the Scottish Ambulance Service and Stornoway Coastguard worked together to help an injured fisherman on Tuesday January 29.

Tobermory RNLI's weekly training was interrupted following a request from the Scottish Ambulance Service to assist.

With the Tobermory Coastguard Rescue Team already on scene, the Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsey went alongside the fishing boat and the crew helped coastguards to transfer the injured man onto the lifeboat.

The fisherman was taken to Tobermory harbour pontoons where he was transferred to the care of Scottish Ambulance Service staff.

He was then transferred to the Stornoway Coastguard search and rescue helicopter at a landing site close to Tobermory High School.

Coxswain David McHaffie said: 'This was a joint effort. We're pleased to hear the fisherman was not seriously injured and we all wish him well with his recovery.'

## RUM

A crowdfunding campaign to save Kinloch Castle on the Isle of Rum has raised almost £1,500.

The fundraiser, which will have just days left at the time of going to press, aims to raise £10,000 to help pay for on-going costs, with a view to fully restore the castle in the future.

To find out more, or to donate, visit [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-Kinloch-castle-isle-of-rum](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-Kinloch-castle-isle-of-rum)

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## Shop owners hand over keys to Killin and Ardeonaig Trust

### Community services to continue

Killin and Ardeonaig Community Development Trust (KAT) has finally taken ownership of a new community shop.

The trust has been trying to raise funds since 2017 to buy News First, Killin's paper shop, from Dougie Petrie and Liz Brown as they wanted to retire. Dougie and Liz were keen to sell the property to the community so the services they provided would continue.

While KAT is not in a position to run the newsagents, MacGregor's Market is. The social enterprise company currently runs Killin Post Office and shop and sells specialist food and local produce.

MacGregor's Market felt it had little security of tenure. It also felt it was hard to sustain the post office and shop at their current rent and level of sales.

KAT and MacGregor's Market have now formed a partnership to take the project forward.

The services MacGregor's will provide in its new premises will be more than a post office and newsagent. They will also provide a space for the Citizen Advice Bureau to attend weekly; sell tickets for local events; provide a community noticeboard; take bookings for the community bus; sell angling permits and provide a space for people to sit and chat.

The newsagent employs boys and girls to deliver newspapers around



KAT receives the keys to the shop from the owners, with MacGregor's Market board members.

the village. MacGregor's will continue to employ the paper boys and girls as it sees this as an essential service to the community. It will also continue with deliveries to Ardeonaig and Glen Lochay.

On Monday December 17 2018, Dougie and Liz handed over the shop keys to KAT, which immediately handed them to MacGregor's after the lease was signed, so there is a continuation of the newspaper services until the amalgamation of the two shops in March.

KAT received funding from the Scottish Land Fund to buy and refurbish the premises. It also received money from Stirling Council's 'Your Place, Your Priority' fund.

KAT will be carrying out the refurbishment in February and

the post office will be relocated in March.

The shop will need to be closed for a short period of time during this period, but newspapers will be sold from MacGregor's Market.

KAT still needs more funding and has set up a crowdfunding page: [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/more-than-a-post-office](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/more-than-a-post-office)

Businesses can buy advertising space in News First window or buy a sponsorship plaque.

Individuals can enjoy rewards from tote bags designed by Killin Primary School to a night in a bothy in Glen Lyon.

Or just donate without buying a reward, but people are being reminded, if able to, to Gift Aid as this adds more to the pot with no extra cost.

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## At random

MARTIN LAING

mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



## Cash boost for North Uist centre

Children in North Uist were delighted after Claddach Kirkibost Centre received a cheque for £2,848 from the Western Isles Lottery.

The funds will be used to buy soft play equipment and to refurbish a room in the centre to provide a year-round indoor play area.

Other organisations to benefit from the lottery are: Balivanich Playpark - £1,362; Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band - £1,306.80; Uist Volunteering - £300; and Cuimhne, which received £2,398 to develop a sensory garden.

The Western Isles Lottery has

proved popular in Uist and the area is on target to receive £13,000 in 2019.

The next project to receive money will be announced shortly and groups across Uist interested in receiving future funding are asked to get in touch by visiting [www.westernisleslottery.co.uk](http://www.westernisleslottery.co.uk)

**Delighted children in North Uist, with Rhoda MacIannan-Trusswell of Claddach Kirkibost Centre, receive a cheque for £2,848.**



# Lochaline ferry terminal upgrade work in spotlight at public drop-in session

Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) is preparing for a year-long programme of work at Lochaline ferry terminal.

A public drop-in session has been arranged to share details of the work and alternative service arrangements during a planned six-week closure.

The event will take place at Lochaline Village Hall on Tuesday February 19 from 3.30pm to 6.30pm. Representatives from CMAL, ferry operator CalMac Ferries Limited, project manager/engineer Royal Haskoning DHV and contractor George Leslie Limited will be available to discuss details of the work, which is scheduled to begin in May 2019, with a six-week closure starting in October 2019. The existing aligning structure, used to line up the ferry on the slipway for loading vehicles and passengers, is to be replaced. The overnight ferry berth at the terminal is



Lochaline ferry terminal is being upgraded.

also being improved. The project will also see other improvements including extra marshalling space, a wider and longer slipway and a deeper berth to improve service resilience and remove the

existing tidal constraint on the port. During a planned six-week closure in October, CalMac will operate a passenger-only service from another location. CMAL senior civil engineer John Quinn

said: 'This project is part of our on-going programme of harbour upgrades and modifications across our network to support safe and efficient lifeline ferry services to communities around Scotland.'

'We will work closely with the local community to keep them informed of the scope and nature of the work being carried out, as well as the service details during the closure period.'

David Gibson, CalMac's service delivery director, said: 'CalMac is fully aware of the importance of this service and is committed to minimising the impact while these works are carried out. This is not without its challenges, but we will work with the communities to ensure we can best support them within the constraints presented by the closure.'

George Leslie Limited will start work in late April/early May and the project is expected to take 12 months.

## Playpark farce worsens

You really could not make it up. Wicksteed Playgrounds, the company responsible for the on-going saga of Oban Community Playpark, has angered campaigners by using social media to urge people to visit their local playgrounds.

If only that were possible here.

Oban Community Playpark, as readers of The Oban Times will know, has been closed for almost a year because of safety issues relating to the blistered and damaged surface.

Despite countless calls for action to repair the playpark and have it re-opened, Wicksteed has done precisely nothing to make amends for its failed installation.

Wicksteed's risible defence is that the matter is in the hands of its insurance company 'which is in the process of seeking a resolution'.

Really?

Wicksteed couldn't simply do the decent thing by turning up of its own accord, fixing the playpark, and then chasing its insurer for the costs involved?

It is, after all, our children and young people who are the losers in all of this. They deserve much better from a company such as Wicksteed.

## Help find the vandals

Words fail me - almost. We reported last week on the lowlife vandals who targeted vehicles in Mossfield, Quarry Road and Sinclair Drive, including one that belonged to disabled William Rodger.

Mr Rodger has now been left unable to get out and about because of the damage done to his car.

What possesses people to behave in such a manner?

The answer is that the vast majority of us have not an earthly idea because it would never occur to us to act criminally.

Police officers in Oban are now investigating and have appealed for members of the public with any information to contact them.

I would echo that request and urge anyone who knows anything to call the police on telephone number 101 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

## What do you think?

Write to me at [mlaing@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:mlaing@obantimes.co.uk) or The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB, or call 01631 568021.

## A typical day - At last, an eating plan that fits into your life



**Breakfast**

### Overnight Oats

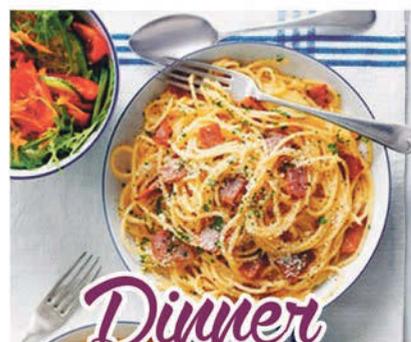
Lots of people have been going bonkers for overnight oats. We have to agree, they're absolutely amazing! **10mins**



**Lunch**

### Tuna and sweetcorn jacket potato

Warming, comforting and easy to prepare - you can't beat an oven baked spud, especially with a tasty tuna and sweetcorn topping! **2hrs, 5mins**



**Dinner**

### Spaghetti carbonara

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Glencruitten Road  
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# OUTDOORS

## Japanese knotweed guidance

National trade body PCA is offering householders access to a wealth of free advice on Japanese knotweed.

The move comes after a Parliamentary inquiry regarding the invasive, non-native plant was held recently at the House of Commons.

During the course of the meeting, the Science and Technology Committee was keen to see new information provided, to help those affected by the plant to get access to the latest guidance.

While the information is being developed, PCA is maintaining its Invasive Weed Control Document Library, including guidance notes, information leaflets and a code of practice – all available for free download – to help provide insight and guidance.

PCA chief executive Steve Hodgson was one of a number of industry representatives who spoke to the committee. Mr Hodgson said: 'We welcome this review, particularly as it addresses areas we have actively voiced concerns around, namely the science behind what impact the plant can have. Despite the fact there are clear pathways to manage and control Japanese knotweed, all too often we encounter situations where homeowners are portrayed as living under siege with the plant.'

'But since the PCA formed the invasive weed control group in 2012, we've always maintained the position that this plant is not a destroyer of buildings, and that it should just be regarded as any other type of property issue.'

The PCA information can be downloaded from [www.property-care.org/professionals/invasive-weed-control/invasive-weed-control-technical-document-library](http://www.property-care.org/professionals/invasive-weed-control/invasive-weed-control-technical-document-library)

A short film is also available – PCA video guide to dealing with Japanese knotweed.

# Tiree seal pup proves

by Stephanie Cope

Tiree ranger, Tiree Community Development Trust

I have quite an active job, but I've never been a big fan of exercise. However, thanks to the infamous Tiree Stone (and I'm not talking about the one that rings) steps had to be taken. For a ranger, jogging on Tiree's beaches is a sure-fire way to uncover extra work: dead things that need to be recorded and sampled, or live things that – for whatever reason – need to be sorted out.

I'd already passed a mummified dolphin and a fusty seal, when I spotted the pup, motionless and jumbled in with a cast of kelp. I chalked it up as just another casualty. However, it looked fresh. This warranted closer inspection, because it would likely need to be sampled.

In fact, the little seal was so fresh it was still alive – but only just. It didn't open its eyes to my voice, hand clapping, or even to a judicious prod with a kelp stipe. Though it was carrying a good amount of weight, it was clearly sick. Once it stirred, it started to shiver uncontrollably.

A group of community volunteers on Tiree recently trained to assist marine mammals in distress. After contacting British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) and explaining that island vets Anne and Mark were on standby, we were cleared to assess the animal.

As a new volunteer team, we don't yet have a full strandings kit. So, following an examination by Anne, the seal was sausage-rolled onto a discarded tonne bag and carried back to our vehicles. This sounds straightforward – but the pup weighed almost 30 kilos. Even its weak protestations were enough to make the job awkward. It was deposited in the back of my jeep for a ride back to Kennovay.

The seal's smell was equivalent to around 50 wet dogs, so this was a windows-cracked operation. At the surgery, Anne and Mark expertly administered antibiotics and hydrating fluids. Noting the animal's laboured breathing and yucky nasal discharge, nobody was getting their hopes up.

The next morning, thanks to the fluids and initial medication, the seal was much better. Anne managed to source some Tiree macker-



Taz the seal pup. Photograph: Louise Reid

el, which he ate with enthusiasm and then spat out all over the large animal area.

Giving further treatment became challenging: 30 kilos of 'no thanks' – with big teeth at one end – will give even experienced handlers cause for thought. Anne consulted with BDMLR and the decision was made to try for immediate release; rather than transporting the animal to the Fife rehabilitation centre, and causing considerable stress to all parties.

Volunteers Stuart and Linda came to help load the animal into a borrowed livestock trailer. When we arrived at the surgery, it was reclining in the bottom of the large pet unit like a giant slug; peppered with bits of half-chewed fish, and stinking to high heaven. It had no desire to leave this paradise. Indeed, it was so keen to remain, that encouraging him out of the pet unit proved difficult.

All went smoothly until we reached the trailer ramp. Sensing the good times were coming to an end, the seal wriggled off the tarpaulin and set out purposefully across Anne and Mark's lawn. It made its feelings very clear on recapture. We had high hopes for a fairytale ending once we reached Balephetrish Bay. The

water was calmer than over at Gott, and as this animal was fully weaned Balephetrish offered a better option for the release. When the ramp dropped we all stood back, record button at the ready, expecting our seal to sprint out and be joyously reunited with the sea.

A couple of hostile snorts came from the trailer, but nothing else. Eventually, we decided to walk him out – at which point he bounced down the ramp in a very undignified fashion and landed like an angry sack of potatoes on the sand. From this vantage point, he glared at us all, and declined to move for the next two hours. We withdrew to the dunes and watched as the tide crept in.

Other seals bobbed in the surf, craning their necks and holding themselves upright to get a better look. While seals naturally spend time out of the water, they get all of their moisture from their food. As our seal had experienced a difficult few days, it was important for it to feed and avoid further dehydration. Even when the tide washed over the seal, it stayed put. Our proverbials were comprehensively frozen and I couldn't see the sea anymore; never mind the seal.

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## This week's walks

# handful

Stuart and Linda kindly checked on him in the morning; he was very close to the same spot. Anne and Mark took another look, and decided that despite the previous day's progress, something still wasn't right. Ann from The Green kindly lent us her large dog crate, and arrangements were made to have the seal collected at the Oban ferry terminal.

Coaxing it into the pet crate was tricky; in fact, Anne just about had to ride it in. We then used straps to lift him up the dune track and into the back of the ranger van.

When we reached the Scarinish Pier ferry queue, negotiations opened to find a suitable seal chauffeur. Alan Worsely and his companion Butch crumbled first. Alan chatted to the seal as it was removed from the back of the ranger van and safely installed in his transit. The seal responded with a series of yowls and much snapping of its teeth. Butch looked apprehensive.

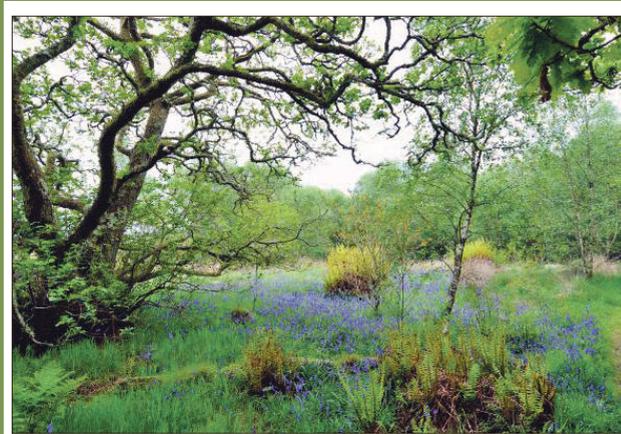
Upon arrival in Oban, the seal was collected by a SSPCA officer and our BDMLR area coordinator. I am told that he was quite a handful when it came to administering further treatment. Staff at the SSPCA rehabilitation centre in Fife have called him 'Taz' (after the famously angry cartoon character); at the last check, they still hadn't quite got to the bottom of what was troubling him.

My sincere thanks to everyone who assisted us with Operation Seal: Linda, Stewart and Louise for time given; Claire and Duncan for the mackerel; George for the use of his livestock trailer; Ann for the use of her pet crate; Alan and Butch for being seal chauffeurs; Derek Wilson Carriers for very kindly transporting the borrowed pet crate back, free of charge.

A special mention goes to Anne and Mark of Coll and Tirie Vets, who not only bore the main burden of caring for (and cleaning up after) this animal, but have also purchased and donated two plasterer's baths to construct a custom-made seal transporting device!

This will be a huge help to Tirie's Marine Mammal Medic team, and we will be fundraising for other items of kit in the near future.

Hopefully, Taz the seal will live to gurgle another day.



## Great places to visit for World Wetlands Day

Following World Wetland's Day on Saturday February 2, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is urging people to visit one of Scotland's amazing wetland sites, to take in the dramatic lochs, peatlands and riverbanks, and the wildlife that lives there; and learn more about these vital areas, and why it's crucial the wetlands stay wet.

There are many types of wetlands in Scotland, including marshes, fens, reed beds, flushes and swamps – in short, a wetland is an area of land that is saturated with water, whether year-round or seasonally. So everyone in Scotland is bound to find a wetland nearby, especially at this time of year.

World Wetlands Day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971. The designation helps to ensure the ecology of each site is protected. The theme for this year is climate change.

Great examples of wetlands can be seen on many National

Nature Reserves (NNRs), including Moine Mhor in Kilmartin Glen.

Raised bogs like Moine Mhor are among Europe's most threatened habitats.

They are home to plants and animals specially adapted to thrive in these water-logged conditions. Fringed by tidal flats, saltmarsh, fen, alder carr and ancient oak woodland, this transition of habitats adds to the reserve's rich diversity of wildlife.

Coastal birds, otters and the rare marsh fritillary butterfly all make their home here. In winter, hen harriers roost on the moss.

Deborah Spray, SNH wetland ecology advisory officer, said: 'Globally there has been a loss of 35 per cent of wetland habitats since 1970 and it is important we do everything we can to protect them. They are such special places and well worth a visit.'

For more information visit [www.nature.scot/landscapes-and-habitats/habitat-types](http://www.nature.scot/landscapes-and-habitats/habitat-types)

### LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

The walk leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet-up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy. Further information at [www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk](http://www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk). Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers Group can be contacted by email on [info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk](mailto:info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk)

**Saturday February 9: Loch Ness Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (699m, Graham), Glas-bhein Mhor (651m, Graham)**

Lying between the Grey Corries and Loch Treig is a 10Km-long high-level ridge crowned by two Munros that make a superb winter expedition.

Start at the end of the public minor road to Fersit, NN350781, here ample parking is available.

Head S on the track, passing the Treig Dam after about 1km, to reach the second of two junctions another 0.6Km further on at NN342776468. Turn N up the track to a sheepfoldEX, beyond which the route deteriorates to an ATV track, which leads up on the right side of a burn to the Hydro PillarEX.

Head SSW to locate a path leading up the nose of the spur of Meall Cian Dearg\*. From the crest, continue SSW up the 3Km-long ridge to the summit of Stob a' Choire Mheadhoin, 1,105m. Continue SW down across the col and up to the summit of Stob Coire Easain, 1,115m.

There are three worthy descents, the choice of which may be influenced by snow conditions: Return by the outward route. Return to the col and descend NW into Coire Easain BeagEX, or descend the NW ridge of Stob Coire Easain until beyond the crags on its NE aspect, then drop into lower Coire Easain Beag.

The most direct way back from here lies in a NE traverse, contouring across the easy-angled slopes between 650m and 700m, until the ground steepens on approaching the NW flank of Meall Cian Dearg. Descend to the 500m contour then head ENE for the Hydro Pillar to rejoin the outward route.

\*This aspect of Meall Cian Dearg has been known to avalanche. If this risk is apparent, it can be avoided by contouring W then SW around the foot of the spur until clear of the crags then climbing SE up easy slopes to its crest.

Grade: S; Distance: 16km; Height to climb: 1,030m; Map(s): LR41, EX392.

Meet at: Fort William WM NN112742 at 0845. Start of walk at 0930. Leader: Ian Moir 07973 836498

**NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB**  
Full walk details at [www.nevis-hillwalking.club](http://www.nevis-hillwalking.club). If anyone would like to go out on the walk please contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email enquiries@nevis-hillwalking.club.

**Saturday February 9: Loch Ness Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (699m, Graham), Glas-bhein Mhor (651m, Graham)**  
Two Grahams rising steeply up from Loch Ness. Visible from afar, they look grander than their modest height would suggest.

Park just N of the Alltigh Youth Hostel at a left hand forestry turning at NH457191. Parking is limited.

Follow the GGW up NE to NH466207 and then turn L along track. Near the end of the track head up the hill. Note that forestry marked on the map above the track has been cleared.

Head up Creag Dhearg (526m) for good views along Loch Ness. Head W then N to point NH450207 between two large lochs. Head NNE up minor ridge to Loch a' Chaise at approx 575m.

Head N onto main ridge and up to 699m trig-point of Meall Fuar-mhonaidh. Head 300m ENE before heading N to col before minor summit of Nighean a Mhill. Care may be required during the last part of the descent.

Head to N end of Loch nam Breac Dearga and then W to summit of Glas-bheinn Mhor. Head S to near end of track at NH437217. Descend the track turning left at the junction before the fenceEX at NH433209. Cross the Allt Loch an t-Sionnach on the bridgeEX and continue S on the trackEX parallel to the river through mixed woodland.

The track turns E and enters a fenced conifer plantation just N of a bridge over the Allt Saigh at NH437192.

Turn sharply right and follow the track over this bridge and E down through the plantation. Ignore the right turn at the junction at NH445193 and continue down to rejoin the GGW at NH454189.

Turn sharply left, cross the Allt Saigh on the footbridgeEX then fork right back to the start.

19km, 900m ascent. Coordinated by Suzanne Theobald.

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# Welcome to Driving Force

Buying a car can be the second biggest investment you will make. Choosing a new car is one of the most exciting experiences a motorist can enjoy and having a clear idea of exactly what you are looking for can make the process much easier.

Whether you buy from a local dealer, a distant retailer, an online broker or via the internet, it pays to do your homework so you are in the best position to get a good deal. This means deciding what make and model you want, as well as any add-ons that you need.

Once you have the facts and figures in front of you, it's time to talk to the dealer and negotiate your best price. Our guide will help you get the right car, with the right features for the right price, so read on and get inspired!



## Volvo XC90 acclaimed as Britain's Best Used Luxury SUV

Already a multiple new-car-award winner, the Volvo XC90 has proven its market-leading strength by being crowned Best Used Luxury SUV in the Diesel Car and Eco Car Used Car Top 50. The honour demonstrates the lasting quality of the XC90 and the sustained appeal of its contemporary design, efficient powertrains, luxury specification, and advanced connectivity and safety technology.

Announcing the award in today's issue of Diesel Car and Eco Car magazine, Editor Ian Robertson said: "This fantastic luxury SUV is a triumph of subtle design. The interior is a lovely place to spend time thanks to Volvo's trademark seats and a tablet-style touchscreen that removes any clutter from the dashboard. If you're lucky enough to find one with the optional Bowers & Wilkins audio system, give it a listen because it turns the XC90 into a concert hall on wheels."

The top-50 list was determined by the magazine's team of second-hand car experts, who took a wide range of issues into account, including purchase price, residual value, general ability and fitness for purpose. More than 750 vehicles were considered, from which the XC90 made the final top 50, in 32nd place. Volvo was further represented by the V40 premium compact family car in 35th place.

The best way to access a pre-owned Volvo is through Volvo Selekt, Volvo's approved-used car programme. The service offers the best cars available on the market and complete customer peace of mind. Each vehicle undergoes more than 100 checks by

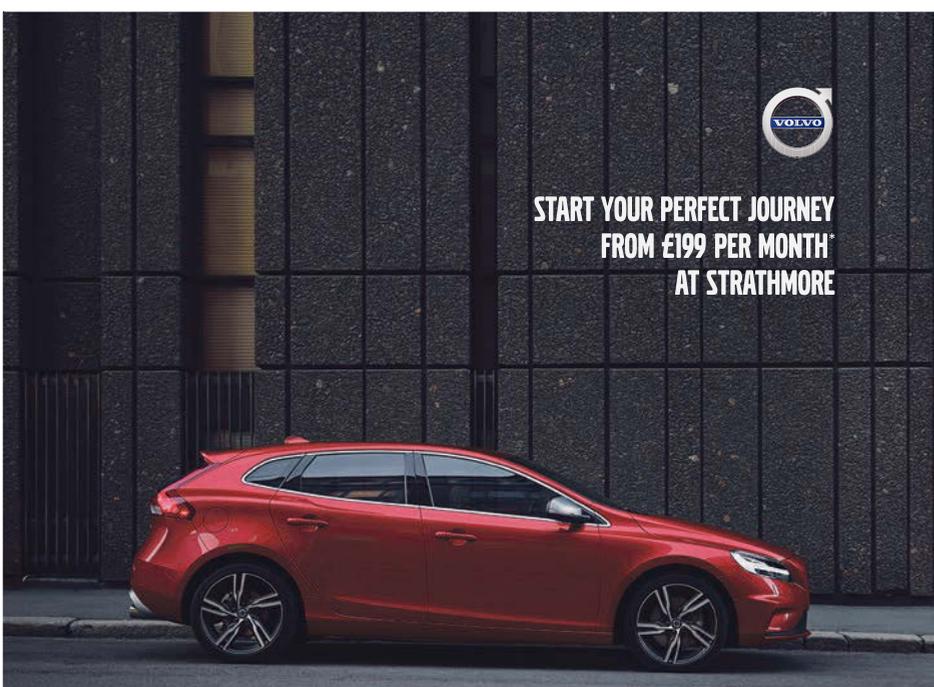
Volvo's technicians and is given the latest factory software upgrades. Sales are backed with a minimum 12-month/unlimited-mileage Volvo Selekt warranty and cover for the car's first or next MoT test, plus a minimum of 12 months' roadside assistance cover. And should the car not meet the customer's expectations, they have 30 days or 1,500 miles to return and exchange their vehicle.



Bruce Greenwood, Volvo Car UK's Used Car Programme Manager, said: "It is great to see the XC90 being recognised as such a strong all-round proposition for people looking for a stylish, practical and reliable pre-owned SUV with luxury guaranteed."

With the benefit of our Volvo Selekt programme, we can help customers seeking the best-quality used XC90s – or any other Volvo model – find their perfect car with confidence."

Full details of the Volvo Selekt Approved Used Car package, and the latest XC90 and other Volvo models currently available, can be found at [www.volvocars.com/uk/find-a-dealer/retailers/perth](http://www.volvocars.com/uk/find-a-dealer/retailers/perth)



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# New Sprinter crowned Large Van of the Year at Great British Fleet Awards

**The new Mercedes-Benz Sprinter has been crowned Large Van of the Year at the inaugural Great British Fleet Awards, held at a glittering ceremony in Hammersmith, London.**

Dan Gilkes, Van Fleet World Editor and one of the judges for the Great British Fleet Awards, said: "We were very impressed with the technology in the new Sprinter last year, but had yet to drive the van on UK roads, which ruled it out of our awards in 2018. Having got behind the wheel mid-year, it was an easy decision to give Mercedes' biggest LCV our large van award this year.

"With the addition of front as well as rear-wheel drive, and more recently new 4x4 versions too, Mercedes has something for everyone with the latest Sprinter. But it is far more than that, which puts the van at number one. The technology and connectivity available to customers is second to none and the whole PRO connect concept should make it far easier for

operators to get the best out of their vans."

Steve Bridge, Managing Director, Mercedes-Benz Vans UK, commented: "The new Sprinter has raised the bar in the large van segment and with this award, further cements its place as the king of the large vans.

"To win an award not just for the 'metal', but for the connectivity and technology too is testament to the capabilities of this vehicles and how it really can keep businesses moving."

Like previous generations of the multi-award-winning Mercedes-Benz workhorse, the next Sprinter – which is priced from £25,330\* excl. VAT – raises the bar in the large van segment. Since its launch in 1995, the Sprinter has defined and re-defined a whole segment numerous times. It has notched a succession of technological 'firsts' including the ESP stability system, Crosswind Assist, the Euro VI emissions standard, COLLISION PREVENTION ASSIST, Blind Spot Assist and Lane Keeping Assist, and collected more than 80 industry awards.



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 Motability



5 year/100,000 mile manufacturer warranty. Terms and conditions apply.

# The Future is Hybrid and Helensburgh Toyota are the experts

**Toyota has been perfecting and innovating hybrid technology for over 40 years and its vehicles are now enjoyed by over 10 million drivers worldwide. Here at Helensburgh Toyota, we are keen to show our customers the benefits that come with hybrid vehicles. From the Yaris to our hybrid SUV range, there is a model to suit everyone.**

They are covered by the same five-year or 100,000-mile warranty as the rest of your car.

## Does a hybrid save you fuel?

On average, at least 50 per cent of the journey time for our hybrid test drives is spent purely in electric mode. This means during this time the conventional engine is not needed for power and therefore no fuel has to be used.

## Our Hybrid Experts

At Helensburgh Toyota we have experts on hand to guide you through the hybrid experience. We can take you on a test drive using technology that demonstrates how much of your journey was spent purely in electric mode.

## Get in touch

If you would like to know more about the Toyota hybrid range, please get in touch with our friendly sales team or pop along to our Hybrid Open Weekend, February 22-24.



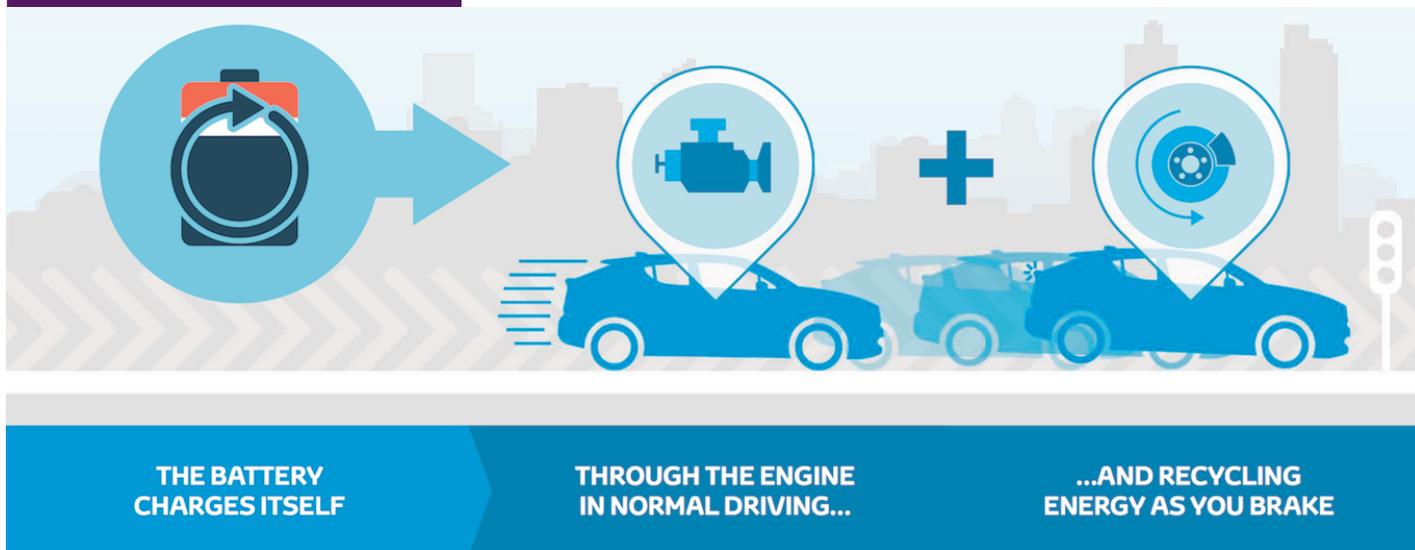
## Self-charging hybrid: No plug-in required

Toyota's self-charging hybrids feature an electric motor and conventional engine, which work cleverly together, not just on the move but also when you stop or slow down. Every moment you are driving, your battery is charging thanks to technology like the regenerative braking system, which recovers energy that would normally be lost and stores it in the battery for later use.

## How long does a battery last?

Our hybrid battery is not like a standard car battery, but a much more sophisticated component which has been designed and engineered by Toyota to last – and keep working – for the entire lifetime of your car. Unlike a pure electric 'plug-in' vehicle that needs to have its battery recharged after a long journey, a hybrid battery continually recharges itself when your car is in motion.

## Hybrid technology example below



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## S & S Services is a bus... strong and reliable as



## Isuzu D-Max picks-up yet another award in 2019

**Birmingham – January 16, 2019** – The multi award-winning Isuzu D-Max has just been awarded ‘Pick-up of the Year’ 2019 by Pick-up & 4x4 Pro, a testimony to our ongoing desire to provide the best working pick-up for professionals. This is hot on the heels of being crowned What Van? ‘Pick-up of the Year’ for the second consecutive year (2018 & 2019) and Pick-up of the Year in the Commercial Fleet Awards!

The Isuzu D-Max was awarded Pick-up of the Year for 2019 with the Pick-up & 4x4 Pro praising both its substance and style. The Isuzu D-Max emerged victorious, beating strong competition from rivals in a highly contested sector. Judges were impressed by the economy and refinement of the innovative 164 PS turbo diesel engine, that provides impressive performance and builds upon the Isuzu D-Max’s reliable workhorse character.

With a 3.5 tonne towing capacity and over 1 tonne payload, the Isuzu D-Max was also praised for providing a quieter, more economical driving experience. The 1.9L turbo diesel engine meets Euro 6 standards without the need for the addition of AdBlue, unlike most of

the Isuzu D-Max’s competitors. The breadth of the Isuzu D-Max range also impressed judges with single, extended and double-cab forms available, as well as a wide choice of trim levels. Coupled with the attractive five-year/125,000 mile warranty package and five years’ roadside assistance (in the UK & Europe), the Isuzu D-Max proved it was truly built for the professionals who use it.

Pick-up & 4x4 Pro said of the win: ‘The Isuzu D-Max is utilitarian at its core and doesn’t try to disguise it, which is charming and endearing. Yet it is still perfectly civilised regardless. And that is why we comfortably chose it as our Pick-up of the Year for 2019.’



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Now with the next generation of John and his son Matthew in the team, S & S Services continues to grow with a second generation of customers now buying Subaru and Isuzu from them.

S & S Services has built its reputation on customer service, after sales, servicing and its quality selection of second-hand vehicles. The business sells and maintains vehicles for customers the length and breadth of Britain.

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Official fuel consumption WLTP for the ŠKODA CITIGO FL full range (3dr & 5dr) in mpg (litres/100km): Combined 55.4 (5.1) to 47.9 (5.9). NEDC equivalent CO<sub>2</sub> combined emissions for the ŠKODA CITIGO FL full range are 97 to 96 g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures (known as WLTP). The CO<sub>2</sub> figures shown however, are based on a calculation designed to be equivalent to the outgoing (NEDC) test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration. For more information, please see [www.skoda.co.uk/owners/wltp-info](http://www.skoda.co.uk/owners/wltp-info) or consult your retailer. Data correct at December 2018. Figures quoted are for a range of configurations (including non-UK) and are subject to change due to ongoing approvals/changes. Please contact your retailer for further information. For fuel consumption data based on the outgoing test cycle (NEDC equivalent data), which is the 'official' UK fuel consumption data until 31 December 2018, please consult your retailer.



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REASSURANCE

**BUILT IN**

# Peugeot 5008 SUV wins 'Large SUV of the Year' at the What Car? Car of the Year Awards for second year running

The PEUGEOT 5008 SUV 1.2 PureTech 130 Allure has won the 'Large SUV of the Year' award at the 2019 What Car? Awards for the second year in a row, one of the most prestigious accolades in the automotive industry.

The What Car? team of judges praised the 5008 SUV for its high build quality and use of premium materials including soft touch fabrics. Judges were also left impressed by PEUGEOT's innovative i-Cockpit® and advanced driver assistance systems, along with low running costs from the award winning 1.2L PureTech petrol engine.

The 5008 SUV features a class-leading interior, with seven individual seats. The rear row can be folded down, as well as fully removed, while the front passenger seat also folds flat for added practicality. The PEUGEOT i-Cockpit® technology helps drivers stay safe on the road with its compact, multi-function steering wheel, 12.3-inch head-up display and 8.0-inch touchscreen with Mirrorscreen®, and its driver assistance technology that include autonomous emergency braking and Active Blind Spot Detection (available as standard from Allure trim level upwards).

The 2019 victory means this is the second

year in a row the 5008 SUV has scooped the hotly contested 'Large SUV of the Year' title at the What Car? Awards. This year it beat rivals including the Audi Q5 and Mazda CX-5.

Steve Huntingford, Editor of What Car?, said: "The PEUGEOT 5008 SUV matches the quality and technology found in much more expensive SUVs, yet is cheaper to run, more practical and at least as stylish. It deserves to be the go-to choice for larger families."

David Peel, Managing Director at PEUGEOT UK, said: "The What Car? Awards are one of the toughest and most prestigious accolades to win. To scoop the Large SUV of the Year award once was already a fantastic achievement, but to do so twice is even better.

"The 5008 SUV offers drivers a whole new perspective on interior design and space, with its innovative i-Cockpit® technology. We'd like to thank the What Car? team for the award."

Since its 2018 launch, the 5008 SUV has won seven international awards and has sold more than 7,000 vehicles in the UK.

To find out more about the award-winning PEUGEOT 5008 SUV and the rest of the PEUGEOT model range call Campbeltown Motor Company on 01586 553 200.



## All-New Peugeot 508 First Edition



Revealed at the Geneva Motor Show 2018, the all-new PEUGEOT 508 First Edition was made available to order to the public from the 6 March with only 200 models available to UK motorists.

The limited edition model comes as a high-spec version of the all-new PEUGEOT 508. The all-new PEUGEOT 508 First Edition features a range of style cues including front grille trim in gloss black and 19" 'Augusta' wheels featuring an exclusive tinted varnish, multipoint massage driver and front passenger seats with Alcantara® and part Nappa Mistral full grain leather seat trim.

The all-new PEUGEOT 508 First Edition also provides a diverse range of innovative on-board tech for the driver, including fully automated parking assistance, a 360° colour camera system and a wireless smartphone charging plate to keep your mobile's battery topped up during long drives.

The Fastback also comes with PEUGEOT's innovative Night Vision function. PEUGEOT'S Night Vision system is a first to the automotive D-segment, helping the driver to detect living obstacles in front of their vehicle at night, within a range of up to 200m beyond the main headlights scope.

David Peel, Managing Director at PEUGEOT UK, said: "It's great to see such demand for the all-new PEUGEOT 508 First Edition. This premium spec level brings innovative PEUGEOT technology and cutting-edge style to complement the model's radical new 'Fastback' design.

"2018 has been a big year for PEUGEOT with a strong range of new products showcasing some of the most innovative and advanced technology in the automotive industry. The limited run of all-new PEUGEOT 508 First Editions is just one example of the great products added to the PEUGEOT range."

## All-new Peugeot Partner takes top award at the 2019 What Van? awards

The all-new PEUGEOT Partner has secured a double win at the 2019 What Van? awards, winning both Light Commercial Vehicle of the Year and Light Van of the Year.

The awards come just a few months after the all-new Partner was voted 'International Van of the Year 2019' at the IAA Hanover Commercial Vehicle Show by a panel of international judges.

"The PEUGEOT Partner has traditionally been a strong fleet model but the new van is set to broaden its appeal," said What Van? Editor James Dallas. "Impressive sophistication and ride quality combine with a line-up to cover all bases in S, Grip, Professional and Asphalt trim levels offered in standard and long versions.

"The workhorse Grip version has been designed for drivers that need to transport heavy equipment on rough terrain, while the range-topping Asphalt is built for drivers making long trips or multiple deliveries in urban areas and benefits from acoustic and thermal enhancements.

"The Partner gets the same impressive engine and transmission options as its siblings but a USP is the iCockpit® interior carried over from its passenger car line-up. The instrument cluster is mounted higher, resulting in a clear view of the road and the steering wheel is flattened top and bottom, giving the cabin a stylishly modern feel."

All-new Partner is available with four trim options: S, Grip, Professional and Asphalt.

Standard equipment includes, i-Cockpit® compact steering wheel and high-mounted instruments, remote central locking with deadlocks and separate locking for the cab, electric front windows, electrically adjustable door mirrors, an overhead storage shelf in the cab, automatic headlights, DAB radio,



Bluetooth® handsfree, PEUGEOT Connect SOS and Assistance system, full bulkhead, unglazed rear asymmetric doors and six tie-down hooks in the load area. Standard and Long body options are available with payload ranging from 667kg to 1,050kg, depending on model.

All-new Partner was not the only PEUGEOT light Commercial vehicle honoured at the 2019 What Van? awards. The PEUGEOT Expert was highly commended in the 'Medium Van of the Year' award category.

The all-new PEUGEOT Partner is available from a Campbeltown Motor Company approved Peugeot dealer, 01586 553 200.

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68	Dacia Stepway Essential TCe	Red/Black	10	£10,250	64	Renault Clio Dyn Nav 1.2	Black	32,000	£7,150
17	Dacia Duster Lau DCi, 4WD	White	13,000	£12,750	64	Vauxhall Corsa SXi 5-door	Silver	35,000	£5,500
66	Dacia Sandero Laureate DCi	Silver	6,000	£8,950	14	Skoda Rapid TDi	White	27,000	£6,550
66	Renault Captur Dyn Sat Nav TCe	Blue/Black	6,500	£12,500	63	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 DCi Visa	Black	48,000	£7,550
66	Renault Clio 1.2 Dyn Nav	White	14,000	£9,750	13	Renault Megane Dyn DCi Estate	Black	75,000	£5,350
66	Renault Captur TCe Dyn Nav	Cream	18,500	£10,250	13	Kia Rio, petrol	Black	44,000	£4,750
15	Nissan Micra Visia 1.2	White	24,600	£5,750	13	Dacia Duster Lau 4WD	Grey	44,000	£7,250
64	Renault Twingo SCe Play	Blue	12,000	£5,950	62	BMW Series SPH 1.6	Black	48,000	£8,650
64	Renault Clio Dyn TCe	Red	16,000	£7,500	61	Renault Megane HB Expression 1.6	Blue	23,000	£4,500

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# LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

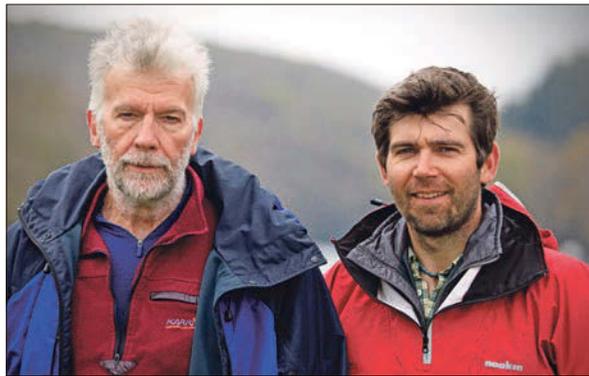
## Sell-outs demand extra screenings at the Phoenix

Oban's community-run cinema is becoming a magnet for independent film-makers.

Duty manager at the Phoenix Marco Pacitti said: 'We are being approached by quite a few film-makers, who are really enthusiastic to get their films out there and head for us.'

'I think they find Oban unique because of its demographic. People from the islands and those who can't get trains and buses to Glasgow come here to get their independent movie fix. We're trying to be a hub showing both blockbusters and independent films. We'd also like to hear from local film-makers who might like to show their work,' he said.

Screenings of movies such as Steven Lewis Simpson's native American film *Neither Wolf Nor Dog* sold out in December and was declared a best seller of the cinema's six-day film festival.



**Dad Niall with son Chris Lucas on their five-week expedition, spending time together.**

The Phoenix had to add on five extra showings of another sell-out success – this time of a self-shot film documentary – after audiences could not get enough of *The Yukon Assignment*.

The raw but rather endearing documentary was brought to the screen by a tiny film production company in

West Cornwall. Directed by and starring British adventurer Chris Lucas, 34, as he journeys 500 miles through the Canadian wilderness with his 64-year-old dad in a canoe, it gives a persuading nudge to the importance of spending family-time together. Although spending five weeks exploring the Yukon in order to make

that special time is in the extreme, it makes gripping viewing because what is seen is so honest and real.

There were luggage mishaps, close calls with bears and Mother Nature, mountain peaks and the mighty waters of the Yukon to conquer, earwiggling on Niall's pillow talk as well as a scattering of campfire chats to listen-in on but nothing too deep to handle. At one point Chris, whose wife was seven-months pregnant at the time, asked Niall for tips on fatherhood, to which his dad replied: 'Hide!'

This was not a high-budget film and there were no helicopters to capture all the magnificence of the region but the family home-movie effect definitely added a massive dollop of quaintness to it in a very British way. It left viewers with a taste for adventure and an urge to call home ... and maybe even book a trip to spend time

with their own mums, dads, sons or daughters.

It has taken a four-year labour of love to get this film finally onto screen. It's producer Charlie Fripp said Oban Phoenix cinema had been 'brilliant' helping it along the way and those behind the *Yukon Assignment* have been 'blown away' by the amazing reception in Scotland. They are now hearing back from people who have been inspired to go on their own journeys which is 'life-affirming' added Charlie.

As for the extra Oban screenings, Chris Lucas said he was 'excited' and hoped the film would continue to encourage and promote wilderness adventure.

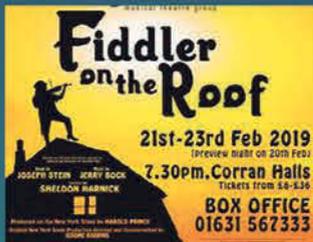
The film is now continuing its UK-wide tour until mid-June before being released online. If anyone missed it, the trailer is on vimeo.com/248635639.

# WHAT'S ON @ CORRAN HALLS

## FEBRUARY

## MARCH

THU/SAT  
FEB  
20  
23



THU  
MAR  
14



MON  
MAR  
11



SAT  
MAR  
23



Spotlight MTG presents:  
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**MICHAEL ENGLISH**  
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**Reserved Seating**

Simon Yates:  
**MY MOUNTAIN LIFE**  
Doors 7:00pm Start 7:30pm  
Tickets: £15  
+ £1 Booking Fee  
**Reserved Seating**

**LIVE/WIRE  
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Corran Halls, Oban  
visit [liveArgyll.co.uk](http://liveArgyll.co.uk)

## Mairi's Auld Lang Syne will put a spell on you

Mairi Campbell's Auld Lang Syne was compelling, mesmeric and completely bewitching, writes Kathie Griffiths.

This one-woman show at Benderloch's Victory Hall on Friday was spellbinding from start to finish and should not be missed as it continues on its tour of Scotland - Mairi will be at Luing's Atlantic Islands Centre on March 8.

Mairi's performance as herself and folk she has known, and still knows, was as fascinating as it was powerful. One woman, so many faces and voices, spectre-like but so real. She had us hooked and intrigued, past conquests include President Clinton, Sean Connery and Sarah Jessica Parker of Sex And The City. Mairi is engaging and funny but then like the pendulum stone she has on stage can swing into stinging our sentimental, nostalgic hearts, pricking our senses. We were willing time-travellers verging on voyeurs.

There was movement, animation and the music was earthy, grounded and rooted



Mairi Campbell gave a bewitching performance.

and tribal at times, ritualistic even. There were also sounds and words that were fragile, delicate and hauntingly heart-felt like the lyrics and tune of Green So Gentle, the hues of green, yellow and autumnal red will never look the same again.

This mighty show based around Scotland's most famous song was rated five stars from last year's Edinburgh Fringe - it is hoped they were solid-gold, full on glittery, spangly stars - she deserves it. Go see it.

# Registration opens for XpoNorth 2019

Argyll-based musicians and film-makers are being invited to apply to showcase at one of Scotland's leading creative industries festivals.

Taking place in Inverness on July 3 and 4, the annual Inverness-based XpoNorth, formerly goNORTH, offers delegates access to an exceptional creative programme.

By day, XpoNorth hosts a packed programme of seminars and workshops featuring leading local, national and international professionals from across the creative sector.

By night, the festival sets the city alight with creativity - from the event's firmly established new music showcase sound tracking a host of city centre venues with over 60 of the hottest new acts around, to a specially-curated short film programme and a range of relaxed networking events.

XpoNorth is funded by Highland and Island Industries and Iain Hamilton,



head of creative industries said: 'It's important that the event acts as a platform to promote the Highlands and Islands as an incredibly diverse creative and cultural destination and surfaces

opportunities to connect our community to leading national and international voices from across the industry.' Free delegate registration is now live and all processes can be accessed at [xponorth.co.uk](http://xponorth.co.uk)

The submission window will close on Monday April 8 and all applications will be forwarded to a panel of industry professionals to establish the list of films and acts invited to showcase.

## a Mull Theatre production The Electrifying Mr Johnston

by Robert Dawson Scott

a new play about one of Scotland's great unsung heroes, Tom Johnston, and his vision to bring "light to the glens."

Plus

BITE-SIZE excerpts of new plays and works-in-progress

Fri 8 Feb	Mull Theatre 8pm	<a href="http://comar.co.uk">comar.co.uk</a>
Sat 9 Feb	Corran Halls 7.30pm	<a href="http://therockfieldcentre.org.uk">therockfieldcentre.org.uk</a> <a href="http://comar.co.uk">comar.co.uk</a>
Mon 11 Feb	Astley Hall, Arisaig 7.30pm	01687 450263/ <a href="http://comar.co.uk">comar.co.uk</a>
Tue 12 Feb	Appin Village Hall 7.30pm	on the door/01631 720498
Wed 13 Feb	Victory Hall, Benderloch 7.30pm	<a href="http://comar.co.uk">comar.co.uk</a>
Fri 15 Feb	The Studio, Edinburgh 7.30pm	0131 5296000 <a href="http://capitaltheatres.com">capitaltheatres.com</a>
Sat 16 Feb	The Beacon Arts Centre 7.30pm	0141 723723 <a href="http://beaconartscentre.co.uk">beaconartscentre.co.uk</a>
Tue 19 Feb	Bowmore Hall, Islay 8pm	on the door/ <a href="http://comar.co.uk">comar.co.uk</a>
Wed 20 Feb	Tarbert Village Hall 8pm	on the door/ <a href="http://comar.co.uk">comar.co.uk</a>
Thu 21 Feb	Dunoon Burgh Hall 7.30pm	<a href="http://dunoonburghhall.org.uk">dunoonburghhall.org.uk</a>
Fri 22 Feb	Macrobert Arts Centre 7.30pm	01786 466666 <a href="http://macrobertartscentre.org">macrobertartscentre.org</a>
Sat 23 Feb	The Brunton, Musselburgh 7.30pm	0131 6652240 <a href="http://thebrunton.co.uk">thebrunton.co.uk</a>
Mon 25 Feb	The Sunart Centre 7.30pm	on the door/ <a href="http://sunartcentre.org">sunartcentre.org</a>
Tue 26 Feb	Plockton Village Hall 7.30pm	on the door/01599 577296 <a href="http://comar.co.uk">comar.co.uk</a>
Wed 27 Feb	The Aros Centre, Skye 7.30pm	01478 613750 <a href="http://aroscommunitytheatre.co.uk">aroscommunitytheatre.co.uk</a>
Thu 28 Feb	Resolis Memorial Hall 7.30pm	01381 610204/ <a href="mailto:davidgilbert938@btinternet.com">davidgilbert938@btinternet.com</a>
Fri 1 Mar	Lyth Arts Centre, Wick 8pm	01955 641434/ <a href="http://lytharts.org.uk">lytharts.org.uk</a>
Sat 2 Mar	Portgordon Village Hall 7.30pm	01542 831116 <a href="http://neatshows.org.uk">neatshows.org.uk</a>
Mon 4 Mar	Eastwood Park Theatre 7.30pm	0141 577 4956 <a href="http://eastwoodparktheatre.co.uk">eastwoodparktheatre.co.uk</a>
Wed 6 Mar	Birchvale Theatre 7.30pm	on the door/07717 676 254
Thu 7 Mar	Glencairn Mem. Inst. Moniaive 8pm	<a href="http://craigdarrocharmshotel.co.uk">craigdarrocharmshotel.co.uk</a>
Fri 8 Mar	Paisley Arts Centre 7.30pm	0300 300 1210 <a href="http://renfrewshireleisure.com/whats-on">renfrewshireleisure.com/whats-on</a>
Sat 9 Mar	Eastgate Theatre, Peebles 7.30pm	01721 725 777 <a href="http://eastgatearts.com">eastgatearts.com</a>

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The Oban Times

# BID4Oban joins search for Oban Live Fringe partners

BID4Oban and Oban Live are inviting Oban businesses to get involved in the music concert's fringe programme this year, running from Thursday June 6 to Sunday June 9.

The fringe partners' project comes as business improvement district group BID4Oban has confirmed it will back Oban Live for a fourth year running, providing key financial and administration support for the cultural event.

At last year's Oban Live Fringe, a number of Oban's bars, cafes, shops and activity providers put on a range of events and special offers over Oban Live weekend. Oban Live ticket holders took advantage of added entertainment, including live music, in many pubs and cafes as well

as special discounts in the town's shops.

Oban will host the Queen Victoria Cruise Ship on Friday June 7, the first day of the event, so Oban Live and the Oban Live Fringe will be an opportunity to give the overseas visitors an even more exciting experience of Oban.

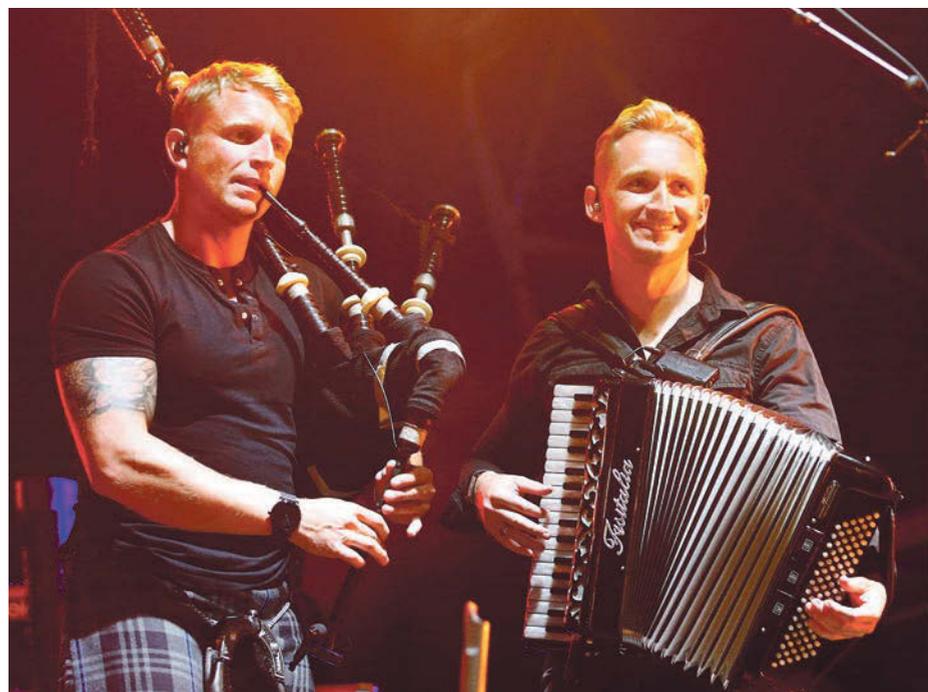
BID4Oban staff will be handing out Oban Live Fringe programmes as passengers disembark at North Pier Pontoons on June 7 as well as other information about Oban.

It is free for businesses to submit an event or offer and become an Oban Live Fringe Partner and outlets can upload their fringe details at [www.obanlive.com/fringepartners](http://www.obanlive.com/fringepartners). Fringe events

must take place before and after Oban Live which runs 4pm until 11.30pm on Friday June 7 and Saturday June 8 to ensure that no-one misses out on the main event.

Chief executive for BID4Oban Andrew Spence said: 'The fringe is a fantastic opportunity to further encourage visitor spend in local businesses whilst complementing the main event itself. The economic impact for Oban, as a result of visitors coming to the town for Oban Live, was £1.4 million last year and this is growing year-on-year.'

He added: 'The event's year-round marketing activity helps put Oban on the map as a top cultural destination. With an increase in ticket sales and the award of Best



The Gillespie brothers of Skerryvore, who are a driving force behind Oban Live.

Cultural Event at the 2018 Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards, Oban Live has proven itself to be an all round social, cultural and economic benefit for Oban and we are delighted to support it again in 2019.'

Naomi Hoolahan, event director for Oban Live, said: 'We are thrilled to be working in partnership with BID4Oban and Oban's busi-

ness community and thank them once again for the financial grant and resource support, which, in our early days growing the event, is critical. Collaborative working is key when delivering a first-class event and cultural experience for thousands of people, especially in a small area such as Oban.

'Thanks to all the businesses who took part last year and

we look forward to receiving events and special offer ideas that we can add to our 2019 Fringe, which is improving every year. Sixty per cent of Oban Live's audience come from outside Argyll and Bute and so the fringe is a great opportunity to show off everything Oban has to offer.'

More information can be found at [www.obanlive.com/fringepartners](http://www.obanlive.com/fringepartners).

Advertorial

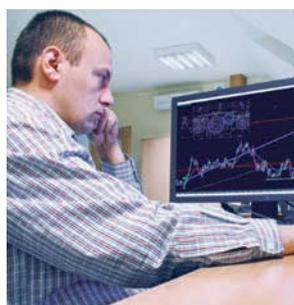
## Eye to eye with John Wallace



# Bright Shiny Objects

Regular readers of my column know of my interest in reading problems. Many patients have to work extremely hard to read even after using appropriate glasses. Typically, I find the training I received as a neophyte optometrist as being very basic and frequently inadequate for the problems my patients are experiencing. I frequently have to refer to text books to find answers to my patients' vision problems.

I often find techniques to help my patients have not changed for decades. In many cases these techniques have undergone repeated attempts at improvement but have stood the test of time. The most frequent attempt at improvement in vision therapy is taking old tech-



niques and adapting them to be used on computers to provide basic vision training systems. The assumption is anything computer based must be better. We have become a society addicted to living our lives through computers or smartphones.

If we spend all day staring at a screen our visual world can become incredibly restricted. Our eyes focus in the same place constantly

and seldom move from side to side. Our attention is so concentrated at a small area we completely ignore everything happening in our visual periphery. As a result I am finding an increasing level of myopia (short-sightedness) and of reading problems because of tiny functional visual fields. When we read we need to see several letters ahead to enable our eyes to scan efficiently. With small functional visual fields we often only are aware of the next letter in a word so are unable to scan read properly. Our visual world is in 3D! We need to spend time living and playing in the real world. Our eyes need to readily change focus and be aware of everything around us, not just focus on a smartphone screen.

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP

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# M'ALBA

## MY ALBA

### DIARDAOIN 07 AN GEARRAN / THURSDAY 07 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
O Mo Dhùthaich (rpt)  
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)  
19.55 FilmG – Mara Thachair Do Dh'fhear a Sgura Dhol Dhan Eaglais (rpt)  
20.00 An Là - News  
20.30 **UR | NEW:** Eòrpa  
21.00 Air a' Chanàil (rpt)  
22.00 **UR | NEW:** Nochd S2  
22.30 Reagan & Gorbachev (rpt)  
23.25 **UR | NEW:** Belladrum Highlights 2018  
23.30 Mach à Seo (rpt)

### DIHAOINE 08 AN GEARRAN / FRIDAY 08 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
18.30 **UR | NEW:** FilmG – Eòghan Beag: Latha Mòr  
18.35 Machair (rpt)  
19.00 An Là - News  
19.25 **UR | NEW:** Women's Six Nations  
21.30 An Lot S3 (rpt)  
22.00 Corp is Anam (rpt)  
22.50 Dhan Uisge (Falls of Acharn) (rpt)  
23.00 Nochd S2 (rpt)  
23.30 Ceòlmhor@Piping Live! (rpt)

### DISATHAIRNE 09 AN GEARRAN / SATURDAY 09 FEBRUARY

16.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
17.45 An Là - News  
18.00 As an Eilean (rpt)  
19.35 Fianais (rpt)  
20.05 Machair (rpt)  
20.30 Vets: Gach Creutair Beò (rpt)

21.00 Port S4 (rpt)  
22.00 Hamish (rpt)  
23.25 Reagan & Gorbachev (rpt)  
24.20 **UR | NEW:** Belladrum Highlights

### DIDÒMHAICH 10 AN GEARRAN / SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY

16.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
18.15 An Là - News  
18.30 Seachd Là - News Review  
19.30 Alleluia (rpt)  
20.00 Eòrpa (rpt)  
20.30 Leugh Mi (rpt)  
21.00 Frances: A Strì ri MS (rpt)  
22.00 Port S4 (rpt)  
23.00 Corp is Anam (rpt)  
23.50 Dhan Uisge (Fall of Acharn) (rpt)

### DILUAIN 11 AN GEARRAN / MONDAY 11 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
19.00 Brigh a' Chiuil - Return to the Voice (rpt)  
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)  
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)  
20.00 An Là - News  
20.30 **UR | NEW:** An Lot S3  
21.00 **UR | NEW:** Trusadh - Pàirc-campachaidh Horgaboist  
**UR | NEW:** TradFest  
22.00 Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach (rpt)  
23.30 Ceòlmhor@Piping Live! (rpt)

### DIMÀIRT 12 AN GEARRAN / TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
19.00 O Mo Dhùthaich (rpt)  
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)

19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)  
20.00 An Là - News  
20.30 Vets: Gach Creutair Beò (rpt)  
21.00 Gladys (rpt)  
22.00 Trusadh - Pàirc-campachaidh Horgaboist (rpt)  
23.00 Ceòlraidh (rpt)  
23.25 Alleluia (rpt)

### DICIADAIN 13 AN GEARRAN / WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
19.00 Brigh a' Chiuil - Return to the Voice (rpt)  
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)  
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)  
20.00 An Là - News  
20.30 **UR | NEW:** Leugh Mi  
21.00 **UR | NEW:** Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach  
**UR | NEW:** Mach a Seo  
22.00 TradFest (rpt)  
23.00 Air a' Chanàil (rpt)

### DIARDAOIN 14 AN GEARRAN / THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne  
Children's programming  
19.00 O Mo Dhùthaich (rpt)  
19.25 Binneas - Na Trads (Phil & Aly) (rpt)  
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)  
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)  
20.00 An Là - News  
20.30 **UR | NEW:** Eòrpa  
**UR | NEW:** FilmG 2019  
22.20 Ceathrar air Chuairt (rpt)  
22.50 Dhan Uisge (Loch Morlich) (rpt)  
23.00 An Lot S3 (rpt)  
23.30 Mach a Seo (rpt)

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# Haste ye back to festival's return



It's been another big Celtic Connections, writes Campbell Cameron.

Elemental. Tribal. Visual and memorable.

Niteworks are all of those and more. They have bridged the fusion thing, Martyn Bennett was likely the first and he inspired more to get across the great divide from clubland to the Scottish tradition. Niteworks follow on from Peatbog Faeries, Croft No 5 and others in the Skeanach Gaelic tradition.

A wave of love filled the hall for the band from Skye, filling the famous Barrowland Ballroom in Glasgow to capacity on Saturday, where the ballroom dance floor bounced better than any village hall. It is simply made for dancing. Each time the solid beat of the clubland theme broke into fiddle and bagpipe the place exploded with energy proving the need for springing. Tribal.

The ethereal voice of Sorley Maclean opens the Niteworks gig and sets the scene. The late Raasay poet was brought to life as he never knew it on the huge Niteworks amplified sound system. Gaelic is no longer a dying language as it was in Sorley's day. It is alive and well, and indeed it is flourishing and celebrated in this ballroom - this is comman - community. Niteworks style. Visual.

Annie Kinsella and Kieran Goss are from the west as well - but their inspiration comes from the Atlantic as it breaks on the shores of western Ireland. Goss is no stranger to the Gaeltacht having played Oban and Benderloch in recent years, and he too is a friend of Celtic Connections. This year he brought a duet album to the Mitchell

Theatre with his partner Annie. The songs of Oh, The Starlings were recorded in New York with Kevin Killen - he of U2, David Bowie and Peter Gabriel. They perform a fine set of ballads together that enthrall the busy audience.

Colin MacIntyre is of the waves and the wind too. He is fiercely a Mulleach and a proud one at that. At one with his island home where he was bought up and city life in the madness of London. The show opened with the Glasgow Orpheus Choir singing about Mull and being an islander. It IS elemental. Ethereal. MacIntyre's credentials are strong like his lyrics. His grandfather the Tobermory bard and banker Angus MacIntyre. His father and uncles are remembered in the show too. As is the Highlanders bible - The Oban Times, in which he proudly remembers his elders featuring in days gone by. He is happy we came.

The album is Wakelines and features fellow Mulleachs Hannah Fisher and Sorren MacLean on fiddle and bass guitar respectively. Former Suede and Verve guitarist Bernard Butler produced the album and he features quietly and very effectively on guitar in Glasgow too.

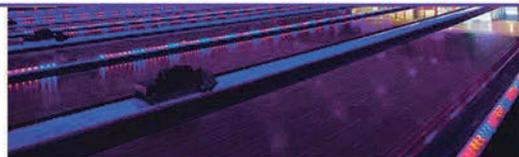
The concert peaks with a simple story of a father battling to get home with a present for his boy. The Fender guitar is held head high to save it from the waves as he wades ashore. The guitar is saved and the 14-year-old boy became a man - a well-respected musician and he played on stage at Glasgow's Centre for Contemporary Arts on Thursday night. Visual and Memorable. Elemental and tribal too.

## What's on at **The Nevis Centre**



**Spectrum soft play area**  
Suitable for children of 12 and under.  
Baby area 0-2 years, toddler area 2-5 years and older children can be let loose in all the other areas.

**Superbowl**  
open everyday from  
12 noon until 10pm



**The Nevis Centre** An Aird, Fort William  
Tel: 01397 700707 [www.neviscentre.co.uk](http://www.neviscentre.co.uk)

# String quartet to play Oban



The Sinopia String Quartet, left, will be playing at St John's Cathedral on Sunday (February 10) at 3pm. Their programme will include works by Frank Bridge, Borodin and Debussy. Tickets are available on the door. On Tuesday February 12, Scottish Opera will be visiting Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern on its Opera Highlights tour. The event kicks off at 7.30pm. Tickets are available via [www.ticketweb.uk](http://www.ticketweb.uk)

# Inveraray Burns Club toasts the Bard

Inveraray Burns Club held its 13th annual Burns Supper on Saturday January 26 in the Inveraray Inn, in front of 53 members and guests. The evening started with last year's president Sylvia Stark installing the new President John Burns with his jewel of office and he in turn presented Sylvia with her past president's medal.

John then took charge of the evening's proceedings and, after a solemn moment's silence for the passing of honorary president Jim McCulloch, excellently compered an evening of laughter and song and recitations.

Before a delicious four-course meal, the haggis was piped in by a new piper to the club, Johan Van Der Wal, who is the manager of the Whisky Shop in Oban and Inveraray. It was carried by Marie Docherty from Renfrewshire, another regular visitor to Argyll, and was addressed by club secretary Kenny Stark.

## Pipe tunes

After the meal the proceedings began with a selection of pipe tunes from Johan, who is a member of the world class Inveraray and District Pipe Band. John Watson, who hails from Dumfriesshire proposed a very informative Immortal Memory and Cumnock man, Iain Farrell, proposed a toast to the lassies. Fiona Elliot replied to the toast to the lassies, and not only did it in rhyme, but humerously verbally attacked the male office bearers of the club.

The speeches were interspersed with a presentation of Burns's Twa Dugs by Jim McMillan and Ian Farrell in which both assumed the parts of a dog, one being the Laird's Dog, and one being the poor man's dog discussing how they saw life from their respective positions.

To a Louse was ably recited by club member Hamish Thomson, who has a home in Shira Glen, and who reminded everyone in Burns's words that sometimes we are seen by others in a way we would rather not, 'Oh wad some pow'r the gift tae gie us, To see ourselves as others see us!'

Throughout the evening the popular folk duo, Bletherskyte, from Cumnock, entertained the audience with an array of songs, ranging from tender love songs to rousing Jacobean songs, showing the immense depth of Burns's genius.

Ultimately, of course, the evening had to come to an end and the members and friends finished in the traditional style of the club, with the whole company singing The Star o' Rabbie Burns and Auld Lang Syne.



New president John Burns being installed.



The haggis being piped.



The haggis being addressed.



Popular folk duo Bletherskyte.

# WHAT'S ON

In partnership with Oban Town Diary [bid4oban.co.uk](http://bid4oban.co.uk)



## THURSDAY 7TH FEBRUARY

**Slimming World**  
Fort William, 3.00pm, 5.00pm & 7.00pm  
Tel; Gillian 07796 040803

**Oban Health Walk**  
Oban Congregational Church Hall  
10am - 11.30am

**Oban Accordion and Fiddle Club**  
The Royal Hotel, 7.30pm

**Entertainment @ Markie Dans**  
FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY

## FRIDAY 8TH FEBRUARY

**Oban Health Walk**  
Glencruitten Church Hall, All Day

**Entertainment @ Markie Dans**  
Tweed Ceilidh Band, Open till 2am

**Scratch Choir #28 - Northern Sky**  
The Rockfield Centre, 8.00pm

**The Electrifying Mr Johnston**  
Mull Theatre, 8.00pm

**Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar**  
From 9pm, Free Entry

## SATURDAY 9TH FEBRUARY

**ODA - Cheerleading**  
Glencruitten Church Hall, All Day

**parkrun**  
Ganavan Sands, Oban, 9.30am

**The Electrifying Mr Johnston**  
The Corran Halls, Oban, 7.30pm

**Entertainment @ Markie Dans**  
Calum MacPhail Band, Open till 2am

**Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar**  
From 9pm, Free Entry

**Comunn Gàidhealach an Óbain Ceilidh**  
Masonic Hall, Albany Street, 7.30pm

**Slow Session #14**  
The Rockfield Centre, 14.00pm

## SUNDAY 10TH FEBRUARY

**The Lightbulb Sessions #5**  
The Rockfield Centre, 14.00pm

## The Highland Cattle Society

128th Spring Show and Sale  
Oban Livestock Centre

**Entertainment @ Markie Dans**  
QUIZ NIGHT at 9.30pm

## MONDAY 11TH FEBRUARY

**The Highland Cattle Society**  
128th Spring Show and Sale  
Oban Livestock Centre

**Slimming World**  
Lochgilthead, 5.30pm & 7.30pm  
Tel; Rhona 07880 878906

## WEDNESDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

**Under The Skin Camera Club**  
The Rockfield Centre, 18.30pm

**Inveraray and District Accordion & Fiddle Club**  
Inveraray Inn, 8.00pm

**Slimming World**  
Oban, 9.30am, 11.30am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm  
Tel; Gillian 07796 040803

Events may charge. Please visit [www.obanwhatson.co.uk](http://www.obanwhatson.co.uk)  
for more details. To list your event, please call **01631 568000**

## WHAT'S ON AT YOUR LOCAL CINEMA THIS WEEK

Tel: 01631 562905 or see

[www.obanphoenix.com](http://www.obanphoenix.com) for more details

FRIDAY 8	15:00	STAN & OLLIE	PG
14:30	MORTAL ENGINES	12A	15
14:30/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART	U	15
17:15	STAN & OLLIE	PG	15
19:30	COLETTE	15	15
19:30	MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS	15	15
TUESDAY 12	12:00/15:00/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART	U
15:15	MORTAL ENGINES	12A	15
18:00	STAN & OLLIE	PG	15
20:00	COLETTE	15	15
20:15	MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS	15	15
WEDNESDAY 13	12:00/14:30/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART	U
12:15	MORTAL ENGINES	12A	15
15:00	STAN & OLLIE	PG	15
17:15	THE FAVOURITE	15	15
19:30	COLETTE	15	15
19:45	MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS	15	15
THURSDAY 14	12:00/14:30/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART	U
12:15	MORTAL ENGINES	12A	15
15:00	STAN & OLLIE	PG	15
17:15	THE FAVOURITE	15	15
19:30	COLETTE	15	15
19:45	MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS	15	15
FRIDAY 9	11:30	MARY POPPINS RETURNS	U
12:00/14:30/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART	U	15
14:15	MORTAL ENGINES	12A	15
17:00	THE FAVOURITE	15	15
19:30	COLETTE	15	15
19:30	MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS	15	15
SUNDAY 10	11:45	MORTAL ENGINES	12A
12:00/14:30/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART	U	15
14:30	THE FAVOURITE	15	15
17:00	STAN & OLLIE	PG	15
19:15	MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS	15	15
19:30	COLETTE	15	15
MONDAY 11	12:00/14:30/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART	U
12:15	MORTAL ENGINES	12A	15

## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

If you would like to advertise in the  
Oban Times Community Noticeboard  
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**Oban Pipe Band**  
is hosting a  
**WINE TASTING EVENT**  
on  
**Friday 15th February**  
at 7.30pm  
**In the Masonic Lodge,**  
**Albany Street**  
Tickets: £20  
(Available from Oban Music, Argyll Square or  
by contacting Glynis Dewar on 01631 571066)

An Comunn Gàidhealach -  
Meur Chruachain  
**Taynuilt Winter Ceilidh**  
Kieran MacInnes  
Sileas Sinclair  
Donald MacLean  
Kenneth MacLeod  
2017 Mod Silver Medallist  
Plus Full Supporting Programme  
**Saturday 17th February**  
**Taynuilt Village Hall, 7.30pm**  
Adults - £4 Children £2

**Inveraray & District**  
**Accordion & Fiddle Club**  
**Inveraray Inn**  
**Wednesday**  
**13th February**  
At 8.00pm  
Guest Artistes  
From Newtyle  
Scott Band Trio  
Supporting players  
most welcome

  
Oban Music Society  
**Concert**  
Sinopia String Quartet  
playing works by Bridge,  
Borodin and Debussy  
**Sunday 10th February**  
**3pm in St John's**  
**Cathedral, Oban**  
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rosemary.tiree@icloud.com  
Lachie Beaton 01631  
565890/07467 020516  
lachie.beaton@tiscali.co.uk

## Scott Band Trio lined up for Inveraray visit



The Inveraray and District Accordion and Fiddle Club kicked off the New Year off in fine style at the Inveraray Inn.

Supporting players were Fyne Folk, with Sally Hall, Alex John MacLeod and Jake MacKay on fiddles and Agnes Liddell on keyboard, and they were joined by Calum Satchel on fiddle. Also playing were – Sandy Carr on melodeon, Willie Buchanan on accordion, accompanied by Jimmy MacDonald on keyboard, Jake on 'moothie', accompanied by Agnes on keyboard. All their varied selections were much enjoyed.

Guest artistes, pictured above, were Craig McFadyen and his band. Unfortunately Craig had sustained an injury to his hand, so moved over to play second accordion with Dad, Hector taking on lead accordion. They were joined by Matthew MacLennan on keyboard and Alastair Murray on drums. Both of their spots were filled with a great variety of sets from start to finish, which delighted the audience and all interspersed with some great craic from Hector.

After the final set of reels, chairman Niall Iain MacLean, thanked the 'local' players and Hector and co for a superb night.

On February 13 the club welcomes Scott Band, chairman of the Blairgowrie Club, and his trio paying their first visit to Inveraray.

# Heartfelt tribute to the life blood of Scotland

A new film documentary, *Scotch The Golden Dram*, celebrating how Scotch whisky became the premier spirit around the globe, is to be released in March.

*Scotch: The Golden Dram* was directed by Andrew Peat, who travelled the Scottish countryside to uncover the history of the craft of Scotch whisky and meet some of the biggest names in the industry.

The film charts the tale of master distiller Jim McEwan, a veteran with more than 50 years' standing in the industry, who takes on a dilapidated distillery on his home island of Islay and turns it into an award-winner.

Some of the other enthusiasts featured include Richard Paterson, a master blender whose nose was insured for \$2.5 million, as well as biochemist whisky-maker Dr Bill Lumsden, and master distiller Ian MacMillan.

Andrew says: 'I am absolutely delighted to bring our film to



UK and Irish audiences. The heart of our film is the characters, the men and women who produce Scotch whisky, from the barley farmers to the bottle makers. And you can literally see the passion and joy and pride they have in their work and this world-renowned product.

'They share their amazing stories and some very humorous anecdotes. It's a very educational film (you learn the entire process of whisky making), but at the same time it's a film of the heart. You will

laugh and possibly cry by the time the credits roll.'

'As well as its whisky offering, Islay provides stunning scenery, a wide variety of wildlife and a warm Scottish welcome. I hope this film will encourage visitors to travel here to enjoy the water of life, and the island's remarkable tourism offering.'

Malcolm Roughead, chief executive of VisitScotland, said: 'Scotch whisky is a culinary and cultural icon and one of Scotland's most valuable commodities.'

'Visitors from across the

globe come to our shores to experience an authentic Scottish dram, with one in five making a trip to a whisky distillery while here.

'We're delighted the love and craft which goes into our national drink forms the basis of *Scotch: The Golden Dram*. Combine that with the awe-inspiring beauty of the landscapes which shape the 'water of life' and you have a film which we hope will leave viewers thirsty for more about Scotland.'

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland regional director, said: 'Boasting an incredible number of distilleries, Islay is a Mecca for whisky-lovers across the world. It's great to see the island feature so heavily in the documentary *Scotland: The Golden Dram* with four distilleries included.'

*Scotch: The Golden Dram* is on general release from March 8 and will be screening at Glasgow Film Festival on March 1, which includes a Q&A and whisky tasting session.

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During springtime guests at Fairmont St Andrews are treated to a truly remarkable experience. As the Scottish countryside blooms visitors are able to enjoy exquisite views across the championship golf courses and the renowned St Andrews Bay. At the Savoy Afternoon Tea guests enjoy delicate finger sandwiches, delicious pastries and fantastic cakes in the Atrium Lounge whilst watching the Zephyr lighting sculpture dancing above.

As well as an overnight stay the lucky winners of this competition will receive spa access, a round of golf, Savoy Afternoon Tea and breakfast in the Squire restaurant.

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**What is the lighting sculpture in the Atrium Lounge called?**

Voucher valid 31 March 2019 until 31 May 2019. Blackout dates apply. Subject to availability. Other terms & conditions apply and will feature on the voucher.

To enter, send separate entries (in the same envelope) with your name, address, telephone number and email address to **Scottish Field Competitions, Fettes Park, 496 Ferry Road, Edinburgh EH5 2DL** or enter at [www.scottishfield.co.uk](http://www.scottishfield.co.uk). Closing date, unless otherwise stated, is 31 March 2019. **Winners drawn from all competitions also enter a prize to win a bottle of Berry Bros. & Rudd Islay Reserve Whisky.**

Entrants must be 18 or over. Employees of Scottish Field, the competition promoters, and their direct families are ineligible to enter. No purchase necessary. The winner will be first correct entry drawn after closing date. No cash alternative is available. The winner will be informed by telephone. Usual Scottish Field rules apply. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition - your name, address, telephone number and email address. If you wish to receive news and offers from the third party running the competition, then please mark the words 'OPT IN' on your postcard entry. If you enter various competitions on one card, you will be opting in for every competition running. Unless you opt in to receive further marketing information we will only contact you if you win a prize in the competition. Scottish Field (Wyvex Media) will retain your information for a maximum of 5 months after the competition closes and then it will be deleted. If you have opted in to receive third party information, the data you have supplied will be passed to the third party company running the competition. This may be used for the purposes of the third party contacting you regarding new products and services for a period of 3 months, unless you agree to an extension with the third party company at a later date.

# Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Celtic Connections is now finished for another year.

This year's festival was wonderful – with too many highlights to mention. Due to other commitments, I didn't manage to make it to any of the concerts that made up the final weekend of the festival. I have heard great things about them all – particularly Rura in St Luke's on the Saturday; Megan Henderson's New Voices commission on the Sunday; and the concert in the City Halls to launch this year's Royal National Mòd which comes to Glasgow in October. Luckily, as a number of times before, Donnie 'Maroot' MacLeod was on hand to write me a report of the latter – and here it is:

## Mòd Ghlaschu launch at Celtic Connections

The City Halls and Celtic Connections welcomed the Glasgow Gaels on Saturday night as Mòd 2019 was officially launched with a tremendous concert. BBC Alba's Siobhan Macinnes introduced a multitude of gold medal winners from across the generations, each singer performing songs which inspired them.

Calum Ross, Margaret Macleod, Darren MacLean, James Graham, Kenna Campbell, Gillibride

MacMillan, Wilma Kennedy, Margaret Callan and Mòd 2019 convenor DI Brown all performed fantastically at the concert, which was expertly co-ordinated by musical director Mary Ann Kennedy. The soloists were complemented by a fantastic house band and the junior and senior Gaelic choirs from Glasgow. The rousing finale of Cearcall A' Chuain was the perfect way to officially launch Mòd 2019.

## Allan Henderson's formative playlist

Last week, I made a trip to the Hillhead Bookclub to watch Allan Henderson perform five songs from his Celtic Connections show for BBC Alba – alongside the majority of the band who joined him on the night of the gig. I will write more about this in next week's column.

## Stirling ceilidh

As usual, the Stirling branch of An Comunn Gàidhealach (founded in 1930) has a great line up for its ceilidh on Saturday February 9. Margaret Callan and family; DI Brown; Holly and Lucy Smith; Islay Duke; the Cluaran Dancers; and piper Callum Wynd will all play. The ceilidh takes place in the Lesser Albert Halls and begins at 7.30pm.



The massed Gaelic choirs singing their hearts out to launch Mòd Glaschu 2019 at Celtic Connections last Saturday night.

## Milngavie ceilidh

Comunn An-taobh-an-Iar's ceilidh (in the Ellangowan Social Club at 7.30pm) has a nice big line up, including Rachel Deans, Catherine Tinney, Gordon McKeeve, and Kenny MacLeod and Peter Beaton. Calum MacColl is the instrumentalist for the evening and Kirsteen Grant the accompanist. The chairman is Peter MacDonald and the piper is Kenneth MacFarlane. There will be a raffle as well as teas, coffees, and biscuits.

## What's On

Friday February 8: Clydebank and District Highland

Association Ceilidh in the Napier Hall, Old Kilpatrick, at 7.30pm.

Saturday February 16: The Mull and Iona Association Annual Gathering in the Glasgow University Union. March 9: Gaelictronica in CCA, Sauchiehall Street, at 7.30pm.

## Pub Scene

**Islay Inn**  
Friday February 8: Mooki.  
Saturday February 9: The Raggaels.

**Park Bar**  
Friday February 8: John Carmichael. Saturday February 9: Trail West. Sunday February 10: Buddha and the Band.

## Your local radio listings

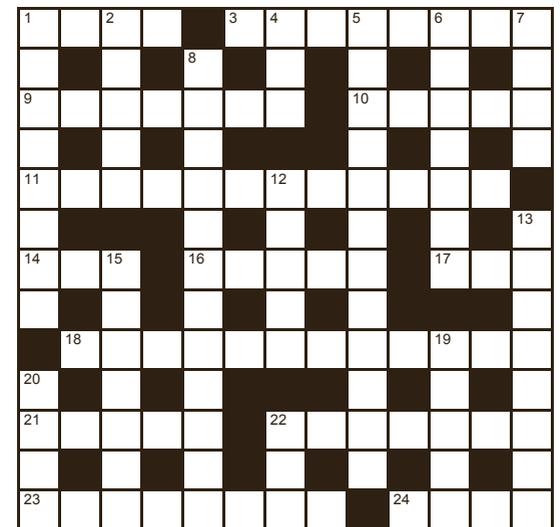
Tune in to 103.3Fm or listen live at [www.obanfm.com](http://www.obanfm.com) or on the Tuneln app. For requests, competitions or questions please call us on 01631 570057 or email: [studio@obanfm.org.uk](mailto:studio@obanfm.org.uk)



**MONDAY:** 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 breakfast show, 9.00 Monday morning with Stephen, 11.00 Ian Simmonds Monday Mix, 17.00 Drivetime, 19.00 Rosie's Highland fling with Rosie MacColl, 20.00 John McLuckie's show, 21.00 David Cullen show, 23.00 Through the night with Clyde 2  
**TUESDAY:** 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 Breakfast show, 10.00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday morning, 13.00 Macky on Fm, 17.00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 19.00 Highest praise with Stuart Chalmers, 20.00 Clyde 2 through the night with the Greatest Hits.  
**WEDNESDAY:** 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 breakfast show, 09.00 Sounds Scottish repeat, 10.00 The Comfort Zone with Lesley Blair Simmonds, 13.00 Doug Carmichael in the afternoon. 17.00 Drivetime with Campbell Cameron, 19.00 Country meets Rock & Roll with Len Ford & Kenny MacLachlan alternating. 21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre, 12.00 Midnight through the night with Clyde 2.  
**THURSDAY:** 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00

Christine's collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00 Margo till midnight then Through the night with Clyde 2.  
**FRIDAY:** 08.00 breakfast show with Laura, 10.00 Teeny and Tiny aka Harry, Janet, and Anna, 17.00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 18.45 Sports View, 19.00 Country meets Country with Jackie Craig, 21.00 Peter Rainnie 12.00 Midnight through the night with Clyde 2.  
**SATURDAY:** 08.00 The Breakfast show with Stephen MacPhee. 10.00 Saturday Morning live with Linda Crosher, 13.00 Clyde2 Sports and the Greatest hits, 18.00 Sports view – Oban Fm Dream team, 19.00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20.00 Dave Lewis, 22.00 Margo till Midnight then Through the night with Clyde 2 and the Greatest Hits.  
**SUNDAY:** 09.00 Sunday Morning with Breege, 11.00 Sunday brunch with Allan MacKechnie, 13.00 Clyde 2 on a lazy Sunday afternoon with the Greatest Hits, 19.00 New Country show – David Entwistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass – Graham Scott, 23.00 Clyde 2 through the night with the Greatest Hits.

# Crossword



## Across

- 1 Put up (4)
- 3 Aftermath of a battle (8)
- 9 Buoyant (7)
- 10 Too heavy (5)
- 11 Verb of completion (12)
- 14 That man (3)
- 16 Urge (5)
- 17 Groove (3)
- 18 The day after Easter (9,3)
- 21 Pancakes served with caviar and sour cream (5)
- 22 Extend beyond something else (7)
- 23 Computer programmes used to direct usage (8)
- 24 Skin sac (4)

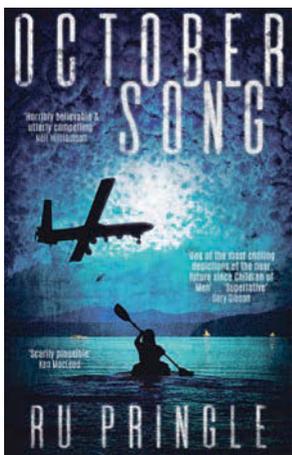
## Down

- 1 Hodgepodge (8)
- 2 Swagger (5)
- 4 Whichever (3)
- 5 Persuasive person (6-6)
- 6 Hatchet (7)
- 7 Unceasingly (4)
- 8 Quick peck before the event (5,7)
- 12 Glasses (5)
- 13 Remains (5,3)
- 15 Large dog breed (7)
- 19 Child's toy (5)
- 20 Wading bird (4)
- 22 Yours and mine (3)

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



# October Song, reviewed by Eric MacIntyre



In a manner reminiscent of Richard Hannay in John Buchan's *The Thirty Nine Steps*, Coira Keir finds herself in Scotland fleeing from forces who would do her harm. But the near-future world depicted here is a lot more complicated than that described by Buchan 100 years ago. Scotland has re-united with the United Kingdom after a long period of independence, explosions have been detonated and the Secret Service is hot on the trail of the suspects.

In this highly-charged environment the West Highlands and Islands offer some hope of avoiding capture because 'North of Oban property crime is no longer looked at by the police.' Pringle will take readers of this newspaper on a journey through very familiar haunts as the mystery deepens and unexplained events occur,

with multiple characters including migrants in a camp. The pace is brisk as drones are deployed in the hunt for escapees from justice.

Pringle has a background as a journalist, musician and photographer and his descriptions of the Highland and island landscapes are highly evocative. His well-written novel will engage readers and provoke fear in equal measure. For as Britain as a whole and Scotland in particular stand today on the cusp of a momentous and unclear future, *October Song* has tapped into this uncertainty and offers a future vision in thriller form which is at the same time highly political and often disturbing.

*Ru Pringle: October Song* is available on Amazon, including the Amazon unlimited subscription service.

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When is a fire extinguisher not a fire extinguisher? When it hasn't been serviced and maintained properly.

'It is the most common mistake people make both in business and in the home,' said Kenny McGillivray of Argyll Fire and Safety, 'that and having the wrong type of extinguisher for the fire. Use a water extinguisher on an electrical fire and you run the risk of electrocution.'

Go and look at the service sticker on the back of your fire extinguishers; if it is 12 months out of date then they might not work if needed in an emergency. The probability increases with time. By law there should be an annual service by a qualified engineer.

Kenny and apprentice Donald Ross are a regular

sight on the roads and ferries of Argyll and Bute and even farther afield in the 'safety car', their fully-kitted-out van.

'I say we go from the Isle of Iona to Hamilton,' said Kenny. 'Businesses and landlords, large or small, know we can provide a complete service: fire risk assessment, keeping them up to date with the legislation and making sure their fire extinguishers and all equipment is regularly serviced as it should be, by trained, competent engineers from a conscientious company.'

Based in Dunoon, Kenny McGillivray has worked extensively in the health and safety field; he started up his own business in 2000. His expert knowledge as a

health and safety consultant for the building trade was already well-known across the area with many leading local businesses calling on his expertise to ensure they comply with the law and pass insurance audits.

'When people first encounter the fire legislation they can feel overwhelmed, be they small business or landlord, but they shouldn't be,' said Kenny. 'This is where our expertise comes in. Get in touch with us and we will call and see you; look over your existing protocols, check that everything is up-to-date and what you need to become complaint and keep your equipment and paperwork up-to-date.'



We are so lucky living here in the West Highlands and islands for we have such a low level of crime but we do have something to fear – and that is becoming complacent.

If you talk to police and security professionals they will tell you that most of us do not do enough when it comes to home security because we think it will never happen to us.

While it is rare, crime does happen and business premises, farms, homes and vehicles are targeted occasionally; the weekly police reports in this paper will remind you of that.

This is an area famed for welcoming visitors from all over the world but some of them are unwelcome and un wanted – people coming from the central belt

because they know how relaxed we can be. We do have reports every so often of a number of crimes taking place on the same day or night, as crooks head for home, taking our possessions with them.

So we should always make sure that we develop, and maintain a good security habit. Don't get paranoid or fearful that you are going to be a victim, just get yourself prepared.

It is also worth remembering that insurance policies often dictate a certain level of security regarding the quality and types of locks and failure to comply might hurt any possible claims.

It goes without saying that windows and doors should have good locks – make sure that extends to garages and sheds.

When we want to sell our house, estate

agents tell us to make sure we have 'curb appeal' and the property looks attractive to people as they arrive to view or see the for-sale sign.

Now think the exact opposite. Remember that most of the theft from property in this area is 'opportunistic crime', when a weakness is spotted and a criminal thinks that it is worth a go. So send the message that yours is a secure home with strong locks, good quality outdoor lights, lights on timers inside and some judicious planting of shrubs which have nice, long, nasty, thorns in strategic places.

Make sure the security extends to garages, sheds, garden houses and parked cars.

Thefts of heating oil are not uncommon so make sure your tank has a secure, locking, cap.

Farmers should also make sure they have good security; thefts of agricultural vehicles and machinery are on the increase across Scotland.

Money spent on good locks is money well spent. BS 3621 is a British Standard relating to thief-resistant locks and EN 1303:2005 is a European equivalent. Locksmiths and your local DIY store will be able to advise you. Your insurance policy might insist on these.

Sliding doors and patio doors need slightly different types of locks

Check the small print: Your insurance policy may specify that key-operated security bolts should be fitted to the top and bottom of doors.

Remember that closed shackle padlocks are more difficult to force open.

## World Wide Worries

Yes, we live in the safety of the West Highlands, but that is in real life. We are spending increasing amounts of time online and that can be a dangerous place.

The minute you switch on a computer you in a different world and it is one where there are a lot of people ready and waiting to make you their next victim.

Once upon a time it was a cough that was hacking, a virus was a bad cold and 'phishing' meant that you owned a pair of waders. Identity theft was someone stealing your passport while you were on holiday. Not anymore.

The chances are that if not now, then very soon, you will know more people who have fallen victim to online crime

than in real life.

It is good to know that there is as much security advice available for your online life as there is for your property and possessions and it is even better to know that we have highly-qualified IT businesses based here in the West Highlands who can advise, install and maintain your online life. And if things

do go wrong, they are there to help.

Another plus is that there are plenty of internet products to help monitor your home and keep it secure.

So it makes sense to take time to review your security for your home, possessions and internet activities, decide what improvements you need to make and to consult the experts.

## Stay safe online

- A good quality firewall and virus protection are essential and you should always invest in these.
- Upgrade your passwords once a year; avoid using the obvious like birthdays and anniversaries. Use the first letter of the words of a phrase; swap out letters and use numbers, 1 for I or 3 for E; mix up UppeR and loWer case letters.
- Always check your statements. Criminals will often make a small test purchase on your account before a big one, look for a pound or so, or even pence.
- You know when bills are due to arrive, if an invoice or statement is late let the sender know; your post might have been intercepted.
- Shred your old documents, or turn them into kindling for the log burner! Do you know where our paper waste ends up once our bins are emptied?
- Beware the phone call which asks for account numbers and details of accounts. Your real bank does not do that.
- Are you in the right online shop? Counterfeiters and identity thieves will often create websites incredibly similar to that of a famous brand.
- If you are offered something that is too good to be true, then it probably is not true.

**MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL:** your children's online safety is way too important for a tick list like this. Go and read up and research, take advantage of advice offered by schools and police, talk to your kids and take action. This is part of being a parent today, sadly, and we all have to make sure we are up to the mark.



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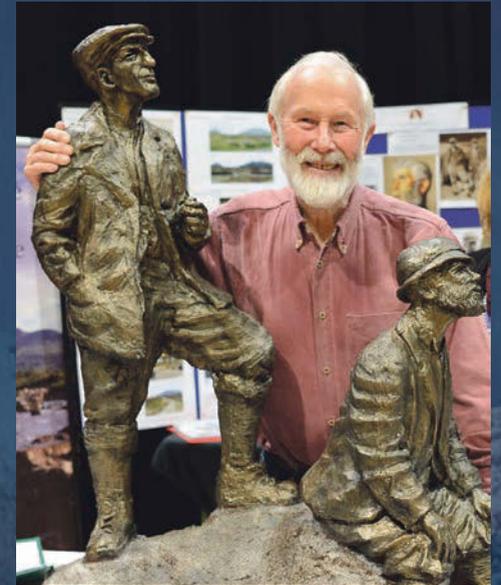
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Fire display 2014

## Fort William Mountain Festival



Big name speaker Chris

### 20th-24th FEBRUARY 2019

Fort William's annual Mountain Festival opens with a spectacular light and fire display starting on the hill opposite the town before crossing the loch to join a parade in the High Street with fire jugglers, musicians and a giant screen showing action videos.

The programme continues

in the Nevis Centre, with the best in biking, climbing, water sports, snowsports, running and much more from Wednesday 20 to Sunday 24 February, attracting audiences in excess of 1,500 people, further contributing to the local economy at a quieter time of the year.

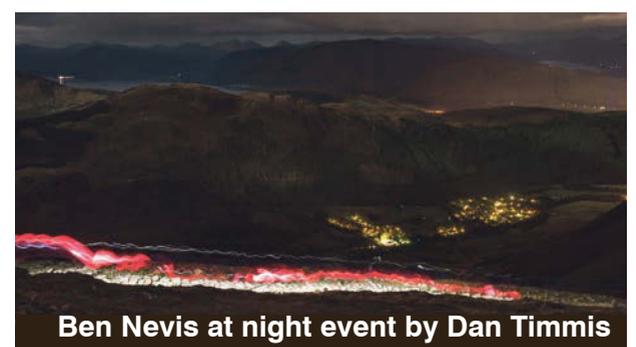
Run by the Highland Mountain Cultural Association, the festival works in close partnership with the community and local businesses. It could not take place without the dynamic volunteer organising committee, made up of a team of hard working local outdoor enthusiasts.

This year, the exciting programme of old favourites and new initiatives sees a wide selection of adventure and outdoor events taking place throughout Lochaber. Residents and visitors are invited to the festival for inspiring presentations, adrenaline filled and thought-provoking world-class films, arts, workshops, exhibitions and the party.

Settle down for the Film Competition, a night of the best outdoor adventure films and find out who has won the 2019 People's Choice, Best Short Film, Best Mountain Sports Film, Best Exploration and Adventure Film and John Muir Trust Wild Places Film Prize. New for 2019, the Young Photographer of the Year Award will also be presented.

Scottish winter climbers have always been at the forefront of world climbing and Scottish winters are seen as one of the toughest climbing environments. The Scottish Winter Climbers' Summit returns to explore whether standards are being held back or should we hold on to our ethics? Hosted by locally based Dave MacLeod, with guest speakers Guy Robertson and Simon Richardson, expect some lively debate.

Running Night with Jasmin Paris and Nicky Spinks: champion runner and mountain lover Jasmin Paris shares the challenges of staying fit whilst juggling a young baby...and working full time as a veterinary scientist. Hear from Nicky Spinks, a British long distance runner, specialising in fell running, who set women's records for the major fell running challenges the Ramsay Round, the Paddy Buckley Round and the Bob Graham Round.



Ben Nevis at night event by Dan Timmis

### FROM SUMMIT TO SEA ... INSPIRING OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

On Bike Night, listen to Jenny Graham from Inverness who broke the record for a female cycling around the world, knocking almost three weeks off the previous record of 144 days set by Italy's Paola Gianotti in 2014. Yorkshire Invaders: Sam and Joe Flanagan come to Fort William to share the best of their Scottish adventures through film and photography.

Ben Nevis Distillery have kindly donated bottles of their famous whisky for participants of a unique treasure hunt along the paths of Ben Nevis! Find hidden bottles of whisky (or photographs of them for a safer experience!) which can then be claimed at the end of the hunt. Such a fun and interactive idea and certainly makes the climb even more rewarding! Big thanks to the team at Ben Nevis Distillery for this generous contribution.

Hear about a vision of a wilder Scotland through stunning imagery and visual storytelling. Peter Cairns introduces a re-wilding journey and David Heatherington offers a fascinating insight into how lynx and people interact elsewhere, with spectacular wild lynx

images by Laurent Geslin.

The prestigious Scottish Awards for Excellence in Mountain Culture recognise the achievements of inspiring individuals and their outstanding contributions to Scotland's outdoor culture. Last year the adult award was presented to Cameron McNeish.

The Exhibition Zone is based in the Nevis Centre and opens each evening. This year, the exhibition will host the Vango Gallery, a collection of evocative images by a Glaswegian artist depicting the wonders of camping and the outdoors. Alongside this will be the usual mix of mountaineering exhibits, books and trade stands.

During the day, there'll be a choice of workshops and masterclasses taking place throughout Lochaber ranging from winter walking skills, ride out and coaching events to trail running skills: ascending and descending.

Festival tickets can sell out in advance, particularly for the popular nights. For more details, times and venues and to buy advance tickets, head to the new festival website [www.mountainfestival.co.uk](http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk)



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# Farm income figures fall by £57m

Total income from farming is estimated to have fallen by £57 million in 2018, after increasing in 2017

The chief statistician in the Scottish Government last week published Total Income from Farming estimates for Scotland 2016-2018, which contains near-final estimates of total income from farming (TIFF) for 2017 and an initial estimate of 2018 TIFF.

Although not all the data is yet in, net income for 2018 was estimated as £672 million, down from £729 million in 2017. The fall is partly due to the cost of feed stuffs, which is estimated to have risen by £74 million in 2018.

Total costs were estimated to have increased about five per cent. Labour costs increased by £26 million to £441 million, and fuel costs increased by £18 million to £147 million.

The total value of outputs only increased marginally. Barley and milk saw the biggest increases in value. While the harvest was adversely affected by the dry summer, prices were good and barley output was estimated to have risen £58 million to £312 million.

The dairy sector also saw a gain, with increased production and a small increase in price resulting in milk output being worth £402 million, up £29 million on 2017.

Overall, livestock is estimated to have seen a small increase in value in 2018.

The largest sector, the beef industry, again remained reasonably steady in 2018, with prices slightly above 2017. Output from slaughter or sales of cattle amounted to an estimated £714 million in 2018. The sheep sector saw another year of price rises, with output worth £234 million. Lower prices saw an eight per cent drop in the value of pig meat, to £100 million, while the poultry sector saw a similar decline to £77 million. The value of eggs increased 12 per cent to top £100 million for the first time.

Depressed prices and quantities resulted in a five per cent decrease in the value of potatoes, with both seed and ware dropping. The vegetable sector saw little change, and now stands at an estimated £140 million. Fruit saw a small increase to £140 million, but growth has slowed since the large increases a few years ago.

Subsidies, including coupled support, were budgeted at to £549 million in 2018. The figure, which for accounting purposes is based on the claim year irrespective of when payments are actually made, includes £425 million in direct payments, a further £66 million in support for Less Favoured Areas, and £47 million in coupled support.



In the longer term, income from farming has been rising steadily since a dip in the late nineties. However, within that trend the figures have fluctuated from year to year, and have struggled since a drop in 2015.

The data also show that productivity, which measures the amount of output per input, irrespective of prices, has fallen in the past three years.

Reacting to the figures, a spokesman for NFU Scotland said: 'It is important to remember when looking at the TIFF figures, that they are aggregate measures for Scottish agriculture as a whole and therefore mask the performance of different sectors and individual businesses and farms.'

with greater clarity on the operating environment that they will find themselves navigating over the next few years.'

The NFUS's livestock policy manager John Armour said: 'While these figures demonstrate there are challenges for the sector, the national farm income figures demonstrate that the livestock sector is the biggest earner for Scottish agriculture - generating almost a third of the national farm output in 2018, worth £715 million. This is a sector which needs certainty, both from the market and from guaranteed support from government to continue to deliver for the Scottish economy by providing employment and opportunities in rural communities.'

Milk policy manager George Jamieson said: 'The figures show a welcome rise in dairy output due to higher production and modest but welcome price increases. Looking back, the graphs demonstrate the volatile nature of dairy, some of which can be mitigated by ever increasing efficiency and economies of scale, which is evidenced by the continued reduction of dairy farmers and increased herd size and yield.'

'However, we don't want or need to lose more dairy farmers from the sector.'

Dairy is a high investment sector, which is increasingly vulnerable to volatility in input and output prices, which is compounded by uncertain weather patterns, and a powerful, competitive supply chain, hence the challenges remain for those who are still in the industry.

'There is hope for a thriving future if we, the sector, can see a supply chain and political decisions that value production. These figures demonstrate that dairy can rise to challenges but needs help in forward planning and investment.'

Crops policy manager Peter Logie said: 'The cereals output is up around 10 per cent from 2017. That's the second rise in a row but it has to be put into context as the 2016 output figure was the fifth year in a row of falling output. So in real terms the output in 2018 is still lower than it was in 2013. And, of course, the input costs have also gone up. Growers report increasing costs of farm machinery, outstripping inflation or the rise of the Euro against the pound. Fertiliser costs are up and large increases are being seen in the cost of sprays.'

'Looking forward there is a lot of uncertainty about how Brexit will impact both on costs and on prices, for grain and the other crops.'

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# The Highlanders

## Oban welcomes the 128th spring show of the Highland Cattle Society

Records look set to be broken at the 128th Highland Cattle sale in Oban next week.

The catalogue for the forthcoming sale and show is bulging; it boasts the largest number of entries for several years and it is attracting serious interest from breed enthusiasts at home and abroad.

The total of 55 bulls and 70 females on offer is going to mean a packed ringside at the sales and there is another unique feature: 12 black bulls on sale, a record entry number.

A spokesman for the Highland Cattle Society said: 'This is by far the largest consignment of black Highland bulls at the Oban event for well over a century; gone are the days when it was nigh on impossible to find a black Highland bull in any fold.'

There will be a selection from 10 leading folds which will include two from HM Queen's Balmoral fold along with entries from Ardbhan, Craigluscar, Cailaich, Hope, Allanfearn and Culloden folds.

Many of the bulls on offer were shown throughout the summer 2018 season and will be in the show ring again on Sunday, February 10, prior to the Monday sale.

It is an impressive line up; the breed champion from the Great Yorkshire Show, as well as the overall reserve champion and reserve male champion from the Royal Highland Show. Champions from the Black Isle and Biggar shows are also competing for the top awards in the Oban show ring.

These will be joined by others from the more remote corners of the country which as yet have never graced a show ring; they have every chance of coming out on top at Oban, as has been the case in the past.

There is also an excellent selection in all the female sections; remember that October's show and sale saw the record price for a Highland heifer calf equalled when the dun-coloured nine-month-old Sonasag the Second of Cladich sold for 4,000 guineas – matching the previous record set at the first sale in the then-new Oban Livestock Centre on October 1994 when the Auchnacraig fold sold Fiach of Auchnacraig to Mrs DO Wain for 4,000 guineas.

The spring sale features in-calf heifers from Mottistone, Craigowmill, Glengarnock folds and Ardbhan, North Uist.

The bulling heifer classes have some of the oldest folds in the breed including Woodneuk, Pollok and Borland, Hynford and Seam.

The two-year-old classes feature folds from a wide area, Kelby from south of the border; Ceannacroic, from Islay and also Gray Brae, Corntown, Ashmore, and Gartocharn. The Dempster family's Teaghlach fold will be selling for the first time on their own account.

The yearling classes will comprise entries from Craigluscar, Shenavallie, Mosscairn, Glengorm, Kynedor and Edgertson fold from south of the border.

A feature at the spring sale will be a draft consignment of

in-calf heifers from Iain and Sheena Graham's well-known Killochries fold, going through the ring at the end of the sale in the un-haltered section. They will be in calf to Uilleam of Dumyat and Challenger of Mottistone. This is going to give the pedigree breeders an opportunity for some new genetics and should also attract breeders who focus on the production of highly-popular cross-Highland heifers.

## Sunday's show

The show takes place on Sunday February 10, beginning at 10am.

This year the judge is Haydn Alun Garton with Jimmy Laing as chief steward. The stewards will be: John Singer, Jim Ogston, Robert Tedbury and Roy Abel-Wright.

Trophies from the show will be presented at the society's dinner and ceilidh in the Royal Hotel, Oban on Sunday night.

The sale will begin at 10am on Monday February 11.

## A great get-together

The Highland Cattle Society's sales and shows are a chance for the owners of all the folds to come together and socialise



## 128th Annual Spring Show & Sale

[www.highlandcattlesociety.com](http://www.highlandcattlesociety.com)



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Renault Ceres 335 X 4WD, 2002, c/w Mailleux MX75 loader, 95HP approx .....	£15,795
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John Deere 6100 4WD, 1996, c/w Mailleux MX 80 loader, 75HP .....	£14,795
Case CX80 4WD 1998, c/w Quicke 2300 loader and 4ft fork .....	£14,495
Case 4230 4WD, 1996, 1 owner from new, V5 document, 85HP, 2 spools .....	£11,495
Deutz Fahr Agro Prima 4.55, 1994, 82HP, reg: L220 PSP, Star Cab .....	£11,995
Zetor 6340 4WD, 2002, c/w Loader /bucket / much fork.....	£10,495
Case 895 4WD 1993, K831 MSA, c/w Quicke 330 loader with 4ft fork.....	£9,595
Massey Ferguson 390 2WD, 80HP, 1990, 80HP approx., drawbar .....	£9,495
Kiotei CK22 Compact 4WD, c/w Kiotei KL120 Loader with 4ft Bucket.....	£8,495
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# are coming

## which has the largest number of entries in years

alongside the important business of running the society.

Saturday's programme includes a meeting of the society's council, the AGM, a drinks reception and a forum.

This includes experienced breeders talking to members about their farm systems, breeding programmes, feeding plans and route to market; question time follows and then there is an open forum which is a great opportunity for breeders old and new to share ideas.

Bull measurement will take place at 2pm at the market.

The prize giving after Sunday's show will take place during a dinner and ceilidh at the Royal Hotel in Oban; the Royal has been the Highlanders' social headquarters for the sales and shows since its earliest days.

## Young handlers

Monday's show also gives young handlers a chance to shine.

The prize for best young handler aged 13 - 18 years is the Woodneuk Cup presented by William and Margaret Thomson, Woodneuk Fold, Barrhead.

The young handlers aged 12 or under compete for the Thistle Fold Trophy presented by Annie Perkins of the Thistle Fold.



## Market reports

### Islay Auction Mart, Tuesday January 29:

Three lorry loads of stock left the island, consisting of 605 hogs, 123 ewes, wedders and cast rams and 48 cull cows. The following are the principal prices obtained:

Cull cows:  
Aberdeen Angus X: Uiskentuie £920  
Highland: Kinnabus £305.  
Limousin: Lossit £900; Neriby £895 & £855; Uiskentuie £845; Dunlossit, Keills £840.

Bulls: Claggan & Smalladh - Limousin £930

Cull cows and bulls per kilo:

Aberdeen Angus X: Uiskentuie 114p.  
Limousin: Dunlossit, Keills 142p; Neriby 132p; Dunlossit, Keills 132p; Claggan 122p; Uiskentuie 122p, 121p & 115p;  
Lossit 110p; Neriby 109p; Uiskentuie 106p; Dunlossit, Keills 104p.

Simmental cross: Uiskentuie 110p; Dunlossit, Keills 102p.

Bulls: Claggan & Smalladh 114p.

Under 30 months stores: Lossit £930 (200p).

SHEEP

Hoggs per head:

Suffolk: Foreland Estate £76 & £74; Lossit £73; Duich £72; Coille £72.

Texel: Blackrock £76.50; Carrabus £76.50; Blackrock £71.50; Carrabus £71.

Cheviot cross: Duich £60.

Cross: Carrabus £70.50; Foreland Estate £61; Coille £60.50.

Mule: Duich £64.

Blackface: Lorgba £75; Lossit £63; Duich £55.50; Lorgba £55.

Jacobs: Ardlussa £60;

Cast rams: Ardbeg £99; Blackrock £75; Ardbeg £56.

Wedders: Esknish £63.

Cast Ewes:

Blueface: Balachlaven £39.

Texel: Blackrock £83; Lossit £60; Ardbeg £56.

Mule: Balachlaven £46.50.

Blackface: Lorgba £49; Lossit £39; Balachlaven £36; Islay Estates £36;

Lorgbaw Croft (Wiggins) £35.

Riggs: Carrabus £70; Balinabby £65; Foreland Estate £54.

Hogg prices per kilo:

Suffolk cross: Foreland Estate 213p; Coille 206p; Duich 200p; Lossit 200p;

Foreland Estate 197p; Octofad 193p; Islay Estate 191p.

Texel: Blackrock 247p; Carrabus 215p; Blackrock 207p; Ardbeg 198p; Carrabus 192p.

Cheviot cross: Duich 194p & 191p

Cross: Balinabby 209p; Foreland Estate 207p; Duich 192p.

Blackface: Lorgba 200p; Duich 191p;

Lossit 185p; Islay Estate 185p.

Jacob: Ardlussa 182p.

### United Auctions Stirling, January 31:

A total of 5,544 prime sheep were sold comprising of 4,110 prime lambs selling to an average of 190.97ppk and 1,434 ewes and rams.

Lambs (4,110) - Luckenburn (Tex) £117.00; West Park (BTex) £105.00;

Shannochoer (Suf) £96.00; Coulshill (Chev) £93.00; Ballymyre (Char) £90.00;

Meikle Gourdas (Mule) £84.50; Cadogan Est (BF) £83.00.

Lmabs (4,110) - West Park (BTex) 259.00ppk; Luckenburn (Tex) 242.00ppk;

Redheugh (Suff) 205.00ppk; Croftgary (Chev) 202.00ppk;

Croftintygan (BF) 194.00ppk; Darnhall (Mule) 187.00ppk; Ballymyre(Char) 184.00ppk.

Ewes (1,434) - Woodhead of Aberdalgie (BTex) £130.00; Glenrath (Tex) £120.00;

Redheugh (Suf) £91.00; Toxside (Chev) £84.00; Horseley (Cross) £79.00;

Middleton of Glasscune (BFL) £76.00; Ballingall (Mule) £72.00; Quixwood (BF) £56.50.

Rams - West Park (Tex) £118.00; Greenwall (Suf) £102.00; Redheugh (Cross) £90.00; Stuck Farm (BFL) £65.00;

Glenfernate (BF) £55.00.

**Caledonian Marts Ltd, January 31:**

A total of 157 cattle sold comprising of 86 prime bullocks, heifers and young bulls, and 71 OTM cattle.

prime heifers peaked at 258p for a Limousin from W Dandie & Sons, Learielaw, Broxburn purchased by G Kirk & Son, Butcher, Denny and to £1,554 for a Limousin from J & J Wyllie, Knockhouse, Crossford purchased by H A Black & Sons, Butcher, Stirling.

Prime bullocks sold to 240p for a British Blue and a Limousin, both from Learielaw purchased by T Johnston, Butcher, Falkirk and to £1,570 for a Limousin from W M Pettigrew, Faskine, Airdrie.

Young bulls sold to 188p for an 18-month-old Limousin from W Dick & Sons, Mains of Throsk, Throsk and to £1,501 from the same home.

Other leading prices:

Bullocks per head:

£1,541 & £1,512 Learielaw

£1,488 & £1,487 Bankhead

£1,472 Brockwoodlees

£1,463 Greencraig

Heifers per head:

£1,545, £1,513 & £1,499 Brockwoodlees

£1,484 Newton of Logierait

£1,475 Angle Park

Heifers per kg:

255p Learielaw

245p Borlick & Learielaw

242p & 240p Brockwoodlees

Bullocks per kg:

232p Knockhouse & Brockwoodlees

230p Brockwoodlees

228p Dullomuir

225p Angle Park.

Also forward were 71 OTM cattle. A mixed show forward with 60 per cent of the OTMs being dairy cattle. Fleshed OTMs averaged 132p selling to 192p for a Limousin from J & J Wyllie, Knockhouse and to £1,360 for a Limousin from W I & A W Callion, Bolfornought. The overall average levelled out at 121p for beef OTMs. Dairy OTMs averaged 90p selling to 128p on multiple occasions from W M Andrews & Sons, Crossflat, Kilbarchan and to £930 from the same home.

Male OTMs sold to 158p for a Limousin from I & W Wilson, Wood of Auldbar, Aberlemno and to £1,720 for the same beast.

Other leading prices:

Beef OTMs per kg:

178p Knockhouse

147p Flemington

146p Bolfornought

144p Wood of Auldbar

Beef OTMs per Head

£1360 Bolfornought

£1290 Flemington

£1100 Flemington

Dairy OTMs per kg

125p, 118p & 112p Crossflat

110p & 105p North Cassingray

104p Kirkton of Beath

Dairy cows per head:

£910 Crossflat

£900 Kirkton of Beath & Crossflat

**Dingwall & Highland Marts, January 30:**

A total of 728 sheep of all classes were sold.

Lambs (536) averaged £63.63 and sold to £83.50 for a pen of Cheviots from Davoch, Rogart.

Ewes (184) averaged £45.01 and sold to £69 for Cheviots from Drumore, Evanton.

Rams (8) averaged £66.19 and sold to £110 for a Blue Faced Leicester from 134 West Langwell, Rogart.

Store lambs once again met a firm enquiry with ewes following the previous day's trade.

Other leading prices per head:

Lambs: SuffX - Davoch, £83;

Chev - Teanluick Croft, Muir of Ord, £82;

BF - Bogburn, Duncanston, £79.50;

DST - Bogburn, £79.50;

Tex - 15 Glenconon, Uig, £78;

TexX - 15 Glenconon, £78;

Suff - Bogburn, £77.

Ewes: TexX - Garguston Shore, Muir of Ord, £58;

Chev - Kirksheaf, Tain, £57.

Rams:

TexX - 15 Glenconon, £83.50;

Chev - Allamore, Drumadrochit, £50.



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Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar

**Chair of the Board of Management**  
**Cathraiche a' Bhùird Stiùiridh**

West Highland College UHI is seeking a new Chair for its Board of Management.

West Highland College UHI is a growing, dynamic and successful provider of higher and further education in the West Highlands, supported by a Board that collectively helps guide the strategic direction of the College and fosters an environment which maximises the potential of learners.

As Chair of the Board, you will be well-connected and bring your expertise and skills used in business or in the community to play a key role in ensuring that the governing body works effectively. You will have particular responsibility for providing strategic leadership to the Board and for ensuring it successfully discharges its overall responsibility for the activities of the College. You will also play a leading role in the College's relationship with the University of the Highlands and Islands and other key stakeholders.

The commitment is an average of 2-3 days a month. The post is not remunerated but out of pocket expenses will be paid. There is a small honorarium of £200 per annum.

**Closing date: 9am Monday 25 February 2019**

For further information please contact the secretary to the Board:  
Email: [claire.wylie.whc@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:claire.wylie.whc@uhi.ac.uk) Tel: 01397 874525 (Monday to Thursday)  
or see the College's vacancies page at [www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/vacancies](http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/vacancies)

*In line with our Equality and Diversity policy, West Highland College UHI is committed to ensuring that all candidates are treated on the basis of their merits and abilities, and that unfair and unlawful discrimination is eliminated. We positively welcome applications from all sections of the community.*

West Highland College UHI is a company limited by guarantee (SC153921) with charitable status (SC024193)  
Registered Office: West Highland College UHI, Carmichael Way, Fort William. PH33 6FF



**Freshwater Technician**  
**Knock Hatchery, Isle of Mull**

Scottish Sea Farms are an internationally recognised farmer of superior quality Scottish Salmon. We pride ourselves in providing industry leading and highly personal development paths which build into fulfilling professional careers. If you are committed to developing our industry and are driven to put your strengths to work, we would very much like to hear from you.

**We are currently recruiting** for a Technician with a specific interest in fish health to join our dedicated team at our Freshwater Operation at Knock Hatchery on the Isle of Mull.

**The ideal candidate** should have a background in Atlantic salmon and can demonstrate competence across a wide range skills including: fish health monitoring, stock appetite assessment, grading, vaccinating, egg incubation and feeding systems, whilst being proactive in health and safety.

**You can expect** a 37.5 hour week, Monday to Friday with 1:4 weekend working and alarm duty rota system.

**In return**, we will offer an attractive salary dependant on experience, additional payment on completion of specific training, discretionary company bonus, pension scheme, life cover, occupational health support, subsidised gym membership and cycle to work scheme. Housing and relocation support will also be available if required.

**A current driving licence is essential.** We are an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons; however you must be able to provide documentation of your right to work in the UK.

For an informal chat please contact our Freshwater Site Manager Ian Fraser on 07818 002 807.

**To apply, please visit the careers page on our website:**  
<https://www.scottishseafarms.com/our-people/careers>

Closing date: **Friday 22nd February 2019**






**Career opportunities** 

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**Duties include:**

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**Please apply by email with full CV, contact details & present salary to:**  
[fiona@wyvexmedia.co.uk](mailto:fiona@wyvexmedia.co.uk)

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**Lochgilthead** **Ref: ARB04456**

Closing date: 22 February 2019.

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**FULL TIME STALKER / GHILLIE AND PART TIME HOUSEKEEPING ASSISTANT, COUPLE REQUIRED**

Benmore Estate are looking to recruit a full time stalker/ghillie and a part time housekeeping assistant to join our estate team on the Island of Mull. Applicants must be keen and experienced and willing to work to the highest standards as part of a small team.

In the first instance please email CV and accompanying letter to: [julian@benmoreestate.co.uk](mailto:julian@benmoreestate.co.uk)

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**Accounts Administrator**

We wish to recruit a bright and articulate individual to fulfill this multi-disciplinary vacancy in our busy office in Oban. The main role is to manage our Wiltshire Farm Foods admin. using bespoke Dynamics software. Training will be given for this. Knowledge of Microsoft Office would be desirable. Attention to detail, literacy, numeracy and patience are fundamental characteristics required.

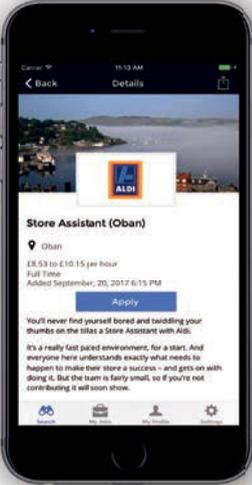
Working hours are Monday to Friday 9am till 2pm approx. although we can flexible for the ideal candidate.

**Please apply with CV and covering letter to Eric Walton, Waltons of Oban, 13 Lochavullin Road, Oban, PA34 4PL. Or email to [eric@waltonsofoban.co.uk](mailto:eric@waltonsofoban.co.uk)**

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Independent Nurse Prescribing qualification preferable but not essential.  
Candidate will be required to be flexible and adaptable, able to work well with our practice team as well as with the patients. You must be well organised, confident and able to work on your own initiative.  
Driving licence is essential.  
Salary will be dependent on experience.  
For more information or to apply, please contact:  
Katie Ferguson, Practice Manager  
Tel: 01586 552105. k.ferguson@nhs.net  
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# PUBLIC NOTICES

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL (U5533 ROCKY BRAE STEPS, FORT WILLIAM) (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2019

Notice is hereby given that on the 29 January 2019 The Highland Council made an Order in terms of Section 14(1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended entitled as above. The Order has been requested by 3B Contractors to carry out essential work in relation to the demolition of the old Cinema and construction of new on the same site.

Pedestrians will be prohibited from using the steps specified in the Schedule hereto from 8am Monday 11th February 2019 until 6pm Wednesday 1st May 2019. Pedestrians will be diverted from Fassifern Road via Bank Street or alternatively to the steps adjacent to The Three Wise Monkeys, which exits at Monzie Square onto the High Street.

A copy of the Order can be inspected at the Service Point, Charles Kennedy Building, Achintore Road, Fort William, on weekdays during normal office hours.

29/01/2018: Paul Nevin Legal Manager, Highland Council HQ, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness

### SCHEDULE

Footpath Affected  
U5533FASSIFERN ROAD – VIEWFORTH CAR PARK 0.03 miles  
(ROCKY BRAE STEPS) 10328, 73862 NN1073  
10267, 73877

Commencing at a point adjacent to the west gable of a property called 'Sonas' extending in a westerly direction for 41 metres or thereby.

**Oban Times** **Oban Times**  
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Landlord Registration Number: 00264/130/08140 EPC: G16

For further details, please contact Sophie at The Estates Office on **01631 705 480** or [Sophie@theestatesofficeargyll.com](mailto:Sophie@theestatesofficeargyll.com)

## TO LET Tighnabruaich

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## Forest Enterprise Scotland Managing the National Forest Estate

### SITE FOR LEASE AT ACHNABREAC, LOCHGILPHEAD FOREST ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND WEST REGION

**INVITATION** to notify an interest in leasing an area of land approximately 2.8ha in size at Achtnabreac by Lochgilphead. The site does not benefit from planning permission but may be suitable for a range of uses subject to all necessary consents.

To register an interest please email – [raymond.mundie@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:raymond.mundie@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) with the subject title "Notification of interest for lease at Achtnabreac"

Please note that the closing date to register an interest shall be 14th February, 2019.

## Dailuaine Ford, by Lochgilphead



This generously proportioned 4/5 bedroom detached house, sits on a large plot with county and woodland views. Located less than 0.5 miles to the popular Loch Awe for fantastic fishing, and set within beautiful countryside with lots of woodland walks. The spacious accommodation comprises of 4 double bedrooms (1 en-suite), Lounge, Kitchen, Orangery, Office, Family Bathroom and upstairs sitting Room/ 5th bedroom. The Property further benefits from downstairs underfloor heating, a detached garage, and large wrap around garden.

**4/5-bedroom, detached house**  
**Offers Over:**  
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  - Garage
  - Large Garden
- EPC: E48

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[www.argyll4sale.net](http://www.argyll4sale.net)

10 Argyll Street, Lochgilphead,  
Argyll, PA31 8LZ

**CROFTING  
COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN NA  
CROITEARACHD  
DECROFTING  
APPLICATION**

I M Larg  
1 Caoles, Tiree  
0.322 ha – Proposed new  
development  
94954

Written comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft and any expressions of demand for the croft (which may be made public), may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 08/03/2019. Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, info@crofting.gov.scot

The Crofting Commission takes the protection of your privacy seriously. To safeguard your personal data and make sure that it is accurate, we only collect and/or store the data necessary to carry out our functions as a regulatory body. You can find a copy of our Privacy Notice at [www.crofting.gov.scot](http://www.crofting.gov.scot)/open-ness-and-customer-care.

**DECROFTING  
DIRECTIONS ISSUED**

D R Cameron  
T J Cameron  
161 Kentra, Ardnamurchan & Sunart  
92202  
0.088 ha  
Reason – Existing house site  
Conditions – With fencing conditions.

J A MacDonald  
2 Portnaluchaig, Arisaig & Moidart  
93630  
0.156 ha  
Reason – Proposed new development  
Condition – With fencing conditions.

A M Barrie  
79 Lochyside, Kilmallie  
93658  
0.080 ha  
Reason – Existing house site  
No conditions

Full details at [www.crofting.gov.scot](http://www.crofting.gov.scot)

**Oban Times  
PUBLIC NOTICES**

[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

The Highland Council  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997  
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>; or electronically at your nearest Council Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link [https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a\\_to\\_z](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z)

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
19/00349/FUL	Land 470M SE Of Allt A'Choire Cottage, Morvern	Installation of 15m high telecoms mast and ancillary equipment within fenced compound
19/00295/FUL	Land 295M SE Of 1 Low Bridge Glen Gloy, Spean Bridge	Erection of 20m high telecom lattice tower and ancillary equipment within fenced compound
19/00280/FUL	Land 59M N Of Benview Lochyside, Fort William	Change of use from holiday unit to house and change of use from croft land to garden ground
19/00305/FUL	Land 60M NW Of Achnasol House Achnabobane, Spean Bridge	Erection of house (amended design to approval Ref: 17/05834/FUL)
19/00262/FUL	House Plot NE Of Avilon Torlundy, Fort William	Erection of 5 no. dwellings

**Time period for comments is 14 days**  
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX  
Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

**Proposed Division of a Croft by Owner-occupier Crofter**

Trevor Robert Potts is applying to divide the owner-occupied croft at 52 Ormsaigbeg, Ardnamurchan & Sunart into two new crofts.

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to: Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, [info@crofting.gov.scot](mailto:info@crofting.gov.scot) within 28 days from the date of this advert.

**PROPOSED ASSIGNATION OF A CROFT**

Susan Joan MacDonald is applying to assign the tenancy of the croft at 7a Bohuntin, Kilmonivaig to Eileen Ann MacDonald of Alderwood, Upper Inverroy, PH31 4AQ

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to: Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW, [info@crofting.gov.uk](mailto:info@crofting.gov.uk) by March 7, 2019.

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Oban Times  
PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Oban Times  
PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Argyll and Bute Council  
PLANNING**

These applications listed below may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 -13.30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead PA31 8RD, your Local Customer Service Point and by logging on to the Council's website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk).

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
19/00057/PP	Erection of 2 No. dwellinghouses and formation of access.	Land Adjacent To Ben Hiant View Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute
19/00119/PP	Erection of extension to dwellinghouse to form self catering unit	Achnacraig Ulva Ferry Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA73 6LY
19/00117/PPP	Site for the erection of 3 No. dwellinghouses	Land West Of Cedar Lodge Connel Oban Argyll And Bute
18/02763/PP	Erection of 10 holiday cottages and shed, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access	Land North West Of Knock House Gruline Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute
19/00072/PP	Renewal of planning permission reference 15/03511/PP (Erection of dwellinghouse and holiday let chalet)	Plot 1 Deerview Tainuitt Argyll And Bute
18/02756/PP	Erection of security fence including two sliding gates	Hydro Seafood GSP Ltd Benderloch Argyll And Bute
18/02719/PP	Installation of boreholes, trenching, pipework and external heat pump enclosures as part of the Iona Heat Network	Land At St Columba Hotel Isle Of Iona Argyll And Bute
18/02774/PP	Change of use from dwellinghouse and shop to single dwellinghouse (Class 9)	Claver House Glengedale Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA42 7AS

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Councils website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
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**Scottish Government  
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**TRANSPORT SCOTLAND**

**ROADS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984  
ACQUISITION OF LAND (AUTHORISATION PROCEDURE) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1947  
THE A830 TRUNK ROAD (SHLATACH RAIL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 201[ ]**

Notice is hereby given that the Scottish Ministers, in exercise of the powers conferred by the above mentioned Acts, on the 23 January 2019 prepared the above mentioned Compulsory Purchase Order which affects the land described in the Schedule hereto for the purpose of improving the A830 Fort William to Mallaig Trunk Road, lying between Glenfinnan and Ranochan in the vicinity of Glenfinnan, Inverness by replacing the Shlatach Rail Bridge.

The Order is about to be made and comes into operation only if made. If the Order is made, a conveyance registered in implement of the Order may vary or extinguish rights to enforce real burdens and servitudes affecting the land.

Copies of the draft Order and of the map referred to therein have been deposited at the following offices and may be seen there without payment of fee during normal business hours from 31 January until 14 March 2019:- Transport Scotland, 5th Floor Reception, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF; The Highland Council, Charles Kennedy Building, Achintore Road, Fort William, PH33 6TZ and Arisaig Post Office, The Spar, The Harbour, Arisaig, PH39 4NH.

ANY PERSON may object to the making of the Order, by notice in writing, to The Director of Roads, c/o Karl McAreavey, Transport Scotland, Network Administration, 4th Floor, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF quoting reference NW/A830/SHLATACH RAIL/CPO/KM and stating the grounds of objection. Any objections must be received on or before 14 March 2019.

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

**TRANSPORT SCOTLAND  
COMHAIL ALBA**

The Highland Council  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

**PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR MALLAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

The Highland Council has published a consultative paper on a proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Mallaig Primary School.

The paper has been issued under the terms of the Council's procedure under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

The consultation period began on 4 February 2019 and will finish on 22 March 2019. During this period members of the public are invited to comment on the consultative proposal. Arrangements have been made for representatives of the Highland Council to meet with parents, children and other members of the public to discuss the proposal at a public meeting to be held on:

**20 February 2019, at 6.30pm at Mallaig Primary School**

All comments made in writing or at the public meeting will be presented in due course to the Highland Council's Care, Learning and Housing Committee for consideration. As this is a public consultation, written submissions, and a note of the meeting, will be made available to the public and any comments submitted may be published on the Council's website – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk).

Hard copies of the report have been made available at: Mallaig Primary School; Lady Lovat Primary School; Arisaig Primary School; Eigg Primary School, Inverie Primary School, Muck Primary School; Rum Primary School; and the Mallaig Public Library.

Alternatively the proposals can be viewed online at: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations>

**MOLADH GUS SGÌRE-SGOILE FOGHLAIM TRON GHÀIDHLIG A STÈIDHEACHADH AIRSON BUN-SGOIL MHALAIG  
SANAS AIRSON COINNEIMH PUBLAICH**

Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd air pàipear co-chomhairleachaidh fhoillseachadh mu mholadh gus sgìre-sgoile Foghlaim tron Ghàidhlig a stèidheachadh airson Bun-Sgoil Mhalaig.

Chaidh am pàipear fhoillseachadh fo theirmean modh na Comhairle fo Achd nan Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010, mar a chaidh atharrachadh.

Tha an ùine cho-chomhairleachaidh a' tòiseachadh air 4 Gearran 2019 agus a' crìochnachadh air 22 Màrt 2019. Rè na h-ùine seo, tha cuireadh aig buill a' phobail gus beachdachadh air moladh na co-chomhairle.

Bidh riochdairean bho Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' coinneachadh ri pàrantan, clann agus buill eile den phobal gus bruidhinn mun mholadh aig coinneamh phoblach a chumar air:

**20 Gearran 2019, aig 6.30f aig Bun-Sgoil Mhalaig**

Thèid beachdan sam bith a gheibhear ann an sgrìobhadh no aig a' choinneimh phoblach a chur, rè ùine, fa chomhair Comataidh Cùraim, Ionnsachaidh agus Taigheadais Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd airson beachdachadh orra. Seach gur e co-chomhairle phoblach a tha seo, bidh tagraidhean sgrìobhte, agus nòta den choinneimh, rim faotainn dhan phobal agus math dh'fhaodte gum fòillsichear beachdan sam bith a gheibhear air làrach-lìn na Comhairle – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk).

Gheibhear lethbhreacan cruaidh den aithisg aig: Bun-Sgoil Mhalaig; Bun-Sgoil na Baintighearna MhicShimidh; Bun-Sgoil Àrasaig; Bun-Sgoil Eige; Bun-Sgoil Inbhir Aoidhe; Bun-Sgoil Eilean nam Muc; Bun-Sgoil Rùm, agus Leabharlann Poblach Mhalaig.

No faodar na molaidhean fhàicinn air-loidhne aig: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations>

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**BEATLES FOR SALE VINYL LP** pmc 1240, collectors item, mono LP, very good condition, Campbeltown, £10 Tel 01586 554537.

**BEATLES LOVE SONGS LP** Good condition vinyl lp, 1977 collectors item, one LP, sides 3 and 4 pcs 7212. Campbeltown, £10 Tel 01586 554537.

**MCCARTNEY 2 VINYL LP** vinyl LP, paul mccartney, ptc 258, recorded at his home studio, good condition, from collection, Campbeltown, £10 Tel 01586 554537.

**THE BEATLES 1962-1966** emi apple label, collectors items, well looked after, part of collection of similar album has 2 LP's. Campbeltown, £10 Tel 01586 554537.

**THE BEATLES 1967-1970** collectors item, 2 LP's, Beatles 1967 to 1970, well looked after, good condition, Campbeltown, £10 Tel 01586 554537.

**WINGS GREATEST VINYL LP** Collectors item, vinyl LP, 1978, ptc 256, good condition, part of collection, Campbeltown, £10 Tel 01586 554537.

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**PERSONAL**

**SANDRA GRIEVE**

Wishes to thank all those kind people who helped her when she fell at Station Square on Thursday, January 24, 2019. Their assistance was greatly appreciated. I am now home from hospital and on the mend.

## DEATHS

**FERGUSON** - Peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on February 3, 2019, Donald John, aged 75 years, of 5 Cruachan Cottages, Taynuilt. Beloved husband of the late Georgina, loving father of David, Lindsey and Derek, much loved and devoted grandpa of Heather, Bethany, Holly, Sara, Joseph, Siobhan, Georgia and Jamie and adored brother of Christy and Mary and a truly loving father-in-law, brother-in-law and uncle to all the family. Funeral service will be held on Friday, February 8, 2019 at 1pm at Muckairn Parish Church, Taynuilt, thereafter to Muckairn Cemetery. Family flowers only. A retiring collection will be taken in aid of Cancer Research UK.

**MACKENZIE** - Jean, sadly passed away January 31, 2019, aged 86, dearly beloved wife of Sammy, loving and cherished mother of Ann, Margaret, William, Iain and Sam, much loved granny, great granny and dearly loved sister. Sadly missed. Funeral service will be held at St. Andrews Church, Fort William on Monday February 11 at 1 pm. Family flowers only please. Donations, if wished, can be given to Alzheimer Scotland. All family and friends are invited to attend.

**MACKINNON** - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on February 1, 2019, aged 62 years, Neil MacKinnon, son of the late Donald and Mary MacKinnon and brother to Jean, Derick and the late Edith and Donnie.

**MACNEILL** - Peacefully at home in Bowmore, on January 31, 2019, with his family, Neville Ridgway, aged 68. Devoted husband of Fay, proud dad of Russell and adoring papa of Mia and Rory. A loving brother, cousin, uncle, father-in-law and friend.

**McKILLOP** - Mary McKillop, aged 85 years, formerly Fuinary, Dunollie Road, Oban, wife of the late Peter McKillop passed away peacefully in Stornoway on January 25, 2019.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**FERGUSON** - Duncan, Sarah and Aonghus would like to record their heartfelt thanks to the extended family, friends, and the local community for so much support, for their attendance at the funeral and for the letters, cards and messages of sympathy received following the sad loss of Catriona. Our special thanks go to the Community Nursing Team and all at the Kyle Medical Practice, Barbara MacDonald, Macmillan Nurse, and all at the chemotherapy unit at the MacKinnon Memorial Hospital (Broadford), the Raigmore Hospital Oncology Department and Kyle Pharmacy for exceptional care and attention. Sincere thanks also to the Rev Dr. Rory MacLeod for leading the uplifting funeral service, to Rev Roddie Rankin for taking part in the service, to the office-bearers at Kyle Church of Scotland, to Iain MacKinnon (precentor),

Lorraine Beaton (organist), Niall Stewart (piper) and to Loch Duich Plants. Thanks to the team from Beth's Coffee Shop for the splendid purvey in Dornie Hall. Our gratitude to Paddy Munro and staff (D.N. Munro/William T. Fraser & Son, Funeral Directors) for sensitive and efficient service. All greatly appreciated by the family. Finally thanks to all who generously donated to the collection which realised the sum of £2,600 to be divided between local Macmillan Cancer Care and Kyle Community Nurses. Ar taing 's beannachdan thugaibh air fad/many thanks to you all.

**MACKENZIE** - Ian, Alasdair, Mary and family would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy after the loss of Duncan. Also to all who attended the funeral service at Oban Free Church with special thanks to Rev James Beaton for a very comforting service, to Ian MacInnes at D & A Munn for the efficient funeral arrangements and to the Manor House Hotel for their hospitality. Grateful thanks to the Oban based carers for their dedicated visits and thanks to all who contributed to the retiring collection in aid of Parkinson's UK.

**MACINTYRE** - The family of the late Rose MacIntyre would like to thank all family and friends for the kindness and support shown since her sad passing. Special thanks to Dr Hall and Dr Hemm for their kindness, care and support over the last few months. Thanks to the district nurses who made it possible for Rose to spend her final days at home as were her wishes. A special thanks to Scott, Linnie and all at John McLellan, Funeral Directors for making such a sad time that little bit easier with their care. Thanks to Meg and staff at the Railway Club for the lovely buffet and to all at McDonald Bros for the beautiful flowers. Finally thanks to all who attended the funeral and gave so generously the amount of £258.48 which was donated between district nurses and Macmillan nurses.

## MEMORIALS

**BLACK** - In loving memory of Isobel Amelia, who died on February 8, 2018, a much loved sister, sister-in-law and aunt.  
- Inserted by Eric, Mary, nieces and nephew.

**MACCORMICK** - In loving memory of John who passed away February 11, 2014. Quietly loved and remembered always.  
- Iona and family, Heathervale, Fionnphort, Mull.

**MACINNES** - In loving memory of a dear father and grandfather, Roddy, who died February 6, 2013. Just a prayer from the family who loved you Just a memory fond and true In our hearts you will live forever Because we thought the world of you. Sadly missed.  
- Your loving family, Oban and Riskey.

**MACLEAN** - In loving memory of our dear mum, gran and great gran, Annag MacLean, Kinlochleven, passed away February 10, 2011 also remembering our dad and grampa Calum MacLean, who passed away May 19, 1984. Loved and remembered always.  
- Ian, Elizabeth and family and Roddy, Fiona and family.

**MACLEAN** - Cherished memories of Ian (Cleansy) a much loved son, brother and uncle, who died February 5, 2004. There is a place in our hearts That is yours alone.  
- Mum, Dad, Ann, Sandra and families.

**MACLEAN** - In loving memory of our darling Ian (Cleansy). Loved and remembered every day.  
- Libby, Pat and family.

**MACLEAN** - In loving memory of Mary MacLean, who died February 8, 2005, aged 65 years. Beloved wife of the late Alistair. A much loved mum, gran and mother-in-law.  
Our hearts are filled with memories Which we gather through the years  
All the happy times we shared Are treasured souvenirs.  
- Dugald, Arlene and families.

**MACLEAN** - In memory of Mary Campbell, a dear sister, sister-in-law and auntie, who died February 8, 2005 and Alistair a dear brother-in-law and uncle, who died March 19, 2016. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day Unseen, unheard but very near Still loved, still missed and very dear  
- Margaret, Archie, Fiona and Duncan.

**MACNICOL** - In loving memory of my beloved husband Jackie, who passed away February 9, 2018.  
Deep in my heart you will always stay  
Loved and remembered every day  
Love you always.  
-Your loving wife Florence.

**ROBERTSON** - In loving memory of Robert (Sugar), died February 11, 2015, beloved husband, father and grandfather. We little knew that morning That God was going to call your name  
It broke our hearts to lose you You didn't go alone  
For part of us went with you The day God called you home  
You left us precious memories Your love is still our guide  
And though we cannot see you You are always by our side

Our family chain is broken  
And nothing seems the same  
But as God calls us one by one  
The chain will link again  
- Margaret, Anne and Robert.



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Church of Scotland volunteers at Souper Sunday, the church's ground-breaking HIV Programme to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS.

# Absolutely souper

THE Church of Scotland has raised more than £500,000 to tackle HIV and AIDS by serving hundreds of thousands of bowls of soup.

Volunteers in congregations across the UK and further afield are using their culinary skills to literally change the world for people living with the virus 'one spoonful at a time'.

Souper Sunday, part of the church's ground-breaking HIV Programme, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this month.

It is a special act of worship led by church elders to raise awareness of the many issues around HIV, a virus that weakens the ability to fight everyday infections and disease, followed by a simple lunch of delicious hot soup and bread.

Diners donate what they can to the HIV Programme, which was established by an act of the General Assembly in 2002 and currently supports 17 projects in 13 different countries, including Scotland.

Carol Finlay of the World Mission Council, which runs the project on behalf of the Kirk, said: 'No one should die of AIDS but we know a million people a year still do. The tools to end the epidemic in our lifetime are available but not yet accessible to all.'

'The Church of Scotland HIV Programme supports our partners in Scotland and around the world as they continue to work towards an AIDS-free generation.'

'With much hard work on the part of soup-makers across the land, Souper Sunday has done

so much to support HIV-related partner projects all around the world, from Scotland to the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

'Church members should be rightfully very proud of this achievement through the act of simply serving bowls of soup.'

'We are changing the world – one spoonful at a time.'

Official statistics from 2017 suggest that 101,600 people are living with HIV in the UK and globally, an estimated 36.7 million people have the virus.

Through the HIV Programme, church congregations are provided with thought-provoking and engaging educational materials to help raise awareness among people of all ages about the impact of the virus at home and abroad.

Ms Finlay said: 'Since 2002, we have made great strides in churches in terms of understanding and have raised £501,087,03 so far.'

'Hopefully today, members are much more aware of the nature of the virus and the opportunities for care, support and treatment and opportunities to counter stigma and discrimination.'

Last year, Rev Richard Baxter, who leads Fort William's Duncansburgh MacIntosh and Kilmonivaig churches in the Highlands, took an HIV test to highlight the need to overcome stigma as a barrier to saving lives.

He said the self-testing kit, made available in parts of Africa, including Malawi, could help stop new infections and unnecessary deaths.

## THOUGHT for the week

*We read in Acts 17:28: 'In Him we live and move and have our being...'*

'Belonging' is a very powerful word; it is the deepest human experience. The human heart was made to belong. We are hard-wired for connection, belonging, love. Where we belong largely shapes and gives meaning to our lives; where we belong, largely determines our contentment and happiness and joy in living. Where we belong is ultimately where we can truly be ourselves, belong to ourselves.

What we fear most is the thought of not belonging, of being disconnected. Observe how we hide or reject or suppress what we think does not belong. Shame comes from something that is deeply flawed in us, something in our makeup or personality that is deemed unacceptable, an unredeemable mistake; something that makes us unworthy and permanently excluded. That sense of permanent exclusion is hell and hellish. Life then becomes an excruciating struggle to keep up appearances.

Christians call this belonging 'communion'. We belong to Christ and we belong, whatever our shame – in fact, because of our shame – to one another. The Gospel message is that everything now belongs. In the light of the cross of Christ, our shame, the struggles and contradictions and tensions of our lives have a special place – indeed a sacred place.

Christianity in its traditional emphasis perhaps needs a shock. Jesus is God experiencing what it is like to be a human being. The spiritual journey is not primarily about being good, but rather allowing God to experience being God in you, in your unique way.

'Allow me,' says God to each one of us, 'to experience what it is like to be you in your humanity, in your difficulties, in your weakness, addictions, with your shame and sins – whatever they may be – and to be one with you.'

That's the Gospel message: whatever your shame, indeed, because of your shame, your dignity is now incomparable. Belonging now belongs to those on the margins; the invitation to belong is addressed especially to the bits that we think require to be repressed; in other words it is addressed to all of us: 'You belong, and everything about you belongs. Don't be merely enduring life, but live YOUR life to the full, in peace, in joy and in love.'

'In Him we truly live and move and have our being...'

Rt Rev Mgr James L Canon MacNeil  
St Columba's Cathedral Roman Catholic  
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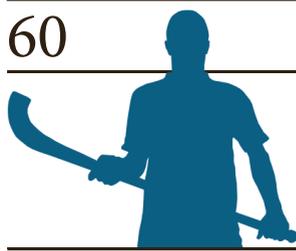
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# SHINTY NEWS

Best for all shinty news, results and fixtures

## New fixture list announced

The sponsor's name may have changed as Marine Harvest rebrand into Mowi (pronounced Murveh), but the excitement remains the same as the Camanachd Association reveals the shinty fixture list for the coming season with less than four weeks to go until competitive action gets under way.

### Mowi Premiership

Stephen Sloss takes his Oban Camanachd squad to the Winterton to play newly-promoted Inveraray on Saturday March 2, the opening day of the shinty season. The sides' only meeting last term came in the Scottish Sea Foods Glasgow Celtic Society Cup when goals from Daniel MacCuish and Daniel MacVicar gave Oban Camanachd a 2-0 win at Mossfield on their way to lifting the trophy.

Looking ahead, Stephen Sloss said: 'We've been looking forward to the fixture list coming out and we're looking to get off to a good start. All games are tough but our first fixture is a reasonable start with Inveraray newly promoted. We'll hopefully capitalise on that, although I'm sure they will be up for it too.'

'Our second fixture is against Lovat. That's always a tight game but, with home advantage, we should be taking points.

'We then have Newtonmore away which should be a good test for both teams. Ultimately I want it to be all about how our team performs though and not about who we are up against.'

Kilmallie are the premiership's other newly promoted side and new boss John Stewart could hardly have been given a more difficult start as his charges begin against reigning champions Newtonmore at the Eilan. Kilmallie will take heart from the fact they took Newtonmore all the way to penalties before eventually losing out in last season's Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup semi-finals, but Stewart recognises how difficult the start is.

He said: 'It's an unbelievably difficult start for us away to Newtonmore, the current league champions, and our next away game, our third match, is against previous league champions Kinlochshiel. It probably couldn't have been any tougher. It'll let us see where we are in terms of the level we need to be at. We are all excited about the challenge though.'

'Numbers have been good at training and I've already confirmed to the players my first team squad of 20 players. If all players are available then five from that squad will have to go with the second team. It's a good problem to have and long may it continue.'

'Our second and fourth games are at home to Inveraray and Lochaber respectively. These are the games

we need to take points from to give us the best chance of staying in the premiership. Then again it's where they will be looking to do the same I'm sure. We have to compete at home and any points we pick up away are a bonus. Should everyone be available, I'm confident we can surprise a few teams this season.'

There are two important points at stake, even at this early stage in the season, as Lochaber host Caberfeidh at Spean Bridge. Managerless Lochaber finished two points ahead of Caberfeidh, just above the relegation zone, at the end of last season. Lochaber were twice winners when the sides met in the league last season, recording three-goal winning margins on both occasions.

Lovat and Kinlochshiel clash at Balgate. Both sides finished on 25 points last season with third-placed Kinlochshiel having the edge on goal difference. Kinlochshiel came out on top in all three of the sides' encounters last season, but all by the odd goal, so another close contest is expected.

Kyles Athletic, runners up last term, welcome Kingussie to Tighnabruach in the knowledge that they came out on top following both encounters between the sides last season.

### Mowi National Division

Oban Celtic and newly-promoted Bute renew rivalries in Oban. The sides met twice in the cups last season and both were close contests. A Robert Walker goal gave Bute a 1-0 win at Mossfield in the Scottish Sea Farms Glasgow Celtic Society Cup but Oban Celtic turned the tables in the Artemis Macaulay Cup, also at Mossfield, when second half goals from Ally McKerracher and Ross MacMillan sealed the win despite Robert Walker's late counter.

Fort William just missed out on the second promotion spot to shinty's top flight at the end of last season and they open their competitive programme against Beaully at Braeview Park. Co-managers Victor Smith and Adam Robertson will have Fort William fired up for this one having lost the same fixture 2-0 last season. However Fort William were comfortable 6-0 winners when the sides met at An Aird in June with new captain Arran MacPhee scoring twice.

Glasgow Mid Argyll and Inverness meet at Yoker. New GMA boss Mark Bain will be keen to get off to a winning start, whilst Inverness want to improve on last season's last place finish in the league.

There is a derby meeting between Glenurquhart and Strathglass at Blairbeg. Stuart MacKintosh and Eddie Tembo are now in charge at



**Oban Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss has been looking forward to the new fixture list being announced.**

Glenurquhart as the side looks to make an immediate return to the premiership. This will be a second meeting on consecutive Saturdays for the sides as they contest the MacDonald Cup at Cannich a week earlier.

Skye Camanachd are without an opening day fixture in this nine team league.

Regional division fixtures will be previewed in next week's Oban Times.

### Bullough Cup draw

The draw for the 2019 Bullough Cup was made at the Camanachd Association offices, Inverness, on Tuesday January 29.

Holders Lochside Rovers, now managed by Brian MacCallum, open their defence of the trophy at home to Kilmory. The winners will have home advantage against Ballachulish or the English Shinty Association in the quarter-finals.

2018 finalists Kyles Athletic seconds were given a trip to Strachurmore to play last year's Marine Harvest South Division 2 champions Strachur, who only lost out in last year's semi-finals. Whoever progresses will travel to play forces side SCOTS Camanachd in the last eight of the competition.

The Oban Celtic second team have been given a tough draw; against the Inveraray seconds at the Winterton with a trip to Yoker to play the Glasgow Mid Argyll second team the reward for the winners.

Glenorchy, who were also semi-finalists last year, and the Aberdour reserves, both received first round byes and they meet in the quarter-finals at Mart Park.

The draw in full:  
Bullough Cup – first round  
Inveraray v Oban Celtic

Lochside Rovers v Kilmory  
English SA v Ballachulish  
Strachur v Kyles Athletic  
Byes  
Glenorchy  
Glasgow Mid Argyll  
SCOTS Camanachd  
Aberdour  
The first round ties will be played on Saturday May 18.  
Bullough Cup – quarter-finals  
Glenorchy v Aberdour  
Lochside Rovers / Kilmory v English Shinty Association / Ballachulish  
SCOTS Camanachd v Strachur / Kyles Athletic  
Glasgow Mid Argyll v Inveraray / Oban Celtic  
The quarter-final ties will be played on Saturday June 15.  
Bullough Cup - semi-finals  
Glasgow Mid Argyll / Inveraray / Oban Celtic v  
Glenorchy / Aberdour  
SCOTS Camanachd / Strachur / Kyles Athletic v Lochside Rovers / Kilmory / English Shinty Association / Ballachulish  
The Bullough Cup Final takes place on Saturday August 3.

### Strathdearn Cup draw

The draw for the Strathdearn Cup was made in Fort William on Thursday January 31.

Camanachd Association development officers Paul MacArthur and Ronald Ross made the draw with Paul picking the home sides and Ronald selecting the away teams.

Holders Newtonmore seconds head west to play the Kinlochshiel seconds. The winners travel to whoever comes out on top between the Lochcarron or Lovat seconds against Lewis Camanachd.

The Fort William second team were beaten finalists last season and should be too strong for the Strathglass colts who play in a league below. The winners travel to the victors from the derby between Strathspey Camanachd and the Kingussie seconds, with Kingussie favourites in that one.

There is also a first round derby at Spean Bridge between the Lochaber and Kilmallie second teams with whoever comes out on top travelling to take on the winners from a third derby between Boleskine and the Inverness reserves.

The Skye Camanachd seconds have home advantage against the Beaully seconds as the sides battle for the right to play either the Glenurquhart reserves or the Caberfeidh reserves.

The draw in full:  
Strathdearn Cup - preliminary round  
Saturday April 27  
Lovat v Lewis Camanachd  
Strathdearn Cup - first round  
Saturday May 25  
Lochcarron v Lovat / Lewis

Camanachd  
Boleskine v Inverness  
Kinlochshiel v Newtonmore  
Strathglass v Fort William  
Glenurquhart v Caberfeidh  
Lochaber v Kilmallie  
Strathspey Camanachd v Kingussie  
Skye Camanachd v Beaully  
Strathdearn Cup - quarter-finals  
Saturday June 29.  
Glenurquhart / Caberfeidh v Skye Camanachd / Beaully  
Lochcarron / Lovat / Lewis  
Camanachd v Kinlochshiel / Newtonmore  
Strathspey Camanachd / Kingussie v Strathglass / Fort William  
Boleskine / Inverness v Lochaber / Kilmallie  
Strathdearn Cup semi-finals  
Saturday August 10.  
Glenurquhart / Caberfeidh / Skye Camanachd / Beaully v Lochcarron / Lovat / Lewis  
Camanachd / Kinlochshiel / Newtonmore Boleskine / Inverness / Lochaber / Kilmallie v Strathspey Camanachd / Kingussie / Strathglass / Fort William.  
The Strathdearn Cup Final takes place on Saturday August 31.

### Glengarry cup bid fails

Glengarry were unsuccessful in their bid to be included in the Strathdearn Cup and Sutherland Cup competitions.

The move would also have allowed Aberdeen University to compete in the competitions as they are also a first team competing in Mowi North Division 1.

The Camanachd Association Board considered the request but did not support it.

### Pre-season friendly results

Winter weather wiped out last week-end's pre-season friendly matches.

Oban Celtic's meeting with Glengarry was postponed on Friday lunchtime as the Mossfield pitch was frozen.

There were similar stories from Castle Leod, where Caberfeidh were to play Lovat; the Jubilee Park, where Ballachulish were to take on the Kilmallie second team for the Iain Aitchison Cup as well as at the Bught Park where Inverness were to host Kinlochshiel.

The games between Boleskine and Aberdeen University at Farr and Strathspey Camanachd at home to the Caberfeidh reserves were also postponed, as was the Ewen Morrison Memorial Cup contest in Portree between Skye A and Skye B.

Tayforth and the Newtonmore second team were to play at Musselburgh with Newtonmore

manager Orsten Gardner taking his side to face his former team. However, the frost put paid to this one too.

## Change of throw-up times for Oban Camanachd

The throw-up times for the Oban Camanachd and Lochside Rovers friendly matches on Saturday February 9 have been brought forward.

Oban Camanachd and the Glasgow Mid Argyll first team will now meet at Mossfield at noon.

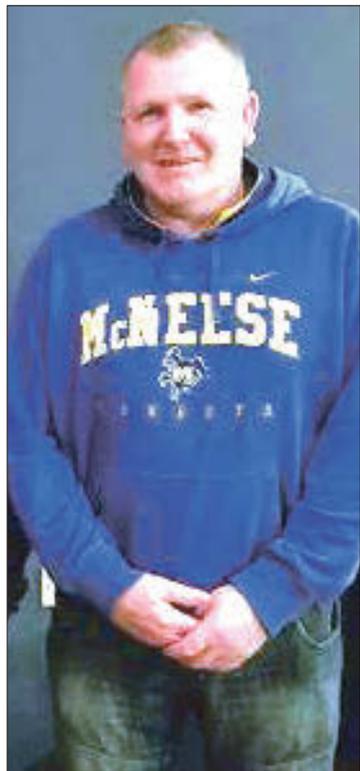
Lochside Rovers and the Glasgow Mid Argyll second team lock horns at Ganavan, also with a noon start.

## Robert Wylie Memorial Cup

The annual Robert Wylie Memorial Cup match takes place this Saturday at Taynuilt Sports Field where the Oban Celtic squad make the short journey to play Taynuilt.

Oban Celtic go into the match as holders having beaten Ballachulish 10-1 at Mossfield in last year's challenge match. This will be a first match in charge for both managers as James McLaren takes his place in the home dug-out with Dougie MacIntyre assuming charge at Oban Celtic.

Throw-up is at 1pm.



New Oban Celtic manager Dougie MacIntyre will take his team to Taynuilt on Saturday for the Robert Wylie Memorial Cup match.

## Kingussie confirm captains

Kingussie have confirmed their captains for the 2019 shinty season.

Scotland U21 player Robert Mabon is Kingussie first team manager John Gibson's choice as skipper.

The Kingussie seconds will be captained by Darren Hanlon having been selected by second team manager Iain Borthwick.

## MacKechnie stays in charge at Glenorchy

Glenorchy have been busy preparing for the new term and a pre-season meeting returned some positive outcomes.

Allan MacKechnie continues as team manager for the side who finished third in South Division 2 last season.

In another boost for the team, Graham Morrice has rejoined the club from Lochside Rovers.

Glenorchy's training sessions started on Wednesday January 30.

The Mart Park side has yet to arrange any pre-season friendlies and their first competitive match is at home to reformed Ardnamurchan in the league on Saturday March 2.

## This weekend's pre-season friendlies

There are a number of pre-season friendlies scheduled for Saturday February 9 as clubs from across the country hope for improved weather conditions.

Oban Camanachd and Lochside Rovers take on their Glasgow Mid Argyll counter-parts. Oban Camanachd's match against the GMA seniors will be at Mossfield, with Lochside meeting the GMA seconds at Ganavan. Both matches throw-up at noon.

Taynuilt welcome Oban Celtic to the Taynuilt Sports Field as the sides contest the Robert Wylie Memorial Cup. Throw up is at 1pm.

Kilmallie are on the road as they head for the Highland Capital to play Inverness at the Bught Park. Throw up in Inverness is also at 1pm.

Lochaber hope to make their first appearance of the season, accepting Strathglass' invitation to contest the Murdo MacKenzie Memorial Cup at Cannich.

Caberfeidh and Newtonmore meet in an all-Mowi Premiership contest at Castle Leod, whilst two more top flight sides, Inveraray and Kinlochshiel, are scheduled to meet at the Winterton.

Fort William make for Blairbeg to play Glenurquhart in an all-Mowi National Division clash. Throw up is at 2pm.

Ballachulish host the Fort William reserves at the Jubilee Park.

Skye Camanachd and Lovat meet at Pairc nan Laoch, Portree, with the George Michie Memorial Cup the prize for the winners. Throw up is at 1pm.

The Beaulie colts and the Kinlochshiel colts meet at Braeview Park whilst Boleskine, who have received a new set of training tops from www.petergow.co.uk, host the Glenurquhart second team at Smith Park. Throw up is at 2pm.

All of the above matches are subject to pitch inspections and a change of venue may take place if appropriate.

# SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1050

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1. If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

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OT

## GOLF

## MacIntyre makes the cut in Saudi International

Continued from page 64

Also in the line up was Masters champion Patrick Reed, as well as Sergio Garcia, Henrik Stenson and man of the moment, Bryson DeChambeau.

MacIntyre has made the cut in five of his six events so far and is aiming to keep up the good work.

'Even though I made the cut, I was struggling in Abu Dhabi,' he admitted. 'I just wasn't on my game and not getting into the recent Dubai Desert Classic event gave me time to practise and change a few things.'

In the first round of the Saudi International, Bob sank a 20-foot putt on the last hole for a birdie to finish with a one-under-par round of 69 which featured three birdies and two bogeys.

Going into the last hole in round two, the Glencruitten golfer wasn't going to make the cut but a superb birdie



**Bob MacIntyre**

four took him to a level par round of 70 and finish with a total of 139 after two rounds which was good enough for him to play the last two days.

Round three saw Bob card a one-over-par 71 with two birdies, two bogeys and a double bogey on the 13th.

However, a superb 68 in the last round saw him card five birdies and three bogies to finish two under par in joint 44th place for a four-round total of 278.

Bob now heads for Australia to take part in the ISPS Handa Vic Open held at the 13th Beach Golf Club in Geelong, Victoria. The tournament starts today, February 7.

## YOUTH AND MINI RUGBY

### Weather is the winner

Last Sunday's busy day of youth and mini rugby hosted by Oban Lorne was called off on Friday afternoon due to the wintry weather conditions that iced over both rugby pitches at Glencruitten.

An early decision was made between the club and Argyll and Bute Council's ground staff to give visiting teams plenty of notice for notifying players and coaches. With Islay's girls' teams travelling it was important they were given sufficient time to cancel ferry and minibus bookings.

Sunday was due to be the launch of 2019's series of Dalriada Festivals which have had a successful first half of the season. Etive Vikings RFC lead both the P4/5 and P6/7 age groups going into the second half of the season with Mid Argyll, Oban Lorne, Kintyre, Lochaber and Isle of Mull all hosting festivals from August to November along with the Vikings.

A full programme of eight festivals are planned between now and May with Islay down to host its first festival for several years at the end of April.

This season U14 boys' and U15 girls' teams have also been included in the Dalriada programme with players still getting valuable game time after progressing from the successful mini rugby set-up.

Sunday's Oban Festival will be rearranged within the next few weeks. The next festival takes place in Lochgilphead on Sunday March 3 hosted by Mid Argyll RFC.

## OBAN SAINTS YOUTHS

### Results and fixtures

This Sunday's results: Under 13s v Milton Rovers; Thistle Weir v Under 14s; St Rochs v Under 15s; Under 16s v Helensburgh. All the games were postponed due to the weather although the Under 14s attempted to travel to play Thistle Weir but had to turn back at Tyndrum.

This Sunday's fixtures: Whitecraigs v Under 13s; Under 14s v OLM FC; Busby v Under 15s; Busby v Under 16s.

# Fly me to Dunoon!

Oban Saints travel to the Cowal Peninsula on Saturday to face Dunoon Amateurs in a rearranged Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division tie following the previous week's weather enforced postponement.

In the reverse fixture back in August braces from Lewis Cameron, James Ford and Matthew Kelly, together with strikes from Craig MacEwan and Matt Rippon, gave Saints an almost perfect start to their league campaign with Jamie Robertson's first half counter to briefly level the scores and deny Graham Douglas a clean sheet being the only black mark.

Since gaining promotion thanks to last season's third place Premier Division One finish behind Barrhead Arky, Dunoon have struggled to adapt to life in the top flight and currently prop up the Premier Division with just one point from their eleven fixtures so far. The opening day 8-1 reverse at Glencruitten was a baptism of fire for the Cowal men setting the tone for a run of seven defeats which was finally end-



**James Ford opens the scoring for Saints in the 8-1 victory at Glencruitten earlier in the season.** Preview and photographs: Derek Black

ed with a share of the points at home to reigning Premier Division One Champions Barrhead Arky.

Sadly for Dunoon making their first impression on the points tally proved not to be the turning point hoped for and remains their only point to date as a further defeats to Inverclyde, North Glasgow Colts and Barrhead Arky have left them cut adrift at the foot of the table.

### Cup Competitions

Any hopes Dunoon may have harboured of an extended cup run to take their minds off their league predicament were dealt a particularly

cruel blow when the Scottish Amateur Cup first round draw saw them paired with Ayrshire Amateur Football Association Premier League high fliers Stewarton United.

The Cowal men made their opponents work hard for their 4-2 win at Dunoon Stadium which set the Ayrshire men off on an impressive run which was finally halted in the sixth round by St Joseph's FP.

It was Ayrshire Premier League opponents again in the West of Scotland Amateur Cup when another very difficult first round draw sent Dunoon to Stevenston to

## FOOTBALL

play Ardeer West Recreation. Dunoon's miserable luck on the road continued with another heavy defeat to leave them to concentrate fully on league survival.

In charge of proceedings for the 2pm kick-off at Dunoon Stadium is Lochgilphead based whistler Jimmy Litster where Saints will definitely be without the suspended Donald Campbell but will hope for more positive news from injury victims Steven MacLeod, Daniel Croarkin, Matt Rippon and Lewis Cameron.

## Home tie for Saints in West of Scotland Cup

Saints have been drawn at home to SAFL Premier Division One side Neilston in the fifth round of the West of Scotland Cup.

Saints and Neilston met back in August at Lochgilphead Joint Campus in the 2018 Argyll and Bute Cup tournament where Saints ran out 3-0 winners thanks to goals from Fraser MacFarlane, Donald Campbell and Kerr Newbigging.

Next Saturday's match at Glencruitten provides both sides with a fantastic opportunity

to progress to the last eight of one of the major cup competitions and looks set to provide another entertaining afternoon of cup football for the Glencruitten faithful.

The tie must be played to a finish on the day with extra-time and penalty kicks coming into play to decide the winner if the two sides cannot be separated after 90 minutes.

Taking charge of proceedings is experienced referee Thomas Gilchrist. Kick-off at Glencruitten will be 1.30pm.

## Lorne looking for promotion place

Oban Lorne's 1st XV are looking ahead to the tail end of their West Division 2 campaign with the team sitting second in the table.

After a confident start to the season the side, coached by Andrew Johnston, stuttered a little mid-season with losses to Wigtownshire, Strathaven and league leader Lenzie but have rallied in recent weeks with three consecutive bonus point wins lifting the side back up to second in the table.

Notably a 45-7 win over third placed Uddingston a few weeks ago raised eyebrows around the league proving that, with a strong side, the men in green can be genuine promotion candidates.

While Lenzie in first place, 16 points in front of Oban, are unreachable, second place is now the aim for the Oban players who have six very

winnable fixtures between now and the end of the season as they look to secure what could be a second promotion spot to West Division 1.

Coach Andrew Johnston has been delighted with his side's showings this season which has featured a number of young players who have progressed through the youth rugby programmes at Oban Lorne and Oban High School.

### Impressed

Eighteen-year-old David Cameron has become a mainstay of the team this season in the backline, while fellow youngster James Divers has also impressed coming in at scrum half and full back. In the pack Lorne Sinclair has been an outstanding addition to the side in the back row.

The latest recruit, 17-year-old Kieron Morrision has made the step-up from U18

## RUGBY

rugby with relative ease.

The young contingent has been bolstered by some experienced newcomers to the side. Doctor and number eight Owen McDonald has brought a huge presence to the club along with forestry worker and second row Eric Roberts. With a huge haul of 30 tries in 17 matches played this season, full back Craig Wright has contributed hugely to Oban's fortunes with his scoring form. It's unlikely that any other player in the country has such an impressive try record at regional level.

Lorne's next fixture is away to Bishopton on Saturday February 16. The teams have not met in a competitive fixture for several years. Oban's next home game is against Millbrae on March 23.

## Oban High h

The second edition of the SP Energy Networks Warriors Championship for schools was launched on Friday, February 1, at Whitelee Windfarm on the outskirts of Glasgow.

More than 1,000 girls and boys are competing in this year's rugby competition which will give a platform to grassroots talent to display their skills at Scotstoun Stadium, the home of Glasgow Warriors.

The tournament will see 25 schools, including Oban High School, from across west, central and southern Scotland compete during seven weeks of action, with the final being played prior to the Guinness PRO14 match between Glasgow Warriors and Edinburgh Rugby on Saturday, April 27.

The Warriors Championship was established four years ago and has helped to raise awareness of rugby union at grassroots level whilst promoting active and healthy lifestyles to young people.

SP Energy Networks began supporting the event last year after coming on board as the club's official community partner at the beginning of the 2017/18 season.

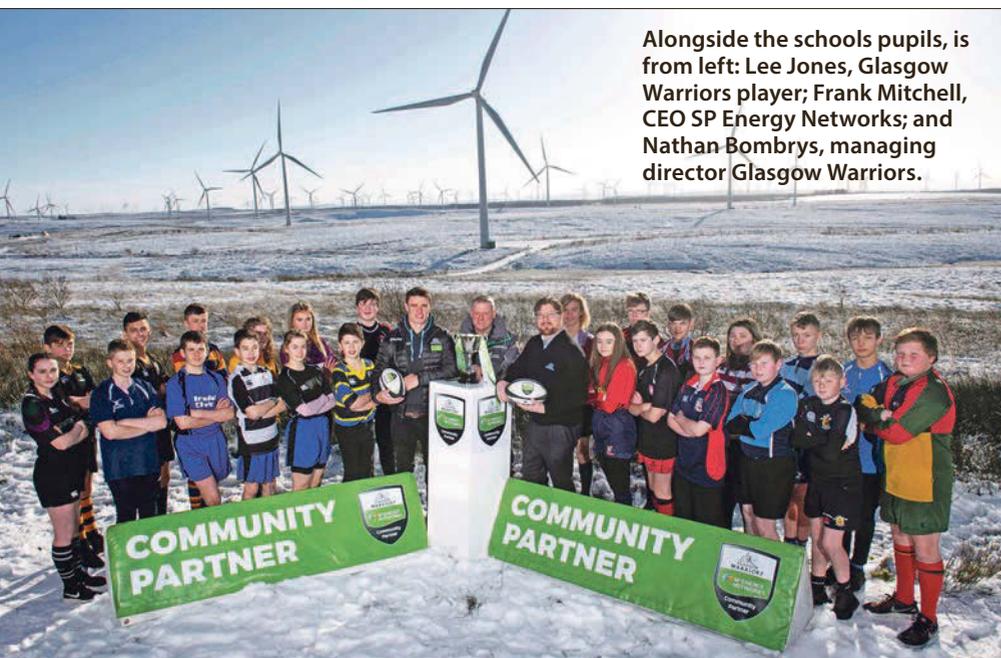
Each school will take part

# The Princess and the president



Scottish Rugby president Dee Bradbury stands shoulder to shoulder with HRH The Princess Royal as the official parties prepare to inspect the teams ahead of Scotland's bonus point victory over Italy at Murrayfield on Saturday. Gregor Townsend's men ran in five tries courtesy of a Blair Kinghorn hat-trick, a finger tip try from Stuart Hogg and a touch down from Chris Harris. Greig Laidlaw kicked three conversions with Finn Russell adding the last. Scotland's next game is against Ireland at Murrayfield on Saturday. Photo: Scottish Rugby/SNS Images

## Helps launch Warriors Championship



Alongside the schools pupils, is from left: Lee Jones, Glasgow Warriors player; Frank Mitchell, CEO SP Energy Networks; and Nathan Bombrys, managing director Glasgow Warriors.

in qualifying rounds at Scotstoun, which was due to start yesterday Wednesday, February 6, and will have S1 and S2 boys' teams competing as well as an under-15s girls' team. Throughout the 2019 SP Energy Networks Warriors Championship, pupils will get an opportunity to meet members of the Glasgow Warriors squad.

Participating schools and qualification dates:

- Q1 - Wednesday, February 6:** Annan Academy, Stonelaw High School, Loudoun Academy, Smithycroft Secondary School, Eastwood High School.
- Q2 - Wednesday, February 20:** Lenzie Academy, Maxwelltown High School, Falkirk High School, Cumnock Academy, Oban High School.
- Q3 - Wednesday, February 27:** Balfron High School, Auchinleck Academy, Queen Margaret Academy, Kirkcudbright Academy, St Andrew's RC Secondary School (Glasgow).

### SCHOOL RUGBY

- Q4 - Wednesday, March 6:** Kyle Academy, Coatbridge High School, Largs Academy, Ayr Academy, St Paul's High School.
- Q5 - Wednesday, March 13:** Marr College, St Thomas Aquinas Secondary School, Jordanhill School, Boclair Academy, Wallace High School.
- Semi-finals: Wednesday, March 27.**
- Finals day: Saturday, April 27:** Prior to Glasgow Warriors v Edinburgh Rugby.

## Capital success for squash quartet

### SQUASH

Four members of Oban Squash Club travelled to the capital at the weekend to take part in the 2019 Edinburgh Sports Club Open Graded competition.

Neil Fraser, Michael Kelly, Paul Kersley and Mark Lockart rubbed shoulders with some of the best players in the world at the event with Fraser winning his Group (D) outright.

Fraser battled his way through three tough matches, including one against club mate Kelly in the semi-final, before beating Edinburgh's Louis Kingdom (11-6; 11-5; 11-5) to take the title.

Kelly finished third while Kersley finished 6th in Group (C) and Lockart 5th in Group F.

'A brilliant achievement,' said Oban Squash Club's Jackie Kersley, 'and well done to Mark, Michael and Paul, who all did great in their groups. They did our wee club very proud.'

The Graded event ran alongside the Edinburgh SC Men's Open and Ladies' PSA which saw Kiwi Paul Coll and Hania El Hammamy, Egypt, run out victorious.



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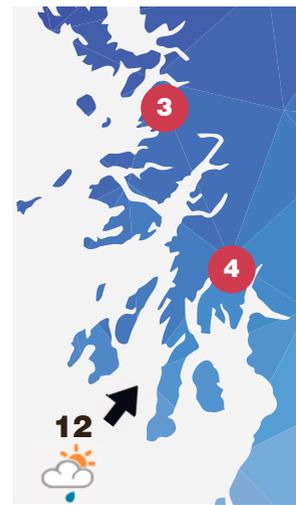
### WEATHER

**Thursday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 4°C to 6°C.

**Friday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 5°C to 7°C.

#### Weekend Outlook

**Saturday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
**Sunday**  
Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 3°C to 7°C.



FRIDAY

### TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday February 7, 2019 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	01.20	1.0	07.16	4.0
<b>Thur</b>	13.41	1.2	19.24	3.8
<b>Fri</b>	01.51	1.1	07.47	3.9
	14.11	1.3	19.51	3.7
<b>Sat</b>	02.16	1.2	08.16	3.8
	14.39	1.4	20.18	3.6
<b>Sun</b>	02.40	1.3	08.45	3.6
	15.06	1.5	20.49	3.5
<b>Mon</b>	03.09	1.4	09.18	3.5
	15.43	1.6	21.25	3.3
<b>Tues</b>	03.49	1.6	10.00	3.3
	16.35	1.7	22.11	3.2
<b>Wed</b>	04.44	1.7	10.58	3.1
	17.44	1.8	23.13	3.0

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

### Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

**Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd**



INSIDE THIS WEEK:  
Fly me to  
Dunoon!

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MARINE**  
DIVING & MARINE SPECIALISTS  
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AND TIDES - SEE PAGE 63



Playing with  
Fleetwood  
has made  
Bob realise  
the level he  
is now at

Bob MacIntyre has made the cut in five out of the six European Tour events so far this season.

Oban golfer Bob MacIntyre headed into the \$3.5 million Saudi International last week feeling he belongs on the European Tour after holding his own in the company of world number 13 Tommy Fleetwood.

The 22-year-old left-hander from Glencruitten Golf Club was pleased with how he

performed in the same group as two-time Open champion Ernie Els in three rounds in South Africa at the end of last year. But it was playing with Fleetwood, the 2017 Race to Dubai winner, in the final round of the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship recently that has left him feeling confident for the rest of the

season on the circuit.

'It's a bit different to last year but I'm here to compete just like the guys,' said MacIntyre of teeing up in a field in Saudi Arabia that is being spearheaded by four of the world's top five.

'I might not be able to compete with these guys just yet - but I'd certainly like to

give it a shot. While I was in the same group as Ernie Els in South Africa and enjoyed that, playing in the final round in Abu Dhabi with Tommy Fleetwood made me realise the level I'm now playing at.

'Tommy's in the world's top 15 and playing with him gave me belief that I can hold

my own.' Last week's event held at the Royal Greens Golf and Country Club in King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia, included world number one Justin Rose, who failed to make the cut, Brooks Koepka and Dustin Johnston - the first time the top three players in the world have taken part in a regular

## GOLF

European Tour event since 2012.

Continued on page 62



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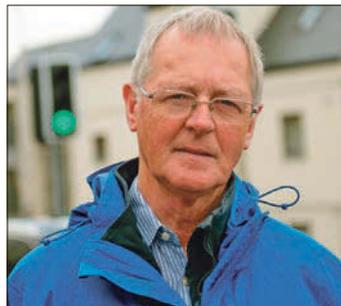
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# Liberty plant remains on track despite Nissan move

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Liberty's flagship alloy wheels factory planned for Fort William is still on course despite the UK car industry being rocked by Japanese car giant Nissan scrapping its plans to build its new X-Trail vehicle in Sunderland.

The assurances that plans were progressing for the Lochaber plant came from Dr Douglas Dawson, chief executive of Liberty Industries Group - part of Sanjeev Gupta's GFG Alliance - which heads Liberty's extensive network of factories making key components for the UK and international automotive industry.

Nissan is switching production of the model to Japan in a move many think has been driven by worries over the impact of Brexit.

While Liberty is classed as a 'Tier One' supplier for Nissan in the UK, it is not yet a wheels supplier to the company.

Dr Dawson was in Fort William as ground engineers moved onto the site earmarked for the new alloy wheels factory.

The technical team moved in with rigs and excavators for six weeks of in-depth ground investigations for the planned plant that is intended to manufacture wheels for at least a fifth of all UK-made cars from 2022 onwards.

The innovative £120million plant, which will take its liquid metal directly from the adjacent Liberty British Aluminium smelter, is expected to create around 400 skilled jobs.

The Lochaber Times asked Dr Dawson if Liberty was worried the decision by Nissan could herald an exodus of other foreign car manufacturers from UK shores.

Dr Dawson said: 'Vehicle manufacturing works on long-term design and production cycles, with new

Continued on page nine

## Curtain finally falls on Fort's former cinema



Moidart businessman Angus MacDonald was all smiles last week when he came to view the start of the demolition of the old cinema in Fort William. The property has been fenced off while heavy machinery flattens the dilapidated Cameron Square building to make way for the town's new picture house. Mr MacDonald, right, is pictured with his project manager, Mark Little. For full story, turn to page two. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

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# Out with the old to make way for new Fort cinema

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Demolition work on the derelict cinema in Fort William is well under way this week, with heavy machinery ripping apart the walls and roof.

Angus MacDonald, who bought the former DV8 clothes store on the Cameron Square site, says he is delighted with the rapid progress being made to clear the area for the new cinema.

'The project is going really well. I'm delighted,' he told the Lochaber Times.

'You can see how much of the building is already down. So hopefully it will be completely down and all the foundations dug up within a month, ready to start building.'

'It will take a year to build and hopefully it will be open in May 2020, in time for the motorbike trials.'



The development will see a two-screen cinema along with a café and restaurant.

Skye-based architectural firm Dualchas Architects have designed the new cinema complex with the aim of creating a striking building, 'very

much of its place and making a strong reference to traditional Highland architecture'.

Fort William has been without a working cinema for 12 years, despite several attempts in the recent past to restore the facility in the town.

The old cinema building is being razed to the ground this week. Visit [www.lochabertimes.co.uk](http://www.lochabertimes.co.uk) to watch the video.

Photographs: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.



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## Salmon farmer reports drop in 'last resort' seal culls

Latest figures show that Scottish Sea Farms has seen a reduction in the number of seals culled to protect farmed salmon stocks.

The fall in numbers is the result of ongoing investment in rigid new pen netting.

The previously unpublished figures show that the company, which has 45 salmon farms around Scotland's west coast and islands, culled 11 seals under licence at nine farms to protect its salmon stocks during the reporting period February 1 2018 to January 31 2019.

This is down 31 per cent and 35 per cent on 2017 (16 seal culls) and 2016 (17 seal culls) respectively.

In Orkney, where the new protective Sapphire Seal Pro nets were first trialled in 2016 before being rolled-out, there have been no seal culls in almost three years.

Seal culling is the last resort option taken by fish farmers to protect the salmon in their care and is carried out under licence only when seals persist beyond all other preventative measures currently being invested in.

Scottish Sea Farms' head of

fish health Ralph Bickerdike said: 'Our priority has been to install Seal Pro nets at those farms with a historic seal challenge.'

'The speed with which we can do this, however, is dictated in large part by nature as there are limited opportunities in the growing cycle where we can install the new nets without risking stress to our salmon. The ideal time is ahead of each new crop.'

To date, Seal Pro netting has been installed at 21 farms at a cost in excess of £4.2million, with plans for a further nine farms – specifically those facing a seal challenge – to be equipped in 2019 and 2020 at the start of each new crop cycle.

However, with counts indicating that the seal population in the west of Scotland has been increasing substantially over the last 10 years, and each seal eating between three-seven kilogrammes of food per day depending on species, the pressure on available food sources has never been greater.

'On occasion, we have installed Seal Pro netting at one farm only to see seals relocate

to another farm where there had been no prior seal challenge,' added Mr Bickerdike.

'This, we believe, accounted for five of the 11 seals culled in the last reporting period and is further reason why we will continue to roll-out the new netting until each and every farm is protected.'

With traditional nylon nets, a hungry seal will push its snout against the soft twine in the hope that salmon will swim close enough for it to grab.

In contrast, Seal Pro netting has an altogether tougher, more rigid surface which helps deter seals and, in turn, improve fish welfare.

Now being widely adopted across the sector, protective netting such as Seal Pro nets along with the use of acoustic deterrent devices has contributed to an 81 per cent drop in the number of seals culled by salmon farmers since 2011 – with the ambition being zero culls.

**HAVE YOUR SAY**  
email us at [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)

# Council welcomes fine for Fort landlord

Highland Council officials have welcomed the £1,800 fine handed down by a sheriff to a Fort William landlord convicted of operating a house in multiple occupation (HMO) without a licence, writes Mark Entwistle.

An HMO is a property in which three or more unrelated adults are residing as their main residence and require to share kitchen, toilet or personal washing facilities.

Harjinder Singh Randhawa, the owner of the first and second floor flat at 39 High Street in Fort William, pleaded guilty at the town's sheriff court last week to the offence and was fined £1,800 by Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald.

It was following a fire in the chip shop in the premises beneath the flat that environmental health officers conducting an investigation into an accident at work, had cause to visit the property.

They found the flat was occupied by seven people who were all living in the property as their main residence and requiring to share kitchen and sanitary facilities.

The property was found to be in a relatively poor stand-

ard of repair throughout and failed to meet the council's adopted standards for HMOs.

Of particular concern was the lack of any fire safety precautions and the poor condition of the electrical installation within the property.

Councillor Ian Cockburn,

**'The HMO scheme was introduced to protect tenants'**

chairman of the council's licensing committee said: 'Ultimately the HMO licensing scheme was introduced to protect tenants and help ensure properties are safe, and so it is important that the council takes action to protect tenants in these cases.'

'I am pleased that in imposing this level of fine the court has reflected the importance of licensing and demonstrates to responsible landlords, who have made the effort to comply with the legislation and bring their properties up to the required standard, that less responsible landlords are

actively being pursued by the council. I would encourage both landlords and tenants to contact the council if they have any concerns about their property.

'Officers are here to help and offer advice.'

Graeme Corner, senior environmental health officer, added: 'We hope that the significant fine imposed in this case sends out a strong message to landlords in the Lochaber area and throughout the Highlands that they must obtain a licence if their property is being occupied as an HMO.'

'While our service always prefer to work with landlords to ensure compliance, we will not hesitate to take robust action where the health, safety and well-being of tenants is comprised by poorly managed and maintained properties such as in this case.'

'The environmental health service will continue to take action against those landlords who do not apply, so I would urge all owners and agents to ensure that their properties are meeting legal requirements.'

## Trial ends after procurator fiscal drops case against Fort man

The trial of a Fort William man accused of behaving in an aggressive manner towards his partner ended with him being found not guilty on Friday after just one witness gave evidence.

Darren Napier, of the town's Angus Crescent, was on trial before Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald after pleading not guilty to behaving in a threatening or abusive manner towards his partner on January 5 this year.

Napier was alleged to have repeatedly shouted at her and also thrown household items

about, including her mobile phone.

His 40-year-old partner was the first Crown witness, but on taking the witness stand she told the court that she had been drinking heavily on the day in question and, coupled with the fact she was on medication, including beta blockers and Diazepam, she could remember very little of the events alleged to have occurred.

Procurator Fiscal Martina Eastwood asked the woman if she could remember phoning the police. 'I don't really re-

member anything,' she said.

Cross-examining, defence agent Catriona Rowantree asked if the couple's neighbours had ever called the police before over noise complaints. 'Repeatedly,' the woman replied, who explained that work had been carried out on the ceilings of the flats below to try to reduce noise levels.

At this point Mrs Eastwood said she was no longer seeking a conviction and Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald found Napier not guilty and said he was free to go.

## Fassifern woman guilty of racially abusive behaviour

A Fassifern woman was found guilty of behaving in a threatening and abusive manner, deemed to be racially aggravated, when she appeared at Fort William Sheriff Court last Thursday January 31.

Johanna Alvarez Landesa, 43, was found guilty of swearing and speaking in an aggressive manner towards Maria Alvarez, 53, from Fort William on December 8, 2017.

Landesa was found guilty of the offence but Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald deferred sentencing for a period of three months in which Landesa is to be of good behaviour.

The court heard that Landesa made a phone call to Ms Alvarez on December 8, 2017, at around 6pm when she was at her home in Mull Court, Fort William, with her son and brother.

Maria Alvarez and her son appeared in court as witnesses to give evidence but had to refer to their police statements to recall accurately when and



where the abusive language was uttered by Landesa.

According to the statement, Landesa demanded that Ms Alvarez come to her house to collect her brother's belongings. Ms Alvarez then asked for more time to do so as the weather was poor. It was at this point that Landesa was reported to have sworn and uttered abusive remarks to Ms Alvarez.

Procurator Fiscal Martina Eastwood said from Ms Alvarez's evidence that during the phone call Landesa was 'angry' and that racial aggravation was contained in those words.

Defence solicitor Claire Russell said that there were issues over identification and location in the evidence as both witnesses were unclear as to whether the events took place at Landesa's home or over the phone. She contended that this issue only became clear once the witnesses were handed their police statements in court.

Ms Russell said this 'undermines the credibility and reliability of the witnesses' and the sheriff could not prove beyond reasonable doubt the language was used at the address stated in the charge.

She stated: 'There are a number of elements in the evidence that her ladyship may have difficulty with.'

However, Sheriff MacDonald said she found the witnesses to be credible and reliable so the case against Landesa was proved. 'The sheriff also said it was proved 'that it is a racially aggravated offence'.

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## Woman dies following Kyle collision

Police Scotland has confirmed a woman has died following a road accident near Kyle of Lochalsh.

The incident happened on the A87 at Kirkton shinty pitches and was reported to police at 5.17pm on Monday.

The 62-year-old woman was the passenger in a black BMW which was the only vehicle involved. Her next of kin have been informed.

Portree Community Policing Sergeant David Canning said: 'Our thoughts at this time are very much with the family and friends of the victim of this collision.'

'I would also extend our thanks to the public for their patience while the road has been closed. Our enquiries are ongoing to establish the full circumstances and I would ask anyone with information who has not yet spoken to an officer to get in touch as soon as possible.'

To pass on information, call the road policing unit in Dingwall on 101, quoting incident 2735 of 04/02/2019.

# Hunt under way to find alternative waste site

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A senior Lochaber councillor believes there are better and more appropriate sites for a new waste handling and transfer station to handle all of the area's blue, green and brown bins instead of the controversial proposed site in Corpach.

Last week the Lochaber Times reported the huge turnout of more than 150 residents from Corpach and Banavie who packed Kilmallie Community Centre to give their views on the possibility of The Highland Council siting a new waste station on land in the village, currently owned by Ferguson Transport and Shipping.

Two senior council officials explained that with just two years to go until a nationwide ban comes into force prohibiting all Scottish local



**Councillor Allan Henderson has already met with council officials as part of efforts to find an alternative site for the waste handling centre.**

authorities from landfilling domestic waste, leasing the Corpach site was the only viable option.

However, this viewpoint brought howls of protest, with many residents standing up to condemn the proposals, citing the levels of disruption already suffered by local people from industrial and

commercial operations already based there. Fears over increased heavy vehicle traffic, additional noise, pollution, bad odours, flies, seagulls and vermin were mentioned.

The three Caol and Mallaig elected members on The Highland Council - Allan Henderson, Ben Thompson

and Denis Rixson - were also present at the meeting.

It was Highland Council which had initially approached Ferguson Transport and Shipping to sound the company out about leasing the area of land for the waste transfer station.

However, it was stressed to residents that no decision has yet been made and a planning application has not been lodged.

But the scale of the opposition from residents saw Alasdair Ferguson, group managing director of Ferguson Transport and Shipping which is headquartered in Corpach, issue a statement the day after the community council meeting, saying the firm could not ignore the level of opposition expressed and said the local authority would be told it needed to find an alternative site for the project.

Asked for his reaction to Mr Ferguson's statement, Councillor Henderson, also chairman of The Highland Council environment, development and infrastructure committee, told the Lochaber Times he had now met with council officials in an effort to establish another suitable site. 'It was clear from the reaction of Corpach residents, while fully recognising that the municipal waste was also their problem, that they would not countenance a waste handling and transfer station in the village without a fight,' he said.

'Highland Council will always try to get the best possible compromise that will not upset the residents. I do believe that there are better, more suitable sites in the area and the Ferguson multi hub will develop in more acceptable ways to the residential community of Corpach.'

## Police appeal after Corpach break-in

Police in Lochaber are appealing for information following a break-in in Annat, Corpach.

Entry was gained to a Portakabin used as a food takeaway sometime between 3pm on Sunday February 3 and 7.15am on Monday February 4. A number of foodstuffs and a low three-figure sum of cash were stolen.

Detective Constable Liam Devine said: 'We are urging anyone who has seen anything suspicious or unusual in Annat to let us know as soon as possible. Anyone with information should contact police in Fort William by calling 101, quoting incident NP347/19, or alternatively, call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.'

## Contractor appointed for work at Invergarry Primary School

The contract for an extension and partial refurbishment of Invergarry Primary School has been awarded to Morrison Construction.

The £800,000 project will see the replacement of a double classroom that is in poor condition with an extension to the school comprising two classrooms, toilets and a cloakroom.

The former school house, which has been vacant for some time, will be refurbished to provide an entrance and reception area, office/meeting room and fully accessible pupil toilets and changing rooms.

Work will start on site later this month, with the building due to be ready by the start of the new



Architect's external view of Invergarry School.

school session in August. Councillor John Finlayson, chairman of The Highland Council's Care, learning and housing committee, said he was delighted the contract had been awarded as part of the local authority's commitment to offer pupils in the Highlands safe and modern learning envi-

ronments. 'As a council we continue to develop plans for improving the fabric of our school buildings and, in partnership with the Scottish Government, we will hopefully see other communities receive the very welcome news that Invergarry has just received,' he said.

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This year's winner of the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture is Noel Williams, from Torlundy.

# Torlundy's Noel wins mountain festival award

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Former high school teacher, author of respected mountain guides, founding member of Lochaber Geopark, retired member of Lochaber Mountain Rescue and accomplished hill runner Noel Williams has won the prestigious Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture in 2019.

Sponsored by Liberty British Aluminium and nominated by the public and his peers as a mountain hero, who celebrates achievement, accomplishment and the spirit of adventure, he now joins the Fort William Mountain Festival Hall of Fame alongside previous esteemed winners that include Cameron McNeish, Dr Adam Watson, Jimmy Marshall, Myrtle Simpson and Ian Sykes.

As a well-known and respected member of the Lochaber community, having moved to the area

for the climbing in 1974, Mr Williams says he feels very lucky to live in such a wonderful part of the country and that he is amazed to be given an award for doing activities he enjoys.

'I'm passionate about helping people appreciate some of the astonishing events that have shaped the local landscape. I hope that, despite the difficult economic climate, Lochaber Geopark will continue to spread this message,' he commented this week.

Rod Pashley, chairman of The Highland Mountain Culture Association, which runs the Fort William Mountain Festival, added: 'This award recognises a lifetime of inspiring others and sharing knowledge and passion for this spectacular area we live in.'

'Noel is quiet and unassuming, hiding his great contribution to mountain culture. We are delighted to be able to recognise Noel's hard work, dedication and passion by

presenting him with this well-deserved Award.'

Kerry McDonald, general manager of the Liberty British Aluminium Smelter at Fort William, said: 'Noel has done a huge amount over the years to highlight our unique environment and way of life and we applaud him for his work that richly deserves this special honour.'

The award will be presented to Mr Williams at a special ceremony on February 23 during the Fort William Mountain Festival 2019, which runs in and around Fort William and Lochaber, from February 20-24.

The fifth Scottish Youth Ambassador for Mountain Culture will be announced shortly and will also receive their award on February 23.

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## Lochside mechanic fined in row over dog

An argument over a Rottweiler dog saw a Lochside man fined £450 at Fort William Sheriff Court last week.

Cameron Donald MacInnes, of Castle Drive, pleaded guilty to punching a window at a property in Fort William's Banff Crescent on December 8, with utter disregard for the consequences, which caused the window to shatter.

The smashed window was at the home of MacInnes's then girlfriend who had been looking after the dog.

Procurator Fiscal Martina Eastwood told the court that MacInnes, a self-employed mechanic, had arrived at the woman's home shortly before midnight to collect the dog.

An argument ensued and MacInnes, 24, who was described as being intoxicated at the time, had then put his fist through a downstairs window and the police were called.

Defence agent Gerry Sweeney said the incident was the 'convergence of inebria-

tion and frustration' involving a deteriorating relationship which was now at a complete end.

'It was a young dog owned by Mr MacInnes which was being looked after by this lady,' said Mr Sweeney.

'He went to collect the dog, words were exchanged with his then girlfriend, and the dog was denied to him. He acted stupidly and was fortunate not to have sustained serious injury from such a stupid act.'

'He confessed to the police and is ashamed and contrite.'

Fining MacInnes £450, Sheriff Eilidh MacDonald told him: 'This was a very unpleasant act, appearing at someone's door so late at night and then disappearing in a taxi leaving a window smashed.'

MacInnes' plea of not guilty to a charge of behaving in a threatening or abusive manner was accepted by the Crown.

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## MP claims Scotland will pay Brexit price

Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP Ian Blackford has claimed that Scotland is on course to pay a heavy price from last week's Westminster Brexit vote.

Following parliament's acceptance of an amendment put forward by Sir Graham Brady MP last week, Prime Minister Theresa May now has a mandate to renegotiate the EU Withdrawal Bill, with the aim of stripping out the Irish 'backstop'.

### Doomed

However, concerns have already been voiced that any renegotiation is doomed to fail with the European Union having already made clear that the backstop agreement cannot be changed.

Despite parliament having already voted on its disapproval of a 'No Deal' scenario, this becomes a default option in the event of failure of the UK government and the EU 27 to strike a deal.

It is this scenario that concerns Mr Blackford the most. Commenting on the various votes last Tuesday

night, SNP Westminster leader Mr Blackford said: 'By throwing her weight behind an impossible demand from the hard Brexit wing of the Conservative Party, the prime minister demonstrated beyond doubt she is now prepared to take Scotland and the UK over the Brexit cliff-edge.'

'Theresa May could have worked across parties to protect jobs and living standards but she chose to side with the Brexit extremists in her own party.'

'Once again Scotland has been silenced, side-lined and shafted by Westminster, and we are paying a heavy price for a chaotic Tory government that Scotland did not vote for.'

'And the Tories ripped apart the Good Friday agreement, an international treaty the UK had signed up to.'

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# Union plea over Fort call centre

## TSSA call on government in Abellio job cuts

The TSSA trade union says the Scottish Government must intervene to save the 19 jobs of workers at Abellio's Fort William call centre.

The TSSA, which is the union for workers in the transport and travel sectors, is seeking an urgent meeting with Abellio, following the company's announcement last week it was transferring the 19 call centre jobs from the Ben Nevis Industrial estate to Glasgow.

Abellio took over the ScotRail franchise in 2015 and plans to relocate the 19 jobs to its shared services centre in Glasgow - 109 miles away. TSSA General Secretary Manuel Cortes says the move makes it virtually impossible for the



TSSA general secretary Manuel Cortes.

nearly all-female workforce in Fort William to keep their jobs.

The TSSA wants the Scottish Government to support the call centre work if necessary or ensure that ScotRail offers the best compensation package possible to the staff who they are bailing out on.

Mr Cortes said on Tuesday: 'I am personally overseeing the events at the call centre in Fort William. I met with all the staff there just last summer.'

'To hear Abellio is pulling out of town is clearly very distressing news for them. I have requested an urgent meeting with Abellio to

discuss the proposals to move work from Fort William to Glasgow.'

'Clearly our members can't be expected to up sticks and move 100 miles-plus nor can they be expected to travel the three-hour journey each way.'

'This is a very difficult time for our members and the town. TSSA will do all we can to protect our members' interests. But the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland must join us in rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck in to do all they can to save their jobs.'

The decision by Abellio has also been heavily criticised by the area's local MP and MSPs, with Ian Blackford MP slamming the move as being akin to a modern version of the Highland Clearances.

Mr Blackford demanded an explanation from Abellio managing director Dominic Booth at the end of last week.

Calling the decision 'wholly unacceptable', Mr Blackford added: 'When Abellio took on this operation from Serco in 2015 there were 63 jobs in Fort William - this has fallen to 19 today.'

'It is right to ask the question as to how this has happened,

but it looks to me that Abellio has overseen the rundown of this business.'

'This smacks to me of management failure. The employees in Fort William should not be paying the price for this.'

'Abellio should be investing in its staff and business in rural areas not closing them.'

'The fact that a company, which operates here in providing its mainstream services under a Government franchise, turns its back on this business is not acceptable from Abellio.'

'Telling its workforce it can relocate from Fort William to Glasgow is a form of a modern day Highland Clearance.'

Employees were due to begin consultations with bosses on Monday. The rail operator said it had become increasingly difficult to recruit staff and to provide the supervision, training and progression needed for the small Fort William facility.

An Abellio spokesperson said: 'We have offered all staff in Fort William the opportunity to relocate to Glasgow with a support package or to help them with finding alternative employment locally.'

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The Abellio call centre in Fort William, where 19 jobs are threatened. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

## MSP meets with new NHS Highland boss

A replacement for the Belford Hospital in Fort William was one of the topics raised by Lochaber MSP Kate Forbes when she met with NHS Highland's new chief executive this week.

The meeting came just days after Iain Stewart started in his new post of running Scotland's largest

health board, with Ms Forbes determined to keep up the pressure on the campaign for reliable and local healthcare for West Highlanders.

Mr Stewart spent an hour with Ms Forbes discussing the ongoing healthcare challenges, mainly in Portree, Raasay and Glenelg, but the situation in Lochaber was

also touched on.

The MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch said she was hopeful of positive changes for NHS Highland service provision in her constituency.

'There are no quick fixes but I know that he is keen to meet people, understand the problems and find solutions,' said Ms Forbes.

# Texas rescue centre helps with airlift of Lochaber pensioner

A pensioner who lives alone in a remote forest cabin near Loch Treig, some 13 miles from Fort William, was airlifted to hospital by a coastguard rescue helicopter on Sunday night after his distress beacon signal was picked up in Texas.

The man, who is reported to be in his mid-seventies, had his SOS call picked up by the International Emergency Response Co-ordination Center in Houston. The centre helps co-ordinate emergency rescues around the world and relayed the information to the UK Coastguard's national operations centre in Fareham, Hampshire.

Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team was alerted and in a statement said: 'LMRT assisted with a med-evac last night for one of the area's 'off gridders' after setting off



**Members of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team ready the sick man to be winched aboard a coastguard helicopter.**

Photograph: LMRT

their PLB [personal locator beacon].

'He was taken by helicopter to Belford Hospital in Fort William for an urgent medical assessment.'

The man is believed to activate his PLB to 'check in' every Sunday to let family and

friends know he is well, but on Sunday an SOS distress alert was activated instead.

With the cabin surrounded by trees, members of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team had to move him to a more open clearing that allowed the HM Coastguard helicopter from Prestwick to winch him aboard.

Speaking to the BBC, UK aeronautical operations centre controller for HM Coastguard, Neil Blewett told reporters: 'What must seem a very long way round for an alert to reach us is actually very quick thanks to the satellite technology that we use.'

'In this case, the man's activation of his beacon, the satellites and the beacon itself saved his life because without any of those we would not have known he needed urgent help.'

## VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER



You might have noticed that the possible introduction of a tourist tax – or Transient Visitor Levy (TVL) – is back in the news.

The Scottish Government's proposed Transient Visitor Levy (TVL) aims to allow local councils to raise additional income directly from visitors to help address local infrastructure problems.

While Lochaber's booming tourism industry is great for our local economy; we can all see that our success in attracting visitors increases the stress on our local infrastructure. Our road network struggles to cope with the extra cars and campervans that a busy tourism season brings and the extra volume of traffic increases the deterioration of our roads.

There are, of course, other consequences of a successful

tourism sector: The new 'disruptive' tourism model of 'Airbnb' rentals mean there is a lack of available housing for the workers that the tourism industry relies on, as well as for those in other industries.

But will the TVL penalise some sectors of tourism industry more than help?

There has been widespread concern about the plans from business groups across Scotland and the Scottish Tourism Alliance said the decision over a Transient Visitor Levy was 'beyond disappointing' and 'will deliver a significant blow to our industry'.

Frazer Coupland, CEO of

Lochaber Chamber, said, 'The detail of just what is proposed isn't yet clear – but we're determined to make sure that the concerns of our tourism members are taken into account in shaping any levy introduced.'

'How any levy is raised is vitally important – we do not want a tourist levy that places an unfair cost and administrative burden solely on accommodation providers.'

'We look forward to being involved in consultations about the levy and will be fighting for the best outcome to benefit our local businesses and wider community.'



The children received certificates at the Burns Supper and will be presented with prizes from the Lochaber Burns Club at assembly.

## St Bride's youngsters celebrate the Bard

A well-attended Burns Supper was held in St Bride's Primary School at North Ballachulish on Wednesday January 30.

The children entertained their parents and families with songs, poetry and musical pieces by Robert Burns.

Andrew Orr, member of Lochaber Pipe Band, piped the haggis into the hall after Jim Sutherland gave a superb rendering

of Holy Willie's Prayer. The four winners of the St Bride's Robert Burns Quich were Cullen Kelly (P5) for his attractive poster of a haggis using recycled materials and for including the words of Burns' poem To a Haggis.

Hamish Man (P5) won for his very clear playing of Auld Lang Syne on his violin; Harrison Wyatt (P7) for his art and craft work based

on Burns poem To a Mouse. Harrison applied the Zentangle Art Technique to his mouse drawing and made a little felt mouse using thread for whiskers.

Joshua Allan (P7) was another winner for his amazing efforts in his two presentations – a tuneful singing of Auld Lang Syne and a detailed PowerPoint presentation of the life and work of Burns.

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# Unsung Highland forestry heroes to be recognised

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The men of the British Honduran Forestry Unit (BHFU), who travelled 5,000 miles to the Western Highlands and elsewhere in Scotland to keep the country's timber supplies flowing during the Second World War, are to be recognised for their heroic contribution.

Rural economy secretary Fergus Ewing MSP has written to the Belize High Commissioner to thank the country's citizens for their efforts.

He has also asked Forestry Commission Scotland to explore ways to celebrate the work of BHFU, along with other Commonwealth citizens, who all rallied to help manage Scotland's



**Men from British Honduras, who volunteered for service in Scottish forestry units, pictured after arriving by ship at Greenock, Scotland.**

Photograph: Alamy.

supplies was vital in the war effort. Supply routes by sea from other countries were cut off so home timber needed to be felled, however, many men were abroad fighting the war.

The timber was much needed for a range of uses, including pit props in the coal mining industry, which in turn produced the fuel for large scale manufacturing in the war.

In 1941/42 around 900 men made the perilous journey from British Honduras (now called Belize) across the Atlantic to work in the forests of Scotland.

They were billeted in a number of camps, mainly in East Lothian, the Scottish Borders and Sutherland, as well as in the western Highlands. The men had to endure harsh weather and very basic living conditions but were welcomed by the local communities.

One such man who rallied to the UK's call for help was Sam Martinez. At the age of 32, Mr Martinez travelled from British Honduras in 1942 to work in Highland forests.

He believed that if anything happened to the 'mother country' then this

would have a real impact back at home and in other Commonwealth countries. He worked in the forests in the Highlands with others from his homeland until the BHFU was disbanded in 1943.

Mr Martinez decided to stay in Scotland and he saw the rest of his years living in Edinburgh until the age of 106. He was a huge Hibs fan and celebrated as the first, and oldest, ever Hibernian supporter from Belize.

His grandson, Yutsil Hoyo Diaz Martinez, lived with Sam for the last five years of his life and was able to document his experiences through video.

News that the British Honduran Forestry Unit's story is to be celebrated next year was welcomed by Yutsil.

'I think it is important to be able to look back on these events and share them with our citizens and the world, since it's not only the families who lived this but almost 1,000 men who served with pride their 'mother country' as my gramps used to call it,' he said.

'This year, as his grandson, I have had the pleasure of sharing his life stories by giving a talk during black history month in October and making a small appearance on BBC's Home Front Heroes - it's something I'll always treasure. Hopefully small steps like these will get this story out for everyone to know.'

forests during the war. In the letter to Her Excellency High Commissioner Ms Perla Perdomo, Mr Ewing said it was a particularly interesting and largely untold chapter of the people of Belize, Central America.

'I therefore wish to formally acknowledge on behalf of the Scottish Government the contribution of the citizens of Belize for their selfless service that the countrymen gave during the war,' he told her.

'Importantly, I want to say thank you to them and to your country for this key contribution to our joint war effort.'

Maintaining timber

## WHAT'S ON in Lochaber

Representatives of Lochaber Sensory Care for Sight and Hearing Support will visit Ardnamurchan on Monday February 11. Staff and volunteers will be in attendance at Acharacle Medical Centre from 10.30-11.45am and then at Dail Mhor Care Home in Strontian from 1-2.30pm.

They will offer help and advice to those with hearing or sight impairment and will also re-tube and maintain NHS hearing aids, and supply NHS batteries. No appointment necessary.

This month's Lochaber Local History Society talk

will be held, just for this month, in the Alexandra Hotel at 8pm today (Thursday February 7). Maya Hoole will speak on the Scottish Rock Art Project.

Thousands of prehistoric carvings are known in Scotland and there may be many more waiting to be discovered.

Maya gave a highly-acclaimed talk last year on the creation of Ava, the image of a Bronze Age girl. She is currently working with the Scottish Rock Art project to examine and record these strange cup and cup and ring marks. Maya will speak

on the work of the project, on theories of their meaning and of recently rediscovered cup marks at Blarmafoldach. All welcome.

The Atholl Duo will be the guest artistes hosted by Lochaber Music for All tomorrow (February 8), at Lochaber High School, at 7.30pm. Tickets on the door.

The next meeting of the Fort William Photographic Society is on Tuesday, February 12 at 7pm in the Salvation Army hall. Members will be showing portfolios of photographs that 'Tell a Story'. Non-members are welcome.



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Snowboarder Chris Hawkes from Inverness, hunting for fresh snow heading towards the top gondola station at Nevis Range, Fort William. Photograph: Steve McKenna.

# Nevis Range fully opens for business

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

After a long-awaited start, Nevis Range Mountain Experience on the outskirts of Fort William opened its doors to ski and snowboard enthusiasts for its first official day of the 2019 season on Wednesday last week.

Following one or two false starts, and after a couple of heavy snow falls and continuing cold temperatures, there was at last enough of the white stuff to get the show on the road.

Nevis Range's marketing manager Nikki Stafford said: 'It's awesome to finally open our doors for snowsports this season. When both locals and visitors get out on to the slopes of Aonach Mor, the mountain really comes alive.'

'This weekend there was certainly a special buzz around the hill that only comes when the snow falls and the runs are full of skiers

and snowboarders. We are definitely looking forward to further snowfalls this week to further improve conditions.

'We've also got an action-packed events programme lined up for all ages and skill levels this winter.'

More snow is forecast to fall across the slopes of Aonach

**More snow is forecast to fall across the slopes of Aonach Mor this weekend**

Mor this week and into the weekend, enhancing current conditions.

Nevis Range activities director John Sutherland added: 'A massive effort goes in from the whole team to get the mountain winter ready.'

'When the snow falls it's good to see everyone's hard work pay off.'

'Last Saturday was a great

day on the hill, snow conditions were variable across the mountain – which definitely need a bit more for a powder day – with some good skiing on pisted runs and powder pockets could be found in some off-piste areas. The sun was shining and we held the first round of the Nevis Range Freestyle Series.

'We look forward to welcoming skiers and snowboarders of all ages and abilities to the slopes for the rest of the season.'

A range of fun and family-focused events will be staged at Nevis Range throughout winter 2018/19, including the Nevis Freestyle Series and the Nevis Mini Shredder Series, quiz nights, ceilidhs, food and drink evenings; together with the welcome return of Ski-an-Duro, the 'ever so slightly bonkers' ski/board and mountain bike race from the summit to the gondola base station.



## Liberty plans remain on track despite Nissan's Japan move

Continued from page one models expected to come on stream in 2022/23.

'Our aim is to ensure this new wheels factory is up and running in time to feed fully into the supply chain for that next cycle.'

'However as everyone knows, the UK automotive industry is in a state of uncertainty at the moment and our plans are linked predominantly to demand from the auto sector, so we need to keep a close eye on the situation and continue our dialogue with the car makers.'

'We'll be having further important discussions with them in the near future.'

On growing concern from some quarters in Lochaber, including local politicians, over the perceived lack of progress on the new alloy wheels plant, Dr Dawson said some £2million had already been spent on pre-



Dr Douglas Dawson.

paratory work, including the creation of 'world class' office facilities.

'That's £2million in cold hard cash to get us to this point. There has been consistency of message and the actual timing of that first big spade in the ground in the first quarter of 2020 is still looking feasible.'

However, he said the company was not com-

placent and described the current woes of the British car industry – as well as the Nissan pull-out, Jaguar Land Rover is shedding 5,000 workers – as 'a perfect storm'.

'The Nissan decision is not good news but it is still building the Qashqai and Juke in the UK.'

'There are still some 1.5million vehicles being built in the UK every year and we believe there is still a market to go for. I can't foresee a future when wheels are not being made in the UK.'

While in Fort William this week, Dr Dawson presented a Liberty-made superbike to Alan Donald, a process controller in the aluminium smelter who chose a name for the new office block.

Mr Donald chose the Gaelic name 'Aisling Mor' which means 'Big Dream' to reflect the ambitious vision Liberty has for the site.

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## MacPhail

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It seems to be a commonly quoted statistic that moving house creates the same stress level as divorce, death or starting a new job!

This has been relayed to me from many directions in the last few days with mixed tones of warning, concern and humour. If this is indeed the case then expect next week's article to be more incoherent than usual.

Maybe it's a reflection of the slightly nomadic life of a musician that I lead, but I'm not yet too concerned about the prospect of this weekend's flitting. Possibly next Monday, when among a mountain range of boxes, I can't find my accordion, my clothes, my laptop or wellies, I might have a different view.

Having moved a number of times over the years, I'm aware that the practicalities of the exercise are certainly not without issue, but because I've never stayed too long in one place it will hopefully be easier than it might otherwise be. I am also in a fairly lucky position that my worldly possessions – few as they are – are already

spread between Glasgow, Fort William and Tiree, and I've no need to shift all these things at the same time, so it will be a less comprehensive migration for me than it would be for most.

More interesting than the practicalities of moving, is the question of how where we live shapes our identity and the extent to which that varies widely between different people. For me, unlike many, where I live doesn't feel too important a factor in identity and never has.

Over the last 22 years since leaving school, as well as periods of living back home, I've lived in Tobermory, Glasgow, Fort William and Oban, but would never consider myself to be from anywhere else but Tiree. I have enjoyed greatly being in every one of these other places, and in different ways feel a strong and positive connection with them all, but to me living in a place is temporary when compared to the constant pull of the place where you were brought up, where family ties are and where cultural background is.

I would not assert that this strong link to place and cultural identity is either a good or a bad thing. Most people have no such specific links to people and place and it makes them no better or worse in character. However, it certainly exists, it feels powerful, and having existed with it, I would not like to live without it.

These connections, coupled with the ever-present background feeling that I'll eventually move back to Tiree at some point, makes the effect of living anywhere else merely transitional. The practicalities of life and chosen vocations may override these hankerings for home, but it is a very enjoyably dream to have.

In the meantime, I am very excited about our imminent move to a new harbour and the beginning of another of life's chapters. I may live there until I'm a 102, but that time will feel transient when set against the permanence of upbringing and the anchor-lines to generations past in a geographic area that is specific to the ethnic group and culture into which I was born.

## Great War exhib

by Mark Entwistle

mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Arisaig may have been a remote rural Highland community during the years of the First World War, but even it could not escape the conflict's clutches.

Now a new Heritage Lottery-funded exhibition at the Arisaig Land, Sea and Islands Centre, commemorates the lives of Arisaig people who served in the Great War.

Stunning portraits of Arisaig men and women gaze out, reminding the looker of their youth, and the ordeals they were to face.

Macdonald, Campbell, MacEachen, Gillies, Mackinnon, MacVarish, and many more familiar Arisaig names feature time and again in the unique 100-year-old Arisaig and South Morar Record of Service, which is also on display in the centre.

This book has been the main source of the remarkable photographs which make up a large part of the exhibi-



tion. Military and genealogy records, family history and local knowledge have all provided background



information, and helped to bring colour and substance to the stories of people long gone, many of whom have

Rugby legend Gregor Townsend...  
Fishing on the Tay... Borders under  
the spotlight... Horse hero Ian Stark..  
Stan Laurel's Caledonian roots...  
Pheasant recipes... Stuart MacRae...

## Regional mòd organisers urge con

This year's Oban Provincial Mòd is on the horizon and competitors are being reminded to hand in their entry sheets.

The closing date for entries along with fees and own

choice music is Friday April 26 and no late entries will be accepted. The event itself will take place on Friday May 31 and Saturday June 1. Children's events will be held on the Friday, with the

adults having their turn on Saturday.

All cups and shields should be cleaned and returned to Furan Gaelic Centre, in the Corran Halls, no later than Monday May 20.

## Kinlochleven High School

Kinlochleven High School has been awarded the prestigious Eco-Schools Green Flag Award by environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful, writes Mark Entwistle.

Eco-Schools Scotland aims to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of all schools, for both pupils and for staff.

It also provides a framework to engage the wider school community in action and support aligned with the purposes of Curriculum for Excellence and Learning for Sustainability.

Eco-Schools Scotland offers schools a choice of 10 topics to engage with, from food and the environment, to litter, to energy.

'Kinlochleven High School chose to focus on a wide range of Eco-Schools topics and Global Goals, but two projects we are most proud of are the S1 Bee Project as part of their It's Your Neighbourhood Campaign and the S2 and S3 work with Green Hydro Renewables,' said headteacher Rebecca Machin.

'The S1 pupils researched the important role of bees and the potential impact of their decline. As well as making posters and a wee film for the local community, they also designed and implemented improvements to our kitchen garden to make our local environment a more bee-friendly place.

The school has also been able to develop a school/

business partnership with a local STEM company, Green Highland Renewables, which has co-ordinated site visits to the powerhouse and dam for all of our S2, as well as our S3 physicists.

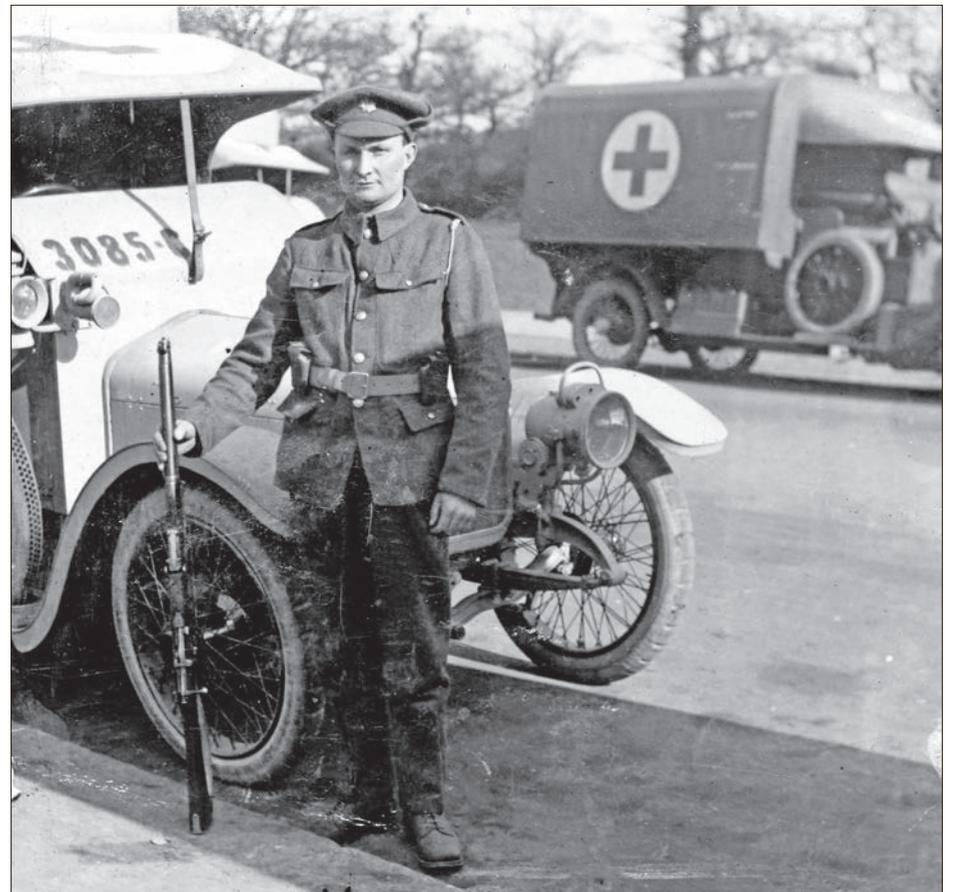
'Green Highland Renewables has also very kindly come in to school to give a STEM sector careers talks, which was also supported by DYW West Highland and Skills Development Scotland, illustrating a variety of career pathways in STEM careers, from apprenticeship, further and higher education in a huge range of fields, all working locally in the Kinlochleven area, thus demonstrating the wide range of opportunities available here.

'On the back of this, our S2

# Exhibition: Arisaig remembers



Clockwise from far left: James Campbell; The exhibition, which is now open; Lachlan Gillies, and right, Charles Macdonald.



just become numbers in the vast, mass history of the First World War.

If anyone has the chance,

they should drop into the Land, Sea and Islands Centre during the coming weeks to see the exhibition, which will

be running until Easter.

The centre's current opening times are: Saturday 10am-4pm; Sunday 11am-4pm; Monday 10am-1pm.

From the end of March it will be open seven days a week.

Further details at [www.arisaiginfo.org.uk](http://www.arisaiginfo.org.uk)

## Competitors to get entries in early

An Oban Provincial Mòd committee member said: 'An incredible amount of work goes into running a two-day event like this. A lot of time goes into chasing people up for them to get their entries

in. We are having no late entries this year. We have been very relaxed previously.'

Last year was a bumper year in regards to the number of children's entries.

Competitors will be keen

to repeat their success at the Royal National Mòd, in October. For more information about this year's Oban Provincial Mod, contact [duncan.macneil@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:duncan.macneil@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or call 01631 567 886.

## achieves green accolade



From left to right are S2 pupils Blair Nicolson, Magaidh Ward, Ailsa Janzen and Ian MacCallum Millar.

pupils also developed a Green Energy Manifesto project involving all of our STEM subjects.'

Ms Machin continued: 'We received a grant from Royal Society to buy resources such as programmable LEGO.

Pupils had to come up with different ideas, model and test them, presenting them to our local politicians at our first Energy Expo event.

'The involvement of our pupils and the encouragement they have received from the

pupils has been outstanding.

'Receiving our second Green Flag is a wonderful and very worthy recognition of all of the work that has been done by our school community.'

Derek Robertson, chief executive of Keep Scotland Beautiful, added: 'Congratulations to the eco-committee, and all other pupils and staff at Kinlochleven High School who worked so hard to achieve their second Green Flag Award.

'Now the pupils and educators of Kinlochleven High School can proudly say they are engaged in a real movement, across more than 60 countries in five continents, striving to improve our environment through learning for sustainability.'



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# Tourist tax would be bad for islands

View from the Edge

CATH MACDONALD

fort@obantimes.co.uk



As I write this on a wet, misty day we have moved on from the snow-covered and icy roads of the last week, but we have not seen the end of ice and snow as more is forecast.

The day is slowly lengthening. Bookings for the summer season are already coming in and tourism businesses will be considering any jobs they need to have done before the season starts.

It was great to hear Harris and Skye were included in the Lonely Planet Best in Travel 2019 Guide as top destinations in the world to visit.

Soon after came the news of a £5 million fund launched by Scottish Natural Heritage to promote tourism in the Highlands and Islands, and improve visitor experience.

One of the aims is that projects supported will help to retain local jobs and services.

But, having hailed the good news, what's all this about a tourist tax?

It is true that money is required to improve the infrastructure and that over recent years the number of visitors has increased dramatically. But the question is whether people would want to visit tourist-taxed areas or would seek other destinations?

There are already increased business rates even on small businesses. These businesses protect local jobs. Their owners need jobs done at various times and look for local builders, joiners, electricians and other tradesmen. Hotels, restaurants and cafes, for example, need staff.

The recent census has shown how the population of the Western Isles has decreased over the years. We need to keep more people here.

There is a glimmer of hope. A survey carried out by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in 2018 showed, when compared to a previous, similar study in 2015, that increasing numbers of young people want to live and work in the Highlands and Islands, including people living in the Outer Hebrides.

It was uplifting to read recently the Isle of Harris Distillery has appointed a local school leaver as its first apprentice distiller. The distillery aims to create long-term employment in the Outer Hebrides for young people who wish to stay in the community.

To go back to tourism, there are now a number of businesses which have been set up on crofts. They are important as a way to supplement incomes, as was the case years ago when all our villages were busy, lively places with crofts worked, and bed and breakfast accommodation on offer in many houses.

We are already paying increased business rates for tourism accommodation so an additional tax on the visitor does not sound attractive. We need visitors coming into our islands to help provide work for local people and to help us keep our young people here.

And let us have an increase in capacity with larger ferries and not a peak time increase in ferry fares, which would also affect our island people.

# Island schools

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Pupils from schools across the Outer Hebrides gathered at Sir E Scott School in Harris last week to take part in an international competition building and programming Lego robots.

It was the first time the Outer Hebrides had taken part in the First Lego League tournament, aimed at getting more young people involved with STEM activities.

Sgoil Lionacleit, Castlebay and Sir E Scott battled it out with their robot designs, while a group from the Nicolson watched what was going on to get ideas for next time.

The STEM acronym stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and the First Lego League tournament is based around building and programming

Mindstorm Lego robots. The event is held every year, with a different theme each year. The theme for 2019 was space, or Into Orbit.

Judges scored the teams on their robot design and its performance in a task-based game, as well as on a research project and their interpretation of First Lego League core values.

Sgoil Lionacleit won the robot challenge and was the overall winner, while Castlebay – the only school with a gender-balanced team – won core values and Sir E Scott won the research project.

The event was organised by Lews Castle College UHI with the support of The Institution of Engineering and Technology and the Energy Skills Partnership, as well as sponsorship from community wind farm charity Point and Sandwick

Trust, which gave £2,000 for the travel and accommodation costs of bringing the school teams up to Harris from the southern isles.

Roddy Ferguson, head of technology at Lews Castle College UHI, was one of the main organisers.

Commenting afterwards he said: 'The standard of the teams was excellent. They should be proud of themselves. They've done really well. All the teams were really enthusiastic and very knowledgeable of the different aspects of the design and the projects.'

Judge Andrew Mackenzie said it had been 'so nice to see young people getting together, travelling quite long distances to compete in a technological competition.'

'Lego is so sophisticated now, with sensors and in-built computers and all the mechanical bits and pieces

# Highland students completing c

A new report has revealed that 70.3 per cent of full-time students successfully completed their studies at Highlands and Islands colleges in the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

This is higher than the national average figure, which shows that 66.1 per cent of students passed further education courses

at Scottish colleges in the period. The region's results are also higher than the previous year, increasing by 2.8 percentage points.

The statistics were published in the Scottish Funding Council's college performance indicators report this week. The number of part-time students who successfully completed their

courses at Highlands and Islands colleges was also found to be higher than average.

Dr Michael Foxley, chairman of the Highland and Islands further education regional board, welcomed the report's findings saying: 'The results show a significant improvement on last year, with students at

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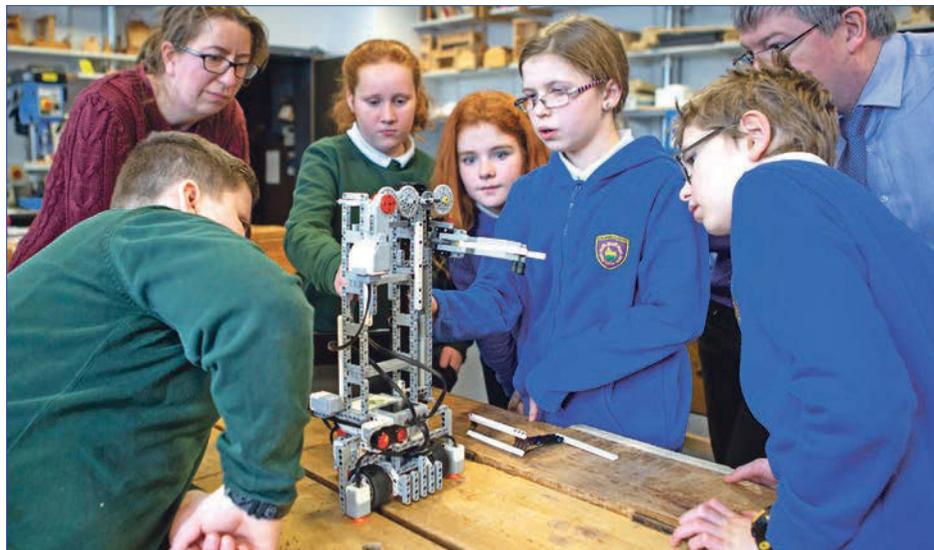
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# in Lego battle



Pupils work on their robot as part of the competition. Photograph: Sandie Maciver of SandiePhotos.

– on the surface simple but underneath very sophisticated.'

Lauren MacNeil, 12, from the Castlebay team, was one of the two presenters, and

she said afterwards: 'It's been amazing. We've had so much fun getting here and doing this.'

Meanwhile, Maureen Monaghan, a chemistry

teacher accompanying the Castlebay group, added: 'It's been a brilliant day for them. They've had loads of fun, just meeting the other schools. It's been great fun.'

# courses beats national average

University of the Highlands and Islands's colleges performing well above the Scottish average.

'They are a testament to the dedication of our staff as well as the hard work of our students. The findings are particularly great for our students, who will be able to progress onto further courses or to access

employment opportunities.' Scottish Conservative Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron said: 'I am delighted that our students are performing so well across the many colleges in the Highlands and Islands. It not only highlights the high quality teaching staff that we have in the region, but also the hard work

that students have put in to succeed in their chosen academic paths.

'Hopefully this can further boost the attractiveness of all our UHI colleges to prospective students from outside the region, so that more people will remain in the Highlands and Islands to work and live in our communities.'

# TalkTalk to axe island jobs

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has called on the Scottish Government to intervene in the TalkTalk proposals for the transfer of its Stornoway operation to Manchester with the loss of 59 local jobs.

The comhairle has written to Paul Wheelhouse, minister for energy and connectivity and the islands, stating: 'Given the fragility of the local economy and the detrimental impacts these losses will have, are there any additional and specific supports that the Scottish Government can offer?'

Councillor Donald Crichton, chairman of the sustainable development committee, said: 'This is a significant blow to the economy of the Western Isles.

'Our immediate thoughts are with the employees of the company and their families and we will play whatever role we can in supporting them.

'We anticipate that the

comhairle, together with our partners in SDS and HIE, will be implementing PACE (Partnership Action for Continuing Employment) procedures.

'However, I also believe that the Scottish Government can and should play an active role and do what they can by way of supporting the employees and I am sure all the local agencies would be pleased to work together with the government and the company.'

### Dismay

Meanwhile Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan and MP Angus MacNeil have also expressed their dismay at the news.

TalkTalk is one of the largest private sector employers on the island.

Mr Allan call the news deeply troubling.

'For an economy the size of the Isle of Lewis, the impact of the loss of 59 jobs cannot

be overstated,' he said. 'It is proportionate to job losses in the thousands for a city the size of Glasgow.'

'This is a real body blow to the Isle of Lewis.'

'Since being informed of the company's intentions, I have spoken to HIE and have asked the Scottish Government's business minister, Jamie Hepburn MSP, what the government can do to help.'

'This is a site that has operated in one form or another for more than a decade and it is important that all options are now explored to try and ensure its future.'

Mr MacNeil added: 'Having spoken with TalkTalk, it is obviously disappointing to hear that it has taken this step. TalkTalk acknowledge that it has highly skilled staff in Stornoway, dealing with complex customer complaints.'

'It will not be talked out of that decision it appears.'

# Police crackdown on road safety

Police in the Western Isles have acted on community concerns and have been carrying road safety patrols in the Stornoway area.

Since mid-December two motorists have been charged with dangerous driving, three in relation to careless or inconsiderate driving, three with driving without the necessary MOT, one with driving with an obscured windscreen and three with

lighting defects on their vehicle. Two motorists were issued with fixed penalty notices in relation to insurance offences, while two vehicles were seized with regards to insurance offences.

One motorist was issued with an anti-social behaviour notice in relation to their driving, while another had their vehicle seized following a second report of anti-social driving.

Where appropriate, reports will be or have been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Chief Inspector Ian Graham said: 'Our communities regularly highlight road safety as a priority across the Western Isles and we are committed to proactive policing aimed at improving safety.'

'This recent enforcement activity is a direct result of concerns raised by local residents and drivers.'

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or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

## Liberty on track despite Nissan move

Liberty Industries Group chief executive Dr Douglas Dawson has given assurances this week that despite the UK car industry being rocked by Japanese car giant Nissan scrapping its plans to build its new X-Trail vehicle in Sunderland, the Fort William plant plans will still go ahead.

The assurance is welcome, although in reality the company must have some fears about what the next few weeks holds.

Dr Dawson was in Fort William as ground engineers moved onto the site earmarked for the new alloy wheels factory. The technical team moved in with rigs and excavators for six weeks of in-depth ground investigations for the planned plant that is intended to manufacture wheels for at least a fifth of all UK-made cars from 2022 onwards.

This is a long game and as we all know politics is a fickle mistress, so we can only hope that Liberty, in planning for the future can be the architect of its own, and Lochaber's fortunes.

## Final frame plays out on Fort's former cinema

It is exciting to see the change in scenery on Cameron Square in Fort William, with the diggers having moved in to demolish what was the old cinema to make way for the new.

Angus MacDonald, who bought the former DV8 clothes store on the Cameron Square site, says he is delighted with the rapid progress being made to clear the area for the new picture house.

He is hopeful the building will be completely down and all the foundations dug up within a month, ready to start constructing the new building, which is expected to take a year to build, with the plan being to open it in time for The Scottish Six Days Trial in May.

The Lochaber Times went out for a chat with Mr MacDonald last week while he was at the site. Watch our video at [www.lochabertimes.co.uk](http://www.lochabertimes.co.uk)

## Ardchattan Parish Church final services

Thank you to all who joined us for the final communion service and the service to mark the close of the church on January 27, 2019.

It was lovely to see a busy church.

Special thanks to the Reverend Bill Gray and Reverend Dr Rodrick Campbell for leading the services, and to Norman Nicholson for his uplifting music.

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow?

**Ardchattan Parish folk.**

## In search of ex-trooper

Every year former members of a Royal Artillery Troop, which was based in Catterick and Aldershot in the 1970s and 80s, have a reunion and for the last 10 years we have been trying to find a Jimmy (Nobby) Clarke who was born and believed to be living in Oban.

We would be grateful if any of your readers know him and could ask him to get in touch as we are keen to locate him.

**Ian Skien**

**The Beagles, Cashes Green, Stroud, GL5 4SD**

## Icy roads raise concerns

I have been hearing from many of my constituents on Islay in regards to the gritting of our roads. There is no doubt in my mind that our front line roads men are hard working and have the same concerns about ice on our roads as everyone else. That said they can only do as they are ordered by our council's central management.

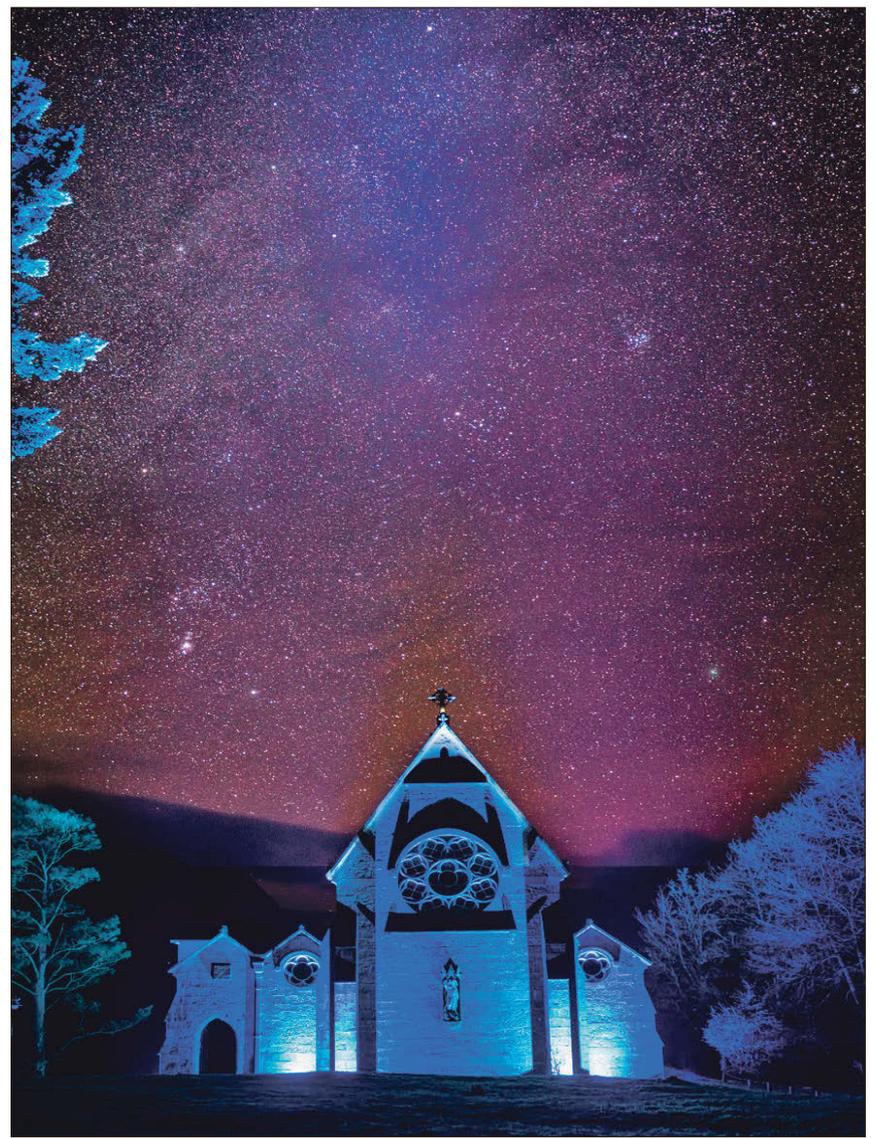
I have received very worrying reports from numerous fellow Ileachs that school buses and cars across many parts of Islay have struggled to stay on the roads leaving many pupils scared by the time they reached school.

Our council has recently failed to grit the roads around Loch Gorm, Gruinart, the Oa, Ardbeg and Artalla early enough, this is despite school buses and cars on these routes each day before 8am.

Our island's diligent and professional school bus and car drivers start driving at 7.15am every morning, so if the gritters don't start until 7am our roads department just can't cover the roads before traffic is on them.

On many occasions over the last couple of

## YOUR PICTURES



We know our readers love to take photographs so we are happy to create this space to showcase people's images each week. If you have a photograph you would like to see published here, send it to [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk), post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB or hand

it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or in High Street, Fort William. This fantastic photograph of the night sky was taken by reader Robert Alexander Hunter, who took this of Glenfinnan Church on December 9, 2018.

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# DISTRICT NEWS

## FORT WILLIAM

Fort William Community Council (FWCC) held a meeting recently at An Drochaid, Claggan, on Tuesday January 15. The following matters were discussed.

### Upper Achintore astro turf

Mark Linfield advised that Highland Council (HC) had agreed to upgrade the old play area behind Ross Place. A meeting was to be held at Lundavra Primary School to discuss the way forward.

### Argyll Road

Pauline Donaldson, of Highland Council, advised that the speed cushions that were removed were beyond economical repair. As this was a bus route, cushions should be replaced with a speed table. This was to be discussed with Mark Smith as the budget was unknown.

### Closed play area

It was noted that the play ground at Grange Road was neglected and the steps dangerous, and there still had been no action to remedy this.

### New member

The chairman proposed Mark Linfield to be co-opted to FWCC. This was seconded and agreed unanimously by the members present. All welcomed Mark to FWCC. The secretary was to advise Dot Ferguson, Highland Council senior wards manager, and arrange a welcome pack.

### Ossian Hotel car park

The car park was increasingly looking more like a junk yard than a car park, which was disappointing when the town was beginning to look so much brighter.

### Monzie Square bins

Three large bins outside the Bank of Scotland in the square can often be found with rubbish spilling over. It was asked whether they could be moved further up the square to

## Diamond congratulations



Maimie and Charlie Ross, formerly of Inverloch and now residing in Inverness, celebrated their 60th diamond wedding anniversary on Thursday January 31. They are pictured cutting their cake at a surprise afternoon tea held by Cheery Chesters.

discourage usage by passer. The secretary was to contact councillor Andrew Baxter and Dot Ferguson. The next is on Tuesday February 19, at 7pm at An Drochaid.

## RUM

A crowdfunding campaign to save Kinloch Castle on the Isle of Rum has raised almost £1,500 so far, but there is still time to donate.

The fundraiser, which only has days left to run, aims to raise £10,000 to help pay for on-going

costs, with a view to fully restoring the castle in the future. To find out more, or to donate, visit [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-Kinloch-castle-isle-of-rum](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-Kinloch-castle-isle-of-rum).

## STORNOWAY

Stornoway Coastguard, Tobermory RNLI, and the Scottish Ambulance Service worked together to help an injured fisherman on Tuesday January 29.

Tobermory RNLI's weekly training was interrupted following a re-

quest from the Scottish Ambulance Service to assist.

With the Coastguard Rescue Team already on scene, the Elizabeth Fairlie Ramsey went alongside the fishing boat and the crew helped coastguards to transfer the injured man onto the lifeboat.

The fisherman was taken to Tobermory harbour pontoons where he was transferred to the care of Scottish Ambulance Service staff.

He was then transferred to the Stornoway Coastguard search and rescue helicopter at a landing site close to Tobermory High School.

Coxswain David McHaffie said: 'This was a joint effort. We're pleased to hear the fisherman was not seriously injured and we all wish him well with his recovery.'

## LOCHABER

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for regional food and drink projects through Highlands and Islands Enterprise's Connect Local's Regional Food Fund.

Connect Local is Scotland's free, local, food and drink marketing advisory service.

The Regional Food Fund will support initiatives and projects in

Scotland which celebrate and promote locally sourced and produced food and drink, in line with the priorities of Ambition 2030.

The fund is for collaborative projects where groups of producers and food and drink businesses benefit from these initiatives and projects are expected to deliver benefits over the long-term.

The closing date for applications is March 1 2019.

Visit [connectlocal.scot/regional-food-fund/](http://connectlocal.scot/regional-food-fund/) for more information and to apply.

## PLOCKTON

Congratulations to Neil MacRae, Plockton, who got his captain's ticket on January 22.

Neil is presently chief officer on the Caledonian MacBrayne boat Finlaggan, sailing between Kennacraig and Islay.

During January there were six inches of rain at Plockton. Warmest day was 11.3 degrees C and coldest night was -2.5 degrees.

The annual Plockton Drama Club Panto staged four well-attended shows at Plockton High School on January 24, 25 and 26. This year the show was Snow White, produced by Sarah Bruce.

Children in North Uist were delighted when Claddach Kirkibost Centre received a cheque for £2,848 from the Western Isles Lottery. The funds will be used

to buy soft play equipment and to refurbish a room to provide a year-round indoor play area.

Other organisations to benefit from the lottery are: Balivanich Playpark, £1,362; Sgoil Lionacleit



Pipe Band, £1,306.80; Uist Volunteering, £300; and Cuimhne, which received £2,398 to develop a sensory garden.

Uist groups interested in future funding should visit [www.westernisleslottery.co.uk](http://www.westernisleslottery.co.uk)

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Find out more about charging and driving an electric car and view the Nissan Leaf Car which will be brought to the event by Morvern Eco Wheels from Lochaline.

## Arisaig to host Bill's Shed event

Arisaig Community Trust, together with the Arisaig Eco Project, will host a special event on Saturday February 23, involving the official opening of 'Bill's Shed' at the Land, Sea and Islands Centre.

The event is in memory of Bill Henderson, who died in April 2017 after half a century living in Arisaig.

Bill came to Arisaig in 1967 to work for Vera Shaw Stewart at Traigh Farm and then spent the next 50 years managing the dairy and sheep farm.

Bill loved Arisaig and was much involved in community life. He served on many local committees, most notably the Arisaig and District Community Council, of which he was a member for 33 years.

He was one of the founding directors of both the Land, Sea and Islands Centre and the Arisaig Community Trust, and was always willing to give wise counsel and hands-on help.

There will be several activities going on during the day for the public to have a look round the shed and let organisers know if anyone is interested in using the space.

There will be the opportunity to help create a new community art mosaic with Helen

Michie Ceramics inside the workshop space. This is a drop-in session with all materials provided.

Or there will be short taster sessions available on the two ACT Ridgeback Electric Bikes.

There will be the chance to find out more about charging and driving an electric car and see the new electric vehicle charge points. Morvern Eco Wheels from Lochaline will also be there with its Nissan Leaf Car.

The plan is also to have a small community tool library at Bill's Shed - for those who may have some DIY and gardening tools they would like to donate or ideas of tools that might be useful to stock.

Inside the Land, Sea and Islands Centre refreshments and homebaking will be available. Deirdre Roberts will be demonstrating spinning wool on one of the centre's spinning wheels, and Veronika Malyjurkova will be displaying and demonstrating how to make a range of natural eco-friendly products. There is no need to book and donations are welcome at the Land, Sea and Islands Centre. Some of the activities may run on later than 1pm depending on interest and weather on the day.

## Retro Roamer

[fort@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:fort@obantimes.co.uk)

### More Roamerisms from the early 1990s

■ If you want to get ahead – get a spare hat. That was what was going through Alex Duncan's mind on Loch Morar last week. He was running his fingers through his hair after his Deerstalker had been blown off his head and swept away towards Meoble. Alex, of course, knows his way around these parts, and he was soon kitted out with a temporary 'Coming and Going' replacement by the Morar Hotel Millinery Department.

■ Alister Grant, Belford telephonist and former ambulanceman was in attendance at the RNI in Inverness, for his investiture. Alister was one of the health board employees from the north being recognised at an awards ceremony. You'll remember how comedian Johnny Bogan used to 'send up' a character called 'Grant from the Highland Board'. Well, Alister will, of course, now feature as Grant from the Highland Health Board.

■ At 6pm last Thursday, as we were about to call it a day in the West Highland News Agency, here's Clydesdale Bank manager, Willie Allan, driving into Monzie Square. 'You're either going to be working late – or you've forgotten something,' says I to Willie. Willie wasn't sure about telling us why he was apparently back for business. But he relented. 'Well, you'll probably see what I'm going to do anyway,' he said with a grin. And he then stuck his card in the Hole in the Wall. Willie added, 'It wasn't till I got to Corpach that I realised I'd forgotten to get some money out of the bank.'

■ Art Sutter was on the wireless and he took a call from Donald, over in Uist. 'De tha dol?' asked Art. 'B..... all,' responded Donald, unwittingly completing a 'macaronic' – a Gaelic and English rhyming couplet.

■ No false starts in the Scottish Grand National at Ayr. The course was certainly mobbed – there were quite a few down from Lochaber. Among the racegoers were Rusty and Eck. With one set of binoculars between them. Eck requested the privilege of watching the National through the glasses – darkly, as it turned out. 'Rusty, I'm not getting a good view through these,' Eck moaned. 'Well, try adjusting them,' suggested Rusty, who was intent on using his height and keen eyesight to advantage to watch the race unfold. 'These are nae damn use', Eck 'eckjaculated'. With only the run-in of the race to go, Rusty finally glanced down at Eck. 'No blinkin' wonder

you're not seeing properly,' he hissed. 'You've got the binoculars back to front!'

■ Did you see the wee Glesca guy hirpling along in the marathon with the laces flapping out of one of his trainers, causing it to be mair aff his fit than on? When he stopped at one of the drinks stations he was asked why he didn't lace it up. He replied, modestly, 'Because it says 'Tai Wan' on the other trainer...'

■ Ann Bruce came down the Rocky Brae en route for Leslie's. It was pouring rain, so Ann did a neat body swerve to avoid the Cameron Centre Cascade. Force of habit for Ann, of course, as the former fountain has finally been dried up thanks to a rhone pipe remedy carried out a few days ago by the 'Authorities'.

■ Meanwhile, George of that Ilk, had let his car linger too long in Viewforth car park. So long, in fact, that a £20 excess charge was levied against him for having the temerity to let his motor overstay its welcome. The Bruce was not amused and has indignantly written about the saga to the council in Doric and English, and to the local papers with an extra Gaelic word or two. Undeniably George has valid points to make. However, in the meantime, watch those spaces!

■ Bob and Rena won't forget their visit to the Forsay Caravan Site in a hurry. On arrival Rena offered to get out of the Rover to open the gate. But, ever chivalrous, Bob said he'd do the needful. In the event both of them climbed out of the motor at the same time. And, as the gateway to the site is narrow, they shut their respective doors to get to the gate. Whereupon their dog, also called Rover, jumped up excitedly and pawed the central locking button – leaving Rover inside and Bob and Rena outside. You can imagine the embarrassment and inconvenience, until help, in the shape of another caravanner, and a length of bent wire, sorted everything out!

■ Let them eat cake! That was the decree from Lochaber High School's sixth-year pupils after their Leavers' Dance. A beautiful iced cake, three feet square, had been baked for this gala occasion, ribbon bedecked in LHS colours. However, at the end of the jiggling the pupils decided it would be a shame to spoil the cake by cutting it. So, in a very nice gesture, they presented it to the residents of Invernevis House, who have been happily eating cake ever since.

■ Roamer is expanding and will now move to a larger, fortnightly column. The next column will be in the paper on February 21.

## A typical day - At last, an eating plan that fits into your life



### Breakfast

#### Overnight Oats

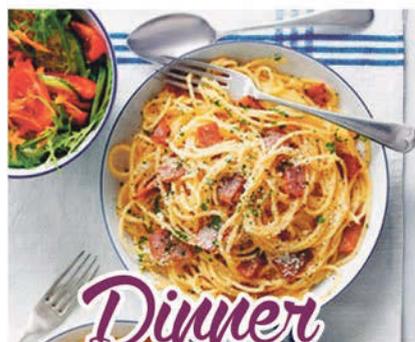
Lots of people have been going bonkers for overnight oats. We have to agree, they're absolutely amazing! 10mins



### Lunch

#### Tuna and sweetcorn jacket potato

Warming, comforting and easy to prepare - you can't beat an oven baked spud, especially with a tasty tuna and sweetcorn topping! 2hrs, 5mins



### Dinner

#### Spaghetti carbonara

Yes with Slimming World you can eat pasta! We've lightened up this classic pasta dish without losing any of the flavour. 20mins

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Baptist Church  
Union Street/ Argyll Street  
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**CAMPBELTOWN**  
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Lodge, St John Street  
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5.30pm & 7.30pm  
Tel: Rhona 07880 878 906

Detailed recipes available at:  
[slimmingworld.co.uk](http://slimmingworld.co.uk)



LT

## SHINTY



From left are Alastair Macintyre, club chairman; Linda Campbell, club secretary, Andrew McAlister, Archie (Mark) MacPherson and Stephen McAlister.

## Funeral donation for Kilmallie Shinty Club

Kilmallie Shinty Club says it is deeply grateful for the very generous donation of £850 presented to the club recently.

The money is the proceeds of the retiring collection at the funeral of Lynsey MacPherson on January 12.

The same amount has also been given to Lochaber Artistic Roller Skating Club.

On its Facebook page, Kilmallie Shinty Club stated: 'We really appreciate this amazing amount raised which shows how much Lynsey and her family meant to the large congregation that attended the funeral.'

'We continue to think of her husband Mark, better known as Archie, brothers Stephen and Andrew, dad Ronnie, Ronnie's partner Veronica and the wider family and know that after the funeral is past the loss can feel so great.'

'Our thoughts go out to them. Tribute was paid to Lynsey by our club chairman at the club AGM and we remember her for being the rock behind Mark throughout his years as player and latterly manager; for her cheerful witty support at games and for practical support in, for example, washing the team strips week in, week out. We are glad Archie will continue his sterling work with the club this year as assistant manager and also in taking youth training at Banavie primary – both jobs we know he will put his characteristic passion into and we are glad to see Stephen and Andrew back at training.'

## LOTTERY

## Lochaber club lotteries

Ballachulish Shinty Club -The numbers for this week (3/2) are 1, 6 and 13. No winners, so a £2,000 draw next week.

Lochaber Camanachd - This week's lotto numbers last Tuesday were 11, 15 and 18 - no winners, so the jackpot is £600 this week.

Caol Community Centre Bingo Club (3/2) - Numbers were 7, 14 and 19. No winners so the jackpot is £200 next week.

Fort William Golf Club lotto (31/1) - Numbers were 9, 13 and 18. No winners so £600 is available.



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## SLT doesn't let snow and ice halt training

## FOOTBALL

A snow and ice covered pitch may have caused the cancellation of South Lochaber Thistle's home match against Glasgow side Westerlands on Saturday, but it didn't stop them training earlier in the week, with an indoor session in Tough Cookies Gym, Fort William.

Gym owner Jonathan McCook is already business sponsor of team member Craig Cameron and was happy to take over training for the night to help the team keep up the match-winning fitness which has given them the edge over most of their rivals.

Not every player could travel to the session in Fort William, but those who did had a hard night on intensive work-out to build muscle and stamina for future games.

Picture Iain Ferguson, alba.photos



Gym owner Jonathan McCook, left, puts the SLT players through their paces

# Winter weather forces Fort FC to call off game



The winter wonderland of Claggan Park, which led to the cancellation of the Fort v Brora match. Picture Iain Ferguson, The Write Image

## FOOTBALL

The weekend's home football fixture between Fort William and Brora Rangers had to be called off due to snow and ice covering the playing surface at Claggan Park.

The Claggan Park fixture was just one of a raft of matches in the Breedon Highland Football League that succumbed to the weather.

This Saturday the Fort are due to travel to Lossiemouth for their next league game.

## Ardnamurchan Shinty Club mark exciting 2018

Ardnamurchan Ladies' Shinty Club marked an exciting 2018 shinty season with an awards night and fund-raising dance to Trail West on Friday February 1.

As well as raising money for the club, a number of awards were handed out.

When the votes were counted, the 2018 development player of the year prize went to Aine O Rua.

Ellen Munro and Sally Patterson shared the development most improved player award.

The Ardnamurchan second team played in South Division 2 and their player of the year was Hannah MacDonald.

Lilijana Alexander's performances throughout the season were recognised as she was named the Ardnamurchan second team's most improved player.

### National Division

When it came to the Ardnamurchan Ladies' first team, who competed in the WCA National Division for the first time, Lucy MacMillan was named player of the year.

## SHINTY

Lisa Ford collected the senior team's most improved player accolade.

Last year was a season in which Ardnamurchan fielded teams at primary, U14 and U17 levels as well as three ladies' teams.

They add to this in 2019 with Ardnamurchan fielding a side in Mowi South Division 2 for the first time since 2011.



Fort William Golf Club winners. Photo: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

# Fort golf club hands out trophies

Fort William Golf Club held its annual prize giving for 2018 at the weekend.

Awards were given to the following:  
Men's Section: Trophy Winners 2018  
Connachie Cup (Men's Club Championship) - Steven Jamieson; runner-up - Paul Campbell.  
The Hugh MacIntyre Trophy (Handicap Match-Play Club Championship) - Jason Wallace; runner-up - Ronnie MacDonald.  
Lochy Bar (Men's Club Championship H'caps 15 - 28) - S Gunn runner-up - Davey Laing.  
Clydesdale Bank Challenge Cup (Knockout Match-Play Handicap) - Peter Stewart; runner-up - Robert Drain.  
The Royal Bank Cup (Two Rounds Stroke Play - Scratch) - Eric Wallace; runner-up - Paul Campbell.  
MacIver Cup (Two Rounds Stroke Play - Handicap) - Willie Duncan; runner-up - Brian A Stewart.  
Scottish Pulp and Paper Mills (Knockout Match Play - Handicap) - R MacDonald; runner-up - Peter Stewart.  
Mairi MacIntyre Rose Bowl (Medal Final - Scratch) - Steven Jamieson; runner-up - Paul Campbell.  
Young Trophy (Medal Final - Handicap) - Jason

Wallace; runner-up - Willie MacDonald.  
Bank of Scotland Tray (Four Ball Match-Play Handicap) - Graeme and Neil Worsdall; runners-up - Pat Cassidy and Peter Stewart.  
Senior Four Ball: Four Ball Match-Play (Handicap) Over 50s - Keith Sangster and Robert McCover; runners-up - Pat Cassidy and Peter Stewart.  
Senior Club Championship (Over 50s) - Peter Stewart; runner-up - Keith Sangster.  
Wolverton Trophy (Local Holiday) - Graeme Worsdall.  
1912 Cup - Willie McCann.  
Captain's Prize - Cal Brown.  
Vice-captain's prize - Jason Wallace.  
Neil Hardie Trophy - Cal Brown.  
John Soutar Medal Final Trophy - Ronnie MacDonald; runner-up - Brian A Stewart.  
Craig Paterson Memorial Trophy - Willie McCann.  
Donnie Gillies Memorial Trophy - Marc MacDonald.  
Ladies' Section: Trophy Winners 2018  
Ladies' Club Championship (Elliot Trophy) - Rosie Macintyre; runner-up - Kathleen Leitch.  
Clydesdale Bank Trophy (Bronze Division Club

## GOLF

Championship) - Ann Lovatt; runner-up - Helen Brian.  
MacNab Cup (Singles -Handicap) - Rosie Macintyre; runner-up - Kathleen Leitch.  
E. Cameron Trophy (Stableford) - Rosie Macintyre; runner-up - Kathleen Leitch.  
West Highland Oil Tray -(Ladies' Outing) - Helen Brian.  
Ladies' Summer Eclectic (Wolverton Cup) - Rosie Macintyre; runner-up - Kathleen Leitch.  
Budget Rent-a-Car - Rosie Macintyre.  
Monthly Medal Winners:  
(month followed by seniors):  
April - David MacPherson, John Ferguson.  
May - Ian Robertson, John Wattsmann.  
June - Jason Wallace.  
July - Steven Jamieson, Kevin Hickman.  
August - Nicholas Hough, Pat Cassidy.  
September - Brian Stewart Jn  
Ladies:  
May - Kathleen Leitch.  
June - Ann Lovatt.  
July - Helen Brian.  
August - Kathleen Leitch.

# Runners brave ice and wind in winter league races

Sunday's Lochaber Athletics Club Winter League race was the 'Riverbank Splodge' in name only after conditions along the riverside were judged too dangerous and an alternative route along the road in Glen Nevis was used instead.

There was a good turnout in both the adults and junior races, despite icy conditions, with a bitter wind blowing.

First man home was Esmond Tresidder (LAC) in a time of 00:25:49, with the first woman over the finishing line Lisette Walter in a time of 00:32:05. Full results can be found on the club website.



Runners make their way along the road in Glen Nevis. Photos: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

And well done to all the kids who did the 'Wee Meall An T' in difficult conditions with a lot of ice underfoot and wind chill. In the boys' under-11 class,

## ATHLETICS

Aaron Tresidder was first home in a time of 00:08:41, with first girl Maddison Macmillan in a time of 00:08:37.

First under-13 boy was Sorley Swabey in 00:11:04, with first girl Mya Carmichael in 00:12:01.

First under-15 boy home was Felix Deschenes in 00:17:23.

The next kids' winter league race, and the last of the 2018/19 winter league, is Saturday March 16 at 1pm, at the North Face car park. This is a change of date.



More action from the weekend's winter league races.



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## WEATHER

**Thursday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures  
4°C to 6°C.

**Friday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures  
5°C to 7°C.

**Weekend Outlook**  
**Saturday**  
Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
**Sunday**  
Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures  
3°C to 7°C.



## TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 7, 2019** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	01.20	1.0	07.16	4.0
<b>Thur</b>	13.41	1.2	19.24	3.8
<b>Fri</b>	01.51	1.1	07.47	3.9
	14.11	1.3	19.51	3.7
<b>Sat</b>	02.16	1.2	08.16	3.8
	14.39	1.4	20.18	3.6
<b>Sun</b>	02.40	1.3	08.45	3.6
	15.06	1.5	20.49	3.5
<b>Mon</b>	03.09	1.4	09.18	3.5
	15.43	1.6	21.25	3.3
<b>Tues</b>	03.49	1.6	10.00	3.3
	16.35	1.7	22.11	3.2
<b>Wed</b>	04.44	1.7	10.58	3.1
	17.44	1.8	23.13	3.0

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

## Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

**Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd**



**INSIDE THIS WEEK:**  
SLT doesn't let  
snow and ice  
halt training

**NORTH WEST  
MARINE**  
DIVING & MARINE SPECIALISTS  
SPONSORS OF THE  
OBAN TIMES WEATHER  
AND TIDES - SEE PAGE 63

# Glencoe rugby siblings on international duty

It was a big weekend for the rugby daft Nelson family, with two members on international duty.

Helen and Robbie Nelson, together with sister and fellow internationalist, Bryony, all grew up in Glencoe.

On Friday night, stand-off Helen, who plays her rugby these days for Montpellier, and her Scottish women team-mates took on Italy at Scotstoun in Glasgow.

Earlier that afternoon Currie Chieftains centre Robbie took the pitch at Gala RFC's Netherdale ground in the Borders to win his fourth cap for the Scotland Club XV side that faced Ireland.

## Respective

Unfortunately neither of the Nelson siblings tasted victory in their respective matches with the women's side defeated 7-28, while the club XV went down 9-23.

In the women's international played on front of a 1,500-strong crowd, the vis-

itors appeared much sharper, running in three second-half tries, despite a 10-minute spell with two players in the sin bin.

Scotland did enjoy large spells of possession and territory after the break but a resolute Italian defence gave little away.

As the game progressed, Scotland started to dominate in the scrum and the hosts opted to scrum the Italians in their 22 when kickable penalties were on offer with the scores at 7-14 to the visitors in the second half.

But a late breakaway try by Italy and then a score bang on 80 minutes put the game beyond Scotland's reach.

Scotland's points came from a try by lock Sarah Bonar in the first half, with hooker Lana Skeldon slotting the conversion which levelled the scores at half-time.

Speaking afterwards, Scotland head coach Shade Munro commented: 'Pretty

## RUGBY

disappointed to have lost in the manner that we did. Having said that, we played well in the first half.

'We defended extremely well. We were on our own line for about 20 minutes I think, so in terms of our defence and the way that we played against Italy, the first in November, is really encouraging.

## Vary

'We need to be able to vary our game a wee bit more than we did. At the end, we ran out of steam and the Italians' class told in the end.

'I think the score was a bit unfair given the huge effort that went in. They did deserve to win but that doesn't detract from the fact that we put in a really big effort.'

In the Club XV match, the host's points came via two penalties from the boot of stand-off Gregor Hunter and another from full-back Paddy Dewhirst.

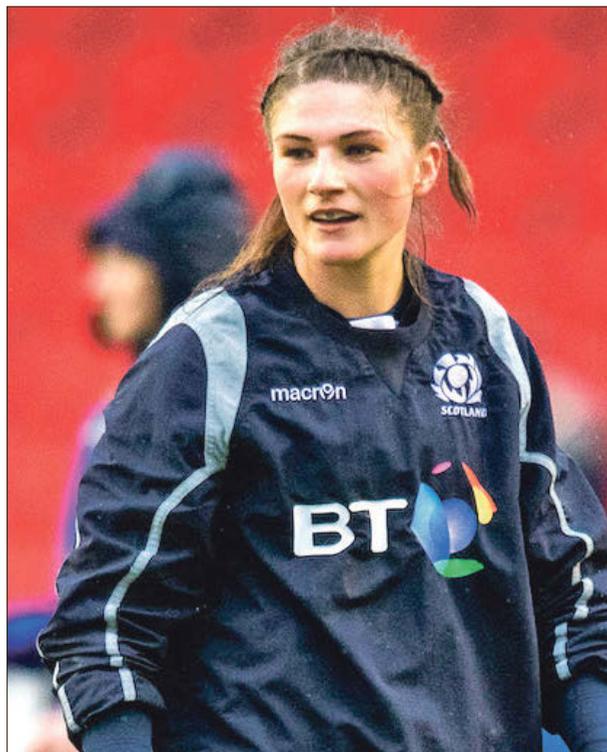
## Lochaber ten pin bowling leagues

After week 12 of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William Alleycats continue to lead the scratch division with 56 points followed by Council on 48 points and British Legion Fort William in third place with 43 points.

The top individual scratch game this week went to Brian Stewart (The Empire) with a 200. Also this week Gary Cowan (The Empire) had a 198 and Brian Johnstone (Alleycats) a 178. Brian Stewart also had the top two-game scratch series with 336 while Gary Cowan had the top handicap game of 252 and Ron Gretton (Retrovators) the top two-game handicap series of 433.

The best team scores of the week all came from The Empire, who had the top scratch game of 573, the top handicap game of 796, the top two-game scratch series of 1,129 and the top two-game handicap series of 1,575.

The top scratch averages are currently held by Brian Johnstone on 160 followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 145 and Gus Fraser (Council) on 144.



Former Lochaber player Helen Nelson was in action for Scotland against Italy on Friday night.



Last year, more than 2,000 athletes from almost 60 countries raced at the event.

## Entries open for mountain running festival

Entries are now open for the UK's biggest mountain running festival in Kinlochleven.

Organisers are urging to get their entries in to the Salomon Skyline Scotland skyrunning races this year as places are expected to sell out quickly.

### Three days

The annual Salomon Skyline Scotland offers three days of world-acclaimed races based in and around Kinlochleven. Last year, more than 2,000 athletes from almost 60 countries raced at the event.

The three Salomon Skyline

Scotland 2019 races – the Salomon Ben Nevis Ultra, the Salomon Mamores VK and the Salomon Ring of Steall Skyrace – will be open for entries on February 5 at 10am.

The races, which are held in Lochaber from September 20 to 22, are on a first-come-first-served basis.

Shane Ohly is the director of organiser Ourea Events. He said: 'The Salomon Skyline Scotland races attract runners from across the world and they sell out quickly. If you are keen to take part, it

is a good idea to set up a date alert for entries opening so that you do not miss out on your chosen event.'

### Local hero

Top mountain running names included Kilian Jornet, Stian Angermund-Vik and Hillary Gerardi, as well as Lochaber's Finlay Wild.





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